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Shifting Policies of Educational Desegregation and Its Effects on The Resegregation of The Aldine Independent School District

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SHIFTING POLICIES OF EDUCATIONAL DESEGREGATION
AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE RESEGREGATION OF THE
ALDINE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Thesis

by

TONYA ELISETTE JUAREZ

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas-Pan American
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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SHIFTING POLICIES OF EDUCATIONAL DESEGREGATION
AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE RESEGREGATION OF THE
ALDINE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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August 2013

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ABSTRACT

Juarez, Tonya Elisette, Shifting Policies of Educational Desegregation and its Effects on the Resegregation of the Aldine Independent School District. Master of Arts (MA), August, 2013, 126 pp., 8 tables, 336 references, 83 titles.

This study examines the desegregation process for the Aldine Independent School District located in Houston, Texas. Beginning with an analysis of the development of public education in Texas, this study observes the educational conditions for blacks and Mexican Americans prior to the end of *de jure* segregation. Thereafter, it assesses the impact of the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision that required desegregation of American public schools. I argue that the shifting policies that occurred after *Brown* requiring mandatory integration resulted in white flight in the school district. With the end of mandatory integration, Aldine I.S.D. reverted back to the practice of using neighborhood schools. Thus, white flight and neighborhood schools caused resegregation to occur in Aldine I.S.D. The Aldine desegregation case is placed within the context of a larger narrative of the changing face of American public education.

DEDICATION

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this accomplishment to my mother, Carmel. It was your faithfulness in my abilities that have kept me going. During the times that I questioned myself, I always remained your source of pride. Thank you for your constant love, joy, and encouragement. I love you.

I would also like to dedicate this milestone to my father Antonio, my brother Roger, my grandparents, tíos, tías, and cousins. All of you mean the world to me and I am blessed to call you family.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to dedicate this work to my students: past, present, and future. Going into teaching, I was filled with passion and was eager to make a lasting impact on the future generation. I did not realize how much of an impact all of you would have on my life as well. I will always appreciate the love and support that you have shown me. To my future students, I look forward to teaching, mentoring, and growing with you.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the promises of liberty and equality rooted in our founding documents, the United States has experienced a long history of disparities. Our Founding Fathers envisioned freedom and the protection of certain liberties to apply to a particular set of individuals, thus not “all men” were created equal. Indeed Thomas Jefferson, the primary author of the Declaration of Independence was himself a slaveholder. The institution of slavery prevailed in the United States, particularly in the South where the economy was directly linked to its existence. Soon the issue of slavery would lead to division within the country, which eventually consumed the newly-founded nation in a bloody civil war that changed the course for blacks in the United States. With the adoption of the 13th Amendment in 1865, slavery in the United States officially ended. Nevertheless, the legacy of slavery in our nation continues to affect us to this day.

Mexican Americans living in the United States were also historically oppressed. Victorious in the Mexican-American War ending in 1848, the United States acquired nearly half of Mexico’s territory. Individuals that lived in the conquered territory were faced with the decision of staying in their homeland, which was now dominated by another country, or leave the place they called home to migrate into what remained Mexico. Those that chose to remain in the conquered land soon found themselves in a position of inferiority in American society.

The oppression of blacks and Mexican Americans permeated all aspects of life, including the field of education. While blacks were at first largely excluded from receiving an education, over time and often through resistance they were granted the right to an education. Even then

many southern states imposed *de jure* segregation and educated black children separately. While there was no law requiring the separation of Mexican Americans in educational facilities, the practice of *de facto* segregation was common.

Thus, policies and practices have negatively affected the quality of education given to blacks and Mexican Americans. Because education is primarily handled by the state, each state's education system is different. The development of a state public education system was one of the important goals for the Texas Republic during the mid-1800s. Nevertheless, disparities between whites and minorities soon became entrenched in its educational policy.

When Anglos first began settling Texas in the early nineteenth century, they brought with them the institution of slavery and the racial ideologies that were prevalent in the American South. Following the Civil War, the Texas Constitution required the education of blacks and whites to be separate. The practice of *de jure* segregation continued until 1954 when it was ruled unconstitutional in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Compliance to the ruling took many years due to the vagueness of *Brown II* calling for desegregation with "all deliberate speed" and issued no proper means of assessment. Even when schools desegregated, the vestiges of school segregation proved to be difficult to conquer.

The purpose of this study is to examine race and the public education system in Texas with a special interest in Harris County, located in the southeastern portion of the state. I argue that the disadvantages placed upon blacks and Mexican Americans by the dominant white race negatively affected their education. Because of the history of political, economic, and social discrimination, the education of both minority groups resulted in an inferior position to that of whites. These factors largely influenced residential segregation, which also proved to negatively affect educational quality. Also, residential segregation created one-race schools. Even after *de*

jure segregation was banned, blacks continued attending all-black schools due to the fact that the majority of blacks lived in racially homogenous areas, ultimately attending the schools that were closest to them. Furthermore, many school districts used policies and practices that enabled the continuation of one-race schools.

Eventually, school systems were challenged in the courts leading to educational reform. Of prime importance were the changes dealing with the issue of segregation. In an attempt to correct the mistakes of the past and provide equal educational opportunities for all children, school systems actively found methods to integrate black and white students. Since blacks experienced *de jure* segregation, it was the black community that filed the majority of desegregation cases. Nevertheless, the Mexican American community also pushed back and found methods to combat the educational injustices placed upon them.

This study will take a micro-level perspective on the issue of segregation and integration by analyzing a local desegregation case in a northern Houston community: the Aldine Independent School District (I.S.D.). Developed in 1935, Aldine I.S.D. established a dual school system based on race. Following the *Brown* decision, Aldine continued to operate one-race schools until they were themselves involved in a local desegregation case filed on behalf of a black Aldine parent in 1964 which called for the end of the dual school system. Ruling on behalf of the parent and students in 1965, Aldine was ordered to desegregate. Yet, because of the language found in *Brown* and *Brown II*, Aldine continued to operate segregated schools. Although enrollment to the white schools was now open for both races, the Aldine administration developed policies and practices that limited racial intermixing.

The turning point of school desegregation came in *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* (1968) and *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* (1971), which transformed what it

meant to integrate American schools. Through these cases, school desegregation meant mandatory integration. Thus, Aldine I.S.D. adopted concrete measures in order to integrate its schools under duress. Once mandatory integration began, demographic shifts became apparent as whites began leaving the district in large numbers. Consequently, this study contends that mandatory integration served as the mechanism that propelled white flight into neighboring suburbs. Because of white resistance to integration, they fled to neighboring districts where they would be free from court-ordered integration. Aldine, still, continued with its integration efforts despite its white student loss.

While whites fled Aldine I.S.D. in large numbers, the Mexican American population continued to rise. Moving into the former white neighborhoods, Mexican Americans were used to desegregate Aldine's schools. Because Mexican Americans have historically been considered a part of the white race, they were used to racially intermix the schools. Furthermore, once the court approved magnet programs as a means of integration, the majority of Aldine's students began attending neighborhood schools. This return to neighborhood schools also led to an increase in the reformation of one-race schools since neighborhoods were racially identifiable. Thus, resegregation of Aldine schools occurred due to white flight and the return to neighborhood schools.

Analyzing the desegregation case for the Aldine district allows us to see the issue from a microscopic perspective. By tracing the evolution of public education for the district and the demographic shifts that occurred over time, we are able to fit it into the larger narrative of the resegregation of American schools.

The first chapter focuses on the development of public education in Texas and Harris County. It illustrates how public schools were formed and the efforts made during

Reconstruction aimed at establishing schools for blacks. Because Texas law required separate facilities for white and colored students, it paved the way for discriminatory practices to exist in Texas schools. Furthermore, I discuss the educational opportunities given to Mexican Americans in Texas. Although Mexican American students were not legally segregated, the practice of *de facto* segregation was common.

The second chapter focuses on the population changes that occurred in the Aldine community from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. These changes are framed within the larger context of demographic shifts that were occurring in both Texas and Harris County. By chronologically tracing Aldine's changing population, one can assess the causes and effects of the changing demographics, allowing for a fuller understanding of these population movements.

The third chapter focuses on segregation in Aldine I.S.D. Through the compliance of Texas law, Aldine operated a dual school system based on race. Although black schools were supposed to be equal, this was not the case. An examination of Aldine schools demonstrates the inequalities that were prevalent between the black and white schools. The chapter concludes with examining the pushback from the black community leading to the desegregation of the district.

The fourth chapter examines the desegregation methods used by Aldine. An examination of key court cases shows the long and difficult process to desegregate American public schools, especially in the South. Aldine, therefore, adjusted its own desegregation plan in order to be in compliance with the changes. The chapter ends with an examination of the magnet school system and its efforts to curb flight from the district.

The final chapter examines the issue of resegregation of Aldine I.S.D. The transformation from a predominately white to a predominately minority school district suggests what was occurring in districts throughout the country. As integration unraveled, whites fled to neighboring suburbs, thus creating a system of resegregation. Because Texas public schools were supported by local property taxes, schools in wealthier districts proved to be better off than schools in poorer districts.

Although the issue of desegregation of Aldine I.S.D. has not received attention by researchers, this historical study makes an important contribution to the field of educational history. Since the study encompasses many different facets, it builds upon the research of several historians of black history, Mexican American history, and educational history. Historians combatting issues of white flight and desegregation were particularly important to the framework of this study.

For example, Bruno Bettelheim's article "Segregation: New Style" examines the issue of education for the gifted child and its emphasis during the era of the Cold War.¹ Bettelheim links the issues of integration for the gifted to that of integration for blacks. He claims that the primary argument for both cases is the lack of educational facilities. School integration became compulsory because the Supreme Court required it. It was understood through the *Brown* decision that separate educational facilities for blacks and whites were not equal. Nonetheless, Bettelheim argues that school integration led to a general decline in educational achievement that asked the question as to whether it created an unequal educational opportunity for gifted students. Of key significance for the study of resegregation, Bettelheim argues that white flight to the suburbs was directly linked to the mandatory integration taking place in city school

¹ Bruno Bettelheim, "Segregation: New Style," *The School Review* 66 (Autumn 1958): 251-272. A "gifted" child refers to an academically advanced student.

districts. Thus, there was a stigma attached to blacks in which they were viewed as undesirable, or at least not qualified enough, for white parents to send their children to schools with.

Bettelheim's illustration of white migration to the suburbs reflects the effort of whites to escape forced integration. His analysis proves useful in demonstrating a correlation between forced integration and white migration to the suburbs.

The relationship of white flight and school integration continued to interest researchers seeking answers to the growing population of minorities in American inner city schools. Joseph Alsop's article "No More Nonsense about Ghetto Education!" further addresses the issue of white flight.² Alsop argues that a clear correlation existed between white emigration and school desegregation. By documenting the demographic shifts of major American cities, he found that the population of blacks increased as the population of whites decreased. Furthermore, in a study of Washington D.C., he found that out of those whites that still lived in the city, the majority of them did not have school age children, while more than a third of those that did sent their children to either a private or parochial school. Alsop argues that white flight coupled with an increasing minority population in the cities led many of these public schools to become resegregated. His analysis of white flight reflects demographic patterns prevalent in other American school systems and its effects on the resegregation of schools, including Aldine.

One of the most influential educational theorists, James Coleman, was amongst the first to document the impact of mandatory busing on white flight. Although Coleman first favored mandatory busing as a means to achieve integration, he later retracted from that viewpoint after examining more data showing that mandatory integration had the opposite effect of its original implications. His book *Equality and Achievement in Education* discusses various aspects of

² Joseph Alsop, "No More Nonsense about Ghetto Education!," *New Republic* 157 (22 July 1967): 18-23.

educational policy.³ He argues that desegregation policies provoked actions on the part of individual families, thus resisting court-ordered integration. His analysis demonstrates the shift of attitudes toward school desegregation. Prior to mandatory integration, desegregation of schools received favorable views from both blacks and whites. Through forced integration, however, many earlier supporters began questioning the effectiveness of school integration, leading to the reversal of “progressive” school reform policies.

Though the impact of the *Brown* decision received considerable attention by researchers, it is James Patterson’s *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* that explores the not-so-great consequences of *Brown*.⁴ Examining the issues that revolved around desegregation, Patterson illustrates the resistance by both government agencies and individuals that were met towards integration. Through the use of court cases, he traces the push for integration. Although school desegregation experienced a progressive movement, Patterson addresses its limitations on tackling the deeper issues of racial inequality. Furthermore, Patterson confronts the issue of economics and class. Through his analysis of *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973), he describes the importance of the Court’s decision on whether the Equal Protection Clause in the Fourteenth Amendment provided for equal educational opportunity in terms of school financing. The Court ruled, however, that the clause did not provide for equal advantages. Thus, class and economics, which shape the educational opportunities of students, did not fit into the arena of educational integration. The resistance toward integration after *Brown* is found in Aldine’s approach to its desegregation process. Similar to the school systems studied by Patterson, Aldine used policies that continued

³ James S. Coleman, *Equality and Achievement in Education* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990).

⁴ James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

promoting school segregation. Patterson's study, therefore, proves critical in providing the context necessary to better understand the reasoning behind Aldine's resistance to desegregation.

Taking a more negative viewpoint in regards to *Brown's* impact, Raymond Wolters' *Race and Education, 1954-2007* also focused on desegregation and integration in American schools.⁵ Wolters argues that the Court's decision years after *Brown* that equated desegregation to mean integration was a large mistake and proved to be a failure. He continues that while desegregation was supported and seen as progressive, integration, on the other hand, received a lot of resistance, including from those that formerly supported the issue. Furthermore, Wolters argues that busing led to discontent, white flight, resentment, and the overall decline of the quality of public education. Although it was the *Brown* decision that served as the milestone ending *de jure* segregation, he argues that other facets of American life such as the integration of other public facilities were more successful than the integration of public schools. Wolters not only describes the shift of educational policies, but he addresses the negative effects that those policies had on the schools. By presenting the negative consequences caused through the reinterpretation of desegregation, his analysis is useful in understanding the shift in Aldine moving away from court-ordered busing to the establishment of magnet school programs.

Also important to the framework of this study were historians in the field of African American and Mexican American history. Since this work analyzes how race relations affected the educational conditions for these specific populations, the work of the following historians proved to be extremely valuable. For example, Barry A. Crouch's *The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Texans* details the efforts made by the Freedmen's Bureau in securing rights for the newly

⁵ Raymond Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008).

freed blacks.⁶ Pushing against the previous historiography that depicted the Bureau as ineffective and a hindrance to black advancement, Crouch argues that the Bureau “on the whole, performed rather well.”⁷ Crouch approaches the study of the Texas Bureau from both the top down and from the bottom up. He accomplishes this through an examination of the Bureau’s assistant commissioners as well as the local and regional agents. While the assistant commissioners oversaw the Bureau’s activities for the entire state, the local and regional agents interacted most with the immediate community. Using extensive papers found in the National Archives, Crouch succeeds at detailing the Bureau’s relationship to the white and black communities of Texas. Crouch argues that the Bureau’s limited success was not due to a lack of will. On the other hand, conditions such as manpower shortages, too much territory to police, and the lack of finances placed limitations on the Bureau’s effectiveness. By looking at the activities of the assistant commissioners and the regional and local agents, Crouch reinterprets the Bureau’s role in enhancing the opportunities for black Texans. His study proves useful in understanding the educational experience of black Texans and their efforts to obtain an education.

For a comprehensive study of the black Texas experience, historian Alwyn Barr’s *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995* provides general readers a foundation of black Texas history.⁸ Building upon the work of other scholars, his study tends to lack analysis and interpretation. However, the wealth of black Texas history that is covered is valuable to those that seek information about the subject. His work is divided into seven

⁶ Barry A. Crouch, *The Freedmen’s Bureau and Black Texans* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992).

⁷ Ibid, 128.

⁸ Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996).

chapters, with each chapter focusing on politics and legal status, education, labor and economics, and social life. Significantly valuable to this thesis was Barr's account of black Texan's educational history. He illustrates the efforts black Texans took toward obtaining an education and the limitations placed upon them. Barr demonstrates that despite economic limitations and racial prejudices, blacks sought to acquire an education.

Significant to the understanding of the Mexican American educational experience in Texas is Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr.'s *"Let All of Them Take Heed": Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981* which focuses on the road taken by Mexican Americans in Texas to achieve educational equity.⁹ Centering his study on the role of organizations such as LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) and the courts, San Miguel argues that Mexican Americans, themselves, did not cause their "failure" in public schools, instead their "failure" was caused by an oppressive culture that ignored their needs. His analysis of educational policies and practices in Texas illustrates the complexity surrounding Mexican American education. Furthermore, his detailed investigation of the methods used by Mexican Americans to combat those limitations demonstrates their perseverance to acquire educational equity.

Central to the history of Mexican Americans in Houston, Texas was Arnoldo De León's *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: Mexican Americans in Houston*.¹⁰ His study allows for an understanding of their changing profile in the city. Evolving from a small community during the early twentieth century, Mexican Americans transformed into the largest minority group by the

⁹ Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr. *"Let All of Them Take Heed": Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1987).

¹⁰ Arnoldo De León, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: Mexican Americans in Houston* (College Station: Texas A&M, 2001).

end of the century. Although De León's primary focus is to examine the changing identity of the Mexican American population, essential to this thesis was his documentation of Mexican migration into Texas and Houston and the educational opportunities available to them in the city. Furthermore, De León frames the growing presence of Mexican Americans within the growth of Houston as a leading industrial center. His insightful documentation of the social, economic, and political issues surrounding Mexican Americans in Houston proved to be fundamentally important in this work.

These authors, among many others, contributed to the framework of my study. Furthermore, the use of several court cases also aided in my understanding of the shifting educational policies that affected the course of public education. Through the use of various primary sources and secondary sources, this thesis will construct a localized history on the effects of desegregation and integration, framing it within the larger picture of the history of desegregation and its processes in the United States.

CHAPTER I

SEPARATE BUT UNEQUAL: DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN TEXAS AND HARRIS COUNTY

May 17, 1954, proved to be a significant turning point in the history of American civil rights. In his deliverance of the Court's opinion, Chief Justice Earl Warren declared that "...in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."¹ The Court's decision, therefore, overturned the landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) case that, although concerned separate accommodations based on race in railway carriages, was used to justify segregation in American public schools. Texas, often viewed as being the last frontier of the American slave era, was left with the remnants of slavery that followed the Civil War. Racial ideologies that promoted the ideas of white supremacy permeated the South, including Texas. Texas education was, therefore, affected by these racial beliefs causing divisions and inequalities to prevail. The following section examines the history of African American education and then shifts to that of Mexican Americans in Texas with particular emphasis on Harris County schools.

Going back to the years of the Republic of Texas, the impetus to establish a successful educational system became an early priority. In fact, one of the chief grievances argued by

¹ *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). <http://ezhost.utpa.edu:2055/hottopic/lnacademic/>? (accessed July 16, 2013).

the Texas revolutionaries was that Mexico failed to establish a public school system.² Thus when Texas became independent from Mexico in 1836, efforts were made to establish a public education system. Although the state of Texas established the first public system of education in 1854, it was poorly enforced and proved a failure. With the external and internal problems that engulfed Texas at that time, the issue of education was not a priority. Between the secession from the Union and the turmoil caused by the Civil War, Texas found itself consumed by these issues. After the dust settled following the Civil War, Texas once again put its effort into establishing an effective and sustainable educational system.³

Although many acknowledged that public schooling was essential, there existed the question of who received it as well as the quality of it. The Texas Revolution of 1835-1836, the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848, and the American Civil War of 1861-1865 had lasting effects on Texan life. Of those consequences, the displacement of newly-conquered Texan Mexicans, as well as the freedmen, left the Texas government with the responsibility of incorporating these peoples into Texas society, which included education. However, racial ideologies about both Mexicans and freedmen filtered into all aspects of public policy.⁴

² Frederick Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1925), 79.

³ *Ibid.*, 150-157.

⁴ The term “Texas-Mexican,” “Mexican American,” “Mexican,” or “Tejano” is used to identify anyone of Mexican ancestry that would not identify themselves as white. This could include those living in Texas prior to the Texas Revolution or more recent immigrants. The term “Mexican” does not refer to a nationality rather it is used in a cultural manner. Furthermore, the term “white” throughout this text is used when referencing a person of full European descent. The term “black,” “colored,” and “African American” is used interchangeably within this text to indicate those individuals of African descent living in the United States. The language used at the time often referred to them as either colored or Negroes. For the purposes of this text, I will substitute the word “black” to replace “Negro.” Although I employ these terms and labels throughout my text to categorize different groups of people, I do not propose these labels as concrete definitions. On the other hand, historians and people, alike, look at identity and race differently. For example, historian Neil Foley in his book *Quest for Equality: The Failed Promise of Black-Brown Solidarity* (2010) uses the term “Mexicans” to classify both citizens of

When the Spanish government confirmed a land grant to Stephen F. Austin in 1821, settlers, mostly from the South, began flooding into the state.⁵ Due to their southern background, these white Texans brought positive views of slavery and negative views of blacks.⁶ These views brought by the white settlers differed from the views of blacks that were present during the Spanish and Mexican periods of Texas.⁷ In the 1836 Texas Constitution, an appeal was required to Congress by free blacks who wished to reside in Texas and, in 1837, Congress voted to allow

Mexico and U.S. citizens of Mexican descent. He also employs “resident Mexican nationals” or “Mexican immigrants” when having to distinguish between the two and the term “Mexican Americans” when referring to a U.S.-born citizen of Mexican descent. In his work, he discusses Mexican immigrants and their resistance in claiming a white identity since in Mexico their identity is entrenched in issues of nationality, social class, and the ideology of *mestizaje*. Many middle-class Mexican Americans, however, claimed “whiteness” which also served as a political weapon. See Neil Foley, *Quest for Equality: The Failed Promise of Black-Brown Solidarity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 14. In his article “The Failed Promise of Wartime Opportunity for Mexicans in the Texas Oil Industry,” historian Emilio Zamora uses the term “Mexican” as a reference to both Mexican nationals and U.S.-born Mexicans citing incomplete nativity and citizenship data making it difficult to distinguish between the two. See Emilio Zamora, “The Failed Promise of Wartime Opportunity for Mexicans in the Texas Oil Industry,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 95, no. 3 (January 1992): 323-350. Also, in her article “Getting Started in Chicana Studies,” historian Cynthia E. Orozco uses the term “Chicana,” “Mexican,” and “Mexican American” synonymously to refer to an individual of Mexican descent born in the United States or Mexico who life experience has been within U.S. society. See Cynthia E. Orozco, “Getting Started in Chicana Studies,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 18, no. 1/2 (Spring-Summer 1990): 46-69. Like Orozco, my usage of the terms “Texas-Mexican,” “Mexican,” “Mexican American,” or “Tejano” reference individuals of Mexican descent, regardless of origin of birth, that are now living in the United States, or more specifically, Texas.⁵ Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995*, 14. Although the land was granted in 1821, with Mexico acquiring its independence, the contract became void. Nevertheless, settlers began arriving that year and Stephen F. Austin was able to negotiate a new contract with the Mexican government in 1823.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 8. The slave population in Texas grew steadily with the immigration of white settlers. From four hundred and forty-three owned by sixty-nine slaveholders in 1825 to approximately five thousand in 1836, with a substantial increase following the Texas Revolution. See Alwyn Barr’s *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995*, 17.

⁷ During the Spanish and Mexican periods of Texas, free blacks experienced better treatment and greater opportunities than other free blacks that resided in other parts of the United States influenced by the racial attitudes hardened during the era of American slavery. For further information see Alwyn Barr’s *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995*.

free blacks in Texas to remain if they abided by the laws of the Republic.⁸ Though, as historian Alwyn Barr points out, the attitudes toward free blacks prior to and after the Texas Revolution changed drastically since the “Texas Revolution brought to power Anglo-Americans who adopted restrictions on free black immigration.”⁹

Between the years that spanned the Texas Revolution and the American Civil War, education was achieved primarily through private schools. Although the public school system was established in 1854 in Texas, it was not until 1876 that public education began to replace private schools as the main source of education.¹⁰ The educational opportunities given to free blacks in Texas after the Texas Revolution were limited. The financial cost associated with private schools limited the opportunity to get educated to those that had financial means to send their children to the schools. Thus, during this stage of Texas education, the state had few public schools from which to exclude blacks, but 60 to 70 per cent of the freedmen achieved literacy although only twenty students in 1850 and eleven in 1860 could find teachers to educate them.¹¹ Education for slaves, on the other hand, remained almost non-existent in Texas. Whereas most southern states legally excluded slaves from receiving an education, Texas had no such law. However, over 95 per cent of the black population was illiterate at the end of the Civil War due to the opposition of their instruction.¹²

⁸ Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995*, 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰ See Frederick Eby's *The Development of Education in Texas*, Chapter VI “Civil War and its Aftermath” and Chapter VIII “The Reestablishment of the State System, 1875-1883.”

¹¹ Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995*, 12.

¹² *Ibid.*, 23.

After the Civil War ended with a Union victory in 1865, Reconstruction began in the South.¹³ In order to ensure protection of the freedmen, an agency was created as a branch of the United States Army known as the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, more commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau. One of the lasting legacies of the agency was their contribution to black education. During the operation of the agency in Texas between 1865 through 1870, four major assistant commissioners were appointed to the state: Edgar M. Gregory, from September 1865 until May 14, 1866; Joseph Kiddoo, until January 14, 1867; Charles Griffin, until his death on September 15, 1867; and Joseph J. Reynolds, until January 1869.¹⁴ Under the assistant commissioners served sub-assistant commissioners who operated on the local level and, by January 1866, the Bureau in Texas created ten day and six night schools with twenty teachers instructing 1,041 students, including many adults.¹⁵ Freedmen schools, therefore, played an integral part in promoting black education. Under the direction of Griffin, all Bureau agents became mini-superintendents of education and were required to visit each school in their area at least once a month.¹⁶ Agents were also required to visit private schools to encourage their self-sustaining basis.¹⁷

The efforts to provide educational opportunities for black Texans came with much opposition. White Texans often refused to sell land or rent rooms for the purposes of educating blacks. Violence was also used as means of intimidation, resulting in schools burnt down, harassment, as well as killing, of teachers.¹⁸ Furthermore, black economic conditions negatively

¹³ Freedom officially arrived in Texas when federal troops landed in Galveston on June 19, 1865. See Alwyn Barr's *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995*, 39.

¹⁴ Crouch, *The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Texans*, 12-40.

¹⁵ Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995*, 61.

¹⁶ Barry A. Crouch, *The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Texans*, 31.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 61-62.

affected their education. As Barry Crouch asserted, “[i]f the crops were plentiful, then blacks could afford to pay a small amount of tuition to support a teacher.”¹⁹ Although the Texas Constitution of 1866 ordered that education for blacks should be encouraged, nothing was done by the state and private philanthropy was not sufficient to accomplish much.²⁰ The primary responsibility of educating Texas blacks was left to the Freedmen’s Bureau, with additional aid provided by private institutions.²¹

Nevertheless, in 1870, Republicans took control of the Twelfth Legislature, creating and promoting a school system that focused on black education. Through the school system, local school boards decided whether blacks and whites should be separated in schools. However, segregation was the custom despite some black opposition.²² Under the leadership of the Republican government, from the 1872-1873 school year, the state’s public schools taught 129,542 students—56 per cent of all school age children in the state—of which one-fourth to one-third of that number were black.²³ Both the Freedmen’s Bureau schools and the schools operated under the Republican school system positively affected literacy for blacks. Illiteracy for freedmen over ten years of age fell from over 95 per cent in 1865 to 89 per cent in 1870 and to 75 per cent in 1880.²⁴ Yet, once the Democrats gained control of the legislature in 1873, the

¹⁹ Barry Crouch, “Hidden Sources of Black History: The Texas Freedmen’s Bureau Records as a Case Study,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (January 1980): 223.

²⁰ Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas*, 266.

²¹ Three of the private educational institutions established for the education of black Texans were Paul Quinn College at Waco, Bishop College at Marshall, and Fort Worth Industrial and Mechanical College at Fort Worth. All three institutions “began and [were] fostered by negro church organizations...indicating as it does that the colored people were beginning to become more independent financially and socially.” See Frederick Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas*, 267.

²² Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995*, 48, 63.

²³ *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

public education system was decentralized and attendance fell to 38 per cent of all possible students in 1873-1874.²⁵

By examining the Texas Constitution of 1876, the influence of racialized views of white Texas settlers is evident. Based on the educational provisions required for blacks, they were considered substantially different and were legally segregated into separate educational facilities.²⁶ Although it was legal to separate students based on race, it did not mandate any special preferences for either party. Hence, despite segregating students based on race, all students were still supposed to acquire the same quality of education. However, this was not the case. Separate facilities and quality of education attained were not equal, as was seen in the schools established in Houston. From the beginning of the establishment of free public schools in Houston in 1876, the schools were inherently unequal.

After the establishment of the public school system in 1876, Harris County opened its first free public schools.²⁷ The organization of these schools was fluid. There were no school districts established. This meant that the communities were left with the responsibility of establishing the schools. Hence, these first schools were organized through a “community system” in which the parents themselves united together and organized themselves into school communities.²⁸ On a yearly basis, the parents submitted a list of children that would attend the school to a county judge, who acted as ex-officio county superintendent. From there, as required, the county judge appointed three trustees who would be in office for the year the school

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ See the Constitution of the State of Texas (1876) Article VII which states under section 7, “separate schools shall be provided for the white and colored children, and impartial provision shall be made for both.” <http://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/constitutions/texas1876/a7> (accessed July 16, 2013).

²⁷ Harris County Department of Education, “History of HCDE,” www.hcde-texas.org/default.aspx?name=HCDEhistory (accessed March 13, 2013).

²⁸ Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas*, 171-172.

was in operation. These trustees were in charge of hiring teachers and overseeing the school. The number of students attending the school was not an issue as there was no minimum required in order to form a school. The school community, primarily made up of parents, enjoyed the rights to use funds provided by the state with very little state interference.²⁹

In Harris County, the newly developed school communities proved to be successful, however, the issue of taxation soon became a problem. According to Frederick Eby, under the community-based school system, “no local taxes could be collected, as there were no fixed boundaries for the school community.”³⁰ The inability to collect local taxes added to the state’s financial crisis. A portion of the state’s general revenue maintained free public schools but it was concluded that the scholastic population was increasing at a rate much faster than the income from the permanent fund.³¹ Thus, local taxation became a central issue in Texas in establishing a successful free public school system. The issue of taxation was soon addressed in an amendment to the 1884 Texas Constitution.

In 1884, this amendment to the Texas Constitution proved to have a significant impact on the future of Texas public education. Through this law, all counties (with some exceptions) were divided into school districts, thus providing more organization, which was deemed necessary to the state’s system of free schools.³² Additionally the new school law established the right of

²⁹ The community-based system of education was applicable to both whites and blacks in Texas. Blacks, through the development of Freedmen’s schools, organized themselves into school communities. Additionally, many northern private institutions provided financial assistance for the education of blacks. The literature does not indicate whether blacks were able to use public school funds. By the establishment of this system, however, the new Texas Constitution of 1876 required that schooling be provided for both whites and blacks.

³⁰ Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas*, 173.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 180.

³² *Ibid.*, 177.

taxation on all property for the education of all children of the community.³³ A look at the Harris County Commissioner's Court minutes in 1884 illustrates the establishment of these new school districts for the Houston region, referred to as common school districts, to be controlled through the county.³⁴ School communities that previously operated under the "community system" would now be consolidated into common school districts based on their locations.

Through an examination of the 1880-1884 school census of Harris County, one can see the early pattern of segregation initially put into place by school officials as they called for separate educational facilities for whites and blacks (refer to Appendix A for tables of the school census). Documentation shows that in the early 1880s, Harris County established separate school facilities for whites and blacks as mandated by Texas law. As was stated earlier, the racial ideology brought to Texas by southern whites transplanted itself into the Texas legal system.

During the time period from 1876-1884, in which Harris County operated under the "community system," school communities were required to report the number of students enrolled in the schools, as well as their scholastic progress. Table 1.1 (refer to Appendix A) shows how the community-based school system promoted a dual school system for white and black students. By examining the data presented more closely, it is evident that "impartial provision" as mandated by the Texas Constitution of 1876 was not practiced. There is a clear difference between the schools operated for whites and blacks. During the 1883-84 school year in Harris County, thirty-four schools operated for white students, with an enrollment of 894 students, but only twenty-one schools for black students with enrollment numbered at 834.

³³ Ibid., 195.

³⁴ Harris County Commissioner Court Minutes, Commissioners Court Department, Houston, Texas, Vol. E (June 18, 1884).

Based on the scholastic population of blacks, there should have been a comparable number of schools for blacks since their scholastic enrollment is in the same range of white student enrollment.

Based on enrollment figures, white enrollment only exceeded black enrollment by sixty students, yet white students were provided with thirteen more schools than black students. This discrepancy can be linked to the community-based schooling that was used in Texas until 1884. The school census data presented in Table 1.1, therefore, shows that the black community lagged behind in establishing community schools, a reflection of the lack of resources and finances provided to them. As historian Mary S. Black argues, “[m]ost early black schools were continually underfunded and were forced to find creative ways to exist.”³⁵ One example is Tillotson College in Austin in which students “literally took matters into their own hands when they built the Old Administration Building, as it is now called, brick by brick. Construction took three years and was partially funded by humble five- and ten-cent contributions from blacks living in the vicinity.”³⁶ It is clear that blacks desired educational opportunities and took it upon themselves to find ways to gain an education, yet it is also clear that they faced strong opposition, not only because of the lack of financial resources, but also due to the racial ideologies that were brought to Texas by white southern settlers. Such racial motives then became institutionalized in the state.

In the 1890 U.S. Census, Harris County had a total white population of 23,718. The total black population for that year in Harris County was 13,522. Hence, it is clear that whites constituted a much larger population in Harris County than blacks. Based on the 1880-1884

³⁵ Mary S. Black, *Early Texas Schools: A Photographic History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 15.

³⁶ Ibid. Tillotson opened as a private school in 1881, founded by the American Missionary Association and affiliated with the United Church of Christ.

school census data of Harris County, however, blacks constituted a little less than half of those attending these public schools. Furthermore, because other ethnic groups were acknowledged as part of the white racial category, it is not clear how many white students were enrolled at these schools, but it is clear that the amount enrolled was sufficiently less based on their total population in the county.³⁷ It can be concluded that many whites opted not to send their children to these early free public schools and instead chose other methods of educating their children.

In Black's research on early Texas schools, she describes the sentiments of those in opposition to the free school system. According to Mr. Gallagher, a school principal in Waco, "there was a decided reluctance on the part of many people to pay school taxes to educate the masses of illiterate Negro children." He continues, "[t]here was also a number of people who objected and refused to send their children to public schools simply because they were free. To them patronage of such schools carried the intimation that they were accepting charity."³⁸

Indeed, free schools were intended to provide an education to orphans and the children of paupers by using the percentage of the money set aside of the general revenue.³⁹ Additionally, the funds allocated through the general revenue were usually used to pay the tuition of those disadvantaged children at private schools.⁴⁰ Because of its original intention of being used for those in a disadvantaged position, such sentiments continued to carry on when Texas began to promote public schooling for everyone. Due to these perceptions of the free school system held by many white Texans, many whites continued to favor private education. Not only were public

³⁷ Once again, I use the term white here to distinguish between an individual that has full European descent and an individual that has partial European descent. For the purposes of this text, I will indicate individuals with partial European ancestry with an ethnic designation, rather than use the term "white" to identify them.

³⁸ Black, *Early Texas Schools: A Photographic History*, 17.

³⁹ Stephen B. Thomas and Billy Don Walker, "Texas Public School Finance," *Journal of Education Finance* 8, no. 2 (Fall 1982): 226.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

schools regarded as charity, their lack of organization, poorly trained teachers, lack of finances, and other weaknesses most likely aided the poor perception of these public schools.

Additionally, the majority of Texans saw education as a private concern to be decided solely by the parent.⁴¹ Therefore, many Texans felt that requiring taxation for the purposes of educating the children of others was an act of confiscation and robbery disguised as law.⁴²

In another example, Lizzie Highston, a graduating senior from Waco High School in 1887 explained “[t]he public schools took over several of the private schools and gradually employed most of the teachers. My father had the point of view, typical of those days, that only the ‘riff-raff’ attended them.”⁴³ Based on these perceptions of the early forms of free public education, it seems likely to have contributed to the low white student enrollment. Many white parents believed a free education was equivalent to accepting charity.

Still, Black argues that “by 1883 the legislature began to believe that good schools would help the economy and that money spent on schools was better than money spent on alternatives such as jails and penitentiaries.”⁴⁴ Due to its large size and great distance from other states, improving transportation in Texas became of chief importance. Railroads, which were still unknown in the Southwest, proved to play a huge factor at promoting the state’s public education system. Serving to aid both transportation and the development of education, the endowment of the public school system and the financing of the railroad companies were linked. A permanent school fund would be established through a large proportion of the United States Indemnity Bonds with only its interest to be used for the support of schools. Further, the school fund would

⁴¹ Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas*, 105.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴³ Black, *Early Texas Schools: A Photographic History*, 17.

⁴⁴ Black, *Early Texas Schools: A Photographic History*, 17.

be loaned to various railway companies at a remunerative rate of interest.⁴⁵ Thus, two of the greatest needs for the state of Texas were now dependent upon one another. Because no private institution had the sufficient financial resources to promote the construction of railroads, a public institution of a massive size, like the Texas education system, was the solution.

Returning to the issue of the lack of white student enrollment, although many whites regarded free public education as charity, Texas was adamant about its establishment.⁴⁶ Not only would it act as a preventative measure for delinquency, but it would also connect Texas through a new method of transportation—railroads. This would serve to unite the people of the state and connect Texas to the greater United States, which would then bolster the state’s economy through the opening of new markets.

Segregation in schooling based on race was not only directed at keeping students separate, but it also affected how faculty and staff were treated as well. Black faculty and staff were limited to teach in black schools. The supply of black teachers mostly came from either the North or from segregated higher education institutions in the state.⁴⁷ The lack of training of teachers, in general, was very low but began to receive increased attention.

The Peabody Fund of 1867 was created to aid the former Confederate states in establishing free public schools. One of the chief concerns for the Peabody Board was teacher training which led to the promotion of scholarships, institutes, and the advancement of the professional life for teachers.⁴⁸ Decades later, in assessing the 1914-1915 school year, the Special Report of the Federal Bureau of Education on the investigation of black education

⁴⁵ Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas*, 115.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

⁴⁷ Black, *Early Texas Schools: A Photographic History*, 12 and Frederick Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas*, 278.

⁴⁸ Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas*, 187.

summarized, “the most urgent need of the colored schools of Texas is for trained teachers.”⁴⁹ Up to that point, teachers were trained at the Prairie View State Normal, various private institutions, the city high schools, and the summer normal institutes. Consequently, the standard of black teachers was very low.⁵⁰

Table 1.2 (refer to Appendix A) illustrates the classification of teachers throughout the 1880-1884 school terms. Based on the data, we can assess that black teachers held a position of disadvantage in the school system. For one, there were less black teachers when compared to white teachers. Based on student enrollment, the number of black teachers should be comparable to that of white teachers. Because this was before the establishment of the 1884 school law, which formed common school districts, this data sheds light on the disadvantage of the black education through the community-based school system. As was discussed earlier in the chapter, there were several factors to explain this discrepancy, such as lack of resources and racial ideologies that limited the success of black education. Yet, the “any means necessary” attitude shared by those in favor of black education reflects the perseverance of educators despite the limitations placed on them.⁵¹

Another example of the inequitable conditions placed upon black teachers is evidenced in the salary for white and black teachers documented in the county superintendent records (refer to Table 1.3 in Appendix A). Due to the smaller number of black teachers compared to white teachers and to the relatively equal student enrollment overall, black teachers ultimately had a higher student-teacher ratio. Thus, it seems that black teachers should have received a higher pay than white teachers. Although this was the case in the 1880-1881 school year, all other years

⁴⁹ Ibid., 278.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Crouch, *The Freedmen’s Bureau and Black Texans*, 31.

show that black teachers received lower pay than white teachers. Because this data reflects the period of the community-based schooling, it is another indication of the impediments put upon black education in general.

It is important to note that although, as a whole, white teachers received higher pay than black teachers, black male teachers did indeed get paid higher than white female teachers. Nonetheless, white female teachers received higher pay than black female teachers. Across the board for the four years examined, female teachers received less pay than male teachers regardless of race.

Indeed, while most of the early black teachers were male, by 1880, black female teachers comprised 274 out of a total of 1,379 black teachers staffed in black Texas schools.⁵² By the end of the nineteenth century, black females, as well as white females, began to occupy teaching positions in large numbers. For example, in Waco, fifty percent of the teachers were women by 1880, and by 1900, that number increased to sixty-five percent.⁵³ For black females, teaching became a respectable profession, despite a low salary, and became the occupation for the best-educated and most aspiring women.⁵⁴

As time progressed, black female teachers continued to find themselves at the lowest rung of the pay scales.⁵⁵ White female teacher's salaries, however, began to exceed that of black male teachers. For example, in Harris County, just years after the above mentioned salaries for black and white teachers, the average teacher's salary from 1882-1884 was \$72 for white males, \$47.80 for white females, \$42 for black males, and \$35 for black females. Ten years later,

⁵² James M. Smallwood and Barry A. Crouch, *Black Women in Texas History*, eds. Bruce A. Glasrud and Merline Pitre (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 54.

⁵³ Rebecca Sharpless, *Black Women in Texas History*, eds. Bruce A. Glasrud and Merline Pitre (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 84.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 83-84.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

blacks continued to trail their white counterparts—white males earned \$292 and white females earned \$260, while black males earned \$252 and black females earned \$205.⁵⁶ Female teachers, despite race, continued to earn less than their male counterparts.

While the practice of separating individuals based on race was prevalent throughout the South after emancipation, the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision reaffirmed its validity. Although the case concerned separate compartments in railway carriages, it was implied that “separate but equal” had a more general application.⁵⁷ Thus, the Court’s decision hardened what was already in place concerning Texas public education. This concept of “separate but equal” was the basis for segregated schools in Texas and remained in place well after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954 that made it unconstitutional to separate students based on race.

Racial identification following the infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson* case is vital and needs to be addressed when examining the scholastic enrollment for Harris County schools found in the county superintendent records. Many ethnicities and nationalities were classified under the white racial category in Harris County. For example, in the 1909-1910 school year, the total number of white children attending Harris County schools was 4,248; whereas, the total number of black children enrolled was 1,524. The census report goes on to classify the different types of children attending the schools by using the nationality of the children. When you look closely at the enrollments, you see that Mexicans, Germans, Italians, Bohemians and other children were classified as white as shown on Table 1.4 (refer to Appendix A). Thus, racial classification was critical in the realm of education.

⁵⁶ Ruthe Winegarten, *Black Texas Women: 150 Years of Trial and Triumph* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 95.

⁵⁷ Mark Rathbone, “School Segregation in the USA,” *History Review* 68 (December 2010): 1.

Due to their “white” racial classification, these students were not required to be segregated by law, as were black children. However, it does not mean they received equal treatment as white students. On the contrary, there is much evidence that they were often discriminated against and treated differently. For example, Mexican students were often subjugated to substandard educational conditions. They were still often placed in either separate rooms or buildings due to their perceived inferiority. According to historian Arnoldo De León, in Houston, “every barrio had the presence of a local ‘Mexican School,’ which generally serviced only the younger children, for in Houston as elsewhere, unwritten rules discouraged promotion into the junior high schools.”⁵⁸

Looking back at the population of Harris County in the late nineteenth century, it is seen that the Mexican American presence in Harris County was relatively small as compared to other counties such as Bexar, the lower Rio Grande Valley, and the El Paso area. This was due to the lack of Mexican American presence in east Texas in earlier periods. During the Spanish period, the royal government attempted to explore the lands on the northern front of New Spain (name used in reference to present-day Mexico until the 1810s), but fell short of finding the value of colonizing the land. By 1716, however, French activity along the Texas coast led the Spanish government to establish settlements in the previously unexplored areas.⁵⁹

One such settlement was established in east Texas and would later evolve into the city of Nacogdoches. Still, compared to other sites that were established such as San Antonio and

⁵⁸ De León, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: Mexican Americans in Houston*, 27.

⁵⁹ Arnoldo De León, *Mexican Americans in Texas: A Brief History* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, 2009), 10-16.

Laredo, the Spanish presence was relatively small and only composed approximately 500 out of 5,000 people who inhabited the region at the end of the eighteenth century.⁶⁰

The lack of Mexican presence in Harris County can be further seen in the 1890 U.S. Census. Of the total population of 37,249 living in Harris County, only eighty were born in Mexico and three born in South America. Although these figures do not include native-born individuals of Latin descent, it illustrates the small presence of Mexicans and people of Latin descent in the area of Harris County.⁶¹

Encompassing only a small presence in most of Texas aside the border region between Texas and Mexico during the late 19th century, Mexican Americans were virtually absent in the discussions of where they fit into the state's system of education. However, Mexican migration began to increase at a rapid rate at the beginning of the 20th century, as authorized contracting companies and private individuals began recruiting Mexican immigrants to meet the demands for cheap labor.⁶² Additionally, conditions in Mexico pushed many Mexicans to flee to the United States in large numbers. Under the leadership of Porfirio Diaz, Mexico became divided as many peasants had their lands stripped from them. This displacement of people, combined with an increasing population, low wages, rising food costs, and exploitive working conditions led to the mass migration of Mexicans crossing into the United States.⁶³ Mexicans also began to settle down in other places other than the border regions, which increased the awareness of what was sometimes referred to as the "Mexican problem" in schools.⁶⁴ Many Mexicans took up

⁶⁰ Ibid., 23.

⁶¹ U.S. Census, *Statistics of Population*, part 2 (Washington, DC, 1890), 658.

⁶² San Miguel, "Let All of Them Take Heed": *Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981*, 14.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 15-19.

occupations in agriculture, however, they were also found in work related to railroads, mining, and construction.⁶⁵

The emigration of Mexicans into Houston followed this same trajectory. It was not until the turn of the twentieth century that a Mexican presence emerged in Houston. As of 1910, there were no indications of any “ethnic enclaves” in Houston.⁶⁶ However, by the 1920s, Houston began seeing the first barrios take shape. Of those barrios, the earliest settlement of Mexicans in Houston was in Second Ward and Magnolia, located in east Houston.⁶⁷

Two major waves of immigration emerged in the United States. The “old” immigrants, prior to 1880, consisted primarily of western European individuals. Between 1880 and 1924 (the year immigration became severely restricted), more than twenty-five million immigrants entered the United States.⁶⁸ These “new” immigrants were primarily from eastern and southeastern Europe. Also comprising a part of the “new” immigrants were Mexicans and African Americans (migrating from the South to the North during the Great Migration). During this time period, prejudices against the “new” immigrants affected immigration policies, restricting the amount of southern and southeastern European immigrants dramatically. Because of the anti-Chinese movement that emerged primarily in the West, promotion of Mexican immigration continued since there existed the need for labor.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Lawrence A. Cardoso, “Labor Emigration to the Southwest, 1916 to 1920: Mexican Attitudes and Policy,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 79, no. 4 (April 1976): 403.

⁶⁶ De León, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: Mexican Americans in Houston*, 8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 10-11. See Richard Griswold del Castillo’s *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890: a Social History* for a discussion of the making of a Mexican American barrio as a way to adapt to a changing Los Angeles.

⁶⁸ James R. Barrett, “Americanization from the Bottom Up: Immigration and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880-1930,” *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 3 (December 1992): 997.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1001.

The increased attention given to the presence of Mexicans in Texas schools is seen in different publications and reports related to their education. One of the major findings of these studies was that Tejano children were not provided with equal educational opportunities because of racial prejudice and were either denied school facilities or provided with limited and inferior educational provisions.⁷⁰ In his 1928 study, H.T. Manuel examined the extent to which school officials denied schooling to these children. By asking several hundred county superintendents to respond to the question “How many districts have Mexican American scholastics but make no provision for their education?,” the results showed that seventeen districts contained Tejano schoolchildren but did not provide any facilities for them.⁷¹

School non-enrollment was also an issue for Mexican American children. According to Manuel’s 1928 study, approximately 40 per cent of these school-age children but only 9 per cent of whites were not provided with any educational facilities or service during the 1927-1928 school year.⁷² Furthermore, when provided an education, Mexican American students were usually given a shorter school year than whites and were also placed in segregated educational facilities.⁷³

As Mexicans began to constitute a growing presence in Houston’s Second Ward and Magnolia area, many whites began moving out. By the 1920s, schools that were once considered “white” schools became known as “Mexican” schools. These schools were not maintained and

⁷⁰ San Miguel, *“Let All of Them Take Heed”*: *Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981*, 23.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Herschel T. Manuel, *The Education of Mexican and Spanish-speaking Children in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1930), 95, quoted in Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr. *“Let All of Them Take Heed”*: *Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 24.

⁷³ San Miguel, *“Let All of Them Take Heed”*: *Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981*, 24.

left to deteriorate for the growing Mexican student populations.⁷⁴ Additionally, in schools in which Mexicans attended with white children, they were often separated into different classrooms although it was claimed it was for “pedagogical” reasons such as curricular concerns, irregular attendance, or language inability. According to historian Guadalupe San Miguel, “educators argued that because of the language ‘deficiency’ and the lack of school attendance, Mexican children could not effectively participate in schools or classes with their English-speaking peers.”⁷⁵

Another growing trend during the Progressive era was the process of Americanization. According to historian James Barrett, Americanization typically “conveys a unified notion of what it meant to be American and more than a hint of nativism.” However, Barrett takes a more critical understanding of the term, claiming that it suggests “the broader acculturation of immigrants, the day-to-day process by which they came to understand their new situation and to find or invent ways of coping with it.”⁷⁶ Schools were one of the main methods that immigrants became “Americanized.” The idea of Americanization implies that an “ideal” culture characterizes what it is to be an “American.” The “old” immigrants originally from Western Europe were perceived as the most evolved civilization. Therefore, the concept of Social Darwinism legitimized discrimination against “new” immigrants—eastern and southeastern Europeans, Mexicans, and blacks. Some progressive thinkers believed that these “less civilized” groups could, however, become civilized through the process of Americanization.⁷⁷ Hence,

⁷⁴ De León, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: Mexican Americans in Houston*, 27.

⁷⁵ San Miguel, “*Let All of Them Take Heed*”: *Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981*, 55.

⁷⁶ Barrett, “Americanization from the Bottom Up: Immigration and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880-1930,” 997.

⁷⁷ Gene B. Preuss, *To Get a Better School System: One Hundred Years of Education Reform in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 41-42.

schools were reformed to favor this process. English-only policies, for example, were encouraged and thought to foster positive feelings of the United States and American principles.⁷⁸ While the English language was promoted, the Spanish language was discouraged and often prohibited.⁷⁹ After World War I, efforts to eliminate the use of Spanish in public schools increased, leading to the passage of a Texas language law in 1918, prohibiting the use of non-English languages for instructional purposes and requiring the use of English in the public school curriculum.⁸⁰ This law applied to teachers, school administrators, superintendents, board members, and other public school personnel and made it a criminal offense to teach in a non-English language. The law was further expanded to incorporate the English-only law to private schools in 1923.⁸¹ The usage of English-only language in schools took a different direction in the mid-1960s as part of Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society. Following the 1968 Bilingual Education Act, Texas legitimized and initiated bilingual education.⁸² Despite this, in 1981, a bilingual education law once again turned towards emphasizing the acquisition of the English-language through the usage of a transition-oriented bilingual education program.⁸³

During the Great Depression, Mexican Americans experienced growing resentment and were blamed for unemployment and high relief rates.⁸⁴ In response, repatriation of Mexicans,

⁷⁸ De León, *Mexican Americans in Texas: A Brief History*, 92.

⁷⁹ Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement in Houston* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 23.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁸² Carlos K. Blanton, *The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas, 1836-1981* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 141.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 150-151.

⁸⁴ San Miguel, Jr., *Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement in Houston*, 29.

including Mexican Americans, was enforced. According to Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., “repatriation became a symbol of America’s mistreatment of this population group.”⁸⁵

Thus, from the development of public education in Texas, blacks and Mexican Americans were not guaranteed the educational opportunities equated to whites. Whereas blacks endured *de jure* segregation, Mexican Americans were subjugated to *de facto* segregation. In Texas, the development of public schooling for blacks became a hot topic during Reconstruction with many of the first black schools established by the Freedmen’s Bureau and private institutions. The discussion of Mexican American education, on the other hand, became a state issue at the beginning of the 20th century due to their growing presence in the state.⁸⁶ As historian Neil Foley argues, it was during this period that Mexicans “breached the centuries-old Southern racial binary of white and black and represented a ‘second color menace’ to many Texas whites.”⁸⁷ However, “over time Mexicans came to locate themselves in the ethnoracial middle ground between Anglo Americans and African Americans, not white enough to claim equality with Anglos and yet, in many cases, white enough to escape the worst features of the Jim Crow South.”⁸⁸ Nevertheless, both blacks and Mexican Americans experienced early instances of school segregation that would prove to have detrimental results.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ San Miguel, “*Let All of Them Take Heed*”: *Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981*, 19.

⁸⁷ Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 41.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER II

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS OF ALDINE

Weeks after the Texan victory at the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836, Augustus and John K. Allen purchased land and founded what became, at least for a brief three-year period, the capital of the Texas Republic. Named after the hero of the hour General Sam Houston, the city of Houston began its path to becoming a bustling city. By the year 1839, Houston was a city of 2,073 people, but it was not until the discovery of oil in southeast Texas, at the turn of the twentieth century, that the city saw substantial growth.¹ Within the city itself, different communities began emerging and soon developed separate identities for themselves. One such community, Aldine, followed this same trajectory. An examination of the history and settlement of Aldine illustrates how the changes in demographics that occurred within the area affected the schooling experiences of the students living there. The following section focuses on the settlement patterns of Aldine from the time of its establishment in the late nineteenth century until the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Much of the history gathered about the area of Aldine was researched to honor the celebration of Aldine Independent School District's 50th anniversary in 1985. In 1982, Aldine Superintendent M.O. Campbell, Deputy Superintendent Kenneth Black, Social Studies consultant Elizabeth Battle, and Director of Public Information Judy Williams began discussing

¹ Marguerite Johnston, *Houston: The Unknown City, 1836-1946* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 29.

the process of celebrating the district's milestone. One of their goals was to research the history of Aldine. For the next three years, they embarked on a journey that proved to be somewhat frustrating given the lack of early historical sources of Aldine. However, with the help of a *Houston Chronicle* article that referenced the Aldine research project, they finally pieced together a vast amount of information about Aldine's history.

One of the most significant events that led to the settlement of the Aldine area was the introduction of the railroad in 1873. Built by the International and Great Railroad, it connected Houston to Palestine, a northern Texan city, and passed through Aldine. It was because of the railroad that the Aldine area began to see a steady growth in population and settlement. According to early maps of the region, the area was then known as Prairie Switch, since it was thought that the train switched engines at this point along the railroad. It was not until years later that the area became known as Aldine.²

The earliest known settlers in the area were Johann Frederick Schlobohm, a German immigrant, and his wife Caroline. Johann was born in the Hanover region of Germany and was in New Orleans by March 15, 1836 when he enlisted in the Zavalla Guards, the 2nd Regiment Volunteer Infantry. His group arrived in Galveston, Texas before the Battle of San Jacinto. Thereafter, Scholobohm's group was placed as guard over Mexican General Santa Anna. Scholobohm continued to serve the Texian Army in Company D, First Regiment, Permanent Volunteers from April 1836 to November 1837.³

What is known about the Scholobohms comes from the old Scholobohm cemetery located in the Aldine area, as well as oral histories passed down within the Scholobohm family.

² Aldine Independent School District, "Aldine's Historical Chronology," Public Information Office.

³ Schlobohm Cemetery, Historic Texas Cemetery, Texas Historical Commission, 2007.

The exact date that the Scholobohms arrived in the Aldine area is not known, but soon after Johann married Charlotte Caroline Kleibrink in 1850, their first child, John F. Scholobohm was born in 1853. According to his tombstone found in the Scholobohm cemetery, John was born on the banks of Greens Bayou near Aldine, Texas.

The reference to “Aldine, Texas” found on John’s tombstone spurred Elizabeth Battle and Judy Williams’ interests in researching whether or not Aldine was ever an incorporated city. Although their research found that Aldine never incorporated, their findings conclude that the area did experience much growth and could be distinguished as a separate entity from central Houston by the late 1800s. Of great significance to the growth of the area was the arrival of a man by the name of Ferris W. Colby in 1887. Additionally, it was in 1888 that the name Aldine first appeared on a map, thus leading Battle and Williams to believe that the name Aldine was influenced by Colby.⁴ However, the origins of the name Aldine were never properly identified since there were many conflicting stories.

One story says that, as the trains would pass the area heading towards Houston, there was a stop at a small hotel with a restaurant. Trains would stop and the conductors would shout “All dine!,” calling for those who wanted to get off and enjoy a meal. However, it was revealed that the hotel was not built until 1900, about twelve years after the name Aldine first appeared on the map. Additionally, the researchers learned that the train rarely stopped at the little depot since it was only located about fourteen miles from Houston.⁵

Another story involves the Norwegian and Swedish settlers of the area. According to this theory, these earliest settlers wanted to preserve their heritage, thus inspiring them to name the

⁴ Aldine Independent School District, “Aldine ISD’s 50th Anniversary- A Synopsis,” Public Information Office, 3.

⁵ Ibid., “Stories about Aldine,” Public Information Office, 14.

area Aldine, after an Italian printing house that used the Aldine press, a hallmark of quality.⁶ It seems odd that the early settlers would name the area after a 15th century Italian printing house rather than something more directly influenced by their Norwegian and Swedish roots.

The last story that seemed to be the one that Williams and Battle found most reliable was that Ferris W. Colby brought the name Aldine with him. There are notarized forms that can trace Colby to Kansas. The early researchers found that there is a city named Colby, Kansas, which was located about seventy miles from an Aldine, Kansas. Even this story, however, seems to have some sketchy information.⁷ In essence, the origin of the name Aldine is unknown and has primarily been kept alive due to its usage in the naming of the school district established in the area.

The development of the area was, however, influenced by the arrival of Colby in 1887. Pamphlets promoting the settlement of this area designate him as the land developer. From the onset of Colby's arrival, the area began to see a great deal of newcomers. According to individuals that conducted business with Colby in the early 1900s, Colby mailed his advertising brochures to the colder regions of the country in order to attract people to the area because of its warmer temperatures. Furthermore, Colby sponsored train excursions from those areas to Aldine. He greeted the prospective land buyers upon their arrival and treated them to a Texas barbeque and watermelon meal under big tents."⁸ In addition, Colby promoted Aldine as a

⁶ Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Aldine Vertical Files.

⁷ E-mail correspondence between the early researchers shows conflicting stories over the existence of a city named Aldine in Kansas. While one source said there was no existence of an Aldine, Kansas, another source confirmed its existence. This e-mail correspondence was found at the Harris County Archives, Common School District No. 29 folder.

⁸ Aldine Independent School District, "Aldine ISD's 50th Anniversary- A Synopsis," Public Information Office, 6.

promising citrus and fig growing area.⁹ However, the early settlers soon learned that the land was not suitable for citrus growing throughout the winter season. Although the growth of citrus crops proved to be a failure, figs were successfully grown.

With the growth of fig production, two fig companies were established in the area. Furthermore, by 1910 there was one schoolhouse located in the area known as Common School District No. 29. By 1912, a second schoolhouse was constructed, consisting of two rooms and located near the original one-room schoolhouse. Additionally, White Oak School on West Montgomery became a part of Common School District No. 29.¹⁰ The area experienced a decline during World War I due to the rationing of sugar, which caused the fig factories to close down. Nevertheless, Aldine continued to develop and flourished in the mid-to-late twentieth century.

As noted, the earliest settlers of Aldine were primarily of Swedish and Norwegian heritage, which represented the greatest number of settlers at the turn of the twentieth century. Thus, individuals of white European origin initially populated Aldine. Although there is no census data that indicates the number of whites, blacks, or Mexican Americans living in Aldine prior to the 1980 Census, it can be concluded by looking at the scholastic data listed for the Aldine area that Aldine was largely a white community.¹¹ Beginning in the early 1900s, however, the development of a predominately black community began to emerge in an area encompassing part of the Aldine school district known as Acres Homes. Interestingly, when

⁹ Ibid., “Aldine Beginnings,” Public Information Office, 7.

¹⁰ Ibid., “Aldine’s Historical Chronology,” Public Information Office.

¹¹ Beginning in the 1970s, the U.S. Census Bureau began using the term Hispanic to identify individuals of Spanish origin, regardless of race. Although this manuscript is discussing Mexican Americans, because Mexican Americans constituted the vast portion of the Hispanic population in Houston, I use the term Mexican American within this text. Furthermore, prior to the 1980 Census, the Aldine CDP was not included as a separate entity on the census.

examining the Aldine census-designated place (CDP), the western portion of the area zoned to the Aldine I.S.D. is not included. Therefore, when looking at the population for Aldine I.S.D., several different sources have to be taken into consideration in order to understand the complexity of Aldine's population patterns.

Although the black population is not considered when calculating population data in the Aldine CDP, the black population had a stable presence in Aldine beginning in the early 1900s. Founded in 1909, Acres Homes initially attracted few people but began attracting residents in the late 1930s thanks to the efforts of W.W. Mount and the Wright Land Company.¹² The land was sold by the acre, hence the name Acres Homes. It is unique in the aspect that although relatively close to downtown Houston, it retains a semi-rural lifestyle and one can still see livestock found in backyards.¹³

After World War II, Acres Homes began developing faster as businesses increased faster than ever before.¹⁴ According to a community planning data book, Acres Homes was once considered the South's largest unincorporated black community.¹⁵ Yet, despite business growth following the war and into the 1950s, Acres Homes continued as a rural and partially developed area.¹⁶

It is in this western part of Aldine, Acres Homes, in which the majority of blacks zoned to the district settled. Hence, it served as the location in which the segregated black schools of

¹² Tracy Smith, Planning and Development Department, *Acres Homes Community Development Area: Data Book*, (Houston: The Dept., June 1984), 1; Roger T. Ward, "Acres Shakers: The Solution to Public Transformation Needs in a black Community" (Master's thesis, University of Houston, 1993), 1.

¹³ Planning and Development, *Acres Homes Community Development Area: Data Book*, 3.

¹⁴ Ward, "Acres Shakers: The Solution to Public Transformation Needs in a black Community", 10.

¹⁵ Planning and Development, *Acres Homes Community Development Area: Data Book*, 1.

¹⁶ Ward, "Acres Shakers: The Solution to Public Transformation Needs in a black Community", 10.

Aldine were located and in which would later serve as the battleground for the Aldine desegregation issue. According to the 1984 data book for Acres Homes, the population was predominately black, consisting of 85.2% black, 10.8% white, and 3.2% Mexican American.¹⁷

The population distribution of Aldine, consisting of mostly whites and a large amount of blacks was reflective of the total population in Houston at the time. In 1900, the city of Houston consisted of 44,632 individuals with 25, 655 being native white, 4,824 being foreign white, and 14,654 being considered “colored” which included Negroes, Chinese, Japanese, and Indian individuals.¹⁸

The lack of mass transportation in the early twentieth century led to the concentration of people living in the inner city. This necessity to live in close proximity to work resulted in housing integration between people of different races and ethnicities. Minorities were not seen to be concentrated in certain parts of Houston in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As Arnoldo De León points out, “[f]oreign-born Houstonians could be found in several sections of the city and even blacks, who dealt with a racial order indigenous to a Southern town, were relatively evenly distributed throughout the six wards.”¹⁹

With the introduction of the street car, many wealthy and middle-class citizens began to abandon the central area as their place of residence.²⁰ Thus, ethnic communities could be seen forming in Houston. As discussed in the previous chapter, it was during the 1910s when the Mexican presence in Houston began expanding at a rapid pace. Job opportunities in oil-related industries further attracted Mexicans to Houston, especially after the completion of the Ship

¹⁷ Planning and Development, *Acres Homes Community Development Area: Data Book*, 6.

¹⁸ U.S. Census, *Statistics of Population*, Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1900.

¹⁹ De León, De León, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: Mexican Americans in Houston*, 8.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

Channel in 1914.²¹ Furthermore, work on railroads was easily available to Mexicans and in 1910 almost a quarter of approximately 100 Spanish-surnamed persons listed work in one capacity or another with the railroad lines.²²

With the disintegration of the walking city between 1910 and 1920, the inner city began showing signs of income disparities, as well as the manifestations of segregation based on race and status.²³ In Houston, housing segregation became visible. Whereas, a black quarter appeared in the Fourth Ward and parts of Third and Fifth Wards, the Second Ward and Magnolia Park were left primarily to Mexicans by 1920.²⁴ According to a 1940 foreign-born population study in Houston, 33% of those born outside of the United States were considered “Latin-Americans.” Although it appeared that they were scattered throughout the city, most were clustered in the downtown and east end area, known as Magnolia Park.²⁵

Houston experienced substantial growth between 1920 and 1930; it grew by more than 111 percent, from 139,000 to 292,000 people.²⁶ The Mexican population in Houston also showed parallel growth, growing from an estimated 6,000 to about 15,000 in 1930—an increase of some 150% greater than the rest of the city’s overall population.²⁷ Several factors aided Houston’s growth during this time. One factor was the success of the automobile industry. As a hub for the oil-related industries, Houston benefited from its success. By the mid-1920s, approximately eighteen million vehicles were registered in Harris County, resulting in increased

²¹ Ibid., 10.

²² Ibid., 9.

²³ Ibid., 11.

²⁴ Ibid., 13-14.

²⁵ Joseph Dishron, “A Population Study of Houston and the Houston Area” (Ed.D, University of Houston, August 1949), 320.

²⁶ De León, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: Mexican Americans in Houston*, 23.

²⁷ Ibid.

demand for motor fuel.²⁸ With increasing capital available from gasoline and fuel oil sales, oil companies built numerous refineries and other oil-related industrial facilities.²⁹

After World War II, Houston's expansion of military installations, defense industries, and petro-chemical facilities caused an economic boom in the city.³⁰ The increased demand for oil and oil products during the post-war era led to a rising economy and further development and migration to Houston.

Not only did World War II have economic consequences for Houston, but it also had a social impact. Because many Mexican Americans and black Texans joined the war effort, their participation exposed them to opportunities that had been previously denied to them. According to De León, Mexican Americans, blacks, and whites “were thrown together by the crisis of the moment and the call for patriotism even abated racial feelings temporarily as all rallied together against a common enemy.”³¹ Their experience, whether in military service or opportunities created through the war effort, enabled and empowered them to demand equal opportunities in the United States.

The era following World War II saw an increase in urbanization. People began migrating in larger numbers, leaving rural areas and moving to the city. Houston was no exception. Between the years 1950 to 1960, Houston went from approximately 938,000 people to 1.2 million people.³² Furthermore, the migration of Mexicans into Houston was substantial, going from 20,000 enumerated Mexicans in 1940, 40,000 in 1950, to 75,000 by 1960.³³ With their

²⁸ Ibid., 22.

²⁹ Ibid., 23.

³⁰ Ibid., 148.

³¹ Ibid., 97.

³² Ibid., 147.

³³ Ibid., 98.

population growth occurring in Houston, the Mexican colonias continued to grow, thus causing outward expansion in which other lesser colonias formed.

The development of the highway system in the 1950s also aided expansion in Houston, as well as other cities. As highways were constructed, urban sprawl began to occur. People moved away from the cities and migrated to other less populated areas that would be relatively easy to commute from given the availability and affordability of the automobile and the new highway systems. Historian Owen D. Gutfreund argues that these cities were “remade by [the] dynamic, rapidly spreading out across the land while simultaneously reinventing their downtowns in order to survive in the automobile age.”³⁴

The growing popularity of the automobile coupled with the expansion of the highway system led many middle-class and upper class people to flee the central cores of cities and migrate to the suburbs. This process, known as suburbanization, picked up at rapid pace through highway development due to the automobile’s affordability and the desire to get away from the problems of the inner city.³⁵

As is the case, suburbanization is often linked to the “white flight” issue. Although there were both blacks and Mexican Americans that moved to the suburbs, the process of suburbanization is most heavily associated with white migration into these outlying cities. As suburbs became more efficient, whites began migrating to those areas, therefore leaving housing available for others to settle in. Due to this, as De León points out, “the urban working class, Mexicans, and other poor folks began occupying the vacated housing.”³⁶

³⁴ Owen D. Gutfreund, *Twentieth-Century Sprawl: Highways and the Reshaping of the American Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 231.

³⁵ De León, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: Mexican Americans in Houston*, 148.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

A closer look into the process of white flight and the emergence of suburbia illustrates how this led to the demographic changes that occurred in both Houston and Aldine during the twentieth century. The growth of suburbs primarily took shape after World War II. The introduction of advanced transportation technology, the automobile, and the highway systems facilitated the growth of suburbs. But what caused people to move out of the city? Social scientists often refer to different “pull” and “push” factors when discussing urban sprawl. As Barry Schwartz points out, the availability of “cheaper land, newer housing, lower densities, and more homogenous neighborhoods in the suburbs” triggered the emergence of migration of people and commercial businesses.³⁷

According to a study that examines whether racial discrimination was one of the underlying causes of whites fleeing the cities and moving into the suburbs, these researchers found that the correlation between the two were unfounded. Accordingly, it seemed that the reason whites were migrating was primarily due to the pull factors referenced above.³⁸ Nonetheless, other studies have shown that the migration of whites occurred heavily during the years of integration. One such study showed that 15 out of 23 districts observed experienced a dramatic decrease in white student enrollment and that of those districts that were majority white prior to mandatory busing, most transformed to be predominately minority or fast-approaching that status.³⁹ Furthermore, the most substantial acceleration of white loss for these districts occurred in their first year of implementing desegregation.⁴⁰ Both Houston and Aldine were not

³⁷ Barry Schwartz, ed., *The Changing Face of the Suburbs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976) 137.

³⁸ Ibid., 154-155.

³⁹ David J. Armor, *White Flight, Demographic Transition, and the Future of School Desegregation* (Santa Monica: Rand Co., 1978,) 31.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 19. The school districts examined all faced court-ordered mandatory desegregation between 1968 through 1976.

immune to white flight. As is evidenced by the changing demographics that occurred in Aldine, it is clear that during the years of desegregation Aldine experienced drastic population changes similar to that going on in urban areas, the most drastic population changes occurring between 1980 and 2000.

Aldine's growth boomed during the late 1960s and 1970s. The location of Aldine as a northern section of a major city allowed it to benefit from the introduction of the automobile, the highway system, and post-WWII demands. As such, Aldine experienced a growth in commercial businesses. Furthermore, since the 1970s, Houston's cycles of economic 'boom' and 'bust' resulted in large fluctuations in employment, population, and construction.⁴¹ In Aldine, for instance, the development of the International Airport opened in 1969 and Greenspoint Mall opened in 1976. Additionally, the development of the North Beltway, which looped around Houston, made it easier to travel between areas in Houston, thus further enabling growth.

During the 1980s, the outlying areas of Houston experienced an increase in development. In fact according to the city's planning and development department, employment declined inside the IH-610 Loop but grew in the city's outlying areas.⁴² Houston's workplace also changed, going from a goods-producing sector to a service-producing sector, which included jobs in government, retail trade, and the services industry.⁴³ The increased economic opportunities contributed to the growth of women, blacks, and Mexican Americans in Houston's workplace.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Planning and Development Department, *Demographic and Land Use Profile for Houston, Texas*, (Houston, June 1992), 10.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

This economic growth provided job opportunities, which attracted people to settle in the area. Furthermore, although the area did see a larger number of people moving in due to the rising economic opportunities available in the area, the population did not necessarily increase dramatically within the years between 1980 through 2000. During these twenty years, the population only increased by over 1,000 persons. By this point, it is likely that Aldine did not experience substantial population growth because Houston suburbs were developing and attracting people to those areas. Houston itself experienced a modest overall 2.2 percent growth rate between 1980 and 1990 in comparison to the growth rate of 29.4 percent from 1970 to 1980.⁴⁵ The pattern of slow growth in an urban area coupled with strong growth in surrounding unincorporated areas was not limited to Houston, but rather reflected growth trends of many other major U.S. cities.⁴⁶

While the total population remained relatively stagnant, there appeared to be a changing demographic pattern taking place. As the years progressed, Aldine increased its minority population, primarily its black and Mexican American population, while the white population saw a decrease. This trend is not limited to Aldine. In Houston during the 1980s, there were significant increases in the Mexican American and Asian population, a steady growth in black population, and a net loss of the white population. As a result, Houston's population was almost sixty percent black, Mexican American, Asian, and other minority groups.⁴⁷

The decrease in Houston's white population can be attributed to low birth rates. For instance, the white birth rate in 1988 was 1.6.⁴⁸ Another contributing factor was the relocation of whites to the suburbs. Their population decreased from 834,061 persons in 1980 accounting for

⁴⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 21.

52 per cent of Houston's population to 662,663 persons accounting for 40.6 per cent of the city's population in 1990.⁴⁹

The population of Mexican Americans, on the other hand, increased between those years. Between 1980 and 1990, the Mexican American population increased to 450,551 from 281,389, a sixty percent increase to twenty-seven percent of the total population.⁵⁰ As mentioned before, economic opportunities in the service sector attracted many Mexican Americans into Houston. In addition, high birth rates also aided their growth. Between 1984 and 1988, Houston's birth/death statistics showed that Mexican Americans had the highest birth/death ratio (9:1) and lowest death rate (294 per 100,000 persons) among all racial/ethnic groups.⁵¹

While the Mexican American population experienced substantial growth, Houston's black population experienced a more modest three per cent growth between 1980 and 1990.⁵² While their population in 1980 was numbered at 431,836, accounting for twenty-seven of the total population, in 1990, their population numbered 448,143 with the percentage remaining the same. Their small growth was attributed to an increase in deaths over births.⁵³

The population shifts that occurred in Houston reflected what was also occurring in Aldine. According to the 1980 U.S. Census, there were 12,623 people living in the Aldine area, of which 2.1% were black and 11.1% were of Spanish origin (refer to Appendix A).⁵⁴ Of the 1,404 Spanish-origin inhabitants, the majority was of Mexican descent, constituting 1,252 of the total Spanish-origin population. Furthermore, of the 11,219 that were not classified as Spanish-

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ U.S. Census, *Total Persons and Spanish Origin Persons by Type of Spanish Origin and Race: 1980*. Vol. I, Characteristics of the Population. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982.

origin, 10,766 were considered white, 269 were black, and 184 were of other races. Based on the data, it appears that the Mexican American presence in Aldine by 1980 was relatively small, similar to the black population. However, the census does not include all the areas that encompass the school boundaries for the Aldine school district since there were many more blacks that were enrolled in the segregated schools in the 1960s than that which is reported on the 1980 Census. For example, Aldine ISD had a black scholastic population of 3,000 students in the year 1961.⁵⁵ Thus, this contradicts the reported population in the census. After examining the area that constituted the Aldine CDP, as reported on the U.S. Census, becomes clear that the area in west Aldine is not included in the data. Thus, the black population living in the school boundaries for Aldine is not accurately represented; yet, it does show the housing patterns throughout the decades and that a shift occurred in the eastern portion of Aldine. Additionally, in order to get a clearer picture of how the black population changed, other data must be considered, such as information obtained from city planning and the demographics listed for the Aldine school district. Through the examination of these sources, a clearer picture emerges of the settlement patterns that occurred in Aldine throughout the years.

One such source is the Northwest Quadrant of 1980, which documents population and density data by census tract. A close look at the census tracts reveals the housing patterns of Aldine. On the western portion of Aldine, the black population resided in much larger numbers than on the eastern part of Aldine. For example, on two census tracts the black population was 5,084 and 4,496 while the white population living in these tracts was 2,684 and 2,307, respectively. Additionally, the Mexican American population living in these tracts was 302 and 1,037. Whereas, in the eastern portion of Aldine, the white population is significantly larger, the

⁵⁵ “Aldine Votes Down School Bonds, Negroes may go on Double Shift,” *Houston Chronicle*, December 1961.

black population was significantly smaller. For example, two tracts consist of 9,334 and 6,672 whites, 423 and 235 blacks, and 1,407 and 897 Mexican Americans, respectively. This data reflects there was some segregation in the Aldine area based on housing patterns. In all areas of Aldine, the Mexican American population was relatively small compared to the total population. A look at Table 2.2 (refer to Appendix A) illustrates further the differences in housing patterns.

Once again, it is important to note that the data collected from the U.S. Census and the Houston Planning and Development Department does not match up with one another. Since the western portion of Aldine ISD is not included in the U.S. Census for the Aldine CDP, the black population appears to be relatively low for the area. However, the black population is large and dominant in west Aldine. This further demonstrates the segregation prevalent in Aldine. While whites constituted the majority of those living in east Aldine, the black population constituted the majority of those living in west Aldine.

Additionally, one can compare the population data listed in both the U.S. Census and the city planning data to the demographics that were recorded by the school district. In 1978, Aldine I.S.D.'s student population consisted of 72% Anglo, 15% African American, and 13% Mexican American.⁵⁶ This population listed for the district reflects that of the population percentages from the U.S. Census and the city planning data. Whereas the eastern portion of Aldine from the census shows that whites constituted a majority of those living in those areas, the data for the western portion obtained from the city planning shows a much larger black population. Mexican Americans, on the other hand, constituted a lower percentage of those living in Aldine altogether but were more ambiguous in their settlement patterns having no distinct patterns as of 1980.

⁵⁶ *Sampson, et al., and United States of America v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.*, "Agreed Order of Unitary Status and Dismissal," 64-H-273, (S.D. Tex. 2002).

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, the demographics in Aldine were changing. While there was a decrease in total population, from 12,623 in 1980 to 11,133 in 1990, the largest ethnic category that showed a decrease was that of Euro-Americans or whites, i.e. non-Hispanic whites. Whereas the number of whites living in the Aldine CDP was 10,766 in 1980, by 1990 the white population dropped to 7, 426. While the number of whites decreased in Aldine, the number of blacks and Mexican Americans grew. In 1980, the black population living in the Aldine CDP was reported at 269 persons but, in 1990, the black population almost doubled to 408 persons. Additionally, the Mexican American population went from 1,404 in 1980 to 2,958 in 1990 (refer to Table 2.3 in Appendix A). By analyzing this data, one can see that although the population did decrease, it only decreased for those of white descent while the number of minorities living in the Aldine CDP increased drastically. Furthermore, the changing demographics can be illustrated when viewing the campus student composition of Aldine. In the year 1994, for the Aldine school district, blacks constituted 34.6%, Mexican Americans 36.4%, and whites constituted 24.7% respectively.⁵⁷ Therefore, it can be concluded that between the years 1978 and 1994, a span of sixteen years, the black population in Aldine more than doubled, as did the Mexican American population, while the white population decreased by more than half.

According to De León, during the 1980s in Houston, “the Hispanic-origin population increased by 72.7 % rising from approximately 17.6% of the entire population to about 27.6% of city inhabitants.”⁵⁸ The large influx of Mexican Americans into the city was caused by growing demands for manual laborers and persistent poverty at the immigrants’ point of origin.⁵⁹ The

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ De León, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: Mexican Americans in Houston*, 233.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 235.

number of illegal immigrants during this period far outpaced the number who had entered the city during the thirty years after World War II. Along with Mexican American came refugees from Central American and other Latin American countries fleeing economic deprivation and political strife.⁶⁰

Furthermore, in the year 2000, the population composition seems to follow this same pattern. While there were 13,979 persons encompassing the total population, 816 (5.8%) were black, 7,875 (56.3%) were Mexican American, and 4,731 (33.8%) were white.⁶¹ Again, the white population dropped by 2,695 persons, while the black population doubled and the Mexican American population almost tripled. Furthermore, by the year 2002, only 7.74% of the total Aldine student population was white, whereas the black student population was 33.25%, and the Mexican American population was 56.22%. Evidently, there were some drastic demographic changes that occurred within the decade of the 1990s, especially within the Mexican American population. It appears that as the Mexican American population continued to increase, the white population decreased. Whereas the community and school district primarily consisted of whites at the beginning settlement phases, by the turn of the 21st century, it appeared the district became predominately composed of minorities.

This population trend was not only specific to Aldine; in fact, it was a larger trend that occurred in many urban areas. In the city of Houston, the total population has shown an increase of about half a million since 1980; however, the total white population has decreased.

Furthermore, the black population has remained relatively stable throughout the years, while the

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ U.S. Census, *Race and Hispanic or Latino: 2000*. Summary Population and Housing Characteristics. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2002.

Mexican American and Asian populations have increased dramatically (refer to Table 2.4 in Appendix A).

Based on the data obtained from the census, city planning, and school records, housing patterns were visible in Aldine that reflected what was occurring in Houston and other urban cities. One example of a city that was experiencing ethnic minority population increases, while also experiencing white non-Hispanic population losses was Los Angeles, California. Los Angeles remained a predominately white metropolis between 1930 and 1960 despite the increased immigration of Mexican Americans and blacks. However, the predominance of whites ended in the following thirty years.⁶²

Although there were no ethnic enclaves at the beginning of Houston's settlement, increased migration to Houston led to the establishment of different ethnic communities living in particular areas of the city.⁶³ It appears that the reasons for this segregation were both self-made and imposed. For instance, when migration occurred, immigrants may have felt the need and desire to be a part of a community. Often times this led to the development of an ethnic community, one consisting of members of its own race or ethnicity. Familial customs, language, values cause people to stick together with others that share those same characteristics. This self-imposed segregation is a factor in the formation of ethnic enclaves. Thus, by the 1920s, when the Mexican barrios in Houston were established in Second Ward, Magnolia, and the north side, the newer immigrants gravitated towards those enclaves.⁶⁴ However, according to De León, "a common culture bound Mexicans together throughout the city, division of the several neighborhoods caused by distance as well as physical and psychological barriers caused people

⁶² Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, eds., *Ethnic Los Angeles* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 87.

⁶³ De León, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: Mexican Americans in Houston*, 8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

to identify more closely with their immediate neighborhoods....”⁶⁵ Nevertheless, although enclaves, as a whole, may have been marginal to the host society, its insular nature and perceived homogeneity minimized the perception of social inferiority in the new environment.⁶⁶

Not all segregation was self-imposed. There were other reasons that ethnic housing segregation occurred. For example, the practice of realtors not selling homes in particular neighborhoods was common. In this sense, minorities were often limited to living in segregated neighborhoods. One example of racial housing segregation enforced by the real estate industry is found in the National Real Estate Board of Chicago’s 1924 code of ethics which stated “[a] Realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, members of any race or nationality, or any individuals whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood.”⁶⁷ Additionally, mortgage-lending institutions promoted residential segregation through policies of lending to non-whites if the purchase of property was limited to certain areas, while also denying loans when potential purchases were located in white neighborhoods.⁶⁸ Thus, by limiting the residential options for ethnic minorities, residential segregation was both promoted and enforced.

Housing discrimination, therefore, was not limited to places in the South. Cities, like Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia, faced discriminatory practices. Take, for example, civil rights activist Bernard Lafayette’s oral history concerning discrimination in Chicago. According to Lafayette, “[p]eople would say that there are problems, but it’s not the same as in the South,

⁶⁵ Ibid., 25.

⁶⁶ Manuel Mariano Lopez, “Patterns of Residential Segregation: The Mexican American Population in the Urban Southwest, 1970” (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1977), 48.

⁶⁷ William H. Brown, Jr., “Access to Housing: The Role of the Real Estate Industry,” *Economic Geography* 48, no. 1 (January 1972): 68.

⁶⁸ Lopez, “Patterns of Residential Segregation: The Mexican American Population in the Urban Southwest, 1970”, 59.

and it's easier to address the problems in the South, because they're so blatant and obvious, but things in Chicago are sort of beneath the surface, and they are sort of smoothed over..."⁶⁹ When discussing Chicago housing discrimination, Lafayette states:

"We began to see that there were patterns of segregation and discrimination, clear patterns. For example, there were no signs that said 'Blacks Cannot Live Here,' but it was white only and it was obviously white only. There were reasons why it was white, not because blacks chose not to live in those communities. It's because they were systematically denied, primarily by the real estate agents. Ninety percent of the housing that's sold is by the real estate agents. Therefore, the real estate agents have control. And they were doing what we call blockbusting, where they would allow a few blacks to move into a neighborhood that was all white in order to cause the whites to become fearful."⁷⁰

In addressing the issues of housing discrimination, there were efforts to pass legislation forbidding it. According to civil rights activist, Jesse Jackson:

"It was an attempt to get the nation to make housing segregation illegal, to make certain that no group had the right to use racial covenants in housing, and so as to lock people out. I mean, in Chicago in 1966 there were actual operative covenants. This is Chicago, not Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia. *Chicago*. But there was some covenants that said a black person can only live 'in the back of the big house.'"⁷¹

Although the Civil Rights Act of 1866 outlawed housing discrimination based on race, stating that all citizens shall have the same right as white citizens to purchase private property, in practice, housing discrimination continued. The 1968 *Jones v. Alfred H. Mayer* case, however, successfully argued that the refusal to sell property to the plaintiff, solely because he was black, violated the provision of the 1866 federal statute.⁷² Although both the District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri and the Court of Appeals ruled to dismiss the case claiming the 1866

⁶⁹ Henry Hampton, Steve Fayer, and Sarah Flynn, *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990), 299.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 308.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Jones et ux. v. Alfred H. Mayer Co. et al.*, 392 U.S. 409 (1968).

statute applied to state action and not private individuals, the Supreme Court reversed the decision because the statute barred all racial discrimination in the sale or rental of property, regardless if it was by public or private authorities.⁷³ The 1866 statute was not a comprehensive open housing law and only applied to cases of racial discrimination. Standing as a separate entity from the 1866 statute was the Civil Rights Act of 1968 barring housing discrimination on the basis of race, religion, or national origin.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the 1968 Civil Rights Act) was weakly enforced and sped expansion of minority communities.⁷⁵

Racial segregation proved to affect the continued segregation of American schools. Both Aldine and Houston experienced drastic population changes from its establishment up to the present. However, it was during the post-World War II era when they experienced the most growth. The process of suburbanization and immigration proved to be instrumental in both cities' changing demographics. In Aldine, during the years 1980 and 2000, a major demographic shift occurred in which the Mexican American and black populations increased, while the white population decreased substantially. It was during these years that marked the desegregation phase for the Aldine Independent School District. As the process of desegregation unfolded, Aldine I.S.D. went from a white-dominated school district to becoming a minority-dominated school district.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Erica Frankenberg and Gary Orfield, eds., *The Resegregation of Suburban Schools: A Hidden Crisis in American Education* (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2012), 6.

CHAPTER III

ALDINE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE ISSUE OF SEGREGATION

Emerging from a culture of racial segregation, it is no real surprise that when Aldine Independent School District developed it, too, perpetuated a system that allowed for the continuation of discriminatory and unjust practices. Through their accordance of the 1876 Texas Constitution that mandated separate schooling for colored children, Aldine developed a system of inferior schooling based on race. Segregation in Aldine was viewed as a black and white issue, largely due to the small presence of the Mexican American population in the Aldine community at the time of the school district's establishment. It was the black community in Aldine that therefore pushed back against the injustice in the backdrop of a civil rights climate that took center stage of American life in the 1950s and 1960s. The following section examines segregation of Aldine I.S.D. and the road that ultimately led to the mandatory court-ordered integration that took place at Aldine schools.

After the 1884 school law passed that established common school districts in Texas, the Westfield and Higgs school communities in north Houston were combined to form Common School District No. 29.¹ During the first few decades of the turn of the 20th century, the

¹ Harris County Commissioner Court Minutes, Commissioners Court Department, Houston, Texas, Vol. E (June 18, 1884), 104.

struggle to fund schools led to the consolidation and annexation in Harris County. Once a scholastic population exceeded five hundred students, the district became eligible for independent status and residents could then vote to pass a tax that raised money to support the school district's operations.²

In this manner several Houston school districts became incorporated, paving the way for Aldine to do the same. Thus, on May 4, 1935, voters approved the consolidation of Common District No. 29 into the Aldine Independent School District. Superintendent S.F. Fenner and others appeared before the Harris County Department of Education Board stating that an election took place and that the voters of Aldine sought independent status. On May 7, 1935, the County Judge made his order "declaring the results of the election and finding that a majority of the voters in such election had voted in favor of such incorporation."³

A year after Aldine's incorporation, a new high school was constructed for the district and was named S.M.N. Marris Senior High in honor of the state superintendent of schools. Additionally, in 1940, White Oak School became George Washington Carver Senior High, which was the high school designated for black students. It remained at that site until 1954 when it moved into a new building, located on South Victory Street.

The years after Aldine's incorporation were met with several obstacles to the advancement of the school district. For example, in 1948, a fire destroyed part of Marris High while the students were decorating for the homecoming dance. The fire demolished the school gymnasium and a circa 1912 schoolhouse that was previously moved behind the gym.

Additionally, a group of unhappy residents formed a tax-cutting movement in 1954, known as

² Harris County Department of Education, "History of HCDE," <http://www.hcde-texas.org/default.aspx?name=HCDEhistory> (accessed March 13, 2013).

³ Harris County Department of Education Board Meeting Minutes (May 10th, 1935).

the Aldine Taxpayers' Association. The Association protested property re-evaluation that nearly doubled the tax rolls. They proved to be challenging for the school board to cope with, as can be seen in statements made by W.W. Thorne, superintendent of Aldine at the time. The Association continuously attempted to overthrow the school board and over the next four years they were successful in doing so.

Furthermore, on Thanksgiving morning in 1954, another complication hit when Marrs High burned down to the ground. In addition, the Taxpayers' Association gained temporary control of the school board between the years 1956 through 1958. During these years, lawsuits and counter suits proved to be costly for the district as the board fired administrators under contract.

These stresses seemed to have an effect on the entire district. By the year 1959, the turnover rate for professional personnel reached 25 per cent. Additionally, the superintendency changed three times since 1956. By mid-April, the school district was unable to meet its payroll, which resulted in unpaid teachers walking off their jobs. The school district was forced to close the schools for a short period of time while they tried to find ways to finance the schools. Relief came when the Texas Legislature approved a bill authorizing the sale of \$200,000 in five percent time warrants. Furthermore, support was given by the community with the purchase of \$100 bonds to put money back in the schools. This proved to be successful. By 1960, voters endorsed a new building program and a new school board. Aldine I.S.D. soon regained its accreditation by the Southern Association and the Texas Education Agency.⁴

During the 1960s and 1970s, Aldine I.S.D. launched an aggressive building program to construct new facilities in order to accommodate the increasing student enrollment. The school

⁴ "Aldine's Historical Chronology," Aldine Independent School District, Public Information Office (Houston, Texas).

district continuously attempted to pass bond issues in order to construct new facilities and renovate existing buildings. It was during these bond elections that a strong visible sense of discontent within the black community became evident.

Since its existence, Aldine I.S.D. developed segregated schools. According to the Texas Constitution of 1876, separate schools were to be provided for white and colored children. By 1964, Aldine I.S.D. consisted of five schools for black students: George Washington Carver High, Charles R. Drew Junior High, A.B. Anderson Elementary, McLeod Bethune Elementary, and Bordersville Elementary. Regardless of their residence, black students were required to attend a school for black children. On the other hand, there existed eight schools designated for white students by 1964, which included Aldine Senior High School, Hambrick Junior High, Francis Elementary, Carroll Elementary, Mendel Elementary, Oleson Elementary, Raymond Grace Elementary, and Orange Elementary.

Although facilities were supposed to be equal for black children, they were not. With the fast-paced growth of Aldine I.S.D., the school district began to plan the expansion of school facilities. While the district made it a priority to acquire funds to support its growth, that same priority was not applied to the black community as can be seen in the district's expansion plans.

In 1961, an article in the *Houston Chronicle* announced the upcoming opening of three new Aldine schools. The disparity between the funds provided for each school proves that black and white schools were unequal. Whereas the new Hambrick Junior High would cost \$800,000 and new Oleson Elementary would cost \$450,000, the new Bordersville Elementary for blacks would cost \$125,000. Although the article places the new black school in a somewhat positive light, claiming that it would be "the first all-electric school building in the Aldine district," it

negated the fact that it cost \$325,000 less than the school for white students.⁵ Furthermore, since blacks accounted for a quarter of the district's total students, there was no valid reason for the discrepancies in funding. Since white schools considerably outnumbered black schools, the amount of students enrolled at both the Oleson Elementary and Bordersville Elementary should have been comparable. According to the *Chronicle* article, "Aldine operates 14 schools for 10,887 students, including 3000 Negro students in one junior-senior high school and three elementary schools."⁶

In addition, W.W. Thorne stated that he predicted "tremendously overcrowded conditions in the Negro schools next fall, with the danger of double sessions,'... 'The white schools will be at capacity next year,' he added."⁷ Thus, it can be deduced that black schools were at capacity and would experience further overcrowding if the vote for bonds failed to pass. The white schools, on the other hand, were not yet at capacity but would be if no new schools were to be built.

Furthermore, in 1961, Carver High School served as both a junior and senior high. There was no junior high school for blacks, just the single high school that operated as a junior high as well, with three black elementary schools. Therefore, one of biggest priorities for the black community in Aldine was to obtain more quality facilities for the black student population.

Aldine I.S.D. also accepted black high school students from other districts that did not offer high schools for black students. Any school district that did not offer schools for their black students were required to transfer them to a neighboring district with black schools. For

⁵ "Aldine District Gets Three New Schools," *Houston Chronicle*, May 31, 1961.

⁶ "Aldine Votes Down School Bonds, Negroes may go on Double Shift," *Houston Chronicle*, December 1961.

⁷ *Ibid.*

example, Humble I.S.D., a school district located east of Aldine, provided Aldine I.S.D. with a facility located in Humble and funds for those black students residing in the Humble district.⁸

The growing numbers of black student transfers became too much of a burden for Aldine. In 1961, Aldine began imposing transfer fees to those districts who sent their black students to Aldine schools. As the *Chronicle* describes, “Spring and Klein school districts will have to pay about \$10,000 in tuition fees next September if they transfer as many high school students to Aldine as they did last September...this year Spring and Klein transferred a total of 63 to Aldine.”⁹ Since the conditions of the black Aldine schools were already at capacity, accepting transfers from other districts contributed to the overcrowding at those black schools.

The differential treatment of black students was not only limited to the separate facilities. Such issues as registration for school shows evidence that blacks were seen as afterthoughts. An announcement in the *Chronicle*, for example, promoting registration demonstrates the disparities between white and black students in the district. According to a May 17, 1961 article, white first graders at Aldine were beginning registration at five different schools starting that following Thursday, whereas “[r]egistration of Negro first-graders will be made later.”¹⁰

Black students were not the only ones to be discriminated against, the same rule applied to black professionals who sought out jobs at the Aldine district. Black teachers, administration, and staff were only assigned to work at black schools. In two separate *Chronicle* articles, Aldine promoted the addition of new teachers to Aldine schools. Of fifty-eight new teachers assigned to work at Aldine schools in 1961, only seven were black. Furthermore, of the seven, four were assigned to Carver and three were assigned to Bordersville Elementary, all black

⁸ Durward Harvey Blackmon, “An Educational Survey of a Portion of North Harris County, Texas” (Master’s thesis, University of Texas, 1939), 28.

⁹ “Transfers to Aldine Face Tuition Fees,” *Houston Chronicle*, May 4, 1961.

¹⁰ “First-Graders in Aldine to be Registered,” *Houston Chronicle*, May 17, 1961.

schools.¹¹ A year later in 1962, another twenty-seven new teachers were assigned to work at Aldine. Of those twenty-seven, five were black and were, once again, assigned to work at black schools.¹²

The segregation that was prevalent in the South can be further demonstrated when looking at the colleges that these black teachers graduated from. All of the new black teachers publicly announced for the Aldine district in 1961 and 1962 graduated from historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Furthermore, a 1965 *Chronicle* article announced that twenty-two out of thirty-two Aldine student teachers were working in secondary schools, while also stating that those that were student teaching at Carver High and Drew Junior High, all-black schools, were attending Prairie View A&M, an HBCU.¹³ Thus, it is evident that discriminatory practices were not only limited to black students, but also applied to black faculty, administration, and staff.¹⁴

While the evidence of discriminatory practices against the black community at Aldine is overwhelming, the Mexican American experience at Aldine schools is almost unknown. The earliest data showing the Mexican American presence at Aldine was not until 1978, approximately seventeen years after the black community at Aldine started to visibly fight for educational equality in the district. By noting that the Mexican American student population of Aldine in 1978 was only 13%, it can be assumed that seventeen years prior, the number was

¹¹ "Aldine School District Assigns 58 Teachers," *Houston Chronicle*, August 23, 1961.

¹² "Aldine School District Assigns 27 Teachers to Northwest," *Houston Chronicle*, September 19, 1962.

¹³ "32 Student Teachers in Aldine Schools," *Houston Chronicle*, March 24, 1965.

¹⁴ Houston's higher education has evidence that Mexican Americans were better treated than blacks. For example, in the 1950s the University of Houston (UH) began admitting Mexican Americans and graduated its first Mexican American student in 1960. It was not until 1963, the year that UH became a public institution, that black students were admitted into the university. See Michael A. Olivas, "Brown and the Desegregative Ideal: Higher Education, Location, and Racial College Identity," *Cornell Law Review* 90, no. 2 (January 2005): 391-417.

significantly smaller, thus contributing to the invisible status of the Mexican American student body.

There is evidence that the Mexican American community received better treatment in Aldine schools than the black community. Although they may not have been treated as equal to whites, Mexican Americans appeared to not have been segregated into separate schools. One piece of evidence points back to the assignment of black faculty to only black schools. While this was the case for black teachers, the same did not apply to Mexican American teachers. Take, for example, a teacher by the name of Elizabeth Garcia who, according to the *Chronicle*, began teaching in the fall of 1961 at Carroll Elementary, a white school.¹⁵ While black teachers were assigned to black schools, it appeared as though at least some Mexican American teachers could teach at the white schools.

Opportunities in education and employment were also dependent on socioeconomic status and class. While most Mexican Americans composed the lowest socioeconomic class, there were others who made up part of the middle class. After the Texas Revolution and Mexican-American War, most Tejano land grantees lost their property, however, others were able to retain land or portions of it.¹⁶ Moreover, by the 1920s, some Mexican Americans were employed in white-collar jobs, such as in the city or county government, public schools, doctors, businessmen, and lawyers.¹⁷ During the 1960s, there emerged a new middle class of Mexican Americans who benefited from Great Society initiatives and advances stemming from the

¹⁵ "Aldine School District Assigns 58 Teachers," *Houston Chronicle*, August 23, 1961.

¹⁶ De León, *Mexican Americans in Texas: A Brief History*, 49.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

Chicano Movement. These opportunities led to further incorporation of upwardly mobile Mexican Americans into the corporate and business sector.¹⁸

It is no surprise that the black community began to fight back against the injustices endured since the initial establishment of public schools in Houston. The first visible instance of pushback from the black community in Aldine I.S.D. came during the bond elections for new Aldine schools. During the bond elections, the vote for bonds continued to get voted down. One of the main issues during the bond elections was the issue of the number of white schools and black schools.

While superintendent W.W. Thorne stressed that new schools needed to be built, the emphasis was on the development of white schools. Therefore, the opponents of the bond issue “contended Aldine has adequate white schools, and told Judge Stovall that they had petitioned the board to call a \$1 million bond election for a new Negro junior high school.”¹⁹ The school board thus made revisions to the school bond proposal and continue having elections until the bonds were passed. While the bond issue was voted down in September of 1961, the new bond proposals voted on in December of that year was a compromise between supporters and opponents of the \$7.5 million bond issue that was defeated Nov. 30, 659 to 390.²⁰ According to the *Chronicle*, the new \$1,880,000 bond issue “would finance construction of a new Negro junior high in the Carver area, an auditorium at Aldine Junior High, and provide funds for stadium improvements, remodeling of Carver and Aldine elementary schools, and the purchase of future school sites.”²¹ However, the school bonds were voted down once again.

¹⁸ Ibid., 154.

¹⁹ “Judge Rules in Favor of Aldine Bond Vote,” *Houston Chronicle*, September 7, 1961.

²⁰ “School Board Election at Aldine Set,” *Houston Chronicle*, November 16, 1961.

²¹ Ibid.

A compromise was finally reached and a revised bond proposal was approved by an election held on February 17th, 1962. The first construction that was authorized with the \$3,895,000 bond was a \$991,809 black junior high school, which was the first junior high for blacks in Aldine I.S.D. With the new construction, students from the Carver Junior-Senior High School would transfer to the new junior high school.²²

Based on the evidence concerning the bond issues of Aldine I.S.D., it is clear that one of the major issues with the bond elections was that black students in the district were not having their needs met. By rejecting the bond issues that focused on white school expenditures, the black community and their supporters were demanding that they receive fair representation in the district. It was during these years that the district began a push for school construction and improvements that the black community became visible in their dissatisfaction of their conditions at the school district.

The pushback of the black community further escalated when George Sampson, an Aldine father, filed a federal court suit in 1964 demanding complete integration of the school district. Sampson, a laborer, was born in 1899 in Groveton, Texas, and moved to Houston later in life as an adult. He resided in Acres Homes, the predominately black community zoned to the Aldine district. When he attempted to enroll his two sons, Vernon and Chesley Sampson, into Aldine High School, he was denied and told to enroll his sons at Carver High, the all-black high school for the district, prompting him to sue the district on the grounds that they were operating an illegal dual school system.²³

²² "Ground Broken for Negro Junior High," *Houston Chronicle*, April 4, 1962.

²³ Erika Sampson, "George Franklin Sampson: The Effect of One Man," *Texas Historian* 50, no. 3, (March 1990).

The plaintiffs' original petition charged that the:

“continued operation of a bi-racial school system in the Aldine Independent School District, maintenance of dual zone lines, the assignment of students and personnel, the operation of school budgets and school activities on the basis of race violate rights of the Plaintiffs and the class they represent, secured to them by the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.”²⁴

Additionally, the suit asked for a complete plan of desegregation of all grades, which would be implemented for the 1964-1965 school year. According to the *Chronicle*, Aldine I.S.D. contended “two Negro teenagers seeking to enter all-white Aldine High School do not represent Negroes as a class.”²⁵ The then-district's attorney Joe Reynolds declared that the Sampson teenagers were “no more than mere volunteers seeking to judicially intervene for the benefit of others. The majority of the class (which the teen-agers seek to represent) do not wish to be forced to go to a white school.”²⁶ Further, the district charged “[t]he Sampsons ‘should know’ no other Negroes want to attend white Aldine schools, but were there others, they would not be numerous and ought to be made parties to the suit.”²⁷ According to the district, “it did not practice illegal discrimination or fail to provide all students the best education possible in its segregated schools.”²⁸

Nonetheless, Aldine I.S.D. was ordered to integrate on March 23, 1965. In the order, Aldine was to immediately integrate the elementary schools, consisting of grades one through six. Furthermore, the order stipulated that no person should be denied attendance to the elementary schools based on race or color. Also, effective September 1, 1966, the junior high

²⁴ *Sampson, et al. v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.*, “Plaintiffs’ Original Petition,” 64-H-273 (S.D. Tex. 1964), 4.

²⁵ “Aldine District Answers Integration Suit Plea,” *Houston Chronicle*, June 27, 1964.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

schools of the district consisting of grades seven through nine be desegregated. While the senior high schools, consisting of grades ten through twelve, of the district were required to be desegregated by September 1, 1967. Additionally, the dual-school boundaries and area boundaries were to be eliminated in accordance with the time of desegregation for the respective school.²⁹ This was the first federal court order calling for complete integration of a Harris County school district.³⁰ Previously, the Houston Independent School District was ordered to desegregate in 1960 but was doing so on a grade-a-year plan.³¹

At the time the desegregation suit took place, one-fourth of the district's 14,000 students were black, not including the black students from other northern Harris county districts that had no black schools. After Aldine was ordered to integrate, Aldine I.S.D. still attempted to keep the status quo intact. Indeed, superintendent W.W. Thorne stated that only a small percentage of Aldine students would be affected by the integration order. Stating that "[t]he geographic distribution of the Negro and white population in the district will still prevent a great deal of racial mixing [since] almost all Negroes and whites live across the district from each other."³² Furthermore, "[w]e are not going to require any Negro students to attend a predominately white school or any white students to attend a predominately Negro school," Thorne stated.³³ Thus, with an estimated seventy black students immediately affected, Aldine schools would experience little change in its schools racial compositions.³⁴

²⁹ *Sampson, et al. v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.*, "Order of Integration," 64-H-273, (S.D. Tex. 1965).

³⁰ "Aldine Told to Integrate All Grades by Sept. 1, '67," *Houston Chronicle*, March 24, 1965.

³¹ E. Bun Lee, Louis A. Browne, and James W. Ward, *Local Newspapers and the Houston Public School Desegregation, 1954-1984* (n.p.:n.p., 2010), 7.

³² "Aldine Integration Will Affect Few," *Houston Chronicle*, March 25, 1965.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Thorne's reaction to the order of integration reflected the passiveness Aldine I.S.D. took in regards to desegregation. Although the case required them to desegregate their schools, they did not comply. Thus, on February 4, 1976, the United States filed a complaint in intervention and a motion for leave to intervene as a plaintiff against Aldine I.S.D. "alleging that the defendants not only had failed to disestablish the racially dual school system, but also had pursued policies and practices with the purpose and effect of maintaining a separate set of schools serving only black students."³⁵

The evidence that Aldine I.S.D. was still operating a dual-race school system was overwhelming. The court found that the Acres Homes schools that operated as black schools prior to 1965 never desegregated. Approximately sixty-one per cent of Aldine's black students still attended the black schools in Acres Homes. Furthermore, while sixteen per cent of Aldine's faculty and staff were black, forty-two per cent were assigned to the black Acres Homes schools.

Additionally, the attendance zones that were used since 1965 resulted in students not attending schools that were closest to their home. There were no natural barriers or physical hazards that the Acres Homes schools exhibited. Instead, the attendance boundaries were used for the continued purpose of segregation.

It was also found that race was a factor in the selection of school sites for school construction. Schools were added around the Acres Homes community to ensure that whites would not be added to the enrollments of the Acres Homes schools. Additionally, land that was available for school construction was not chosen because it would cause racial mixing. Additionally, portable or temporary facilities were used at white schools, while there were unused facilities that could have been used at the black schools. The district court found that

³⁵ *Sampson, et al., and United States of America v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.*, "Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law," 64-H-273, (S.D. Tex. 1977).

Aldine purposely reinforced segregation through the construction of schools and the location of the temporary buildings.³⁶

Aldine I.S.D. also altered the grade structures of schools in order to prevent the assignment of white students into the Acres Homes schools. For example, from 1972-75 Eisenhower operated as a junior-senior high school and from 1975-76 Hoffman Middle School housed part of the elementary enrollment in the Inwood-Acres Homes area.³⁷ The reason for these manipulations was found to be none other than to prevent the enrollment of white students into black schools. Furthermore, the students of Anderson and Bethune were the sole students entering the Drew and Carver schools. All other schools were not directly fed into the corresponding schools, but were based on attendance zones. In this sense, they were purposely restricting black students to the historically black schools.

Furthermore, Aldine implemented a free transfer policy since 1965, meaning that students could be granted a transfer if space was available. Aldine did not provide transportation to students. This transfer policy was developed for white students zoned to attend black schools to transfer to the predominately white schools of the district. The assignment of faculty and staff was also found to be out of compliance with the order of integration. Whereas, white teachers new to the district were assigned to Acres Homes schools, established black teachers were transferred to predominately white schools on an involuntary basis. The same did not apply to established white teachers. The court found that this practice led to less-experienced teachers being assigned to the Acres Homes schools, placing students in those schools at a disadvantage.

Lastly, the small size of Drew Junior High and Carver High was found to have no justification and found to negatively influence the students who attended those schools. Due to

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

its small size, both the availability of courses and extracurricular activities were limited. In conclusion of the court's findings, the court maintained that "[s]ince 1965 the defendants have failed to disestablish their racially dual school systems, and have pursued policies and practices with the purpose and effect of maintaining a separate set of schools serving only black students."³⁸ Following the findings, the court ordered that the district immediately develop a plan in order to discontinue the dual-school system and to rid itself of the vestiges caused by the segregated school system.

The case of Aldine I.S.D. failing to halt segregation in its schools is not unique. Most districts in the South failed to comply with desegregation. Although desegregation was to follow the *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* case of 1954, little integration was implemented in the South in the years that followed. A decade after the *Brown* decision, the *New York Times* reported that "98.9 per cent of the 2,901,671 Negro students in eleven Southern states still attend all-Negro schools."³⁹ In implementing the *Brown* decision, the Supreme Court announced in 1955, what became known as *Brown II*, that desegregation of the schools should be made "with all deliberate speed."⁴⁰ This vagueness in the timetable for desegregation is what allowed school districts to drag their feet at accomplishing desegregation.

According to Raymond Wolters, in order to understand the effects of the *Brown* case, one must have an understanding of the factors constructing society at the time. During the 1950s, elementary students were assigned to neighborhood schools. Thus, whatever school was nearest to your home would be the school your children attended. Since race often played a part in

³⁸ *Sampson, et al., and United States of America v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.*, "Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law," 64-H-273, (S.D. Tex. 1977).

³⁹ Raymond Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 44.

⁴⁰ James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*, 84.

residential patterns, little racial mixing would be possible and would not satisfy desegregation requirements if the schools were to “reflect the racial proportions of the larger region or state.”⁴¹

Additionally, Wolters argues that the United States government during the 1950s was so involved in the space race against the Soviets that school desegregation took a backseat in the national agenda.⁴² When the Soviets launched the first satellite into space, *Sputnik*, American classrooms reflected the push for a more competitive spirit, thus continuing grouping students based on their academic abilities. Most agreed at the time that the grouping of students based on academic ability would work against desegregation since many black students were below grade level, which was largely due to segregation resulting in inadequate educational resources.⁴³

Many Southern states resisted the *Brown* case. There were states that asserted that, in the absence of an amendment to the Constitution, states retained the authority to operate racially segregated schools if those schools were substantially equal.⁴⁴ In the case of Texas, the issue of desegregation received mixed reaction.

According to Robyn Ladino’s study of the Mansfield desegregation crisis, Texas’ large size, historical background, and population diversity resulted in it becoming a “sectioned state with regard to the southern resistance movement.”⁴⁵ Although the total black population of Texas was relatively small, comprising only thirteen per cent of the state’s population in the early 1950s, the majority of Texas blacks lived in the northeast and east central sections of the

⁴¹ Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 44.

⁴² The United States involvement in the Cold War further escalated tensions globally and on the home front, causing other issues to take priority over school desegregation.

⁴³ Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 45-46.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴⁵ Robyn D. Ladino, *Desegregating Texas Schools: Eisenhower, Shivers, and the Crisis at Mansfield High* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 34.

state.⁴⁶ Although different sections of Texas would prove to integrate more easily, the east and central regions where the majority of the state's blacks were located were largely against integration since their customs largely reflected Southern values.⁴⁷

When the news of the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision arrived, Texas found itself in opposition. Texas Governor Allan Shivers with the support of Attorney General John Ben Shepperd opposed school desegregation as a violation of states' rights. When asked to participate in arguments against *Brown II*, Shepperd readily agreed. In clarifying the tradition of segregation in Texas, Shepperd made an analogy between segregation and the state to that of a parent and a child. In his mind, it was a personal issue. Hence, it was a state issue that should be dealt within the state without federal interference.⁴⁸ The issue of states' rights, therefore, was a leading factor in promoting resistance toward federal intervention in school integration.

While many school districts from Texas voluntarily desegregated, particularly in the western and southern regions where the population of blacks was minimal, others in the eastern portion of the state strongly resisted. Thus, when the Federal District Court ordered the integration of Mansfield Independent School District located near Fort Worth in 1956, the first order of integration for the state of Texas, a crisis was bound to ensue.

As a result of the integration order, white residents gathered outside Mansfield High School in resistance, believing it was their duty to keep the high school segregated, thus declaring their commitment to prevent the black children from enrolling.⁴⁹ Fearing that violence might transpire, Governor Shivers sent the Texas Rangers to maintain the peace. Although the Texas Rangers were to ensure peace, they were not sent to offer aid or escort the black students

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 96.

to enroll in the white schools.⁵⁰ Furthermore, Shivers permitted the Mansfield School Board to transfer out any student that may incite violence, for example, the black students that were attempting to enroll. Thus, the Governor's actions ensured that segregation remained in place at Mansfield High, placing states' rights over federal authority.⁵¹ Unlike the Little Rock crisis a year later, the Eisenhower administration did nothing to rectify the situation at Mansfield High.

Critical to the issue of civil rights and desegregation was timing. During the Mansfield case, President Eisenhower was campaigning for re-election. His decision to not intervene in the Texas case stemmed from his intention to carry Texas in the election.⁵² However, the same month as the Mansfield case, Eisenhower surprised his critics when he nominated Catholic Democrat and justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court, William J. Brennan, Jr. to the Supreme Court. His move to the left foreshadowed his actions a year later when the Little Rock crisis surfaced.⁵³

After the 1964 Civil Rights Act, most Southern states came to accept desegregation because "by then they considered desegregation inevitable and also because they wanted federal money- not just for education but also for research and development, for military bases and industrial contracts."⁵⁴ Desegregation as outlined by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not mean integration. Instead, desegregation meant that no student should be denied to attend a school on the basis of race. According to Wolters, this "freedom of choice" led to "only limited

⁵⁰ Ibid., 103.

⁵¹ Ibid., 103-104.

⁵² David A. Nichols, *A Matter of Justice: Eisenhower and the Beginning of the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 136.

⁵³ Ibid., 137. During World War II, Eisenhower's contact with black soldiers profoundly changed his perception of blacks and discrimination. From that point onwards, his actions were in favor of granting rights towards black American men serving in the army, specifically their right to enlist for combat duty. See David A. Nichols, *A Matter of Justice: Eisenhower and the Beginning of the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 8-13.

⁵⁴ Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 124.

integration, and in most instances the mixing occurred only if Negro pupils transferred to white schools.”⁵⁵

However, change occurred in 1968 with the *Green v. New Kent County* decision in which the Supreme Court “changed the constitutional mandate from a prohibition of segregation to a requirement that authorities must achieve a substantial amount of racial mixing.”⁵⁶ The *Green* case proved to be a turning point in the history of school desegregation. No longer could school districts turn a blind eye to continued segregation, they were now required to legally initiate integration.

Due to the ambiguous nature of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case, Aldine I.S.D. continued practicing school segregation. Aldine’s own desegregation case, *Sampson v. Aldine I.S.D.* of 1965, that mandated the integration of Aldine schools, did not require Aldine to fulfill true integration. Instead, like the *Brown* case Aldine was required to desegregate the schools and rid itself of its dual boundaries based on race. *Green v. New Kent County* (1968), therefore, served as the catalyst requiring Aldine to take the necessary steps to reach integration and rid itself of the vestiges of past discrimination.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 125.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 136.

CHAPTER IV

THE LONG ROAD TO ACHIEVING “INTEGRATION” FOR THE ALDINE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

After the *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1954, the national, state, and local governments confronted what it meant to achieve desegregation. The ambiguous time frame given to accomplish desegregation through *Brown II* allowed state and local governments to drag their feet on the issue. In Texas, like many southern states, most school districts continued to be segregated. Although the process of achieving integration for each school district varied, many were interconnected through the courts. In Aldine, the process of achieving integration proved to be a long one. The school district was ordered to fully desegregate by 1967; however, it was not until 2002 that Aldine gained unitary status.¹

Following *Brown*, several southern school districts turned to the “freedom of choice” school policy to facilitate desegregation.² These school districts proposed that since the students were given the freedom to select which school they chose to enroll in, they were neither

¹ The United States Supreme Court’s standard for determining whether a school district has achieved unitary status is: (1) whether the school district fully and satisfactorily complied with the court’s desegregation orders for a reasonable period of time, (2) whether the school district eliminated the vestiges of past de jure discrimination to the extent practicable, and (3) whether the school district demonstrated a good faith commitment to the court’s order and to the provisions of the law and the Constitution which were the reasons for judicial intervention in the first instance (*Sampson, et al. and the United States of America v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.* (S.D. Tex., 2002), “Agreed Order of Unitary Status and Dismissal,” 1).

² Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*, 100.

discriminating nor purposely segregating students based on race. In essence, they argued that freedom of choice would facilitate the same amount of integration as neighborhood schools achieved in the North, since racial residential patterns often brought little integration in northern schools. Using the language from *Brown* and the 1964 Civil Rights Act, freedom of choice schools were compliant with the law of the land, therefore, federal officials were given no choice but to accept them.³ They did, however, investigate southern school districts to ensure that the students were indeed given free choice. During the summer of 1967, approximately 250 southern districts were investigated, with officials finding abuses to the free-choice school policy.⁴

Those that opposed the exercise believed that, in practice, no white children would apply to black schools and those black parents interested in sending their children to white schools had to tackle the transfer process individually and faced a range of bureaucratic obstacles.⁵ Not only were black parents faced with the laborious task of transferring their children to white schools, they were often met with opposition from the white community. The example of the Carter family from Drew, Mississippi illustrates the reality that black families faced when exercising their right to attend white schools. Between 1965 and 1970, seven of the Carter children were enrolled in the previously been all-white schools. During this time, a segregationist landlord evicted the Carter family from their house, the Carter children were isolated in their school (having been the only black students attending), and their classmates often taunted them.⁶

Although the choice to send their children was indeed made of their own free will, the opposition

³ Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 125.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*, 100.

⁶ Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 125.

they faced halted many black children from attending the white schools. Therefore, their choice was not truly free, as several factors facilitated their reluctance to attend white schools.

Even in places where the choice was truly free, most blacks chose to continue attending predominately black schools. In one example, two black sisters in Waycross, Georgia chose different paths. While Christine Sarvis chose to attend a white school, her sister Bernadette remained at a black school because she preferred to stay where her friends were. Richard Mock, a teenager in rural Alabama, opposed his mother's decision to send him to a white school. In response, he ran away to Los Angeles where he washed pots and pans.⁷

The opposition to the freedom of choice school policy became pronounced in the mid-1960s. There began a shift in the school desegregation process as a new generation of government bureaucrats identified freedom of choice as another form of massive resistance, propelling the change in civil rights policy towards a different direction, one from "Freedom Now" to "Mandatory Integration."⁸ The change occurred as younger people were hired by the federal Office of Education and replaced the older educators who had spent most of their careers in state and local school systems.⁹ While the older educators were heavily influenced by the former acceptance to dual schools, the environment of the Civil Rights Movement guided these newer bureaucrats.

It was during these years that the government, with full enforcement from all three branches, began tackling desegregation in a force unparalleled in previous periods.¹⁰ When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, Title VI enabled "federal officials to cut off aid from

⁷ Ibid., 126.

⁸ Ibid., 130.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*, 137.

school districts that practiced *de jure* segregation.”¹¹ However, the bill contained a clause that would prevent mandatory assignment of students in order to rectify racial imbalances in the schools. In this sense, the act “advanced a color-blind vision of the good society.”¹² Just like *Brown*, the act interpreted desegregation to mean the opening of doors regardless of race, without regard to eliminating the effects of prior segregation.

Nevertheless, the Office of Education and the Department of Justice were authorized to enforce desegregation. Critical to this time was the appointment of Harold Howe II as the U.S. Commissioner of Education who “by the 1960s had developed the conviction that integrated public schools were the answer to the nation’s racial problems.”¹³ The grandson of Samuel Chapman Armstrong, founder of the Hampton Institute for Negroes in 1868, he and his staff disagreed with the original understanding of *Brown* and the Civil Rights Act of 1964; instead, they regarded integration as the best method to promote black advancement.¹⁴

Thus, in their 1966 enforcement guidelines they “maintained that freedom of choice did not satisfy the requirements of the law unless it achieved substantially proportional mixing.”¹⁵ The 1966 guidelines were met with opposition and challenged in the courts. The Fourth Circuit, which included several southern states along the Atlantic seaboard, contended that “freedom of choice satisfied the requirements of *Brown* and the Civil Rights Act. Unless there was evidence of some sort of intimidation, there was no need for school authorities to require that students achieve ‘a greater intermixture of the races.’”¹⁶ On the other hand, according to Wolters, the Fifth Circuit which oversaw cases from the Deep South, declared “desegregation plans were to

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 130.

¹⁴ Ibid., 131.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 135.

be judged according to the amount of racial mixing actually attained.”¹⁷ Further, the Fifth Circuit “held that the Constitution and the Civil Rights Act required affirmative racial policies to achieve racially balanced student enrollments.”¹⁸

The conflict between the Fourth and Fifth Circuits was settled when, in the 1968 case *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, the Supreme Court ruled that mandatory integration was required. Situated in rural Virginia, New Kent County implemented little integration through the freedom of choice school policy. Of its 736 black high school students in the district, only 115 chose to attend the white high school, while none of the 519 white students chose to attend the black schools.¹⁹ In his opinion, Justice Brennan declared that school officials had “an ‘affirmative duty’ to desegregate so that the county would operate a ‘unitary system in which racial discrimination would be eliminated root and branch.’”²⁰ However, *Green* went beyond student integration. It also affected the hiring and assignment of faculty and staff as well as the quality of facilities. This monumental decision proved to be a turning point in the history of school desegregation. No longer would “free choice” be enough, school districts were now required to maintain racial balance in their schools.

In 1971, another case stimulated the road to integration. In *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg*, the Supreme Court ruled that busing students as a method to promote integration was constitutional. The case was based on the desegregation case for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District in North Carolina. The school district served approximately 84,000 students, with 29 per cent of those students being black. Because the black student population was

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education, A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*, 145.

²⁰ Ibid., 146.

dispersed among various parts of Charlotte, Judge McMillan “imposed a busing program that aimed to achieve an equal dispersion of blacks and whites.”²¹ The case was appealed and brought before the Supreme Court which affirmed Judge McMillan’s ruling that allowed busing as a means for integration. Furthermore, the Supreme Court ruled that if school districts had a history of *de jure* segregation, they were now compelled to take the necessary steps in order to rectify the ramifications and promote racial mixing.²² Using the *Green* case as its point of reference, the Supreme Court once again contended that it was not enough to simply open the doors to enrollment. Even if enrollment was a choice, the prior system of segregation created an atmosphere that inhibited true integration. Instead, forces, such as white opposition, would continue to segregate the races.

Influenced by these court cases and other changes in the law, Texas education was soon affected. For example in *United States of America v. State of Texas, et al.* (1971) the state of Texas was ordered to: “evaluate all of their activities and practices relating to the desegregation of public elementary and secondary education...file a plan stating specific actions which they would take pursuant to their affirmative obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.”²³ Because of the failure to integrate the state’s public schools, the state was now held accountable to meet their legal requirements. Citing the *Green* and *Swann* cases, the court ordered that the state of Texas take affirmative steps to integrate the schools. Not only were schools to be fully integrated, but they were also required to rid themselves of the vestiges of segregation.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

²² *Ibid.*, 140-141.

²³ *United States of America v. State of Texas, et al.*, 5281 (E.D. Tex., 1970).

Hence in the desegregation case for Aldine I.S.D., these cases proved to be highly influential. Based on the 1965 order of integration, Aldine was not required to take affirmative actions to integrate their schools so long as they achieved a racial percentage that was proportionate to the population of the district. Influenced by *Brown*, the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Aldine's 1965 order of integration simply called for the elimination of the dual school boundaries and the desegregation of the schools, stating that no person shall be denied attendance to the schools because of race or color.²⁴ Therefore, Aldine was not required to actively pursue steps to integrate the school. By opening the doors to all students and eliminating dual zones, Aldine was fulfilling the requirement. However, since Aldine had a history of *de jure* segregation, the *Swann* case required it to find ways to promote racial mixing.

Between 1965 through 1977, the United States Department of Justice monitored the desegregation process for Aldine. In 1973, the Department notified the district that certain geographic areas were populated by blacks and because Aldine was operating under the neighborhood school policy certain schools could be identified as black schools. Aldine claimed the reason for this condition was directly linked to the "planned development of black communities by entrepreneurs of the 1890's."²⁵

Between 1973 through 1977, the Justice Department continued to propose that Aldine abandon their neighborhood school policy or modify it in favor of total integration of each school. Yet, according to Jonathan C. Hantke, "[i]t was the belief of the Board of Trustees that the advances made in the decade following the 1965 order were directly attributable to the

²⁴ *Sampson v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.* (S.D. Tex., 1965).

²⁵ Jonathan C. Hantke to Members of the Board of Trustees, "Memorandum: Re: The Effect of Desegregation Orders on the Attendance Zones in Aldine Independent School District," January 21, 1992.

practice of establishing neighborhood schools.”²⁶ Although continually recommended to change their policies by the Justice Department, Aldine felt that their academic achievements since 1965 were due to its neighborhood school concept. Citing their unparalleled academic accomplishments (such as the Ellen B. Lane Center for Exceptional Children which was recognized nationally for educating handicapped children and the comprehensive education program which received regional and state-wide recognition), Aldine continued to use the neighborhood school policy despite the DOJ’s recommendations against it.

Consequently, in 1977, the United States intervened in Aldine’s desegregation case, using both the *Green* and *Swann* cases to justify the requirement to find alternate methods in order to fulfill complete integration. As a result, Aldine I.S.D. submitted several proposals for integration. The proposals submitted were designed to reject mandatory busing from one neighborhood to another. One plan proposed racially balanced assignment of teachers, transfers from majority to minority schools, further lowering the student-teacher ratios and increasing the expenditure to predominately black schools, and the construction of more schools which would serve both black and white students. Another plan proposed that, in addition to everything in the previous proposal, a magnet senior high school that should replace the existing black high school. With additional proposals being shut down, the one proposal that was finally approved “called for transporting children in non-contiguous attendance zones to schools out of their neighborhoods.”²⁷ In addition, the Court approved the construction of an elementary school and directed Aldine to redraw student attendance zones.²⁸ The Court required Aldine to seek the approval of the Justice Department for any proposed changes in attendance zones, transportation,

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

or school construction which might lead to a change in student assignments throughout the integration process.²⁹

Thus, mandatory busing became the primary method of integrating the elementary students at Aldine. Nevertheless, the District remained in opposition to the policy. It felt that although it would adequately integrate the schools, it would place a “disproportionate burden on the black students in the system.”³⁰ It was Aldine’s belief that black students would benefit more from attending a school in their own community than being forced to attend a school elsewhere. Although the school district was not in favor of the method, it was unable to be granted an alternative. In the District’s eyes, the best option for educating all students at Aldine was through the neighborhood schools. This method was reintroduced by the school district beginning in the early 1990s. No longer feeling that mandatory busing should be required, they offered up a new proposition seeking to implement a magnet school program.

Beginning in 1994, Aldine began discussing the magnet program with the Department of Justice (DOJ). In correspondence between the district and the Civil Rights Division of the DOJ, the district expressed its effort to amend the existing 1978 desegregation plan in favor for the magnet school program.³¹ While the District assured that the amended plan for desegregation would fulfill the desegregation requirements, the DOJ had reservations. After one of the visits touring the school district, the DOJ expressed concerns that the Bethune and Carver schools were

²⁹ The earliest correspondence between representatives of Aldine I.S.D. and the Department of Justice that was made available is from the early 1990s. We can safely assume based on the correspondence that Aldine used mandatory busing in order to integrate Aldine schools from 1977-1995.

³⁰ *Sampson, et al. and United States of America v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.*, “Consent Order” (S.D. Tex.: 1977), 2.

³¹ The agreed desegregation plan of 1977 was modified through Court approval in 1978.

still racially identifiable. In her correspondence letter addressed to Mr. Hantke, Aldine's then attorney, she writes that:

“...we are concerned that the facilities at Bethune and Carver remain racially identifiable. For example, Carver's facilities are in poor physical condition; the desks, lockers, and supplies seem to be substandard. It does not appear that any work has been done at these schools in recent times. When compared to high schools like Eisenhower, the contrast is stark. If Carver and Bethune are to become magnet schools capable of attracting students from across the district, work must be done to effectively remove any vestiges of the dual system.”³²

In response, Jonathan Hantke wrote that Bethune was scheduled for remodeling within the next three years. Additionally, he cited the construction of other schools within the last five years in the Acres Homes community, as well as a mathematics wing that was added to Carver High. He pointed out that, although Carver, like other older facilities would not be as physically pleasing like a new facility as Eisenhower, it still attracted many students from across the district.³³ Yet, Ms. Evans followed that although the Caraway and Stovall schools were added to serve the Acres Homes community, “...nothing has been done to improve the facilities of schools which were the subject of the initial complaint.”³⁴

Throughout the campaign to modify the desegregation plan, the District sought out discussions with the Acres Homes community. According to A.W. Jones, Aldine Board of Trustees President, “...the school board is convinced that their young children need to be taught

³² Lisa Evans, Attorney to Jonathan C. Hantke, “Re: Sampson and United States v. Aldine ISD C.A. No. 64-H-273 (S.D. Texas), June 30, 1995. (Eisenhower was opened in 1972, while Carver moved to its current facility in 1954)

³³ Jonathan C. Hantke to Lisa Evans, “Sampson and United States v. Aldine Independent School District; Cause No. 64-H-273; In the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas (Houston Division), August 1, 1995.

³⁴ Lisa Evans to Jonathan C. Hantke, “Sampson and United States v. Aldine ISD, C.A. No. 64-H-273 (S.D. Texas), September 19, 1995.

in the elementary school in the community. We are confident that the Acres Homes community ardently supports this transition.”³⁵

The modification to the desegregation plan was approved in 1995. No longer required to bus black elementary students to previously white schools, the new program was designed to attract students from across the district into the magnet schools that were located in the Acres Homes community. Nonetheless, by this point in time, the demographics of Aldine changed dramatically since the 1965 call for desegregation.

Accordingly, the acknowledgement of the drastic changes can be found in the Joint Motion to amend Judgment and Consent Orders. In the document, it was brought to attention that:

“[s]ince this Court’s Order in 1978, the number and percentage of white students enrolled in the District has substantially decreased. In 1978, the District’s total student population was approximately 33,000, with 15% African American, 13% [Mexican American], 72% White, and less than 1% Other. Today, the District’s total student population is 43,937, with 35.1% African American, 38.0% [Mexican American], 22.7% White, and 4.3% Other. The change in the demographic and racial make-up of the community and the decline in white student enrollment make it difficult to stabilize the level of desegregation.”³⁶

Thus, according to the consent order, the new proposed desegregation plan was aimed to “stabilize the racial composition of each school, encourage families to move into the District, and discourage flight from the District.”³⁷

Using the magnet school program from 1995-2002, Aldine was able to prove that they had done everything possible in order to integrate their schools. Although they were still out of

³⁵ A.W. Jones to Sabrina Whitehead Jenkins, “Re: Conversion of Anderson Fourth and Fifth Grade School to K-4 School; *Sampson, et al. v. Aldine Independent School District*; Cause No. 64-H-273; In the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas (Houston Division),” December 14, 1993.

³⁶ *Sampson, et al. and United States of America vs. Aldine Independent School District, et al.*, “Joint Motion to Amend Judgment and Consent Orders,” (S.D. Tex., 1995), 2-3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

compliance in certain areas such as the percentage of black students in certain schools falling out of the Court's 15 per cent variance, the Court agreed that "the District has eliminated the vestiges of the former dual system to the extent practicable with respect to student assignment."³⁸

With respect to the desegregation case concerning Aldine schools, the Mexican American student population, faculty, and staff were not included. They were treated with the same regard as white students, faculty, and staff. This proved to have a negative consequence for the Mexican American population. While the Mexican American presence at Aldine in 1978 was 13 per cent, by 2002 its population was at 56.22 per cent, more than half of the total student population of the district. The white student population dropped by 2002 to only accounting for 7.74 per cent of the total student population, whereas in 1978 it accounted for 72 per cent.

When the desegregation process was under way, Mexican Americans were included in the white category, thus it appeared that the Aldine schools were in fact becoming integrated. For example, the court's order of dismissal lists the demographics of each campus; however, only two categories existed: black students and other. Since the desegregation order originally implied that black and white students were to be integrated, the focus continued to be on those two populations. As the demographics of Aldine began to shift and the number of white students began to decline, the focus, as is evidenced by the demographic statistics, turned from listing the school's racial composition as "black and white" to "black and other". By this point in 2002, Mexican Americans were the majority that encompassed this "other" category.

Additionally, in the 1977 desegregation order, the District was required to increase the percentage of black staff. After the 1995 modification, the District alleged that "[t]he employment of African American staff has been, and will continue to be, a priority in the

³⁸ *Sampson, et al. and the United States of America v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.* (S.D. Tex., 2002), "Agreed Order of Unitary Status and Dismissal," 8.

District.”³⁹ In the 2002 order for dismissal, it was revealed that due to the practice of focusing on two groups, “black” or “other,” Mexican American faculty and staff were left at a disadvantage. For example, for 60 principals for the district in 2002, 22 (37 per cent) were black, 30 (50 per cent) were Anglo, and 8 (13 per cent) were Mexican American. This trend continued in almost every category: assistant principals, counselors, and other administrators for the district. So while the Mexican American student population was more than half of the total student population, they were not represented in the faculty and staff composition of the school district.

Unlike the Mexican American experience at Aldine, the Mexican American community that encompassed the Houston Independent School District (I.S.D.) did in fact push for their inclusion in the school desegregation issue. In the Houston I.S.D. case, the method that was used to desegregate the schools was through a pairing plan that paired predominately Mexican American schools with black schools that began in 1970. Because the law classified Mexican Americans as white, the districts were able to use them to fulfill desegregation purposes. The pairing plan between the Mexican American and black schools met with much opposition, which forced the District to develop other alternatives. During the summer of 1975, the District won approval of a magnet school plan in the federal courts.⁴⁰ Like Aldine, this alternative seemed to be the key at fulfilling integration requirements.

In the 1970 case, *Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District*, the school district was also accused of violating the rights of both Mexican Americans and blacks through the school-pairing program. In order to win the case, the plaintiffs needed to prove that Mexican

³⁹ *Sampson, et al. and United States of America v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.* (S.D. Tex., 1995), “Order,” 7.

⁴⁰ De León, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: Mexican Americans in Houston*, 207-208.

Americans were an identifiable minority group and should be treated differently as Anglos. They were successful as “Judge Woodrow Seals found that on the basis of language, culture, religion, and physical characteristics, Mexican Americans formed a distinct minority.”⁴¹ Although this was a huge win for the Mexican American and black students in Corpus Christi I.S.D., the case only applied to Corpus Christi schools.

Due to the low representation of Mexican Americans in the Aldine school district at the beginning of its desegregation process, Aldine did not follow Houston I.S.D.’s method of pairing black and Mexican American schools since there was no such thing. However, as desegregation continued and forced integration through the method of mandatory busing occurred in Aldine, whites left the district in large numbers and were replaced with Mexican Americans that were moving into the area. Therefore, by 1995 the demographics of Aldine changed drastically and it was no longer necessary to bus students to the former white schools since this was no longer the case. Instead, magnet schools were aimed to attract students from across the district while limiting white flight out of the district. Nevertheless, this was not successful since between the 1995 implementation of the magnet school program and the 2002 order of dismissal, Aldine’s white student population dropped by 14.96 per cent.⁴²

⁴¹Brian D. Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles, Mexican Americans, African Americans, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Texas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 197.

⁴²*Sampson, et al., and United States v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.*, “Agreed Order of Unitary Status and Dismissal,” 64-H-273 (S.D. Tex. 2002).

CHAPTER V

WHITE FLIGHT AND THE RESEGREGATION OF ALDINE SCHOOLS

When desegregation first began to unfold in Aldine I.S.D., the primary concern focused on the rights of the black students living in the district. Although desegregation of all Aldine schools was required by 1967, little change was reflected in the following decade. Through the intervention of the Department of Justice in the Aldine case in 1977, mandatory integration began to occur. As integration unraveled, a correlation between integration and the changing demographics emerged. As the population of both blacks and Mexican Americans increased in Aldine, the population of whites decreased. The following section examines how integration promoted the practice of white flight into neighboring suburbs. As whites began to leave the inner cities in large numbers, the inner cities became primarily composed of minorities. The transformation of Aldine from a predominately white school district to a minority school district is a reflection of what occurred in many other American cities. Mandatory integration, therefore, was the mechanism that prompted white resistance and led to resegregation of American schools.

Following Aldine's order of desegregation in 1965, the population of the Aldine community more than doubled by 1978. The racial composition of the community remained relatively the same. Of the 33,000 students in the district in 1978, 4,950 (15%) were black, 4,250 (13%) were Mexican American, 23,760 (72%) were white, and 330 (>1%) were of other

ethnic categories.¹ While the number of Mexican Americans enrolled in Aldine schools when desegregation went into effect in 1965 is unknown, the large presence of white students enrolled in the district in 1978 demonstrates that the population of whites did not dramatically decrease following the 1965 desegregation order.² Although there may be several factors for the continuity of a dominant white presence in the school district, the complacency toward integrating Aldine schools seems to be a good explanation.

Through the use of neighborhood schools, little racial mingling resulted through the order of integration at Aldine. Like W.W. Thorne, superintendent for Aldine schools at the time of the 1965 desegregation order predicted, little integration would result through desegregation since most blacks and whites lived across the district from one another.³ Furthermore, Aldine I.S.D. used policies and practices that limited the amount of racial integration that occurred. Through the school district's efforts coupled with the existing residential patterns, most whites continued to attend predominately white schools. Therefore, Aldine's order of integration proved to be of little inconvenience to Aldine's white population since they continued to attend the predominately white schools.

However, the years that followed the order for mandatory integration resulted in a large exodus of whites from the Aldine community. Between 1978 through 1995, the white

¹ *Sampson, et al., and United States of America v. Aldine Independent School District, et al., "Joint Motion to Amend Judgment and Consent Orders," 64-H-273 (S.D. Tex. 1995)*

² At the time of the 1965 desegregation order, Aldine had a student population of approximately 14,000. Of those 14,000 students, approximately one-quarter were black and the rest were labeled as white. Therefore, it is not known how many Mexican Americans accounted for those students in the "white" category. Since there is no mention of Mexican Americans during desegregation discussions, as well as their small presence in the school district in 1978, it is safe to assume that Mexican Americans composed a small presence in Aldine schools during the decade following the initial integration order.

³ "Aldine Integration Will Affect Few," *Houston Chronicle*, March 25, 1965.

population went from constituting 72 per cent to 22.7 per cent of the total student population.⁴

Although whites and blacks lived across the district from one another, the mandatory policy of busing black students to predominately white schools caused a great amount of racial mixing for the Aldine schools. By 2002, when the district was considered to have achieved unitary status, the percentage of whites dropped further and only comprised 7.74 per cent of the student population.⁵

The changing demographics made it difficult for the school district to stabilize the level of desegregation. With a declining white student population, Mexican Americans were used as a substitution to achieve the racial compositions required through the order of integration. The district's increasing number of Mexican Americans enabled it to integrate the black and Mexican American student population. The racial status of Mexican Americans as whites, therefore, allowed Aldine to be in overall compliance with the integration order. The racial compositions of individual schools and classes were all used to demonstrate that Aldine achieved the highest amount of integration possible. The binary representation separating "black" students with "other" students enabled it to promote the appearance of integration. Since the court order focused exclusively on black integration, as long as blacks composed a certain percentage in each school, Aldine I.S.D. would be in compliance in regards to student assignment.

When the desegregation plan was modified in 1995, eliminating mandatory busing and establishing a magnet school program, one of the aims of the modification was to attract families

⁴ *Sampson, et al., and United States of America v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.*, "Joint Motion to Amend Judgment and Consent Orders," 64-H-273 (S.D. Tex. 1995).

⁵ *Sampson, et al., and United States v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.*, "Agreed Order of Unitary Status and Dismissal," 64-H-273 (S.D. Tex. 2002).

into the district and discourage flight from the district.⁶ Although not stated, it is apparent that this was an inference to the white flight occurring in the district. The white student population was the only population that declined; all other ethnic student populations increased since integration first began. Magnet schools, therefore, were a way to attract families to either remain or move in to the district. This was also the case for Aldine's neighboring district, Houston I.S.D., which began its magnet school program as a part of their desegregation case in 1975.

Evidence of white flight can be found as early as the 1950s in northern school districts. According to Bruno Bettelheim, segregation in the North took form in a "separation of nice white children from poor white and Negro children...accomplished by moving to the suburbs or by sending children to private or parochial schools."⁷ Although better associations and cultural opportunities were listed as the reason that many families moved to the suburbs, Bettelheim argues that "[t]he real reason for the flight to the suburbs is the desire to live in geographical and cultural separation from Negroes and other members of minority groups who are deemed undesirable and, most of all, the wish to protect one's own children from having to attend school with children from 'undesirable' homes."⁸ Bettelheim notes that suburban real estate developers, aware of those desires, used the exclusiveness of the school system as their main selling point.⁹

Therefore, although many Northerners were condemning southern school districts for segregating students, school districts in big cities were doing just that, except in a more discreet manner by moving out of the cities and into the suburbs. Hence, whites were preventing themselves from becoming affected by the efforts to integrate. While residential patterns

⁶ *Sampson, et al., and United States of America v. Aldine Independent School District, et al.*, "Joint Motion to Amend Judgment and Consent Order," 64-H-273 (S.D. Tex. 1995).

⁷ Bruno Bettelheim, "Segregation: New Style," *The School Review* 66 (Autumn 1958): 253.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 253-254.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 254.

previously prevented them from racial intermixing, the court ordered integration methods might have required them to be bused to black schools—which is what happened in Charlotte, North Carolina years later. Therefore, many large northern cities were “becoming holding pens for the poorest people of color in the country,” while “[a] ‘white noose’ of suburban development” encircled them.¹⁰ Even if white families chose to stay in the cities, many enrolled their children in private or parochial schools.

The ability to either enroll their children in private or parochial schools or move to the suburbs brings up the key issue of class. Race and class often go hand in hand; it is quite tricky to discuss one without looking at the other. As for the issue of migration into the suburbs, middle-class whites composed the majority of those migrating. Middle-class minorities migrated to the suburbs as well, just on a smaller scale. Since the majority of blacks and Mexican Americans comprised the working class, they often times were given no choice but to remain in the cities.

In *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973), the issues of class and economics came to the forefront of the school desegregation issue. The case centered on a predominately Mexican-American high school in San Antonio. On May 16, 1968, four hundred of the Edgewood High School students held a walkout and demonstration, arguing against the lack of resources and unqualified teachers at the school.¹¹ As a result, parents formed the Edgewood District Concerned Parents Association in order to address the problems. The group’s lawyer appealed to the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund for assistance

¹⁰ Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*, 176-177.

¹¹ Cynthia E. Orozco, “Rodriguez v. San Antonio ISD,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jrrht> (accessed July 3, 2013). Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

but was unsuccessful. Demetrio Rodriguez, a World War II and Korea veteran, “was angry that his two boys had to attend a badly equipped, dilapidated elementary school, whereas children who lived in Alamo Heights, an affluent school district ten minutes away—within the city but financed separately by residents of that district—went to a much better facility.”¹² Thus, Rodriguez and seven other Edgewood parents filed a class-action suit on behalf of Texas schoolchildren who were poor or resided in a school district with a low property tax base.¹³

The plaintiffs argued that the state’s dependence on local property tax gave the affluent an advantage. Thus, the state’s finance system violated the equal protection clause of the Constitution since there were substantial inter-district disparities in the amount of money spent per student.¹⁴ While the lower courts ruled in favor of Rodriguez’s claim that the Texas school finance system was unconstitutional, on appeal the Supreme Court reversed the decision of the lower court. In its opinion, the Court declared that the state of Texas was not in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment since the clause “did not require absolute equality or precisely equal advantages.” Furthermore, the Court “rejected the lower court’s finding that education was a fundamental right or liberty.”¹⁵ Thus, the issue of class and economics proved irrelevant in the issue of school desegregation.

The school finance system would continue to arise in discussions over educational equality. Over a decade after *San Antonio ISD v. Rodriguez*, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), filed a suit against the Edgewood school district

¹² Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*, 177.

¹³ Cynthia E. Orozco, “Rodriguez v. San Antonio ISD,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jrrht> (accessed July 3, 2013). Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

¹⁴ *San Antonio Independent School District, et al. v. Rodriguez, et al.*, 411 U.S. 1 (1973). <http://ezhost.utpa.edu:2055/hottopics/lnacademic/> (accessed July 16, 2013).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

once again claiming the state's finance system violated the Texas Constitution. In 1989, the Texas Supreme Court ruled on behalf of the plaintiffs affirming the unconstitutionality of the state's finance system.¹⁶ In response, methods were proposed in order to rectify the unequal educational opportunities caused through the reliance on local property taxes.¹⁷

Another case added more discouragement to integrationists. In *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974), a class of Detroit children and parents filed an action against various state and local officials with the aim of establishing a desegregation plan in Detroit schools.¹⁸ Due to *de facto* segregation, Detroit's public schools became 72 per cent black.¹⁹ The leader of the suit, Mrs. Bradley, had a son that attended a virtually all-black school that was "badly overcrowded, necessitating the erection of portable classrooms that quickly fell into disrepair." Furthermore, "teachers at the school, it seemed, had stopped teaching."²⁰ Agreeing with Mrs. Bradley, Federal District Judge Stephen Roth "declared that real progress toward desegregation could not be achieved within the boundaries of the city."²¹ As a result, he ordered a desegregation plan that would consolidate the school districts of Detroit, affecting fifty-three suburbs and approximately 780,000 students, with almost half of them having to be bused.²² A court of appeals agreed with the district court.

¹⁶ *Edgewood Independent School District, et al. v. William Kirby, et al.*, 777 S.W. 2d 391 (1989).

¹⁷ De León, *Mexican Americans in Texas: A Brief History*, 160-161.

¹⁸ *Milliken, Governor of Michigan, et al., v. Bradley, et al.*, 418 U.S. 717 (1974). <http://ezhost.utpa.edu:2055/hottopics/lnacademic/?> (accessed July 16, 2013).

¹⁹ Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*, 178.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 179.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

During the trial, the district court found that actions from all-levels of the government established and reinforced residential segregation in Detroit.²³ Since blacks comprised the majority of students in the Detroit public school system, inter-district school integration seemed the only alternative to truly integrate the schools. Despite this, the Supreme Court reversed the judgment of the lower court.²⁴ The Court maintained that the federal court held no authority to impose a multi-district remedy to a single-district segregation problem if the other districts that were included operated under a unitary system. The evidence showed that all fifty-three suburban towns had no intent to discriminate or segregate students based on race, therefore, they could not be included in desegregation plans of Detroit schools.²⁵ Consequently, Detroit was forced to find other alternatives to desegregate its schools. Nonetheless, by 1986, Detroit's public schools were 89 per cent black.²⁶

Joseph Alsop, in his analysis on school desegregation, argued that there was a clear correlation between white emigration and school desegregation. In his study of Washington D.C., he notes that of the approximately 250,000 whites that remained in the city, 13,000 were of school age. Of those 13,000 school age children, more than 5,000 attended a parochial or private school. Therefore, he concluded that "Washington's remaining white population is almost exclusively composed of (a) old people, (b) single people, (c) couples without children of school age, and (d) couples who can afford to send their children to parochial or private schools or who live in the few neighborhoods where the schools are still mainly white."²⁷ Furthermore, all other

²³ *Milliken, Governor of Michigan, et al., v. Bradley, et al.*, 418 U.S. 717 (1974). <http://ezhost.utpa.edu:2055/hottopics/lnacademic/>? (accessed July 16, 2013).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*, 181.

²⁷ Joseph Alsop, "No More Nonsense about Ghetto Education!," 18-19.

white couples moved to the suburbs when it was time for their children to attend school and would move back to the city once their children were no longer of school age.²⁸ Based on the comparison between Washington D.C. to other major northern cities such as Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia, and St. Louis, a trend of an increasing black population was visible. In his efforts to address the phenomenon that was occurring, he argues that “the practical result of *unprepared* desegregation is *an enlarged ghetto with a greater number of segregated schools than there were in the first instance.*”²⁹ Thus, resegregation of schools was occurring. For example, at the beginning of the civil rights movement, one Jewish neighborhood voluntarily paired their school with a nearby ghetto school. Although the New York Board of Education promised special support, the only support given was the general maintenance of the school buildings. Consequently, the quality of education soon decreased and soon the Jewish parents either sent their children to private school or moved to the suburbs. While there was formerly only one segregated school, two emerged after the Jewish students left the school.³⁰

In his 1966 study, James Coleman issued a report that favored mandatory integration through the use of busing. Integrationists used his report as confirmation that mandatory integration was the route to achieving racial balance. He recommended class integration and believed that “lower-class black children would benefit if they attended school with more academically oriented middle-class white students.”³¹ He believed that if white middle-class children remained, the majority in the class then they could set the tone for the school in which both black and white children would learn.³²

²⁸ Ibid., 19 and Wolters *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 228.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 231.

³² Ibid.

Nevertheless, by 1975, Coleman retracted from his first report. He no longer favored mandatory busing as a means for desegregation; instead he believed that it had the reverse effect than what was intended. Instead of providing stable and progressive school integration, the policies “increased residential segregation through the moves of whites beyond the reach of the desegregation order.”³³ Based on the findings of his report, massive school desegregation plans in large cities resulted in the loss of white children from the schools. Thus, the desegregation policies were “provoking resegregation actions on the part of individual families.”³⁴ If white families were faced with a situation in which there were no suburbs to flee to, such as county-wide desegregation plans found in southern school districts, then the white families would form their own private schools.³⁵ Instead, Coleman suggested other methods of integration and believed that magnet schools, which many school districts were developing, were a good starting point.

When looking back at his first report that promoted mandatory integration, he recognized that there was a difference between the black students who integrated before mandatory integration and black students who were forced to integrate. The data he collected for his first study reflected integration through the free-choice plan in the South and neighborhood schools in the North where blacks and whites lived in the same area in 1965. Because the data collected from the first report involved voluntary integration, it may have resulted in the favorable evidence that the integrated black students scored higher on achievement tests than similar students educated in predominately black schools. Further according to the first Coleman report, whites were not found to be negatively affected. In contrast by 1975, Coleman concluded that

³³ Coleman, *Equality and Achievement in Education*, 166.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 165.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

for black students, “the most that could be said for large-scale integration was that academic scores usually did not decline.”³⁶ Furthermore, the worst “was that sometimes the academic scores of whites declined after integration.”³⁷

David Armor also served as a setback for liberal integrationists, when he published an article that advocated against court-ordered busing for racial balance. Although like Coleman, Armor once supported mandatory integration, he concluded that it was counterproductive because not only did it stimulate middle-class flight but it also “seemed to aggravate race relations while damaging the confidence of African American students and doing nothing to improve their academic achievement.”³⁸ Summarizing research on integration in six northern cities, including a voluntary program in Boston, he concluded that integration heightened the racial consciousness of blacks and also led whites to have more negative attitudes towards them. Therefore, Armor contended that contact between the two races under the wrong conditions reinforced negative impressions.³⁹

In the case for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system, which sparked the use of mandatory busing for desegregation, the general population, including suburban whites, was in its favor. Over time, as the pattern of settlement changed, students began spending a lot more time in transit and some were even spending two hours a day on a bus.⁴⁰ When school authorities refused to build new schools in predominately white areas, it led many whites to enroll their children in new private schools of which “more than thirty...were established after

³⁶ Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 231.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 231-232.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 233.

³⁹ Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 234.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 271.

1970.”⁴¹ The number of whites enrolled in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system continued to decline and by 1997, “about 25 percent of the white students...were enrolled in private schools—more than double the national average for private school enrollment and ten times what the rate had been in Charlotte-Mecklenburg in 1970.”⁴²

To maintain support of the public schools, in 1992 the school system reduced the amount of forced busing and established magnet programs at the district’s schools. The magnet programs were a success at attracting whites and became so “popular with suburban whites that waiting lists grew longer every year.”⁴³ Eventually the number of white applicants exceeded the slots set aside for white students. This led to a 1997 lawsuit filed by a white parent who claimed the school system should not enforce racial quotas, alleging that the school system had remedied past segregation. In 1998, the School Board declared that it had not yet desegregated its schools and made a bizarre attempt to find fault in its desegregation attempts.⁴⁴ Yet, the court ruled that the school system had eliminated desegregation and its vestiges, thereby granting it unitary status. This meant that the school district was no longer allowed to have racial quotas at its schools and programs. The Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court both affirmed the decision which “marked the end of an era in American social policy.”⁴⁵ The results of the decision, nonetheless, increased racially imbalanced enrollments and “[w]ithin a few years the proportion of black children who were attending schools that were at least 80 percent black increased from 3 percent to 15 percent.”⁴⁶

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 274.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 275-276.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 277.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 278.

As mentioned before, the neighboring district to Aldine, Houston I.S.D., also experienced white flight. As integration unraveled, whites continued to flee into the neighboring suburbs. Because Houston I.S.D. was under its own desegregation order, whites could easily move to the many neighboring suburbs that were predominately white, where there was no mandatory integration order.

Evidence that whites were attempting to avoid desegregation efforts is further supported by the fact that private citizens living in an affluent area, controlled mostly by Houston I.S.D., attempted to form their own independent school district—one that would be 89 per cent white, 6 per cent black, and 5 per cent Mexican American. The proposed formation of Westheimer Independent School District (W.I.S.D.) began in the fall of 1971. Still, Houston I.S.D. sought an injunction to prohibit the formation of W.I.S.D.⁴⁷ The court concluded that the formation of W.I.S.D. would in fact negatively affect the amount of desegregation for Houston I.S.D. However, white flight continued to occur at the district. From the time that Houston I.S.D. was ordered to desegregate in 1957 to 1984 when the case was dismissed, the district went from being 74.2 per cent white and 25.8 per cent black to 19 per cent white and 43.6 per cent black.⁴⁸

While the issue of resegregation received attention by scholars and activists, more people began to realize that mandatory integration was not fulfilling its intended purpose. The evidence of white flight could be not overlooked since, by 1980, “most of the nation’s large cities lost more than 40 percent of their white students.”⁴⁹ With the loss of white students, school districts would find it more difficult to fulfill integration requirements. Through the *Milliken v. Bradley* decision of 1974 which prohibited forced inter-district integration, it seemed that eventually

⁴⁷ E. Bun Lee, Louis A. Browne, and James W. Ward, *Local Newspapers and the Houston Public School Desegregation, 1954-1984*, 551.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁹ Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 255.

school districts would request unitary status. Based on the limitations placed upon them through the changing demographics, to what extent would school systems continue under court supervision? That question was answered through three important cases which paved the way towards school systems achieving unitary status: *Oklahoma City v. Dowell* (1991), *Freeman v. Fitts* (1992), and *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1995).

In *Oklahoma City v. Dowell* (1991), the school board sought dissolution of their local desegregation order. The order was implemented after a suit was filed in 1961 by a group of black students and parents against the Board of Education of Oklahoma City. In 1977, the district court then issued an “Order Terminating Case,” which claimed that the district’s desegregation plan had worked, the district had complied with the court’s requirements, and the district now achieved unitary status. Nonetheless, the school district adopted a student reassignment plan that would begin in the 1985-1986 school year that would then have the effect of going back to predominately one-race schools. Therefore, the black students and their parents challenged the board and asserted that it had not achieved integration but the district court refused to reopen the case. On appeal, the Court of Appeals concluded that nothing in the 1977 order indicated that the 1972 injunction was terminated. The case went back to the district court who believed that the 1972 decree should be terminated, citing that (a) demographic changes made the plan unworkable, (b) the board did nothing in the past twenty-five years to promote residential segregation, (c) the school district bused students for more than a decade in good-faith compliance with the district court’s order, (d) the city’s existing residential segregation was the result of private decision-making and economics and not a vestige of former segregation, and (e) that the reassignment plan was not intended to be discriminatory. The Court of Appeals,

however, did not agree with the district court and the case was taken to the Supreme Court.⁵⁰

The Court agreed with the district court, thereby concluding that school systems that once practiced racial discrimination should be released from court-ordered busing if they complied with court orders and eliminated to the extent possible the vestiges of past discrimination.⁵¹

Furthermore, in *Freeman v. Pitts* (1992) the case surrounded the desegregation order of a Georgia county school system that previously used *de jure* segregation. In 1986, school officials sought a declaration of unitary status and filed a motion for dismissal. Nevertheless, during the seventeen-year desegregation case there was an increase in the black student population from 5.6 per cent to 47 per cent. Furthermore, a shift occurred in the residential patterns of the county in which the northern half became predominately white and the southern half became predominately black. Although 50 per cent of black students attended schools that were more than 90 per cent black, the district court found that the county's population changes were not caused by the school system's policies, but instead by independent factors and that the school system was a unitary system in respect to some of the *Green* factors, but had not satisfied them all. Therefore, the district court ruled that it would order no further relief as to the unitary areas but the school system was still required to address the problems in the other areas. The Court of Appeals, however, while affirming that the county school system had not achieved unitary status, declared that all the *Green* factors must be satisfied at the same time for a number of years.⁵² The case was taken to the Supreme Court who reversed the judgment of the Court of Appeals and emphasized that "judicial supervision of public education should be temporary and should

⁵⁰ *Board of Education of Oklahoma City Public Schools, Independent School District No. 89, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, Petitioner v. Robert L. Dowell, et al.*, 498 U.S. 237 (1991). <http://ezhost.utpa.edu:2055/hottopics/lnacademic/> (accessed July 16, 2013).

⁵¹ Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 265.

⁵² *Robert R. Freeman, et al., petitioners v. Willie Eugene Pitts, et al.*, 503 U.S. 467 (1992). <http://ezhost.utpa.edu:2055/hottopics/lnacademic/> (accessed July 16, 2013).

last only until local authorities had eliminated the effects of discrimination to the extent practicable.”⁵³ Furthermore, in addressing the issue of demographic shifts, the Court contended that if the local school districts were required to counteract the shifts, the supervision of the courts would be never-ending.⁵⁴

Lastly in *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1995), the case revolved around a desegregation order in Kansas City, Missouri. The case was influential because it dealt with the issue of the racial achievement gap. The argument was that the “federal courts should enforce racially balanced integration until black and white students made similar average scores on standardized tests.”⁵⁵ The Supreme Court, on the other hand, held that the racial achievement gap was formulated by different factors that could not be controlled; therefore, test scores should not be applied in determining whether a school system desegregated its schools.⁵⁶

In determining whether a school system eliminated segregation and its remnants, the key factor was whether a school system took all probable steps. It seemed that the school systems would find it extremely difficult to ever meet true desegregation with the drastic demographic shifts taken place after mandatory integration went into effect. It seemed as though white flight coupled with an increasing minority population would make it improbable to achieve true integration. Therefore, many school systems after complying with their desegregation orders would eventually obtain unitary status although many districts still had one-race schools.

Evidence that white flight was linked to integration efforts is supported by the increased enrollment at private and parochial schools and the intent to find other ways to avoid mandatory integration. Because of the efforts to curb the amount of white flight, many major American

⁵³ Wolters, *Race and Education, 1954-2007*, 265.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 266.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

cities developed magnet programs which motivated whites to remain in the district. Since the dismissal of desegregation orders, however, the majority of districts have returned to one-race schools. Furthermore, independent factors largely ruled by class and economics have continued to segregate the races through residential patterns. Driven by independent choices, such as the choice to move out of the city to the suburbs or enroll children in private or parochial schools, the school districts have limited opportunity to achieve true integration. Therefore, although not truly achieving integration, school districts were declared by the courts to have achieved unitary status through their efforts to integrate their schools. Important legal cases such as *Oklahoma City v. Dowell* (1991), *Freeman v. Pitts* (1992), and *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1995) paved the way towards desegregation requirements. The pattern of resegregation occurred in Aldine schools as well. Once mandatory integration became enforced, whites began leaving in large numbers which transformed Aldine from a white to minority school district.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the evolution of public schooling in the state of Texas and, more specifically, Harris County. Throughout its development, blacks and Mexican Americans held a position of inferiority imposed by the dominant white culture. *De jure* and *de facto* segregation maintained their inferior status and negatively affected the educational opportunities for these groups. Blacks and Mexican Americans, however, found ways to combat discrimination and continuously strived to gain educational equality. Prior to and after Reconstruction, black schools found creative ways to exist. Whether it was through tuition paid on behalf of black families or the actual labor used for construction of schools, blacks were determined to be educated.¹ In similar efforts, Mexican Americans organized evening schools in Mexican communities, fundraised to subsidize education for college students, and formed alternative schools such as the “Little School of the 400.”²

By focusing on the Aldine Independent School District, this thesis analyzed the effects of segregation in the district. It demonstrated the efforts taken by black families to end legal segregation a decade after the *Brown* case ruled racial segregation unconstitutional. Furthermore, by framing the Aldine desegregation case into the national narrative of school desegregation, the study highlighted the shifting policies affecting the methods used to desegregate Aldine schools. The Aldine case study is representative of what previously and is currently occurring in other school districts throughout the state and country. The growing

¹ Black, *Early Texas Schools: A Photographic History*, 15.

² De León, *Mexican Americans in Texas: A Brief History*, 112, 129.

presence of Mexican Americans throughout the United States has transformed inner-city schools and is presently transforming suburban schools.³ Additionally, as white flight to the suburbs occurred, once-flourishing communities decimated through the loss of cultural and business institutions.⁴

The first chapter of this study focused on the development of the public education system in Texas and Harris County. It illustrated the efforts made by the dominant white culture to establish racial policies that hindered the educational opportunities available to the newly freedmen. It also revealed the educational opportunities and limitations placed upon Mexican American students. While emancipation of blacks led to the establishment of a dual-school system based on race, the education of Mexican Americans became a state issue when their growing presence could no longer be ignored.

The second chapter analyzed settlement patterns in the Aldine area. Framing the changes that occurred in Aldine within the larger context of demographic shifts that occurred in the city and state-level, we form a better understanding of the causes and effects of these demographic shifts. The data demonstrates that the most drastic demographic changes occurred during the post-World War II era. The advances made in transportation technology and the development of the highway system led to urban sprawl. However, the most drastic population changes for Aldine and Houston occurred between 1980 and 2000 when the Mexican American and black populations increased, while the white population substantially decreased.

The third chapter focused on segregation in Aldine I.S.D. The District's operation of a dual school system based on race proved to be unequal. Although the *Brown* case ruled racial

³ Frankenberg and Orfield, *The Resegregation of Suburban Schools: A Hidden Crisis in American Education*, 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

segregation unconstitutional in 1954, it was not until 1965 that Aldine was ordered to desegregate its schools. The ambiguous nature of *Brown*, however, allowed Aldine to continue its operation of a dual school system.

The fourth chapter examined the shifting desegregation policies brought forth through the courts and its effects on desegregation efforts of Aldine I.S.D. The turning point in school desegregation came with the 1968 *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* and the 1971 *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* rulings that changed desegregation requirements. No longer would school districts continue to take a passive approach in desegregating their schools, school districts were now required to take affirmative steps to ensure the highest amount of integration possible. Thus, Aldine I.S.D. implemented mandatory court-ordered busing that transported black students to white schools. However, mandatory integration had the opposite effect and led to white flight from the district.

The fifth and final chapter focused on resegregation of Aldine I.S.D. The mandatory integration that was enforced in the district promoted white flight to occur into the neighboring suburbs. An analysis of integration efforts of other U.S. cities demonstrated that resegregation of schools occurred in most major cities. By framing Aldine's desegregation case within the context of other school systems' desegregation efforts, this chapter demonstrated that mandatory integration was the mechanism that led to the resegregation of American schools.

The dream promised in the *Brown* decision was never truly realized. Yes, the disbanding of *de jure* segregation proved to be a milestone on the road to civil rights and equal educational opportunities. Nevertheless, the aftermath that came through the *Brown* decision retracted from its original purpose. The methods used in order to break the racial, social, and economic barriers that separated blacks, Mexican Americans, and whites did little to solve the problem. In my

view, the way that most minorities experience public education today suggests that we are back to the pre-*Brown* era.

Although the intentions toward integrating blacks, Mexican Americans, and whites were respectable, the reality of implementing workable solutions to past and present discrimination proved difficult. While notable achievements of the Civil Rights Movement, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the 1968 Fair Housing Act, led to many civil rights victories, by the end of the 1960s, the momentum gained during the movement faded. With the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and the turn towards conservative administrations in the White House, the role of existing civil rights groups altered to that of preserving the legislative and judicial victories previously obtained.⁵

Indeed, our schools continue to be segregated to this day. Current enrollment trends published by the Texas Education Agency continue to show the decline of white student enrollment in our state's public schools. Between the school years of 1992-1993 to 2011-2012, the white student population in Texas dropped from encompassing 47.2 per cent to 30.6 per cent, while the Mexican American population increased from 35.1 per cent to 50.8 per cent respectively. The black population, on the other hand, showed a slight decrease between those years, dropping from constituting 14.3 per cent to 12.8 per cent of the student population for the state.⁶ While the statistics may be influenced by a combination of factors such as low birth rates, the failure of our public schools has led whites to seek other alternatives such as private or parochial schools. Furthermore, many of our schools have reverted back to one-race schools. In

⁵ Steven F. Lawson and Charles Payne, *Debating the Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1968* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 39.

⁶ Texas Education Agency, "Enrollment in Texas Public Schools 2001-02," *Division of Accountability Research-Department of Accountability and Data Quality*, December 2003 and Texas Education Agency, "Enrollment in Texas Public Schools 2011-12," *Division of Research and Analysis-Department of Assessment and Accountability*, December 2012.

terms of the school finance system of Texas, the issue of its constitutionality continues to be argued today. While the reexamination of the finance system is an optimistic sign of redressing the inequalities of poorer school district's educational opportunities, discussions of private school voucher programs in Texas undermines the progress of reforming our state's public schools.

Moreover, the psychological effects caused through past and present discrimination cannot be ignored. Research shows that racism can negatively impact health of individuals, families, and communities.⁷ Past and present discrimination, as well as countering responses to discrimination, become entrenched within individual and group memories.⁸ The psychological effects of negative perceptions, consequently, have proven harder to overcome, despite legislation that legally opposed discrimination. As Robert L. Carter, Thurgood Marshall's second in command, points out, segregation created "a feeling of 'second-class citizenship' which expresses itself in criminality and rebellion against constituted authority."⁹

Nonetheless, it is not my belief that in order for minorities to be successful, they should attend school with white pupils. Although there is no doubt that white schools in the suburbs have a higher quality of education than inner-city minority schools, our focus should be on what can be fixed and not just wishing things different.

There is a new wave of educational reformers that are concerned about the perception of the poverty of race. These reformers argue against all the handicaps and labels placed upon minority children and believe that anyone can learn but it is going to take a "by any means

⁷ Glenn Adams, Monica Biernat, Nyla R. Branscombe, Christian S. Crandall, and Lawrence S. Wrightsman, eds., *Commemorating Brown: The Social Psychology of Racism and Discrimination* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2008), 93.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ John P. Jackson, Jr., *Social Scientists for Social Justice: Making the Case against Segregation* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 86.

necessary” attitude to accomplish such a task. My personal experience, both as a student and a teacher, in the state’s public education system inspired the research of this study. By understanding the context and factors that shaped the education system today, we are able to form connections that can enable true reform in our schools. Instead of focusing on the physical barriers and the logistical aspects of education, perhaps we should focus on shaping new perceptions toward blacks and Mexican Americans in our school systems.

Although we have a long and difficult road to achieve true education reform, I am optimistic over the future. Some may argue that we have come a long way since Jim Crow, but in many aspects we are still living in that era. Unlike the decision of *San Antonio I.S.D. v. Rodriguez*, I believe that an equal educational opportunity is a right and should not be a privilege. Until we continue to treat it as one, though, we will continue to see disparities within our educational system.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

TABLES

Table 1.1
School Communities in
Harris County, Texas, 1880-1884

HARRIS CO.	1880-81 WHITE	1880-81 COLORED	1881-82 WHITE	1881-82 COLORED	1882-83 WHITE	1882-83 COLORED	1883-84 WHITE	1883-84 COLORED
School Communities Organized	39	17	35	17	38	21	36	24
Schools Maintained	28	14	30	13	30	21	34	21
Scholastic Population Reported by Communities	954	618	976	605	1010	763	1024	845
Pupils of Scholastic Age Actually Enrolled in School	611	531	709	437	830	645	894	834

Source: County Superintendent Records, Annual Report of the County Judge of the Public Free School Affairs, Harris County, 1880-1884, Texas State Department of Education. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Table 1.2
 Classification of Teachers
 in Harris County, Texas, 1880-1884

	1880-81	1881-82	1882-83	1883-84
WHITE MALE	19	18	21	14
COLORED MALE	10	7	10	10
WHITE FEMALE	11	8	5	13
COLORED FEMALE	3	6	7	7

Source: County Superintendent Records, Annual Report of the County Judge of the Public Free School Affairs, Harris County, 1880-1884, Texas State Department of Education. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Table 1.3
 Average Salary Per Month
 in Harris County, Texas, 1880-1884

	1880-81	1881-82	1882-83	1883-84
WHITE MALE	\$22.78	\$34.35	\$28.00	\$35.00
COLORED MALE	\$32.12	\$32.75	\$36.00	\$32.00
WHITE FEMALE	\$20.36	\$18.45	\$30.00	\$31.00
COLORED FEMALE	\$21.05	\$23.07	\$27.50	\$27.50

Source: County Superintendent Records, Annual Report of the County Judge of the Public Free School Affairs, Harris County, 1880-1884, Texas State Department of Education. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Table 1.4
 Classification of students enrolled in
 Harris County, Texas Schools in 1909-1910

HARRIS COUNTY 1909-1910	
TOTAL NUMBER OF WHITE CHILDREN 8 AND UNDER 17 YEARS OF AGE	4248
TOTAL NUMBER OF COLORED CHILDREN 8 AND UNDER 17 YEARS OF AGE	1524
TOTAL NUMBER OF AMERICAN CHILDREN	4163
TOTAL NUMBER OF GERMAN CHILDREN	1205
TOTAL NUMBER OF ITALIAN CHILDREN	157
TOTAL NUMBER OF MEXICAN CHILDREN	44
TOTAL NUMBER OF BOHEMIAN CHILDREN	65
TOTAL NUMBER OF ALL OTHER CHILDREN	138
GRAND TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENUMERATED	5772

Source: County Superintendent Records, Scholastic Census Report, Harris County, Texas, 1909-1910, Texas State Department of Education. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Table 2.1
 1980 Aldine CDP Population

TOTAL PERSONS	SPANISH ORIGIN							
	TOTAL 1,404	MEXICAN 1,252	PUERTO RICAN 9	CUBAN 1	OTHER SPANISH 142	RACE		
						WHITE 771	BLACK 0	OTHER RACES 633
12,623	NOT OF SPANISH ORIGIN							
	TOTAL 11,219		WHITE 10,766		BLACK 269		OTHER RACES 184	

Source: U.S. Census, *Total Persons and Spanish Origin Persons by Type of Spanish Origin and Race: 1980*. Vol. I, Characteristics of the Population. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982.

Table 2.2

1980 Northwest Quadrant Population and Density Data

CENSUS TRACT	TOTAL POPULATION	WHITE & OTHER	BLACK	SPANISH ORIGIN	TOTAL ACREAGE
533.01 (EAST)	4,766	3,815	473	478	1,481.10
533.02 (EAST)	11,164	9,334	423	1,407	1,466.90
533.03 (EAST)	7,804	6,672	235	897	2,231.20
530.02 (WEST)	8,070	2,684	5,084	302	1,952.30
531.01 (WEST)	7,840	2,307	4,496	1,037	1,642.40
539 (WEST)	9,617	7,749	944	924	6,235.40

Source: Houston Northwest Quadrant Data Book, Houston City Planning Department, December 1982.

Table 2.3

1990 Aldine CDP Population by Race

ALL PERSONS 11,133	WHITE 8,571		BLACK 443		AMERICAN INDIAN, ESKIMO, OR ALEUT 48	
	HISPANIC ORIGIN	NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN	HISPANIC ORIGIN	NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN	HISPANIC ORIGIN	NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN
	1,145	7,426	35	408	48	1
	ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER 336			OTHER RACE 1,735		
	HISPANIC ORIGIN	NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN	HISPANIC ORIGIN		NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN	
	19	317	1,711		24	

Source: U.S. Census, *Race and Hispanic Origin: 1990*. General Population Characteristics. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1990.

Table 2.4

Houston Population, 1980-2000

RACE/ETHNICITY	CENSUS 1980	CENSUS 1990	CENSUS 2000
TOTAL POPULATION	1,595,138	1,631,766	1,953,631
WHITE	834,061	662,766	601,851
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	436,392	448,148	487,851
HISPANIC OR LATINO	281,331	450,556	730,865
ASIAN*	34,259	66,993	106,620
OTHER	9,095	3,303	26,444

Source: U.S. Census, *Total Persons and Spanish Origin Persons by Type of Spanish Origin and Race: 1980*. General Population Characteristics. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1982, U.S. Census, *Race and Hispanic Origin: 1990*. General Population Characteristics. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1990, U.S. Census, *Race and Hispanic or Latino: 2000*. Summary Population and Housing Characteristics. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2002.

*Asian includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander populations.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tonya Elisette Juarez graduated from the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo High School in 2006. After graduation, Tonya attended the University of Texas at Austin where she studied history with an emphasis on Mexican American studies. She graduated with her Bachelor of Arts degree in History in 2009. Thereafter, she attended the University of Texas-Pan American to pursue her Master of Arts degree in History and received her degree in 2013. Throughout her graduate studies, she became interested in educational history and chose that as the topic of her thesis research. Her thesis examined how shifting policies affected school desegregation in a local school community.

Tonya is currently a high school history teacher at the Aldine Independent School District in Houston, Texas. She is active in the community and at work, overseeing such organizations as the high school's history fair program, U.I.L. social studies program, senior class, and the humanitarian society. She also participated in a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute in 2013, a four-week program held in Chicago, Illinois, which focused on the topic of "Rethinking the Gilded Age and Progressive Era."

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