


2017

# “Marching Mothers”: The Battle for Desegregation in Cleveland Public Schools, 1957-1976

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The College of Wooster

“Marching Mothers”:

The Battle for Desegregation in Cleveland Public Schools, 1957-1976

by

Theresa Dunne

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements of Senior Independent Study

Supervised by

Jordan Biro Walters

Department of History

Spring 2017

## ABSTRACT

In 1957, the Cleveland Municipal School District's (CMSD) Board of Education implemented a relay program to address issues of overcrowding in Cleveland public schools. Solely affecting schools that served a predominately black student body on Cleveland's rigidly segregated East Side, this program split the school day into two three-and-a-half hour sessions to accommodate increasing student body sizes, shortening the school day for African American pupils by an hour-and-a-half compared to the five hours in the classroom given to white peers. As mothers of children on the relay program realized that this was the Board of Education's permanent solution to overcrowding, they mobilized to protest the racial discrimination pervasive in the Board's policies. Their picketing and sit-in demonstrations fueled by emotions such as anger and frustration laid the foundation for the larger school desegregation movement that occurred in Cleveland, Ohio from 1957 to 1976. The purpose of this independent study is to examine African American women as the driving force behind Cleveland's school desegregation movement. Through their personal connection to their children, mothers sustained the movement's momentum as it faced resistance from the Board of Education and whites, using emotion as a political tool to garner further support. By analyzing mothers' activism in Cleveland's desegregation movement, this study also seeks to show the significance of Cleveland in terms of the national civil rights movement and shed light on the imperative contributions of women often overshadowed in the popular civil rights narrative by male historical subjects.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Jordan Biro Walters for her guidance, support, and encouragement over the duration of this project. Thank you for challenging me to think beyond what I originally saw as the bounds of my historical narrative. I always looked forward to our weekly meetings. To Tessa Hall in the Writing Center, thank you for listening to my writing week after week. Your reassurance and willingness to discuss my topic were so valuable to this project. I must also extend my gratitude to the Copeland Fund Committee for granting me the incredible opportunity to conduct my own archival research at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio.

To my friends at Wooster, thank you for making these past four years so enjoyable. To my family, thank you for embracing a liberal arts education. And lastly, to my wonderful mother, thank you for editing this cover-to-cover. I apologize for not calling home more often.

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**Figure 1.** Map of Greater Cleveland in 1970. Source: *Wikimedia Commons*. 2

## INTRODUCTION

Editor Plain Dealer — Sir: Ralph W. Findley, president of the Cleveland School Board, accused the “Relay Parents March to Fill Empty Classrooms” of “meddling in the affairs of our schools”—schools that belong to the community...Just for the record, we, the parents of relay children, have banded together to fight this cancerous disease of overcrowding and part-time education in our schools...We hope the School Board will reexamine its position and take all necessary steps to end this shameful plight of our children immediately.—Daisy Craggett and Clara Smith, Co-chairs of the “Relay Parents March to Fill Empty Classrooms”<sup>1</sup>

In a reactionary letter published in *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* on October 20, 1961 addressing the Cleveland Municipal School District’s (CMSD) overcrowded and highly segregated schools and the Board of Education’s neglectful attitude towards the parental activism that surrounded the discussion, two African American mothers from Cleveland’s Hough neighborhood on Cleveland’s predominately black East Side, Daisy Craggett and Clara Smith, expressed their concern. Frustrated by the Board’s solution to alleviate overcrowded schools in the city’s predominately black neighborhoods with a relay system in 1957 that broke the school day into two sessions and therefore, limited the number of hours their children attended school, the two mothers formed the Relay Parents March to Fill Empty Classrooms (Relay Parents). Through their leadership, Craggett and Smith sought to take control of the situation at hand and work towards improving some of the issues that severely impacted their children’s education in Cleveland public schools. They aimed to combat the intense racial segregation deeply ingrained throughout the school district due to the stringent residential segregation apparent across the city’s neighborhoods.

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<sup>1</sup> Daisy Craggett and Clara Smith, “School Rooms,” *Call & Post*, October 20, 1961.



Figure 1: This map depicts the city of Cleveland. The Hough, Glenville, and Central neighborhoods lie on the city's East Side, slightly south of the Lake Erie shoreline.

“Map of Greater Cleveland in 1970,” *Wikimedia Commons*.

The overcrowding that sparked the formation of the Relay Parents started in the 1930s as an influx of the United States' African American population began to move to U.S. cities outside of the South to escape the harsh racial oppression that was prominent in southern states and pursue better social and economic opportunities. The rigid Jim Crow laws enforced in southern states segregating public schools, places of employment, and public spaces prevented blacks from improving their standing within society post-reconstruction. In comparison to racial inequalities in the South, legal segregation was much less so in the North, and therefore, many black families migrated northwards in a movement commonly referred to as the “Great Migration.”<sup>2</sup> Industrialization in northern cities like Cleveland offered African Americans a wider range of job opportunities. In Cleveland specifically, the black population had risen to 72,000 by 1930 from just 6,000

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<sup>2</sup> Joe William Trotter, *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley*, Ohio River Valley Series (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998).



thirty years earlier.<sup>3</sup> A second migratory wave of African Americans from the South during the postwar era further contributed to the increasing number of blacks in Cleveland. By 1960, the black population had risen to roughly 250,000 which was over 100,000 more, compared to a decade prior.<sup>4</sup> Committed to moving their entire lives elsewhere in search of improved living conditions, African Americans valued any chance to boost their economic and social standing in the North.

Particularly, African Americans in the South initially viewed northern public education systems as a means for upward social and economic mobility. Those who chose to move outside of the South held high expectations for northern public schools in comparison to the subpar conditions of segregated schools in southern states. However, public schools in the North were not free of racial inequalities, and in fact, racial prejudices persisted throughout northern school systems as well. Federal housing policies and zoning restrictions confined Cleveland's black population to certain areas on the city's East Side, primarily in the Hough, Glenville, and Central neighborhoods. The distinct separation between black and white neighborhoods created a racial divide in Cleveland public schools since schools drew students from their surrounding neighborhoods. This split led to an equity divide in Cleveland public schools between schools with an all-white student body versus those serving a predominately black student population.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Carol Poh Miller and Robert A. Wheeler, *Cleveland: A Concise History, 1796-1996*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 162.

<sup>4</sup> "Population of urbanized areas: 1960 and 1950," No. 10, p. 33, In *Number of Inhabitants*, 1960. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960).

<sup>5</sup> Miller and Wheeler, *Cleveland: A Concise History, 1796-1996*, 162.

Further compounding the problem, Cleveland's public school district allocated its educational and financial resources towards public schools in largely white communities, leaving those schools with mostly-black student bodies underfunded and in poor condition. Additionally, teachers in these schools were most likely underqualified while West Side schools received the best teachers in the system due to the supposed higher success rate of their students. Lastly, Hough, Glenville, and Central area schools offered little or no remedial classes to struggling students, nor vocational courses for those pursuing trades. The types of social services offered like counseling or career advice were limited if provided at all.<sup>6</sup>

Despite all of these issues, it was mainly overcrowding that sparked a movement in 1961 among parents against the existing discrimination apparent in the Cleveland public school district.<sup>7</sup> Most schools that experienced overcrowding existed on Cleveland's East Side in its Hough, Glenville, and Central areas, neighborhoods with a large black population. The Cleveland public school district suffered from overcrowding and resorted to makeshift classrooms in churches, libraries, gyms, dispensaries, playrooms, and portables to accommodate the growing number of students.<sup>8</sup>

To tackle overcrowding in classrooms, Cleveland's Board of Education implemented half-day sessions in the Hough and Glenville area schools to accommodate the increasing number of children attending. The relay system, as it was called, allowed half of the student body to attend school in the morning while the other half waited until

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<sup>6</sup> Leonard Nathaniel Moore, "The School Desegregation Crisis of Cleveland, Ohio, 1963-1964: The Catalyst for Black Political Power in a Northern City," *Journal of Urban History* 28, no. 2 (January 2002): 136.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

the afternoon. Children affected by half-day sessions only attended school for three and a half hours-per-day versus the usual five. The missing one and a half hours triggered controversy as students on half-days received less education than those attending traditional day-long sessions on the west side.<sup>9</sup> The school board launched half-day sessions in 1957 to alleviate the congestion in public schools. With this program, half-day sessions were utilized in 130 classrooms throughout Cleveland by 1960, mostly in its Hough and Glenville neighborhoods. Although the relay system intended to fix overcrowding in affected public schools, 1,700 kindergarteners were still put on the wait-list in the same year.<sup>10</sup> These decisions made by the Board of Education sparked a long wave of civil rights demonstrations in which parents and supporters of Cleveland's civil rights movement protested the Board's actions that intentionally created and maintained a segregated public school district.

As way of background to my project, the topic of racial segregation in Cleveland's public school system brings up larger discussions of de facto segregation in northern cities which I will discuss in further detail throughout my independent study. The 1954 Supreme Court Decision, *Brown v. Board of Education* decided that "separate but equal" education lawful by Jim Crow standards was ultimately unconstitutional.<sup>11</sup> However, for many cities in the North, this did not make a difference in terms of desegregation in public schools since public schools in the North were not officially segregated by law. Instead, since schools maintained racially homogeneous student

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<sup>9</sup> Robert Lewis, "Half-Day School," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, September 9, 1960, sec. Letters to the Editor.

<sup>10</sup> Moore, "The School Desegregation Crisis of Cleveland, Ohio, 1963-1964," January 2002, 136.

<sup>11</sup> Michael J. Klarman, *Brown V. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Movement: Abridged Edition of "From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality"* (Cary, NC, USA: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2007), 79; For a more in-depth analysis of the *Brown* decision, look to Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality*, Vintage Books ed. edition (New York: Vintage, 2004).

bodies based on the demographics of their neighborhoods, the Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD) could enact policies that would solely affect predominantly black areas without legal backlash; hence their ability to implement half-day sessions specifically in black communities for four years. These inequalities in the Cleveland public school district demonstrate the overall ineffectiveness of *Brown v. Board of Education* in northern cities throughout the nation. Traditionally recognized as one of the most groundbreaking and influential events of the Civil Rights Movement, the Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education* declared de jure segregation unconstitutional in May of 1954.<sup>12</sup> Despite the impact this had on southern states' formally established segregated schools, in northern cities, like Cleveland, whose school system was not segregated by legal definition, the segregation persisted.

This seemingly perpetual segregation in Cleveland public schools gave rise to grassroots activism surrounding desegregation, particularly due to the efforts of frustrated mothers whose children received subpar educations based on the decisions made by the Board of Education. After the implementation of the 1957 relay program, mothers Daisy Craggett and Clara P. Smith mobilized parents to form the Relay Parents March to Fill Empty Classrooms to protest the blatant segregation within their children's schools. As a solution, Relay Parents suggested the creation of a busing system that would transport students from overcrowded schools into those with open space largely in nearby majority-white neighborhoods. In turn, busing would solve issues of overcrowding and simultaneously encourage integration. Eventually in 1962, by the name of the Hazeldell Parents Association (HPA), these parents joined forces with Cleveland's coalition of civil

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

rights organizations, otherwise known as the United Freedom Movement (UFM), which amplified the school desegregation movement throughout the city. During this time, mothers still played a prominent role as they became the emotional driving force of the movement by publically calling attention to their children's suffering at the hands of the Board's racially discriminatory and unjust policies.

As mothers and notable community activists within the Hough neighborhood, Craggett and Smith were extremely influential in shaping Cleveland's desegregation movement. Their leadership extended past the organization of the Relay Parents, devoting themselves to causes that bettered the lives of children in their surrounding community. Craggett, a native Clevelander, headed the Hough Area Council and later reported for Cleveland's African American newspaper, *The Cleveland Call and Post*, specifically focusing on and advocating for issues related to community and youth development.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, Smith, a mother of six who moved to Cleveland as a child in 1927 from Sayerton, Alabama, presided over the East 88<sup>th</sup> Street Club and the Wade Superior Neighborhood Association in addition to co-founding multiple neighborhood organizations.<sup>14</sup> The leverage that these women held as a result of their immense community involvement aided them in gaining support for the Relay Parents. They used their roles as community leaders to address issues of overcrowding in largely black schools that put their children at a disadvantage compared to their white peers.

At its core, this independent study project will expand upon the critical role that African American mothers' emotion and leadership had in shaping Cleveland's school

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<sup>13</sup> "Daisy Craggett Wins Service Award," *Cleveland Call and Post*, May 26, 1962, 2A.

<sup>14</sup> "Biography of Clara P. Smith," wrhs.org, accessed March 12, 2017, [http://catalog.wrhs.org/collections/view?docId=ead/PG610.xml;chunk.id=bioghist\\_1;brand=default;query=clara%20smith](http://catalog.wrhs.org/collections/view?docId=ead/PG610.xml;chunk.id=bioghist_1;brand=default;query=clara%20smith).

desegregation movement while at the same time, shedding light on subjects frequently overshadowed in popular civil rights narratives. To do so, it will pull from themes addressed in civil rights historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's article, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past" in which she tells an expanded civil rights history that strays away from the popular narrative and argues that many of the discriminatory policies prompting activism in the black community stemmed from New Deal reform. By stressing the importance of a "longer" history, Dowd allows for untold stories to surface like those of class and workers' rights, women's activism, and Northern civil rights advocacy.<sup>15</sup> Throughout my independent study, I aim to broaden the 'textbook' civil rights narrative that typically begins with the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision; highlights the passing of major legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and includes stories of bus boycotts, lunch counter sit-ins, and grassroots activism largely in the Jim Crow South. Instead, I offer a northern narrative by using the city of Cleveland as a case study and including the stories of local actors, particularly mothers who were pivotal in the progress of the city's movement.<sup>16</sup>

In selecting Cleveland as my area of study, I join the conversation surrounding the northern civil rights movement among historians who like Dowd Hall, seek to complicate the popular narrative of civil rights history. For instance, Thomas J. Sugrue in his book *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* gives a comprehensive overview of northern cities' need for civil rights legislation in

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<sup>15</sup> Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1233–63, 139.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*, (New York: Random House, 2008), xiii.

areas like housing and education despite common perceptions that discrimination based on racial prejudices was solely a problem in the South. He describes the political, social, and economic institutions controlled by whites in the North meant to exclude African Americans and discusses the various ways African Americans challenged these systems. While Sugrue's book offers many examples of racial inequalities in the North ranging from school segregation to discrimination in the workforce, in my own study, the racial inequalities ingrained within Cleveland's public school system will act as a more detailed narrative that will contribute towards Sugrue's overall regional discussion of school segregation in the North.

By narrowing my subject to Cleveland's school desegregation crisis, I will join historian Leonard C. Moore in studying Cleveland as an important example of the civil rights movement in northern cities across the United States. Moore's work in his article "The School Desegregation Crisis of Cleveland, Ohio, 1963-1964" specifically focuses on the Cleveland school desegregation movement's contributions to the rise of black political power in the city, and similarly, Moore's book *Carl B. Stokes and the Rise of Black Political Power* looks more broadly at the election of Mayor Stokes and his resounding political influence as the first African American mayor of any major U.S. city. Throughout both works, Moore sees the school desegregation movement as critical to the unification of Cleveland's African American community and the election of Stokes in 1967. In addition to Moore, those looking to study Cleveland's school desegregation movement must also consult Ronnie A. Dunn's recent book from 2016, *Boycotts, Busing, and Beyond: The History of School Desegregation in the Urban North*, which examines Cleveland's desegregation movement as emblematic of the movements that occurred in

northern cities across the United States. However, diverging from these histories, I aim to analyze the school desegregation movement through a different lens by turning to the mothers and women involved. In doing so, I hope to show that it was through women's persistent emotional and organizational efforts that the desegregation movement became such a political force in Cleveland.

Moreover, my analysis on women's participation in the school desegregation movement will add to current scholarship on women in the larger civil rights movement. Until more recently, histories of the civil rights movement frequently omitted the immense impact African American women had on the movement nationwide, particularly at the grassroots level. *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965*, edited by Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline A. Rouse, and Barbara Woods gives one of the first examinations of the extent of African American and white women's roles in Southern civil rights activism. Second, Bettye Collier-Thomas' and V.P. Franklin's book *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* offers readers a sociopolitical look at the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement through a biographical lens, using personal documentation from African American women active in protest organization and demonstration. While these works give comprehensive analyses of women's participation in civil rights causes, much of their analyses is geared towards civil rights in the South. By studying women in Cleveland's movement surrounding school desegregation, I show that women were central to the formation of civil rights activism outside of the Jim Crow South, largely through their ability to garner emotion among supporters. To do so, I use theories derived



from Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought* as well as those presented by historians of emotion, Peter N. Stearn and Susan J. Matt in *Doing Emotions History*.

In telling the narrative of mothers in Cleveland's desegregation movement, my independent study relies on primary source information pulled from the Western Reserve Historical Society archive in Cleveland, Ohio. For my research, I primarily looked at the records of Cleveland's NAACP branch, other civil rights organizations active in the movement such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and United Freedom Movement (UFM), in addition to some personal collections like the Ardelia Bradley Papers and the court case *James L. Hardiman Reed v. Rhodes Papers*. While these collections offer essential historical evidence for my independent study, it is important to note the voices absent in this rendering of Cleveland's school desegregation movement. For instance, though we see the response of mothers in reaction to half-day policies and busing, we do not receive the voices of children on the relay system. Furthermore, my analysis does not fully delve into the emotional reactions of white mothers who opposed integration in their children's schools due to the limitations of my selected source base. However, these could be areas for further research on Cleveland's school desegregation crisis.

My independent study examines how African American mothers specifically used their emotions regarding the segregation of their children in Cleveland public schools to create and sustain the momentum of the city's school desegregation movement. To explore this issue, I divide the movement into three parts: the reaction surrounding the Board's implementation of the 1957 relay program and later busing plans, the intensified

protest demonstrations in February of 1964, and the years leading up to and directly following Stokes' 1967 election.

Chapter one establishes that the parent demonstrations surrounding the relay program were catalysts for Cleveland's school desegregation movement. It analyzes mothers' reaction to half-days and how mothers were able to build upon their personal relationship to their children in order to effectively garner support for the movement as the Board continued to segregate the school district. With the intensification of desegregation demonstrations at the beginning of 1964, chapter two argues that African American mothers were the emotional driving force behind strengthening the movement. They united supporters under a collective emotional identity that stemmed from anger, frustration, and resilience. This unification gave the movement its strength as it faced opposition from white counter protesters who did not want their neighborhood schools integrated. Building upon this idea of unification, Chapter three largely uses Patricia Hill Collins' theoretical concept of the *othermother* to show that African American women who were not mothers, were able to empower and unite a fractured community through their community-based and political agendas. It highlights the political and community-based efforts of Ruth Turner, a former high school teacher who taught German in Cleveland public schools before feeling compelled to join the movement in 1963 after noting the increased civil rights activism occurring in Birmingham, Alabama at this time.<sup>17</sup> Her influential leadership as executive secretary of CORE and advocacy for Stokes' 1965 and 1967 campaigns ultimately gave the movement strength during a time of fracture. As a result, the chapter illustrates that othermothers instilled a sense of hope

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<sup>17</sup> Ruth Turner, interview by Robert Penn Warren, May 7, 1964.

in the school desegregation movement that sustained its momentum despite division among supporters until the NAACP sued CMSD's Board of Education in the 1973 case, *Reed v. Rhodes*.

## CHAPTER ONE:

### THE RELAY PARENTS AND THE RISE OF CLEVELAND'S SCHOOL DESEGREGATION MOVEMENT

Appalled by overcrowding in Cleveland public schools, Edith Gaines wrote to *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* on March 26, 1960, referencing an article published a week prior that addressed the dire state of Cleveland's education system. A worried mother and city resident, Gaines saw issues of overcrowding within the Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD) as indicative of a larger problem. The differences in the quality of education children received within the same district shocked Gaines. While schools with predominately black student bodies on Cleveland's east side suffered from rapidly increasing student body sizes resulting in waitlists, cramped classrooms, and dual shift schedules, schools in all-white areas largely functioned under capacity. As CMSD's Board of Education blamed the recent baby boom for increasing student body sizes, Gaines redirected her readers' attention to the obvious racial implications tied to overcrowding:

The difficulty Negro families have in finding housing except in a few older neighborhoods like E. 55 to E. 133 is a more important factor in overcrowding of that area than the "baby boom" which all neighborhoods have experienced...Don't all Cleveland children deserve the same quality of education for the same price? And don't all Cleveland children deserve a better education than they are getting?<sup>1</sup>

Her letter politicized her own children's struggle by calling into question the educational inequalities in Cleveland public schools based on race. Through her impassioned response to the racial discrimination ingrained within Cleveland's education system,

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<sup>1</sup> Edith Gaines, "Pay-as-You-Go," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 26, 1960, sec. Letters to the Editor.

Gaines helped foster the bubbling conversation surrounding school desegregation as it started to gain momentum in northern cities across the country in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

A catalyst for school desegregation movements in northern cities like Cleveland, the landmark *Brown* case emphasized the uncanny similarities between racially homogenous northern neighborhood schools and legally segregated schools in the Jim Crow South. Due to local and federal zoning and housing policies, metropolitan areas in the North maintained segregation through legal measures.<sup>2</sup> These policies prevented African Americans from moving outside of designated, nearly all-black neighborhoods and contributed to the *de facto* segregation in cities outside of the Jim Crow South. This resulted in the heavily concentrated black population on Cleveland's East Side, as well as in almost every other major northeastern and midwestern city including some port cities on the West Coast like Oakland.<sup>3</sup> Racially segregated neighborhoods created racially segregated schools, which in turn, led to drastic educational disparities between schools with majority-white and majority-black student bodies.

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<sup>2</sup> Whereas northern cities like Cleveland did not legally enforce the strict Jim Crow Laws explicitly segregating the South, cities turned to three discriminative tactics to racially divide their metropolitan areas. The first relied on private, legal covenants that prohibited blacks from purchasing homes within nearly every newly constructed housing development built between 1920 and 1948. Developers intended to only offer this housing option to whites, maintaining the racially homogenous ideals of suburbia. As their second mechanism, cities used federal housing policies created during the Depression that established an unequal housing market and contributed to African Americans' struggle to obtain housing. In Cleveland, national legislation like the Housing Act of 1949 and the Federal Highway Act of 1956 funded urban renewal projects in cities like Cleveland to spruce up declining neighborhoods by demolishing "slum" areas and leaving empty lots in their place. Furthermore, loans and mortgages provided by the federal government were rarely marketed to residents in racially-mixed or all-black areas, as one black family made an entire surrounding neighborhood "actuarially unsound." Lastly, the persistent efforts of real estate agents in their defense of the rights of home owners and developers to rent or sell to their desired customer forced African Americans into previously racially-mixed or all-black neighborhoods within northern cities. Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*, 1st ed (New York: Random House, 2008), 204.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

Although Gaines broadened the subject of her letter to bring attention to these persisting disparities in Cleveland public schools, she specifically targeted the detrimental impact Cleveland's relay program had on students' education in the opening of her letter. As way of background, in 1957, CMSD's Board of Education unveiled a temporary solution to alleviate overcrowding mainly within Hough, Glenville, and Central area schools—three neighborhoods with virtually all-black demographics—known as the “relay system.”<sup>4</sup> This solution essentially cut student body sizes in half, offering separate morning and afternoon half-day sessions to students. Those on half-day schedules received three-and-a-half hours of classroom education per day rather than the typical five that students received on full day schedules. The unexpected longevity of the program meant that by 1960, some ten year-olds living in the Hough neighborhood had never attended a full day of school. The lost hour-and-a-half of schooling caused African American pupils to fall educationally behind their white peers. Acting as the voice for many parents whose children received their education in half-day increments, Gaines expressed the need for an equal and quality education across the entire school district.<sup>5</sup>

The Board of Education's 1957 decision to implement a relay system marked a pivotal moment in Cleveland's school desegregation movement. Once it became clear that half-days were the Board's permanent solution to overcrowding in schools with largely African American student bodies, parents responded. On the forefront of this movement were African American mothers whose children attended such poor and neglected schools. They saw the Board's action as a blatant devaluing of their children's

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<sup>4</sup> Leonard Nathaniel Moore, “The School Desegregation Crisis of Cleveland, Ohio, 1963-1964: The Catalyst for Black Political Power in a Northern City,” *Journal of Urban History* 28, no. 2 (January 2002): 135.

<sup>5</sup> Gaines, “Pay-as-You-Go,” March 26, 1960.

education. This moved them to form activist groups, particularly the Relay Parents March to Fill Empty Classrooms (Relay Parents) in 1961. At first, Relay Parents called for busing as an alternative to half-days to relieve congested schools and integrate African American children into better-funded, all-white schools. Viewing their children's well-being as their main priority, mothers set out to change the Board's racially discriminatory policies so that their children could receive a quality education. This paper will analyze the 1957 relay system as a catalyst for parent demonstrations resulting in Cleveland's larger school desegregation movement in the 1960s. Based on the Board of Education's clear bias towards the desires of white parents, the chapter will delve into the obstacles Relay Parents faced on behalf of the Board's decisions during their protests while trying to change a system patently racialized. To do so, it will rely on the individual voices of parents, particularly mothers, involved in the activism that occurred such as Daisy Craggett and Clara Smith, co-chairs of the Relay Parents. They used their positions as mothers to garner support for the school desegregation movement, building upon the emotional connection they had with their children and expressing this to the public.

Despite the relay program's official implementation in the fall of 1957, it is important to note that the Board instituted half-day sessions prior to its 1957 start date as a strategy to relieve schools struggling with overcrowding on an individual basis. Half-days had always been an issue of contention in terms of education matters. Dating back to 1933, Cleveland resident Genevieve D. Storey wrote a letter to the Board of Education concerning the use of half-days at R.B. Hayes school in Cleveland. She penned, "Young children, and those known as over age borderline certainly, ought to have five full hours in school. Why should they be on the street or in an uncomfortable, unsupervised home

while a teacher is being paid full time for time they do not get?”<sup>6</sup> Even before the larger 1957 relay program, community members felt half-days cheated students out of the education they deserved. In the years leading up to the relay program, half-day sessions at Doan Elementary School in the Hough neighborhood prompted Doan mothers to make an appearance before the Board in 1956 to express these same concerns.<sup>7</sup> However, the Board relied on this strategy for an easy fix to its increasing student body sizes in the Hough, Glenville, and Central neighborhoods.

In relation to Cleveland, overcrowding began when the rapid population expansion in the Hough, Glenville, and Central neighborhoods placed strain on the public school system. The congestion in these Cleveland neighborhoods was the result of city efforts to concentrate its black population into a confined area on Cleveland’s east side. In the mid-1950s, Cleveland’s black population rose by nearly 100,000 people.<sup>8</sup> Strict zoning regulations implemented in Cleveland during the post-war era limited African Americans to few neighborhood options. By 1965, 99.9 percent of Cleveland’s black population lived on the east side.<sup>9</sup> As a result, CMSD experienced a significant increase in its overall student population size. Unprepared for this massive influx in students among Hough, Glenville, and Central area schools, the Board neglected to formulate more substantive plans to solve overcrowding, and instead, school administrators created makeshift classrooms in school gymnasiums, libraries, attics, basements, and auditoriums

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<sup>6</sup> “Letter by Genevieve D. Storey,” February 17, 1933, Box 27, Folder 4, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Cleveland Branch Records, Cleveland Board of Education, general 1933-1954, MS 3520, Western Reserve Historical Society; hereafter NAACP Cleveland Branch Records, 1955-1964.

<sup>7</sup> “Report by the Board of Education” September 24, 1956, Box 28, Folder 1, NAACP Cleveland Branch Records, 1955-1964.

<sup>8</sup> Carol Poh Miller and Robert A. Wheeler, *Cleveland: A Concise History, 1796-1996* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 162.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*



to accommodate growing class sizes.<sup>10</sup> Some schools elected to hold classes in nearby libraries, churches, and community centers. In addition to these problems, issues with overcrowding forced thousands of kindergarteners onto waiting lists, ultimately delaying their education. With little or no space available for the incoming number of students, 1,465 children on the waiting list in 1956 could not begin kindergarten, increasing to nearly 1,700 children by 1961.<sup>11</sup>

Although it was overcrowding that became the principal source of parental frustration, the educational disparities between Cleveland's black and white schools existed for years prior to this problem. The homogenous racial demographics of Cleveland's neighborhoods allowed CMSD to classify schools as 'all-white' or 'all-black'. The Board of Education allocated the school district's educational and financial resources towards its 'white' schools on Cleveland's West Side due to the supposed higher success rate of their students, leaving those schools with black student bodies underfunded and in poor condition. They justified such financial allocation by arguing that students within these schools produced higher success rates and viewed black students as intellectually inferior to whites. Directing their educational resources in this manner left those schools with predominately black student bodies with inferior teachers, and limited vocational resources and social services (like counseling or career advice). Additionally, with only one African American member on the Board elected in 1959, William F. Boyd who voiced the need for improvements in neglected black schools on Cleveland's East Side, the six other white members consistently outvoted his propositions

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<sup>10</sup> Moore, "The School Desegregation Crisis of Cleveland, Ohio, 1963-1964," 135.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

in relation to the desegregation crisis.<sup>12</sup> In spite of the many inequalities, it was ultimately the expansion of the relay program into the 1960s that sparked initial parent responses from Cleveland's African American community as their children packed into makeshift classrooms while empty classrooms remained open in white schools on the west side.<sup>13</sup>

As it became apparent that the relay program was the Board's permanent solution to overcrowding, parents began to take the matter into their own hands. While the Board promised relief in the Hough neighborhood by planning to open two new schools in the spring of 1959, these schools still functioned over-capacity, holding two to three-hundred more students than their thresholds, and later were placed on the relay program to accommodate their student body sizes. The following October, a group of Hough parents finally approached the Board of Education, seeking an end to half-day education, though the Board ignored their pleas.<sup>14</sup> Despite the growing concern among African American parents over the harmful effects of the half-day on their children's education, the relay program persisted. By the fall of 1960, about 8,400 students were on half-day sessions, an increase of nearly double from the spring.<sup>15</sup> Evidently, the concentration of black students in all-black schools rose from 57 percent in 1955 to 76 percent in 1960.<sup>16</sup> This percentage continued to rise to 90 percent over the next decade. Angered by the Board's treatment of their children's education, parents from the Hough, Glenville, and Central areas joined forces to form the Relay Parents March to Fill Empty Classrooms in October of 1961.

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<sup>12</sup> Moore, "The School Desegregation Crisis of Cleveland, Ohio, 1963-1964," January 2002, 150.

<sup>13</sup> Moore, "The School Desegregation Crisis of Cleveland, Ohio, 1963-1964," 136.

<sup>14</sup> "What has happened to Cleveland's schools during the past eight years by the Citizens' Committee to Support Our Schools," Box 2, Folder 3, Paul Alden Younger Papers, Education-related organizations, records, Western Reserve Historical Society.

<sup>15</sup> Al Andrews, "School Board Moves to Fund TV Station," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, January 31, 1961, sec. News.

<sup>16</sup> *Reed v. Rhodes*, Box 1, Folder 2, James L. Hardiman Reed v. Rhodes Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, 2.

Their demonstration efforts initiated the long string of activist movements for desegregation in the years that followed.

Although both mothers and fathers participated in forming the Relay Parents, it was primarily African American mothers who stood at the heart of early school desegregation demonstrations. As exhibited by the initial actions of the Doan mothers in 1956, the relay program prompted mothers to take action against the Board of Education's unfair policies. On a personal level, these women saw their children's future jeopardized by the discriminatory school policies. This meant that the problem directly infiltrated into their households. They saw their children suffer firsthand at the will of CMSD's Board of Education. Unable to sit by and watch their children face such poor educational conditions, mothers began to strategize in PTA meetings, developing plans to address the Board's blatant discrimination against their children.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, women in particular played a major role in shaping Cleveland's school desegregation movement based on their positions within the community. While generally excluded from popular civil rights narratives, women largely participated in the civil rights movement through their local connections to the community. Through their leadership, they bridged the gap between the public and private sphere, merging the personal experiences of their children's education with their political and organizational strategies.<sup>18</sup>

In terms of the role African American women played in the civil rights movement, most women were successful in mobilizing local efforts more so than on a

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<sup>17</sup> "Harry E. Davis PTA Criticizes McAllister," *Cleveland Call and Post*, February 8, 1964.  
Chas Sanders, "Hough Mothers Demand School Probe: Stage 'Sit-In' Demonstration at Board of Ed," *Cleveland Call & Post*, September 30, 1961.

<sup>18</sup> Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long?: African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 41.

national scale. Their ability to evoke a reaction from the community stemmed from their role as “bridge leaders,” a term coined by Belinda Robnett in her book *How Long, How Long? African American Women in the Civil Rights Struggle*.<sup>19</sup> Bridge leaders were the influential women of the civil rights movement who attained their position of power through their political and social actions in the community.<sup>20</sup> They were the PTA presidents and community council leaders who directed the public’s attention towards the problems plaguing African American students in the Cleveland public school system.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, these women’s positions as mothers allowed them to politicize their concern for their children’s welfare. To do so, they built upon their personal connection to their children and brought the issues that affected their households into public light.

For instance, prior to the official formation of the Relay Parents, a group of Hough mothers staged a ‘sit-in’ demonstration at the Board of Education to show their commitment to ridding their children’s schools of half-day sessions. Organizers of the sit-in and Hough mothers Daisy Craggett and Clara P. Smith claimed that the mothers’ cause remained “free of politics” and instead, promoted the fact that they were purely at the Board of Education for the sake of their children.<sup>22</sup> In addition to the protest, the mothers also demanded the Board allow them to conduct a thorough investigation of Cleveland public schools that would provide evidence of the inadequate school environments in several schools with predominately African American student bodies. Following the investigation, these women planned to continue their sit-ins until the Board resolved the

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Hough Community Council, minutes, files, Box 2, Folder 6, Paul Alden Younger Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

<sup>22</sup> Sanders, “Hough Mothers Demand School Probe: Stage ‘Sit-In’ Demonstration at Board of Ed.”

problems found under the survey, which soon evolved into the larger Relay Parent protests. The initial efforts of Hough mothers created communitywide activism that pushed for quality education for Hough-area children.

Once officially organized, the Relay Parents held their first official silent march on the Board of Education to fight the injustices thrust upon their children in the Cleveland public school system on October 9<sup>th</sup> 1961.<sup>23</sup> The group, which consisted largely of women, sought “to fight this cancerous disease of overcrowding and part-time education in our schools.”<sup>24</sup> Led by Hough neighborhood school activists, Daisy Craggett and Clara Smith—the co-chairs of the Relay Parents—the demonstration encouraged parents to come protest the fact that their children were being “short-changed” in basic subjects like science and social studies because of the relay program.<sup>25</sup> Viewed as charismatic leaders, these mothers attracted attention through their ability to evoke emotion among their supporters, sharing the stories of their children in order to gain support from the broader public.<sup>26</sup> At the protest, over sixty mothers and children picketed on the Board of Education’s property prior to the Board’s meeting later that day with signs reading, “Do Not Cheat Our Teachers and Pupils,” and “We March Today For a Better Tomorrow.” At the meeting, Craggett distributed a letter to the Board members which explained the Relay Parents’ frustration towards the relay program and suggested using a busing system to transport students to the many available classrooms on the west side. Seeing this as a simpler, more immediate solution for bettering their children’s

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<sup>23</sup> “Relay Parents March”, 1961, Box 2, Folder 6, Hough Community Council, minutes, files, Western Reserve Historical Society.

<sup>24</sup> Daisy Craggett and Clara Smith, “School Rooms,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 20, 1961, 20.

<sup>25</sup> Promotional Materials for the Relay Parents, 1961, Box 28, Folder 2, NAACP Cleveland Branch Records, 1955-1964.

<sup>26</sup> Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 41.

educational experience than trying to improve the conditions within the existing schools their children attended, a busing system became the Relay Parents' new goal.<sup>27</sup> They finished the meeting after agreeing to reduce the number of relay classes in place and research the plausibility of busing for their October 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. With the promise of new school construction and the potential for student transportation, the Relay Parents felt content with their initial progress.

After this initial meeting with the Relay Parents present, the Board of Education's president, Ralph A. Findley, told *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* that the Board saw the protests as parents "meddling in the affairs of our schools" and not appreciating the Board's attempts to relieve overcrowding in the schools. These statements further infuriated parents, prompting a public response from Craggett and Smith published in *The Plain Dealer*. It read:

We are accused of being "ungrateful" for the new schools that have been and are being built for our children. We are glad that the Board is building these new schools, but our gratitude cannot bind us to the fact that thousands of children are still on relay and in overcrowded rooms. The three new schools will not solve all of our problems, as the Board well knows. However, they refuse to consider even temporary measures such as open transfers, re-districting or bus transportation to empty rooms that exist in other schools...<sup>28</sup>

The Board's claims about the attitudes of Relay Parents made them even more aggravated. The set plan for decreasing the number of relay classes only slightly aided the situation with the building of a few new schools and additional makeshift classrooms.<sup>29</sup> Relay Parents knew that their efforts must increase in order for them to

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<sup>27</sup> For further reading on busing, see: Joyce A. Baugh, *The Detroit School Busing Case: Milliken v. Bradley and the Controversy over Desegregation*, Landmark Law Cases & American Society (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011), and Richard A. Pride and J. David Woodward, *The Burden of Busing: The Politics of Desegregation in Nashville, Tennessee* (Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1995).

<sup>28</sup> Daisy Craggett and Clara Smith, "School Rooms," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 20, 1961, 20.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Kwartler, "Half-Day Classes to Be Cut Down," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 10, 1961, 2.

incite significant change throughout the school district. Once again, Craggett and Smith turned to Hough community members to gain support for the movement.

Before the Board of Education meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Relay Parents staged another picket outside of the Board of Education in hopes that the Board would approve a busing system to replace relay classes. These actions attracted much publicity in Cleveland news sources, which acted towards the Relay Parents benefit. At the meeting, Craggett spoke to the Board, demanding an end to overcrowding and the relay program. Her initial remarks underlined the damaging impact shortened class days had on students' education. Pulling from a statement by the United States Commissioner of Education, Craggett classified the years of education lost to half-day sessions as the "stolen years," showing that half-day students suffer from "the frustrating fatigue of a tight schedule."<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, she questioned the Board's current plans that would leave 3,000 students on half-day schedules and defended busing as the best, most cost-effective option to alleviate overcrowding. Using amateur research, the group found that the average for transporting students in Ohio was \$26 per pupil. She finished her speech by calling attention to the 165 open classrooms in Cleveland public schools. While emergency approval from the Ohio State Board of Education allowed half-days initially, Craggett whole-heartedly believed that, "the emergency now becomes the need to transport part-time pupils to empty classes."<sup>31</sup>

The October 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting was a monumental success for the Relay Parents. The Board of Education agreed upon a busing system that gave parents whose children were

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<sup>30</sup> "Statement of Mrs. Daisy Craggett," October 23, 1963, Box 28, Folder 2, NAACP Cleveland Branch Records, 1955-1964.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

on half-day schedules the opportunity to send their children to available classrooms in nearby all-white schools. Effective as of January 29, 1962, the plan provided bus transportation for students from their home schools to an assigned receiving school at the beginning of the school day, and then back again once dismissed. In doing so, bused students received a full day of education rather than the three-and-a-half hours they received at their home schools. To make up for the lost class time during transportation, students received a shorter lunch period.<sup>32</sup> With thirty transportation classes formulated from students at Hough's Hazeldell Elementary by the January 29<sup>th</sup> start date, the Board decided to send these students to nearby William H. Brett, Memorial, Henry W. Longfellow, and Garfield Elementary schools.<sup>33</sup> Differing from the larger busing plans of the 1970s that developed in Charlotte, North Carolina, which bused students out to the more affluent suburbs, CMSD limited its program to only the neighboring schools surrounding Cleveland's overcrowded schools on the east side.<sup>34</sup> The Board saw this as more economically sensible, regardless of the large availability of classrooms on the west side.<sup>35</sup>

The Board of Education's restriction allowing busing to nearby schools was one of the first indications of the Board's attempts to perpetuate a segregated school system. Afraid of displeasing white parents whose children attended selected receiving schools, the Board of Education tried to reassure them that busing would not affect their children's classrooms. They reinforced that the busing system was merely a temporary solution for

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<sup>32</sup> "Efforts to Eliminate Relay Classes for the Semester Beginning January 29, 1962," Box 28, Folder 3, NAACP Cleveland Branch Records, 1955-1964.

<sup>33</sup> Theobald, George E., Letter to Theodore W. Hartman on Transportation Classes from George E. Theobald, January 4, 1962, Box 28, NAACP Cleveland Branch Records, 1955-1964.

<sup>34</sup> "*Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*," American Constitutional Law: The Bill of Rights and Subsequent Amendments, Credo Reference, accessed November 20, 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Leonard Nathaniel Moore, "The School Desegregation Crisis of Cleveland, Ohio, 1963-1964:" 135.



overcrowding until the district could build new schools in overcrowded areas that would eliminate busing altogether. In a second attempt, the Board isolated bused students within receiving schools as much as possible.<sup>36</sup> On a surface level, the receiving schools seemed integrated; however, measures taken by the Board of Education preserved segregation within receiving schools, limiting interactions between black and white students.

Confined to their assigned classrooms, school assemblies, extracurricular activities, physical education classes, and eating lunch in the cafeteria were all off-limits to bused students. A single, designated bathroom break throughout the day ensured that bused students would not come into contact with white students in the restrooms or hallways.

CMSD's Superintendent, William Levenson justified this segregation with:

It is obvious to you that the easiest thing to do was to put children from a school in a bus with their teacher and take them to that school. That is why it was done. Secondly, and quite honestly, we were launching an endeavor about which there was a great deal of concern to the people of a certain racial area. This is quite obviously a reason we did it as we have.<sup>37</sup>

Additionally, the election of Board member Ralph McCallister to president of the Board of Education in 1963 sharply turned the Board of Education's decisions against the Relay Parents. Coming to his position of the Board as a former school teacher in an all-white suburban district, McCallister drew his support from whites living on the predominately black east side whose children attended schools that would most likely be impacted by any attempts to integrate. Fearing that he might lose his support base due to integration, McCallister shaped his policies in order to appeal to white voters. This eventually resulted in the Board's 1963 decision to stand by their racially discriminatory policies that conserved segregation within the Cleveland public school system. In spite of the

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

clear racial divide between white and black students in receiving schools, the Board claimed that this was simply the easier solution, arguing that segregation was a safety measure for transported pupils. With such policies, McCallister became the primary target of the many civil rights groups in Cleveland working towards desegregation.<sup>38</sup>

After witnessing this continuation of racial discrimination in Cleveland public schools despite the implementation of busing, the Relay Parents' frustration intensified. The actions of the Board reemphasized the existing racial prejudices which perceived African Americans as intellectually inferior to whites and therefore, undeserving of the same education. The Relay Parents, who had adopted the name the Hazeldell Parents Association by this point, teamed up with the United Freedom Movement (UFM), a local civil rights coalition whose mission was to unite and coordinate Cleveland's many civil rights efforts. Established in the summer of 1963, this coalition of over fifty fraternal, civic, and social organizations in Cleveland modeled its strategies off of those conducted by the southern civil rights movement.<sup>39</sup> This union was pivotal in the movement towards school desegregation in Cleveland because it was the first time the black community joined together under a single organization. The group also included representatives from Cleveland's Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Cleveland Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) who accumulated much of its support from the impoverished black community. As the active demonstrations escalated from 1963 into 1964, the UFM along with leaders from its

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<sup>38</sup> "Relay Pupils Start Bus Shift Jan. 29," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, November 10, 1961.

<sup>39</sup> "Encyclopedia of Cleveland History: United Freedom Movement (UFM)," accessed November 21, 2016, <http://ech.case.edu/cgi/article.pl?id=UFM>.

partnered coalitions were responsible for many of the organizational efforts that progressed the desegregation movement.<sup>40</sup>

Under the coalition, mothers joined picket lines once again to contest the Board's refusal to integrate students into receiving school classrooms. Craggett defended their decision and wrote a letter to the Editor of the *Call & Post*. With this, Craggett asserted that mothers were necessary to effectively enact change throughout the school district:

Surely, it is clear now to everyone that, left alone, Cleveland schools would insulate our children from their brothers and from education as in the deepest corners of the South; that schools would be run like a ward club, education passed out like patronage; and that the giant would sleep again and constantly until shaken by marching mothers.<sup>41</sup>

Mothers were behind ending the relay system, implementing the busing system, and the organization of further demonstrations to desegregate Cleveland public schools. Her words encouraged them to continue their efforts as the movement encountered numerous challenges at the beginning of 1964 once their picket lines clashed with counter protests. It was these "marching mothers" who gave Cleveland's school desegregation the momentum to persist in face of resistance.

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<sup>40</sup>Moore, "The School Desegregation Crisis of Cleveland, Ohio, 1963-1964:" 140.

<sup>41</sup> Daisy Craggett, "Hough Parents Speak Out," *Cleveland Call & Post*, February 22, 1964, 3B.

CHAPTER TWO:  
MOTHERS' ACTIVISM DURING THE HEIGHT OF DESEGREGATION  
DEMONSTRATIONS

With the heightening tensions of Cleveland's school desegregation movement at the end of January 1964, the United Freedom Movement (UFM) held a mass rally at Antioch Baptist Church on February 2 to discuss upcoming demonstrations and respond to recent violence that erupted. Upset and outraged by the Board of Education's failure to integrate Cleveland public schools with its new busing system that transported students from predominately black overcrowded schools in the city's Hough, Glenville, and Central neighborhoods to nearby receiving schools with all-white student bodies, members from the UFM, HPA, CORE, NAACP, and Presbytery for Race and Religion joined forces to gather support for the movement's next steps. A statement by Mrs. Gantt, the Hazeldell Parents Association's (HPA) picket captain, clearly expressed the need for support behind the school desegregation movement as it planned future demonstrations:

We represent the cause of total integration and equal education for all children. There is no difference of opinion between the Hazeldell and the UFM and CORE. We have the best leaders we could want; now we need more followers. The battle will be resumed Monday at the Board of Education. I'm going to be there. Are you? We were like prisoners at the Board, with limited facilities, but so are our children at Brett, Memorial, and Murray Hill. If they can endure it, so can we.<sup>1</sup>

Ultimately, Mrs. Gantt called for unity among African Americans in order to defend the right of their children to the quality education given to their white peers. She made it clear that Cleveland's African American community must join forces and amplify the push for an integrated education system. A parent interjected, "Any parent not willing to

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<sup>1</sup> Transcript from UFM Meeting, February 2, 1964, Box 2, Folder 41, Congress of Racial Equality, Cleveland Chapter Records, 1960-1969, Western Reserve Historical Society Collections.

take part in the battle is not a parent,”<sup>2</sup> challenging those who chose not to partake in the movement and shaming them for not fulfilling their necessary duty as parents.

Although this statement encouraged all parents whose children attended subpar, segregated public schools to join the fight for desegregation, this chapter will specifically focus on the school desegregation movement’s reliance on mothers to strengthen its efforts, particularly as the movement intensified in January of 1964. Black feminist thought paints Black motherhood as a particularly multifaceted social institution that has the ability to empower African American women and invoke social activism within the broader community. Though women’s perception of motherhood remains highly dependent upon the individual, sociologist Patricia Hill Collins highlights black motherhood’s position as a “resilient lifeline” that secures a “collective survival” among African Americans in the face of oppression.<sup>3</sup> Incorporating these ideas, the chapter argues that mothers were able to instill a similar sense of resilience among supporters of Cleveland’s school desegregation movement that fostered its increased momentum at the beginning of 1964. By participating in sit-in and picketing demonstrations, African American mothers created a cohesive emotional backbone that derived from the anger, frustration, and determination felt by support of the desegregation movement. This backbone sustained its efforts as white parents who feared integration in their children’s schools began violent counter protests that stemmed from their own emotions. In turn, African American mothers were able to form a resilient “emotional community” among

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 2000), 177; hereafter cited as *Black Feminist Thought*.

those who fought for integration in public schools.<sup>4</sup> It was this strong emotional connection within the movement that gave it the power to overcome resistance from white counter protestors and unite supporters under a single cause.

The emotions expressed by participants in the heightened demonstrations for school desegregation stemmed from the Board's false assurance that they would try to integrate students as quickly as possible in hopes of subsiding the movement. In the fall of 1963, the Board agreed to the demands made by UFM and HPA leaders to ensure the "fullest possible integration" of transported students into receiving schools by January of 1964.<sup>5</sup> However, the Board failed to actually act upon the set demands and decided to adhere to the original segregated busing system implemented a year prior. Despite the Board's claim that they integrated 46 percent of transported students into receiving schools, the UFM found that these numbers rather stood at 4 percent.<sup>6</sup> The Board's failure to observe the requests of the black community once again demonstrated their disregard for educating African American students. In a joint statement made by the UFM and HPA released on January 27<sup>th</sup>, the groups identified the Board's "broken promises" that ensured immediate integration for transported students as the "most insulting."<sup>7</sup> Outraged by the Board's unwillingness to integrate and report accurate

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<sup>4</sup> Mark D. Steinberg "Emotion History in Eastern Europe," in *Doing Emotions History*, Susan J. Matt and Peter N. Stearns, eds. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 77.

<sup>5</sup> Ann Skinnerer, "How the Integration Crisis in Schools Here Developed," *The Cleveland Press*, January 28, 1964 Box 1, Folder 5, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers, 1960-1969, Western Reserve Historical Society; hereafter cited as Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers.

<sup>6</sup> "Pickets are Expected at 2 Schools Today," *The Cleveland Press*, January 28, 1964, Box 1, Folder 5, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers.

<sup>7</sup> "Statement by UFM and Hazeldell Parents Association, For Release Mon., Jan 27," 1964, Box 29, Folder 3, NAACP Records, Cleveland Board of Education, General, Undated, MS 3520, Western Reserve Historical Society; hereafter NAACP Records, Undated.

statistics, mothers, fathers, and civil rights activists made their way to the picket lines at the Board of Education on the morning of January 27<sup>th</sup> 1964.

Similar to the tactics used by mothers in the Hough, Glenville, and Central areas to rally support against the relay program in the previous chapter, mothers became advocates for the problems their children faced in receiving schools that they could not express to the public. Policies mandated by the Board of Education left black students in receiving schools without recess time, clean dishes at lunch, and a safe environment free of taunting from white peers. The *Call & Post*, Cleveland's leading black newspaper, published mothers' accounts of their children's experiences to convey them to a larger audience and gather further support for the school desegregation movement. Their statements addressed the extreme inequalities their children faced in Cleveland public schools and additionally, illustrated the need for an increased participation from the black community for the sake of their children. Ella Louis, an HPA mother, compared her children who were on the busing system to "orphans" who lacked a stable space for learning.<sup>8</sup> This imagery contributed to the notion that transported students in receiving schools were helpless, unable to defend themselves against the adverse decisions of the Board of Education. The lack of agency students had in regards to their own education conveyed by their mothers prompted other adults within the community to join the struggle for school integration, and allowed the movement to adopt a clear direction that promoted equal access to education for black students in Cleveland public schools.

In addition to acting as voices for their children, mothers also physically supported the school desegregation movement through their repeated involvement in

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<sup>8</sup> Allen Howard, "'Fed-Up' Parents Stage Protest," *Cleveland Call & Post*, February 1, 1964, 1A.

direct action demonstrations organized by the UFM. Their participation in sit-in protests organized by the UFM on Friday morning, January 31<sup>st</sup> signified their relentless spirit as they fought to have their children receive a quality education, uninhibited because of their race. The commitment the mothers' demonstrated to protecting their children helped inspire support for their cause in the wider community. By moving into the school administration building and obstructing the hallway to the Board of Education offices, these women showed the lengths they would go for their own children. Prominent civil rights activist and CORE executive secretary, Ruth Turner, gave directions to demonstrators before the protest, "You walk in and take your places, wherever you think you can be most effective and then sit. You just sit and refuse to move unless they want to carry you away bodily."<sup>9</sup> Using the "civil disobedience-passive resistance" techniques popularized in the southern civil rights movement by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the UFM and HPA hoped to dramatize the education issue at-hand in an effort to emotionally appeal to a broader support base. A form of nonviolent direct action protests, sit-in demonstrations posed a physical representation of African Americans overcoming established racial barriers due to segregation whether at lunch counters, universities, or inside school administrative buildings.<sup>10</sup> In Cleveland's school desegregation movement, sit-in demonstrators presented themselves as a single, impenetrable force, united by the common goal of school integration. This solidarity pushed the demonstrators to cement themselves in the hallway until Saturday evening and some even remained in front of the Board's office into Sunday night. Each group left the school administration building

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<sup>9</sup> "How the Integration Crisis in Schools Here Developed," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, February 1, 1964 Box 1, Folder 6, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers.

<sup>10</sup> Iwan W. Morgan and Philip Davies, eds., *From Sit-Ins to SNCC: The Student Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012).



smiling and singing to show that the many hours spent demonstrating did not take a toll on the strength of the movement, and if anything, reinforced ideals within the African American community that they must continue to protest to make an effective change.

Directly following the departure of sit-in demonstrators from the Board of Education offices, the UFM expounded upon the emotional momentum derived from picketing and sit-in efforts the previous week and held mass rallies at both Antioch Baptist Church in Cleveland and St. Paul's Church in Cleveland Heights on Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss the movement's next steps. Intending to hold massive school boycotts later in the week if the school board refused to hasten the diffusion of transported students into receiving classrooms, Harold B. Williams, the executive secretary of Cleveland's NAACP unveiled the UFM's plans to withdraw children from Hazeldell Elementary on Thursday and send them to organized "freedom schools" in churches and community centers on Friday.<sup>11</sup> Like the freedom schools in the South, the UFM's freedom schools were set up as an alternative education option that promoted racial, political, social, and economic equality in addition to teaching additional subjects like African American history. Through such efforts, the schools intended to empower those students who attended.<sup>12</sup> However, in order to conduct successful protests, the UFM needed an overwhelming amount of support from the African American community.

To do so, the rally relied on a number of speakers essential to the organization of demonstrations to vocalize the emotional incentives of the larger movement. In a rousing

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<sup>11</sup> "UFM Readies School Boycotts," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, February 3, 1964, Box 1, Folder 6, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers.

<sup>12</sup> Jon N. Hale, "Introduction: The Mississippi Freedom Schools," in *The Freedom Schools*, Student Activists in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement (Columbia University Press, 2016), 11.

speech by Turner, she stated, “I’m going to change the tone of this meeting, because I’m angry—very angry,” going on to name all of those responsible for seemingly perpetual segregation in Cleveland public schools. On a more personal note, Minnie Hill, a Hazeldell mother who sat-in at the Board of Education headquarters for two days, put her devotion to her child’s education into words at the rallies, “I’ll sit in, swim in, or fly in until my child is able to sit in the same classroom with white children.”<sup>13</sup> The Church rang with cheers and applause from the crowd. Through publicizing their emotions, these leaders were able to instill a similar emotional drive within their supporters.

Additionally, within their neighborhoods, African American women worked to strengthen the UFM’s overall efforts through community-based support. These women used their leadership positions in PTA’s or local citizens’ groups to play an active role in Cleveland’s push for integration outside of the sit-in demonstrations and picket lines. For example, mothers from the Harry E. Davis PTA criticized the Board of Education, and more specifically Ralph McAllister who presided over Cleveland’s Board of Education, for the differing education standards in Cleveland public schools.<sup>14</sup> They wanted the Board to improve the standard of schooling for all black students in Cleveland by first conducting an investigation to determine the concrete reasons behind the educational disparities within predominately black and white schools across the city.<sup>15</sup> By doing so, the mothers reinforced the larger purpose of Cleveland’s desegregation movement, which promoted a quality education for black students in public schools. Ultimately, the efforts

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<sup>13</sup> “UFM Readies School Boycotts,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, February 3, 1964, Box 1, Folder 6, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers.

<sup>14</sup> “Harry E. Davis PTA Criticizes McAllister.”

of mothers and women in their local communities further strengthened the unity of school desegregation movement, as they underlined the movement's founding principles to improve the quality of their children's education and rid Cleveland public schools of the racial discrimination protrusive in its policies.

Furthermore, the public demonstrations of African American mothers who took part in picketing and sit-in efforts also propelled the school desegregation movement forward as supporters increasingly sympathized with the aggravated mothers. The Hazeldell mothers' willingness to march at receiving schools in the face of Cleveland's wintry elements showed their commitment to improving their children's educational circumstances. As the UFM and HPA planned more public demonstrations, the movement attracted further attention from press sources and gained traction in the Greater Cleveland Area. Through their marches, mothers were able to breach the separation of the private and public spheres, and politicize a problem that stemmed from the household.<sup>16</sup> Emotionally, this activism spawned from the distress they felt watching their children undergo the constant brunt of racial discrimination in the classroom. They used their emotion to rally Cleveland's black community to join them along with other civil rights activists in the battle for school integration.

Conversely, African American women and mothers active in civil rights demonstrations had to carefully monitor the types of emotions expressed during the movement for desegregation. While whites used African Americans' expression of emotion against them as justification for further discrimination, black women were

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<sup>16</sup> Ruth Feldstein "I Wanted the Whole World to See: Race, Gender, and Constructions of Motherhood in the Death of Emmett Till" in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, edited by Joanne Meyerowitz (Temple University Press, 1994), 266.

particularly vulnerable to this prejudice. The stereotype that African Americans tended to be more emotional than whites stretches back to the institution of slavery and the disparaging view that black behavior was dependent on instinct rather than reason.<sup>17</sup> Because of this, whites were able to uphold the position that blacks were intellectually inferior, arguing that intellect controlled one's emotional impulses. For black women, the notion that emotionalism was more so a feminine characteristic also played into a gendered stereotype that whites held against African American mothers and female activists.<sup>18</sup> Affected by both sexism and racism, black women had to maneuver their public demonstrations within the confines of both race and gender.<sup>19</sup> This debilitated the strength of African American women's role in the school desegregation movement and stripped them of their political power in the eyes of whites.

On the opposing side, white mothers whose children attended designated receiving schools joined together to counter the unified UFM and HPA 1964 protests fearing the ill effects integration might have on their children. Though many associate the sixties with its radical protests and progressive movements, alternatively, white mothers who rallied against busing signified the conservative backlash that occurred simultaneously across the nation in cities from Boston to Los Angeles. The Board of Education selected nearby Collinwood neighborhood schools to host bussed classes from Hough's Hazeldell school; however, since classrooms within these schools were still racially segregated, the schools became hotspots for the major picketing demonstrations

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<sup>17</sup> Britta Walschmidt-Nelson, "Does Every Vote Count in America," in Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, ed., *Emotions in American History: An International Assessment* (Berghahn Books, 2010), 227.

<sup>18</sup> Ruth Feldstein, "I Wanted the Whole World to See" in *Not June Cleaver*, edited by Joanne Meyerowitz, 267.

<sup>19</sup> Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Policies," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1: 139-67.

organized by the UFM and HPA. It was this picketing that drove white mothers to physically intervene at William H. Brett elementary school on January 27, 1964. That day, eighty Brett mothers filled the school's auditorium while others barricaded the doors to a second-grade classroom. CMSD's assistant superintendent responded by insisting that the mothers vacate the premises, yet they refused to do so.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, at Murray Hill and Memorial schools, two other receiving elementary schools in the Collinwood area, few parents brought their children to school and those that did escorted their children into their classrooms.<sup>21</sup> Despite the relatively peaceful nature of the pickets, Brett mothers lashed out against African American demonstrators, grabbing their signs and initiating the first physical conflict between opposing sides on school grounds.<sup>22</sup> This violence marked the start of a two-week wave of violent attacks upon the black community by whites who ultimately feared racial transformation in Cleveland public schools.

Furthermore, the Brett mothers' physical confrontation was the first act of violence between white and black demonstrators within the week of heated protests. Whites against school integration deemed the nonviolent direct action strategies ineffective based on their prejudice against emotional demonstration in the black community. An article printed in *The Plain Dealer* on the first day of UFM pickets stressed, "Reason at the conference table can do far more than a picket line circling the Board of Education Offices... It can be counted on to provide an impartial opinion and to suggest some steps toward a solution. Pickets can only call attention to the fact that there

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<sup>20</sup> "Whites, Negroes Hit Mixing Policy," *The Cleveland Press*, January 28, 1964, Box 1, Folder 5, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> "Whites, Negroes Hit Mixing Policy," *The Cleveland Press*, January 28, 1964, Box 1, Folder 5, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers.

is a dispute.”<sup>23</sup> However, as shown in the previous chapter, meetings between the Board of Education and black community leaders were largely ineffective, and it was the Relay Parents’ picketing that ultimately pressured the Board of Education to eradicate the relay system. Second, the Board only agreed to a busing system per the picketing of the Relay Parents. Altogether, these demonstrations remained generally non-confrontational. Regardless of their previous orderly nature, once white parents began to insert themselves into the protests by heckling and physically provoking UFM picketers, the demonstrations clashed with one another.

As more and more white parents joined in the pickets, the motivation behind their demonstrations changed from protecting their children from UFM pickets to preventing integration entirely. With the Board of Education slowly beginning to integrate a few transported students into receiving classrooms for a couple hours each day, white mothers changed their tone from the safety of their children to defending racial separation. They felt that the Board of Education repudiated its original stance to uphold segregated classes in receiving schools and resorted to direct, physical action to halt any attempt to integrate. At Murray Hill School, violence erupted in full force as a result. Eggs became weapons thrown by whites to antagonize African American picketers and provoke physical confrontation between the opposing sides.<sup>24</sup> In a riot formation, parents at Murray Hill School surrounded the building holding bricks, baseball bats, and pipes to intimidate UFM picketers.<sup>25</sup> With their tools, the crowd significantly damaged

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<sup>23</sup> “Reason Instead of Picketing,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, January 27, 1964, 16, Box 1, Folder 5, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers.

<sup>24</sup> Tony Natalie and Norman Mlachak, “Mob Hurls Eggs, Smashes 4 Autos in Wild Melees,” *The Cleveland Press*, January 27, 1964, 16, Box 1, Folder 5, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers.

<sup>25</sup> “Insults, Fists, Threats Traded by Crowd,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, January 30, 1964, 16, Box 1, Folder 5, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers, 1960-1969, The Western Reserve Historical Society Collections, The Western Reserve Historical Society.

four automobiles carrying black passengers on Mayfield Road beside the school's property. A black reporter who was riding in one of the cars at the time of the attack stated, "It was just like in the South—it must have been."<sup>26</sup> Cries from mothers to "hit" UFM demonstrators and "knock them down" heightened the conflict even further.<sup>27</sup> Thus, it was the vicious behaviors of whites towards desegregation activists that turned the school desegregation crisis into a violent affair. Refusing to bend to integration, white parents fed off of one another's fear to reinforce racial barriers that preserved the whiteness of their classrooms.

The extreme hatred whites showed towards African Americans and the possibility of integration in the conflicts that arose at Murray Hill illustrated the existing racial prejudices of whites. Whites in opposition to desegregating public schools argued that neither white nor black students would benefit from diffused classrooms. Furthermore, when speaking to the Board, white mothers asserted that they opposed integration due to the fact that it placed their children in classrooms with "strangers," and therefore, jeopardized the safety of their children.<sup>28</sup> As a result, they created their own emotional community that capitalized on these feelings of fear for their own children.

Nonetheless, the riots proved otherwise. The strong opposition to integration that specifically targeted UFM pickets clearly showed that race was the driving force behind the backlash. Groups such as the Collinwood Improvement Association and the National Association for the Advancement of White People, both white citizens' organizations,

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<sup>26</sup> "'Just Like the South,' Says Victim of Mob," January 30, 1964, Box 1, Folder 5, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers, 1960-1969, The Western Reserve Historical Society Collections, The Western Reserve Historical Society.

<sup>27</sup> "Insults, Fists, Threats Traded by Crowd," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, January 30, 1964, 16, Box 1, Folder 5, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers.

<sup>28</sup> "Board Sees Parents of Bus Pupils," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Box 1, Folder 6, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers.

fought to maintain segregation within the school system. They attacked the Board for allocating their time towards black organizations like UFM and CORE, which in turn, limited the Board's ability to meet with white groups.<sup>29</sup> Asserting that integration would detrimentally impact their children's experience in public schools, whites vouched for continued racial separation.

As a result, McAllister looked to appease these white parents who strongly opposed integration in their children's schools by assuring them that diffusion was a temporary solution, once again pushing UFM demands to the side. With new building projects to alleviate overcrowding in the Hough, Glenville, and Central neighborhoods in the works, the Board confirmed that the busing system would only persist until more classroom space became available in the children's neighborhood schools. While this comforted worried whites, the UFM found the policy unacceptable. Despite the Board's supposed efforts to integrate receiving schools "forthwith," the building of new schools along established racial divides in Cleveland further perpetuated segregation within the city's public schools. Likewise, the Board also delayed the integration process in receiving schools to start the following month, though their agreement with UFM suggested that the process would happen immediately. In light of these actions, the UFM released a statement, which read, "We charge all three schools as being both separate and unequal in violation of the 1954 Supreme Court ruling."<sup>30</sup> As frustration and anger grew once more among African Americans at the Board's disregard for their children's

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<sup>29</sup> "Whites Seeking More Attention by School Board," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Box 1, Folder 6, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers, 1960-1969, The Western Reserve Historical Society Collections, The Western Reserve Historical Society.

<sup>30</sup> "UFM Puts Ultimatum to Schools," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, February 6, 1964, Box 1, Folder 6, Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers.



education even after persistent integration efforts, the UFM mobilized to boycott the schools.

The emotion that spawned by the Board's recurrent denial of UFM requests caused the organization to stage a successful boycott of Cleveland public schools on April 20, 1964. An attitude of resilience imparted on the movement by mothers gave it the strength to transform emotions of anger and frustration into direct action protests. Over 92% of black students participated in the boycott, attending freedom schools organized by the UFM as an alternative education option for children, teenagers, and even adults. One of their main objectives was to "instill a sense of pride and achievement in community and race."<sup>31</sup> At freedom schools, children learned about African and African American history, literature, and culture, as well as the importance of Cleveland's civil rights movement specifically. The UFM sought to not only unify the parents, but also the children, giving them the skills to actively take part in the battle for their own education.<sup>32</sup>

Not surprisingly, the organization of freedom schools in Cleveland was largely a project headed by women and mothers. While many women across Cleveland served as Master Teachers and classroom aids within freedom schools, there were also women from the neighborhoods primarily impacted by segregation who acted as area supervisors for an entire cluster of freedom schools.<sup>33</sup> Through such involvement, women from the

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<sup>31</sup> "Objectives of the Cleveland Freedom Schools," Box 2, Folder 40, United Freedom Movement Freedom School Records, 1963-1965, Western Reserve Historical Society; hereafter cited as United Freedom Movement Freedom School Records.

<sup>32</sup> Leonard Nathaniel Moore, "The School Desegregation Crisis of Cleveland, Ohio, 1963-1964: The Catalyst for Black Political Power in a Northern City," *Journal of Urban History* 28, no. 2 (January 2002): 155.

<sup>33</sup> "Freedom School Coordinating Committee: Area Supervisors List," Box 2, Folder 40, United Freedom Movement Freedom School Records, 1963-1965.

Hough, Glenville, and Central neighborhoods were able to once again play a pivotal role in the shaping of a strengthened collective identity that refused to back down in the face of racial oppression while simultaneously gathering support for the school desegregation movement. As the escalated integration crisis simmered down, the mothers continued to foster empowerment throughout Cleveland's black community.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### *OTHERMOTHERS AND THE TURN TOWARDS POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY-BASED ACTION*

In their final major effort towards school desegregation, the United Freedom Movement (UFM) organized a school boycott. They aimed to protest CMSD's Board of Education's 1964 plans to eradicate the busing system altogether and fund new school construction in the Hough, Glenville, and Central neighborhoods that would simply augment segregation in Cleveland public schools. The intent of the boycott was to keep students from attending school on April 20, 1964, and instead, offer a "Freedom Day" alternative, in which students would attend freedom schools held in local churches and community centers. In freedom schools, students would learn about African and African American history, literature, and culture, as well as the importance of the civil rights movement happening locally. Per their curriculum, UFM freedom schools hoped to "instill a sense of pride and achievement in community and race."<sup>1</sup> Through persistent promotion by the UFM, the Freedom Day attracted support from across Cleveland. Ruth Turner, the executive secretary of Cleveland's CORE chapter and a critical actor in the city's civil rights movement, helped in the organization of multiple rallies in the days leading up to the boycott. She was confident that these measures would be a "big success" for the African American community, and that they would call attention to the education disparity in Cleveland public schools.<sup>2</sup> Her continued advocacy for the

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<sup>1</sup> "Objectives of the Cleveland Freedom Schools," Box 2, Folder 40, United Freedom Movement Freedom Schools Records, 1963-1965 MS 5147, Western Reserve Historical Society; hereafter cited as United Freedom Movement Freedom Schools Records.

<sup>2</sup> Ken Temple, "UFM Issues Call!: Keep School Kids Out," *Cleveland Call and Post*, April 18, 1964.

Freedom Day attracted many city residents, college students, and nearby suburbanites who offered to assist in the day as organizers or teachers in freedom schools. A significant number of these volunteers were women from the predominately black neighborhoods on Cleveland's East Side, in which schools were heavily impacted by segregation. Through their Freedom Day efforts, African American women sought to foster a resilient spirit among children within their community.

This community-driven aid that African American women took part in to support the desegregation movement positioned them as “othermothers” for African American children living in Cleveland's Hough, Glenville, and Central areas. The theory of the othermother draws from Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought*, and establishes the centrality of women within the black community and their ability to mold the lives of those outside of their own household. According to Collins, the othermother in African American communities is any woman responsible for the caring, nurturing, or teaching of children in her community other than her own.<sup>3</sup> In relation to Cleveland, othermothers worked to improve the severe inequalities that detrimentally impacted their children's education. Using Collins' theory of *othermotherhood*, this chapter argues that it was the work of African American women who used their position as othermothers to garner a sense of hope in their community that ultimately sustained the desegregation movement as it faced a fractured civil rights movement during the latter half of the 1960s. The chapter will first analyze freedom schools as a way for othermothers to extend their outreach to entire classrooms of children. In their lessons, othermothers provided children with tools of empowerment and strategies to defend themselves against discriminatory

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<sup>3</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 2000), 178.

policies implemented by CMSD's Board of Education, and ultimately, unified Cleveland's African American community under a singular collective identity. Second, to consider the othermother as a political role, it will examine the actions of Ruth Turner who was an integral leader of Cleveland's civil rights movement. While mentioned in the previous chapter for her work related to integrating transported students into receiving schools, Ruth Turner was instrumental in the movement's transition to more political strategies, particularly in her ardent support for the 1965 and 1967 campaigns of Carl B. Stokes, the first black mayor of any major U.S. city.<sup>4</sup> With the election of Stokes, the African American community found new hope. Lastly, the chapter will look at the leadership of African American women who worked on improving conditions within their own violence-stricken neighborhoods after the Hough riots of 1966 through community-based organizations as othermothers. In short, the decline of direct action demonstrations in Cleveland's desegregation movement prompted othermothers to resort to political and community-based strategies, which gave the movement hope as it encountered a divide between supporters.

Although division lingered on the horizon, the UFM boycott on April 20, 1964 was extremely successful as a means of both protest and pride for African Americans in the Hough, Glenville, and Central areas. Under the UFM, civil rights organizations across the city joined together to form a coalition against the Board's plans to construct new schools in these neighborhoods that would eliminate the need for a busing system altogether and in turn, rid the district of any possible chance at integration. Without busing, students would attend their assigned neighborhood schools that fell within

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<sup>4</sup> Leonard Nathaniel Moore, *Carl B. Stokes and the Rise of Black Political Power* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

Cleveland's rigid racial divides. This not only further segregated Cleveland public schools, but also diminished the desegregation movement's progress in achieving the implementation of a busing system.<sup>5</sup> To challenge the Board's plans, UFM officials and local civil rights leaders such as Turner rallied the African American community to participate in a citywide school boycott and subsequent Freedom Day. A huge success in uniting Cleveland's African American community, on the day of the boycott, nearly 92 percent of African American students in Cleveland were absent from school with many attending freedom schools in local churches and community centers. Freedom schools served as a substitute for the school missed while boycotting. The success of freedom schools on Freedom Day led to the continuation and extension of the program in the summer of 1964. In these classes, students learned about Cleveland's local civil rights movement, particularly relating to school desegregation, in addition to African American history and culture.<sup>6</sup> Their main purpose was to teach children about the importance of desegregation and help them better understand their right to a quality education.

It is important to note that the UFM was not the only organization to use freedom schools as a desegregation strategy. Freedom schools in Cleveland followed a similar but not exact education model to the more widely known freedom schools organized during Mississippi's 1964 Freedom Summer. Proposed in 1963 by Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) activist Charles Cobb, the purpose of freedom schools was to combat the rigid Jim Crow segregation upheld by Mississippi legislators and

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<sup>5</sup> Released Statement by the UFM, March 10, 1964, Box 2, Folder 40, United Freedom Movement Freedom Schools Records, 1963-1965.

<sup>6</sup> "Our School Boycott--Teachers' Guide," Box 2, Folder 40, United Freedom Movement Freedom Schools Records, 1963-1965.

school board officials in spite of the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) ruling.<sup>7</sup> To encourage elementary, middle, and high school-aged students to join the civil rights movement, students spent the summer learning about political activism and tactics used by civil rights organizations to work against the system. They also studied national legislation like the Constitution and Declaration of Independence to better understand how the state government denied them rights guaranteed to all citizens of the United States. With this knowledge, students returned to public schools in the fall ready to protest racial discrimination.<sup>8</sup>

In a similar fashion, UFM freedom schools strove to provide students with the ability and confidence to protest racial injustice in the Cleveland public school system, an objective that depended on the participation of othermothers in the Freedom Day. Othermothers brought characteristics of Black motherhood into freedom schools. Just as African American mothers were responsible for empowering their own children, othermothers were responsible for shaping a cohesive, strengthened identity among African American youth in freedom schools by volunteering as area school supervisors, master teachers, and teaching assistants. In the classroom, they explained the importance of working towards integrated schools. They voiced to students that segregation lodged a misunderstanding and prejudice into the minds of pupils due to the racial homogeneity of their classrooms, and established the drastic inequalities between all-white and all-black schools. Moreover, through lessons prepared by the UFM, othermothers taught students how to effectively participate in direct action demonstrations like boycotts and sit-ins.

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<sup>7</sup> Jon N. Hale, ed., "Introduction: The Mississippi Freedom Schools," in *The Freedom Schools, Student Activists in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement* (Columbia University Press, 2016), 1–18, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/hale17568.5>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

They posed questions to students intended to spark class discussion concerning students' role in the civil rights movement such as, "How should you act during a boycott?" and "What is the purpose of freedom schools?"<sup>9</sup> Through these lessons taught by othermothers, students were able to better grasp the illegality of segregation in the North while acquiring the knowledge and skills to overcome it. In garnering this collective identity, the lessons taught by othermothers in UFM freedom schools gave students the specific tools to take control over their own education and take part in the battle for a quality, desegregated education.<sup>10</sup>

Comparatively, othermothers and UFM volunteers focused the second-half of their lessons on promoting African and African American heritage. Since students received little to no education on subjects such as African American history or literature in public schools, freedom schools sought to fill this gap. Starting with the "African Background," classes worked through topics such as resistance to slavery in the Americas, living conditions for southern African Americans following the Civil War, and "The revolt of the Negroes in the decade 1954-1964."<sup>11</sup> They celebrated prominent figures such as Frederick Douglas, Harriet Tubman, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and read poetry by Gwendolyn Brooks, Langston Hughes, and James Weldon Johnson that conveyed messages of struggle, resistance, and strength. Ultimately, this focus on the humanities served as a source of racial pride for students. It emphasized the extensive reach of art and literary expression when faced with racial oppression and encouraged students to follow in the footsteps of notable African American leaders.

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<sup>9</sup> "Our School Boycott--Teachers' Guide," Box 2, Folder 40, United Freedom Movement Freedom Schools Records, 1963-1965.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



On the whole, these lessons taught by othermothers and other freedom school volunteers expressed that students played a critical role in carrying the momentum of the desegregation movement into the future. Additionally, freedom schools solidified that perpetuating segregation would simply lead to further inequalities in the school system, as well as more frustration and hatred. As younger generations of African Americans took their seats in freedom schools on the day of the boycott, othermothers and UFM volunteers expressed messages of hope rooted in UFM lessons while they projected the importance of working towards desegregation in Cleveland public schools and the need for activism from children in their segregated classrooms as well as the larger community. The massive outreach of their Freedom Day efforts fundamentally unified African Americans under a singular emotional force driven by hope and progress. Upon their graduation, students received diplomas that reinforced the optimistic message that students must work to “create a more perfect world where peace shall reign and true brotherhood prevails.”<sup>12</sup>

As hope resonated among Cleveland’s African American community due to the success of the freedom schools, CORE Executive, Ruth Turner spoke with writer Robert Penn Warren for his book of interviews titled *Who Speaks for the Negro* about the experience of African Americans in Cleveland. One of the most prominent community othermothers in the desegregation movement, Turner believed that the overwhelming support shown by the African American community for the boycott and freedom schools proved their commitment to the cause. Despite the long struggle for school desegregation, apathy among African Americans for the movement was not her concern. Turner

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<sup>12</sup> Freedom Diploma, 1964, United Freedom Movement Freedom Schools Records, 1963-1965.

described the role emotions played in Cleveland's civil rights movement, in addition to the limitations they posed:

I would say that in the particular movement in which I am involved, hate doesn't have much function. Hope does. Despair does. If you're acting on despair with hope – acting on frustration with hope. None of us really have time to hate. It's too all-consuming. Similarly, we don't have time to love, not in any intense personal kind of way.<sup>13</sup>

Her reflection on hope as a means of overcoming despair and frustration spoke to the upcoming adversities Cleveland's civil rights movement would face in the following years. By emphasizing hope, Turner vocalized the movement's need for perseverant activism regardless of division to incite economic, political, and social justice across the city. To her, the overwhelming number of participants in freedom schools indicated that frustration among African Americans had not turned to apathy, even as the Board continued to deny UFM requests. Rather, the UFM's ability to rally 92 percent of black students in Cleveland public schools illustrated the strength of the movement.<sup>14</sup>

According to Turner, this overwhelming support for UFM's boycott needed to translate into the political arena in the coming months. Now that the majority of Cleveland's African American community seemed active and ready to participate in further civil rights efforts, Turner seized the opportunity to turn the movement's direction towards politics.<sup>15</sup> Up until this point, civil rights activism in Cleveland primarily relied on nonviolent direct action tactics like picketing, sit-ins, and boycotts to provoke social change. However, under Turner's leadership, CORE shifted its tactics to include more political strategies. Turner discussed the organization's summer program that aimed to

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<sup>13</sup> Ruth Turner, interview by Robert Penn Warren, May 7, 1964.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

register more black voters and encourage African Americans in Cleveland to vote as a united community. She believed that a collective vote was necessary to change the city's political agenda in ways that would benefit African American neighborhoods on the East Side. Through Turner's repeated advocacy for the projects, she hoped to increase the African American community's political organization in Cleveland and as a result, give them the power to challenge its political system at a moment of peak unification.

Despite this initial strength after the boycott, the coalescence of civil rights organizations under the UFM was temporary and soon after, Turner found herself trying to politically reunite African Americans under Carl B. Stokes 1965 campaign. Stokes was a Cleveland-native who grew up in the city's predominately black East Side neighborhoods and eventually became the first black mayor of any major city in the United States. Prior to his election in 1967, he received his law degree from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law and served three terms in the Ohio House of Representatives. Stokes' 1965 campaign emphasized issues pertinent to African American voters like employment, health care, housing and urban renewal, crime, and racial relations. As the conversation surrounding civil rights became more and more political, divisive fractures within the cohesive movement occurred.<sup>16</sup> Division over whether or not the UFM should endorse political candidates caused three leaders to resign in 1965 and led to the eventual decline of the coalition. Lacking clear leadership and with its financial support from member organizations decreasing, the UFM officially ended its coalition efforts in 1966. While segregation worsened in Cleveland public schools over the decade, the conversation surrounding school desegregation weakened. As a result, the number of

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<sup>16</sup> Steven F. Lawson, *Civil Rights Crossroads: Nation, Community, and the Black Freedom Struggle* (University Press of Kentucky, 2003).

direct action demonstrations such as pickets, boycotts, and sit-in demonstrations declined without a singular driving force to organize the many civil rights groups present in the movement. In the face of division and the UFM's collapse, Turner persisted and turned CORE's attention to the 1965 mayoral campaign of Stokes in an attempt to revive the strong support accumulated by the Freedom Day. At a meeting in front of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) delegation including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Turner stated that with Stokes in the running, Cleveland's civil rights movement had an "excellent opportunity" to replace "inept and incompetent" city and school board officials. "The election of Stokes as mayor would make our city stand taller around the nation," said Turner informing the SCLC of CORE's endorsement and the optimism embedded in the possibility of an African American mayor.<sup>17</sup> By backing Stokes, Turner sought to gain more political traction for the civil rights movement and improve the gaping political, economic, and social inequalities that so affected African Americans living in Cleveland.

The fervent support for Stokes' campaign from Turner and CORE reflected the movement's shift to politics nationwide, particularly in northern cities. Stokes' campaign aligned with the rise of black power and black nationalism across the United States as leaders such as Malcolm X and Bayard Rustin stressed the importance of black self-determination and viewed attaining political power as the next step for the civil rights movement.<sup>18</sup> A year prior to Stokes' bid for mayor, on April 3, 1964, Malcolm X addressed the need for political control in his famous "The Ballet or the Bullet" speech in Cleveland at a meeting organized by CORE.

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<sup>17</sup> Al Sweeney, Ailing Dr. King Tries to Stir Local Voters, *Cleveland Call and Post*, July 31, 1965.

<sup>18</sup> Moore, *Carl B. Stokes and the Rise of Black Political Power*, 5.

We must --We must understand the politics of our community and we must know what politics is supposed to produce. We must know what part politics play in our lives. And until we become politically mature we will always be misled, led astray, or deceived or maneuvered into supporting someone politically who doesn't have the good of our community at heart. So the political philosophy of Black Nationalism only means that we will have to carry on a program, a political program, of re-education to open our people's eyes, make us become more politically conscious, politically mature, and then we will -- whenever we get ready to cast our ballot, that ballot will be -- will be cast for a man of the community who has the good of the community of heart.<sup>19</sup>

Malcom X's speech seemed to direct CORE's agenda over the following years. Seeing Stokes' as the "man of the community" that would greatly influence the standing of low-income African Americans on Cleveland's East Side, Turner mobilized all CORE members to volunteer for his campaign by circulating literature, stuffing envelopes, visiting local businesses, and giving donations.<sup>20</sup> They projected Stokes' platform that prioritized issues pertinent to African Americans living on the East Side like employment, health care, housing, crime, and race relations.<sup>21</sup> As the group's leader, Turner directed CORE's involvement towards community outreach to signify that the support of all African Americans in Cleveland was necessary for Stokes' 1965 election.

Though Stokes' mayoral campaign certainly challenged that of incumbent Ralph S. Locher, he lost the race by a slim margin of 2,142 votes.<sup>22</sup> This loss had a detrimental impact on CORE since the organization donated the majority of its funding to support Stokes. Without the funds to sustain itself, Cleveland's CORE chapter fell apart.

However, Turner's perseverant efforts locally within the organization afforded her

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<sup>19</sup> Malcolm X, "The Ballet or the Bullet," accessed February 8, 2017, [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp\\_textbook.cfm?smtid=3&psid=3624](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=3&psid=3624).

<sup>20</sup> Ruth Turner to Members of CORE, October 5, 1965, *Congress of Racial Equality Papers, 1963-1967*, Western Reserve Historical Society .

<sup>21</sup> Moore, *Carl B. Stokes and the Rise of Black Political Power*, 41.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

recognition on the national front. In 1966, she became executive assistant to CORE's national director and helped Cleveland become one of CORE's Target Cities in 1968. This program funded projects in four areas seen as critical to improving low-income, largely African American neighborhoods on the East Side: youth leadership training, voter education and registration, economic development research, and conferences to discuss further concerns among black residents.<sup>23</sup> Through Turner's persistent civil rights advocacy, she exemplified the community othermother and used this role to further politicize Cleveland's civil rights struggle and bring attention to the city on the national front.

However, in Turner's absence, the tone of the civil rights movement drastically shifted in Cleveland, particularly with the success of Carl B. Stokes' 1967 mayoral campaign.<sup>24</sup> As frustration rose particularly among African Americans in Cleveland's Hough neighborhood where poverty and crime rates were ostensibly higher than the rest of the city, racial violence ensued and culminated in the Hough riots of 1966. The racial unrest that ensued under Locher as mayor caused his reputation to deteriorate, and consequently, Carl B. Stokes gained the support of both African Americans and whites across Cleveland who saw Stokes' platform as a remedy for heightened racial tensions in the city. With \$250,000 in funds from local and national organizations to finance his 1967 campaign, Stokes ran a much different campaign than in 1965.<sup>25</sup> He understood that in order to win the election, he needed support from both the African American community and whites. As a result, Stokes encouraged civil rights activists to cease their

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<sup>23</sup> "Art Evans Head Target Cities Project", *Cleveland Call and Post*, June 29, 1968.

<sup>24</sup> David R. Colburn and Jeffrey S. Adler, eds., *African-American Mayors: Race, Politics, and the American City* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

<sup>25</sup> Moore, *Carl B. Stokes and the Rise of Black Political Power*, 55.

efforts for the time being with the promise that his election would ensure a push for civil rights. He feared that demonstrations might deter white voters and cause him to lose the election. Meanwhile, CORE mobilized to register African Americans in Cleveland. The committed efforts of his supporters helped Stokes clinch a win at the polls on election day as the country's first African American mayor, a major milestone for the civil rights movement nationwide. Once elected, Stokes turned his attention to revitalizing Cleveland through government-funded projects. In his first year, Stokes created a program to tackle issues of housing, employment, and urban renewal called Cleveland: Now!, a \$1.5 billion project that he hoped would fix some of the major problems plaguing low-income urban areas. His emphasis on revitalization through government-funded projects turned the focus of civil rights issues in Cleveland towards improving conditions for African Americans within the neighborhoods themselves.<sup>26</sup>

Under Stokes' platform of community revitalization, African American women extended their outreach as othermothers into neighborhoods through their involvement and leadership in volunteer organizations, particularly the YWCA. The decrease in school desegregation demonstrations prompted women to seek out other channels to improve the futures of African American children in their community who still were victims of the Board's segregationist policies. Programs and committees within YWCAs set out to offer assistance to struggling families in their community while also tackling problems that affected their neighborhoods such as education and welfare.<sup>27</sup> The YWCA's Community branch in the Central Area offered Teen Clubs and programs for

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>27</sup> Y-Women's Community House of the Addison YWCA 1967, Hough-related organizations, records, Paul Alden Younger Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

elementary students that included field trips and educational and recreational activities. Additionally, a group of young mothers active in the YWCA's Community branch formed the Central Area Action Committee to address problems pertaining to housing, employment, education, and hunger.<sup>28</sup> Similar efforts taken by members of the Hough and Glenville area YWCA's showed that the women's association was an important outlet for othermothers who hoped to effectively better their children's circumstances within their neighborhoods despite the Board of Education's unwillingness to integrate the school district.

However, while the volunteer efforts of othermothers sustained a sense of hope at the community level, the school segregation situation in Cleveland public schools continued to worsen. From 1960 to 1970, the number of students who attended racially homogenous schools grew from 79 percent to 86 percent.<sup>29</sup> The opening of Emile B. deSauze school in 1967 contributed to increasing segregation percentages across the district. Furthermore, the Board of Education redrew boundary lines that assigned children to public schools depending on their neighborhood in order to alleviate some of the overcrowding still impacting classrooms in schools with primarily African American student bodies on the East Side. Instead of using this as an opportunity to redraw boundaries across racial divides that would result in more integrated schools, the Board furthered the segregation problem. In 1973, the NAACP brought these issues to court in the case *Reed v. Rhodes*, which successfully sued the Board of Education for creating and maintaining a segregated public school system.<sup>30</sup> It was this court case that mandated a

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<sup>28</sup> "Hough Area Civic Association Pays Tribute to 18 Women," *Cleveland Call and Post*, Nov 22, 1969.

<sup>29</sup> *Reed v. Rhodes* (C73-1300), James L. Hardiman Reed v. Rhodes Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.



citywide busing system and ultimately began to effectively desegregate the school district.

The plaintiffs of *Reed v. Rhodes* were African American mothers and their children who the Board segregated and deprived of a quality education. These mothers selected by the NAACP stood in for all of those children and their families living on Cleveland's predominately black East Side that faced oppression on a daily basis due to the city's discriminatory education policies. In doing so, they acted as othermothers for all African American children in the Cleveland public school system. Three years after the case's beginning, Judge Frank J. Battisti of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio found CMSD's Board of Education guilty of intentionally segregating and discriminating against African American pupils in Cleveland public schools. The decision called for the implementation of a busing system that would transport African American students on the East Side to majority-white schools on the city's West Side.<sup>31</sup> With this order, the Cleveland Municipal School District made gradual progress towards desegregating its public school system and gave mothers hope that through legislation, an integrated education for their children might be possible.

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

## CONCLUSION

Based upon this analysis of the record, the significant involvement of the Cleveland Board of Education in the creation or maintenance of a segregated school system cannot be denied. Many of its actions had that condition as their natural, probable, foreseeable and actual effect. Other actions cannot be explained except by ascribing to them a deliberate, conscious intent on the part of the board to segregate public school pupils on the basis of race. Therefore, the court finds that the Board of Education has violated the plaintiffs' fourteenth amendment right to equal protection under the laws by intentionally creating and maintaining a segregated school system.— *Reed v. Rhodes Decision* (1976)<sup>1</sup>

The 1976 decision of *Reed v. Rhodes* by Judge Frank J. Battisti marked the start of Cleveland Municipal School District's lengthy integration process. After finding CMSD's Board of Education guilty of intentionally establishing and upholding segregation throughout Cleveland public schools, the Court mandated that the plaintiffs, Cleveland Board of Education, and State Board of Education create a proposal together that would offer a desegregation plan for the coming academic year within ninety days of the Court's decision. At this time, the Court also temporarily halted all new school construction projects so that they could be reviewed by the Court prior to their opening to ensure that the schools would not further segregate the school district as originally intended by the Board of Education.<sup>2</sup>

As much as the legal recognition of unlawful segregation in Cleveland public schools was a bout of progress for the school desegregation movement, the actual process of integration took much longer than initially anticipated. In the 1976 *Reed v. Rhodes* decision, the Court determined that the district should begin efforts to integrate by September of the following year. Nonetheless, the Court refused to approve the Board of

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<sup>1</sup> *Reed v. Rhodes* (C73-1300), James L. Hardiman Reed v. Rhodes Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, 200.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

Education's proposals for desegregation until the Board's third draft presented in October of 1977 that included plans for the implementation of citywide busing system set to start in September of 1978. This busing system and accompanying remedial order issued by Judge Battisti in February of 1978 was ultimately instrumental in desegregating Cleveland public schools. Through crosstown busing, the program aimed to integrate nearly 115,000 students in the Cleveland public school system. Of this number, 36 percent of students were white from the West Side, 60 percent were African American students living on the East Side, and 3 percent were Hispanic students from the city's central areas.<sup>3</sup> In 1979, the school district began to transport students across the city in order to officially desegregate Cleveland public schools. Unlike the 1962 busing system established by the Board per the demands of the Relay Parents which continued to segregate students within classrooms, this citywide busing system was initially successful in desegregating the district.

The implementation of a busing system that legitimately integrated African American students into classrooms alongside white pupils constituted a great feat for the NAACP and supporters of the school desegregation movement following a struggle that spanned over two decades. As shown throughout the duration of this project, the school desegregation movement was a constant battle between the Board of Education and Cleveland's African American community, as the Board continually rejected African Americans' propositions to integrate the schools and instead, segregated their children further into racially homogenous schools. The numerous demonstrations and community-based efforts organized through grassroots activism proved most effective in uniting the

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<sup>3</sup> Jim Carl and Argun Saatciogle, "The Discursive Turn in School Desegregation: National Patterns and a Case Analysis of Cleveland, 1973-1998," *Social Science History* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 59-108, 79.

African American community under a single cause, and allowed the movement to resist any attempt by the Board to hinder their influence. This strength kept Cleveland's segregation problem in the public eye, even after its momentum declined during the latter half of the 1960s. Still, the district remained rigidly segregated, keeping the issue a hot topic of discussion among the city's civil rights leaders. At a meeting in Columbus, Ohio to address school segregation across the State in 1972, NAACP officials decided that Cleveland was the "perfect" district to press desegregation and in 1973, the NAACP filed a suit against the Board of Education. At this time, the NAACP began organizing events to rally African American support in Cleveland, knowing that black solidarity was critical to the success of former civil rights efforts.<sup>4</sup> They promoted the busing system as their main objective in order to unite African American support behind a singular solution. This busing system was ultimately effective in initially desegregating Cleveland public schools in contrast to the previous 1962 attempts that transported students from overcrowded schools to those in nearby neighborhoods with empty classrooms.

Regardless of the fact that the 1979 busing system was the most successful effort in desegregating Cleveland public schools, busing did not fix the segregation problem. Over the course of its implementation, whites increasingly moved out of the city and into Cleveland's surrounding suburbs. From 1973 to 1992, the percentage of whites in Cleveland public schools decreased from 41 percent to 18 percent.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, African American students were still in segregated classrooms as a result of the declining number of white pupils attending Cleveland public schools despite transportation. This problem only grew worse during the latter half of the 1990s once the court rescinded its order

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

which mandated busing and other measures that the court saw necessary in order to establish an integrated education system. In 2000, the court officially freed the school district from court control and in turn, ceased all desegregation efforts.<sup>6</sup>

In relation to the history of the northern civil rights movement, Cleveland's school desegregation movement remains relatively understudied. While current scholarship mainly focuses on the early efforts of the Relay Parents as well as the 1964 riots at Murray Hill School and heightened demonstrations, a gap in the literature concerning the movement exists in the years following the movement's fracture and *Reed v. Rhodes* in 1973. Although my independent study touched upon some of the community-based action that ensued during these years to indirectly progress the school desegregation movement, further research could expand upon this subject by solely looking at the role of community-based aid in improving the quality of education given to African American students in segregated schools as desegregation efforts came to a halt.

Secondly, the role African American women played in Cleveland's civil rights narrative should continue to receive increased attention from scholars. Future research on the subject might explore mothers' reactions to the *Reed v. Rhodes* decision and the varying attitudes to the Board's implementation of the 1979 busing system. As more and more whites began to move outside of the city and Cleveland public schools across the district became predominately black, some parents questioned the purpose of busing if integration was not a result. By studying these mothers' reactions, scholars will shed further light on the present state of Cleveland public schools, and the reasoning behind the discontinuation of the city's busing system. Furthermore, it will allow them to study

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<sup>6</sup> David R. Logan, "Choosing Segregation: Racial Imbalance in American Public Schools, 1990-2000," 2002.

some of the root causes behind resegregation in Cleveland public schools, indicative of the resegregation that occurred in public school districts across the Northeast.

With regard to the current status of resegregation in Cleveland public schools, CMSD schools remain highly segregated due to the racial composition of the city. According to recent statistics published by the CMSD, the racial makeup of the school district stands as follows: 66.9 percent black, 14.4 percent Hispanic, and 14.6 percent white.<sup>7</sup> With the majority of Cleveland's African American population residing on the East Side of the city while white and Hispanic populations largely occupy the West Side, the city's public schools reflect this racial divide. Since the eradication of the school district's busing system in 1996, the segregation of students in Cleveland public schools increased significantly. From 1989 to 1999, segregation in solely elementary schools throughout the Greater Cleveland metropolitan area jumped from 38 percent to 71 percent over the course of this decade. Likewise, in 1999, Cleveland public schools ranked fifth in terms of segregation among other Northern cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and Milwaukee. This reflects Cleveland's current status as one of the most segregated cities in the country.

In addition to Cleveland public schools being rigidly segregated, the schools struggle to provide their students with a quality education, leaving many African American children with limited educational opportunities. Data collected from the CMSD's 2015-2016 report card indicates that the district received an 'F' in each of the areas that the State measures to determine its overall performance success. In terms of achievement levels based on state test results, most students had either a basic or a

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<sup>7</sup> "Facts," Cleveland Metropolitan School District, 2016, <http://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/domain/24>.

limited understanding of the subjects they were tested on, which depended on their grade level. Only 23.5 percent of third-graders scored proficient on the Ohio state reading test. Additionally, 69.1 percent of high school students in Cleveland public schools graduate in four years and 43.2 percent of these students attend college within the first two years after graduating.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, because most of these students' families fall beneath the poverty line, the poor education they receive very much constrains their opportunity for economic mobility and their ability to rise into the upper classes. This creates an inescapable cycle for many impoverished African American youths confined to a poor education system.

In a long-form piece for *The New York Times Magazine* titled "Choosing a School for My Daughter in a Segregated City: How one school became a battleground over which children benefit from a separate and unequal system," Nikole Hannah-Jones, an investigative journalist who covers civil rights issues, writes about her personal challenges choosing whether or not to send her daughter to New York City public schools. As a middle-class African American mother who grew up on Waterloo, Iowa's predominately black East Side, Hannah-Jones attended a segregated school until her mother enrolled her in the city's desegregation program so that she could attend the "best" public school located in a whiter and wealthier area. Although Hannah-Jones understands her mother's reasoning behind wanting her child to receive the best possible education, she does not seek the same fate for her daughter. Instead, she decides to enroll her daughter at P.S. 307, an elementary school in Brooklyn where the student body is made up of 91 percent black and Latino students and nine out of ten students fall beneath

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<sup>8</sup> Ohio School Report Cards, 2015-2016 *Cleveland Municipal School District*.

the poverty line, knowing that diversifying a school economically can improve the school's chances at receiving funding from the district. By choosing P.S. 307, Hannah-Jones considered the implications of her decisions on a broader spectrum. She writes:

This sense of helplessness in the face of such entrenched segregation is what makes so alluring the notion, embraced by liberals and conservatives, that we can address school inequality not with integration but by giving poor, segregated schools more resources and demanding of them more accountability. True integration, true equality, requires a surrendering of advantage, and when it comes to our own children, that can feel almost unnatural.<sup>9</sup>

As Cleveland public schools continue to struggle to provide their students with a quality education, it is important to remember the words of Hannah-Jones in conjunction with the actions of the many mothers and othermothers active during the school desegregation movement. By putting the needs of the entire community before themselves, these mothers fought to combat the racism and prejudice behind the Board of Education policies that privileged whiter and wealthier schools. Their efforts on behalf of all African American children in Cleveland's segregated public school system propelled the desegregation movement further, and ultimately, sustained the movement until the court-mandated desegregation of the district starting in 1976. The individual choices that these women made to aid the movement strengthened Cleveland's African American community and gave way to pivotal moment's in the nationwide civil rights movement such as the 1967 election of Carl B. Stokes or the *Reed v. Rhodes* decision. This community outreach exemplified by African American women during Cleveland's desegregation movement becomes increasingly important as the current presidential administration promotes a push towards privatizing public education, instead of

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<sup>9</sup> Nikole Hannah-Jones, "Choosing a School for My Daughter in a Segregated City: How One School Became a Battleground over Which Children Benefit from a Separate and Unequal System," *The New York Times Magazine*, June 9, 2016.



improving existing public schools. Pulling from Hannah-Jones' argument, we must consider the sake of the broader community.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

Ardelia Bradley Dixon Papers 1931-1991. Western Reserve Historical Society. Cleveland, OH.

This collection contains both personal and professional documents tied to Cleveland civil rights activist, Ardelia Bradley Dixon who served on the board of the NAACP's Cleveland branch and the Cleveland Public Library and volunteered for many charitable organizations in Cleveland including the Phyllis Wheatley Center, the Interchurch Council of Greater Cleveland, and the National Council of Churches. Although my project does not include Dixon, the collection contains newspaper clippings about the intensified school desegregation demonstrations in January-February of 1964.

*Cleveland Call and Post Online Archives, 1934-1991*, Cleveland, OH.

Established in 1928, *The Call & Post* is a Cleveland-based newspaper that covers issues that primarily affect the city's African American community. Because of its largely African American readership, this source is helpful in discerning the community member's responses to the Board of Education discriminatory policies that created poor school conditions in the Hough, Glenville, and Central neighborhoods. To do so, my independent study looks towards editorials, letters to the editor, and quotations in news articles to determine African American mothers' responses.

*Cleveland Plain Dealer Online Archives, 1845-1991*, Cleveland, OH.

As the major newspaper in the Greater Cleveland Area, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported on many of the events that occurred during the school desegregation movement. These articles contain details and quotes from firsthand participants in the movement. In my independent study, I use the information in the articles to show that women were extremely active in the movement, as many of them feature mothers as their primary subjects.

Congress of Racial Equality, Cleveland Chapter Records, 1960-1969. MS 5147. Western Reserve Historical Society. Cleveland, OH.

The Congress of Racial Equality's (CORE) Cleveland Chapter Records at the Western Reserve Historical Society consist of the organization's agendas, minutes, membership cards, press releases, proposals, flyers, publications, and other miscellaneous material dating from 1960 to 1969. For my project, I primarily use the documents related to Freedom Schools as evidence to show Ruth Turner's involvement in Freedom Schools through CORE. Her prominent leadership enabled the success of the Freedom Schools, proving that she was an influential othermother in Cleveland's school desegregation movement.

James L. Hardiman *Reed v. Rhodes* Papers 1972-2001, MS 5123. Western Reserve Historical Society. Cleveland, OH.

This collection contains papers related to the 1973 *Reed v. Rhodes* case that officially decided that the Board of Education was guilty of intentionally creating and maintaining a segregated school district. The information retrieved from the collection is useful as I conclude my project with the impact that this case had on Cleveland public schools and the court's attempt to desegregate the district. Furthermore, the evidence presented by the plaintiffs on the racially homogenous demographics of the district contribute to my overall discussion on the fervent segregation present in Cleveland public schools.

Paul Alden Younger Papers, 1951-1976. MS 3869. Western Reserve Historical Society. Cleveland, OH.

This collection housed at the Western Reserve Historical Society contains material related to the work of both Betty and Paul Alden Younger. As social activists, the two worked with multiple civil rights organizations including the United Freedom Movement and Citizens Committee to Support Our Schools. The papers related to their involvement with the Hough Area Council are most relevant to my project as they provide valuable information on the community-based efforts to improve conditions in public schools.

Penn Warren, Robert. Interview with Ruth Turner. *Who Speaks for the Negro?: An Archival Collection*. 1964.

In an interview conducted by writer Robert Penn Warren on May 7, 1964 for his book *Who Speaks for the Negro?*, Ruth Turner, a former teacher in Cleveland Public Schools and the Congress of Racial Equality's executive secretary, describes Cleveland's local civil rights movement and the poor conditions African Americans face due to racially discriminatory policies. Throughout the interview, Turner touches on topics such as poverty, voting, and education. She also details her own role in the movement and how she became involved in CORE. In relation to my project, this interview provides critical primary source information from Turner herself who was an instrumental figure in the school desegregation movement.

"Population of urbanized areas: 1960 and 1950," No. 10, p. 33. In *Number of Inhabitants*, 1960. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960.

Cleveland's urban racial demographics in 1960 compared to 1950's will be useful in my project as it shows the movement of whites from the city to the suburbs. Although the data does not decipher between races (it simply states white/non-white), it is quite visible that while whites populated the suburbs, non-whites remained in the city. Nearby suburbs like Euclid and East Cleveland had minimal non-white residents, whereas these cities' white populations had increased since 1950. Throughout my research, I plan to refer to census data to indicate the shifts in racial demographics in the Cleveland area as well as trace various trends related to education in Cleveland, for example, years of school

completed by persons 14 to 24 or years of school enrolled by persons 5 to 34. With data interpretation, I will be able to better understand the role education played in urban areas from 1950-1970.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Cleveland Branch Records, 1922-1969, MS 3520, Collections, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, OH.

The extensive collection of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Cleveland Branch Records at the Western Reserve Historical Society holds the city's most prominent civil rights organization's records from 1922-1969. While the collection holds reports, minutes, newspaper clippings, press releases, speeches, and other miscellaneous materials, the records pertaining to the Board of Education were particularly useful to to better understand the interactions between the NAACP and CMSD's Board, and those issues which the NAACP saw as integral in the fight for desegregating Cleveland public schools.

United Freedom Movement Freedom School Records, 1963-1965, MS 4814, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, OH.

The United Freedom Movement's Freedom Schools Records housed at the Western Reserve Historical Society contains materials from the massive school boycott that took place on April 20, 1964 including volunteer applications, promotional flyers, curricula, and lists of students, teachers, supervisors, and volunteers who took part in the Freedom Schools. These records gave me an indication as to how involved women were in the organization of the Freedom Schools, and thus, aiding to my overall argument of the othermother in Chapter three.

## Secondary Sources

Carl, Jim, and Argun Saatciogle. "The Discursive Turn in School Desegregation: National Patterns and a Case Analysis of Cleveland, 1973-1998." *Social Science History* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 59-108.

In this sociological study, education specialists Jim Carl and Argun Saatciogle examine the changing conversation of school desegregation from the 1970s to 1998. They argue that the tone surrounding the desegregation discussion has become largely negative in more recent years using newspaper coverage, court documents, administrative student records, and census information as evidence. They find that the social and political factors that prevent an impartial discussion on school desegregation lend themselves to the complications that cloud the implementation of policies to desegregate public education systems. The historical information that they gather on desegregating Cleveland public schools in the 1970s is valuable to my independent study, particularly as I conclude my project with the more recent status of the Cleveland Municipal School District.

Colburn, David R., and Jeffrey S. Adler, eds. *African-American Mayors: Race, Politics, and the American City*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

In terms of a larger body of scholarship on the importance of African American Mayors in relation to the civil rights movement, University of Florida historians David R. Colburn's and Jeffrey S. Adler's compile a collection of ten essays on the election of black mayors in major cities across the United States, starting with Stokes in 1967. Similar to the argument of Leonard Nathaniel Moore in *Carl B. Stokes and the Rise of Black Political Power*, through the various narratives, readers see the African American mayors faced difficulties meeting the expectations they set for their African American constituency due to white opposition and economic influence. As per my project, this book shows that Cleveland was the first in a long line of cities to elect an African American mayor and the demonstrates the turn of the national civil rights movement towards political strategies.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2000.

A sociologist at the University of Maryland, Patricia Hill Collins argues that the knowledge produced by African American women remains unacknowledged. As dominant groups purposefully suppress this knowledge to promote their own, the ideas that constitute black feminist thought evolve due to this suppression. Therefore, black feminist thought is situated between the interactions of suppression and the resilience that manifests as a result. While Collins addresses many of the major themes that influence black feminist thought such as work, family, and oppression, I will use her chapters that focus on motherhood specifically. Within these, Collins discusses the importance self-definition plays into the ability to resist the harsh racial oppression that African American women face in society. Furthermore, she also emphasizes the important role mother's play in shaping their children's ability to endure and resist racial prejudice as well. This will most aid my argument in chapter two as I argue that the emotional connection between mothers and their children allowed mothers to foster the emotional motivations behind Cleveland's school desegregation movement.

Douglas, Davison M. *Jim Crow Moves North: The Battle over Northern School Segregation, 1865-1954*. Cambridge Historical Studies in American Law and Society. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

As Sugrue's analysis of civil rights in the North focuses on racial inequalities in a broader sense, Davison M. Douglas's book, *Jim Crow Moves North: The Battle Over Northern School Desegregation, 1865-1954*, seeks to understand the complex history behind school segregation in the North, since much of this racial separation still remains in place today. Throughout the book, he debunks the myth that racial segregation solely persisted in the South, proving that segregation did exist in northern cities across the United States and laws mandating desegregation were largely ineffective. To do so, Douglas analyzes

many court cases in cities outside of the Jim Crow South that worked to combat segregation, showing the extensive reach of racially discriminatory policies in the United States. Although Douglas's study addresses an earlier history of school segregation than my project, the information is useful since it gives me a sense of the broader history of segregation in the North, particularly in Ohio as Douglas uses it as a primary example of northern segregation throughout his text.

Dowd Hall, Jacquelyn. "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past." *The Journal of American History*, 91 (4), 2005.

Although the American Civil Rights Era is usually associated with the 1950s and 60s, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, a historian at UNC Chapel Hill, analyzes an extended narrative of the movement in her article, *The Long History of Civil Rights and the Political Uses of the Past* published in *The Journal of American History*. In this work, Dowd Hall traces the history of the Civil Rights Movement back to the New Deal, noting that previous histories that limit the momentum of civil rights to its designated Era or deny the movement's presence in the North erase the most impressive qualities about the mass movement's pursuit of justice. As per Hall's relationship to my project, this article exhibits the importance of civil rights history in its entirety since causes for the movement can be tied back to the negative effects of New Deal programs on African American families. By addressing the family structure, Hall introduces gender dynamics to her argument suggesting that women's activism played a key role in the freedom movement. The article does not mention half-days, but it does state that African American women played an early and critical role that "foreshadowed" black feminism and the later expansion of the civil rights movement as it took full form, an area of civil rights I address in my project. Moreover, Hall's cited literature offers further resources that give a more in-depth analysis of women's role in the Civil Rights Movement.

Feldstein, Ruth. "I Wanted the Whole World to See: Race, Gender, and Constructions of Motherhood in the Death of Emmett Till." in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*. Edited by Joanne Meyerowitz. Temple University Press, 1994.

Elaine Tyler May's *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* established that the United States' "containment" foreign policies affected domestic life during the Cold War as well. Though May primarily focuses on white, middle class domesticity, Joanne Meyerowitz in *Not June Cleaver* aims to show that not all women fell under this classification. That, in fact, women experienced issues related to their class, race, and sexual orientation, which did not align with those of the middle-class, white, heterosexual female. In my independent study, I draw from Ruth Feldstein's chapter, "I Wanted the Whole World to See" and her analysis of Emmett Till's mother, Mamie Till Bradley, and the complex figure she became after she chose to open her son's casket at his funeral so that "the whole world" could see his beaten and disfigured body. Because the chapter delves into an emotional analysis of Mamie's role as a mother, I will pull parts of her analysis to aid my argument on the important position mothers held in Cleveland's school desegregation movement.

Formisano, Ronald P. *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s*. 2nd revised edition. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

In an attempt to explain whites' averse reaction to Boston's 1974 implementation of a busing system, Ronald P. Formisano studies the years of tense racial relations and violence that dominated the city following the decision in his book *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s*. He argues that while racism was certainly a factor in whites' response to the policy, they saw the Board's decision as a class issue as well. Since the receiving schools were primarily in the white, working class neighborhoods that surrounded Boston's predominately black areas, whites impacted by the school board's busing plans felt that the number of black students were unevenly distributed. To prove his argument, he uses letters and interviews from participants in the protest. Although my I.S. does not directly address this same class issue, I can use the strong reaction from white parents in Boston detailed in Formisano's book to strengthen my argument on the emotional response from the Collinwood Improvement Association in Cleveland. This will mostly be relevant for my second chapter.

Waldschmidt-Nelson, Britta. "Does Every Vote Count in America?: Emotions, Elections, and the Quest for Black Political Empowerment." in *Emotions in American History: An International Assessment*, edited by Gienow-Hecht, Jessica C. E. New York: Berghahn Books, 2010.

An international historian at the Free University of Berlin specializing in U.S.-Ottoman relations, Jessica Gienow-Hecht, in her book, *Emotions in American History* pulls together a collection of essays which delve into emotion's role in shaping major American historical events. She argues that emotions history can shed light on the connection between individual experiences and developments in history on a broader scale. Covering a wide variety of subject matter, Gienow-Hecht compares and contrasts the ways European histories view emotional responses to those of Americans. The second to last chapter "Does Every Vote Count in America?: Emotions, Elections, and the Quest for Black Political Empowerment" is particularly in my independent study as it addresses emotional responses from the black community during the civil rights movement. Written by Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson, an American historian at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, the chapter makes the argument that the publically visible emotional responses from African Americans helped them garner further political power during and after the civil rights movement. I will use Waldschmidt-Nelson's argument to support my claim that African American mothers' emotion, as a result of educational inequalities in Cleveland public schools, eventually provoked change within the Cleveland Municipal School District. I will mainly put this source in conversation with Stearns' *Doing Emotions History* and Robnett's *How Long, How Long?* to show the role emotions played in Cleveland's desegregation movement.

Hale, Jon N. *The Freedom Schools: Student Activists in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement*. Columbia University Press, 2016.

In American historian Jon N. Hale's book *The Freedom Schools*, Hale argues that Freedom Schools gave African American youth the chance to politicize their own struggle in Mississippi's segregated schools. Through the education received at Freedom Schools, children learned skills to join the civil rights movement, showing that participation among African Americans at all age levels was so important for the success of the movement. By specifically focusing on children's experience in Freedom Schools, Hale offers an alternative perspective to the literature. This history is particularly useful to my discussion of the Freedom Day in Cleveland, as the Freedom Day emphasized similar themes in order to project the strength of Cleveland's school desegregation movement.

Houck, Davis W., and David E. Dixon, eds. *Women and the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009.

Noted in Davis W. Houck and David E. Dixon's book, *Women and the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965*, the limited number of recorded civil rights speeches delivered by women during the civil rights movement causes their efforts to be overshadowed in the movement's mainstream narrative. Because men tended to assume more national leadership positions, their commentary took precedent in the media over those of women who typically spoke on the local level. Second, the "maintenance of the movement" devalued women's role based on the sexist ideologies that persisted at the time, leaving many speeches by women unrecorded and forgotten. To offer some sort of remedy to this hole in the civil rights narrative, Houck and Dixon compiled a collection of thirty-nine speeches from both prominent and everyday women active in the civil rights movement. In relation to my project, their original oral production allows me to study the type of emotion that women civil rights leaders conveyed through their deliverances. This will help me address themes of emotion throughout my argument. While none of these women are from the Cleveland area, they still touch upon similar topics like education that will be extremely prevalent in my project.

Keating, W. Dennis, Norman Krumholz, and David C. Perry, eds. *Cleveland: A Metropolitan Reader*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1995.

Dennis W. Keating, Norman Krumholz, and David C. Perry present in their collection of essays on Cleveland the urban history of one of the oldest cities in the United States and see its development as an example of nationwide transformations in urban spaces. The book contains a section devoted to race and discrimination which provides details on the formation of the historically black neighborhoods in Cleveland, traces the black community's fight for political power during the 1960s, and dedicates a chapter to housing discrimination which will be particularly helpful when looking at de facto segregation and its impact on the Cleveland public school system. This book will be a good source to refer to as a base of information. Although Moore's article gives a



stronger argument that more-so relates to my topic, these essays cover a wide range of time and will help me better understand the development of Cleveland's political, social, and economic climates in the 50s and 60s.

Matt, Susan J., and Peter N. Stearns, eds. *Doing Emotions History*. 1st Edition edition. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

As a relatively new field in the subject of history, the history of emotions explores the evolution of emotional standards and their resulting impact on society. With a collection of essays by emotions scholars, *Doing Emotions History*, Susan J. Matt and Peter N. Stearns delve into an analysis of emotions that brings together some of the leading thoughts in the field to spark a discussion about the direction of emotions history for those interested in learning more about this emerging historical perspective. To do so, they selected a broad range of works by emotions historians who study a variety of topics from the impact of love in advertising to emotions influence on political change. *Doing Emotions History* aims to teach students and scholars the practice of emotions history. For my independent study, I will mainly use the chapter written by Matt titled "Recovering the Invisible" who argues that one must contrast emotional norms to individual emotional experiences in order to construct a history of emotions. This will give me the tools to conduct proper primary source analysis and help me identify emotion in my larger narrative.

Miller, Carol Poh, and Robert A. Wheeler. *Cleveland: A Concise History, 1796-1996*. 2nd ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

This book by Carol Poh Miller and Robert A. Wheeler gives a detailed background history on the city of Cleveland from 1796-1996. While this history is more closely a general overview that traces the development of Cleveland, it offers significant data concerning the city and its residents. Regarding my uses of the source, the section that I look for my project primarily addresses Cleveland's more recent economic problems. This helped me understand the struggles plaguing Cleveland at the time of the half-day policy. While it very briefly mentions the racial tensions specifically on Cleveland's east side, it especially emphasizes the white flight from the city and Cleveland's deteriorating conditions as its residents flocked to the suburbs.

Moore, Leonard N. *Carl B. Stokes and the Rise of Black Political Power*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002.

This full-length monograph on the election of Carl B. Stokes in 1967 by Leonard Nathaniel Moore shows the impact Stokes had on Cleveland as the first African American mayor of any major U.S. city. In the book, Moore argues that while Stokes turned his attention towards efforts that would improve living conditions for African Americans in Cleveland, he could not overcome the city's struggling economic status, white hostility, nor the division among the African American community due to the actions of black militants. Joining the larger conversation of scholarship on African American mayors elected, Moore adds to David R. Colburn's and Jeffrey S. Adler's

collection of essays on the subject *African-American Mayors: Race, Politics, and the American City*. In terms of my own research, Moore's work shows that the election of Stokes did give African Americans in Cleveland hope that conditions in Cleveland public schools would improve for their children, even though desegregation was not achieved under Stokes' leadership.

Moore, Leonard Nathaniel. "The School Desegregation Crisis of Cleveland, Ohio, 1963-1964: The Catalyst for Black Political Power in a Northern City." *Journal of Urban History* 28, no. 2 (January 2002).

Leonard Nathaniel Moore's article from the *Journal of Urban History* argues that the failed protests led by Cleveland's black community in reaction to the city's de facto segregation policies ultimately helped the black community attain power in Cleveland. In the article, Moore details the fight for desegregation in Cleveland's public school system, starting with the official implementation of half-day sessions in 1957 and the many protests that followed in regard to Cleveland's desegregation movement. This article will be valuable in my research because it traces the events of the desegregation movement and lends support to my possible argument that the half-day system was the catalyst for the larger desegregation movement in Cleveland. In relation to Sugrue's work, Moore's study offers examples of the struggle for civil rights specifically in Cleveland.

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

In Belinda Robnett's book, *How Long, How Long? African American Women and the Struggle for Civil Rights*, Robnett analyzes the relationship between women's leadership and the successes of the civil rights movement. Writing from a black "womanist" perspective, Robnett uses her background as a sociologist to offer readers a sociohistorical perspective on women's critical role in the fight for racial equality. Through the incorporation of personal accounts from African American women active in the civil rights movement, Robnett shows that women were essential in organizing the movement's efforts on a local level despite the lack of coverage surrounding their efforts. She defines the distinct ways men and women rose to positions of leadership and argues that while men attained power through their previous work as ministers or other higher-up positions, women relied on their involvement in the community to become leaders. Although Robnett's study focuses on women in the southern civil rights movements, I can apply many of the concepts Robnett introduces in my analysis of the northern narrative. Furthermore, I plan on using Robnett's argument in tandem with that of Houck and Dixon's book of recorded women's speeches in order to formulate a more comprehensive view on the role women played in the civil rights movement.

Sugrue, Thomas J. *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 2008.

In Thomas J. Sugrue's *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*, he examines the civil rights movement's impact on Northern cities. Despite common perceptions that the fight for civil rights mainly affected the South, Sugrue focuses on the fact that racial discrimination was not as defined in the North as it was in the Jim Crow South, and therefore, this ambiguity offered a whole new set of challenges to blacks living in Northern cities. Throughout his book, Sugrue studies a number of discriminatory practices and policies administered in various Northern cities, such as Philadelphia and Detroit, and the attempts of civil rights activists to campaign for equality. In one of his chapters, Sugrue specifically studies education and the desegregation movement in the North. He delves into Northern de facto segregation and the NAACP's struggles to combat such an institutional form of inequality that was not legally recognized. I will use examples of de facto segregation from this chapter and compare them to de facto segregation in Cleveland's public school system. Ultimately, I see this source as one of my main secondary reference materials because of its concentration on inequality in the North.