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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, "DISCOVERING THE VOICES OF THE SEGREGATED: AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE TURKISH PEOPLE OF SUMTER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA", by TERRI ANN OGNIBENE, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

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ABSTRACT

DISCOVERING THE VOICES OF THE SEGREGATED: AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE TURKISH PEOPLE OF SUMTER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

by

Terri Ann Ognibene

This qualitative study is a narrative investigation that analyzes the educational experiences of the segregated Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina during the integration movement. Four participants share their stories of how attending an elementary school for Turkish students affected their integration into White high schools. Oral history is the specific research methodology that is used. The theoretical framework that guides this study is critical-narrative theory. Through critical research, the researcher analyzes how "the social institution of school is structured such that the interests of some members and classes of society are preserved and perpetuated at the expense of others" (Merriam, 2001, p. 5). Narrative theory also informs this study. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explain that the heart of narrative analysis is "the ways humans experience the world" (p. 2).

The research questions that guide this study are the following: (1) How do the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, who attended public school during the early part of the 20th century, describe their educational experiences?, and (2) What are the perceptions of the Turkish people regarding the integration movement, educational power struggles and oppression?

Through in-depth interviews, participants discuss (a) thoughts on being Turkish, (b) feelings of isolation, (c) experiences at the Dalzell School, (d) experiences at the high schools (Edmunds and Hillcrest), (e) attitudes toward other ethnic groups, and (f) perceptions of the integration movement. The overwhelming evidence from interviews supports Freire's (2006) two stages of the pedagogy of the oppressed. Freire states,

> In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation. (p. 54)

The educational implications of this study offer insight into how today's educators are called to "renew our minds so that the way we live, teach, and work can reflect our joy in cultural diversity, our passion for justice, and our love of freedom" (bell hooks, 1994, p.34).

DISCOVERING THE VOICES OF THE SEGREGATED: AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE TURKISH PEOPLE OF SUMTER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

by
Terri Ann Ognibene

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Language and Literacy Education
in
the Department of Middle/Secondary Education
and Instructional Technology
the College of Education
Georgia State University

Atlanta, Georgia
2008

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Terri Ann Ognibene
2008

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This is dedicated to those from whom I come and of whom I am one, the Martin Frazier Ray and Lani Hood Ray family. Their life experiences have moved me, perplexed me, inspired me, strengthened me, encouraged me and molded me into the person that I am today. May this feeble attempt lend to their voices: Martin (Papa): 1910 – 1996, Lani (Granny): 1911 – 1996, Melissa (Aunt Sis): 1932 – 2006, Josephine (Aunt Jo): 1934 - , Martin Jr. (Uncle Bubba): 1936 – 1992, Buford (Uncle Buford): 1938 – 1963, Loretta (Aunt Ret): 1940 - , Pearl (Mom, the most intelligent woman I know): 1942 - , Della Mae (Aunt Della): 1945 – 2008 and Floyd (Uncle Floyd): 1948 – 2000.

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I would also like to thank the four participants of this study: Boaz, Tonie, Helen and Jean. Your stories have touched my heart. Thank you for enduring difficult times and for taking action against oppression. Thank you for trusting me enough to tell me about your educational experiences. Your courage has brought educational freedom to the younger generation of Turkish people, and I, for one, am eternally grateful. Thank you for fighting the good fight. Without your struggle, I would not be free. God bless you!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> All of us in the academy and in the culture as a whole are called to renew our minds if we are to transform educational institutions – and society – so that the way we live, teach, and work can reflect our joy in cultural diversity, our passion for justice, and our love of freedom. (hooks, 1994, p. 34)

Context of the Problem

We are the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina. Our story has never been told. Our rich history has been overlooked. Our identity has been challenged. We have roots that extend all the way back to the Revolutionary War (Berry, 1945; Bull, 1982; Gregorie, 1954; Kaye, 1963; Muhammad, n. d.; Myers, 1989; Nicholes, 1970; Sumter, 1917; Thompson, 2000; Trillin, 1969; Woody & Thigpen, 2005; Workman, 1950a, 1951, 1953b) yet we are seldom mentioned in educational history books. During the early part of the 20th century, we were denied an equal access to education because of the tones of our skin. Through our struggle for educational equality, our "passion for justice" and our "love of freedom" have brought about a change in our community which now shares a "joy in cultural diversity" in the teaching of all children (hooks, 1994, p. 34). This is our story. May it inspire today's educators to embrace and value the similarities and differences of all students in the classroom.

Our forefather, Yusef Ben Ali, also believed by some to be Joseph Benenhaley, was chosen by General Thomas Sumter himself, to be a scout for his

army. Ben Ali proved to be such a valiant scout that Sumter gave him and another man named Scott some land from his own farm. Ben Ali's descendants greatly increased in number and many still reside in this same area of Sumter County, South Carolina. So who are we and why is our story unknown? To consider these questions, I take the reader back to the 1950's and share two articles from a newspaper, as quoted in New (2002), printed in Charleston, South Carolina, as seen in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1

South Carolina Colony of Turks

Charleston, S.C., Sept. 10, 1953 – UP – A federal judge must go back to revolutionary war history Wednesday to settle a school segregation dispute over a mysterious colony of "Turks." The "Turks," a colony of some 300 persons, have petitioned the federal court of the eastern district of South Carolina for admittance to the Hill Crest School for white children in Sumter County. The colony, which up to now has had its own schools and churches, has been called "as much a mystery to their neighbors as the mound builders," by one historian and no one seems certain of its background (p. 1).

Figure 2

Subject to Segregation Laws?

Judge Ashton H. Williams will hear arguments as to whether the present colony of "Turks," are white or negro, and whether they should be admitted to the Hill Crest School. He had previously granted a temporary injunction preventing school officials from refusing to register "Turks" at Hill Crest, but stayed the injunction when 150 white parents kept their children away from the school, on opening day last week. White residents of the county said the Turks were part negro descent and therefore subject to South Carolina's segregation laws which bar negroes from white schools. Members of the colony said they were of Turkish descent and historians refer to a mysterious Ben Ali or Benenhaly as founder of the colony.

Researchers who investigate the history of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina agree that there is a lack of information regarding our origins (Berry, 1945; Bull, 1982; Gregorie, 1954; Kaye, 1963; "S. C. 'Turks' are pushing court case," 1961; Thompson, 2000; Workman, 1950a; Workman, 1951; Workman, 1953b). The absence and distortion of our history have caused many people to speculate about our identity. To help clarify the confusion regarding our identity, the participants of this study give their own thoughts regarding who we are through the telling of their stories.

Purpose Statement

One purpose of this study is to bring to light the life stories of the educational experiences of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, through the use of their own voices. The participants of this study lived through the educational integration movement in Sumter County, South Carolina during the early part of the 20th century. Their life experiences during the integration movement were unique, and their stories, until now, have been unheard. There is no other known community in the United States like that of the community of Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina (Nicholes, 1970; Trillin, 1969). Their educational stories have been preserved on a flash drive, on a computer desktop and on a printed hard copy and, through this study, are made available to the public. This study contributes to the knowledge base of ethnicity issues that are unique to the United States. Analyzing the lived experiences of Turkish participants has allowed me to look at the power relationships that existed during the early part of the 20th century and the Turkish people's perceptions of them.

A second purpose of this study is to inspire today's educators to embrace and value the similarities and differences of all students in the classroom. The United States of America has changed considerably since the early part of the 20th century when the Turkish students of Sumter County, South Carolina were denied an equal access to education. School segregation is no longer mandated, but the culture of each individual classroom is still often reflected by the attitude of the adult in charge. Educators have the choice to belittle or to uplift, to encourage or to discourage, to accept or to deny their students in the decisions that they make in

their classrooms. Through the telling of their stories, the participants of this study shed light on the effects that the choices their teachers made had on their educational experiences.

Rationale for the Study

Our beliefs about history are based on the oral traditions and written documents that have been passed down from generation to generation. Through it all, someone had to make a judgment call regarding which events, documents and people were important enough to remember. In many cases, the dominant culture has had the strongest voice in these decisions. Those in power have sometimes taken precedence over the voices of those who have not been in power. Is it not important, though, to seek out other voices, perhaps voices from non-dominant cultures? Our legacy for future generations lies in our hands. On the rare occasion that we might serendipitously happen upon a different voice regarding the way things were from those who lived through it, should we not record it, analyze it, and reveal it for all to hear? Who better to explain the integration movement and how it affected the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina than those who lived through it and still remember specific details about it as if it had happened yesterday? Smith and Whitmore (2006) explain that "sharing stories is the one way we make meaning in our world" (p. xx). They explain that it is important to validate the stories of people whose

> voices are silenced and then forgotten. [The researcher's goal] is to put these voices on paper so that their stories are documented and readers may become witness to the heartache schools can cause in the lives of students that don't fit the picture of the "typical student." (p. xxi)

In the study at hand, the telling of their stories not only enabled the Turkish people from Sumter County, South Carolina to have a part in the telling of their own history, but it also will benefit anthropologists, historians and curious readers who desire to learn more about unique ethnic groups, such as this one.

Sadly, the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina are fading away. The older generation remained "enclosed" (Schumann, 1976) more so than the younger generation simply because the Turkish people of the older generation often married within their own ethnic group. There are few Turkish people today who marry other Turkish people. Other similar cultural groups exist and are also fading out. Lisa Alther (2007), on her quest to learn more about her family background, discovered that she had Melungeon ancestors. Her situation was very similar to my own. She explains:

> The Melungeons, whoever they might once have been, are ceasing to exist through outmarriage. Ironically, it's only these last twilight years that their putative descendants are discovering and celebrating this complex legacy. I vow to make sure that they don't vanish before their story is told. (pp. 168-169)

Likewise, I make this same vow to the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina. I also vow to approach this study with humility and with respect for their history. I will do my best to represent them accurately so that future generations might know who they were and might glean a better understanding of the lives that they lived. Once they have passed on from this world, this document will hopefully become a bridge that will connect them to their future descendants. It is my intent to create a document that will become historical evidence, not only

of the existence of this unique ethnic group, but also historical evidence of their personal lives, using their own voices and their own stories.

Sumter County, South Carolina Today

The setting for this study was the community of Sumter County, South Carolina. In 1845, Sumterville was incorporated. The city shortened its name to Sumter ten years later. Sumter, which was named after General Thomas Sumter, Revolutionary War hero, began as a plantation settlement and is known for its southern hospitality, swans and the Carolina Gamecocks. This small community is located in the eastern part of South Carolina, about an hour and a half from the Atlantic coastline in one direction and the Blue Ridge Mountains in the other.

Sumter is quaint enough that a visitor might happen upon sandy roads occasionally, yet modern enough to offer a one-story mall to its community. The people of Sumter often cruise along Broad Street Extension to find a multitude of modern stores, schools, businesses, and small shops. Spanish moss haunts many of the older trees, and muscadine vines can be found along neighborhood roads in late August. Children can be seen walking their dogs without leashes as they head to the fireworks stands. Some of the more agricultural residents set up fruit stands along the sides of the roads to sell their hot roasted peanuts and fresh produce. The sounds of roosters crowing can be heard all throughout the day. Mobile homes are readily available, as are older brick houses. Newer subdivisions have begun sprouting up in the outskirts of Sumter, in the towns of Dalzell and Oswego. The people of Sumter are friendly, and it seems that everyone knows everyone else. One seldom goes to town without running into a familiar face. The

words “sir” and “ma’am” are common in the mouths of young and old alike, and conversations often revolve around the passing of someone or ailments common to all. Sumterites are generous with their time and with their possessions. One rarely goes to a neighbor’s house without bringing something from the garden, and when it is time to leave, someone always asks, “What’s your hurry?”

The highway leading east into Sumter County, South Carolina is lonely. Except for an occasional cemetery that divides the lanes, a railroad track, and a pair of old cement bridges that mirror one another, the view is limited to road signs, a few stores and many trees. The city of Sumter, itself, is a little metropolis of 681 square miles with an estimated population of 39,159 people (Sumter County population, retrieved February 25, 2008 from http://www.city-data.com/city/Sumter-South-Carolina.html). Like most cities, Sumter has various restaurants, parks, educational institutions, libraries, a mall, a hospital, a museum, and even an air force base. While Sumter is more rural than urban, the city has a growing number of new business establishments that have brought many opportunities to the people of Sumter.

Historical Sumter County family surnames can be seen repeating themselves on road signs, businesses and schools. One does not need to travel far to find a beautiful sunset at Swan Lake – Iris Gardens or the ruins of forgotten buildings. The remains of homeless chimneys and porches suggest that brutal times have come and gone, and that they have stood the test of time. Similarly, the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina have endured difficult times, but we are still standing. The stories of those who lived during the early part of

the 20th century will be told here, using their own words, in an effort to represent them as authentically as possible.

Historical Beliefs about the Origins of the Turkish People of Sumter County, South Carolina

There are many different renditions of stories regarding the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina. The Turkish people are said to be the descendants of Yusef Ben Ali, or Joseph Benenhaley. Through the years Yusef Ben Ali's origin and heritage has been much debated. Dr. J. H. Mitchell (1943), a historian who studied the origins of the Turkish people of South Carolina, suggests that our forefather, Yusef Ben Ali, or Joseph Benenhaley, might have originated from Turkey. He refers to the literary character Cid Hamet Benengeli, an Arabian historiographer in Cervantes' Spanish fictitious novel, *Don Quijote,* in order to support his claim. This character's name is pronounced like the surname of Joseph Benenhaley, the one believed to be the forefather of the Turkish people in Sumter County, South Carolina. Mitchell (1943) explains that Cervantes' character, Benengeli, is described as being of Arabic origin, "a Moor, a Mohammedan, an Arabian and a Manchegan author, and since a large segment of Turkey is Arabic and migrated freely into North Africa, there is some real ground for the Benenhaleys to be called Turks" (p. 7). Ira Kaye (1963), a former lawyer of Sumter County, South Carolina, who knew the Turkish people intimately having defended them in school court cases, concurs that General Thomas Sumter believed that Benenhaley was "from the coast of North Africa, then part of the

Turkish empire, so that they [the Turkish people] were known as Turks or Moors" (p. 10).

While an official documentation of Yusef Ben Ali's background has not been verified, the earliest known document that refers to his ethnicity was written by General Thomas Sumter's great-grandson, Thomas Sebastian Sumter. In *The Watchman and Southron*, Sumter (1917) states that Benenhaley was "a Caucasian of 'Arab' descent" (p. 1). He further explains in his book, *Stateburg and Its People* (n.d.) that

> Joseph Benenhaley and the man Scott were either pirates or had escaped from pirates – the writer has forgotten which, but they were, "white men."
>
> It has been unfortunately, but nevertheless true, that on account of their inherited dark complexions, they [the Turkish people] have been confused with that class of people known as Red Bones, scattered about in North and South Carolina, but this is entirely a mistake. They have never made any alliances, except with white people, as all of us know who are conversant with their history. (p. 71)

Helen Team, a genealogist and descendant of Joseph Benenhaley, explains that some of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina identify themselves as Native Americans from the Cheraw Indian Tribe. While she does not discredit this claim, she explains that

> it has not been proven on the Benenhaley side. The Oxendines might be. I do not believe that the Benenhaleys are Native Americans. There is no proof that I can see from all of my research that they are Indians. What I've seen that says that they are Turkish, I don't know about that either. What I've read is just what people have written. Others may have proof that I have not seen. What I have gotten is just through research. It is just what somebody else has said, but I do not believe everything I have read. I personally don't believe that the descendants of Joseph Benenhaley are Native Americans. I have not seen the physical

> features of an Indian. I don't see the facial features or the muscular build either. (Team, personal communication, January 2, 2008)

Likewise, Sue New (2005) maintains that "we will never have all our questions answered, but we cannot tack Indian blood on them [the Turkish people] with no proof, whatsoever. Joseph Benenhaley was not Indian" (p. 2).

Robert Bass (1961) explains that the Turkish people from Turkey were probably either pirates or prisoners of pirates from the Barbary Coast. From the 16th century until the 19th century, the Barbary Coast, located on the northern coast of Africa, was known for its pirates and slave traders who attacked ships and coastal regions to capture slaves from Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. "Turks and Moors were routinely captured during Spanish sea battles with the Ottoman fleets on the Mediterranean, the most notable being the battle of Lepanto in 1571" (Alther, 2007, p. 135). Turkish people from Turkey might have been abandoned on the Carolina coast in the sixteenth century by Sir Francis Drake, and may have become indentured servants. To explain this phenomenon, Alther (2007) explains that

> The English privateer Sir Francis Drake arrived off the coast, en route to England from the Caribbean, where he'd sacked the Spanish town of Cartagena in what is now Colombia. Cartegena was the main port at which gold and silver looted from Incan mines were loaded onto Spanish ships, which sailed back to Spain in large fleets, in an effort to avoid being plundered by privateers from other countries.
>
> Some historians believe that Drake, having lost some ships from his fleet in the storm and not having enough room for the colonists, dumped some of the freed slaves from Cartagena on Roanoke Island. Drake left Cartagena with several hundred slaves of various ethnicities, but he arrived in England with only one hundred Turks. Either the others were dumped on some coast while still alive, or they died on the voyage and were heaved overboard. It wasn't unusual for ship captains to unload sick,

> unruly, or otherwise unwanted passengers on some desolate shore. (Alther, 2007, pp. 135-136)

These explanations offer a possible solution as to how Turkish people from Turkey might have arrived on the coasts of South Carolina. If it is indeed true that "it wasn't unusual for ship captains to unload sick, unruly, or otherwise unwanted passengers on some desolate shore" (Alther, 2007, p. 136), it is possible that Yusef Ben Ali might have been one of those Turkish passengers (from Turkey) who was abandoned on the coast of South Carolina.

Because the Turkish people of Sumter, South Carolina have few documents regarding the authentic ethnicity of the one we believe to be our forefather, Yusef Ben Ali, some descendants believe that he was Turkish (from Turkey), some believe that he was a Moor from Morocco, Africa, some believe that he was a pirate, some believe that he was a White man of Arab descent and some believe that he was a Native American. Regardless of his origins, according to historical accounts, Yusef Ben Ali was a great scout for General Thomas Sumter during the Revolutionary War ("Benenhaleys, Scotts settled in Sumter County by General Sumter," n. d.; Kaye, 1963; New, 2005; "S. C. 'Turks' are pushing court case," 1961; Sumter, 1917; Workman, 1950a, 1953b). He helped this country to gain its freedom from England, and for his service, he was rewarded by General Thomas Sumter in that General Thomas Sumter gave him a large portion of land from his own estate to raise his family (Gregorie, 1954; Kaye, 1963; Myers, 1989; Nicholes, 1970; "S.C. 'Turks' are pushing court case," 1961; Sumter, 1917; Trillin, 1969; Woody & Thigpen, 2005; Workman, 1950a, 1951). Unfortunately, however, Yusef Ben Ali and his descendants have faced

many struggles living in the rural south because of the tones of our skin. In our early history, we were not dark enough to be considered Black by the community; and we were not light enough to be considered White by the community. We were set apart as our own unique ethnic group, and we forged our own identity.

Status as Whites Recognized

When setting up his residence, General Thomas Sumter hired some Turkish people and others to work on his plantation. This more than likely raised eyebrows in the community, and the ethnicity of the Turkish people was challenged. Nassau (1994) suggests that General Thomas Sumter, himself,

> presented an affidavit to the authorities that they were indeed Turks, which he had personally imported from the Ottoman Empire as contract labor. Never mind that Turks were the ruling people of that Empire and not likely to contract out as hired hands, or that the Turks of South Carolina knew no Turkish and were not Muslim. (retrieved July 15, 2005)

Nassau (1994) brings up an interesting point. If General Thomas Sumter did import Turkish people from the Ottoman Empire, it does seem logical that they would have spoken the Turkish language and probable that they would have been Muslim. Since the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina did not speak Turkish and were not Muslim, many doubt that they were imported directly from Turkey. Regarding the importation of Yusef Ben Ali (Joseph Benenhaley) from Turkey, White (1975) quotes Sebastian D'Amblemont Sumter, the grandson of General Thomas Sumter, as writing in a letter to McDonald Furman, dated August 16, 1889, "I am very certain that General Sumter had no hand in his importation and do not think that he made his appearance here until after the first decade of the present century" (p. 6).

The only other claim that I have found regarding General Thomas Sumter's importing laborers from Turkey is Berry's (1945). He states,

> The so-called "Turks," of Sumter County, are said to be descendants of laborers imported from Turkey by General Thomas Sumter, or of Turkish pirates stranded on the Carolina coast, or of refugees who escaped from their pirate captors. The legends are numerous and never convincing. (p. 35)

Berry (1945) casts doubt on the stories regarding the origin of the Turkish people, including the idea that they were actually imported as laborers from Turkey. I have not found any verifiable sources of documentation that General Thomas Sumter personally imported the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina from the Ottoman Empire. The most reliable account regarding the origin of the Turkish people that I have found was written by General Thomas Sumter's great-grandson, Thomas Sebastian Sumter (1917). Nicholes (1970) validates that he is a credible source. She writes,

> Having lived in the same community with the Turks his entire life, having known as a boy the wives of the original "two," [Yusef Ben Ali and a man by the name of Scott], and having heard his great-grandfather [General Thomas Sumter] tell of the lives and characters of these whose ancestors the general had brought to the area, he is well qualified to write these facts which were no doubt most helpful to the young [Turkish] soldiers going out into a strange world. (p. 1)

Sumter (1917) does not mention General Thomas Sumter importing the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina from the Ottoman Empire. He simply states,

> At the outbreak of Revolutionary War Gen. Thomas Sumter found himself in Goose Creek Parish, near Charleston, S. C. General Sumter then commenced trading with the Indians for land and bought a plantation from them as high up as the Santee river and made a home near Nelson's Ferry. It was during this

> period the war of "American Independence" broke out. It was not long before he had a following of friendly Indians and whites to join him in the fight for freedom. It was on one of his recruiting trips he came upon a crowd of men fighting some chickens at a cross road, and upon his remonstrating with them many agreed to follow him and fight for their country. One in the crowd called out "Boys that's the blue hen's chicken let's follow him, he is the game cock."
>
> Hence he got the soubriquet "game cock." It was from this crowd he enlisted Joseph Bennanhaly, and a man who gave his name as Scott. He made Joseph Bennanhaly his scout, in which capacity he continued during the war. He was a Caucasian of "Arab" descent. (Sumter, 1917, p. 1)

General Thomas Sumter's own great-grandson claims that the general enlisted Joseph Benenhaley from the group of men at Goose Creek Parish, near the South Carolina coast. He does not mention anything about the General importing men from the Ottoman Empire. If indeed Turkish people were abandoned on American coasts, it is very probable that the General encountered some of these men when he was near the coast of Charleston at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. Yusef Ben Ali was one of the men in the group that was chastised by the General for fighting chickens, and he was so impressed by the General's passion for justice (even for chickens) that he and many others chose to follow him and fight with him during the Revolutionary War ("Benenhaleys, Scotts settled in Sumter County by General Sumter," n. d.; Nicholes, 1970; "S. C. 'Turks' are pushing court case," 1961; Sumter, 1917). Workman (1950a) even states that,

> Their story begins, so far as South Carolina is concerned, back in the early days of the American Revolution. And that story is vouched for by the descendants of General Thomas Sumter, the "Gamecock" of the Revolution and the men for whom Sumter county is named. (Workman, 1950a)

The fact that the descendants of General Thomas Sumter vouched that the general recruited Joseph Benenhaley and another man named Scott near Charleston supports the claim that they were not directly imported from the Ottoman Empire. After the war, he gave them both some land near the Sumter house near Stateburg to raise crops and families. The General was one of South Carolina's most distinguished citizens and founders of the Republic, and his word was respected. Though people had their doubts as to the ethnicity and origin of the Turkish people, the General was willing to speak up for them. He was pleased with their work ethic and "fearful of losing them as they were unhappy with their treatment by neighboring Whites, he took action to have their status as Whites recognized" (Nassau, 1994, retrieved July 15, 2005). The fact that General Thomas Sumter, himself, recognized and defended the White status of the Turkish people carried a great amount of weight in the community.

On one occasion, Yusef Ben Ali and the other man named Scott were the subject of a court case in Sumter County, South Carolina, in which they were called to testify as to their race. Many citizens at the time were objecting to the right of these two men to vote and to sit on a jury. Because General Thomas Sumter was a well-respected man, he was called to testify on behalf of these two men. General Thomas Sumter's great-grandson, Thomas Sebastian Sumter (n. d.), explains in his book, *Stateburg and Its People*, the oral tradition that has been passed down to him:

> [The Turkish people's] dark complexion brought up the question of their having a right to sit on a jury and when General Sumter was sent for – the writer [Thomas Sebastian Sumter] was told this by the late Col. Jas. D. Blanding, who was about 18 years old, who

> said he saw General Sumter walk in, place his pistol on a desk and deliberately shake hands with both men and turning, asked if that was sufficient. Of course this was sufficient to establish them as belonging to the white race. I, the writer [Thomas Sebastian Sumter, the great-grandson of General Thomas Sumter], got all of this information as written above from my father [Sebastian D'Amblemont Sumter], who remembered General Sumter well. (Sumter, n. d., p. 70)

The case was quickly dismissed because it was a known fact that at this time in history, White men and Black men did not shake hands with each other. His act in the court room that day was the testimony that established the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina as being White citizens.

Issues of Identity Confusion and Generational Tension

The Turkish people of Sumter County South Carolina have had to deal with issues of identity confusion throughout the years. What did it mean to be a Turkish person during the early part of the 20th century? What does it mean to be a Turkish person now? Dr. Eleazer Benenhaley (2007), a man of Turkish descent, who was born and raised in Sumter County, South Carolina believes that many are too young to understand what the older Turkish people experienced. He explains:

> While visiting one of the middle schools in Sumter County years ago, I came in contact with a history teacher and a group of boys who were of Turkish background kidding each other with ethnic slurs. The teacher said to me, "I hope you don't mind us having fun with each other." I replied, "You can do that with them, but you cannot with me." You see, those young boys knew nothing of the bigotry and prejudices that their parents and grandparents had faced. I doubt that the teacher knew.
>
> I will always be thankful for those who endured the indignities of those who tried to keep their children out of the White schools. Those brave people have gone on to their reward and those who opposed them have had to answer to the Great Judge of the Universe!

> Statements such as “Turkish Community,” “You people up there,” or “clan” are outdated and prejudicial. In the past, if a person was English, Irish, German and married a person of Turkish background, they were immediately classed as “Turk” by the locals. This is no longer true. Although there are still physical characteristics, those of Turkish descent have been absorbed or assimilated into the surrounding communities. It has been almost forty years since someone of Turkish descent married someone of Turkish descent.
>
> Those of Turkish descent who have gone on paid a tremendous price in order for those who are younger and now living in Sumter to have equal rights and live in a community with dignity and respect. Sumter is no longer a community of bigots. Many of the citizens of Sumter are shocked when they hear of the way the Turkish people were treated years ago. (Benenhaley, 2008, p. 34)

Literary author, Linda Crew, also addresses generational tension and internal conflict in her novel, *Children of the River* (1989), through her young, female, Cambodian American character, Sundara, and her struggle to fit in either culture. “If only her aunt could see what an outsider she was at school. At home Sundara was too American; at school she felt painfully aware of not being American enough. She didn’t fit in anywhere” (p. 81).

Like Sundara, the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina might have felt as if they did not belong anywhere during their struggle for equality. Neither the Blacks, nor the Whites, claimed them as their own. Although they maintained the same rights as White people, in that they were permitted to vote in Democratic primaries when party membership was restricted to Whites, they were still not accepted by the Whites and were segregated, just as the Blacks at that time were. It is possible that they chose to separate themselves from other ethnic groups for group “preservation,” (Schumann, 1976) but more likely that they succumbed to unite because of not being accepted by other groups. They had their

own schools, but they were not equal. An anonymous newspaper article entitled "Sumter County Colony Locally Called Turks," printed on the front page of *The State* (1928, March 18), explains that there were

> two schools given over to "Turk" children, one a two-teacher school at Dalzell and the other a small school at Stateburg. Both these schools [were] housed in good frame buildings left vacant by the recent consolidation of the white schools of the community.

They did not have the same educational materials as their White counterparts did, and they did not have teachers with the same educational backgrounds. Because of these inequalities, the former South Carolina lawyer who defended the Turkish people in court cases, Ira Kaye, wrote a letter to the Superintendent of Sumter County School District #2 and to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Sumter County School District #2. In his letter, he requests that a Turkish minor student be transferred from the "Dalzell Grammar School for Turks" to the "Shaw View Heights Junior High School or in the alternative to Hillcrest Elementary School" (I. Kaye, application for transfer of a minor child to Shaw View Heights School or to Hillcrest Elementary School, March 19, 1960). He writes:

> The applicant is presently finishing the 7th grade and desires to be enrolled for the school term, commencing in September 1960, in her proper grade in either Shaw View Heights Junior High School or Hillcrest Elementary School. The applicant resides less than 1 mile from Shaw View Heights Junior High School and is conveniently located on the school bus route to both that school and the Hillcrest Elementary School. On the other hand to attend her present school requires over a 60 mile round trip each day, lasting over 1 ½ hours each way. The distance and the time consumed, if her requested transfer is granted, is but nominal.
>
> Moreover the level of education possible in her present school is extremely low and inadequate by American standards. In her room both 7th and 8th grade[s] are taught by one teacher who

> has to divide his time between these important pre high school grades. In neither Shaw View Heights Junior High School nor Hillcrest Elementary School are these conditions to be found. The Dalzell School has no facilities for the teaching of Science, Home Economics, facilities present in both the Shaw View Heights and Hillcrest schools. The Dalzell school has no library, which facility is present in both Shaw View Heights and Hillcrest schools. The discrimination practiced against the applicant by the School Board in compelling her to attend an inferior school at a long distance from her home instead of allowing her to attend the proper school in the area of Sumter County wherein she resides jeopardizes her chance of completing the high school education to which she is entitled by law. It places an unfair burden upon her insofar as her future academic career is concerned and violates her rights under the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution. (I. Kaye, application for transfer of a minor child to Shaw View Heights School or to Hillcrest Elementary School, March 19, 1960)

The Turkish students who were forced to attend an inferior elementary school were at an extreme disadvantage when permitted to attend White high schools. Because they had not been granted a strong educational foundation in their early years because of poor facilities, they were not prepared to be placed into classrooms with their White peers who did have access to proper educational facilities. The frustration that these Turkish students experienced in not being able to keep up with their classmates forced many of them to drop out of school, but it was no fault of their own. As Smith and Whitmore (2006) explain, “it [is] often the dictates of others that [govern] the choices students [are] allowed to make” (p. 12).

Segregation in the Community

It has been stated by some that the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina used to have their own section of the emergency room at Tuomey Hospital in Sumter County, South Carolina. According to their stories, there was

one room labeled “Colored” for Blacks, two rooms labeled “Turks” for the Turkish people, and the rest of the rooms were for Whites. Some Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina were even labeled as “Turks” on their birth certificates and their death certificates simply because of the color of their skin. As I have researched documents, I have found that some siblings born of the same parents have been labeled differently on their birth certificates in the area of “race.” Older siblings have sometimes been classified as “Turk” on their birth certificates while their younger siblings have been classified as “White.” This phenomenon may have something to do the way birth certificates were filled out. Sometimes, the area of “race” was left up to the people filling out the forms. They actually used to have the freedom to write what they thought a child’s race was. Wayne Winkler (2006) is a researcher who identifies himself as being Melungeon. When researching his family background, he noticed that

> Census reports have always had problems with our families. One might have been White, Mulatto, etc. Census takers were not anthropologists or scientists. They looked at someone and made a judgment, so there has always been an inconsistency there.

In my own research, I even found one Turkish child, in a documented record, who was labeled as “Black,” but he was born to two “White” parents. Genetically this is not possible. Like the Melungeons, the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina have endured these types of inaccuracies for many years. Workman (1953b) observes that

> Though their features were similar to those of non-Turkish Whites, they had dark complexions, with a touch of bronze or reddish-yellow, which made them look like American Indians. That impression was bolstered by their high cheek bones and clean-cut features. It was noteworthy that those same characteristics were typical of the purer strain of real Turks, and anthropologists said

> there was a strong physical similarity between Turks and a number of American Indian tribes. (Workman, 1953b)

Trillin (1969) mentions an article in the Columbia *State* that explains that

> their skin, though dark, is thin, showing a rosy tint in the cheeks of the young people. Their features are decidedly Caucasian, their ankles and wrists slender, and their incepts arched. No flat feet, flat noses, thick lips, or curly hair are found among them. (p. 107)

Bull (1982) also mentions the physical characteristics of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina. He states,

> With their straight black hair and copper colored complexion, they looked like Turks. In all they were a cheerful people, and as with some a drooping moustache and fierce look belied a genial disposition. The girls were pretty at a young age. (retrieved April 5, 2006)

These physical characteristics are not common to all Turkish people, by any means. Our skin tones vary from very light to very dark. We have blue eyes, green eyes, hazel eyes and brown eyes. In a letter to the editor of the *Item* newspaper in Sumter County, South Carolina, Gibbs (1989) responds to a previous letter written about the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina. She states,

> My grandmother gave birth to 13 children. Ten survived. Of that 10, I remember only two with brown eyes. The rest are as blue as the sky or as green as the grass, and none of them wear color contacts!

Some believe that many of the Turkish people presently living in Sumter County, South Carolina have lost some of the aforementioned physical characteristics through outmarriage, while others contend that these physical characteristics are not, and have never been, typical of all Turkish people.

Overview of Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guides this study is critical-narrative theory. Through critical research, I analyze how "the social institution of school is structured such that the interests of some members and classes of society are preserved and perpetuated at the expense of others" (Merriam, 2001, p. 5). The interests of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina during the early part of the 20th century were not considered to be the central focus of the social institutions of schools. The education that they received was not equal to the education that others received, and they had to fight for many years to gain access to equal education.

Narrative theory also informs this study. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explain that the heart of narrative analysis is "the ways humans experience the world" (p. 2). As I listened to the narratives of the participants of this study, I heard first-person accounts of how the Turkish people's needs were overlooked at the expense of the needs of other members of society. I was equally interested in the stories that were told (the narrative aspect), and the inequality of education (the critical aspect) of this study. More on the theoretical framework of this study will be explained in Chapter Two.

Overview of Methodology and Guiding Questions

Qualitative research allows one to explore the human element that is often overlooked in other types of research paradigms. I approached the study with humility and respect, seeking to gain insight into the perceptions of the participants regarding their own constructed knowledge of their educational

experiences during the early part of the 20th century. I understood from the beginning that this issue was a very sensitive issue that many people still do not wish to discuss. I wanted my participants to understand that my objective was not to degrade or add insult to injury, but to let them tell their own stories of their personal experiences.

I preserved the oral histories of the participants so that they would have a record of their own history using their own voices and stories. This oral history project allowed members of the Turkish community to fill in the gaps that exist in historical record books so that they might give voice to, and preserve, their own rich and unique history. I began by researching the area of Sumter County, South Carolina as well as its history. I gathered educational artifacts, such as census records, report cards, published articles from newspapers, magazines and books, photographs, birth certificates and death certificates from a variety of sources. I then began interviewing my selected participants in depth. As they spoke, the interviews, undoubtedly, went in many different directions. Following Ritchie's (1995) suggestions, I strove to

> start with open-ended questions, allow the interviewee to talk broadly, ranging as far and wide as possible, listen and make notes as the interviewee [spoke], but [I did not] interrupt. When it [was] clear that the person [had] exhausted the subject and stopped, [I went] back and [asked] specific follow-up questions, [clarifying] points of confusion or contradiction, and [pursuing] details. (p. 68)

The interviews followed the three-interview series set forth by Dolbeare and Schuman, as quoted in Seidman (2006). The purpose of the first interview was to put the participants' experiences in context of the integration movement. The second interview was to focus on the concrete details of their personal

educational experiences in light of the integration movement. The purpose of the third interview was to ask the participants to give meaning to their experiences. This three-interview series will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

Through qualitative methods for collecting data, I preserved the stories themselves and coded the interviews for an analysis of content. I emphasized the stories that the participants told. Through in-depth interviews, first-person narratives of Turkish experiences in the school system, prior to as well as after the integration of Turkish students into White schools, have been given. Oral histories will be preserved through the telling of their personal stories. While this study mostly focuses on the educational experiences of the participants, I did not limit it solely to stories about their education. The questions that guide this study are the following:

(1) How do the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, who attended public school during the early part of the 20th century, describe their educational experiences?, and

(2) What are the perceptions of the Turkish people regarding the integration movement, educational power struggles and oppression?

More on the methodology of this study will be explained in Chapter Three.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, various words, which refer to different ethnic groups, will be used. It is not my intention to be divisive or degrading in any way when distinguishing among ethnic groups. I personally will not use degrading terminology to refer to any ethnic group, but these words may appear in

some cited references. Some would argue that to differentiate in any way is to be degrading. While I agree that to differentiate among ethnic groups can be divisive and seemingly racist, this study analyzes ethnicity issues that are unique to the United States and it will, therefore, distinguish among various ethnic groups. The terms that I define are my own working definitions based on my experiences and research of what the words mean for the purposes of this study. They are, by no means, exhaustive definitions.

The first term that I will define is the expression *Turkish people*. This term is difficult to define because of the sensitive nature of the term. Just the mere mention of this expression or its derogatory term, *Turk*, may cause group members to become very angry because of the racist way in which some people have used this term in the past. *Turkish people*, while proud of our heritage, do not like for outsiders to hint that we are different in any way.

In the past, this expression was used to refer to groups of people who had specific family surnames or to refer to people whose complexion ranged from very light to very dark. I have heard many times that the only true *Turkish people* are the Benenhaleys because of their ancestor, Yusef Ben Ali, or Joseph Benenhaley. Some believe that other *Turkish people* with different surnames were labeled as *Turkish people* because of their marriages to the Benenhaleys. Some common surnames among those who claim to be or who are labeled as *Turkish* are Benenhaley, Ray, Hood, Lowery, Oxendine and Buckner. Other surnames also may be representative of the *Turkish* ethnic group, but will not be discussed in this study. I choose to use this term because the *Turkish people* themselves

refer to themselves as *Turkish people*, as do other people in the community. Many *Turkish people* claim to be White of *Turkish* descent, just as Italian Americans claim to be White of Italian descent. Some who have been labeled as *Turkish people* actually claim to be Native American and are seeking to have their tribe, the Cheraw Indian tribe, formally recognized by the state of South Carolina. Others challenge both of these claims and suggest that through the years, we may have intermarried and mixed with other ethnic groups.

I will not use the terms *Turkish* or *Turkish people* to refer to people born in Turkey, but rather to refer to people who are related to the families of the community of Sumter County, South Carolina who claim to be of *Turkish* descent or who have been labeled as being *Turkish*. I will use the expressions *Turkish* or *Turkish people* to refer to my people. We live all over the world now, but at one time we were a tightly knit group that resided mainly in Sumter County, South Carolina. Several *Turkish* people still live there. I, personally, will not use the term *Turk* in this paper because it is a derogatory term used to isolate and separate the *Turkish people* from other ethnic groups. This word is not an acceptable term, but it may appear in cited references.

I will use the term *White* to refer to people who are non-Turkish and who claim to be *White*. This ethnic group was the privileged ethnic group during the early part of the 20th century. The *Turkish people* claimed to be *White*, but the *White people* did not accept them as being *White*. Thus, the differentiation of the term *Turk* was used to justify their exclusion from mainstream and from *White*

schools. The use of this term made the *Turkish people* feel like second-class citizens.

I will use the term *Black* to refer to people who are non-Turkish and who claim to be *Black*. This ethnic group was not a privileged ethnic group during the early part of the 20th century. The *Turkish people* did not claim to be *Black*, and the *Black people* did not claim that the *Turkish people* were *Black*. During the early part of the 20th century, there was great social distance among these three groups.

The terms which refer to ethnicity are capitalized in this study because according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2001), "racial and ethnic groups are designated by proper nouns and are capitalized" (p. 68). I do not use a color to refer to the *Turkish people* because "colors [referring] to other human groups [other than Black and White] currently are considered pejorative and should not be used" (p. 68). Also, in keeping with the guidelines set forth by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2001), I refer to my participants as *Turkish people* because I asked several group members about "preferred designations . . . to avoid terms perceived as negative" (p. 68), and they all agreed that the term *Turkish people* is the most appropriate term to refer to this particular ethnic group.

Educational Implications of My Study

As bell hooks (1994) explains, education is never politically neutral (p. 30), and human experiences can not be, nor should they be, removed from a teacher's style of teaching. Educators, whether intentionally or not, express their

political views through their teaching. Past experiences, present circumstances and future goals have an impact on everything that is said and done in the classroom. Educators who have experienced segregation will teach differently than educators who have experienced a privileged past.

In his book, *Maus II, A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began* (1991), Art Spiegelman's character, Vladek, retells the horrors of the Holocaust as his son documents the heartbreaking tales. His son has a difficult time dealing with what the Holocaust has done to his father, so he goes to see a psychologist. The psychologist encourages him to lay aside the stories of his family's painful past. Vladek agrees and quotes Samuel Beckett, saying that, "Every word is like an unnecessary stain on silence and nothingness" (p. 45). He did not believe that discussing it further would improve the circumstances of those who have suffered. I disagree with Samuel Beckett that speaking about the past is an "unnecessary stain on silence." I instead believe that we should keep in mind the things of the past in order to prevent them from happening again in the future. There is a healthy middle ground between denying and turning away from one's past and being consumed with one's past. Indeed, our families and communities, and our very selves, are shaped by that history and we can not pretend that it did not exist or fail to listen to and tell the stories of those who have suffered. We should live in the present, with our minds conscious of the past, making plans for the future.

Through the years, I have learned much about my mother's struggles and her accomplishments. She has shared with me our history of segregation, but has taught me not to be enslaved by it. She has given me a vision for a bright

educational future, a future where there will be equal education for all students. Teachers will teach so that all of their students can be empowered, and students of every ethnicity will learn in order to be free. She has given me roots, as well as wings. This is what I hope to give to my students and to my readers.

Turkish people are still prevalent in Sumter County, South Carolina. Unfortunately, very little literature, and no known oral histories, are available to them regarding their own history. In addition to informing and inspiring educators and students, it is hoped that this qualitative study will add to, and enrich, the existing literature regarding Turkish history in Sumter County, South Carolina during the early part of the 20th century. Chapter Two will introduce the reader to the background information of the educational experiences of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina during the early part of the 20th century. This chapter will be supplemented with literature related to their unique background, literature related to social distance, literature related to critical-narrative theory, and literature related to oral history.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Turkish People of Sumter County, South Carolina

I have often heard that children are colorblind, and to some extent, this is true. As a young child, I was unaware of how ethnic backgrounds had any bearing on people's attitudes toward each other. Having grown up in Georgia, I was sheltered from many of the harsh realities that my family members experienced because of being Turkish. Eugene Robert Barber, an Italian American who grew up in Utah, explains in an oral history interview, that the innocence of children blinds them to people's differences. He states, as quoted in Kelen and Stone (1996), that

> We used to play basketball all the time. Everybody played. We had blacks, Greeks, Italians, Mormons. We all grew up together, and we didn't realize [differences]. So I can't tell you why in my lifetime becoming adults made such a difference. As children it didn't make a difference. But as soon as we became adults, all of [a] sudden your culture, your color, my culture, my color, made a difference in our lives. I don't understand it. Never did. (p. 259)

I remember the first time I thought about what it really meant to be Turkish. I was spending the night at my cousin's house, which was a real treat that usually ended in tears when it was time to go home. She was telling me how some students at her school in Sumter County, South Carolina had made some derogatory comments about her being Turkish. I could not comprehend what she was saying. I could not see any difference between them and us, and I did not

know that others could. And even so, what difference did it really make? I wondered if people thought that some groups were better than others. Even with our differences, were we not all still a part of the human race? She literally had to explain to me that according to them, we were different, and that our parents had it even worse than people our age did, back in the so-called "good old days."

Growing up, my older brother and I often heard stories about "dem good ole days." My family would often pass down stories of simpler, better times. Life was slower, work was less stressful, and family was more important. Then a change in our nation's history marked the beginning of a new era. The integration of schools was simply a precursor to what the United States was about to experience. This event in our nation's history strengthened "our democratic values and infrastructure", but the "difficult and tumultuous years" of Vietnam, the Watergate scandal, the Civil Rights Movement, women's liberation, and several other "social upheavals" would soon follow (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley, & Goodlad, 2004, p. 69). All of these "social upheavals" had a direct impact on the way of life that my family knew, but none more than the integration of schools.

Isolation of the Turkish people: Was it by choice or were they forced? The integration of schools would eventually bring forth a better life for my family, but the growing pains were intense, and my family encountered the extreme resistance of some. Before this time, my family had lived in a county with three prominent ethnic groups: Blacks, Whites and Turkish people. Some accused the Turkish people of distancing themselves from the other ethnic groups and

believed that they purposely isolated themselves. Woody and Thigpen (2005), for example, suggest that "The Turk families mainly lived in this small community and avoided dispersal into the general society. Very few moved away from this community" (p. 97). While several members of the Turkish community may have chosen to remain in Sumter County, South Carolina for a while, their reason for doing so, and whether or not they actually "avoided dispersal into the general society" (Woody & Thigpen, 2005, p. 97), or were forced to isolate themselves, is not evident. It is possible that they did, in fact, choose to isolate themselves after recognizing that they were not accepted by other ethnic groups in their community. They might have felt safer and more accepted living in a community of Turkish people. They shared a common ethnicity and similar educational and social experiences. Their ethnic group was able to remain "enclosed" (Schuman, 1976) for years because, as Cassie Nicholes (1970) writes, "for the most part, the Turks [,] through the years [,] married those from their own group" (p. 1). Shermerhorn and Paulston, as cited in Schumann (1976), use the term "enclosure"

> to refer to structural aspects of integration as opposed to cultural aspects (life-style and values). Enclosure involves factors such as endogamy, institutional separation and associational clustering. If the two groups have separate schools, churches, clubs, recreational facilities, if they have restrictions on marrying outside their specific group enforced by either custom or law, if they tend to have separate professions, crafts or trades, then the degree of enclosure is considered high. On the other hand, if the two groups share the same social institutions, are free to marry outside their group and engage in the same professions, crafts and trades, then the degree of enclosure is low. High enclosure maintains social distance and limits contact between the two groups. Low enclosure has the opposite effect. (p. 137)

Since during the early part of the 20th century, the various ethnic groups maintained separate institutions, such as schools and churches, there was high

enclosure, and thus, great social distance. An interesting phenomenon about the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina is that, for the most part, they, like the Whites and Blacks, did marry within their own ethnic group for several years. This seeming restriction they had on marrying outside of their specific group produced a handful of common surnames: Benenhaley, Ray, Hood, Lowery, Buckner and Oxendine. The surnames of these families, and a few others, are prevalent among tombstones in the cemeteries of some of the churches in Sumter County, South Carolina, such as Long Branch Baptist Church and Springbank Baptist Church. The Benenhaly/Benenhaley and Ray surnames are also on a few tombstones in the cemetery of High Hills Baptist Church in Sumter County, South Carolina. While it seems unlikely that society forced the Turkish people to marry within their ethnic group, it is very likely that there were unwritten societal customs regarding the acceptable parameters of marriage. Nowadays, Turkish people from Sumter County, South Carolina rarely marry other Turkish people, and the ethnic group is slowly disappearing.

Some believe that there are two reasons the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina were isolated: 1) they chose to isolate themselves (Gregorie, 1954; "S. C. 'Turks' are pushing court case," 1961; Trillin, 1969; Woody & Thigpen, 2005; Workman, 1950a; Workman, 1950b; Workman, 1953a; Workman, 1953b) and 2) society pressured them into isolating themselves (Gibbs, 1989; *Hood v. Board of Trustees of Sumter County School District No. 2*, 1961; Kaye, 1963; "S. C. 'Turks' are pushing court case," 1961). Workman (1950b), a reporter who interviewed people from the Turkish community before

the integration of schools, wrote several articles about the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina. In one article he reports that he spoke directly to a Turkish man who stated that

> their forefathers made a mistake by building a wall about themselves. That clannishness, manifested also by a patriarchal type of leadership only now fading away set the Turks up as a group separate and distinct from their neighbors. But it is easy to understand why they stuck together in their associations. The distinctive appearance of the Sumter county Turks kept them from general social association with their white neighbors, although they have always had business, legal and other dealings with them.

Workman (1950b) seems to believe that while the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina chose to isolate and "preserve" (Schumann, 1976) themselves, their White neighbors also chose not to associate with them socially because of their physical features. Schuman (1976) defines "preservation" as "a strategy in which the 2LL [second language learner, or second culture, in this case] group completely rejects the life-style and values of the TL [target language or dominant culture, in this case] and attempts to maintain its own cultural pattern as much as possible" (pp. 136-137). The Turkish people did not "preserve" themselves, according to this definition, because they did not wish to reject the life-style and values of the dominant culture, but rather wished to assimilate into this group. Even so, according to Workman (1950b), Whites, Blacks and Turkish people all seemingly kept to themselves except in business dealings. In another article Workman (1953b) states that

> As the years passed, the "Turks" (as they came to be known in the community), grew into a numerous clan. They lived mostly unto themselves, keeping apart from whites and Negroes.
>
> In recent years, several of their leaders have come to regret the early clannishness of their forebears, and to wish for greater

> integration with the white citizens of the county. It is understandable, however, that they should have been somewhat apart, for their physical appearance sets them off from the general run of white persons. (Workman, 1953b)

Most of the unflattering articles that I have read regarding the isolation of the Turkish people were written by people who were not Turkish, and these authors mostly claim that this isolation was a choice. In an article written by an anonymous author in *The Charlotte Observer* entitled "S. C. 'Turks' are pushing court case" (1961), for example, the author insinuates that the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina purposefully isolated themselves. The author writes,

> For many years, the "Turks" of Sumter County have sent their children to a "special" elementary school at Dalzell that is classified as neither white nor Negro. Turks of high school age have for a number of years attended white high schools in Sumter County.

What the author does not mention here is that the Turkish elementary students were not allowed to attend White elementary schools yet. They were still fighting for their right to do so when this article was written. The author's choice of words, however, leads one to believe that the Turkish people chose to isolate themselves from the rest of the county.

There are some who believe that the Turkish people were not accepted by other ethnic groups, and therefore, in an effort not to be rejected, they became an isolated, homogeneous group. Calvin Trillin (1969) writes that

> as a third racial element, with a tenuous grasp on whiteness, the Turks never knew when they might be rebuffed. But as a rural people with their own church and school they presented few opportunities to those who might rebuff them. (Trillin, 1969, p. 104)

The Turkish people themselves, however, might disagree with this statement and say that society forced this isolation upon them by distancing them from churches, schools and social activities.

Segregation of the churches. The High Hills Baptist Church was founded in 1770 with Richard Furman "for whom Furman University is named" (Workman, 1950a), as the pastor. This church is located in the Stateburg area of Sumter County and is still a place of worship.

> After the Revolutionary War, [Furman] preached here until 1787, when he accepted a call to Charleston. At one time, three racial groups attended this church. The Turks sat on the left, the whites on the right, and the blacks in the gallery. (Gregorie, 1954, p. 469)

Although it might be surprising that this church was made up of three ethnic groups, it is not surprising that they were separated inside, and even though they were segregated, there was "an element of whiteness in the way they were segregated" (Trillin, 1969, p. 104). The Turkish people sat downstairs with the other Whites, and when the church became overcrowded, the Turkish people decided to build their own church (Gregorie, 1954, p. 469) which would still be a part of the Santee Baptist Association and the South Carolina Mission Board. They hired a White preacher, Dr. J. H. Mitchell, to organize Long Branch Baptist Church with a membership of 44 people. When he left the congregation, four years later in 1908, the membership had doubled to 88 people. Long Branch Baptist Church is still a place of worship for many people in Sumter County, South Carolina, but it is not a Turkish church. It is a Baptist church where "people of all walks of life come together to worship" (Gibbs, 1989).

Toward the end of his career, Dr. J. H. Mitchell (1943), when referring to the Turkish people, stated that

> looking back over my forty years of ministry, I find some of my warmest friendships were among the Turks. I think especially of Uncle Tom, William, Noah, and Henry Benenhaley. Henry was and is as true a friend as any preacher ever had. (p. 7)

This personal account of Dr. J. H. Mitchell attests to the fact that not all members of the three ethnic groups of Sumter County, South Carolina desired religious, educational and social segregation. The majority, however, insisted upon segregation of the schools.

Segregation of the schools. The Turkish students of Sumter County, South Carolina, attended their own segregated school on the west side of Frierson Road, one mile south of Dalzell for many years. In 1913, the school was called Benenhaley and had 28 students in a 138 day session (Woody & Thigpen, 2005, p. 96). There were two Turkish schools for a period of time, one near Stateburg and one near Dalzell, but the two schools were eventually consolidated into one (Gregorie, 1954, p. 169). The Dalzell School had three White teachers who may or may not have had college degrees. The school was not accredited for college entrance as it only went up to the eleventh grade. Afterwards, the school became an elementary school. When it was an elementary/high school, upon finishing the eleventh grade, students were awarded a certificate instead of a diploma.

In 1949, some of the Turkish leaders of the community sought to have their children admitted to the White high schools in the area so that “they might enter college with a better standing than they can now have” (Workman, 1950b). In his article written for *News and Courier*, Workman (1950b) writes

> The Turks of Sumter county, who live about here and Stateburg, have their own school on the outskirts of Dalzell, but until now have not had opportunity to attend a local accredited high school.
>
> High school work of a sort has been conducted at the three-teacher Turk school, but the only accredited high school in the area is the Hillcrest school. Hillcrest serves white students from the four school districts in northwestern Sumter county and is a consolidated high school.
>
> This year the Turks tried to have some 12 to 15 of their children admitted to the Hillcrest high school. It would have been financially and educationally unsound to build a separate high school for that limited number of Turk children. The Hillcrest school board turned them down, and the Turks hired a lawyer and took their case into federal court.

Many Americans are unaware that other underrepresented groups suffered just as the Blacks did when courts ordered the integration of schools. Photographers from local newspapers meticulously captured the “Little Rock Nine” (nine Black students who were escorted to Little Rock Central High School by the Arkansas National Guard on September 2, 1957). The governor of Arkansas at the time, Orville Faubus, ordered military protection in order to “keep the peace” (Jacoway, 2007, p. 4). Turkish students in Sumter County, South Carolina, however, heard no such order from the governor of South Carolina. Some of the participants of this study were among the very first Turkish students who petitioned for the right to attend Hillcrest High School, a school for Whites only. My own mother followed in their footsteps.

When I was growing up, she would often encourage me to get a good education because she was not allowed to get one. After dinner, she would excuse me from the table, and she would say, “I’ll clean up. It’s more important that you do your homework.” And so I became a pretty good student. She once told me the

story of waiting for the bus to pick her up for the first day of integrated school. She was 14-years-old. As she watched the bus approach, of course she was nervous and anxious about finally getting to attend the White school, but she was not prepared for what actually happened. As the bus approached, she watched as it sped up and left her behind. The students on the bus were hanging out of the windows and waving at her. She walked home, defeated. When she actually made it to school, she sat down at a table in the cafeteria to eat her lunch. Everyone at the table told her that she was not welcome, and they asked her to leave. They shouted at her, “We don’t eat with Turks.” This humiliation continued to follow her throughout her high school career. She often felt as if everyone was against her, even her teachers. They would sometimes point to the Turkish students in their classes and say, “You people over there need to speak up” instead of addressing them by their names. What these teachers failed to realize is that “students have memories, families, religions, feelings, languages and cultures that give them a distinctive voice” (hooks, 1994, p. 88).

When my mother was even younger, she attended the Dalzell School for Turkish students. Most of the students in this school were related to each other. One can imagine the challenge the teacher must have faced while trying to teach a room full of children who were in different grades. While the older Turkish students were first permitted to attend high schools for Whites in 1950 (Kaye, 1963, p. 11), the elementary students did not win their right to attend schools for Whites until eleven years later, on October 17, 1961 (*Hood v. Board of Trustees of Sumter County School District No. 2, Sumter County, South Carolina*, 1961).

When my mother was a child, she did not realize that she was any different from anyone else until she was allowed to attend the high school for Whites. Her childhood experiences were similar to those of Lenny, a character in Bapsi Sidhwa's (1991) novel, *Cracking India*, when she first noticed that people were different. Lenny states, "And I become aware of religious differences. It is sudden. One day everybody is themselves – and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols" (p. 101).

When my mother was in the eighth grade, because of the court case involving Turkish students, she thought she was going to go to the all-White school, but she was denied. According to her, she and the other elementary Turkish students stayed out of school for a whole year during the school year of 1956-1957 because of all of the political commotion surrounding school court cases. They were surprised by the desire of some to keep them segregated. Berry (1945) reports an incident in which he asked school officials in several different districts where certain students were not allowed to attend the White schools,

> "What would happen if they demanded high-school privileges?"
> "We would just have to see to it that none of them ever passed the seventh grade."
> These were typical of the answers to my question. In short, very few [of these students] ever reach high school; and those who do "are not very happy here," or "they hardly ever graduate" or "they seldom go more than a year." (p. 39)

Berry (1945) inquired about several marginalized groups, not just the Turkish students of Sumter County, South Carolina. Some of the groups that he mentioned when asking school officials these questions included groups which he personally describes using unflattering slurs such as "Red Bones, Red Legs, Brass

Ankles, Turks, Buckheads, Croatans, Marlboro Blues, Creels, Chavises, Goins, Bones, Greeks, Portuguese, Clay-eaters, Yellow Hammers, Summerville Indians, and those yellow people" (p. 35). These types of conversations among community leaders were partly the reason that the Turkish people and other disenfranchised groups decided to take a stand against segregation.

Elizabeth Eckford was one. She grew up in Arkansas and attended Horace Mann High School, which was a school for Black students. In the spring of 1957, her principal asked the student body if any students would like to volunteer to be among the first Black students to integrate into the all-White Little Rock Central High School. Initially she did not volunteer, although she was aware that Little Rock Central High School offered courses that she was not able to take at Horace Mann High School. She decided in August that she did want to be a pioneer for change, so her mother took her for an interview with Superintendent Virgil Blossom. Dr. Blossom tried to dissuade her and the other Black students who desired an equal education. Jacoway (2007) describes in detail the first day of integrated school for Elizabeth:

> When the bus deposited her at the corner of Twelfth and Park Streets Elizabeth could see the large crowd that had formed in front of the massive buff brick school. As she approached the corner of Fourteenth and Park, she felt comforted by the presence of the National Guardsmen [surrounding] the school, and she headed for the sidewalk behind the line of soldiers so they would be between her and the noisy protesters. One of the guardsmen motioned for her to cross to the other side of the street, suggesting that she should approach the decidedly unfriendly throng of about two hundred whites.
>
> Obedient as always, Elizabeth did as she was told, and the whites initially drew back to let her pass. When however, she heard one man say, "Here she comes, now get ready!" she felt the first real fear surge through her. She moved to the middle of the

> street, walking with the soldiers on her right and the large band of increasingly hostile whites on her left.
>
> Whites were crowding close behind her saying such things as "Go back where you came from! Go home before you get hurt." When the frightened child finally arrived at the midpoint of the campus and tried to pass between two soldiers, they raised their guns and barred her entry. Her knees now shaking, Elizabeth turned to face the mob, hoping to find a friendly or compassionate soul. One grey-haired woman seemed to have a kindly manner, but when the black girl looked at her beseechingly, the woman spat in her face. (Jacoway, 2007, p. 4)

Richard Rodriguez's story, though different, beams with a similar tone of animosity of some of the students in his school toward integration because he was Mexican American. He grew up in Sacramento California and attended an all-White school. While some of the White students befriended him, others made it very clear that he was not welcome because of his dark skin. When he first started going to elementary school, he spoke less than 50 words of English. His lack of English knowledge did not help his social skills. He recalls,

> One day the nun concluded a session by asking me why I was so reluctant to read by myself. I tried to explain; said something about the way written words made me feel all alone – almost, I wanted to add but didn't as when I spoke to myself in a room just emptied of furniture. She studied my face as I spoke; she seemed to be watching more than listening. In an uneventful voice she replied that I had nothing to fear. (Rodriguez, 1982, p. 61-62)

The adults in their lives had disappointed them. In Elizabeth's case, she sought help from the guardsmen and the grey-haired woman, but these adults prevented her from entering the school that she had a legitimate right to attend and even spat in her face. Richard's story was much less violent, but still speaks volumes of how adults in schools sometimes neglect to make it a point to discover the needs of their students by truly listening to them.

When Native Americans were first integrated into White schools, they also encountered adults in their schools who neglected to appreciate them and their culture. Neola Walker, in an oral history interview with Herbert T. Hoover, as quoted in Cash and Hoover (1971) explained,

> While I was quite small, I stayed at the Reform Mission. My mother and father moved back, back out on the farm during the school year, in the spring of the year, so they put us up at the Reform Mission. We had to talk Indian at home, and then, when you saw an Indian kid, you just naturally talked Indian. But there they whipped you if you didn't speak English. And some of the children who went to school up there couldn't speak a word of English. Say there were ten years old and they still were just starting school; they would get whippings for talking Indian. And for anything Indian, you were beaten; they used big long rubber hoses, about two or three feet long. They would take heavy boards and crack them across the knuckles. (p. 79)

Throughout the course of the history of integration, non-dominant groups, such as these have had to fight for their right to receive an equal education and have had to persevere when they were misunderstood and neglected. Turkish leaders brought their first case to the court in 1953. The plaintiffs complained of racial discrimination in state schools and asked to be admitted to the White schools. Judge George Bell Timmerman, Chief Judge, denied the summary judgment and the Turkish families appealed the decision. In the October 1961 court case, Ira Kaye, the lawyer who defended the Turkish students and their families, reminded the court that

> Action [was taken] by elementary school pupils who complained that they were required to attend a segregated primary school. This action commenced on August 31, 1953, by a group of elementary school pupils residing in Sumter County, South Carolina, calling themselves "Turks" and members of the Caucasian race in which they complained that they were required to attend a segregated primary school attended only by Turks. The case lay dormant for more than four years, during which time the plaintiffs twice

> changed counsel, but because of asserted difficulties in procuring counsel willing to prosecute their case, made no move to pursue their administrative remedies or have other proceedings in the District Court until May 1960 when present counsel for the plaintiffs came into the case.
>
> Plaintiffs, who reside in Sumter County, South Carolina and call themselves Turks and members of the Caucasian race, complain that in the past children of their race, being of darker color, have not been admitted to the public schools of the county in equality with the White children residing in the county and have been required to attend a separate school, and this custom has led to lengthy litigation.

The court eventually found that

> Children of the race known as Turks were entitled to admission to public schools of Sumter County, South Carolina, on equal basis with all children of the county and without discrimination as to race or color. The custom of refusing admission to children of their race to the white public schools of the county on the basis of race or color was unconstitutional. (*Hood v. Board of Trustees of Sumter County School District No. 2, Sumter County, South Carolina*, 1961)

Zora Neale Hurston, who lived during the Civil Rights Movement, was very familiar with the seeds of oppression and with the results of living in a narrow-minded world. Her novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1990), was out of print for almost 30 years before it was rediscovered and reprinted. In this novel, Janie, a young Black female living in the rural south, leaves her childhood behind and is sent into the world with her grandmother's advice, that regardless of how others treat her, she is the one who has the power to be free. She states,

> You know, honey, us colored folks is branches without roots and that makes things come round in queer ways. You in particular. Ah was born back due in slavery so it wasn't for me to fulfill my dreams of whut a woman oughta be and to do. Dat's one of de hold-backs of slavery. But nothing can't stop you from wishin'. You can't beat nobody down so low till you can rob 'em of they will. When you got big enough to understand things, Ah wanted you to look upon yo'self. Ah don't want yo' feathers always

> crumpled up by folks throwin' up things in yo' face. (Hurston, 1990, pp. 16-20)

My own mother voiced these same concerns to me. She wanted me to have the education that she was denied because of her ethnicity. She pushed me to break through barriers and let my voice be heard. She had a vision for my future. It mirrored that of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream (1963). I have always known that my limitations would be established by my own lack of zeal, not by the limitations imposed on me by society. I am a Turkish person who is living in a different time period, in Atlanta rather than Sumter County, with different rules, and a whole new set of freedoms. I am free from historical and racial segregation, and I am grateful to those who came before me and fought for my rights. I would not be who I am today; indeed, society would not be what it is today, without these pioneers of change. I, like Sandra Cisnero's character, Esperanza, in *The House on Mango Street* (1984), will not "forget who I am or where I came from" (p. 87), but at the same time, I will not let my past dictate my future. While I am mindful that past social and educational injustices occurred through segregation, I am hopeful that the oral histories of the participants of this study will benefit future generations.

Segregation of social activities. The Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina were not only segregated in churches and schools, they were also segregated in the social arena. General Thomas Sumter was a "staunch defender of their white status" (Kaye, 1963, p. 10), and because of him, they were accepted to serve on juries with Whites, but they were never fully accepted by the Whites in their early history. They were allowed to vote when voting was limited to

Whites, and they fought alongside Whites in the Civil War, in World War I and in World War II. At least eight Turkish men died in action for the Confederacy, but yet, for many years they were not appreciated for their sacrifices, and this was due to the color of their skin. Kaye (1963) explains,

> Their grave markers show their service for the South, [but many groups] never take notice of their sacrifices or service on Confederate Memorial Day. The major complaint of the white community has been that all social activities connected with school must be conducted privately so that the Turk children could be excluded. The Turk children are excluded from all athletic programs and more or less voluntarily avoid all social activities. I know of one instance in which a young Turk was excluded from the wedding party of a friend of his, a member of the white community, because the other church members refused to allow the Turk in church with them. (Kaye, 1963, pp. 10-13)

These examples of exclusion and segregation caused a great deal of pain, confusion, and especially social distance among the ethnic groups in Sumter County, South Carolina.

Social distance. The segregation of the Turkish people from other ethnic groups might have been based on society forcing them to “enclose” (Schumann, 1976) their culture. They were quiet people who kept mostly to themselves. They often married other Turkish people, possibly, in order to keep the ethnic group pure. This is restated in a newspaper article in *The State*, published in Columbia, South Carolina in 1928. An unknown author writes, “They have their own church, their own schools, and socially, they have preserved their own distinct identity through five generations” (1928, March 18). The unidentified author of this article further explains that this separation has caused “a third element in the race

problem of the community." Articles such as this one may have created even greater social distance among the ethnic groups in South Carolina.

As mentioned earlier, while the Turkish people were "enclosed," they did not necessarily seek to "preserve" their culture, in that many of them sought to be accepted into the dominant culture, but were denied access. The preservation of ethnic groups is one of three patterns that determines a culture's "social distance" (Schumann, 1976). The concept of "social distance refers to the cognitive and affective proximity of two cultures that come into contact within an individual. 'Distance' is obviously used in an abstract sense, to denote dissimilarity between two cultures" (p. 176). Schumann (1976) hypothesizes that the greater the social distance between two cultures, the more difficult it is for the two cultures to accept one another. Likewise, the smaller the social distance between two cultures, the easier it is for the two cultures to live harmoniously together. In the beginning of the 20th century, the decision of the ethnic groups to segregate themselves created a large social distance that would cause future turmoil in Sumter County, South Carolina.

In addition to preservation, other social distance patterns that cultures may choose are those of assimilation and acculturation. Cultures that choose to assimilate themselves into a second culture almost become one with the second culture. Many of the first culture's values, traditions and practices are abandoned in order to adopt those of the second culture. Cultures that assimilate replace their own culture with that of the second culture. Acculturation, on the other hand, refers to the sometimes long and resistant process of adapting to a new culture.

According to Brown (1994, p. 171), who evaluates Schumann's (1976) acculturation model, this process has four successive stages. The first stage is the period of excitement of the newness of the second culture. The second stage is that of culture shock, in which people feel that the second culture is intruding on its own culture. The third stage involves recovery from the initial shock of being immersed into a foreign culture, and the fourth stage involves acceptance of the new culture. The alternative to these two social distance patterns, as mentioned before, is that of preservation. Cultures that choose to preserve themselves, do not accept other cultures as their own. Instead, they retain their own values, traditions and practices. It is very probable that during the early part of the 20th century, the various ethnic groups of Sumter County, South Carolina all chose to separate themselves for a variety of reasons. This separation, however, resulted in future distress among the ethnic groups during the integration movement.

Vision of an equal education. During the early part of the 20th century, my relatives were aware that they were living in a homogeneous Turkish community. Although they were aware of the segregation among the Turkish people, the Blacks and the Whites in Sumter County, South Carolina, they seemed unaware of the degree of overwhelming desire of many people to keep the groups separated. When they realized that their children were not receiving an equal education, they decided to seek equal educational opportunities from the court system. They came together to form a united front in order to do what Greene (1988) explains as a desire to

> reject a state of things they had decided was intolerable. They would not have felt it to be intolerable if they had no possibility of

> transformation in mind, if they had been unable to imagine a better state of things. (Greene, 1988, p. 16)

With their vision of a better educational future for their children, they united, petitioned, and were indeed granted access to equal educational opportunities. They were striving to gain their own "completeness," an effort that still continues, and they were growing tired of the struggle to overcome the alienation that they were experiencing from other groups of people (Freire, 1970, p. 28). My goal, in writing this paper, is to bring to the surface some of the life experiences of the Turkish people who lived in Sumter County, South Carolina during the early part of the 20th century and to relate these experiences to the historical event of the integration movement. The first-hand information that was collected through in-depth interviewing will become an oral history that will be made available to the general public. Through qualitative methods for collecting data, the participants told their personal stories of simpler, yet difficult times and how they perceived life as they watched it change, progress, and unfold.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by two distinctive theories, critical theory and narrative theory, which I have combined into one: critical-narrative theory. As I conducted the study, I never completely abandoned either of the two theories because each played an equally important role in the analysis of data. Therefore, the theoretical framework for this study combined the two theories into one to create critical-narrative theory. To better understand each of the two individual theories, I will explain them both in greater detail.

Many value human narrative as the missing link between historical artifacts and historical events. Sometimes the missing piece of a puzzle can easily be explained by people who were present and actually lived through historical events. As more and more researchers realize this, more and more researchers are gleaning insight from narrative studies. Chamberlain (2006) notes,

> That scholars in these fields [sociology, anthropology and psychology] "turned" to narrative as an analytical model was partly a response to the emphasis on the positivist methods that dominated the social sciences between the 1940s and 1970s. Rather than observing everyday behavior and actions as manifestations of rational purpose, which may produce cultural artifacts and activities that are observable, explicable, and utilitarian, such behavior and activity could be seen as conceptual frameworks. The flowering of histories demanded new sources and methods. The use of narrative as a descriptor of oral histories did not become commonplace, however, until the 1980s, and as a mode of analysis, not until the 1990s. (Chamberlain, 2006, pp. 384-387)

Historical events have been passed down because people either have recorded or have told stories of events that have occurred. If people had not told their stories, we who live in the present would be ignorant of historical events. How would recorded historical events have changed if someone else had told the stories? We may never know, but we must accept that there are many stories that have never been told and many voices that have never been heard. This study discovered some of these untold stories. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explain that the heart of narrative analysis is "the ways humans experience the world" (p. 2). I was interested in hearing the stories of how Turkish people experienced the world during the integration movement. This is why I chose narrative theory to serve as one important framework to guide this study. I paid close attention to

what the participants said and to how they said it as I asked them about life as they remembered it.

Personal narratives have offered much in the writing of history. Parse (2001) explains that

> Narrative discourse conveys stories of everyday living and discloses meanings through the linguistic choices made by the narrator. In this sense, narrative is meaning-making, and it is pervasive in human living. The researcher may identify a discipline specific frame of reference as a guide to the study, and in so doing discloses the ontological lens of the narrative. (p. 43)

Ontology is concerned with beliefs about what there is to know about the world. Realists argue that social reality is an "external reality which exists independently of people's beliefs or understanding" (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p. 11). Materialists argue that "there is a real world but that only material of physical features . . . of that world hold reality" (p. 11). Idealists, on the other hand, argue that "reality is only knowable through the human mind and through socially constructed meanings" (p. 11). My ontological lens is the latter, one that is idealistic in nature, and I have chosen critical theory as the frame of reference through which I viewed the data.

Narrative theory analyzes life events through the personal anecdotes of storytellers. Parse (2001) lists the major assumptions underpinning the method of collecting data according to narrative theory:

> 1. In human existence, matter, life and meaning are fused.
> 2. "Human experience is enveloped in a personal and cultural realm of non-material meanings and thought" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 15).
> 3. Experience is constructed through interpretation of meaningful recollections, perceptions, and expectations.

> 4. Stories about life events shed light on the meanings of human experiences. (Parse, 2001, p. 43)

As I interviewed participants, I was interested in hearing the narratives of their educational experiences in Sumter County, South Carolina during the early part of the 20th century, and specifically their perceptions of ethnicity and power in the educational setting during the integration movement.

The second lens that informed this study, critical theory, is based on the premise that "education is considered to be a social institution designed for social and cultural reproduction and transformation. Knowledge generated through this mode of research is an ideological critique of power, privilege and oppression in areas of educational practice" (Merriam, 2001, p. 4). As the participants told their stories, I listened to see if they would discuss whether power, privilege and oppression played a role in their educational experiences during the early part of the 20th century. I was interested in discovering whether or not the participants of this study perceived that they were oppressed in any way or whether they perceived that they were free during the early part of the 20th century. Sometimes outsiders regard others as being oppressed who actually consider themselves to be free, and sometimes the oppressed are simply unaware of their oppression. Isaiah Berlin (1970) suggests that we humans

> are enslaved by despots – institutions or beliefs or neuroses – which can be removed only by being analyzed and understood. We are imprisoned by evil spirits which we have ourselves – albeit not consciously – created, and can exorcize them only by becoming conscious and acting appropriately. (p. 143)

There is no power struggle if one does not feel oppressed and decides to accept his or her situation as it is. To confront oppression, one must first

recognize it and then act upon it. If a person does not feel obligated to speak out against something, he or she "will not suffer from censorship or controls on freedom of speech. The individual simply feels free: It is no different than breathing; the condition simply *is*" (Greene, 1988, p. 11, emphasis in original). This condition occurs when an individual accepts his or her oppressed situation as a part of life. The individual has grown accustomed to his or her situation and is almost numb to the idea that it could or should improve. Freire explains it this way:

> As long as the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition, they fatalistically "accept" their exploitation. Further, they are apt to react in a passive and alienated manner when confronted with the necessity to struggle for their freedom and self-affirmation. It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves. This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection; only then will it be praxis. (2006, pp. 64-65)

During this oral history project, I listened carefully to the narratives of the participants to hear their voices regarding issues of oppression, discrimination, and power struggles in the educational setting during the integration movement. I am a witness to the accounts of their initial acceptance of their situation, the reflection of their oppression and their final action to bring about change. Change only comes about, though, when the oppressed become aware of the condition that society has imposed upon them and when they seek to liberate themselves. Kincheloe (1997) credits Antonio Gramsci with the philosophical mindset that the

> starting point for any deeper understanding of the self involves consciousness of oneself as a product of sociohistorical forces. A critical philosophy, he wrote, involves the ability of its adherents to

> critique the ideological frames they use to make sense of the world (Reynolds, 1987; Mardle, 1984). The success of such an effort hinges on the ability of the self to make sense of power and to flush it out of the places in which it hides. (Kincheloe, 1997, p. 58)

As I interviewed participants for this oral history project and analyzed their narratives, I did so through a critical lens.

Oral Histories' Contributions to Historical Understanding

Oral histories offer new insight into historical understanding that no other methodology is capable of doing. Primarily, oral histories offer authentic accounts of historical events from the mouths of people who experienced them. Secondly, oral histories allow the voices of common people to be heard, and thirdly, oral histories fill in the gaps of history books with the missing experiences that other historians have not investigated.

Belinda Hurmence (1989), when gathering background material for a novel she was writing, discovered the *Slave Narratives*. As she read through the transcripts, she stated, "I saw at once the treasure that lay in oral histories. The *Narratives* resounded with an authenticity I had not encountered before in any prose dealing with slavery" (p. xi). The *Slave Narratives* were a collection of 284 ex-slaves who told their stories to the Federal Writers' Project. The participants were all in their 80s and 90s when they were interviewed in the 1930s. Without these *Narratives*, the history of slavery in this country could only be understood from the perspectives of those who owned slaves, and not through the eyes of the slaves themselves. Personal accounts of what it actually meant to be a slave could not be understood from any other means than that of the stories that the slaves themselves told.

Oral histories also allow the voices of common people to be heard. Frequently in history books, only the stories of the powerful and the educated have been highlighted. Oral histories, while not limited to the voices of common people, do offer an avenue for their voices to be captured and published. Kelen and Stone (1996), in their quest to discover the voices of ethnic and minority voices in Utah stated that

> The history of non-Mormon ethnic and minority groups in Utah had never before been told from the bottom up – from the perspectives, that is, of its average citizens. Formal histories, narrating late nineteenth and early twentieth century ethnic experiences, had laid a solid academic groundwork, but the voices and lives of ethnic people had never found their way into Utah consciousness. (p. xi)

Oral histories provided a way for the voices of the common man to be heard.

Finally, oral histories fill in the gaps of history books with the missing experiences that other historians have not investigated. Much can be learned about history if we will search for and find the untold stories of our past. Oral histories offer new perspectives on history as we know it by allowing these missing stories to enlighten us. Kelen and Stone (1996) note that oral histories portray "dense clusters of lives that [are] missing from our textbooks, guidebooks, and map books" (p. xii). They have the power to change our understanding of history as we know it.

Oral history as a methodology. While oral history is a methodology that allows the interviewee to tell his or her personal story, its primary emphasis is on the recounting of recent historical events through people's experiences. It enhances history as we know it because it allows eye witnesses to inform the

general public about their perceptions of what happened in the recent past because they lived through it. It does not necessarily "set out to seek answers but rather to chronicle experience" (Howarth, 1998, p. 77). Very often, history is told through the eyes of the rich, the powerful and the privileged. The common person has seldom been represented in historical archives. Oral history provides a way for his or her voice to be heard, and therefore, it provides a different perspective on what has been recorded in historical books. "Oral history in its present form permits the purposeful intervention of historians in collecting the data needed to illuminate particular areas about which too little information has survived from other sources" (Lummis, 1988, p. 17). Oral history is not limited to the stories of the common man, however. Modern oral history began after World War II, in 1948, at Columbia University with Allan Nevins interviewing elite groups in the United States. Nevins conducted a study in which he interviewed "significant" Americans about their letter writing habits, oil wildcatting, the Book-of-the-Month Club, the Ford Motor Company, the timber industry and other projects that were chosen for their potential to fund his projects (Lummis, 1988; Sharpless, 2006). Nevins and his graduate students used a wire recorder to transcribe interviews because the portable tape recorder had not yet been invented. It was not until 1963 that the Philips Company invented portable tape recorders, which made it more feasible for oral history projects to become much more abundant.

The definition of oral history as a methodology has been debated by people who call themselves oral historians for several years. In 1965, with 89 oral history projects nation-wide, as recorded in the report, *Oral History in the United*

States, oral historians "realized a need for standardization of practices and procedures, which Gould Colman, an archivist and oral historian at Cornell University, articulated in an article in the *American Archivist* (Sharpless, 2006, p. 24). According to Sharpless (2006) many things were accomplished at this meeting. The first item of business was to agree upon the name of this particular methodology. The consensus was that the methodology would be called oral history and would be written in lower case letters. Philip Brooks of Truman Library and other historians argued that part of the definition of oral history should include the recording of participant interviews. This was agreed upon by the majority of those present and was added to the definition in the United States. A greater debate arose, however, regarding what to do with the tapes after the interview and whether or not the tapes should be transcribed. Some believed that the tapes should be destroyed, making transcription a necessity. Others argued that the interviewee should have the right to decide on whether or not the tapes should be destroyed or at least have the right to censor the recorded tapes and transcripts. These researchers stated that interviewees might be hesitant to participate if they lost their right to edit the information that they had given in an interview.

Regarding the transcribing of recordings, the topic of how to transcribe was also discussed. Some thought that ungrammatical mutterings should be transcribed and that the original transcript should be used. These researchers insisted that the interviewees should not have the right to edit the transcript and change their words because the recording needed to match the transcript. Those

who sought to protect the participants, however, maintained that these people should have the right to say anything they wanted during the interview, and that they should be able to change anything that they had said at a later date. With all of this discussion, many saw the need for standardization and even a code of ethics for oral historians.

> The discussion of the need for a code of ethics began as early as 1967, stirred in part by William Manchester's controversial use of intimate interviews with the Kennedy family in his book *The Death of a President*. At its third meeting, in 1968, the Oral History Association adopted its first set of standards, labeled "Goals and Guidelines." The first clearly stated the right of the interviewee: "His wishes must govern the conduct of the interview." (Sharpless, 2006, p. 26)

Oral historians were still not in accord, however. In fact, the argument continued for many years after the 1968 meeting. Howarth (1998), for example, in an effort to persuade others to understand the importance of keeping transcripts free from editing writes,

> In the context of the previous argument about bias and editing, it means that any production is seriously devalued as a historical or factual record the moment editing takes place. The only acceptable interview is a long continuous and uninterrupted take. (p. 9)

Those who resist the editing of transcripts see no need for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. In fact, Seidman (2006) quotes L. Shopes as saying,

> In 2003, in the limited area of oral history, the federal Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP), decided that oral history interviewing does not involve the type of research defined by the Department of Health and Human Services regulations and is therefore excluded from Institutional Review Board oversight. (p. 77)

Most universities, however, will not allow their graduate students to conduct any type of research without IRB approval, regardless of the methodology.

While the Oral History Association established guidelines for oral historians, the truth of the matter is that many oral historians disagree as to the definition of oral history or even how to do oral history most effectively. Howarth's definition (1998) states that

> Oral history is both a subject and a methodology, a way of finding out more by careful, thoughtful interviewing and listening. Interviewing is perhaps the wrong word, for successful sessions involve a high degree of empathy and are often more closely related to informal conversations or neighbourly exchanges between trusting friends. (p. 4)

Baum (1977) places more emphasis on the end product. He explains that oral history is a

> research technique for preserving knowledge of historical events as recounted by participants. It involves the tape recording of an interview with a knowledgeable person, someone who knows whereof he or she speaks from personal participation or observation, about a subject of historical interest. [Oral historians should focus] on making the material collected as accessible (you can find it and you have permission to use it) and usable (in a form and a degree of understandability to be used fairly easily) as possible. (p. 5)

Grele's (1994) definition of oral history focuses on two issues,

> the role of the historian/interviewer in the creation of the document he or she is then called upon to interpret, and the creation of that document within a particular historical and social space and within a particular historical tradition. (p. 1)

These authors and researchers seem to emphasize one particular aspect of oral history, whether the interview, the end product, the role of the researcher or the historical context of the study. While all of these aspects of oral history are important, a more accurate definition of oral history would include all of these aspects in the definition. The definition that I found to be most helpful was from

Lummis (1988) who defines oral history/oral evidence this way: “In sum and in brief, my definition of oral evidence is an account of first hand experience recalled retrospectively, communicated to an interviewer for historical purposes and preserved on a system of reproducible sound” (p. 27). Nearly all oral historians would agree that having first hand experience is an essential element of oral history. Not having first hand experience of historical events is an oral tradition rather than an oral history “because oral tradition’s major focus is on the past beyond the recall of one lifespan” (Lummis, 1988, p. 26). People who retell history from stories that have been passed down have not had a personal encounter with the historical event. Therefore the event becomes hearsay and an oral tradition.

The “retrospective” element of Lummis’ (1988) definition is based on his belief that one’s view of historical events changes with time. It is often difficult to analyze history as it happens. Once removed from the time frame, however, one is not caught up in the emotions and dangers of the event.

> “History” is a retrospective examination and cannot be undertaken at the time events take place. The retrospective element in oral history is important because it asks questions of the past which reflect present interests and seeks evidence which was not produced at the time. That evidence is collected within a changed culture and, therefore, is not vulnerable to the biases and pressures of the period which produced it however much it may be shaped by the biases of its own day. (Lummis, 1988, p. 27)

Lummis explains that while the biases and pressures of the past do not interfere with the oral history interview, researchers must be careful not to allow present day biases and pressures to taint the study. As I interviewed the participants, I allowed the interviews to go in any direction the participants

wanted, so as not to lead the conversation to any particular topic, other than their educational experiences. I carefully prepared the first interview questions in such a way that participants were simply placing their personal educational experiences into the context of the integration movement. The questions were not leading questions, but rather, simple open-ended questions, meant to elicit general information about their educational experiences during the early part of the 20th century.

One aspect that distinguishes oral history from other types of methodologies is that it involves an interviewer and an interviewee. Many believe that the interviewer should have prior knowledge of the historical event of which he or she is asking. Even this, though, is debated among oral historians. Some believe that to have a priori knowledge is to taint the study by leading it in the direction that the interviewer wants to go. I believe that an interviewer can have a priori knowledge and still conduct an unbiased interview. Having researched the history of Sumter County, South Carolina, and having heard stories from family members, I had a priori knowledge of events leading up to the integration movement, as well as family members' thoughts about these events. I could have allowed this information, especially my family members' thoughts about these events, to tarnish the way the data were collected, but instead, I chose to ask them to tell me what they wanted to tell me about their educational experiences and then ask follow up questions based on the stories they chose to tell. The debate regarding having prior knowledge of the historical event is still much debated and sometimes avoided by oral historians.

> Many wish to avoid the conclusion that the interviewer needs to be well informed because this would imply that oral history is restricted to an informed elite and/or professional historians. They would argue that a genuine historical curiosity and the ability to listen are an interviewer's most important assets; and that oral history can be collected by the layman with very little experience or knowledge because, after all, it is the informants' experience and knowledge which are the essential elements. (Lummis, 1988, p. 23)

The belief that two heads are better than one is central to the collection of data through this particular type of methodology. While it is true that one of the roles of the interviewer is to listen carefully to what the interviewee says, I contend that he or she should also have enough knowledge about the theme to ask pertinent, but not leading, questions. People skills are a must, and a bond of trust must be established from the beginning. Freire (2006) explains that "whoever lacks this trust will fail to initiate (or will abandon) dialogue, reflection, and communication, and will fall into using slogans, communiqués, monologues, and instructions" (p. 66). A good interviewer also gives wait time to the interviewee. Rushing an interview and interrupting a memory seriously jeopardize the quality of the interview. Making eye contact and smiling are also good qualities for an interviewer to have when speaking with an interviewee. While empathy does not come naturally to some interviewers, this quality is vital during an interview. The person being interviewed wants to be understood and not judged. Therefore, a good interviewer listens with an empathic ear, develops trust, and allows the interviewee to say all that he or she wants to say without being interrupted or judged.

Oral history sometimes has been referred to as life history, and while similar, they are not the same type of methodology. Lummis (1988) explains,

> The difference between the way social scientists use life story methodology and oral history is one of central focus: life story emphasis is on the subjective world of the informant, whereas oral history is primarily concerned with gathering information about historical and social structures. (p. 25)

Life history is used to allow an interviewee to give a biography of his or her life, but it may not delve into historical accounts. While oral history also is used to allow an interviewee to give a biography of his or her life, it does have a relationship with past historical events, even though this relationship may still be subjective. It is a way to collect data about a person's life and how historical events affected his or her life or simply a way to allow a person to explain historical events first hand, having lived through them.

Critics of oral history claim that this type of methodology produces "documents that may be imperfect renditions of the past" (Chamberlain, 2006, p. 390) because it relies on people's memories, which are sometimes vague and incorrect. The memories of the elderly and the memories of people who have experienced a traumatic event, especially, may be fragile. Asking someone to recall an event that happened decades ago with clarity is a mighty task. Not only does it rely on one's ability to conjure up that memory, but it relies on one's ability "to recover not only the material surface of what happened, but also the narrator's attitude toward events, the subjectivity, imagination, and desire that each individual invests in the relationship with history" (Portelli, n. d., p. 391). The point can be made, however, that all recorded history is subjective. Those

who have recorded history have done so with a specific purpose in mind, sometimes to emphasize certain events or to minimize others. People have had to make decisions regarding which cultures would be represented and which cultures would be neglected, which leaders would be remembered and which leaders would be forgotten. Oral traditions, which have no written or recorded documentation, have even become part of our beliefs about history. Did George Washington really cut down a cherry tree? Was he honest about it? Did he have wooden teeth? Or are these simply oral traditions? The recounts of history, through the methodology of oral history, at least, give constructed first hand accounts of historical events from people who lived through these events. Their memories may be cloudy and their perspective subjective, but "to talk to a witness [is] to engage directly with the making of history, and we [ask] no more of witness[es] than that they narrate what they saw or experienced" (Chamberlain, 2006, p. 390).

Like all historians before me, I also had to make a decision regarding whether to emphasize certain events or to minimize others. Baum (1977) helped to put my mind at ease by explaining,

> Every step of the way in oral history involves making a decision. Who to interview? For one session or many? What question to ask next? How to phrase it? Whether to transcribe the interviews or just aim at indexing the tapes? How lightly or heavily to edit the transcripts? How roughly or elegantly to complete the transcript? How fully to index? If you don't like decision-making, avoid oral history. (p. 6)

I chose to emphasize the integration movement and the Turkish people's educational experiences during this movement. The reason I chose to emphasize

this event is because there is no record of this event from the Turkish people's perspectives using their own voices and their own stories. I developed a very good relationship with each of the participants, and they felt at ease with me. I encouraged them to tell me as much or as little as they wanted. I listened a lot and spoke a little. My intention was not to minimize other events or groups of people, but certainly other events and groups of people were not the emphasis of this study. That was a call I had to make, and since very little information exists regarding the Turkish people's perceptions of their educational experiences during the integration movement, I believed that this event was worth researching.

While a definition for oral history is still much debated, all oral historians have an obligation to other scholars and to the general public regarding how oral history is collected. "Oral history recording generally sets out in a systematic way to record and preserve, as accurately as possible, memories and reminiscences and to relate those memories to other sources of information such as archives" (Howarth, 1998, p. 81). My goal in writing this oral history is preserve these memories by recording them as accurately as possible. Because I am a firm believer in the rights of the participants of this study, however, I only recorded the interviews that my participants allowed. I transcribed the other interviews as the participants answered my questions.

Previous oral histories. Many researchers have seen the importance of collecting data from various cultural groups in order to write oral histories. The stories that the participants have told have enriched our understanding of historical events because they have been told through a unique lens, that of the

common man. Some of these oral histories highlight groups such as former slaves of the United States, Native Americans and non-dominant groups in Utah such as the "African-American community, the Jewish community, the Chinese community, the Italian community, the Japanese community, the Greek community and the Chicano-Hispano community" (Kelen & Stone, 1996).

Belinda Hurmence (1989), who read the stories of 284 ex-slaves, chose 27 to include in her novel, *Before Freedom, When I Just Can Remember*. These narratives were collected by field workers of the Federal Writers' Project, who found and interviewed former slaves in the 1930s. The interviewers asked the former slaves a variety of questions and wrote down their answers, to the best of their ability, as the tape recorder had not yet been invented. The 10,000 pages of transcripts that were collected have been stored in the Library of Congress. These narratives have proven to be extremely informative to historians who have sought to understand slavery in the United States prior to and during the Civil War. Hurmence (1989) explains that

> America's infamous period of slavery casts a long shadow on our national past, a shadow in which those human beings who were most affected are still but dimly perceived. History may readily assess the economics and politics that condemned an entire race to bondage for nearly 250 years, but it continues to conceal from us the slave trapped in slavery. (p. ix)

For this reason, the oral histories of these former slaves are of the utmost importance. No other historical evidence is able to accurately detail what life was like for them. An example of this first hand information is an anecdote cited in Hurmence (1989) by the former slave, Ben Horry, who was 87 years old when he

was interviewed by Genevieve W. Chandler in Murrells Inlet, South Carolina in August, 1937. He states,

> The worse thing I remembers was the colored overseer. He was the one straight from Africa. He the boss over all the mens and womens, and if womans don't do all he say, he lay task on 'em they ain't able to do. My mother won't do all he say. When he say, 'You go barn and stay till I come,' she ain't do 'em. So, he have it in for my mother and lay task on 'em she ain't able for do.
>
> Then, for punishment, my mother is take to the barn and strapped down on thing called The Pony. Hands spread like this and strapped to the floor and all two both she feet been tied like this. And she been give twenty-five to fifty lashes till the blood flow. And my father and me stand right there and look and ain't able to lift a hand! (Hurmence, 1989, p. 24)

Likewise, the oral histories of the Native Americans have proven to be very valuable, not only to the Native Americans who want to tell their stories, but to non-Native Americans who want to learn more about their rich history. Cash and Hoover (1971) explain,

> For centuries, Europeans and Americans have been writing histories of American Indians. They have studied them, invaded their privacy, and cast theoretical concepts about their image, their past, their future, and their psyche. Through all this activity, few thought to ask the Indians themselves about their past, and even fewer made any attempt to show the history of these great people through their own eyes. (p. ix)

In the late 60s, the American Indian Research Project, prompted by Doris Duke, set out to conduct an oral history project in which more than 800 separate interviews with Native Americans were conducted in order to allow their voices to become available to the general public. An excerpt from one of these interviews from an anonymous Native American is the following:

> It is hard being an Indian person, so much harder when you work in shops and construction sites. How hard it is to advance. Say your supervisor or somebody you work with maybe had come in contact with Indians and had a bad experience. You probably

> had never seen them before, but because you are Indian, he might take it out on you. He won't come right out and say so; he wouldn't make it hard for you, directly, but he probably would make it harder for you to advance. (Cash & Hoover, 1971, p. 192)

The oral history project that Kelen and Stone (1996) undertook was extensive. After receiving funds from the Utah Humanities Council to conduct an oral history project, they wanted to interview senior citizens and community leaders in Salt Lake City "to create a documentary portrait of ethnicity in Utah before it was too late" (Kelen & Stone, 1996, p. x). They completed the project in eight years after conducting 689 interviews. They believed strongly in the importance of accurately representing various non-dominant groups in Utah's mostly White and Mormon population. An example of one of the interviews that they conducted with an Italian American gives the reader an idea of what it was like growing up poor in America. The participant, Eugene Barber, explains that one time he and his friends stole a sack of potatoes. He explains that his father "made us bring it back. Times weren't good for us. . . It got so bad for us at one time that my mother had to keep us out of school. . . We just didn't have enough clothes" (Kelen & Stone, 1996, p. 253). As evidenced from the previous anecdotes, oral histories introduce a new perspective on the world to others who may be unaware of how things were for specific ethnic groups. Those who seek to learn about others' experiences through oral history projects are often transformed during the process.

My Transformation as a Result of this Inquiry

I was born in Saint Charles, Missouri to an Italian American father and a Turkish American mother. My father met my mother at Shaw Air Force Base in

Sumter County, South Carolina. They married in Sumter County, but did not settle there. As my father was in the Air Force, we did not stay in Missouri very long either. We soon moved to Georgia where I grew up in an all-White neighborhood and attended an all-White school. I remember the first time a Black person moved into the neighborhood and attended the elementary school. I was in the sixth grade. He was accepted in our class, but not in our neighborhood. I did not understand the tension that evolved in the neighborhood when we suddenly had Black neighbors. One day his house burned down, some believe by arsonists, and the family moved. It was my first memory of racism.

Years later I was sitting in Dr. Randy Fair's cultural diversity class. I did not have the best attitude about going to class one day because I was not particularly enthused with the book that we were reading. The book was *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* by bell hooks (1994). I said something in class that day that I regret saying, but I am glad I said it because my eyes were opened afterwards. I said, "I'm tired of reading the same thing over and over again. I wish that she [the author] would stop belly-aching about the oppression that she went through. Yes, it was horrible, but it is over now, and it is time to move on." The students in the class were appalled. You could have heard a pin drop. How dare I say, "belly-aching" and "move on?" I'll never forget the words of a student across the room. She said, "That's easy for you to say. You come from a privileged background."

Now I was the one who was offended. She did not know my family's history. "How dare she judge me?" I thought, not recognizing that I had judged

the author of the book we were reading. While I suppose it is true that I do come from a “privileged background,” (I am a White person with Turkish and Italian roots) it is only because of the ones who came before me who fought for my rights to receive an equal education and other equal opportunities that I have grown up “privileged.” They, themselves, did not have a “privileged background,” and this includes my own mother. I was ignorant that day in class. I wish I could take the insensitive words back, but at least my eyes were opened to the way that “privileged” people think. Because they have not experienced oppression, they do not realize that they are “privileged.”

After telling my family’s story to the class that day, Dr. Fair challenged me. He said, “There is a story that needs to be told here, and you are the one who needs to tell it.” I decided to change my dissertation topic and follow my heart. I was on a mission to tell their stories and, in the process, perhaps discover my own identity.

During this journey, I have learned many things as I have developed into a researcher. I have faced many obstacles. I have hurdled over some and mourned over others. I have come to realize that there are many sides to a story, and there are many stories that are aching to be told, if we will just stop to listen to them. I have learned that with age, there is wisdom. I have seen that, as the saying goes, some people come into our lives and quickly go. Others stay for a while, leave their footprints on our hearts, and we are never the same. I approached this study with innocent curiosity, hoping to help those who were segregated to tell their

stories. It turns out that I am the one who has benefited the most because I have begun the journey of discovering who I am.

This study began in August of 2006 when I met with a prominent member of Sumter County, South Carolina. I had begun to research the history of Sumter County in the library there in town. An employee of the library directed me to this person as someone who might be able to help me with my study. He agreed to eventually allow me to interview him for my study, but unfortunately, he passed away soon afterwards. We were able to meet a few times, however, and after meeting with him, I wrote down some of my thoughts in my field notes journal. Here is the first entry of my journal after meeting with him:

> *Journal entry: Wednesday, August 2, 2006.*
>
> I met with a prominent member of South Carolina this morning in his office. I was a little early, so a female employee let me in. He arrived around 10:30 wearing a white button down shirt, khaki pants, and a red Glasscock Co. cap. He asked me to turn on the lights, and he answered his phone and then checked his two messages. I lingered outside of his office, and he came outside and jokingly asked me, "Did you get lost?" He is a very kind, southern man. He searched through his files and pulled out a file surprisingly labeled "Turks." He flipped through a green file folder, about an inch thick, and told me that the articles that he has collected over the years were in no particular order. He said I could take the folder to the table outside of his office and read, but we talked for at least 30 minutes before that.
>
> He called me "Miss Ray" at first because my mother's maiden name is Ray and he wasn't going to try to pronounce my real last name. He asked me if my first name was Angela. When I told him that it was Terri he said, "Well, OK, Miss Karen." He called me Karen and Carrie for a while until I wrote my name for him. In our phone conversation on Monday, July 31, he informed me that he was "as deaf as a post." He is a very funny man, very helpful and very interested in my study. I am extremely appreciative of the fact that he has collected many articles on the Turkish people over the years. I am sure that these articles will prove to be very valuable to my study.

So what did we talk about? I told him that I was a student at Georgia State University working on my Ph.D. He seemed pleased. He said that he had helped another lady a few years back who was working on her master's degree. He told me that all of the articles were his. He said that all of his work on different types of research had worn his wife out. I assume that she has passed away. He has a beautiful picture of her in her younger years on his wall. He still referred to her as his bride.

He said that he will never forget a lesson he learned through politics. Apparently during a past election a politician (I can't remember his name) had taken the Turkish vote, about 300 people. It seems to him that the Turkish people vote as a block, so a candidate who has the Turkish block has 300 votes right off the bat. He told me that the Turkish people pick the county's officials – they have in the past and they still do. This was a valuable lesson for him to learn.

He told me that he was alive during the integration movement of the schools. I asked him how he responded to what was happening. He said back then he was simply an observer of what was happening. He also told me that one of the White teachers is still alive and well. I would love to interview her.

He said that an elderly nurse in the hospital explained to him that a long time ago the hospital was divided. The White unit was on one side of the hospital. The "Colored" unit was on the other side of the hospital. These two units were divided by two rooms for the Turkish people. My mother has also verified that she clipped an article from the *Item* newspaper regarding the hospital rooms for the Turkish people, but that she no longer has the article.

He said that some of my people are very particular about being referred to as being different. They believe that referring to them as a distinct group, other than White, is denigrating. They do not like to be called "Turks." They also do not like the attention.

He told me that in his mind, the Turkish people were up here, and he held up his hand way above his head. He said that they work hard, some work for the Glasscock Co. and some work at Shaw Air Force Base. He said that they are self-sufficient, and that most of them used to be farmers.

During our phone conversation on Monday, July 31, 2006, he told me that my people were more American than most. He stated that they fought with General Thomas Sumter, so they have proven that they love their country and are willing to die for it.

When I asked him where he thought that the Turkish people came from, he explained that either General Thomas Sumter or Thomas Sumter's son married a French woman and that she may have brought some Moroccans with her to Sumter County. He also said that another possibility would be that since the Ottoman

Empire (Turkey) was so powerful at one time, that anyone who looked foreign was simply referred to as being a Turk, regardless of where they really originated. This group of Turkish people in Sumter County, South Carolina, in this case, would not actually be Turkish (from Turkey) but referred to as Turks because of the Ottoman influence in the world. He did state that the Turkish people were not Red Bones. If so, we would be allowed to accept money from the government for being Native American. Since we are not allowed to do that, we are not Native American.

He told me that the best thing going for my people (regarding our status as Whites) was that Thomas Sumter himself stood up in a court room and recognized them as being White. Because of Thomas Sumter, my people were allowed to vote, which gave them great political power in the county.

He also told me that his boss is Turkish. He seems to hold the Turkish people in very high regard. He explained that they are attractive people with good skin tone that everyone wants.

He showed me some pictures of the Dalzell School. One picture was taken in 1949, and it was a picture of nine young girls in a play. He is going to make copies of three pictures for me. He is even going to make an 8 x10 of the picture of the girls in a play.

Before I left he asked me if he could read something to me. I sat and listened as he read about the fair of 1881. He read that the fair was for Whites only from Tuesday to Friday and that Saturday was reserved for the "Coloreds." My mother later told me that Black people were not allowed to go to the fair when the Turkish people went to the fair either. He also told me that he had the original sign announcing the fair in which Whites were allowed on certain days and Blacks were allowed on certain days. He had the sign at his place of employment, but the woman who was in charge "had an absolute fit about it" and made him move it. He also told me about a roll of tickets that he has that allowed the "Colored" people to go to the fair.

I paid him $25 for all of his help, for the articles, and for the picture. I am supposed to pick up the picture tomorrow. At that time I will ask him the name of the teacher who is still living and the name of the politician who taught him about the Turkish political front. I will also ask him about the roll of tickets for the "Colored" people to go to the fair. Maybe he will allow me to take a picture of them or even have one. I would also like to take a picture of the sign that he had to move. Even though it has nothing to do with the Turkish people, he said that it might help my paper. He said, "It will let people know how things were here in Sumter County, South Carolina." (Journal entry: Wednesday, August 2, 2006)

Unfortunately, this endearing man passed away soon after this meeting. I never saw him again, but he helped me so much in the little time that I knew him that I wanted to allow his voice to be heard, too, even though I can not disclose his identity. He was a good man and loved by all. I am very fortunate to have met him, not only for my study, but also for the impression that he made on my life. Our meetings resulted in my becoming a much more informed researcher. He gave me great insight into how others perceived the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina during the early part of the 20th century and also how they view the Turkish people today. However this study turns out, it is due, in great part, to his contributions.

Personal conflicts. I was in Sumter County, South Carolina when an article came out in the local newspaper about the Turkish people not actually being Turkish, but rather Native American. This article stirred up a lot of angst among many members of the Turkish community who do not claim to be Native American. Other members of the community, however, believe that they may have Native American roots and are seeking to have their tribe recognized by the state of South Carolina. As a researcher, I was intrigued. As a member of the Turkish community, I was perplexed. While I am open to the truth about our origins, I have not found any documentation to prove that we are Native American in any census records, birth certificates or death certificates. If I had found proof that we were Native American, I would have accepted that as who we are. It seems that if we were Native American, our ancestors would have claimed

this all along and would have passed this information down to us. I also realize that a family tree can go in many different directions. Some members of the family tree may have married people from Native American tribes, which would make some members of my family partially Native American. I must admit my bias at this point, but I do not want to say that I am biased because I am closed minded. I am biased because I have not found any proof that we are Native American. And since this study is about the educational experiences of the participants and not about their genetic makeup, I did not pursue this issue as much as I would have if this had been a study to determine who we are genetically.

I have struggled throughout this whole process with the fear of misrepresenting the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina. The painful past, according to some, should remain in the past. Others have a different point of view. They believe that their stories deserve to be heard. With two differing views, it is impossible to please everyone. My only choice was to approach this study with love and with the utmost respect for the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina. I have been transformed and humbled by what I have learned about their educational experiences. I have become their student, and they have become my teachers. My goal is to honor them and their heritage. Chapter Three will discuss the particular methods that were utilized for the collection of data in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research

The methodological approach that guided this study was qualitative in nature. Qualitative research allows the researcher and reader to step into the lives of the participants by examining the participants' experiences from their own points of view. In this study, I sought to understand holistically the experiences of the Turkish people who lived in Sumter County, South Carolina during the early part of the 20th century. I began the interview process with general questions that became more specific as certain themes were discovered from the data. Qualitative research, through interviewing, was the appropriate paradigm for this study because as Seidman (2006) explains,

> So much research is done on schooling in the United States; yet so little of it is based on studies involving the perspective of the students, teachers, administrators, counselors, special subject teachers, nurses, psychologists, cafeteria workers, secretaries, school crossing guards, bus drivers, parents, and school committee members, whose individual and collective experience constitutes schooling.
>
> A researcher can approach the experience of people in contemporary organizations through examining personal and institutional documents, through observation, through exploring history, through experimentation, through questionnaires and surveys, and through a review of existing literature. If the researcher's goal, however, is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry. (pp. 10-11)

My intention was not to begin with a specific set of goals and hypotheses, nor to conduct experiments in which quantifiable data would be analyzed. Rather I decided to consider the human element, which would shed light on the meaning of the personal experiences and perceptions of Turkish people during the integration movement.

When considering a methodology for this study, I looked at the five reasons offered by Strauss and Corbin (1990), as quoted in Roberts (2004), for doing qualitative research:

> 1. the conviction of the researcher based on research experience
> 2. the nature of the research problem
> 3. [the understanding of] what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known
> 4. [the desire] to gain novel and fresh slants on things about which quite a bit is already known [and]
> 5. [the need] to give intricate details of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods. (p. 110)

I was of the conviction to use qualitative research for this study because the nature of the research problem itself dictates that humans tell their own experiences of what their lives were like when they were younger. Through qualitative research, and through in-depth interviews, specifically, I was able to uncover that which was unknown because my participants had never informed the general public of their stories before. Using open-ended questioning and multiple interviews, I hoped to gain fresh ideas about general topics that had already been recorded in history. Qualitative research gave me this opportunity to gain fresh ideas and allowed me to convey what Roberts (2004) credits Straus and Corbin with as the “intricate details of phenomena” (p. 110). These “intricate details” would otherwise have been lost through any other type of methodology.

Oral history was the ideal methodology that was used for this study because its focus is on the telling of personal experiences of historical accounts through interviews. Through qualitative means of conducting the study, I considered the human element when collecting the data, and I asked questions of interest, but I allowed the participants to take the interviews in any direction that they desired. Fogerty (2006) has identified the stages that researchers go through when conducting interviews. He states that oral history begins with

> the conception of an interview or series of interviews and continues through research, narrator selection, and the interviews to transcription, editing, publication, and finally, public use in a variety of formats. At each stage of the process, context is created that becomes an important part of the interview and its meaning. (p. 207)

The participants' narratives of their personal experiences of historical accounts gave context and credence to this study, but oral history involves more than simply conducting interviews with participants. It encompasses the collection of a variety of data, and it becomes an historical document that is available to the general public.

Collecting the Data

Throughout the inquiry process, I collected data from a variety of sources to answer the guiding research questions:

(1) How do the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, who attended public school during the early part of the 20th century, describe their educational experiences?, and

(2) What are the perceptions of the Turkish people regarding the integration movement, educational power struggles and oppression?

I conducted formal and informal interviews, took field notes, audio recorded and videotaped some of the interviews, transcribed all of the interviews, and researched archival photographs of schools, students, census reports, artifacts and documents. I began by researching archival photographs and documents as well as the area and history of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina. This helped me to have a well-informed background knowledge of their past before the interviews began.

I interviewed each participant three different times, following Dolbeare and Schuman's three-interview process, as quoted in Seidman (2006). Samples of interview questions for the first, second and third interviews may be found in the appendices and are labeled as "APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B and APPENDIX C" accordingly. Dolbeare and Schuman's three-interview process is designed so that

> The first interview establishes the context of the participants' experience. The second allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs. And the third encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them. (Seidman, 2006, p. 17)

Following these guidelines, my goal was "to have the participant reconstruct his or her experience" (Seidman, 2006, p. 15). It was my hope that through this reconstruction process I would learn more about how the participants in this study "defined the world" (Seidman, 2006, p. 11) that they lived in during the early part of the 20th century. People derive meaning from their experiences, and I wanted to understand the meaning of their experiences during the integration movement from their own points of view.

The purpose of the first interview was to ask the participant to share as much as possible about his or her life experiences in the context of the historical event that was being studied. Since this study revolved around the integration movement, I asked the participants to tell me as much as possible about their lives and their experiences during this time in our nation's history. The most important aspect of the first interview was to have the participants reconstruct their early educational experiences during the integration movement so as to provide a context for the second interview.

The purpose of the second interview was to have the participants give as many details as possible regarding their educational experiences in light of the context. I asked the participants to try to relive several events that they had mentioned in the first interviews, such as attending the Dalzell School, attending Edmund's High School and Hillcrest High School, being in a play, studying the Bible in school, attending graduation ceremonies, and experiencing a boycott. I asked them to say as much as they wanted about each topic giving as many details as possible. I told them that it was not possible to exhaust the subject and that they could share as much as they would like to share. I did not ask them to give meaning to their experiences yet. I simply asked them to tell me, from memory, what they experienced during this time in our nation's history.

The purpose of the third interview, according to Dolbeare and Schuman, as quoted in Seidman (2006), was to ask the participants to

> reflect on the meaning of their experience. Making sense or making meaning requires that the participants look at how the factors in their lives interacted to bring them to their present situation. It also requires that they look at their present experience

> in detail and within the context in which it occurs. The combination of exploring the past to clarify the events that led participants to where they are now, and describing the concrete details of their present experience, establishes conditions for reflecting upon what they are now doing in their lives. The third interview can be productive only if the foundation for it has been established in the first two. (Seidman, 2006, pp. 18-19)

The third interview proved to be the most difficult for all of the participants. This was the one interview which required the participants not just to tell me about their educational experiences during the integration movement and to give me details about these experiences, but to make meaning of all of these experiences. As the participants reflected upon their experiences and how these events affected their lives, I saw genuine sadness in their faces. They recalled the memories of the way things were, and I felt helpless because I could not change the past.

After each interview, I began the important task of transcribing the conversations into a written format. I made sure to add the dates of the interviews as well as continuous numbering for easy referencing. Following Fogerty's (2006) suggestions for transcribing, I made "the initial edit – usually performed by the interviewer, the narrator's edit, and the final edit, contained in a copy of the printed/published transcript" (p. 217). I did this for each of the 12 interviews and two additional conversations. I saved the transcripts to a flash drive, to a hard drive on the computer and in a researcher's notebook for safekeeping.

Most oral historians are in accord that interviews should be audio recorded. Fogerty (2006) describes the audiotape as that which "represents the interview in its purest form" (p. 227). While transcripts of interviews are more widely used by researchers, the audio recording of an interview offers much more

than a hard copy of the interview that is read. Through the audio recording, one is able to hear tone of voice, hesitation, voice inflection, excitement, dread, fear, and even sarcasm, which are often overlooked as one reads a transcript. Even more powerful than the audio recording, however, is the video recording, because it offers yet another avenue through which to interpret data, the visual cue.

As the intricate details of emotions, gestures, voice tones, facial expressions and body language can not be recorded on audio tape, I video recorded one of the interviews, and I asked someone who has been trained in cinematography to edit portions of the tape in order to make a short documentary of this study. While I have no experience in this area, I knew the importance of trying to video tape the conversations, documents and sights of Sumter County, South Carolina. Not knowing if I would actually be able to follow through with this, I decided to take many pictures of buildings, sights, and various documents anyway. Using the videotape of the one interview that I video recorded of Boaz, some audio tape of six formal and informal interviews, some photographs of the community and a selection of music that I felt enriched the study, I approached a young man whom I know, who is very talented in this area, and asked him if he would help me. We met, and I showed him what I had, how I would like it, the order of slides that I would like and the music that I would like to go with it. He felt that he could take the various sources of information that I presented to him and put them all together into a short documentary. The short video is meant to give the viewer a glimpse into the area of Sumter County, South Carolina today, as well as to allow the listener to hear the actual voices and stories of the Turkish

people who were segregated during the early part of the 20th century. It is not a summary of this study, but rather an artistic product of the sights and sounds that moved me during the data collection phase. I selected music with lyrics that I believed represented the tone of the study. This short video may be expanded at a later date when I broaden the scope of this study for the purpose of writing a book for the people of Sumter County, South Carolina. I believe that to "triangulate the data" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 257), researchers should use a variety of sources to create credible studies, and one way to do this is through the use of videotaping interviews. Ritchie (1995) explains the importance of videotaping interviews:

> Transcripts, audiotapes, and videotapes all impart the same basic information, but videotape provides an extra dimension to oral history interviews. Transcripts reduce language to written symbols. Tape recordings convey tone, rhythm, volume, and speech patterns. But the facial expressions and body language captured by videotape reveal even more of an interviewee's personality. A smile, a wink, a frown, or a look of perplexity would be missed in an audio interview and convey more than what can be reproduced in a transcript. (p. 109)

I began this study by collecting documents that might help me to better understand the history of Sumter County, South Carolina. Some examples of the documents that I collected were fair tickets, a report card, photographs, census records, birth certificates and death certificates. Howarth (1998) sees the need to utilize documents in oral histories. He states, "The idea of basing interviews on photographs and documents does not seem to have been pursued by oral historians to any great extent. The field is wide open, with enormous amounts of work most urgently needed" (p. 132).

After studying the documents that I had collected, I began to view the documents as tangible parts of history, but they were still tangible parts of history that could not speak. “Documents give a certain specious air of being trustworthy accounts of that period. But history does not happen in documents” (Lummis, 1988, p. 13). History happens through the lived experiences of humans who explain historical documents. These documents are most useful in oral history projects when participants, who lived through historical events, are able to explain, from their experiences, what the documents are. I asked all of the participants to give meaning to the documents because without their explanations, the documents were simply pieces of information tucked away and forgotten on dusty library shelves and in cold file folders.

Field Notes

In my search for the most effective way to keep notes during this study, I decided to adhere to the guidelines set forth by Spradley (1979). The different types of field notes that Spradley (1979) discusses are “the condensed account, the expanded account, analysis and interpretation and the reflexive field work journal” (pp. 75, 76).

The condensed account. During the interviews, I sometimes took condensed notes of my thoughts. I did this during most of the interviews, whether they were recorded or not. Because it is not possible to write down everything that is being said as it is being said, these notes were sometimes abbreviated. I simply wrote down a few words that I knew would remind me later of a much bigger story or even things that happened during the interview. These condensed notes

consisted of “phrases, single words, and unconnected sentences” (p. 75). The purpose of condensed notes is to use them to create what Spradley (1979) refers to as “expanded accounts” (p. 75).

Expanded accounts. As soon as the interviews were over, I took the condensed notes and expanded them into complete thoughts. The condensed notes helped to trigger my memory of what I had seen or heard. For the two participants who did not want to be audio recorded, the expanded accounts were vital to this study. Without them, their stories would have been lacking important details. For the other two participants, the expanded accounts were a result of transcribing the interviews. “Tape-recorded interviews, when fully transcribed, represent one of the most complete expanded accounts” (Spradley, 1979, p. 75).

The following is an entry from my field work journal after spending some time with one of my participants, Tonie. She and I went to her neighbor’s house to visit. Her neighbor was an elderly Black woman who was born and raised in Sumter County, South Carolina.

Journal entry: Wednesday, April 4, 2007.

> Tonight Tonie and I went to her neighbor’s house. We sat outside in the neighbor’s front lawn chairs and just chatted about all kinds of things. Regarding this study, one thing the neighbor told me was that if ‘one of [the Turkish people] likes you, they all like you.’ This attests to the unity of the Turkish people. We listened to crickets, were bitten by mosquitoes and witnessed a child being chastised across the street. We talked about gardens and how to make flowers grow. Tonie’s neighbor said that she can break a little piece of a plant off of a living plant and simply put it in the dirt, water it, and it will grow. I observed the participants as they spoke and took field notes regarding their emotions, gestures, voice tones, facial expressions and body language. I noticed that the two women treated each other as sisters. Though not related, their intimate relationship warmed my heart. The neighbor had

> recently lost a loved one and Tonie was comforting her with a listening ear, frequently looking down and moving her feet in the sand. They both wore nightgowns and were comfortable with their appearance. I watched as the neighbor showed Tonie where the preacher had come by to spray wash her house. She told Tonie, 'He won't take any money. He just wants to help.' The neighbor seemed comforted to know that so many people, regardless of ethnicity, cared about her. After the walk around the house, Tonie marveled at her neighbor's garden. She called me over so that I could also admire the various plants. What I really admired, though, was the close bond of friendship that I had observed in the two women. This friendship might not have been so intimate 60 years ago because of the great social distance that existed among the ethnic groups in Sumter County, South Carolina.
>
> Earlier today, Tonie took me to the site of the old Hillcrest School. It is another school now. We walked through the halls and I took pictures of the building of the old school that refused admittance to Tonie in the late 1950's. One day, when she was younger, she was allowed to go to this school to register. The next day none of the White students came to school because they were boycotting. Only the Turkish students showed up for school that day.
>
> After an informative tour of the school, we left. When we were back in the car, Tonie's eyes started welling up with tears. She looked out the passenger side window as we were leaving the school. As I watched the image of the school diminish in my rear view mirror, Tonie said with a muffled voice, 'Sometimes I wonder why God didn't let me get an education.' She then wiped the tears from her eyes and did not say another word during the ride back to her house. It was obvious to me, from this experience, that she is still very affected by the neglect of the school system and the people in charge from when she was a child. While she has moved on and become a successful adult, her painful childhood memories have not been forgotten. (Journal entry: Wednesday, April, 4, 2007)

As shown in this excerpt from my field notes, I carefully recorded the participants' emotions and body language in order to give the reader a better understanding of their perceptions of their educational experiences during the early part of the 20th century.

Analysis and interpretation. Spradley (1979) explains this type of field notes as "a place to 'think on paper' about the culture under consideration" (p. 76). For me it was a place that I could write down my thoughts about what the participants said or their reactions to some of the questions. I slowly let them marinate in my mind as I wrote. I asked myself many questions about why things were the way they were and how things progressed to the point of segregation. I suppose that the most pressing question that anyone who has been segregated asks is, "Why?" I wrote down some of my analyses and interpretations of an interview I had with Boaz in one entry:

> I met with Boaz today. He, his wife and I went to a restaurant (the S and S) to eat before the interview, and he drove. We then went back to Boaz's house and I interviewed him there. He allowed me to videotape the interview. It went very well, but Boaz obviously became very upset toward the end of the interview as I assume some questions brought back painful memories of the past. It was disturbing to see how his childhood memories still evoke pain and sorrow. Fortunately, he has persevered and has overcome obstacles, but the memories of his past are still close to his heart. He has contributed a great amount to this study because he is open with me about every topic, even the difficult topics. I highly respect this man, and I will do my best to honor him and our family. (Journal entry, July 7, 2007)

Field work journal. During the study, I wrote in my field notes journal periodically. This journal helped me to reflect on the study, on my own thoughts and biases, on my perceptions of the methodology that I was utilizing and the participants of the study. I was careful to date each entry, and I found this journal to be very valuable as I began to write the dissertation. According to Spradley (1979), the field work journal should "contain a record of experiences, ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs, and problems that arise during field

work" (p. 76). I discovered a great deal about myself through the field work journal. I was not inhibited to write about my fears and mistakes because I knew that this journal was for my eyes only. I was honest with myself, and I wrote down the mistakes I made as well as my fears and biases. In order to be honest with my readers, I wanted first to be honest with myself about the fact that I have fears and biases. My goal was to overcome these fears and not to allow my biases to cause me to have a closed mind or to interfere with the study. My promise to the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina was to conduct a study in which their voices would be heard, in spite of my fears and biases.

The Role of the Researcher

My role in this study was to serve as a researcher of artifacts and documents that related to the educational experiences of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, as well as to serve as an interviewer of the participants of this study. I traveled to Sumter County, South Carolina to do some research on the community and history of Sumter County in August 2006. I gathered information from libraries, a museum, a hospital, cemeteries and burial grounds, churches, schools, parks, a visitor's center, ruins of former buildings, a fair, the office of the local newspaper, a genealogical and historical research center, a respected genealogist, historical markers, and the homes of family and neighbors. I collected books, magazine articles, newspaper articles, a report card from the Dalzell School, "Colored" tickets to the Sumter County fair, old pictures, old yearbooks, court documents and census records, such as birth certificates and death certificates.

I am of Turkish and Italian descent by birth, and I have never lived in Sumter County, South Carolina. Although I am Turkish, my experiences of being Turkish vary greatly from the experiences of the Turkish people who grew up in Sumter County, South Carolina, especially during the early part of the 20th century. I was born in Missouri, and I now live in Georgia. I am the only grandchild of my grandparents who has never lived in Sumter County, South Carolina. For this reason, I have a unique lens through which to view the experiences of the participants of this study. I am removed enough from this community to see it as from an outsider's point of view, yet I am connected to this community by blood and through the relationships that I have with my family and with other Turkish people who live in Sumter County, South Carolina. They view me as one of their own, yet I am different because I have grown up in another state 250 miles away. I am very privileged to have this "situated knowledge" (Haraway, 1998) about the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina. Because I am one of them, I am able to relate what it means to be Turkish to non-Turkish people.

Through the years, I have listened to the stories of my grandfather, grandmother, uncles, aunts, cousins, and mother around the dinner table. I have observed their interactions with other Turkish people as well as with non-Turkish people. I have experienced what it means to be part of a community that is set apart from the rest of the world. My role as the researcher and interviewer in this study was to document their stories so that others might understand the

experiences of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina during the early part of the 20th century.

Data Analysis

As I analyzed the data from the participants' stories, I did not prescribe prior codes to the interviews, but instead sought to recognize themes as I analyzed the data. I coded each interview and used "constant comparative analysis" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) when comparing the interviews among the four participants. This method involves comparing all sources of data to each other in order to identify similarities and differences. To conduct "constant comparative analysis," (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) the researcher

> begins with a particular incident from an interview, field notes, or document and compares it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set. These comparisons lead to tentative categories that are then compared to each other and to other instances. (Merriam, 1998, p. 159)

I began by collecting historical documents such as pictures, a report card, tickets to a fair, newspaper articles and census records. As I interviewed the participants, I constantly compared their stories to each other as well as to the documents that I had collected. I was able to connect a picture of girls in a play with the stories that the participants had told me about being in a play. To my surprise, I found a picture of one of the participants in the study when she was only seven years old. She had never seen the picture before and was amazed that there was evidence of her memory of being in that play.

After conducting the initial interviews, I conducted additional interviews, which were guided by grounded theory (Merriam, 2001) in that further questions

were asked based on previous participant response. I discovered common and unique themes, and I asked additional questions in order to clarify meaning. Having been a student of qualitative research for several years, I understand the importance and ethical responsibility of properly representing the voices of the participants as well as analyzing the data fairly using qualitative methods. My guest room became my lab, and two separate notebooks were used to organize literature, documents and interviews.

I began the coding process by reading one interview at a time and jotting down the main ideas that were discussed. I continued reading more interviews and adding more ideas. After reading all of the interviews, and cross-coding them, I had identified an overwhelming 114 different themes. I then began to categorize the themes under headings. Some headings required subheadings. In the end, I condensed the 114 different themes into six common themes.

I also left an audit trail (Lincoln, 1985) in order to ensure that my work was accurate. I added line numbering to all of the interviews so that “an auditor could subsequently trace any statements back to the original data on which they were based” (p. 198). I dated each interview and each entry of my field notes, too. I had two different researcher’s notebooks which contained articles for the literature review and transcripts of all interviews. Video tapes and audio tapes were also dated, labeled and secured for easy retrieval. Again, I followed Spradley’s (1979) suggestions regarding how to take field notes, and thus, leave an audit trail.

When quoting the participants I coded the data so that after a direct quote, the participant's initial is given along with a number 1, 2, or 3. These numbers refer to the first, second, or third interview respectively. I then placed a comma after the number of the interview followed by another number. This second number refers to the line or lines in the original transcript. Thus, a reference of "B2, 14" would mean Boaz's second interview, line 14.

I read the interviews several times in my search for commonalities. The first time I read the interviews I simply jotted down on a piece of paper and on the transcript itself a one word summary of each of the conversations. I prescribed a color to each of the themes and reread the transcripts again. I color-coded each of the interviews as I searched for these themes. As a result of the data analysis of the interview data, I identified the following six themes: (a) thoughts on being Turkish, (b) feelings of isolation, (c) experiences at the Dalzell School, (d) experiences at the high schools (Edmunds and Hillcrest), (e) attitudes toward ethnic groups, and (f) perceptions of the integration movement. I organized the paper by themes instead of by participants because this study is not a case study, but rather an oral history. Since the historical focus of this study is the integration movement, I wanted to highlight what each participant said about their various experiences during the integration movement. Thus, I showcased all of their thoughts on one theme at a time to allow the reader to hear several voices and opinions about each of the six themes individually.

Selection of Key Informants

As I considered Boaz as a potential participant, I reviewed Spradley's (1979) guidelines for choosing an informant. He writes,

> During the past ten years I have listened to hundreds of students discuss their relationships with informants. Many of their difficulties resulted from identity differences, cultural barriers, incompatible personalities, and lack of interpersonal skill. But the most persistent problems came from their failure to locate a good informant. I have identified five minimal requirements for selecting a good informant: (1) thorough enculturation, (2) current involvement, (3) an unfamiliar cultural scene, (4) adequate time, and (5) nonanalytic. (p. 46)

These five requirements will be thoroughly explained, but it should be noted that Spradley (1979) states that while it is possible that not all participants will meet these five criteria, he highly recommends that the first informants selected meet all five. Since Boaz would be one of my first informants, I wanted to ensure that he met all five of Spradley's (1979) requirements.

Thorough enculturation. An important characteristic of a potential participant of a study is that he or she be very familiar with the culture, having lived in it for quite some time. A person who has recently moved into the culture is not as informed about the way things are as a person who has lived in the community for an extended period of time.

> Good informants know their culture so well they no longer think about it. They do things automatically from years and years of practice. One way to estimate how thoroughly someone has learned a cultural scene is to determine the length of time they have been in that scene. The more thoroughly enculturated an informant, the better. (.Spradley, 1979, pp. 47-48)

Since Boaz was born and raised in Sumter County, South Carolina, went to school there, and ministered to the community of Sumter County, South Carolina for

several years as pastor of a church, I determined that he was “thoroughly enculturated” and that the first requirement for selecting a potential participant had been met.

Current involvement. A second requirement of the first participants of a study, according to Spradley (1979), is that they have current involvement in the culture.

> When people are currently involved in a cultural scene, they use their knowledge to guide their actions. They review what they know; they make interpretations of new events; they apply their knowledge to solving everyday problems. When people stop using some part of their cultural knowledge, it becomes less accessible, more difficult to recall. Informants who leave a cultural scene forget the details and can only remember general outlines of the activities that went on. (pp. 48-49)

Boaz lived in Sumter County, South Carolina for many years, but he also traveled and lived in other states. His ties to Sumter, though, are strong. He and his wife both have family members who are buried in Sumter, and they sometimes take flowers to the gravesites. He presently lives in another city in South Carolina, but he occasionally goes back to Sumter for weddings, revivals and funerals. Three or four years ago he went back for a revival meeting in the Santee Association. Last year, sadly, he conducted his own mother’s funeral as well as my aunt’s funeral. He has also conducted the funerals of two of his wife’s sisters in the past. Family members from Sumter County, South Carolina often call him either to invite him to a wedding or to ask him to conduct a wedding or funeral. I believe that even though Boaz lives in another city in South Carolina, his ties to Sumter County and his continuous involvement in the community are significant. Therefore, I believed the second requirement for selecting a potential participant had been met.

An unfamiliar cultural scene. The third requirement, that of selecting an unfamiliar cultural scene, is more for the interviewer than the interviewee. It is important, according to Spradley (1979), that researchers select to study cultures and experiences with which they are unfamiliar. While I knew a little about the educational experiences of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina from the stories I had heard growing up, I knew just enough to be curious and to want to know more. Because I did not personally experience the same types of educational experiences as my participants and because I did not grow up in Sumter County, South Carolina, I had just enough unfamiliarity for this to be a positive interviewer trait. If I had been very familiar with the educational experiences of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, or the culture of Sumter County, then I may have overlooked important information that the participants were sharing with me. “The most productive relationship occurs between a thoroughly enculturated informant and a thoroughly unenculturated ethnographer” (Spradley, 1979, p. 50). If both the participant and the researcher are informed, then the participant may assume that the researcher already knows the answers to his or her own questions and may not elaborate. With an uninformed interviewer, however, this will not happen because the participant is truly educating the researcher about his or her experiences. Because I was personally unfamiliar with the history of Boaz’s educational experiences and his perspectives on the integration movement, the third requirement for selecting a potential participant had been met.

Adequate time. Spradley's (1979) fourth requirement for selecting a potential participant is that the participant be willing to give of his or her time for the study. Interviews can sometimes be lengthy and time consuming. Therefore, potential participants must be informed of this and must be willing to give of their time for the study. Spradley (1979) explains,

> In estimating the amount of time someone might give to interviews, it is well to keep in mind that a busy informant keenly interested in the project will often *make* time (emphasis in original). Because interviews involve the informant as an expert witness, they generate considerable enthusiasm. High priority should be given to someone who has adequate time for the research. (pp. 51-52)

When I approached Boaz about being a participant in this study, he was very interested because he believed that the study would be meaningful to the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina. I gave him a copy of the Informed Consent which stated:

> You are invited to help in a research study. The purpose is to study the school experiences of the Turkish people of Sumter, South Carolina during the early 1900s. You are invited to help because you either went to school in Sumter, South Carolina or you lived in Sumter, South Carolina during the early 1900s. It will take about three hours of your time over nine months. You will be asked to be interviewed at least three to seven different times, for about one hour each time. (Informed Consent)

Boaz agreed to the terms of the agreement and was willing to make time for the interviews. Therefore the fourth requirement for selecting a potential participant had been met.

Nonanalytic. The fifth requirement for selecting a potential participant, according to Spradley (1979), is that he or she not analyze the information that he or she is giving from an outsider's point of view. Some participants believe that

they are actually helping the interviewer by explaining what they believe the interviewer would eventually conclude. Interviewers should search for participants who are willing to speak naturally and who do not analyze what they are saying. Spradley (1979) explains it this way:

> The ethnographer wants to discover patterns of meaning in what an informant says. This requires constant *analysis* of utterances, taking them apart to find the tacit relationships and patterns (emphasis in original). Some informants can assist in analyzing their own culture – provided it is always from the perspective of the insider. In our society, many persons draw from psychology and the social sciences to analyze their own behavior. They mistakenly believe they can assist the ethnographer by offering these analytic insights. Such individuals make poor informants for the novice ethnographer. (pp. 53-54)

While I follow Spradley's (1979) logic that an informant who analyzes his or her own speech would not help a study, it seems that this requirement would be difficult to establish before an interview. How would an interviewer know whether or not the participant was going to analyze his or her speech from an outsider's point of view without first interviewing the participant? The only way to use this requirement as a qualification for selecting a potential participant would be to ask the participant up front if he or she would analyze what was being said or if he or she would try to speak naturally. While I did not address this requirement with Boaz ahead of time, I chose to select him as one of my first informants anyway. The end result was that he did speak naturally to me. He did not analyze his speech or say things from an outsider's point of view, and he was a very valuable participant. Because of his participation, and that of the other participants, the results of this study will shed new light on Turkish history in Sumter County, South Carolina.

Two of the participants in this study decided that they did not want to be identified. While they agreed to do the interviews, neither would allow me to audio record, videotape nor take pictures of them. They selected pseudonyms, too. The other two participants gave me permission to use their names, but in order to protect them, I decided to assign them pseudonyms, too. One participant, Tonie, stated that she would participate and that I could audio record the interview, at first. After an initial interview, however, it was obvious that the digital voice recorder was interfering with the quality of the interview. Tonie stared at the recorder and carefully monitored her speech and the information that she gave. She was nervous and would often ask to start over during the interview. While one characteristic of oral history is that the interviews be recorded, I had to respect and protect Tonie's desire not to be recorded because, according to the Principles of Professional Responsibility, 1971, paragraph 1, as quoted in Seidman (1979),

> In research, an anthropologist's paramount responsibility is to those he studies. When there is a conflict of interest, these individuals must come first. The anthropologist must do everything within his power to protect their physical, social and psychological welfare and to honor their dignity and privacy. (p. 35)

We both decided together that it would be best to do the interviews without recording them. The result was that the interviews were much more natural and Tonie was more at ease. I interviewed her and typed her answers as she spoke. Afterwards I allowed her to read the interviews and make any corrections that she deemed necessary.

Before I interviewed Tonie, I wanted to make sure that she had met all or at least most of Spradley's (1979) requirements for selecting a good informant. Tonie was born and raised in Sumter County, South Carolina. She attended the Dalzell School when she was a young child and Hillcrest High School when she was a teenager. She spent many years of her youth and adult life in Sumter County, so I was convinced that she had a "thorough enculturation" (Spradley, 1979, p. 46). Tonie is still involved in the community, as she has family that lives there. She was willing to give of her time and energy to talk with me, and she did not analyze her words from an outsider's perspective. Therefore, I believed that Tonie had met all of the criteria for being a good informant.

Likewise, Helen, another participant of this study, met all of Spradley's (1979) requirements for being an informant. She was also born and raised in Sumter County, South Carolina, and she attended the Dalzell School and Hillcrest High School. She is still currently involved in the community, and during the interviews, she did not analyze her words as she spoke. She made it very clear from the beginning that she did not want to be identified. In fact, during member checks (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), Helen would ask that I delete or change the names of people that she had mentioned that might identify them or her. I assured her that I would change the names of the people that she had mentioned and anything else that might identify them or her.

The final participant in this study, Jean, like the other three participants, was born and raised in Sumter County, South Carolina. She lived there for many years before getting married and moving away from the community. I believed

that while she had a “thorough enculturation,” her “current involvement” (Spradley, 1979, p. 46) was minimal. She lives in another state and rarely comes back to Sumter County, South Carolina. She was, however, more than willing to give “adequate time” to the study, and she did not analyze her speech from an outsider’s point of view (Spradley, 1979, p. 46). Therefore, she met almost all of Spradley’s (1979) requirements for being an informant. She, like Tonie and Helen, attended the Dalzell School and Hillcrest High School. Boaz, on the other hand, attended the Dalzell School and Edmunds High School. All four participants were of Turkish descent and were very generous with their time and with their stories, even though the memories of their stories brought back some feelings of pain and sorrow.

Establishing Rigor

The purpose of this study was to discover the voices of the Turkish people who lived through the integration movement in Sumter County, South Carolina during the early part of the 20th century. Through in-depth interviews, first-person narratives of Turkish experiences in the school system, both prior to, as well as after the integration of Turkish students into White schools, was given. Oral histories were preserved through the documentation of audio recordings, and in one instance, the video recording of personal stories of the participants. Throughout the study, I was aware that I had a tremendous responsibility to properly represent the participants in the study to the best of my ability. As I interviewed the participants, I documented their stories on text, and I assessed and evaluated the interviews through qualitative means.

Credibility was increased by adhering to some of the naturalistic techniques that provide trustworthiness created by Lincoln and Guba (1985). For example, I ensured prolonged engagement in Sumter County, South Carolina by traveling regularly to South Carolina throughout the course of the study. A timeline of data collection is in the appendices and is labeled as "APPENDIX D." I spent a few weeks there during summers and one Christmas break, and I tried to go at least one weekend a month for several months in a row. While prolonged engagement is not a necessary quality when conducting an oral history project, I did spend a considerable amount of time in Sumter County, South Carolina while conducting this study. Trustworthiness was not attained through prolonged engagement, however, but rather through the building of close interviewer/participant relationships. The participants and I all share common ancestors and common family names. Because of the relationships that were developed, and because I am a member of their community, a common bond of trust was established and nourished. While there, I conducted research of the area and history of Sumter County, I interviewed participants and I conducted "member checks" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) with the participants to ensure accuracy of the study. Member checks involve "taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible" (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). Sometimes I mailed the typed transcripts of our conversations to the participants, sometimes I read the transcripts to the participants over the phone or in person, and sometimes I delivered the transcripts to the participants' homes and collected them later. After

collecting them, though, I always made the recommended changes and then gave the corrected version of the transcript back to the participant to ensure that what I had typed was indeed what he or she had said.

Dependability was “enhanced through the use of well-informed” participants (Denzin, 1994, p. 513). Before conducting the formal interviews, I wanted to establish a relationship of trust with each of the participants. I spoke with each one on the phone and began by explaining who I was. I felt that it was necessary for the participants to understand that I was one of their own, even though I lived in another state. While I did not know most of them, I was related to all of them. They all knew my mother, which is why I believe they were willing to take a risk and open up to me. I asked each of them if they would be willing to share the stories of their educational experiences with me, and to my surprise, they all said, “Yes.” I believe that if I had not been a part of this community, these participants would not have been as willing to share their stories. Three of the participants live in various cities in South Carolina. I traveled to their homes to conduct most of the interviews. The fourth participant lives in another state, so I interviewed her over the telephone. During the interviews I used photographs and documents to elicit responses to the questions and to help the participants remember aspects of their educational experiences.

Transferability was provided by the use of thick description (Geertz, 1973). Through the process of interviewing, I tried to ask questions that would evoke rich information (Geertz, 1973). I knew that this would allow me to write a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the themes that I identified from the

interviews. An example of one of the questions that I asked that I hoped would evoke rich (Geertz, 1973) information was, “[Using as many details as possible] could you describe a typical day at the Dalzell School?”

Confirmability was built around audit trails, field notes and a reflexive journal. All data have been organized and saved. Hard copies of the data have also been printed. All information has been saved and stored in at least three different locations, the hard drive of my laptop computer, a flash drive and a researcher’s notebook for safekeeping. I triangulated the data by ensuring that I was analyzing my findings from more than one “vantage point” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 257). I used multiple sources of data, such as pictures, documents, artifacts and census records, and several different participants told stories of their life experiences during the integration movement in Sumter County, South Carolina.

One of my fears during this study was that I would unintentionally misrepresent the participants. I wanted their voices to be heard, not mine. I did not want to ask leading questions or say anything during the interviews that might influence their answers. For this reason, I tried to ask open-ended questions that would allow the participants to take the interview in any direction that they wanted. I also asked the participants to read the final transcripts of the conversations so that they could read what was written to make sure that I recorded it correctly.

Another fear of mine was that the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina would not want this study to be conducted. Now that times have changed, things are not the way they used to be, and many people would rather

not talk about the past. Bringing it up again makes people have to live through it again, and I did not want to hurt anyone or cause anxiety. As I spoke with some of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, however, many expressed a sincere interest in this study. These supporters believed that it was time for the stories of those who experienced educational segregation to be told so that their children and grandchildren might understand exactly what they went through, how they had to fight for equal rights, and how they were victorious in the end.

Regarding my biases, to be honest with the reader, I have my own set of beliefs and attitudes regarding who we, the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, are, and this is based on my research. I do not believe that Yusef Ben Ali or Joseph Benenhaley, our forefather, was Native American. I did consider the idea during this research, thinking it would be exotic to be able to claim this heritage. I was open to whatever I would find in historical documents and census papers, but found nothing that could tie the Benenhaley surname to Native American heritage. The earliest birth certificates and death certificates with Benenhaley surnames listed “Turk” as the person’s race. I did not find any that listed Benenhaleys as being Native American. The purpose of this study, though, was not to discover who we are genetically, but rather to discover the voices of the participants regarding their educational experiences during the early part of the 20th century. I researched census records for the purpose of tracing my family tree back to Yusef Ben Ali, which I was able to do. I did not research census records for the purpose of determining our ethnicity, but unless I have

documented proof, I will not assume that we are anything except what our ancestors before us claimed to be, that is, people of Turkish descent (New, 2002).

Where historical records fell short, I had to rely on the earliest documents available regarding our origins. One of these documents was the written account of General Thomas Sumter's great-grandson, Thomas Sebastian Sumter, who claimed that the Turkish people were "Caucasian of Arab descent" (1917), and that his great-grandfather, General Thomas Sumter himself defended their White status in court (Sumter, n. d). Having said that, I understand that some Turkish people may have married Native Americans. This would mean that their children would be Turkish and Native American, but not because of the Benenhaley blood line, according to census records.

Another bias of mine is that I have no reason to doubt that the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina received an unequal education because they were segregated during the early part of the 20th century. I have read several different documents (Bull, 1982; Gibbs, 1989; *Hood v. Board of Trustees of Sumter County School District No. 2, Sumter County*, 1961; Kaye, 1963; "S. C. 'Turks' are pushing court case," 1961; "Sumter County colony locally called Turks," 1928; Workman, 1950b), and I have seen many pictures (Woody & Thigpen, 2005) that support this belief. The internal conflict I have is based on my desire to be as objective as possible in data collection and data analysis without being neutral on my beliefs about segregation. I believe that proponents of segregation actually believed that they could provide an equal education to segregated groups, but historical accounts have not supported their claim. As an

educator and as a person of Turkish descent, I am not neutral on this issue, but I do not believe that I have to be neutral in order to conduct an objective study. Neutrality, after all, is an attitude or thought toward something. It takes place in the brain. Objectivity, on the other hand, is an act or behavior. It is seen in the way one conducts a study. Regarding objectivity and neutrality, Bernard (1994) states,

> Objectivity does not mean (and has never meant) value neutrality. No one asks Cultural Survival, Inc. to be neutral in documenting the violent obscenities against indigenous peoples of the world. No one asks Amnesty International to be neutral in its effort to document state-sanctioned torture. We recognize that the power of the documentation is in its objectivity, in it chilling irrefutability, not in its neutrality. (p. 153)

While I knew in my mind that I was not exactly neutral on this topic, I still strove to be objective. Bernard (1994) attests to the fact that "objectivity gets its biggest test when you study your own culture" (p. 154). This is because researchers who research their own cultures have strong ties to the culture. They often overlook things that an outsider might see, simply because of their familiarity with the culture. They also have their own sets of beliefs that were shaped by this culture. Barbara Meyerhoff, as quoted in Bernard (1994), decided to conduct a research study on her own cultural group. Bernard (1994) explains her inner conflict:

> She had never thought about studying her own kind, but she launched a study of poor, elderly Jews who were on public assistance. She agonized about what she was doing and, as she tells it, never resolved whether it was anthropology or a personal quest.
>
> Many of the people she studied were survivors of the Holocaust. "How, then, could anyone look at them dispassionately? How could I feel anything but awe and appreciation for their mere presence?. . . Since neutrality was

> impossible and idealization undesirable, I decided on striving for balance." (Bernard, 1994, p. 154)

Likewise, I strove to be a balanced researcher in my own study. I echo her sentiments of feeling nothing but awe and appreciation for the participants of this study and all Turkish people who had similar experiences.

My Key Informant

My mother lives in Sumter County, South Carolina, and she knows many Turkish people. She was my initial key informant (Merriam, 2001) and gave me advice as to whom she thought I should interview. She grew up with many of the Turkish people in Sumter County and knew who might want to share their stories as well as their photographs. She was also very familiar with the history of the Sumter County. She was a vital part of this study because she served as a mediator between the Turkish community and me. She was an insider to the Turkish community, whereas I was merely the daughter of an insider. While I am part of the family, I do not live in Sumter County, and could have been perceived by some to be an outsider. My mother suggested that I interview Boaz, a highly respected member of the Turkish community. Boaz was a former pastor of a Baptist church in Sumter County, South Carolina. Before that he was an associate pastor at different Baptist churches in several other states. He has also served as interim pastor at another church and still serves as interim pastor at a church on Sunday mornings. He is the author of two Christian books. I purposefully selected the participants, and I listened to my key informant's advice as to whom she thought I should interview. Patton (1990) explains that

> the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich* cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term *purposeful sampling.* (Patton, 1990, p. 169, emphasis in original)

I carefully searched for participants who were willing to share their stories so that I might learn a great deal about the life experiences of Turkish people who grew up in Sumter County, South Carolina during the early part of the 20th century and how these life experiences affected and were affected by historical events. I used one of the more common forms of purposeful sampling, that of "snowball, chain, or network sampling" (Patton, 1990). As Patton (1990) says, "this strategy involves identifying participants or cases of interest from people who know people who know people who know what cases are information-rich, that is, good examples for study, good interview subjects" (p. 182). I was confident that the key informant would be able to lead me to "information-rich" participants, and that they, in turn, would lead me to others. They did, in fact, lead me to other people who had stories to share and who were interested in participating.

During the course of this study, I interviewed Turkish people from two different decades, those born in the 1930's and 1940's. The span of two decades gave me great insight into the rich history of Sumter County, South Carolina. When deciding on the number of participants for this study, I remembered that the sample size should not be so large that it is difficult to extract thick, rich data (Geertz, 1973) nor so small that it is difficult to achieve data saturation (Flick, 1998). In this study, I purposefully selected (Patton, 1990) and interviewed

immediate as well as extended relatives, some of whom I had not yet met. I was very interested in interviewing at least one sibling of one of my grandparents, but this was not possible due to health issues.

Initially I wanted to confine this study to my immediate relatives, and my reason was threefold. First, I believed that my immediate relatives would be more willing than extended relatives or non-relatives to allow me to interview them regarding such a sensitive topic as educational segregation during the integration movement. Second, I believed I would be able to earn their trust sooner than I would be able to earn the trust of extended relatives or non-relatives because they already knew me. Third, I wanted to offer this project as a gift to them for sharing their oral histories with me. I viewed this project as a way that I might honor my immediate family as well as those in our family who have passed away.

After researching the history, documents and artifacts of Sumter County, South Carolina, and after talking to some members of my immediate family, however, I changed my mind. I began to think about how this study might affect the relationships I have with my immediate family members. I knew that some members of my family had mixed emotions regarding whether or not this study should be done, and I thought that involving them might cause unnecessary strain on our relationships. I would no longer be just “Terri.” For some of them I would be the unwanted researcher, too. Also I already knew a great deal about their lives and I believed that the familiarity that we shared might interfere with the quality of the interviews. I believed firmly that I could collect the information I needed from other participants, who actually wanted to participate, without my becoming

too emotionally involved. This is why I chose to branch out and meet other Turkish people whom I had not known very well before.

Chapter Four will explain the findings of this study. The six themes that were identified will be explained in detail with personal anecdotes from each of the interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

In the past, historical documents about the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina have been written by non-Turkish people. While these documents may have been accurate from their perspectives, they were missing one key component that could have enriched their findings, that of allowing the Turkish people to tell their own histories. This study, written by a Turkish author, found and interviewed those who lived through the integration movement and encouraged them to give personal testimonies regarding their educational experiences. This chapter will report the findings of these interviews as it discusses concerns and common themes that were discovered through analysis of the data.

Opposition to the Study

Investigating the educational experiences of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina was a difficult, yet rewarding process. Both before and during the study I spoke with family members and attended conferences to help me decide on an exact topic. A man from my church, who identifies himself as being Melungeon, approached me about a Melungeon conference in Atanta, Georgia. The Melungeons, according to Brent Kennedy, as quoted in Alther (2007)

> descended, in part, from Turks marooned on the Carolina coast in the sixteenth century. He maintains that the name Melungeon may come from the Turkish *melun can* or the Arabic *melun jinn* [emphasis in original], both meaning something like "cursed soul," which is no doubt how people stranded in a strange land surrounded by surly natives might feel about their plight. Later, he theorizes, this sobriquet was adopted by Europeans as a term of opprobrium for the descendants of early Turks. (Alther, 2007, p. 95)

I decided to go to the Melungeon conference. While there, I looked around and could not help but notice that the Melungeons in the audience appeared to be people of many different ethnic groups, yet they all claimed that they were from the same ethnic group. I sat in awe for several minutes. Is this what it would be like to live in a truly raceless world? I saw people who appeared to me to be White, Black, Latino, Native American and Asian, but they all identified themselves as being Melungeon. As I sat and listened to several speakers, I took note of a piece of advice from Kevin Hayes (2006) who introduced the keynote speaker, Wayne Winkler. He cautioned all researchers who were studying our own family histories to "remain open-minded because when we shake the family tree, we need to be prepared to eat whatever fruit comes out." He was mostly referring to the genetic information that most people who research their family trees are afraid to uncover, but I discovered another type of fruit that was just as frightening – familial opposition to the study.

I was cautioned by family members beforehand that it might not be a good idea to stir the pot. Several clichés came to mind: "That's water under the bridge," "Let sleeping dogs lie" and "Don't fix what is not broken." Two family members, in particular, cautioned me in love. One asked why I "wanted to bring all that up

again?" and the other told me that she would not do the study if she were in my position because "some people might get mad." I greatly appreciate these two family members loving me enough to approach me regarding the sensitivity of this topic. Their advice to approach this study with humility and respect guided me through each interview.

Most people who have experienced segregation are very cautious when speaking about it. They are afraid that their talking about the past will only make the pain resurface, and that it can not possibly have a positive effect. Their opposition to this study is more than likely based on the fear that it might bring negative attention to our ethnic group. I believe, however, that these stories should be told. The Turkish people who came before me were brave men and women who were segregated, both in educational institutions and in the community at large. They all came together to demand equal rights and their courage to bring about integration should be commended. My intention is not to belittle, demean or hurt anyone in any way, but rather to celebrate and document the bravery of my predecessors through an oral history project. Without their efforts and the efforts of similar segregated groups, I, too, might have had to attend a three room schoolhouse for Turkish students.

The Participants

The participants in this study were all in their 60s and 70s, and they were all born and raised in Sumter County, South Carolina. I am related to all of them in some way. When I asked them about their ethnicity, they all identified themselves as being White Americans of Turkish descent. As children, they were

forced to attend the Dalzell School, a school for Turkish children only, until the Supreme Court decision of *Hood v. Board of Trustees of Sumter County School District No. 2, Sumter County, South Carolina* (1961) allowed elementary students to make the eventual transition into White elementary schools. Older Turkish students were allowed to attend White high schools in 1950, whereas the younger Turkish students were not allowed to attend White elementary schools until 1961.

Two of the participants in this study married Turkish spouses, while two married non-Turkish White spouses. One of the participants has remained in Sumter County, South Carolina while the other three have moved around to other cities, states or countries. Descriptions of all four participants are found in the sections that follow.

Boaz. When I first met Boaz, I was intrigued by his story. His parents were separated before he was born, and he was raised by his mother and other extended members of his family. He grew up in a humble home that was full of love. His mother believed in him from the time that she gave birth to him. He told me, “I was born in Sumter County, close to Wedgefield, South Carolina. I grew up on a farm. Mom raised me, and she had to work in order to provide for me. We lived with her mom and dad. Mother had very limited schooling. When I told her I was going to drop out, she said, ‘You can, but you’re going to work.’ And so she had a job for me the next day.” (B1, 45-49; B1, 196; B2, 90-91). Boaz’s mother emphasized the importance of getting an education. She did everything in her power to help Boaz either continue his studies or face the hardships of earning a

living. Her belief in her son pushed him to overcome many obstacles that he would face in the school setting.

As an adult, Boaz is a natural leader among the people of South Carolina. He is highly regarded and is a very wise and loving man. He is also very well educated. He used to be a teacher and a football coach. Called by God in the early 50s, Boaz served as pastor in several churches in the Southeastern part of the United States, including one church in Sumter County, South Carolina until he recently retired. He now serves as interim pastor of a church on Sunday mornings. Boaz has held several leadership positions in schools, colleges, churches, missions, conventions, associations and conferences. He has also authored two books. I first became familiar with Boaz after reading one of his books, twice. In his book he discusses some of his childhood experiences of growing up in Sumter County, South Carolina as a Turkish boy. I was naturally drawn to him as a possible participant for my study having read his work and having connected with it. When I approached him about the study, he was very supportive. He wanted to get to know me, so he and his wife met with me in a restaurant to discuss the project.

After ordering a meal of chicken, vegetables and biscuits, he asked the blessing, and we discussed the purpose of this project. He wanted to be sure that my intentions were pure. I assured him that they were, and I expressed that I would do my best to uplift the Turkish people and their efforts during the early part of the 20th century to end segregation. He then invited me to his home to talk. He said, “The only thing I ask of you, Terri, is in your report, anywhere you quote

me, is that it's to elevate the people, not in any way to demean." I responded, "Yes, sir. That would be my purpose." He then said, "Right, and nothing in any way to hurt somebody" (February 26 conversation with Boaz, 462-465). I assured him that I was in accord, and that I would do my best to honor our people.

Over the course of this project, we became very close. He and his wife were exceedingly hospitable, cooking for me, inviting me to stay for a weekend and making it a point to introduce me to other family members. Boaz also gave me the names and phone numbers of other people whom I should contact for the purposes of this study. He gave up many hours of his time to tell me about his educational experiences both before and during the integration movement. He also took me under his wing and mentored me during this whole process, leaving encouraging messages on my voice mail and sending an uplifting note through the mail. His participation in this study proved to be of paramount importance, and I am forever grateful to this man and the other three participants of this study for agreeing to share their stories with me.

Tonie. Tonie has a very small frame, but a huge heart. When I arrived at her house, she took me on a tour of the yard. She likes to garden and is very knowledgeable about plants and flowers. She was raised in a very large family and told me, "Back then, we didn't have TV and things so we spent a lot of time at home. We had all of our meals together, morning, noon and night, where the blessing was always asked" (T1, 43-45). While family was of paramount importance to her parents, education was not. Tonie's parents had limited schooling but were still able to raise several kids and provide for all of them.

While times were tight, Tonie said that she was unaware that they were poor. They always had food on the table, and they were never in need of anything.

Tonie has a very healthy sense of self, in spite of her childhood educational experiences. She does not allow her past educational experiences to affect her self-esteem today. The last year that she attended school was the ninth grade. She stopped going to school because of the pressures of school and home. When she approached her parents about taking a correspondence course in order to take the General Educational Development Exam (GED), they were not supportive. She married a man in the military, had children and then traveled all over the world. She was a stay-at-home mom and worked occasionally when her children were older. As an adult she rarely thinks about being Turkish. She identifies herself as being White and does not like to be thought of as being any different. She also has a vivid imagination and a sharp memory. When recalling memories from her elementary school years, she was able to describe things meticulously. When I asked her if the Dalzell School had a graduation ceremony, she responded, “Yes. I went to an 8th grade graduation. I wore a dress that was pulled off of the shoulders and fitted in the bodice. It had ruffles all the way down and had a hoop under it. It was light green” (T2, 239-248).

Tonie is compassionate. She has forgiven those who demanded segregation and even occasionally visits the gravesite of one of the boys who was the least accepting of the Turkish students when they attended the White schools. I was with her on one occasion. She called me over to the gravesite and made a point to let me know that she had forgiven him. It was almost as if she were trying

to say it in his presence. She told me that in spite of the way things used to be, she was not bitter. She was truly saddened by his death. She said that the past is in the past and that there is no point in harboring ill feelings toward those who were unaccepting of the Turkish people. She regrets that she and others had to endure segregation at the time, but she knows that she can not change the past. She only wishes that things could have been different. Tonie, like Boaz and the other participants, was vital to this study. She shared newspaper clippings, books, photographs and documents that she thought might aid me in this project. Tonie called me often to check on the status of the study and to encourage me over the phone. Without her help this study would not have been complete.

Helen. Like Tonie, Helen also grew up in a large family. Having several brothers and sisters may be the reason that she is so humorous and quick-witted. She asked me if I had read anything from the *Ebony* magazine. The title of the issue was "South Carolina's Raceless People." When she held it up, I asked, "What does that mean? What's in there?" She said, "Just hold your horses, girl. This den is so dark my friend says, 'Why don't you paint your den white?' I say, 'Why don't you paint it for me?'" (H1, 26-28). She stopped in the middle of one interview to tell me a joke. She said, "Did you hear about the letter that Chelsea Clinton wrote to that general? She asked him to explain why he didn't do something. He replied that he was afraid. She said, 'With all of those medals that you wear on your uniform, I wouldn't think that you would be afraid of anything.' He said, 'I'm afraid of three things: Osama, Obama and yo' mama" (H3, 120-124). We both laughed heartily and then continued with the interview.

Helen is vibrant and full of life. She used to work with young children in an educational setting. She attended school until the 11th grade, and then decided to get married. During our initial meeting, she insisted that I not use her real name, videotape her, audio record her or take pictures of her. She wanted to remain completely anonymous. After we chatted for a while and became acquainted, she offered to take me on a tour of the Sumter/Dalzell area one windy afternoon, so we jumped in the car and she pointed out areas of interest. We ended up at a cemetery where many members of our family are buried. Several tombstones share common family surnames that are representative of Sumter County's Turkish families. As we walked through the cemetery, she gave an account of the lives of various people who had passed away. We came upon the recent gravesite of a young man in his 20s. Helen admired the flowers, carefully pulled a weed or two, and commented that the family had really taken good care of his gravesite. She also was filled with great sorrow at the passing of such a young person. Helen loves passionately and feels pain deeply. She told me that, through this study, she had come to know me and love me, and that she wanted me to continue to visit her after this study was completed. I assured her that I would, as she was family, not only by blood, but also now through a relationship.

Helen is also feisty. She has always had a very strong will, standing up to those who sought to keep her down. She said that when she was in school, people used to refer to her as the "mean White Turk" (H2, 56). She confronted students (male and female), bus drivers, school teachers, administrators and even community leaders. She believes firmly in equality and is quick to speak her

mind. She said that she has always wanted to write a book or appear on Oprah, and that this is probably the closest she will come to it. Helen had a plethora of documents that she shared with me, including birth certificates, court documents, magazines, newspaper articles and pictures. She treasures these documents and keeps them in a large plastic bag with a zipper in a very safe place. When she showed them to me, I was amazed at the number of documents that she has kept throughout the years. Many of the papers had yellowed over the years, but they were still intact. She even had some of the items laminated for safekeeping.

Helen's stories are heartbreaking. She recalls with detailed precision events that happened over 50 years ago as if they had happened yesterday. Her internal conflict regarding the way she feels about the people who demanded segregation is a constant battle. She desperately wants to forgive, but has difficulty forgetting the way she was treated. Through it all, she has tried to make sure that her children's and grandchildren's educational experiences were better than her own. Her participation in this study was extremely important in many ways, but mostly because her reaction to segregation was different from the other three participants. Her personal anecdotes offer the reader a unique perspective on how some people fought segregation at the time.

Jean. Jean is and always has been brave. She is also steady and grounded. During the time of our interviews, she underwent surgery that would keep her off of her feet for a while. She faced that, just as she faced daunting events when she was a child, with extreme courage. Our conversations were more serious than some of the conversations that the other participants and I had. When she was

younger, Jean was an inspiration to other Turkish students in that she was one of the first two Turkish students to graduate from Hillcrest High School. During our interviews, she was very open about many sensitive topics. She discussed the fact that Turkish people often had to sit in other areas of churches, theaters, buses and hospitals. During one interview she explained, “I remember one occasion when I, I think I told you once before that we used to go out, and we’d ride the transportation, the bus would come by, and we’d go to ride to town, and you’d have to wait on that on public transportation. They would make you go to the back of the bus.” I asked, “So did you ever, did you automatically go to the back because you knew that that’s what you were supposed to do?” She responded, “Oh, they would send you to the back.” I questioned, “They would send you back there?” She replied, “Yes, they would tell you to go to the back, yes” (J3, 141-149).

Since Jean was one of the first Turkish students to attend a White high school, she probably endured more resistance than most. We conducted our interviews over the phone because we do not live near each other. Jean met her husband at a summer camp. While there, she heard about an employment opportunity and inquired. She was hired and moved away from Sumter for a while. She and her husband have served in several churches, and Jean even worked in a college for a while. She earned the right to attend Hillcrest High School when she was in the 11th grade. As expected, she faced great opposition, being one of the pioneers of social change in the community. Jean is a very sweet person. She has moved on with her life, in spite of the way that others treated her

when she was young. She is very open to learning about the history of the Turkish people, and she thirsts for more information regarding our genetics. She hopes that this study will help her to understand more about our history and who we are ethnically.

Jean is the one participant in this study who graduated from high school. Boaz, Tonie and Helen quit for a variety of reasons. They either did not feel prepared, decided to get married, or chose to avoid the resistance that they faced while attending the White high school. In spite of leaving high school early, two of the three took the General Educational Development Exam (GED) and passed, and one even went on to receive a doctorate's degree.

When I asked Jean to comment on earning the right to attend high school with non-Turkish Whites, she stated, "I hated even getting on the bus. It was a burden to have to go to school. They never accepted us in anything. They rejected us. Any class activities, you weren't a part of it. Some quit. They couldn't handle it. [My friend] and I stuck it out, though" (J1, 20-23).

Since Jean was one of the first Turkish students to attend Hillcrest High School, some of her stories were unique, and her participation in this study was needed. She paved the way for the Turkish students who came after her, just as all four participants in this study paved the way for future Turkish students, like me, to have an equal education.

Thoughts on Being Turkish

During my initial interviews I asked all of the participants to define themselves ethnically. Sometimes the way we identify ourselves is determined by

our genetics and sometimes the way we identify ourselves is determined by the context in which we live. I know that being a person of Turkish descent and living in Georgia does not have the same meaning as being a person of Turkish descent and living in Sumter County, South Carolina. I also recognize that being a person of Turkish descent and going to school during the second half of the 20th century does not have the same meaning as being a person of Turkish descent and going to school during the first half of the 20th century. I did not ask the participants to elaborate or give meaning to their responses in the initial interviews because Dolbeare and Schuman, as quoted in Seidman (2006), suggest that meaning-making should be reserved for a later interview. When I asked the participants, "Ethnically how do you define or identify yourself?," Boaz stated, "My ethnicity is Turkish, as far as I know" (B1, 160), but he also laughed, and with a twinkle in his eye he said, "That's a good question because so many times I've had people come up to me and say to me, 'What's your nationality?' and I'll just laugh, and I'll say, 'American'" (B1, 156-158).

When I asked Tonie the same question, she exclaimed, "I'm Caucasian of Turkish descent" (T1, 49). She went into detail about how her maternal grandmother was not all Turkish, but her maternal grandfather was. Tonie does not like to be referred to as anything but White simply because she does not like to be distinguished as being different. When she was a child, she recalled, "They didn't think we were White, and they treated us as such" (T1, 73-74). Tonie, who had been mild-tempered during most of the interview raised her voice when she made that statement. I could see that the memory of others not accepting her as

White was still a sore topic of conversation. Helen did not answer my question directly, but jokingly asked me a question. She inquired, “Have you ever heard of in the army, ‘Don’t ask and I won’t tell?’” (H1, 16). Being a Turkish person of light complexion, Helen had this option when she was younger, unlike Turkish people of dark complexion. When I asked Jean, she hesitated for a few moments. She then stated, “That’s a hard question. I tell them I’m Turkish” (J1, 71).

When Boaz stated that his ethnicity is Turkish, as far as he knows, he was basing that on his research, not simply on a guess. He has read the works of several historians and he has examined census records. All of the evidence that he has collected over the years has led him to believe that he is a direct descendent of the original Joseph Benenhaley, whom he believes to be “Caucasian of Arab descent” (Sumter, n. d.). He gave me a copy of a letter that Sumter (n. d.) left with Boaz’s grandmother so that future generations would know a little about their ancestors and how they fought and died for their country. In a later interview, Boaz elaborated on what it meant to him to be Turkish. He explained,

I assume I accepted it just like anyone else who would have been from whatever ethnic background they were from. That’s who I am. I’m proud of it. I have no reason not to be. God gave me the same abilities, and I have the same rights that anyone else has, and I hold my head high” (B3, 335-338). When Boaz made this statement, I could not help but notice that this statement was not simply a figure of speech. He was literally holding his head very high as he spoke, and he had a solemn look on his face.

Tonie claimed to be Caucasian of Turkish descent. Later in the interview she stated, “I hate saying that we had to go to a White school. I hate saying that because I consider myself as White” (T1, 79-80). She would rather not distinguish herself from non-Turkish Whites because she identifies herself as “Caucasian.” That is not to say that she is ashamed of being Turkish. In fact, she mentioned several times that she was proud to be Turkish. She attributes her olive complexion and stunning green eyes to her Turkish ethnicity. But this same olive complexion that is coveted by many today caused her problems when she was younger. During her interviews, Tonie told me many stories about her educational experiences. She usually did so with a look of sadness in her eyes. Based on Tonie’s composure during some of the interviews, I believe that she experienced pain and trouble when she was younger because people chose to distinguish among ethnic groups. She does not wish to see those lines drawn anymore.

When I asked Helen to define and identify her ethnicity, she dodged the question with a joke. She has a great sense of humor, even when talking about a sensitive subject, such as this one. When I asked her how she would feel if someone asked her about her ethnicity, she stiffened in her chair, leaned forward, looked me in the eyes, and responded, “How would you feel if someone asked you that? I would ask why they wanted to know. I wouldn’t be insulted. I used to be offended about it, but not now” (H1, 178-179). Helen explained to me that her grandfather was White. He married a Turkish person and their children were then classified as being Turkish. She even had a question for me. She asked, “Your daddy’s White, right?” I replied, “Yes, ma’am.” She became inquisitive and

asked, “Why is it that your daddy is White, your mama is Turk, so why would you be labeled as a Turk? If you lived around here, you’d be classified as being a Turk. Can you explain that to me? (H2, 164-166). If you lived here, and you had gone to school here, you would have been classified as a Turk. Why is that? (H3, 245-247).” Helen was clearly unsettled at the injustice of being labeled. She made it a point to reiterate that had I grown up in a different place, at a different time, that I, too, would have been labeled. She enlightened me with those words because I had never thought about someone labeling me that way. I did not like the thought of it, and it made me uncomfortable.

Jean stated that defining how she identified herself ethnically was difficult to answer, but then stated that she tells people that she is Turkish. In a later interview she explained what she tells people regarding her ethnicity. She said, “Well, I just tell them I don’t know that much about it and they will say, ‘Well what nationality are you?’ And I would say, ‘Well I’ve always been told that I was Turkish.’ And I’m not ashamed to tell them that. Like I used to get down on the word, ‘Turk’ or whatever, but that doesn’t bother me, doesn’t phase me anymore. If I knew more about it . . . I wish I knew more about my background and the history of it. But I don’t, so I can’t tell people too much about it because I don’t know that much about it. I was always told, that with General Thomas Sumter the Turkish man came over or a couple, or whatever, and that’s the way it got started. But I don’t know anything. They’ll say, ‘Have you ever been to Turkey? Were you born over there or what?’ And I’ll say, ‘No. It goes way back.’ That’s what I’ll tell them. ‘It goes way back.’ I don’t know how far back. I wish I

did, though" (J3, 264-275). Jean thirsts for more information regarding her ethnicity. She relies on the oral traditions that have been passed down through the generations and is very open-minded to any new information regarding her ethnicity.

All of the participants, except for Tonie, related their ancestors' origins to General Thomas Sumter having brought them to Sumter County, South Carolina. Boaz stated, "Going back to the Benenhaley name and studying Thomas Sumter's history of Sumter County, and Robert Bass' book, which is titled, *The Gamecock*, and then Ann King Gregorie's book, all three of these point out the fact that the first Benenhaley, Joseph Benenhaley, was a scout for Thomas Sumter during the Revolutionary War. So far as being able to pinpoint when the first Benenhaley came to South Carolina, to America, it's been hard to describe" (B1, 160-166).

I can personally attest to the fact that pinpointing when and how the first Benenhaley came to South Carolina is "hard to describe." I have not found any written documentation that explains where he was born, where he was buried or who his parents were. I have heard that Joseph Benenhaley was buried either at the High Hills Church in Stateburg or the Home Place at the General Thomas Sumter Monument Area in Sumter County, South Carolina, but I have not yet investigated the matter. The great-grandson of General Thomas Sumter wrote that Joseph Benenhaley was a "Caucasian of Arab descent" (Sumter, 1917), but even this description leaves room for individual interpretation. Sumter (n. d.) also gave testimony regarding General Thomas Sumter's defending the White status of the Turkish people, which supports his claim that Joseph Benenhaley was a

"Caucasian of Arab descent" (Sumter, 1917). But without official documentation of our forefather's ethnicity, the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina have had to piece together historical records and oral traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Three out of the four participants were very clear about their perception of their identity. They claimed to be of Turkish descent. Helen was the only participant who did not answer the question directly, but even so, based on her three interviews, I am confident that she identifies herself as a person of Turkish descent. For example, when talking about her grandparents, she stated that "the White comes from him [her grandfather]. She [her grandmother] was full-blooded Turkish" (H1, 190). When I asked the participants if they believed that they were Native American or if they knew anything about the Dalzell School being called an Indian school, Boaz responded, "I'd never head that. In fact, I don't believe that. There may be something I missed along the way, but as I told you, I spent ten years of my life at the Dalzell School and I never heard such a thing" (B2, 98-101).

I then asked, "What would you say to someone who asked you if you were Native American? Are you Native American?" He seemed agitated by the question and said with great authority, "I'd tell them in no uncertain terms, no." I did not want to push the subject, but I was curious and I believed that Boaz and I had established a strong interviewer/participant relationship. So out of curiosity I asked, "How do you know?" He raised his eyebrows and gave a very thought provoking response. He stated, "How do I know? How does everyone else know

who he or she is? They take somebody's word. They read it in a book. Somebody's passed it down, your parents, your grandparents before you. This is who we are. This is where we came from" (B2, 410-417). He had a point.

Helen's responses were similar. She stated, "Indian school? I've never heard of that. The old people don't put any stock in that (H2, 174-178). Who were these Indian children?" (H3, 197). I explained to her that the people who refer to the Dalzell School as being an Indian school are assuming that the Turkish people were the "Indian children." She suddenly had a disgruntled look, and just shook her head no.

Jean also had never heard of the Dalzell School being called an Indian school but she was open to the idea of possibly being Native American. She said, "I don't recall any of that. If they did, I don't remember it, but I don't think they did (J2, 39-40). My kids say we'd like to be Cherokee Indian. I really don't know. I really don't. My daughter, she said, 'Mom I always liked Indian people'" (J1, 71-74). The lack of evidence regarding the origin of the Turkish people is perplexing to some who live in Sumter County, South Carolina, and they would like definitive answers as to the origin of their forefather.

Tonie based her belief that she is not Native American on her physical characteristics not being typical of Native American and on her never having heard the Dalzell School referred to as an Indian School when she was attending the school. She said, "I don't believe we're Indians because we don't have Indian characteristics. When I was a little girl, I had light hair and beautiful green eyes. I still have beautiful green eyes." She then blushed and laughed. I pursued the idea

of the possibility of the Dalzell School being an Indian school. I asked, “Do you think that if it had been referred to as an Indian school that you would have known back then?” Tonie responded, “All I ever heard was that it was a Turk school.” Since she did not answer the question directly, I specifically asked, “Was it an Indian school?” Her answer was a confident “No.” I wanted to understand more, so I asked, “How do you know it wasn’t an Indian school?” Her response was simple and directly to the point. She stated, “There weren’t any Indians there when I went” (T2, 125-134). Tonie, like Helen, seemed confused as to why some think that the Dalzell School was a school for Indian children when many of the ones who attended this school did not claim to be Native American.

In follow-up interviews, I decided to ask the four participants to give meaning to what it meant to be Turkish in the early part of the 20th century and to how they felt when someone used the word “Turk” around them. I then asked them to elaborate on what it means to be Turkish today. Boaz became pensive and said, “For someone to call me a Turk, I didn’t like the expression, the way it was used because it was used out of derision. I did not know enough about the history of Turkey to appreciate my ancestry until I did go back to school and study history. I’m very proud of my Turkish ancestry. But at that time, when someone used the term, it was a term out of derision, and I did not like it at all. [Now] it’s different because the mentality of people has changed. The younger people coming along, many of them do not have the same attitudes that their grandparents or even their parents had because when they used the term ‘Turk’, at

the time, they used it in a condescending manner as if to say, ‘We’re better than you are’” (B2, 110-121).

Tonie, with a look of solitude stated, “It meant that we were somehow different. Not to everybody, though. I didn’t have it as hard as the ones who went before me. Likewise, the ones who came after me didn’t have it as hard as I did. [Now] I say I’m Turkish. I say it with pride and dignity. People think it’s neat” (T3, 13-15 and 23-24). Tonie helped me to understand that the meaning of the word has changed over time. The word “Turk,” at one time, was used to distinguish Turkish people from others. Now the word conjures up feelings of pride regarding who we are.

Helen expressed her feelings on the matter by saying, “It just meant that you were being singled out. They made a point to let you know that you were different. Now, after I got older, I learned. People, if they try to live for the Lord, and if they are educated, they don’t live like that. But it takes you a long time to get to the realization that they are just ignorant and just to let it go. But it takes a long time to get to that point” (H3, 103-107).

I was curious to see how Jean perceived the word, “Turk,” so I asked, “If someone were to say the word ‘Turk’ around you when you were younger, how [would] that [have made] you feel?” She answered, “Awful bad, I’d just, I’d go into orbit, you know? Those were like fighting words because you didn’t want to be called a ‘Turk.’ At that time I think maybe it was just the way they treated us and we didn’t want to be treated differently (J3, 20-32). It makes no difference now. It doesn’t make any difference to me anymore” (J3, 35-39).

In summary, the four participants stated that the word “Turk” was used out of derision during the early part of the 20th century, that it meant that they were somehow different, that they were being singled out and that it was a fighting word. They also agreed that today, the word does not hold the same meaning as it once did. The word does not evoke the same feelings of anger and resentment because the attitudes and mentality of people have changed.

Feelings of Isolation

During the early part of the 20th century the Turkish people were isolated from the Whites and the Blacks. After speaking with all four participants in this study, I ascertained that this isolation was a combination of society forcing the Turkish people to isolate themselves and the Turkish people’s desire to isolate themselves because of the way they were treated in the community. Boaz explained, “I think they [the Turkish people] felt much more comfortable among themselves. Again that was because it was being forced upon them (February 26, 2007 conversation, 271-272). I think protection is a good word, but I think it was due to the fact that they knew how they had been classified because of their dark complexion and probably all kinds of questions asked, ‘What are you? Who are you?’ until one of the ways that they felt a protection of themselves was just to be clannish, stay to themselves. I don’t think you could say it was a matter that they hated someone else of a different color. I think it was more of a protection of what the other people forced upon them (B2, 340-346). So the people stayed pretty much to themselves” (B3, 153-154).

One reason Boaz stayed to himself, as he explained, was because he grew up on a farm. Back then houses were not as close to each other as they are now, so it was only natural that he did not have a close association with other people. He even stated that once the Turkish students were allowed to attend White high schools that they chose to sit together. It seems that none of the ethnic groups at this time wanted to associate with other ethnic groups. Boaz continued, “It was like you just don’t push. You might not want to have anything to do with them. I don’t want to have anything to do with you just as much as you don’t want to have anything to do with me. It works both ways. If you can do without me, I can do without you. I just grew up with that attitude, I guess” (B3, 591-595).

Helen also stated that the isolation of the Turkish people was due in part to their own desire to be isolated, but that it could have been forced upon them, too. She explained, “We all lived in the same area and everybody was the same (H2, 243). We made our biggest mistake when we settled into one area. Like your mama and daddy moved off and you and [your brother] didn’t have to experience this. This is where our parents were born and raised. Your mother would have stayed here if she hadn’t married your daddy (H3, 149-155). When we were growing up, we didn’t go anywhere except to our cousins’ houses. We didn’t socialize with anybody else (H3, 260-262). But it could have been forced upon them” (H3, 344).

Tonie further corroborated that the isolation of the Turkish people was due to their desire to be isolated and to their not being accepted by other ethnic groups. We were discussing the isolation of the Turkish students when I asked her

what made her school unique. She responded, “It was unique because there were only Turkish families going there.” So I asked, “Was that by choice?” Tonie gave an emphatic “No” (T1, 183-185). But later she added, “Actually I think that most of them chose to stick to themselves” (T3, 109).

Jean also explained, “We had our own churches you know. We weren’t allowed in other churches. You’d be put on the back row. I used to ride a bus in town and they’d put you on the back seat. (J1, 40-45). We weren’t in favor of segregation, but we didn’t have any choice. They just would not let us into the White school. We weren’t recognized. It was like they had a hatred for us, and why? I don’t know” (J1, 146-153).

The isolation of the Turkish people during the early part of the 20th century may have been a reaction to their dissatisfaction with the way that they were being treated in their community. The interviews with the four participants of this study yielded their perceptions as to why they believe the Turkish people were isolated. Their beliefs regarding this matter were that the Turkish people were forced to isolate themselves and at the same time, they chose to isolate themselves because there was comfort and protection in this homogeneous isolation. One participant believed that it was a mistake to isolate themselves, while the others explained that they were isolated because they were not accepted and were not allowed to be fully integrated into society. The isolation of the Turkish people, regardless of whether they were forced to be isolated or whether they chose to be isolated resulted in intra-marriage among Turkish families, distinctive speech patterns and “enclosure” (Schumann, 1976) of the ethnic group.

Intra-marriage among Turkish families. While Turkish people today live all over the world and have many different surnames, there was a time when people were identified as being Turkish by their surnames. The most common surnames that the participants of this study identified as belonging to the Turkish ethnic group were Benenhaley, Ray, Hood, Lowery, Buckner and Oxendine. The truth of the matter is that there may have been more surnames that were not mentioned that were representative of the Turkish ethnic group, just as these six surnames may have represented other ethnic groups, as well.

Being isolated, regardless of the cause, meant that the Turkish people mostly married within their own ethnic group, which was a common practice for other ethnic groups, as well. The difference, though, is that the Turkish population was not as large as the other ethnic groups' populations, hence the repetition of family surnames throughout the generations. Boaz and I had an interesting discussion about the intra-marriage of Turkish families. I said, "I know that for a while [the Turkish people] weren't marrying outside of their ethnic group, for a very long time." Boaz had a look of wonderment in his eyes as if he was not sure as to where the conversation was leading. He then stated, "I think they just accepted it. In other words they got the idea, 'we are who we are, who they say we are. We're not going to try to force the issue. I'm as good as they are, but hey, if they don't want to date me, we'll marry within [our own ethnic group].' I mean, I'm glad I married [my wife]. But I never thought about . . . of course I got married when I was 18. I told [my wife] she didn't give me a chance" (Laughter). I was curious as to what Boaz was going to say before he told me how old he was

when he was married, so I asked, “Were you going to say that you never thought about marrying someone outside of the ethnic group?” He responded, “No,” which meant that he had never thought about marrying someone outside of the ethnic group. I asked, “So that was just an understanding?” He responded, “I think so. It was just a matter of not being in a situation where you were with other people. I mean, you went to school with [other Turkish people], so unless you were the kind of guy, back there then, that went to some of the bar rooms, or places like that, you did not intermarry [with other ethnic groups]” (B3, 671-689).

When I asked Helen about intermarrying with other ethnic groups, she stated, “The opportunity they had was when people would marry people from Shaw Air Force Base” (H2, 315-316). Jean added, “If they [would have] married a [person from another ethnic group], they were from out of state or something” (J3, 307-308). In general, when Turkish people did marry outside of the ethnic group, it was to someone from somewhere else who was not familiar with the ethnic group isolation.

Regardless of the reason for the isolation of the ethnic groups, the Whites, Blacks and Turkish people usually married within their own ethnic group in Sumter County, South Carolina during the early part of the 20th century. The participants of this study mentioned that this was just an understanding among all ethnic groups. The opportunity to intermarry with other ethnic groups began when people began marrying military personnel from Shaw Air Force Base who were not concerned with the social distance (Schumann, 1976) among the ethnic groups.

Distinctive speech patterns. As the isolation of the Turkish people resulted in the intra-marriage of this ethnic group, it also resulted in distinctive speech patterns, too. It is difficult for me to be aware of these unique speech patterns sometimes because they are familiar to me, but when I actively listen, I hear some of them. I asked each of the participants if the Turkish people had distinctive speech patterns, and they all said, "yes." Some of the participants were able to give me some examples. When Tonie and I spoke, she stated, "Yes. Some sound Cajun and don't pronounce their words correctly. Their accent, the way they talk is different. Not everybody is like that" (T3, 100-101). Helen agreed. She stated, "Terri, I've had people ask if I'm from Charleston, 'Are you from Louisiana?' I haven't been asked very often what I am, but the few times that I've been asked, it was when I started talking. We talk differently. For instance, this sounds silly, but someone named Judy, we say, 'Juddy.' That's just an example. Someone named Connie, we say, 'Conie.' We grew up with our parents talking like that and not pronouncing things correctly. Sometimes we don't finish words or sentences. If someone asks a question, we don't say, 'yes.' We say, 'yay'" (H2, 359-365).

Boaz's thoughts on the matter were, "You can hear it anywhere where the people who do not have the educational background, but a lot of times words are cut off, instead of saying it plainly. 'Gonna.' You know, and of course . . . I heard somewhere in [a city in Georgia], somebody said, 'Yea, bo!' I said, 'He's from Sumter.' I said, 'I can guarantee you.' I've had people to ask me a lot of times if I'm from Charleston" (February 26, 2007 conversation with Boaz, 127-137).

Jean mentioned that other people bring to her attention that she has a unique accent. She explained, “I get teased a little [where I live] with the different words I use. I’ll say, ‘Cut off the light’ and they say, ‘Shut off the light.’ What do you do to the lights? Do you cut them off or shut them off?” I responded, “I turn them off” (J2, 314-323). We both started laughing. She continued, “[Turkish people] just talk very flat. I don’t want to say drawn out, because almost all of the Southerners do have that anyway, but in their pronunciation of words, now this is the older people, I’m saying 60 and above” (J3, 255-257).

All of the participants agreed that some of the Turkish people have distinctive speech patterns, which resemble the speech patterns of people from Charleston, South Carolina or Baton Rouge, Louisiana. This oral history project not only captured the words of these participants regarding speech patterns, but through the use of audio recordings and video tapes, it also captured the spoken words of Boaz and Jean. The distinctive speech patterns of which the participants spoke were a result of the isolation of the group. Another result of the isolation was that the ethnic group was enclosed (Schumann, 1976) for many years.

Enclosure of the ethnic group. Since the integration of schools, the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina are not nearly as enclosed today as they were during the early part of the 20th century. Today, many Turkish people have moved to other cities either to start a family or to attend college and begin careers. In the past, however, many Turkish people remained in Sumter County, South Carolina. They married other Turkish people because of the general societal practice of the time that most ethnic groups married within their

own ethnic groups. Since only a handful of surnames represented the Turkish ethnic group, these surnames repeated themselves through the generations and are visible today in many cemeteries in Sumter County, South Carolina. Now that the Turkish people frequently marry outside of the Turkish ethnic group, the ethnic group is slowly disappearing. I asked each of the participants if they believed that eventually the Turkish ethnic group would disappear. Jean stated, "Do I think that they will not exist? Oh, I think it's getting where there's remarrying out into other [ethnic groups] and so forth, just like I think . . . I don't know if it will ever be that it will totally not exist, but it won't be too much left there in another 20 years" (J3, 358-361). Tonie concurred. She stated, "Most of the Turkish men and women, the older ones anyway, married other Turkish people. That doesn't exist anymore (T3, 122-124). Yes. I definitely think that they will be gone one day, maybe in the next 25-50 years, no one will even know what a Turk was" (T3, 132-133).

Boaz tried to remember the last time two Turkish people married each other. He stated, "It's been years and years since a Turk married a Turk" (February 26, 2007 conversation with Boaz, 386-387). If they do not marry each other, they obviously can not have Turkish children, which means that the ethnic group is slowly disappearing. When I asked Helen if she thought that the ethnic group would not exist in the near future, she stated, "Not in my lifetime, but probably in your lifetime. It won't be long because if I sit here and started thinking about all the dark Turkish people who are left, they are up in their 80s. You'll be dead before it's completely gone (H3, 393-395). Soon there won't be

any Turkish people left. The genuine Turks are dying out, the darker ones. The Turkish generation will soon be gone because Turkish people married Turkish people, but it is not that way anymore. I can't remember the last time a Turkish girl married a Turkish boy. It used to be if you were Turkish, you married a Turkish person, but it's not like that anymore. People are exposed to other people" (H3, 252-257).

The participants all agreed that eventually the Turkish ethnic group of Sumter County, South Carolina might one day be extinct because Turkish people no longer marry other Turkish people. If this be the case, this oral history project will enlighten future descendents of Turkish families regarding their educational and community segregation. Turkish descendents will be able to read first-hand accounts of their ancestors' having to attend a segregated elementary school, the Dalzell School, as well as winning their rights to attend integrated high schools, Edmunds High School and Hillcrest High School.

Experiences at the Dalzell School

The four participants in this study all attended the Dalzell School, which was a segregated elementary school for Turkish students. "This school made some effort to prepare pupils for high school, but was not accredited for college entrance" (Gregorie, 1954, p. 470). Before Turkish students were allowed to attend integrated high schools, they were forced to attend the Dalzell School, which only had 11 grades and three teachers. Afterwards, in 1950, the Dalzell School became an elementary school and had eight grades. Helen, Boaz, Jean and Tonie all spoke fondly of their memories of the Dalzell School and talked about

many aspects of the school including the school building and teachers, lunch, Bible study, recess and options for Turkish students after receiving an 11th grade Dalzell certificate. Their only negative comment about the school was that the school did not prepare them academically for the level of work expected of them at the integrated high schools.

The Dalzell School was a three-room one story building. Each room contained several grades, so the teacher had to divide her time for teaching among three or four different groups. When I asked Helen how many students were in her class she said, "Probably about 12 in my grade. I believe we had 1st, 2nd and 3rd in a little room and then 4th, 5th and 6th . The highest students were on the end. The school wasn't very big (H1, 131-133). We didn't have any running water inside. We had to use an outhouse. We didn't have any heat. We didn't have any air conditioning. We had to collect wood to stay warm. The teachers kept order. One had a ruler, and she would hit you on the hand with it, but nothing serious" (H1, 140-152).

Students who arrived early were expected to gather wood and start a fire inside until the teachers and other students arrived. Back then, the teachers trusted the students with such tasks. Everyone worked together to create an environment conducive to learning. When someone was off task, the teachers sometimes used corporal punishment to keep order. They were highly respected and, according to the participants, very strict. The educational background of the teachers, though, is unknown. Helen genuinely adored her teachers at the Dalzell School, but stated, "I don't know that the teachers at the Dalzell School had a college education"

(H1, 84-85). Boaz explained, “I think they did the best they could. I certainly don’t think we had the most qualified teachers. Had they been, I don’t think they would have been at Dalzell” (B1, 445-446). All of the participants seem to believe that only one of the teachers at the Dalzell School had a college education because she eventually went on to teach at one of the high schools. At the Dalzell School, once everyone was warm and had studied a few subjects, it was time for lunch.

The Dalzell School did have a cafeteria, and according to Tonie, they paid seven cents for lunch when she first attended the school, but the price rose to ten cents when she was older (T2, 50). She explained the lunchtime procedures this way: “The first grade would go first, then the older grades. The food was already prepared and placed on the table for the number of students there were that day (T2, 41-42). They already knew how many students would be eating and they prepared the lunches ahead of time. When we entered the lunchroom, we just sat wherever we wanted. I usually sat where the biggest apple was” (Laughter) (T1, 195-198). When I asked what was served at these lunches, Boaz responded, “Sometimes we would have soup, milk, peanut butter, crackers, maybe an apple” (B3, 105-106). The lunches at the Dalzell School were a highlight of the day. The four participants also spoke very highly of recess and the Bible class they had once a week.

The Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, according to Gregorie (1954), “embraced the Baptist faith” (p. 469). For this reason, the Dalzell School invited a Bible teacher to come once a week to teach Christian principles. All of the participants spoke very highly of this class. Jean stated,

"Yes, they taught Bible, which I really appreciate because a lot of that stuck with you. We had to memorize scripture and as you get older your eyes go. Those things stick with you. That's one thing I'm grateful that I had. We had someone come teach Bible maybe once or twice a week" (J2, 73-76).

Tonie was also grateful for the Bible teacher and class. She had a vivid memory of that time of the week. She recalled, "They used to have prayer and Bibles in the school. We would have this lady who would come and teach us Bible stories. We would sing and she would play the piano. She would take that flannel board and stick pictures of Jesus and Mary on it. She would tell us stories and illustrate the stories on that flannel board. I was infatuated with that. I think she came every Thursday. She stayed about an hour" (T1, 96-102).

After a few hours of exercising their minds, the students needed to exercise their bodies. Recess at the Dalzell School was unsupervised. Students were allowed to go outside and play until the teacher called them back in. They were not given toys or athletic equipment, so they had to devise ways to entertain themselves. Boaz smiled, raised his eyebrows and reminisced, "Recess was one of the best times. At ball time, we would pick up and play ball. We'd usually have a rubber ball or a tennis ball, not a baseball. We'd get a piece off of a desk for a bat, didn't have any such thing as a baseball bat. Usually no gloves, if a person was lucky, he might have a glove, and he was thought of as the star player, having a glove (B2, 34-41). We had a good time during play time. Get out and play, talk about boxing with boxing gloves, we had naked fists. We'd get out there and say, 'Now you're not going to hit in the face.' Boy before we'd get started somebody

would pop somebody in the face" (February 26, 2007 conversation with Boaz, 372-376).

I watched as Boaz's expression changed from one of glee to one of regret. He recalled, "But I've often wondered because of the tremendous ball players that they had how far they could have gone. I used to sit and listen at the American Legion teams from Sumter, and listen at them play, and I just wondered how it would have been to have been able to have had a good diamond and to have been able to play" (B1, 501-505).

Being unsupervised was freeing for the students, but it was also somewhat dangerous. Helen explained, "We would go in the woods and make play houses. In the woods there was an old car seat. A friend of mine would say, 'You get on the car seat. Be the patient. I'll be the doctor.' That day we were in the woods. The teacher would usually call the students in. That day the bus driver came to get us instead of the teacher. The bus driver came out there and we were playing doctor and patient. He said, 'If you don't get up real quick, you're going to be playing undertaker. Look at that snake!' Honey that was the biggest rattlesnake I'd ever seen. It was wrapped around the springs of that car seat. We were lucky" (H2, 254-261).

Just as Helen and her friend were unaware of the potential danger of the snake under the car seat, they were also unaware of what attending the Dalzell School might mean for their academic futures. The Turkish students who received an 11th grade Dalzell certificate were not allowed to attend colleges because colleges required a 12th grade diploma. So what were their options? Boaz

answered, “Well if they wanted to go somewhere else to school, they would have to finish that 12th grade. Most of them, sorry to say, just got a job in the community. Of course a number of the families took their children out of the area where their children could get the proper training for schooling” (B2, 239-242). I thought I understood Boaz to say that the options basically were try to go to another school or get a job. When I asked him, he responded, “Right.” So I asked for clarification. I pressed, “You couldn’t just go into college from the Dalzell School graduation diploma, right?” To this, Boaz responded, “No” (B2, 245-247).

Helen recognized that many Turkish students were not given the opportunities to succeed academically because their school only had 11 grades. She said to me, “If the other lawyers had any heart at all, they would have seen that these children [didn’t] have a chance. What could you do with an 11th grade education that wouldn’t even be recognized?” (H3, 407-410). Jean seemed to answer her question. She explained, “Not too much of anything, farm work. I don’t know if anybody worked as a secretary or anything. There’s not much they could do. I don’t even know if they could have worked as a clerk in a store. I don’t remember any of them working in stores then” (J2, 182-186).

Simply stated, the participants of this study believed that attending a school with only 11 grades put them at an extreme disadvantage for future academic success. I asked Helen why the school only had 11 grades. She thought for a while and then stated, “I don’t know why there wasn’t a 12th grade. They didn’t care. If it was up to them, there wouldn’t be any grades, I suppose” (H1, 115-116). The participants all agreed, though, that because they attended the

Dalzell School, they were not prepared for future academic work or community work.

The Turkish leaders began to recognize that their children were not receiving an equal education and came together to stand up for their rights. I asked Boaz, “When people actually started fighting for your rights, do you remember who those people were?” (B1, 271-272). Without hesitating, he remembered, “Yes, Mr. Henry Benenhaley was one, Woodrow Hood, especially, was one of the ones that really pushed this. Also Marion Hood, Hammond Ray and Henry Ray were also involved” (B1, 275-277). The other participants concurred that these men united, and Jean added one more person to the list, “Herbert Ray” (J1, 92). Boaz explained the awakening of a desire to better themselves to me. He said, “What happened was that when the young men went off to World War II, of course, they fought as Caucasians. They were treated as such, and when they came back, when they wanted to join the American Legion and things like that. At that time they were not allowed to because they were Turkish. So this is when they began to assert their rights and began to find out what could be done. And this is when it began. We owe so much to those people who had the courage to go through what they went through. In fact, Mr. Augustus L. Merrimon is the one who led them through getting into the high school. He was a lawyer from Sumter. Many of the lawyers were afraid to take the case because the people put pressures on them. In fact, one of the lawyers dropped the case because we feel that the people in Sumter put so much pressure on him that he dropped it. And then Mr. Ira Kaye came along, and he took the one then for the

elementary children and took it through, and the won for the opening" (B1, 278-292).

Ira Kaye was the last lawyer who eventually defended the Turkish people in their fight for an equal education. He was very familiar with their situation and, once the Turkish people were proactive in acquiring him as counsel, he helped them to gain access into White high schools. He described their elementary schooling this way:

> With the right to attend high school, the Turks now discovered that their children's inferior elementary schooling made high school very difficult for them. Its educational facilities were extremely poor. In an age of consolidated school districts with good libraries, laboratories and classroom aids, the Turks struggled on in a three room school for eight grades with no libraries and other equipment, local school teachers would not teach them and teachers were imported from another county. More, extremely crowded school rooms, with teachers trying to handle three grades at once, meant that most of the children did not receive decent instruction which was reflected in poor grades in high school for most of them and a large number of drop-outs. (Kaye, 1963, p. 12)

While Ira Kaye (1963) did not mention statistics in his claim that there were a "large number of drop-outs" (p. 12), the statistics of this study claim a 75% drop out rate, in that Jean was the only participant in this study to graduate from high school. I asked her if the Dalzell School was similar to other schools in the area. She responded, "We were limited to a lot of things, and the facility was not like the others. It was a struggle [going to high school]. You had a lot of studying to catch up because I felt that we didn't get everything that we should have gotten" (J3, 347-355). Helen concurred. She said, "When you go to school for nine years and don't get the basics and get what you need, when you get to the

ninth grade, you've pretty much lost it. They taught reading, writing, and the three Rs but that's about the size of it" (H3, 388-391).

Boaz claimed that the school system in Sumter was responsible for the Turkish students' being unprepared. He stated, "I just don't think the school system in Sumter put the effort there to provide and prepare the students (B3, 88-89). I refer to it now as Dalzell University in jest (B3, 30-31). When I was in the 9th grade, I didn't know a noun from a verb (B1, 214). During my first year in college, I had never seen a microscope before other than in a picture (B1, 228-232). Another thing, when I got to the third grade and was hoping I was going to the fourth grade, they didn't have room so they came up with what they called a Big third grade and a Little third grade. You had to go through the third grade again and not go to the fourth grade because they didn't have room" (B1, 204-209).

Tonie was clearly upset when talking about not being granted an equal education and elaborated on how being unprepared affected her in her career. She looked at me from across the room and stated, "I never looked back on it until I got old enough to realize that I needed a job one day and had no qualifications and no education (T1, 156-158). Since the Dalzell School was so far behind a regular school, by the time I got into the 9th grade, I probably had a 7th grade education or a 6th grade education. I couldn't keep up with the kids because of that. By the time I got to the 9th grade, my peers were so far ahead of me that I failed that grade. (T2, 84-87) But I do feel like I'm intelligent" (T1, 158). She made a point that, though she had not received an equal education, it had no bearing on her

intelligence today. I could see that she did her best to overcome her childhood educational experiences in order not to be limited in her adult life or her self-esteem.

The four participants of this study were all forced to attend the Dalzell School for Turkish students. Though they had very pleasant memories of the school, the students and teachers, they all agreed that this school had not prepared them for the rigors of public high school or for their future careers. The school had only 11 grades, so going to college was not an option unless these students went to another school that had 12 grades. The teachers at the Dalzell School may or may not even have had a college education. All of these factors caused the participants of this study to reflect on how things could have been if they would have been given the right to an equal education when they were younger. While these Turkish students eventually made the transition into integrated high schools, their experiences were very different, depending on which high school they attended.

High Schools (Edmunds and Hillcrest)

Depending on where they lived, the participants in this study were integrated into two different high schools. Boaz attended Edmunds High School because he lived in the Edmunds High School district, and Jean, Helen and Tonie attended Hillcrest High School because they lived in the Hillcrest High School district. The two high schools, according to the participants of this study, were very different in their acceptance of Turkish students into their schools: Edmunds was more accepting and Hillcrest was more resistant. I asked Boaz why he

thought there was a difference in the way that the Turkish students were accepted in these two schools and he stated, “This is my opinion, but I think that the majority of the Turkish people lived in the country and that’s where Hillcrest was. That’s where so much of the prejudice was. Hillcrest was pretty much in the center or close to the Dalzell area. That is why I would think the people in that particular area had more contact with the Turkish people, from the stand point, they just knew each other better. At that time there was hatred, prejudice, bigotry toward the country people more so than those in the city. You had the country district and then you had the district in Sumter. Edmunds was in the city and Hillcrest was in the country. I just think it was because of the proximity and the dealings that they had with one another” (Personal contact, April 19, 2008).

Edmunds High School. Edmunds High School was formally opened in 1939 and was named after a former educator and superintendent of schools in Sumter County, Dr. Edmunds. Edmunds High School was very accepting of Boaz from the first day that he attended. He remembered, “The people at Edmunds were very kind, the teachers and the students. I didn’t go but five weeks and quit because I was unprepared at the time going from Dalzell to Edmunds High in the 10th grade. But when I went to stop, to drop out, they begged me not to (B1, 17-21). As soon as I got there, [the coach] invited me for football (B1, 25). I was accepted as a peer. Any type of program they had was open to me (B2, 166-167).

When I asked him to describe a typical day at Edmunds High School. He stated, “[It was] very structured, very different because the classes were divided. On a typical day, we would have algebra, then maybe typing, English class. I

made the mistake of taking Latin. And I took it one day until the teacher asked me a question, and I couldn't answer, so I did not go back to that class" (B2, 68-75). Boaz explained that the teachers, coaches and students were all very supportive. He had very few problems with anyone at this school. He could only think of two incidents in which he was discouraged a little. He stated, "[I] had no problems with any of the students, except one boy in a class one day said something, and I just let him know what would happen and had no more problems with him" (B2, 169-171).

The other incident was not at the school, but rather at the bus stop. Boaz recalled with sadness, "When it came to my stop, there was a girl on the bus, and she would always make sure that she got way ahead so she didn't have to walk along with me in getting off of the bus." I asked, "Why didn't she want to walk with you?" Boaz seemed dejected and said, "She thought she was better than me. I was Turkish. She didn't want to be seen with me" (B2, 183-188). But for the most part, Boaz felt encouraged by everyone at Edmunds High School. In fact, he stated, "It's just five weeks, but coming from the background of Dalzell to Edmunds, just for those five weeks, I'll always be proud of those five weeks at Edmunds" (B2, 177-179). He remembers one teacher, in particular, who tried to encourage him to stay in school. Not wanting to disappoint her, he dropped out without her knowing. He explained, "I went to the office to sign out, and my teacher found out about it and talked me out of it. But then when my teacher wasn't looking, I went back and signed out. Sneaky" (B3, 270-272).

Like Boaz, who attended Edmunds High School, the Turkish students who attended Hillcrest High School felt unprepared for the challenges of a rigorous high school curriculum. They had great difficulty competing with their classmates. There were some teachers and students who tried to help them succeed, but because of the lack of preparation and because of the strong resistance of some toward Turkish students, many were not successful.

Hillcrest High School. Hillcrest High School accepted its first Turkish students in 1950. Prior to this year, the Turkish students attended the Dalzell School until they reached the 11th grade. Turkish students were not allowed to attend White schools until 1950, but there were not enough of them to have their own high school. Therefore the court ruled that they should have the right to an equal education and granted them access to White high schools. I asked Tonie to describe the classes that were taught at Hillcrest High School. She stated, "I took math, home economics, science, English, literature. We even went to agriculture classes with the boys once a week and watched farm films and gardening, which I enjoyed. I don't know why I liked it, but I'm still interested in gardening" (T1, 104-111).

Regarding extracurricular activities, Tonie explained, "The only thing I remember about Hillcrest was football games, basketball games, the cheerleaders. Inside the gym we would watch basketball games." I asked, "Did you participate in any of these activities?" Tonie said with disappointment, "I didn't participate in any of it, but I went to watch basketball games in the gym, and I wasn't very fond of them" (T1, 139-143). Tonie, Helen and Jean did not participate in any

extracurricular activities including the prom. They explained that Turkish students were not allowed to participate in any of these activities. Tonie's explanation was, "We weren't allowed to participate in any sports, cheerleading, proms. . . as a matter of fact, they kept the proms a secret – where they were going to be, what night they were going to be. That was hush, hush, so the Turkish people couldn't go. They just acted like we weren't there. They wouldn't give you a chance to try out for anything" (T1, 145-153).

Jean echoed Tonie's thoughts about the prom. She stated, "I'll never forget the prom. They had it at a private place in Dalzell so we couldn't go (J1, 14-15). They had a private one so that [my friend] and I wouldn't be able to attend." I was not sure that I understood, so I asked, "Do you mean they kept it private just so two people wouldn't come?" She then spelled it out very clearly and said, "That is correct. That was terrible. Two people, I mean, just two of us" (J3, 78-85). Likewise, Helen stated, "When we went to Hillcrest we weren't allowed to participate in anything. When they were getting ready for their prom, they went to the Dalzell Community House. I guess they didn't tell us that we couldn't participate, but if they didn't want us to sit by them on the bus, they sure didn't want us at the prom" (H1, 122-126).

In spite of the efforts of some to keep the Turkish students segregated, there were others who reached out to them. Both Helen and Tonie mentioned the same teacher who was very nice and helpful. Helen said, "[She's] the only one I can ever remember who was nice to us" (H2, 216). Tonie was also encouraged by this same teacher. She remembered her with adoration and told me about one day

in class when she was feeling defeated. She remembered, “I said, ‘I don’t know how to put a zipper in this skirt.’ She said, ‘I’m going to show you. I’m not going to do it for you.’ So she encouraged me to do that (T2, 180-182). She always told me I did a good job. I was sewing. We had to wear what we made, and it was supposed to be a double collar. I said, ‘I left the collar off of this blouse.’ She said, ‘It’s fine. All you have to do is press the seams and press the collar. Then bring it back and let me look at it.’ She said, ‘Tomorrow everyone has to wear the outfits you made.’ So I was embarrassed, but I wore it, and she said, ‘Oh, it looks nice’” (T2, 172-179). The efforts of this teacher, and others like her, made the transition into the White high school more bearable for the Turkish students. The efforts of those who resisted integration, however, made the transition very difficult.

Upon reminiscing about her days at Hillcrest High School, Jean sighed. She began to tell me about several events that came into her mind. She explained, “[My friend] and I went through h-e-l-l together. We were put back in everything (J1, 13-14). It was hell on wheels. That’s putting it mildly. We dreaded to go. They made it tough for us and treated us badly” (J2, 26-27). As I listened, I understood more of why she had sighed before explaining her educational experiences to me. The difficulty for Jean began from the moment she boarded the bus until the moment she returned home in the afternoon. She told me, “When you get on the bus and people start picking at you and teasing you, that gets your day started off bad. In the classroom they would treat you badly. You never were treated nice, Terri. They looked at us as trash (J2, 88-90). They wouldn’t be

caught dead sitting on the seat beside you or anywhere close. And they'd call you names" (J3, 410-411). Jean then elaborated on how as difficult as it was, she stood up for herself and did not allow others to stop her from attending Hillcrest. She said, "We stuck it out. It was hard (J2, 290-291). I don't remember literally fighting, except one day on the bus. That boy that I told you about pulled my hair and I clobbered him. We had book satchels back then and I clobbered him, and he didn't bother me anymore" (J2, 304-307).

Tonie was the youngest participant in this study and attended Hillcrest High School seven years after Jean. Her experiences may not have been as drastic, but she still spoke of having to endure the resistance of some. She explained, "No one really wanted us there (T2, 324). I felt like they were better than I at that time. I don't anymore" (T3, 149). I noticed that Tonie had a great amount of self confidence during the interview. She was not ashamed to admit her struggles as a child because these same struggles helped her to be sure of herself as an adult. When recalling the first day of integrated high school, she proudly claimed, "We went into the school to register and then we left. I think our parents took us up there, and we went into the school to register. It was like they didn't want us in the school, but we went anyway. We walked right passed them, signed our name" (T2, 281-284). Tonie was making a statement that day. She might have known that there were some people who did not want the Turkish students to attend Hillcrest High School, but she knew she had just as much right to attend the school as anyone else. For this reason, she was fearless. After attending the school, she was faced with the resistance of some, but claimed, "The only ones

who treated us badly were the ones who grew up here. The air force kids who didn't grow up here treated us well because they didn't know anything about Turks. Some of the teachers would try to turn some of the students against us. They'd get together, and some of them were the instigators. They would try to embarrass us in front of the class. I was chewing gum in class, and this one teacher made me spit out my gum. Then she made me go around to different classes during class and scrape gum from under a desk with a chisel until I had 50 pieces" (T2, 140-153). Tonie's experiences may be difficult for some to comprehend. She stated, "Every time we tell someone, even from another county in South Carolina, they've never heard of it. They just think it's awful. They say, 'You are kidding. Oh my goodness'" (T3, 142-144).

Jean has also experienced disbelief by others who hear of her experiences. Younger Turkish people who have never experienced segregation, for example, find it very difficult to believe that their older relatives had to fight for the right to attend White schools. She stated, "When I tell my kids they don't want to believe it" (J2, 96-97).

Likewise, in the church where Boaz was a pastor, some members of the congregation were very surprised to hear of his educational experiences during the integration movement. He explained their disbelief, "I've had church members who have read my little book say to me, 'I can't imagine that someone would act that way. People in other areas are amazed that people would have been treated as such'" (B3, 412-415). Boaz was shaking his head when explaining this as if to assure me that it was true.

All of the participants agreed that not everyone at Hillcrest High School was resistant to integration. Some genuinely wanted the Turkish students to have a smooth transition and befriended them. The ones who were not as accepting, however, made life very difficult. Helen was the most vocal about some of the things that she endured. During one interview, she carried on a lengthy monologue in which she recalled the resistance. I listened intently without interrupting as she relived several difficult experiences at Hillcrest High School. She was visibly strained at the thought of having to retell these stories, and then she began. She stated, "One day we were sitting on the grass and these apples and rotten oranges came flying. I was wearing a brown corduroy outfit and the oranges hit me. [Someone] said, 'A rock this size could really hurt someone.'

"There were some boys who would [say mean things about us]. I said, 'If you repeat what you said again, I will hit you across the head with this coke bottle.' I stood up for myself (H2, 55-56).

"The lunchroom was still outside the main building. We would get ready to go in, and there were [some students]. The minute we would try to go in, they would elbow us and try to prevent us from entering.

"Then one day we were passing the cemetery and a boy made a comment, 'One less Turk to deal with.' One day I stepped on his foot and said, 'Excuse me.' He said, 'You can't excuse a dog after he already bit.'

"The bus driver would start off driving, and then he would see how he could jerk the bus to make us fall down because all the Turkish students had to stand. One day I got on the bus. I said to a little girl, 'move your feet, honey, and

let me sit down.' She started crying and said, 'The bus driver said no more Turks can sit by me.' I said, 'Let him tell me I can't sit down.' He said, 'Do you want me to slap your face?' That's when [another Turkish student] stood up and said, 'Yes, slap her right now.' The bus driver said, 'I want both of you off of my bus right now' (H1, 58-62).

"Some teachers would refer to us as 'You people over there, you need to speak up.' In class we would sit together. No one would ever sit with us.

"I remember the first two Turkish girls to graduate from Hillcrest. One of the girls had on a beautiful white dress. There was one White girl who had on the identical dress. They called them the 'Gold Dust twins.' It was some type of detergent at the time. That girl called home and someone brought her another dress. She wouldn't wear the dress because one of the Turkish girls had on the same dress.

"Math wasn't my cup of tea. When I got to the 9th grade, I wrote a letter to be taken out of math class, and she took me out. I wrote the letter, so I never would have graduated without math. (H1, 65-97). I signed my parents name to it and she didn't even pursue it. She said, 'If you want to drop out, drop out.' (H2, 287-288).

"I hated to see the light come. A lot of mornings we would get to the point where we could see the road and we would let the bus pass right by because the bus driver would always jerk the bus. We'd tell my daddy and he would say, 'Get in the car. I know you missed the bus on purpose.' You see, he knew what we went through.

"A friend of mine had a crutch. When she would get on the bus, she would usually hand the crutch to the bus driver and he would put it down for her. One day she handed him the crutch and he said, 'Take care of your own self.'

"Some of the cafeteria women were so mean. They would push the choice pieces of chicken to the side and give us the backs (H2, 103-114).

"A lot of people around here just want to forget it happened. It's real. There's no need in denying it (H1, 53-54). Some people around here are in denial. They say, 'Don't bring that up. It's in the past' (H2, 23-24) Sometimes I think about what we could have been and what we could have done if we would have had an education. We experienced the thing where if the teacher called you to the board and you couldn't do something, everyone would laugh. 'Ha! Ha! She can't do that.' And it was devastating. They were right. We couldn't do that" (H2, 95-101).

Helen's stories paint a sad picture of what happens when ethnic groups have great social distance (Schumann, 1976). While it is difficult to generalize the relationships among the three prominent ethnic groups in this study, I asked the participants to explain their perceptions of these relationships.

Attitudes toward Ethnic Groups

The Blacks, the Whites and the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina were enclosed (Schumann, 1976) ethnic groups during the early part of the 20th century. They all attended segregated schools, they lived in their own areas, and they sat in the same places in churches, theatres and buses. This segregation, whether voluntary or forced, did not meet with great opposition until

the integration movement threatened to bring the three ethnic groups together. Suddenly, the thought of assimilating, or even acculturating (Schumann, 1976), into other ethnic groups caused great turmoil in the community. For the purposes of this study, I asked the participants to explain, from their personal experiences, the relationships that existed between the Turkish people and the other two ethnic groups.

Relationships between Whites and Turkish people. During the early part of the 20th century, the Turkish people identified themselves as being White of Turkish descent. Boaz stated, "When I went for a job as a youngster, I went with the Whites to be examined, with the Whites when I went [into the military]. I went as a Caucasian" (B1, 364-365). Although the participants identified themselves as being White, the community did not always accept them as being White. The community even classified some non-Turkish Whites as being Turkish because they married Turkish people. Boaz continued, "If a Ray married a Benenhaley, the child that would come would certainly have some roots, yes. But I don't think it's fair for the people in the community to take, say, Hood, for example, Hood is English, and to class him or her as a Turk is ridiculous. If my [child] married an Italian, that wouldn't make [my child's] ancestry Italian. Now, if they had a child, it would mean that the child would have some connection, but not [my child] (B2, 321-326). Because of prejudice, whatever group married in with the Benenhaleys were automatically classed as Turks" (B1, 187-189).
As pastor of a church, Boaz even received a letter from the State Tax Commission in which the person who sent the letter addressed the letter to the "Turk

Parsonage." Boaz was very upset that someone from the State Tax Commission would make an ethnic distinction in a letter to the church. Boaz decided to write his own letter. He said,

"Dear Sir,

This letter is in reference to an application for tax exemption addressed to the 'Turk Parsonage.' Are all such applications sent to churches with the addresses stating to the English Baptist Church, Irish Catholic or Negro Church? I am appalled that people with such mentality are working for the State Tax Commission. It is tragic that some people still have Dark Age attitudes" (B1, 404-409).

Children who were born to one Turkish parent and one White parent were labeled as "Turk" on their birth certificates. Jean experienced this with her own child. She said, "Even when my [child] was born, they had [Turk] on [my child's] birth certificate, and I think we had it taken off. They saw me and classified [my child] as being Turkish. I couldn't believe they put that on [the] birth certificate (J2, 332-334). People were prejudiced back then. (J2, 62-63). Helen also was appalled that the people who filled out her first child's birth certificate wrote "Turk" in the "race" section. When she had her second child, she was very vocal about how to fill out the "race" section. During the interview, she clenched her teeth together and pointed her finger at me as she explained, "At the time when I had my other [child], they were still putting it on there and I had to tell the nurse that she'd better not put 'Turk' on there" (H2, 377-379). It was obvious to me that she was very serious. After listening to some of her choice words, which have not

been included in this paper, I was confident that the nurse, more than likely, did not put “Turk” as the child’s race.

When I asked Tonie about this issue, she told me that her original birth certificate had “Turk” in the “race” section, too. She did not believe that this was a fair practice. She stated, “My first birth certificate, the original, had ‘Turk’ on it. They classified us as Turks as if it were a race. That is not a justifiable term for the Turkish people. Absolutely not! The birth certificates should have said, ‘White’ or ‘Caucasian’ for race” (T2, 397-400). She also commented, though, that times have changed. People do not have the same type of mentality as they once did. She said, “I don’t think any prejudice exists today like back then. They don’t look at us as Turks anymore. They still know we’re Turkish, but it’s different. I don’t have a problem going anywhere anymore. I am more confident, and times have changed” (T3, 33-35).

Boaz agreed that people’s attitudes have changed. He stated, “I’ve had people to ask me about my background. I had some of the girls at church; they used to come up and put their arm up against mine and say, ‘I’m as dark as you are now.’ I said, ‘Yes, but how long will it last?’ (Laughter). And we’d just have a big laugh over it. But I’m glad that things have changed to a large extent, the younger people coming along” (B1, 346-351). Boaz does admit, though, that when he was younger that Turkish people did have problems because of their complexion. Boaz explained an interesting phenomenon about a friend of his who worked civil service at the air force base. His friend had his paper and “it had ‘O’ on there for race. He [said] ‘They’ve got zero there. They don’t think I’m

anything'" (February 26, 2007 conversation with Boaz, 91-93). I wanted to know why this practice was common during the early part of the 20th century, so I asked Boaz, "Why do you think they used to put 'Turk' where it says 'race' on birth certificates and even death certificates?" He stated, "I would like to say out of ignorance, but I think out of prejudice. They wanted to be sure that was set aside. The Turkish people knew they belonged to the White or Caucasian race and wanted to claim that. They [the Whites] did not want to give them that right" (B3, 400-405).

Being classified as being Turkish on birth certificates often meant being excluded from community activities, but not always. Turkish people were not always easy to identify based on their physical characteristics. Some Turkish people had light complexions, whereas others had dark complexions. Helen's family had light complexions. One day a man approached Helen's dad about a new school that was opening. Helen explained, "A [man] came and told my daddy, 'Now we are opening a private school. If you want your children to go, go enroll them now because we are not letting Turks or Blacks go.' So my daddy said, 'Well that excludes us, then, because my children are Turkish' (H2, 48-51). She told another story about a Turkish friend of hers who wanted to go with Helen to get her hair cut. Helen said, "This girl went with me, she was dark, and she was a friend of mine. She said, 'I'd like to get my hair cut.' We walked up to [the beauty shop], and we walked in. The lady said, 'I'm ready. Come in. You can sit in that chair.' I said, 'It's not for me. It's for her.' She said, 'Oh I can't cut her hair.' And she didn't (H2, 22-28). Some of the older White people still feel the

same way about the Turks. They might put up a front, but some of them feel the same. Not the younger ones, but the older ones" (H2, 351-353).

Because of the varying degrees of complexions, some Turkish people were treated differently than others. But according to Boaz, some people out of ignorance claimed, "All of you look the same" (B3, 347). Boaz also explained that Turkish people were sometimes addressed by their first names, while they themselves addressed Whites by their last names. Helen reiterated this in her interviews. Boaz began to tell me about a man he knew who experienced this very thing. He said, "[Fred] was a farmer. Two of the farmers that lived right close to [him], when they would come, and again, this comes from politeness and the way you've been taught. But when they would talk to [Fred], it would be '[Fred],' that's his first name. It wouldn't be Mr. [last name]. It was [Fred]. But when [Fred] would refer to them, it would be Mr. So-and-so'" (February 26, 2007 conversation with Boaz, 275-280). Helen echoed his thoughts. She said, "I have always taught my grandchildren to be respectful to elders and people in authority, but back then they would call all White people 'sir' and 'ma'am.' They treated them like they were royalty or something just because their skin was a lighter shade than theirs" (H3, 73-80).

The most troubling incident regarding the relationship between the Whites and the Turkish people happened to Jean. She told me a story that I could not believe. She stated, "One night, when the KKK was on the rampage, you wouldn't remember that, somebody burned a cross in my dad's yard. We got up the next morning and there was a cross burning in our yard and for about two

weeks, a lot of people stood guard out there. That was when the KKK was in full swing. I was terribly upset and afraid because you know what the KKK was doing (J2, 58-64). It was just kind of dreadful. We were scared. We were afraid to go outside the house. It was a scary situation. And they used to. . . I know they used to meet right down the road from us, there. And they'd have their services. We could just kind of see from our house when they'd have the crosses burning and they'd have their meetings. It was not a good experience (J3, 374-383). I know that there are still some of the older ones who still hold things against the Turkish people" (J3, 399-400).

The Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina sought to assimilate (Schumann, 1976) into the White culture, but were denied access for several years. During their struggle to gain access to an equal education, they were sometimes labeled as "Turks" on official records, such as birth certificates. This classification, which was sometimes based on their surnames and sometimes based on the color of their skin, caused them to be segregated by the White ethnic group. Their stories attest to the great social distance that existed between the two ethnic groups.

Relationships between Blacks and Turkish People. The participants were less vocal about the Blacks than they were about the Whites, but the social distance, (Schumann, 1976) was great between these two ethnic groups, as well. The Blacks, the Whites and the Turkish people were all enclosed (Schumann, 1976) during the early part of the 20th century and seldom associated with others outside of their ethnic groups. Marrying someone of a different ethnic group was

a rarity, and even befriending someone of a different ethnic group was uncommon. For the Turkish people to associate with the Blacks, it would have meant that the Turkish people would have been a part of this ethnic group and vice versa. Since the Turkish people claimed to be White, they rarely associated with the Blacks. This does not mean that they did not like the Blacks. Kaye (1963) explains,

> Over-emphasized in the position of the Turks has been their hatred of the Negro. Those who make this charge have been very superficial in their view of the problem. The fact that these poor people have insisted upon a White status for so long must be weighted in the light of history. In the pre-15th Amendment era of our history, even the free Negro was under severe legal handicaps. So were the Indians living in the South. Not to strive for recognition as White meant a loss of all hope of achieving anything for future generations. (p. 15)

In one of her first interviews, Jean mentioned that she thought that the Whites treated the Turkish people "worse than Blacks." I asked her to defend what she meant by this. She explained, "The Blacks weren't trying to get into schools or anything, then, but the Turkish people were. I don't know how to explain this, but they felt this bitter . . . I mean we were just caught in between. So I really don't know how to describe it, but I just think they thought we were just pushing our way in, and that we shouldn't, and that we were just kind of trash under their feet" (J3, 414-422). Helen's thoughts on the relationships between Blacks and Turkish people were that "the Turkish people didn't discriminate against Black people, but they didn't socialize with them" (H3, 349-351).

Based on the interviews with all of the participants, I inferred that the difference between the way the Whites treated the Turkish people and the way the

Turkish people treated the Blacks was that the Whites not only did not accept the Turkish people as part of their ethnic group, but they also went so far as to push them away. The Turkish people, on the other hand, while they did not accept the Blacks as part of their ethnic group, just as the Blacks did not accept the Turkish people as part of their ethnic group, they (the Turkish people) did not go so far as to push them away. They did not try to keep them from attending the same schools once they were integrated into the White schools. They did not have an issue with attending school with Turkish people, Whites and Blacks, but they would not attend schools with just Turkish people and Blacks because the Turkish schools and the Black schools were not equal to the White schools. Workman (1950) writes, "They [the Turkish people] want [their] children to have an accredited standing when they leave high school so that they might enter college or the business world with a better understanding than they can now have." It was not so much that the Turkish people did not want to associate with the Blacks so much as it was that they wanted their children to have an equal education with the Whites. They were caught somewhere in between because they had the same rights as Whites in that they could vote when voting was limited to Whites only, but they were still segregated and denied an equal education, like the Blacks. Many wondered about their ethnicity because of this.

The *Ebony* magazine featured an article on the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina in January 1957 and titled the article, "South Carolina's Raceless People." The title of this article was offensive to some of the Turkish people. They were upset that *Ebony* featured an article on them stating that they

did not have a race. According to the participants of this study, the Turkish people did not dislike the Blacks. In fact, they shared common experiences with them during the integration movement. When I asked Jean to explain to me the relationship between the Turkish people and the Blacks, she reminded me, “I accept the Blacks. We were treated badly like they were” (Jean’s second interview, line 143-144).

The Integration Movement

The integration movement for the Turkish students began in 1950. This preceded the integration movement for the Blacks. The Turkish community had a difficult time keeping a lawyer who would fight for them until they were victorious because some of the Whites in the community objected to the Turkish people’s desire to integrate into the White schools. The Turkish people finally hired Ira Kaye, who took their case all the way to the Supreme Court and won. Kaye, (1963) explains the legal proceedings and community reaction:

> In 1952, parents requested the local school board to let their children go to schools closest to their homes. A judge of the U. S. District Court in Charleston signed a temporary restraining order requiring that this be accomplished and the local school board acceded. White parents, however, threatened a school boycott and induced the county school board to overrule the local school board, after the community went to see Governor Byrnes, who apparently advised them not to transfer the children.
>
> At any rate, the separate school for Turks was continued and all Turk children were required to attend it. Following the Supreme Court decision in 1954, a further attempt was made on behalf of the Turks. Before the case could be heard on appeal, however, the South Carolina school-placement law was enacted and the United States Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit, required the Turks to use administrative remedies which were not in existence at the time they brought the action in the lower court. By this time, the local attorney handling the case for the Turks withdrew. The lawyer who replaced him had about worn himself

> out physically trying to obtain a trial on the merits and he too had to withdraw. It took the Turks a little over three years finally to find another counsel willing to risk all that goes with a civil rights or race relations case in the deep South. (Kaye, 1963, pp. 12-13)

I asked each of the participants to tell me as much as they could remember about segregation, integration and the people who were catalysts for change. For Boaz, segregation was something that most people simply accepted. He stated, "I think they just accepted it as a fact. I don't think at the time, that they thought of it being anything other than . . . that they could have done anything else. I think they just accepted it. I did. I knew nothing better" (B1, 493-495). Jean echoed his sentiments regarding the acceptance of segregation. She stated, "Yes, I realized we were segregated, and, but it just, I guess it was just kind of an accepted thing. I didn't know any other way. I just thought it was an accepted thing." I inquired, "So was that OK with you?" She responded, "Oh, I'm sure it wasn't OK. No, but I just felt, what else can we do? It's either that or you don't go to school" (J3, 128-133).

Helen shrugged her shoulders and told me, "I didn't know any different. We were all there. I just thought, 'That's the way it is.' It had been like that for years and years. I knew I was separated from the other groups, but it didn't bother me" (H3, 220-222). Tonie did not even realize she was segregated for many years. She stated, "I didn't even know I was a Turk until I went to Hillcrest. I never knew that I was any different from anybody else until I went to Hillcrest and found out" (T2, 114-115).

Regarding integration, Tonie stated, "It was awful. It was scary. You never knew what they were going to say to you or what they were going to do to

you. Even the teachers were prejudiced. Traumatic. That's the word I think of, something I hope no one ever has to face again." I asked, "What made it so traumatic? Can you give me an example?" She said emphatically, "Yes. Kids calling you 'Turk', the bus leaving me and I would have to go back home. I'd have to have an excuse the next day about why I wasn't in school, and I would put, 'The bus driver refused to pick me up.' They didn't care. If they were the only ones on a seat, they would put their books on the other side of the bus so that you couldn't sit there, and dare you to move them" (T1, 230-239). Jean, on the other hand, admitted that she knew she was being segregated. She stated, "We realized it. We thought that maybe we were different and they didn't accept us, so you just planted it in your mind that you were different. So I guess we grew up thinking we were different" (J2, 54-56).

Since the ages of the participants in this study ranged from 65 to 75, some of the participants were very young and could not remember very much about the people who were catalysts for change. They only remembered experiencing a boycott. The older participants were already out of high school when the court case began. They were able to tell me more about the people involved, but they were not affected by the boycott. Helen remembered the boycott and the people who were involved. She recalled, "It's a wonder someone didn't kill me when I was in school. [On the day of the boycott] when [a school official] came out there and said, 'You all can come in now,' I said, 'Are you sure now? Are you finished Turk-talking so we can come in?' One girl punched me in the ribs. I said, 'Don't punch me now. I'm not afraid of these people up here' (H3, 128-133). Ira Kaye

was dedicated. He fought hard for this (H2, 169-170). That was a long road, too, honey. I'm sure that Ira Kaye and Merrimon [have passed away], but they fought tooth and nail. That Ira Kaye was a trooper. He wasn't in that for the money. His heart and soul were in it" (H3, 220-226).

Jean stated, "I remember there were probably ten of our men who raised enough money to do this" (J2, 136-137). The participants were able to name many of the Turkish people who united to fight for an equal education including Henry Benenhaley, Woodrow Hood, Marion Hood, Hammond Ray, Henry Ray and Herbert Ray. These men are considered to be heroes among the Turkish people, and their efforts are commendable because they were persistent in their fight for their children to have an equal education. In the end they were victorious.

I asked Boaz if the integration movement was a hard time for most people. He asked, "To accept, you mean? From the standpoint of the Whites accepting the Blacks and accepting the Turks? Oh, I'm sure it was. I mean, they were so bitterly opposed to it, those who lived in the area. I'm sure (B3, 528-532). People were marching against integration. It was a tough situation. [In North Carolina in 1968] people [even] had ax handles [in the march against integration]. They were ready to be violent, whether they became, they were ready" (B3, 555-563).

The protests against integration undoubtedly made the transition into integrated high school a very difficult one. I asked the participants to recall their first day of integrated high school. Helen responded, "It was a bad experience, an experience I'll never forget" (H1, 167). Jean added, "I was scared to death, scared

to death. They didn't want us coming in, that's for sure. They would tease. They would call us all kinds of names" (J1, 140-142).

Tonie's first day of integrated high school was several years later during the height of the elementary school court case. Tonie recalled, "The first day I went to school there, all the kids came, and the Turkish kids went, too. The second day, the Turkish children were the only ones who showed up. All the White kids stayed at home. So that year I stayed out because we couldn't go back to the Dalzell School, and we couldn't go back to the other school because the White kids would stay home if we showed up. So some of us stayed out a year while [the Turkish men] fought the legal battle for equal rights (T1, 87-93). I fell behind. Staying out of school for one year as a child and then having to go back into the next grade, you forget a lot" (T3, 39-40).

Helen also experienced the boycott. She explained it this way, "That particular day, we would usually go in when the bell would ring. There wasn't anybody there but us. Two White girls came but the teachers told them that they had to go back home. They told them to call their parents to come and get them (H2, 275-278). I can't explain this to my grandchildren. They can't comprehend any of this (H2, 155-156). People who aren't from this area, if you tell them this kind of stuff, it's like if I tell [my grandchild about this, the response is], 'That's a bunch of junk.' [My grandchild] laughs, but I [say] that it's not a laughing matter. People from the outside can't believe it (H3, 404-407). It's hard to believe that people that lived here haven't heard about it" (November 3, 2007 conversation with Helen, 27).

Regarding the participants' educational experiences during the integration movement, Boaz stated that people were bitterly and violently opposed to integration, Helen described it as a bad experience, Jean said that she was scared to death and Tonie remembered having to stay out of school for a whole year. In light of the overwhelming evidence that the integration into White schools was not a positive experience for the participants in this study, and that they were forced to attend a segregated school, I asked the participants if they considered themselves to be oppressed. Boaz stated, "I had so much to do with playing and working until, I didn't think much of it. Sure I knew how people felt" (B3, 567-568). Helen seemed shocked that I would even ask. She said, "Oh, yes. I mean, Terri, honey, you are so young you can't. . . there's no way that as much as I have talked to you, there's no way that you can imagine. Sure I did" (H3, 422-423). Jean agreed. She stated, "Yes, oh sure, you know. We just were all the time. I mean, you were just looked down on, you were just, they wanted you to think you were different. And we got, we believed that we were, I guess. After so long, you just kind of think you are" (J3, 159-161). Tonie explained that her feeling of oppression depended on where she was. She elaborated, "Yes. I didn't feel like that growing up because we were raised with White kids, but going to school, yes, I felt oppressed. I felt like they were better than I at that time" (T3, 14 7-149).

During all of the interviews, the participants recounted their educational experiences of what it meant to grow up Turkish during the early part of the 20th century. They gave personal anecdotes of their experiences of integrating into White high schools, and the data from these interviews have been analyzed.

Through cross-coding, the following common themes were discovered: (a) thoughts on being Turkish, (b) feelings of isolation, (c) experiences at the Dalzell School, (d) experiences at the high schools (Edmunds and Hillcrest), (e) attitudes toward other ethnic groups, and (f) perceptions of the integration movement.

In summary, the history of the Turkish people, until now, has been reported and documented by people who were not of Turkish descent. This oral history project sought to shed new light on the history of the Turkish people by providing the means through which they could tell their own stories regarding their educational experiences during the integration movement. Their voices will provide the missing link to their untold history. Chapter Five will analyze the findings, discuss Freire's (2006) pedagogy of the oppressed, elaborate on the transition from segregation to integration, suggest modern connections to assimilation and enclosure (Schuman, 1976), give implications for today's educators and offer recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina are a unique community. We are able to trace our origins to one Yusef Ben Ali or Joseph Benenhaley, who was recruited by General Thomas Sumter to be a scout during the Revolutionary War. Many of the descendents of Joseph Benenhaley remained on that land for many years, and some still reside there. Most of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina claim to be White of Turkish descent. During the early part of the 20th century, however, non-Turkish Whites did not claim them as their own. Instead they excluded Turkish people from attending White schools, community events and social events. The segregation of both Turkish people and Blacks caused great "social distance" (Schumann, 1976) among the three ethnic groups. This study analyzed the participants' educational experiences during the integration movement and allowed them to give voice to their own histories, which is something that no other study has done. It is hoped that this study will add to, and enrich, existing literature regarding the educational experiences of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina.

Generally speaking, history has been recorded by the privileged about the privileged. Many gaps exist in historical text because the voices of the underprivileged have been ignored and forgotten. When gaps, such as these, exist, and they can be bridged, historians should seek ways to offer various perspectives

on the way things were. For the purposes of this study, I sought to search and find the voices of those who had been ignored in historical texts. Their voices, like the voices of the privileged, deserve to be heard and recorded for all to hear. In an effort to bridge the gap regarding the integration movement and how it affected the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, I conducted this oral history project.

The purpose of this oral history project was to discover the voices of segregated Turkish people who experienced integration into White schools in the midst of great turmoil. Like the Blacks, they were excluded from attending White schools, but unlike the Blacks, they identified themselves as being White and were allowed to vote in primaries that were reserved for Whites only. This inconsistency in the way that society viewed the Turkish people caused some identity confusion among community members and among the Turkish people themselves. In fact, when the Turkish people began to fight for their rights to attend White schools, they used as evidence the fact that they were considered to be White when it was time to elect officials. The skin tones of Turkish people also varied from very light to very dark. This furthered the identity confusion among community members regarding the ethnicity of the Turkish people. Lighter-skinned Turkish people were sometimes given privileges that darker-skinned Turkish people were not. As I recorded the voices of the participants of this study, they discussed some of these issues regarding their ethnicity and how it related to their educational experiences during the integration movement.

The research questions that guided this study were the following:

(1) How do the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, who attended public school during the early part of the 20th century, describe their educational experiences?, and

(2) What are the perceptions of the Turkish people regarding the integration movement, educational power struggles and oppression?

During the initial stage of the study, I designed these two questions and researched the most effective way to conduct the study so that these questions would be answered. I chose to conduct a qualitative study in which people would construct their own meanings of their personal experiences. Their stories and anecdotes would answer my two guiding questions. More, since I was interested in how their educational experiences revolved around the integration movement; I knew that I would be recording history. The most logical methodology for this study was that of oral history, and the lens through which I viewed the data was that of critical-narrative theory.

Oral history is a methodology that meshes people's life stories to events in history. Its emphasis on historical events distinguishes it from that methodology known as life history, which does not connect people's stories to events in history. Through oral history, people give meaning to their experiences as they retell their stories. Following the guidelines set forth by Dolbeare and Schuman's three-interview process, as quoted in Seidman (2006), I conducted three in-depth interviews with each participant. Each interview had a specific purpose. The first interview was conducted to set up the participants' experiences in the context of the integration movement. The second interview was conducted to ask the

participants to elaborate and give many details about the experiences they had discussed during the first interview. The third interview was conducted to ask participants to make meaning of these stories in the context of the integration movement. Through the course of these interviews with various participants, I reflected on whether or not the participants experienced power struggles during their integration into White schools and whether or not they were oppressed.

Overview of the Findings

Based on the data that I collected from the first and second interviews with each participant, I concluded that the Turkish people were oppressed during the early part of the 20th century because their experiences chronicled acts of oppression. All four participants commented in their interviews that people were prejudiced during this time (T1, 231; J2, 162-163; H3, 400-402; B1, 187) and that the Turkish students were forced to attend a segregated school (T1, 70-73; J1, 82-85; H2, 88-89; B1, 190-193). While I concluded that the participants were oppressed during the early part of the 20th century based on their responses to my questions during the first and second interviews, I wanted to know if they were oppressed. Therefore, in the third interview with each participant, I asked them directly if they were oppressed.

Helen, Jean and Tonie answered “yes” and Boaz stated that he “knew how people felt,” which, I believe, means that he was aware of the oppression. There is no power struggle if one does not feel oppressed and decides to accept his or her situation as it is. To confront oppression, one must first recognize it and then act upon it. If a person does not feel obligated to speak out against something, he or

she "will not suffer from censorship or controls on freedom of speech. The individual simply feels free: It is no different than breathing; the condition simply *is*" (Greene, 1988, p. 11, emphasis in original). This condition occurs when an individual accepts his or her oppressed situation as a part of life. The individual has grown accustomed to his or her situation and is almost numb to the idea that it could or should improve. The data from this study mirrored much of the two stages of Freire's (2006) theory of the pedagogy of the oppressed.

Freire's (2006) Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Freire (2006) has identified two stages that oppressed people go through.

> In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation. (p. 54)

Freire's (2006) first stage of the pedagogy of the oppressed has three distinct levels. The first level occurs when oppressed people simply accept their oppression. They neither question it nor think that they should fight against it. Their oppression is a part of life. As time progresses, however, oppressed people often move to the second level, that of reflecting on their oppression. They are no longer passive and compliant. They realize that their oppressive state is such because they have allowed someone to control them. Reflection naturally leads oppressed people to Freire's (2006) third level, that of praxis. Upon reflecting on their state of being, the oppressed unite to fight against their oppressors.

> As long as the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition, they fatalistically "accept" their exploitation. Further, they are apt to react in a passive and alienated manner when

> confronted with the necessity to struggle for their freedom and self-affirmation. It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves. This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection; only then will it be praxis. (Freire, 2006, pp. 64-65)

Freire (2006) accurately describes what the oppressed go through in their fight for freedom. I noticed, during my analysis of the data that the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina went through all three levels of the first stage of the pedagogy of the oppressed during their struggle for equality. This evidence from the data supported and gave credence to his theory regarding the pedagogy of the oppressed.

In the beginning they accepted their fate as a part of life. Years later, however, the Turkish people became conscious of their oppression and were renewed with a desire to change their situation, as Weffort (1967) notes, “The awakening of critical consciousness leads the way to the expression of social discontents precisely because these discontents are real components of an oppressive situation” (p. 36). After recognizing that they were being oppressed, they reflected on it, and then decided to fight for their freedom. In the end, they were victorious. I was amazed that all of Freire’s (2006) levels of the first stage of the pedagogy of the oppressed were found in their stories, as I did not allow theory to drive the data. On the contrary, after having conducted all of the interviews, I then closely examined Freire’s (2006) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* on the advice of a classmate, Terri Fisher, and I concluded that the findings of this study supported his theory.

Stage One: Acceptance, Reflection and Action

The first stage of Freire's pedagogy has three levels: acceptance, reflection and action. In this first stage of the pedagogy of the oppressed, Freire (2006) believes that when oppressed people are unable to identify the cause of their oppression, the first level that they experience involves accepting their lot in life fatalistically. At this level, oppressed people behave passively toward their oppression. Either they do not want to combat it, or they do not know how to combat it, or they simply do not recognize that they can combat it.

When they have a "moment of awakening" (p. 64), however, they begin to move to the second level, that of reflecting on their condition. Many oppressed people at this level begin to plan acts of rebellion toward their oppressors in their desire to gain liberation. The third level takes reflection one step further. Oppressed people at this level begin to act as they reflect because action and reflection work hand in hand. Oppressed people at level three rise up and seek to conquer oppression. Freire (2006) writes

> The insistence that the oppressed engage in reflection on their concrete situation is not a call to armchair revolution. On the contrary, reflection – true reflection – leads to action. On the other hand, when the situation calls for action, that action will constitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection. (p. 66)

While the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina did seemingly accept that they were oppressed initially, they reflected upon it and eventually came together to fight against it. In 1949 they hired a lawyer to begin the battle. The court cases lasted for years and at least two lawyers withdrew from

the case until they finally found one, Ira Kaye, who would eventually lead them to victory in 1961.

Level one: Acceptance. During the interviews each of the four participants explained that they accepted life as it was, even when it was not fair, because they did not see any way out. When I interviewed Boaz, for example, he explained the interesting phenomenon of how school officials from the Dalzell School handled the problem of overpopulation when there were too many third grade students for the amount of space that they had in the school. To rectify the situation, school officials decided to create a Big third grade and a Little third grade. This meant that some of the third grade students who were supposed to be promoted to the fourth grade would instead be promoted to what was called the Big third grade and rising second graders would be promoted to what was called the Little third grade. In essence, some students had to repeat the third grade simply because there was no room for them in the fourth-grade classroom. In the interview I asked Boaz if that was something they made everyone do in the third grade, and he answered, yes, for that year only. It seems that people would have protested this, but oppressed people who are at the first level, that of acceptance, simply accept unfair mandates, such as this one. They have come to believe that their oppressed state is just a part of life. Segregation, for example, was not viewed as something necessarily negative for a while. When I asked Boaz about segregation and whether people were in favor of segregation or whether they opposed it, he explained that the Turkish people just accepted it as a part of life and that they did not know any better. Being with one’s own ethnic group was something that all

ethnic groups in Sumter County were doing. They did not view it, necessarily, as something that needed to be rectified. The condition simply was.

Jean also explained that she believed that the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina simply accepted their mandated segregation and that they did not know of any other way. I noticed a sense of hopelessness as she described her two choices, either go to segregated school or do not go to school at all. She made a comment that there was nothing that she could do about the situation. Therefore, she and the Turkish people accepted the situation.

The other participants gave similar testimonies about their acceptance of the way things were. Helen reflected that Turkish people had been segregated for years, and that she was not bothered by this segregation. She, like Boaz and Jean, also commented that she did not know that there was another option.

Tonie's comment about accepting the fact that the Turkish students were segregated had more to do with her not realizing the reason for the segregation than her simply accepting the situation knowingly. She grew up in a community in which she attended school, went to church and associated mostly with Turkish people. She also grew up with some White children, but did not see many of them at church or school. She did not think that there was anything wrong with this segregation, and she did not realize that she was viewed as being different by other ethnic groups until the ethnic groups all came together during the integration movement. The Turkish people did not realize that their situation was oppressive, and therefore, they accepted it as just a part of life. Freire's (2006) second level, that of reflection, occurs when oppressed people become aware of their

oppression and reflect on the injustice of their state of being. They then begin to devise a way to conquer this oppression.

Level two: Reflection. Accepting oppression is only the initial level that the oppressed go through. When they stop and think about their situation, they realize that things are unfair and that they need to change. This second level, which is reflection, is the bridge between acceptance and action. Indeed it is where attitudes begin to change and people begin to unite to bring about social justice. It includes memories of how things were, thoughts on how things are, and the wonder of how things could be.

When describing her experiences in making the transition into the all White school, Tonie recalled the mistreatment that she endured. She commented that integration was traumatic because even the adults at school did not seem to want the Turkish students there. She described several incidents in which she was made aware of being different. She was verbally and emotionally abused by the students, the bus driver, teachers and other school officials. She went from being sheltered and living in a safe, homogeneous environment of mostly Turkish people to integrating into a school in which she was the target of oppression. Her educational experiences during the integration movement caused her to constantly reflect on how her life had changed, why she was being oppressed, and what she should do about it. An example of how her life had changed was through the roles that adults played in her life. Tonie commented that some of the teachers at Hillcrest High School tried to embarrass the Turkish students and even tried to turn other students against them. Tonie's faith in adults no doubt dissipated. She

understood that some people made her the object of oppression because of her ethnicity, but she did not comprehend why people judged others based on the color of their skin. She believed that she should fight oppression and in her own way, she did so. She stated that she knew that others did not want her to attend Hillcrest but that she walked right passed them and signed her name on the registration papers.

Jean also reflected on the past. I asked her if there was ever a day when she realized that she was Turkish and that that was something different. When she first began to reflect, she admitted that she had adopted the belief that she was different in her mind because that was what she had always heard. Society had caused her to believe that she did not deserve the opportunity to have an equal education. She had accepted this notion for a while, but the more she reflected, the more she wanted to devise a way to bring about change.

While Helen reflected on the past, she also made several comments about her thoughts on the Turkish community today and her thoughts about what could have been. She was perplexed that some Turkish people want to deny that they were mistreated during the integration movement. Helen is not one to overlook injustice. She believes that while the mistreatment happened in the past, people should still be aware of it today. Helen also spoke in wonderment of how things could have been different had the Turkish students been granted an equal education. She reflects on it frequently, even after all of these years. Like Helen, Boaz also commented on the wonder of what could have been. He reflected on the missed opportunities the athletes were denied because of the lack of facilities to

play ball. According to Boaz, there were some talented athletes who might have been able to play professionally, but they did not have access to a good diamond on which to play baseball.

All four participants reflected on their state of being during the integration movement. Tonie and Jean discussed feeling different. Tonie stated that she was not aware that people looked at her as being different until someone pointed it out in high school. Jean declared that she had actually accepted her situation as being normal because she had somehow been led to believe that she did not deserve an equal education. Helen and Boaz both reflected on the way things could have been if only segregation had never been a part of their lives. Boaz was even brought to tears as he spoke about this topic. The events that occurred in the personal lives of the participants over 50 years ago were still very near and dear to their hearts. Fortunately, this reflection led the Turkish people to Freire's (2006) third level, that of action.

Level three: Action. Freire (2006) insists that action without reflection is merely activism. Action coupled with serious reflection brings about praxis (p. 65). Praxis differs from activism in that it renews the minds of the oppressed. They begin to believe in themselves and value themselves as equals to other ethnic groups.

As I read the transcripts of each participant I noticed something very interesting. All of the participants spoke of the action of the Turkish community as well as their own individual action in the fight against oppression. When I asked about the court cases in which the Turkish community sought to have

Turkish children admitted to White schools, all four participants were able to tell me about the Turkish leaders who came together to bring their case to the Supreme Court. They were able to tell me the names of the men who led the movement as well as the years that they began to see a change. A few of the participants were even able to give me the names of the lawyers and community leaders who either helped or hindered their cause. Boaz, Tonie, Helen and Jean all connected with the community in the fight against discrimination, and also were individually involved in the fight. Jean's battle took place on the school bus. An adolescent boy was being abusive to Jean by pulling her hair. She decided to act. She turned around and hit him with her book bag. Once she acted against this boy, he never bothered her again. Jean's story is an example of what Freire (2006) means when he states, "The oppressed must see examples of the vulnerability of the oppressor so that a contrary conviction can begin to grow within them" (p. 64). When Jean hit the boy behind her, his vulnerability was exposed. His attitude more than likely changed toward Jean, as he never bothered her again.

Tonie's individual fight was not as violent. She reminisced about going to the White high school on the first day of class and walking right past those who did not want her there. She felt victorious in her own individual act against oppression. Boaz also defended himself in school when necessary, but his individual contribution to the fight against oppression occurred more during his adult life. He, being a community leader, often had to confront other community leaders who were prejudiced. One time he even spoke with the judge of probate about a mistake on a marriage license. The marriage license listed a Turkish

person as being Black and this made Boaz very angry. The judge of probate assured him that this document and any others that were brought to his attention would be corrected. Boaz also sent a letter to the South Carolina Chairman of the Tax Commission regarding the letter that was sent to one of the churches in Sumter County, South Carolina addressed to the "Turk Parsonage." In writing this letter, Boaz was acting against oppression.

Like the other three participants, Helen also had an individual role in the fight against oppression. Her unique contribution to this study involves the numerous anecdotes regarding her personal fight. One day in her high school, a boy made a negative comment about her and she threatened him with a coke bottle. She also confronted people in authority when she perceived an injustice. The day of the boycott, for example, Helen asked the school official if he was finished "Turk talking" so that the Turkish students could come in. She also confronted the bus driver when she discovered that he told the White students on the bus that they were not allowed to let Turkish students sit next to them. This confrontation caused her and another student to be taken off of the bus that day. As she reflected on her oppression, she acted against every form of oppression that she encountered.

"The pedagogy of the oppressed has two distinct stages. In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation" (Freire, 2006, p. 54). Freire's (2006) levels of the first stage of the pedagogy of the oppressed include acceptance, reflection and action. The overwhelming evidence from the interviews with all four participants

strongly supported his claim. “In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation” (Freire, 2006, p. 54).

Stage Two:Process of Permanent Liberation

During the first stage of the pedagogy of the oppressed, the participants, after accepting their situation and reflecting upon it, eventually came together to fight against their oppression. They recognized that they were being oppressed and had to overcome many obstacles in order to be able to successfully liberate their minds. The obstacles they had to overcome were sometimes their own feelings of worthlessness. This lack of self-esteem was undoubtedly caused by other people pointing out their differences and prohibiting their participation in academic, community and social events. Tonie mentioned in one interview that once she became an adult, she realized that she did not have the qualifications to get a job, but that she did feel intelligent. She also stated that when she was in high school, she felt like the other students were better than she was, at the time, but that she does not feel that way anymore (T3, 149). Tonie had to overcome her feeling of being less valuable before she could fight oppression. She knows that she is intelligent, and she knows that others are not better than she is, but she had to overcome the obstacle of self-doubt before she could move on.

Jean and her friend were the first two Turkish students to graduate from Hillcrest High School. They were faced with great opposition each day. She also had to overcome the obstacle of not letting others keep her down. She was

determined to fight against those who wanted to hold her back. Helen, likewise, was determined to overcome oppression. She was determined to overcome the hardships that she had endured while trying to graduate from high school. She did not allow her past to defeat her will to succeed. Boaz also had a strong determination to overcome adversity. He was selected to be president of the senior class, and he received the President's Medal as the Student Most Likely to Succeed. He went to college on probation as a result of his grades because he never graduated from high school. He has walked across at least four different stages to get different types of degrees or diplomas and has never walked across a high school stage to get a high school diploma.

In their praxis, they had a renewal of their minds. Their self-esteem improved greatly and they had a strong will and determination. This change in their attitudes caused them to believe in themselves and to believe in their entire ethnic group. This is how the community was able to come together to bring about change; they first had a change of mind, which produced a strong united front as they acted against their oppressors.

It has been said that the only thing that is constant is change. The participants all mentioned that times have changed. Things are not the way they were. The mindset of the community of Sumter County, South Carolina has changed for the better since the younger generation, which did not experience educational segregation and oppression, has come along. The younger generation of today, which seemingly deals with little or no discrimination, sometimes dismisses stories of an oppressed past. These youth have the privilege of

experiencing more equality among ethnic groups, for which their families have fought. Having grown up in an integrated world, these young people are sometimes out of touch with the way things were. While they may find it hard to fathom some of the stories they hear from the older generation about the way things were, they know that these stories are a real part of what shaped their parents and grandparents into whom they are today and while they, themselves, experience little or no discrimination, they can neither escape nor dismiss the oppressive stories of their families' past.

Jean, Tonie, Boaz and Helen, when speaking about the community of Sumter County, South Carolina, divided it into two groups, the older generation and the younger generation. They reminisced about the way things were while acknowledging the change that has come. They also mentioned that some people from the older generation still have the same mindset that they had during the early part of the 20th century even though the world is changing around them. Jean, when talking about White members of the older generation, made a comment that she believed that some of them still held something against the Turkish people. Helen felt the same way as Jean. Tonie and Boaz, though, stated that they could see a difference in the attitudes of the community. Tonie does not see any evidence today that prejudice exists as it once did. Likewise, Boaz commented that people are much more relaxed in their attitudes toward ethnic groups. He explained that people are more light-hearted about the differences in the ethnic groups in Sumter County, South Carolina these days, even kidding each other about having a better tan.

The younger generation of Turkish people and even some non-Turkish people who live in Sumter County, South Carolina now sometimes have a difficult time believing the stories of the older generation of Turkish people. The stories are incredulous to them because times have changed so much that it is difficult to believe that the Turkish people were ever segregated or oppressed. All four participants mentioned that most people either do not know about the segregation and oppression of the Turkish people during the early part of the 20th century or have a difficult time believing it.

Helen explained in one of her interviews that she could not talk about this issue with her grandchildren because they simply could not understand. They dismiss her stories because they sound so foreign to them, having grown up in an integrated world. Likewise, Tonie made a comment that there are few people, even in South Carolina, who are aware of the Turkish people and what they experienced during the integration movement. When she chooses to confide in someone and tell them about her educational experiences, the reaction is always one of shock. Jean added that her children have difficulty believing her stories. Boaz, too, found disbelief in his own church. The members of his church found out about Boaz's educational experiences by reading one of the books that he wrote in which he gives the reader a glimpse into what it was like growing up as a Turkish boy during the integration movement.

The disbelief of some and the testimonies of the participants in this study indicate that a tremendous amount of change has indeed occurred in Sumter County, South Carolina. How did it come about and where do we go from here?

From Segregation to Integration

The first stage of Freire's (2006) pedagogy of the oppressed, as mentioned earlier, involves acceptance, reflection and action. Freire's (2006) second stage of the pedagogy of the oppressed involves "permanent liberation" (p. 54). Once the Turkish people united to confront and battle segregation, they ignited the spark toward this "permanent liberation" (p. 54). They were tired of the way things were and had decided that they were not going to tolerate a second class status any longer. Confronting their oppressors, through court battles, was a way to become more fully human, and as Freire (2006) would say, a way to help their oppressors become more fully human. He states,

> Consciously or unconsciously, the act of rebellion by the oppressed (an act which is always, or nearly always, as violent as the initial violence of the oppressors) can initiate love. Whereas the violence of the oppressors prevents the oppressed from being fully human, the response of the latter to this violence is grounded in the desire to pursue the right to be human. As the oppressors dehumanize others and violate their rights, they themselves also become dehumanized. As the oppressed, fighting to be human, take away the oppressors' power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression. (Freire, 2006, p. 56)

In essence, oppressors actually want the oppressed to rise up and confront them because they want to be more human and less monstrous. Once the Turkish people and the Blacks succeeded in gaining equal rights, the Whites, who were oppressing them, lost their power to segregate and had to find a way to work together. This process brought all three groups closer together and lessened the amount of social distance (Schumann, 1976) among them. The result can be seen in all of the schools in Sumter County, South Carolina today, as well as in schools

all over the world. While times have changed, studies such as this one are needed to remind us of how things were, so as not to repeat them.

Making the transition from a segregated school to an integrated school was very challenging for the participants of this study. Even Boaz, who attended a high school that embraced the integration of the Turkish students, had academic difficulty in high school. If the Dalzell School had prepared these students for the high standards of public high school, the social transition might have been more bearable. Since the four participants were not prepared academically for the challenges of high school, they were set up for failure. At Hillcrest, the attitudes toward the Turkish students were not as warm-hearted. The negative attitudes of some of the students and teachers, coupled with the fact that the Turkish students were not prepared, made the transition from segregation to integration a constant battle, both socially and academically.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Assimilating into the Community

The Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, while once an enclosed ethnic group, have made great strides toward assimilating into the culture of the community. This community now embraces people of all ethnicities, and all students have the right to an equal education. One might argue that the Turkish people have not completely assimilated into the culture of the community because, as Helen explained, “Some of the older White people still feel the same way about the Turks. They might put up a front, but some of them feel the same. Not the younger ones, but the older ones” (H2, 351-353). On the other hand, one might argue that the Turkish people have assimilated into the

culture of the community because they intermarry with other ethnic groups. It is no longer a common practice for a Turkish person to marry another Turkish person.

An obvious advantage that was a result of integration was that the Turkish people gained access to an equal education as they assimilated into the community. They were no longer pushed down and forced to attend an inferior school. A disadvantage that came with this new found freedom, however, was that integration was not immediately liberating for the Turkish students. While they were allowed to attend White high schools, they were not prepared to succeed there, and they endured emotional and psychological tensions of being rejected and demeaned.

A second advantage that was a result of integration was that the Turkish people were no longer bound by the societal tradition of marrying within the ethnic group. They had many more choices regarding choosing a lifetime mate once the attitude of the community began to tolerate intermarriage among the ethnic groups. A disadvantage of intermarriage, however, was that the ethnic group is now fading away. All of the participants shared that they believe that the Turkish people from Sumter County, South Carolina will no longer exist in 25-50 years because of intermarriage. They fear that their descendants will not truly understand who their ancestors were, or what it meant to be Turkish during the early part of the 20th century. This reason alone validates the importance of conducting oral histories, such as this one.

A third advantage that was a result of integration was that the Turkish people no longer experienced discrimination because they had made strides toward assimilating into the culture of the community. A disadvantage of this, however, as it is with any group that assimilates into another culture, was that they began to lose sight of their identity as Turkish people. Many Turkish people today are unsure of what it really means to be Turkish because they have adopted and adapted to the culture of the community.

Identities

Identities, according to Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1998) "being lived – unfinished and in process, never arrive in persons or in their immediate social milieux already formed and happen in social practice" (p. vii). They are how people perceive themselves, and they are dynamic, fluid and ever-changing. People form their own identities based on how they position themselves in society. Sometimes cultural forces affect people's identities of themselves by telling them who they are and what they are worth. An educational atrocity occurs when educational institutions exclude people from attending its establishment. Not only is this exclusion a political statement against a group of people, but it also has an effect on the way these excluded people view themselves in the context of society.

Segregated groups have a tendency to view themselves as being inferior to the dominant group. Groups that have not experienced oppression, on the other hand, are often taught to think for themselves. They often develop the sense that they are equal to others instead of being below them. They tend to have a very

healthy sense of self and become independent thinkers. “Identity is a concept that figuratively combines the intimate or personal world with the collective space of cultural forms and social relations” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 5). In essence, our understanding of who we are is based on our internal perceptions of ourselves as well as society’s perception of us. The educational implication of this concept is simply that our students will believe in themselves if we first believe in them. If we express an interest in their culture, their beliefs and their values, then they will come to understand that their culture, beliefs and values are valued and respected.

Assimilation and Enclosure in Today’s Classroom

During the early part of the 20th century, the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina were restricted from the privileges of the dominant culture, although they tried to assimilate into this culture. They were not allowed to attend school or church with the Whites, and therefore, became an “enclosed” (Schumann, 1976) community. Today’s classroom teachers may see evidence of enclosed groups in their own schools. As a teacher, I have observed that students sit together in the cafeteria, not only by grade level, but sometimes by ethnic group, too. Large numbers of students of the same ethnicity congregate in the halls before school and between classes as if to communicate that they prefer segregation. And while people are naturally drawn to others who share common attributes, they must be careful that their desire to be with people who are similar is not based on their desire to be separated from people who are different.

The four participants of this study shared many stories with me regarding their feelings of exclusion, inadequacy and hopelessness. Many other ethnic

groups also have experienced these same emotions. While I chose to interview the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, they are only one group of many who have experienced educational oppression. Their stories of being denied an equal education and being forced to attend a segregated school may resonate with other oppressed groups, and with educators, as well. Everyone can learn from their stories.

We classroom teachers have the power to set the tone of appreciation and respect for all people by modeling this appreciation and respect with our children. Students, regardless of their ethnicities, have a right to an equal education in an atmosphere of love and acceptance. Children often adopt the attitudes and values that are displayed by the adults in their lives; therefore it is crucial that we teachers demonstrate the importance of truly valuing each and every student who enters our classroom.

Implications for Today's Educators

I asked each of the participants, "What do you hope this study will accomplish?" Boaz stated, "One thing, and I don't want this to be selfish, but here is a young lady who has some Turkish ties doing a research like this. People have to take notice of that (B3, 799-801). I think it's good for some of these who have their ideas so to speak about the 'Turks' to realize that we've got smart people, too, and to understand our feelings. We're not just trying to fight back, but we're proud of who we are and what we have accomplished, and how other people have treated us and accepted us (B3, 762-766). I think it will be educational to a lot. It will blow the minds of a lot (B3, 823-824). They may not like it, but I say they

need to know it" (B3, 758-759). When we teachers show our students that they are an important part of the culture of our school, they grow up believing that they are smart and understood by their teachers. They develop a sense of pride in themselves, and it may be because a teacher made them feel valued.

When I asked Helen what she hoped the study would accomplish, she explained, "The truth needs to be told. I think it's a story that needs to be told (H3, 326-327). I hope people who read this will learn a lot about the way things were, and the injustice that the Turkish people endured" (H3, 428-429). Without oral histories, such as this one, people would be ignorant of "the way things were," and they would be ignorant of the educational and social injustices that many people have endured. We who are familiar with educational oppression, in order not to repeat it, should be informed of the stories that have been told by people who have personally experienced them.

In response to my question about what she hoped this study would accomplish, Tonie declared, "I think the world needs to know about it, at least the United States" (T3, 141). Tonie understands the importance of telling her stories through an oral history for the purpose of allowing others to hear them. We educators should actively listen to the stories that our students tell us about their lives. Our students of all ethnicities have much to tell us if we will stop and listen.

Jean said, "I hope it will help us know more about the Turkish people, and I hope that it will help us to understand more about what happened to our people. And I wish you all the luck in the world in it" (J3, 467-470). Jean and I are in accord as to what we hope this study will accomplish. We hope that it will help

people to have a clearer understanding of what the Turkish people, and other marginalized groups, experienced during the integration movement.

Recommendations for Further Research

As I ventured through this journey of investigating the educational experiences of the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina, I had plans to do so much more than I was able to accomplish. My hope is that someone else will pick up where I left off, or that I will continue this study by collecting more data from a variety of sources. Before mentioning these recommendations for further research regarding this particular study, however, I would like to encourage people from other ethnic groups to investigate their own groups, especially disenfranchised groups that may not ever reveal their stories to anyone else who is not a member of their own group. I believe that much can be accomplished when researchers investigate their own ethnic groups because participants are more willing to trust their own than outsiders. I experienced this first hand during this study. It was difficult for me to find participants who would be willing to share their stories considering the sensitivity of this topic, and once I found them, only two out of four would allow me to audio record and videotape their voices. I can not imagine the difficulty an outsider would have had if he or she would have tried to conduct this study. I can only compare it to the success I might have had trying to investigate the Amish from Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

This study could have gone in many different directions. I considered interviewing the older generation and the younger generation to compare and contrast educational experiences. I dismissed the idea, however, in lieu of the fact

that I was really more interested in the educational experiences of the Turkish students during the integration movement. This might be an area, though, for someone who would like to make a point for how far we have progressed over the years.

I also considered interviewing people from all three ethnic groups who experienced the integration movement in Sumter County, South Carolina. I believe that this would have strengthened my study considerably, and I actually did find a White man and a Black woman who were willing to participate. The White man was the prominent citizen of Sumter County, South Carolina who was mentioned earlier in this study. He shared many documents and stories with me, but after only three months of knowing him, he passed away. The Black woman who agreed to participate decided against it the next day. I think she was afraid of being identified, so she declined. Perhaps if I had been a member of her ethnic group, she might have trusted me more. While I seriously considered interviewing other people outside of the Turkish ethnic group, I finally decided against it because the focus of my study was the educational experiences of the Turkish people during the integration movement. People outside of the Turkish ethnic group would not have been able to help me answer the two guiding questions of this study.

Future researchers may also want to investigate school officials who either taught at the Dalzell School or at Edmunds High School or at Hillcrest High School during the integration movement. I have been told that one of the teachers of the Dalzell School is still very much alive, and that she lives in Sumter County,

South Carolina. I was not able to locate her because the prominent White man who was going to be a part of my study is the one who told me about her. He had her contact information, so when he passed, I was not able to locate her. Someone who lives in Sumter County, South Carolina, however, may have more ties than I regarding her contact information.

I noticed during this study that the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina are thirsting for more information regarding our ethnicity and the one we call our forefather, Yusef Ben Ali or Joseph Benenhaley. Perhaps someone could investigate this man and discover what no historian has been able to uncover to date, his origin. This would clear up a lot of questions that the Turkish people of Sumter County, South Carolina have about the one from whom we come.

Along the same lines, an interesting study would be an investigation of the six surnames mentioned in this study: Benenhaley, Ray, Hood, Lowery, Buckner and Oxendine. What are the roots of these surnames? Are there other surnames that have been classified as being of Turkish descent? Are all of these or are any of these of Turkish descent? Perhaps a future researcher could conduct a study in which he or she studies the DNA of several Turkish people. There are tests now that can tell people what percentage of various ethnic groups is in their blood stream. I considered having my blood analyzed, but I did not want the results to taint my thoughts on this study. Now that this study is complete, I may have the test to satisfy my curiosity. But in all honesty, my identity is not based on what a

blood test can tell me. I know who I am through the life that I have lived and through the experiences that my family and I have endured.

I learned very valuable lessons from the participants of this study. First, I learned that we educators must make it a point to get to know our students and to respect their cultural and ethnic uniqueness. Our students of all ethnicities have something to contribute in our classrooms, and they want to contribute. In the end, everyone will benefit from a variety of perspectives and contributions.

Second, I learned that educators' words are very powerful. The words we say to our students are often remembered for years and years. They have the power to build up and to deflate. We must be careful with the words that we use. Sometimes we may something that we believe is innocent, but our words may be misconstrued or misunderstood. Unfortunately, negative comments tend to haunt our students many years after they leave our classrooms. Since we have the power to change the world through our students, we should not take this responsibility lightly. Rather, we should use the privilege that we have been given, that is, to be teachers, to make a difference in the lives of all of our students, and thus, in the world.

Third, I learned that educators must insist upon equality in the classroom for all students. Favoritism has no place in schools. All students deserve the right to an equal education, and we set the tone for equality in our own classrooms. We must ensure that we treat all students equally and that we truly value them equally as individuals.

Finally, I learned that we must teach our students to appreciate their freedoms. Many people have not been given the freedoms that many of us enjoy. We must not only teach our students to appreciate their freedoms, but we educators must ensure that we offer freedoms within the confines of our own classrooms. We must offer opportunities for students to be able to make choices in order to exercise these freedoms.

My hope for this study is that educators who read its words will be the spark that will ignite the change that today's classrooms need. May it be the change that will help us to "renew our minds" so that we can "transform educational institutions – and society – so that the way we live, teach, and work can reflect our joy in cultural diversity, our passion for justice, and our love of freedom" (hooks, 1994, p. 34).

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APPENDIX A

FIRST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for Boaz, Tonie, Helen and Jean: The purpose of today's interview is to have you tell me about your personal educational experiences during the integration movement. Please tell me as much as possible about yourself in regards to this historical event.

1. Tell me a little about yourself as far as where you were born and where you grew up.
2. Where have you lived? Have you always lived in Sumter County, South Carolina?
3. Do you have any brothers and sisters? Did you attend school with them?
4. How do you identify yourself ethnically?
5. How did you get to your elementary school? Did you walk?
6. Who attended your school?
7. What classes were taught at your elementary school?
8. Would you tell me a little about the teachers at your elementary school?
9. Were there any extracurricular or community activities?
10. How big was the school? Can you describe the building?
11. Did your elementary school have a cafeteria?
12. Was the atmosphere conducive to learning?

13. How long did the school day last?

14. How old were you when the Turkish people integrated into the White schools?

15. What can you tell me about these documents? (a report card, pictures, ticket)?

APPENDIX B

SECOND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for Boaz, Tonie, Helen and Jean:

The purpose of today's interview is to get you to mention some of the things that you've already discussed, but to give me more details about things. If I were to ask you to describe a typical day of school, I might ask you to describe it using as many details as possible.

1. From the time, as much as you can remember, getting up in the morning until going to bed at night, and going to school, the Dalzell School. . . Do you think you could tell me from your memory what a typical day might have been? What did you do?
2. What about lunch? Did you pay for your lunch every day? Did you bring your lunch? Explain lunch time procedures to me.
3. Could you tell me what a typical day was like at the Dalzell School? Tell me about getting up and getting ready to go to school in the mornings. What was your usual routine? Did you go to school with any siblings? Were you in any of the same classes?
4. Could you tell me what a typical day was like at your high school? Did you have any afternoon responsibilities at home after returning home from school? Tell me all about them.

5. Was it called the Dalzell School, that's it, or was it called the Dalzell School for Turks, or was it called the Dalzell Elementary School? What was it called exactly?
6. When you were growing up was there ever a day when you realized that you were a Turk and that was something different? Relive that day for me.
7. Was the Dalzell School a Christian school? Can you tell me about studying the Bible at the school in a public school? What was that experience like exactly?
8. Can you give me details of some positive experiences that you had at your high school where you felt accepted or someone really encouraged you? What were those experiences like?
9. And likewise, the opposite of that, I asked you to give me positive experiences where someone encouraged you, can you give me details of where someone may have discouraged you a little bit at your high school? Relive those experiences for me.
10. What about in the community? Was there any incident where you felt, not at the school itself, but just out in the community where you felt discouraged? Relive that experience.
11. Were you ever in a play? Can you remember a play you were in? Tell me as many details about the play as possible.
12. What did you used to do during recess at the Dalzell School? Explain to me some of the games that you used to play. What did you used to do for fun during the summer time?

13. Was there an actual graduation ceremony for those who finished the Dalzell School? Did you ever attend a graduation at this school? What was that like?
14. What were the options for the students after they finished the Dalzell School? Would it have been possible for a student to go to college from the Dalzell School?
15. Tell me about the court case in which the Turks fought for their rights to attend the White schools? Were you ever sitting around listening to the adults talking about this case? What was that like? What did they used to say about all of this? How long did the court case last? What was the end result?
16. Tell me about the day, using as many details as possible, that you experienced a boycott? What was that like?
17. Are you a direct descendant of Yusef Ben Ali? Joseph Benenhaley?
18. Is the Benenhaley family name the only authentic family from that particular man? Is it the only Turkish family that has roots that extend all the way back to Joseph Benenhaley?
19. How are the Rays, and the Hoods, the Oxendines, the Lowerys and the Buckners associated as being Turkish?
20. Are they Turkish, too?
21. Do you know anything about the other man that was with Joseph Benenhaley? He went by the name of Scott.

22. Do you think that Thomas Sumter ever made it to Charleston or to Goose Creek Parish? Why do you think that?
23. Did you have any afternoon responsibilities at home after returning home from school? Explain to me what a typical afternoon was like.
24. How involved were your parents in your schooling? Tell me a story that involves your parents and the school.
25. Explain to me the details of the greatest challenge you faced at the Dalzell School.
26. Explain to me the details of the greatest challenge you faced at your high school.
27. Tell me the details of the best day you ever had at the Dalzell School.
28. Tell me about the best day you ever had at the high school.
29. Can you think of any other stories that you have not yet shared with me about your educational experiences either in the Dalzell School or the high school you attended?

Additional questions for Boaz:

1. What was a typical day like at Edmunds High School?
2. Would you say that the speech patterns of Turkish people are unique? How?
3. Do you know anything about older birth certificates indicating that some was used for race? Was this a justifiable term for the Turkish people?

Additional questions for Tonie:

1. In your first interview you said that you were Caucasian of Turkish descent. Would you please explain to me the ethnicity of your parents and all four of your grandparents? Were they all Turkish? Where were they born? Do you know anything about the ethnicity of your great-grandparents?
2. How long did you attend Hillcrest High School? Did someone pressure you into leaving or did you decide to leave on your own? When did you leave the school? Why did you leave the school? Tell me the details of your decision to stop going to school.
3. Would you explain what the "Punching Judy" was? Tell me about that experience in school.
4. Would you explain in great detail the Thom Thumb wedding to me? Tell me the story of the day you performed in the play.
5. Are there certain last names that are associated with Turkish people? What are they?

Additional questions for Helen:

1. You mentioned in the first interview that Turks speak differently than others. Would you elaborate on what you meant? Could you give me some detailed examples of specific speech patterns that might be common among the Turkish people?
2. You also mentioned that some birth certificates indicated that some people were listed as "Turks" under the race section. Do you know when this

practiced stopped? Do you know why this term was used for race? Was this a justifiable term for race for the Turkish people?

3. Are there certain last names that are associated with the Turkish people? What are they?
4. When did you get married? Was that the same year you stopped going to school? What grade were you in?
5. Can you think of any other stories that you have not yet shared with me about your educational experiences either in the Dalzell School or the high school you attended? You have mentioned stories about the bus, people throwing food, teachers coming to your defense and eventually leaving because of behavior of some students, entering the lunchroom, the boycott, not being allowed to participate in sports and other school functions, distinguishing remarks about “you people”, teachers allowing you to take yourself out of classes so as not to be able to graduate and a school official coming to Dalzell to take the new boy to another school? Tell me the stories that you remember with as many details as possible.

Additional questions for Jean:

1. Were you ever refused service in a store?
2. Why did you have to sit on the back of the bus?
3. How involved were your parents in your schooling?

APPENDIX C

THIRD INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for Boaz, Tonie, Helen and Jean: Given what you have said about your educational experiences during the integration movement, reflect on the meaning of your experiences. What does it all mean? What sense does it make to you now as an adult?

Some questions for Boaz:

1. What made you want to pursue your doctorate?
2. You mentioned that you dropped out of the10th grade. Why did you decide to do that?
3. You mentioned that you were not prepared for high school? Why were you not prepared?
4. You mentioned that the Dalzell School was referred to as a "White school for Turks." What does that mean?
5. How did it feel when you were finally given the right to attend the White high school?

   Some questions for Tonie:

6. What does it mean to you to be Turkish? What did it mean when you were growing up? Does it mean anything different now?

7. Do you think it's possible to live your whole life and the find out you are something you did not think you were?
8. What does race mean to you?
9. Do you think the Turkish people were forced to be isolated or did they choose to be isolated?
10. Do you think that eventually the Turkish ethnic group will not exist anymore?

Some questions for Helen:

11. What was it like going to work once you were out of school?
12. Can you describe in as much detail as possible the court case and what it meant for you as a school-aged child?
13. Why do you think the Turkish people stayed in Sumter County, South Carolina?
14. Did you realize you were segregated from the other groups? How did you feel about it?
15. What did you think about Ebony magazine referring to the Turkish people as "South Carolina's Raceless People?" What does that mean to you?

Some questions for Jean:

16. What did it mean to you to "stick it out" and finish high school?
17. Was there ever a day when you realized that other people looked at you as being different? What did that mean to you?
18. Do you think there is such a thing as a typical person who represents ethnic groups?

19. Was it accepted for the Turkish people to marry outside of the ethnic group when you were younger?
20. Would you describe the day that someone left a burning cross in your yard? What did that mean to you? How did your family react to that?

APPENDIX D

TIMELINE OF DATA COLLECTION

	7/06-9/06	10/06-12/06	1/07-3/07	4/07-6/07	7/07-9/07	10/07-12/07	1/08-3/08
Research of history of Sumter, SC	X	X	X				
Collection of documents	X	X	X				
Selection of participants	X	X					
Interviews with participants			X	X	X	X	X
Constant comparative analysis			X	X	X	X	X
Member checks				X	X	X	X
Audit trails	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Field notes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Analysis of data	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Interview with genealogist					X		
Research of family tree				X	X	X	X
Melungeon conference		X					
Writing of dissertation			X	X	X	X	X
Documentary							X