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Eleanor's story: growing up and teaching in Iowa: one African American woman's experience

Kay Ann Taylor
Iowa State University

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**Eleanor's Story: Growing Up and Teaching in Iowa—One African American Woman's
Experience**

by

Kay Ann Taylor

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education

**Program of Study Committee:
Daniel C. Robinson, Co-major Professor
Jackie M. Blount, Co-major Professor
Constance P. Hargrave
Patricia R. Leigh
Valerie V. Sheares**

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2001

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**Graduate College
Iowa State University**

**This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation of
Kay Ann Taylor
has met the dissertation requirements of Iowa State University**

Signature was redacted for privacy.

Co-major Professor

Signature was redacted for privacy.

Co-major Professor

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For the Major Program

To the struggle and transforming the promise of social justice into reality

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FROM ELEANOR

I am thankful to my entire family, my church, educational opportunities, community organizations, and friends for my upbringing and development. I want to thank Carline Phillips for introducing me to Kay Ann Taylor, whose interest in meeting me as an early Iowan African American educator made this biography possible. It has made Kay more aware of our problems and she, in turn, can help educate others through her research and from her visits with me. I have been told many times that I should write my experiences and with Kay's help, I finally had the chance.

Preface

Although strides continue to illuminate and unravel the contributions and history of Black Americans in Iowa, much work remains to be done. In the arena of education, especially teachers and their experiences, this gap is apparent not only in Iowa, but nationally. At one time, teaching was one of the few professional career paths open to Black women. Confined by their race and gender that was perpetuated by institutionalized racism, Black women made progress for themselves, their families, and their race through an ongoing theme of education as racial uplift. As barriers to professional fields open to Black women began to break down, new generations no longer had to rely on teaching and education for their career choice. As a result, the number of Blacks entering teaching as their chosen field continues to decline. This translates into fewer role models for young Blacks in their classrooms and to the trend of the diminishing numbers of Black women entering teaching. This is one of several reasons for undertaking writing a biography of Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's life as a teacher.

There are other compelling reasons for undertaking this research of Eleanor's life. Eleanor is a woman who defies definition and time. At the age of 81, her memory and recollection are next to flawless. She recalls names, dates, and places, from Paine and Georgia Normal Colleges in Georgia, to Haiti, New York, Japan, Utah, Kansas City, Kansas, Kansas City, Missouri, Ames, and Des Moines, Iowa. A biographical account of Eleanor's life offers a rich lens into history through several dimensions: (1) Iowa history as uniquely lived and experienced by Eleanor; (2) the life of a Black female Iowan from 1918 through the present; (3) Eleanor's experiences as a schoolteacher in Des Moines, Iowa, as well as other locations during her lifetime; and (4) Eleanor's life as representative of the tenets of Black

Feminist Thought (BFT) representing self-determination, education as racial uplift, community and religious involvement, the network and kinship of Eleanor's African American family heritage. Black feminist thought is demonstrated through seeking and constructing knowledge about the lives and experiences of Black women through their narratives, as well as Critical Race Theory's (CRT) preference for storytelling. The tenets of CRT provide a second provocative basis from which to view Eleanor's life, for example, the incidents of racism that she encountered and through the principle of interest-convergence—the idea that Whites tolerate or encourage racial advances for Blacks only when they promote White self-interest. In most cases throughout Eleanor's biography, these incidents are not identified specifically because it would break the flow of her life's story. Rather, it is left to the reader to make her/his own connections to the representative events in Eleanor's story.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Resources that dictate how biography should or can be written were explored.¹ These resources represented numerous disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, psychology, and history, to name a few. Five references were located under a subject search of "Education – Biographical Methods," however, none were appropriate for this research.² I regard Norman Denzin as offering reliable thought in his field of expertise, and as a result, Denzin is referenced.³ Denzin is published widely for over three decades addressing research methods in the areas of sociological inquiry, qualitative and interpretive inquiry, research design, and related theories and issues, and is regarded highly by numerous scholars.

Table 1. Terms/Forms and Varieties of the Biographical Method. (Table reproduced from Norman K. Denzin. 1989a. *Interpretive Biography*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., p. xii.)

Term/Method	Key Features	Forms/Variations
1. Method	A way of knowing	Subjective/objective
2. Life	Period of existence; lived experiences	Partial/complete/edited/public/private
3. Self	Ideas, images, and thoughts of self	Self-stories, autobiographies
4. Experience	Confronting and passing through events	Problematic, routine, ritual
5. Epiphany	Moment of revelation in a life	Major, minor, relieved, illuminative
6. Autobiography	Personal history of one's life	Complete, edited, topical
7. Ethnography	Written account of a culture or group	Realist, interpretive, descriptive
8. Auto-ethnography	Account of one's life as an ethnographer	Complete, edited, partial
9. Biography	History of a life	Autobiography
10. Story	A fiction, narrative	First or third person
11. Fiction	An account, something made up, fashioned	Story (life, self)
12. History	Account of how something happened	Personal, oral, case
13. Discourse	Telling a story, talk about a text, a text	First or third person
14. Narrator	Teller of a story	First or third person
15. Narrative	A story, having a plot and existence separate from life of teller	Fiction, epic, science, folklore, myth
16. Writing	Inscribing, creating a written text	Logocentric, deconstructive
17. Difference	Every word carries traces of another word	Writing, speech
18. Personal History	Reconstruction of life based on interviews and conversations	Life history, life story
19. Oral History	Personal recollections of events, their causes and effects	Work, ethnic, religious, personal, musical, etc.
20. Case History	History of an event or social process, not of a person	Single, multiple, medical, legal
21. Life History	A person's story of his or her life, or a part thereof	Edited, complete, topical, fictional
22. Life Story	A person's story of his or her life, or a part thereof	Edited, complete, topical, fictional
23. Self Story	Story of self in relation to an event	Personal experience, fictional, true
24. Personal Experience Story	Story about personal experience	Single, multiple episode, private, or communal folklore
25. Case Study	Analysis and record of single case	Single, multiple

Denzin's work is a condensed course in the variations found in biographical writing and research. It further serves as a synopsis of numerous texts in print that address the same topic. Denzin's table reproduced as Table 1. exemplifies this.⁴ A dilemma arises when confronted with multiple genres of biography, or qualitative research, each with its own definitions, criterion, and sets of rules.⁵ Making an already complex situation even more so,

was the realization that all of these sets, in addition to other sources that were researched, are all grounded primarily in what I consider the dominant, White perspective.⁶ This observation extends to White feminist theory.⁷ The dominant, White view is steeped in the ideology generating from White privilege, i.e., the automatic advantages that White citizens enjoy as a result of being White in a White-dominated culture and society where racism persists against people of color and through which racism is perpetuated by a monolithic view of the human experience, thereby creating oppression and inequality through the social construction of race. Intersections and overlaps within these genres create extended complexity.

Thus, I returned to the tenets and foundational ideas represented in CRT and BFT. I believe that this is the point from which this research most accurately, appropriately, and truthfully generates. Critical Race Theory and BFT both recognize that storytelling is inherent in bringing experiences to the forefront. The perspectival or perspectivist approach advanced through BFT and CRT scholarship emphasizes examining the personal experiences of individuals in what is termed “a call to context.”⁸ Common venues for giving voice to oppressed groups through CRT storytelling scholarship are biography and autobiography, which reveal counter-stories that “expose the false necessity and unintentional irony of much current civil rights law and scholarship.”⁹ In CRT, “social reality is constructed by the creation and exchange of stories about individual situations (Bell, 1989; Matsuda, 1989; P.J. Williams, 1991). Much of the CRT literature tacks between situated narrative and more sweeping analysis of the law.”¹⁰ Tate identifies four reasons for the centrality of storytelling in CRT:

- (1) to address the manner in which political and moral analysis is conducted in traditional legal scholarship. (Delgado, 1989, 1990)

- (2) the potential of story to change mind-set (Delgado, 1989). Most oppression does not seem like oppression to the oppressor (Lawrence, 1978). The dominant group of society justifies its position with stock stories (Delgado, 1989, 1990, R. A. Williams, 1989). These stock stories construct realities in ways that legitimize power and position. Stories by people of color can counter the stories of the oppressor.¹¹
- (3) the role story telling can play in community building. Stories help to build consensus, a common culture of shared understandings, and a more vital ethics.
- (4) to help ensure the psychic preservation of marginalized groups. A factor contributing to the demoralization of members of out-groups is self-condemnation. People of color may internalize the stock stories that various groups of society promote to maintain their influence (Crenshaw, 1988). Historically, people of color have used story telling to heal wounds caused by racial discrimination. . . . the story of one's condition leads to greater insight into how one came to be oppressed. Moreover, Bell (1987) argued that this allows the oppressed to stop inflicting mental violence on themselves.¹²

Ultimately, these counter-stories reinterpret the stories perpetrated by the dominant view, which has dictated whose knowledge is real knowledge and whose knowledge is valid for centuries. Shortcomings in the dominant view become revealed through telling counter-stories and lead to the goal of achieving the possibilities for human freedom, equality, and social justice. Thus, Eleanor's biography represents a counter-story when situated within the dual contexts of CRT and BFT, in which storytelling is a foundational element.

Briefly defined, the three main tenets of CRT are (1) that racism in the United States is so embedded and widespread that it appears normal in U.S. society and culture; (2) the principle of interest-convergence—that advances for Blacks and people of color are achieved only when the interests of Whites are served; and (3) that counter-stories and narratives, often in the form of biography and autobiography, is the method used to reveal the truth of the experiences of oppressed groups that debunk the myths about Blacks and people of color, which are promoted by the dominant view. One more important aspect of CRT is that interest-convergence is commonly guaranteed through legislation, the courts, and through

laws that are passed, dating to the Constitution of the United States whose overriding interest was controlled by powerful White males through protection of their right to property. By sharing experiences in Eleanor's life through her biographical counter-story, the pervasiveness of racism throughout her life is revealed, in addition to the principle of interest-convergence.

Paralleling CRT's call to context, BFT solicits storytelling of the lives of Black women. These stories clarify a "Black women's standpoint—in essence, an interpretation of Black women's experiences and ideas by those who participate in them."¹³ "When we share our stories and seek to unshroud the lives of women who have come before us, the telling empowers us all."¹⁴ "Black women have been doubly victimized by scholarly neglect and racist assumptions. Belonging . . . to two groups . . . traditionally . . . treated as inferiors by American society—Blacks and women—they have been doubly invisible. Their records lie buried, unread, infrequently noticed."¹⁵ More histories of Black women need to be written. Although the literature is making some gains, the experiences of Black women still remain neglected and obscured, with the exception of a handful of "leaders." "A general history and regional histories of black women need to be written. Many outstanding women deserve to have biographers . . . it is . . . hoped that historians, researchers and writers will turn their talents to this relatively unexplored field."¹⁶ It is my ardent belief that Eleanor's story is one worth telling and that there remain, as Gerda Lerner says, many stories yet to be told.

Several searches of online resources and libraries yielded interesting results. A subject search on "Biography as a literary form" generated 186 records from the Iowa State University (ISU) Parks e-library. Many of these books have an older copyright date. Most of these books offer no insight into Eleanor's life as a biographical research project. The

entries are specific to individuals, different countries, different times in history, for example, England, Spain, different religions, and White men and women. None of the entries provided insight into writing biography situated in CRT or BFT. Results were similar when performing a subject search on "Biography," yielding 142 records.

A subject search on "African Americans –Biography" produced 345 records. In looking at these records, several things are apparent: (1) many of the books are general in nature, (2) many of the books are accounts of well-known men, (3) many of the books have older copyright dates from the 1940s through the 1980s, (4) the books about women are about more well known women activists, performers, and writers, (5) there are few, if any books that depict anything similar in nature to Eleanor's story.

A final subject search was conducted on "African American women –Biography." This search generated 35 records. It is interesting to note that this search did not produce titles of African American women's biographies that are found in the broader search under the subject, "African Americans –Biography." The results reflect that there are few, if any, titles similar in nature housed in the Parks Library to the biographical work undertaken about Eleanor's life. Several of these titles represent volumes that detail the lives of several women, and in some cases, anywhere from 50-100 women.

Resources representing the stories of Black Iowa women are few. Barnes and Bumpers published a book in 2000 whose focus is the ten Iowa cities with the highest population of Blacks.¹⁷ It is a resource rich with photographs and a brief history of Blacks in each of the cities. Eleanor recognized many of the people in the chapter about Des Moines. In 1999, Hubbard published an account of his life's story as the University of Iowa's first African American professor.¹⁸ There is a section in the autobiography with several

photographs. There is an index, however there seem to be no entries bearing names associated with Eleanor. Bergmann published *The Negro in Iowa* in 1969.¹⁹ This history is more general in nature. There is no index. The references for the publication appear to be general. Douglas published an account in 1998 of the racial stereotyping that took place at Camp Dodge during 1917-1918.²⁰ This account does not provide any specific insights into the lives of African American women in Iowa. Dykstra's 1993 work is a broader historical account of White supremacy in Iowa.²¹ Schwieder published a historical overview in 1996 of Iowa's diverse development.²² *Outside In: African-American Experience in Iowa 1838-2000* is a forthcoming book about the African American experience in Iowa.²³ Chapters in it will address topics such as education, agriculture, women, the church, and others.

Boyd's recent 2000 book compiles approximately 116 personal narratives in, *Autobiography of a People: Three Centuries of African American History Told by Those Who Lived It*.²⁴ Women who could be considered Eleanor's peers by virtue of their year of birth, i.e., around 1918, who have narratives in the book include: Era Bell Thompson (1906), Dorothy West (1909), Pauli Murray (1910), Jane (1914), Rosa Parks (1913), and Ella Baker (1903). Six out of 116 indicates that there is room for Eleanor's story in the literature.

Stevenson provided a bibliography of works in 1985 about Black women in the United States. Fourteen works were listed under the headings "Biography" and "Autobiography."²⁵ Copyrights for these publications ranged from 1979 through 1984 and shared the lives of Billie Holiday, Hazel Harrison, Lena Horne, what it is like to be a Black lesbian in the White America, and others. These fourteen biographies or autobiographies, in combination with the subject searches conducted on the ISU e-Library, additional searches

conducted at other libraries, and online bookstores indicate that there is a need for stories like Eleanor's to be told.

From 1976 to 1981, the Black Women Oral History Project began interviewing 72 women from all over the United States. This work was published in 1987 and revised in 1989 as a guide to the transcripts generated as a result of the project.²⁶ Vaz published an anthology of aspects of the lives of African American women in 1995.²⁷ This work centered around four main themes: (1) Black women's social history through the lens of their activism, (2) image wars: literary and popular constructions of Black women, (3) performing their visions, and (4) contemporary psychosocial challenges. The story of Eleanor's life represents these four themes.

In another anthology, Vaz states that, "Learning and absorbing from other black women is part of the process of oral narrative research."²⁸ Paula Giddings makes the following statement that may be interpreted as an invitation to tell Eleanor's story, "What I have learned in the eighties and nineties is that the faith in progress our forebears taught was not only in terms of our status in society, but in our ability to gain increasing control of our own lives."²⁹

Bell-Scott offers an anthology that is a collection of essays, interviews, poetry, and photographic images. Through their chosen medium, these African American women tell stories about their lives. In the Foreword, Marcia Ann Gillespie shares the following

Women sharing their life stories enrich us all, and we hunger for the connection, often unknowingly. . . . When we share our stories and seek to unshroud the lives of women who have come before us, the telling empowers us all. We connect the dots between the personal and the political, the individual's truths and the larger realities; women's existence, our people's journey, and the human experience.³⁰

Bell-Scott adds additional support to telling the story of Black women's lives in the

Introduction:

This book is about the process of telling Black women's lives, with an eye toward what folks in my southern Black community call "flat-footed truths." To tell the flat-footed truth means to offer a story or statement that is straightforward, unshakable, and unembellished. This kind of truth-telling, especially by and about Black women, can be risky business because our lives are often devalued and our voices periodically silenced.³¹

In a previous anthology written by Bell-Scott representing the writings of 50 different women, it is noted that, "Reality *can be* (re)created by one who writes [or who tells her story]."32

Lerner offers the following insights into the importance of writing about the lives of African American women:

Black women have been doubly victimized by scholarly neglect and racist assumptions. Belonging as they do to two groups which have traditionally been treated as inferiors by American society—Blacks and women—they have been doubly invisible. Their records lie buried, unread, infrequently noticed. . . . There have been few biographies of black women of the past, fewer monographs. . . . It is, in my opinion, too early to attempt the writing of a social history of black women. The research and monographic work which form the essential groundwork for such a study have yet to be done. . . . Black history collections, which abound in source material concerning "anonymous people," have failed to pay attention to black women, except for a handful of "leaders." . . . They [black women] have shown the pride and strength of people who have endured and survived great oppression. This has given them a sense of their own function in the life of their race and their families and a strong confidence in their own worth. If there is one theme that can emerge . . . it is the strength, racial pride and sense of community of black women. . . . A general history and regional histories of black women need to be written. The many outstanding women whose selections are included in this book deserve to have biographers. . . . It is to be hoped that historians, researchers and writers will turn their talents to this relatively unexplored field.³³

The voices of the preceding Black women are too powerful to ignore. From their statements, observations, research, and experiences, Eleanor's biography is a significant contribution in giving voice to the experiences of Black women.

QUESTIONS INVESTIGATED

Interviews with Eleanor began by focusing on her education and teaching experiences, as well as her family background. When the mutual decision was made by Eleanor and me to expand Eleanor's story into a biography, new questions were added to provide further depth and insight into her life's activities. The following listing represents all of the questions and topics around which Eleanor's interviews centered:

1. **Background information:** Birth name, current name, age, date of birth, and place of birth. Family's background as far back as you would like to or can go, for example, your grandparents, parents, siblings, your origins, where you grew up and lived, occupations, education of family members; your children, your spouse, and their education and careers.

Describe your experiences while growing up, for example personal and school recollections. Who and what influenced you, how and why?

Describe your education and school environment while growing up, the race/ethnicity of students and teachers, the curriculum. Who was represented in the curriculum? What was your class size, the resources available to you in school, general parental involvement, learning styles, testing. Was tracking used in your school. If so, did it affect you and how? What extracurricular activities were you involved in?

2. Describe any instances of racism or discrimination that you experienced.
3. Describe the role of religion and the church in your life.
4. **College:** Describe where you went to college, your program of study, and your experiences there. If you were in a teacher preparation program, what was it like?

Please describe the coursework and curriculum. Do you feel that you were graded fairly while in college? What was the racial/ethnic makeup of the students and faculty while you were in college? Who was your support system while you were in college? Did you have a mentor, and if so, who? What were your housing accommodations while you were in college? If you student taught, where did you teach, what grade level, and what was that experience like for you? Were you involved in extracurricular activities, and if so, which ones?

5. Describe why you chose teaching as your career.
6. Describe your career in teaching. Where did you teach and for how long? What grade level or subject area(s) did you teach? What was the racial/ethnic makeup of the students, teachers, staff, and administration at the school where you taught? What did the curriculum represent in the school where you taught? Please describe any instances of racism or discrimination that you experienced while you taught.
7. Do you have any journals or diaries that you are willing to share?
8. Elaborate on why you never intended to teach. What did you really want to do? Why did you end up teaching?
9. Identify and discuss your activities since your retirement.
10. Who were your role models? How did they influence you?
11. What were the expectations of your family for you?
12. What was your motivation and incentive for attending college?

One significant aspect of this research is that it offers fertile ground for interpretation and analysis in multiple realms. Further, I anticipate that Eleanor's story will achieve the appreciation for Eleanor and her life that I have.

METHODOLOGY

Carline Phillips is a mutual friend of Eleanor and me. When I explained my research focus to Carline, she generously took the initiative and recommended Eleanor as a fascinating individual and former teacher. Carline introduced me to Eleanor in the fall of 2000. We met at a restaurant in Des Moines, not far from Eleanor's home. As we ate lunch together, we learned more about each other. I explained my research focus to Eleanor, her role in the research, and what the process would involve. During lunch, I was fascinated and intrigued by Eleanor's accounts of events in her life. I contacted Eleanor by telephone to arrange our first interview. Eleanor indicated that her preference was to conduct the interviews in her home in Des Moines. Carline expressed interest in attending the interviews. Initially I felt reservations about Carline's presence during the interviews because of my coursework in qualitative research and methodology. However, I never expressed my concern to anyone. After the first interview, I gave more considerable thought to what I originally perceived as a potential dilemma in maintaining the integrity of the interview process. Although my research was not necessarily qualitative, resources describing oral history or oral narrative interviews prescribed parallel considerations. My thoughts returned to my grounding in Black feminist thought and the sense of community embodied within both my readings and my personal experiences. My conclusion resolved that there was nothing detrimental in Carline's presence during the interviews. Conversely, Carline's presence represented my perception of the sense of community and sisterhood, as well as someone familiar to Eleanor who made Eleanor feel more comfortable. Further, Carline raised many interesting and stimulating questions during the course of the interviews. Later in the process, Carline's commitments prevented her from attending some of our interviews.

By that time, Eleanor and I were comfortable with each other and established what I feel is an excellent relationship. Patricia Hill Collins describes the importance of dialogue and connectedness for Black women working out new knowledge claims:

“Dialogue implies talk between two subjects, not the speech of subject and object. It is a humanizing speech, one that challenges and resists domination,” asserts Bell Hooks (1989, 131). For Black women new knowledge claims are rarely worked out in isolation from other individuals and are usually developed through dialogues with other members of a community. A primary epistemological assumption underlying the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims is that connectedness rather than separation is an essential component of the knowledge validation process (Belenky et al. 1986, 18).

This belief in connectedness and the use of dialogue as one of its criteria for methodological adequacy has Afrocentric roots. In contrast to Western, either/or dichotomous thought, the traditional African worldview is holistic and seeks harmony. “One must understand that to become human, to realize the promise of becoming human, is the only important task of the person,” posits Molefi Asante (1987, 185). People become more human and empowered only in the context of a community, and only when they “become seekers of the type of connections, interactions, and meetings that lead to harmony” (p. 185). The power of the word generally (Jahn 1961), and dialogues specifically, allows this to happen.³⁴

The study progressed through interviews, which were two hours or more in length each. The interviews were audiotaped and notes were taken. For the first five (5) interviews, Eleanor prepared an audiotaped narrative that responded to my questions, thus providing a second primary source. She referred to the list of questions that I gave her, and one by one, hand-wrote her text, then recorded it on an audiotape. After the interviews and narratives were transcribed and printed, Eleanor made handwritten corrections on the word-processed originals, and gave them to me to make revisions. Each electronic version was labeled in ascending order. The primary documents that Eleanor gave me were electronically scanned or copied. They were stored in electronic files on my personal computer or in labeled folders.

Eleanor and I participated in fourteen (14) interviews over one year's time. During this time, she shared a wealth of primary documents and artifacts from her personal collection with me. These primary documents and artifacts appear in the galleries later in this work. Unless otherwise noted, all of the primary materials are from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection. In some instances, newspaper clippings did not identify the source or the date. This is noted with the graphic and a comment is included as to the likely origins of the document. Some of the images in the gallery were touched up electronically to remove distracting dark lines, marks, and so on that resulted from the age of the artifact or from the scanning process. Additional primary documents and resources were identified and located from the trip that Eleanor and I made to the Iowa Historical Building in Des Moines in June 2001 to view the Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display.

Originally someone was contracted to do the transcription, however I did the transcription for the last six months of the research. Interview and narrative transcripts were positioned loosely under various generic chapter titles. To ensure trustworthiness, the electronic transcript copies were hand-corrected by Eleanor and then transferred to the current electronic file by me. Eleanor and I decided together how her story was told. Rather than interrupting the text in the biography, the decision was made to include the primary documents in three (3) different galleries within the biography.

This research was a vigorous examination of Eleanor's life, experiences, and activities as she shared them with me. Her story represents her life's experiences, primarily in Iowa, and as someone who never wanted to teach, but who ultimately did. The research

was entered into with Eleanor as the primary contributor and with the ultimate goal identified as a story that Eleanor feels is a true representation of her life as she lives it.

Trustworthiness. The constructions of reliability, validity, and objectivity in the positivist domain do not transfer into this biographical counter-story represented in telling Eleanor's life. Critical Race Theory scholarship embraces perspectivism, characterized by emphasizing concrete personal experience, i.e., particularity, whereas the positivist paradigm seeks to establish universal truths and generalizability. Also central to CRT scholarship is the call to context in examining the personal experiences of individuals, which is another source of conflict with the positivist notion of universality. When combining CRT's perspectivism and its call to context with Black Feminist Thought's purpose of examining the lives of Black women not previously considered intellectuals that establish Black women's standpoint, the framework of trustworthiness of the data and interpretation common to qualitative and critical postmodern research is a valid criterion for evaluation. The critical researcher's idea of catalytic validity becomes pertinent in this research context, i.e., "the degree to which research moves those it studies to understand the world and the way it is shaped in order for them [and all those interested in the dilemma] to transform it."³⁵ The goal of transformation directly applies to the overriding goal of seeking social justice. One of the most compelling aspects of trustworthiness in Eleanor's biography is her ongoing input and edited corrections through every phase of the interview and manuscript production process. Another major factor is the amount of time that was spent in the interview process with Eleanor—fourteen interviews averaging two hours in length each over one year's time, which were conducted in Eleanor's home, an environment where she felt safe and comfortable. Our communication did not end with the interview process, however. We

continued to exchange information and corrections through telephone conversations and by mail. Our time spent in the overall research process extends to the time that we spent establishing a sound relationship. By audiotaping, transcribing, printing, and returning the interview manuscript documents to Eleanor to make corrections on the hard copy, the research was conducted in a participatory mode and further trustworthiness of the data is ensured. Consistent cataloguing, filing, labeling, and handling of the paper and taped transcripts and primary documents is one more aspect of trustworthiness of the data. There were frequent member checks with Eleanor over the course of the research and while writing the final version of the document. Some events in Eleanor's life arose during several interviews and her accounts reinforced and validated each other, in addition to primary documents from her personal collection that corroborated her statements. In some instances, there was more than one primary document that substantiated Eleanor's account of her life, as well as documentation and corroboration from two or more other sources, both primary and secondary. In Butchart's discussion of conducting nearby history, four types of visual and material documents are noted that constitute historical evidence, just as do written documents. These four types include pictures, particularly photographs; items from education's material culture; education's iconography; and buildings.³⁶ Three forms of these visual and material primary documents occur in Eleanor's personal collection and appear in the galleries: photographs; items from education's material culture; and buildings, thereby further establishing trustworthiness. As each chapter was completed, a copy was given to Eleanor on which she made corrections and reworded portions of the manuscript to more accurately represent her life. Eleanor's wealth of primary documents provided authentication of her life and her activities that are detailed in her biographical manuscript. Eleanor's and

my visit to the Iowa Historical Building in Des Moines produced more primary document verification that supported the social conditions during Eleanor's life and in Des Moines, which supports the trustworthiness of the events in her life as they are recorded. Primary and secondary sources documented the conditions in Iowa and Des Moines over the course of Eleanor's life through the present time. When discrepancies were found, they were noted in the endnotes. Eleanor's account, her primary documents, in addition to other primary and secondary sources provide triangulation of the data in numerous instances. For example, Eleanor's recollections of the segregated YMCA in Des Moines during her youth is supported through newspaper clippings featuring statements from Black Iowans living in Des Moines at the same time as Eleanor. Two autobiographies of Black men involved in the activities of the YMCA during the same years as Eleanor further substantiate Eleanor's memories of the segregated practices prevalent during that time. Many of these primary and secondary resources were identified by me over the course of the research and include aspects of Iowa history and the state of Blacks in Iowa historically and into the current time. These resources extend to the literature on CRT and BFT. Trustworthiness was further assured through meetings and discussions with peer reviewers and with my co-chairs throughout the research process. Rather than adopting the objective stance prominent in positivist research, my biases in this research are clearly stated in the interpretation and analysis section that is delineated next in this document. In so doing, trustworthiness is maintained and consonant with the qualitative and critical paradigms in which trustworthiness is situated.

Eleanor is a living archive of historical and current information and a rich resource for this primary document research. Gerda Lerner's research, *Black Women in White*

America, is both highly respected and credible research upon which Eleanor's story was modeled.³⁷ The major difference between Lerner's work and this research is that her resources generated from archival sources, whereas Eleanor's interviews and her personal archives constitute the major portion of primary document sources for this research.

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Inherent in locating and revealing the traditions of Black women not previously considered intellectuals, the tradition is situated in truth-telling stories, which often take the form of a biography or an autobiography. Mitchell and Lewter state the following about the narrative method:

Bible tales are often told for the wisdom they express about everyday life, so their interpretation involves no need for scientific historical verification. The narrative method requires that the story be told, not torn apart in analysis, and trusted as core belief, not "admired as science."³⁸

One bias lies in my definition of what constitutes a biography. I was influenced to some degree by the numerous biographies that I read during my lifetime. In order to commence any discourse, agreement must first be reached regarding a definition of the terms employed. To me, a biography tells the story of someone's life through a second person—the person with whom the life is shared. To honestly give passion to that privilege, there minimally must be mutual trust, respect, and empathic understanding—what I consider basic elements in human relationships. There further needs to be established realness or genuineness, honesty, acceptance, and caring.³⁹ Hill Collins makes the following statement about the ethic of caring:

These components of the ethic of caring—the value placed on individual expressiveness, the appropriateness of emotions, and the capacity for empathy—pervade African-American culture. . . . Two contrasting epistemological orientations

characterize knowing: one an epistemology of separation based on impersonal procedures for establishing truth and the other, an epistemology of connection in which truth emerges through care.⁴⁰

The ultimate true meaning and essence are in Eleanor's words and in her life, just as the meaning lies within us all. Denzin's description states that:

We must remember that our primary obligation is always to the people we study, not to our project or to a larger discipline. The lives and stories that we hear and study are given to us under a promise, that promise being that we protect those who have shared with us. And, in return, this sharing will allow us to write life documents that speak to human dignity, the suffering, the hopes, the dreams, the lives gained, and the lives lost by the people we study. These documents will become testimonies to the ability of the human being to endure, to prevail, and to triumph over the structural forces that threaten at any moment to annihilate all of us. If we foster the illusion that we understand when we do not or that we have found meaningful, coherent lives where none exist, then we engage in a cultural practice that is just as repressive as the most repressive of political regimes.⁴¹

From this basis, it is Eleanor's story that I find interesting. I purposely minimized interpretation and analysis of Eleanor's life in the text of her biography, however, at the same time, interpretation and analysis take place through what was identified, selected, and told as Eleanor's story. The primary documents that were selected for inclusion from her personal collection and the historical aspects that compliment her life experiences woven into the manuscript constitute additional interpretation and analysis. Eleanor is the authority on her life as she lived it. Historical contexts were established throughout her biography that were drawn from interviews, narratives, Eleanor's primary documents, and from other primary and secondary sources. Important in this process is that Eleanor made her primary documents available from her personal collection to include in her biography. Thus, the main text of Eleanor's biography does not represent over-interpretation in keeping with Denzin's caution, "this sharing will allow us to write life documents that speak to human dignity, the suffering,

the hopes, the dreams, the lives gained, and the lives lost by the people we study,” and “foster the illusion that we understand when we do not.”⁴²

This research, and another bias, is grounded in the tenets of CRT: (1) that racism in the United States is normal; (2) that exploring the experiences of marginalized groups often takes the form of storytelling; and (3) the principle of interest convergence—the idea that White elites will tolerate or encourage racial advances for Blacks only when they also promote White self-interest. How Eleanor lives and negotiates her life in Iowa terrain, as well as outside Iowa over her lifetime, provides one provocative and illuminating lens through which to view not only history, but the life of a remarkable woman by any measure during any time, anywhere, and any place. Eleanor’s life story reflects her encounters with racism in a society dominated by Whites, those views, and those practices that cause racism to appear normal in U.S. society. Telling Eleanor’s life story as a biography represents the storytelling aspect inherent in both CRT and BFT.

My biases grounded in CRT and BFT provide the lens through which I personally view Eleanor’s life as she shared it with me. In Eleanor, I see a strong, self-determined woman who sought uplift through education for herself and her children. These traits are deeply rooted ones in the tenets of BFT.⁴³ Based on the literature that was reviewed representing several fields and philosophies, each of which discusses the “right” way to conduct research and the “right” way to write a biography, the context of Eleanor’s life is situated in the tradition of storytelling represented in CRT and BFT literature. Significantly, it is a response to the call issued by several authors noted previously for more accounts of Black women’s lives. Critical Race Theory and BFT remained influential in my own thinking about the events represented in Eleanor’s life. My bias is in knowing Eleanor and

holding her in the highest esteem. My bias is being a purist in a, generally speaking, short-sighted culture. Nevertheless, in spite of these shortcomings, I sincerely believe that Eleanor and I created a work of art together. The art was Eleanor. The instrument was me.

RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

I find Woodson's words as compelling today as when he first wrote them, as well as one rationale for this research of Eleanor's life:

The chief reason why so many give such little attention to the background of the Negro is the belief that this study is unimportant To educate the Negro we must find out exactly what his background is, what he is today, what his possibilities are, and how to begin with him as he is and make him a better individual of the kind that he is. Instead of cramming in the Negro's mind with what others have shown that they can do, we should develop his latent powers that he may perform in society a part of which others are not capable.⁴⁴

The format of this document proceeds as (1) front matter, (2) Preface, (3) Introduction, (4) Body of text (chapters with the endnotes at the end of each chapter); (5) Conclusion; (6) Bibliography. The Introduction provides a historical backdrop and context of Blacks living in Iowa, for example, what brought them to Iowa, population representation, laws or unofficial practices that were designed specifically to address the Black population. This representation remains consonant with the underlying facet of CRT in that exclusionary and racist practices for Blacks are embedded within the laws and legislation passed in the U.S. and as such, represent the principle of interest-convergence. Chapter 1 details Eleanor's paternal and maternal ancestors and the path that they took to arrive in Iowa. Chapter 2 describes Eleanor's K-12 school years, family, and community activities while growing up in Des Moines, Iowa. Chapter 3 is an account of Eleanor's experiences while attending Iowa State College (ISC) as an undergraduate student from 1936-1941. Chapter 4 discusses

professional positions in which Eleanor was employed following her graduation from ISC. Chapter 5 illuminates events and experiences surrounding Eleanor's marriage and raising her children, as well as her beginning employment as a junior high school teacher in Des Moines, Iowa. Chapter 6 characterizes in more detail Eleanor's experiences teaching school in Des Moines. Chapter 7 details Eleanor's retirement years and her activities during that time. The Conclusion identifies significant events from examining Eleanor's life. The Conclusion presents a broad overview of primary document research that looks at the conditions of Black Iowans from 1966 through the present, as representing the overall social climate in Iowa and Des Moines where Eleanor lives and worked. Parallels are drawn between experiences in Eleanor's life with CRT and BFT. The Conclusion identifies implications of the study and questions inviting further investigation. The Bibliography is provided at the end of the manuscript.

Interpretation and analysis are accomplished through the selection of the facets of Eleanor's life included in her biography, her primary documents that are incorporated, as well as the historical aspects that compliment her life experiences. The Conclusion synthesizes the counter-story of Eleanor's life within CRT and BFT. Future plans for this work include a published biography of Eleanor's life story. From an internet search and email correspondence, I learned that there is a digital online archive in Kansas that is interested in work that addresses the all Black Sumner High School in Kansas City, Kansas from 1905-1978. Eleanor taught in this school for approximately nine years. As a result of this insight, future plans include designing and developing a digital online archive of this research, as well as making it available as a resource for other scholars who are interested in pursuing research located within the context of CRT and BFT.

It is my sincere and true belief that Eleanor's story offers inspiration and hope to many. She serves as a role model to a diverse group of people. Eleanor's story, crafted in this manner, culminated in a rich dialogue and narrative in concert with numerous primary documents. The voices represented in the literature search speak to the need for more biographical research about the lives of Black women. As represented in the literature searches, the majority of biographies that bear any similarities to Eleanor's story are limited in number. This research and the story of Eleanor's life is significant in the following ways:

1. It provides a view of Iowa history as uniquely lived and experienced by Eleanor.
2. The personal experiences in Eleanor's life, a Black female Iowan, from 1918 through the present are illuminated.
3. We have the opportunity to share Eleanor's experiences as a schoolteacher in Des Moines, Iowa and other locations during her lifetime.
4. Eleanor's life as representative of the tenets of Black Feminist Thought (BFT) representing self-determination, education as racial uplift, community and religious involvement, the network and kinship of Eleanor's African American family heritage.
5. Facets of Eleanor's life that represent experiences that parallel the tenets of Critical Race Theory.
6. Eleanor's biography as one response to the identified need by Black female scholars as noted in the literature for more biographical accounts of the lives of Black women.
7. Events from Eleanor's life while she was a teacher at Sumner High School, Kansas City, Kansas, contributes to the existing historical and archival information available about Sumner High School.

8. Events examined in the Conclusion identify the need for future research through counter-stories as biography or autobiography.

Notes for Preface

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⁴ Denzin, 1989a.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

⁶ P. R. Backscheider, 1999; R. C. Bogdan and S. K. Biklen. 1992. *Qualitative Research for Education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon; Denzin, 1989a; C. Glesne and A. Peshkin. 1992. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction*. White Plains, NY: Longman; R. Josselson and A. Lieblich, 1993; G. D. McCracken, 1988; C. N. Parke, 1996; T. Schwarz, 1990; L. M. Smith, 1994, pp. 286-305; H. F. Wolcott. 1990. *Writing Up Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

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⁸ Richard Delgado. Ed. 1995. *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, PA.

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¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 210

- ¹¹ Paulo Freire, 1970, advanced a similar theory of oppressed/oppressor in his work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder.
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- ¹⁵ Gerda Lerner. Ed.. 1992. *Black Women in White America: A Documentary History*. New York: Vintage Books, p. xviii.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xxxii.
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- ³⁰ P. Bell-Scott. Ed. 1998. *Flat-Footed Truths: Telling Black Women's Lives*. New York: Henry Hold and Company, pp. xiv-xvi.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. xvii-xix.
- ³² P. Bell-Scott. Ed. 1994. *Life Notes: Personal Writings by Contemporary Black Women*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, p. 25.
- ³³ Lerner, 1992, p. xviii, p. xx, pp. xxi-xxii, p. xxv, p. xxxii.
- ³⁴ Hill Collins, p. 212.
- ³⁵ Joe L. Kincheloe and Peter L. McLaren. 1994. Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, Eds., *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 151-i52. See also, Sharan B. Merriam. 1988. *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.
- ³⁶ Ronald E. Butchart. 1986. *The Nearby History Series: Local Schools: Exploring Their History*. Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History.
- ³⁷ Lerner, 1992.
- ³⁸ Henry H. Mitchell and Nicholas Cooper Lewter. 1986. *Soul Theology: The Heart of American Black Culture*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, p. 8.
- ³⁹ Carl Rogers and Jerome H. Freiberg. 1994. *Freedom to Learn. 3rd ed.* New York: Merrill.
- ⁴⁰ Hill Collins, pp. 216-217.
- ⁴¹ Denzin, 1989a, p. 83.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ Hill Collins, 1991.

⁴⁴ Carter G. Woodson. 1933, 1999. *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., pp. 190, 151.

Introduction

Why would Black Americans want to locate in Iowa? This question is a perplexing one when viewed in the context of the Reconstruction era and the following years. North of the magic Mason Dixon line, Iowa may have appeared inviting and provocative with its status as a free territory and later as a free state. This label was, however, more one that resulted from geographical location than from actual antislavery practices. Even though slavery never existed officially in Iowa, early White traders, government officials, and miners visited, traveled through, and settled in the territory with their slaves who were primarily house servants. During the mid- to late 1800s, industry and employment in agrarian Iowa was minimal, particularly in comparison to the larger eastern cities, for example, New York, Philadelphia, or Chicago where freedpeople more commonly and frequently settled. Numerous displaced freedpeople, as a result of their prior enslavement, were, for the most part, without the financial means that traversing to the west or north required. Nevertheless, Black Americans found their way to Iowa with the hope that a “free” territory and later state, promised.

The Black population in Iowa increased from 188 in 1840 to 10,685 by 1890. By the turn of the century, Blacks numbered 12,693 in Iowa. From 1850 to 1860, the Black population in Iowa more than doubled. Population for Blacks in Iowa from 1840 through 1940 from census records is as follows: 1840: 188; 1850: 333; 1860: 1,069; 1870: 5,762; 1880: 9,516; 1890: 10,685; 1900: 12,693; 1910: 14,973; 1920: 19,005; 1930: 17,380; 1940: 16,694. To provide a view of how many Blacks in Iowa were living in Des Moines, Polk County, the figures from 1870 through 1940 are: 1870: 303; 1880: 672; 1890: 1,194; 1900: 2,041; 1910: 3,591; 1920: 5,837; 1930: 5,173; 1940: 6,637. The figures clearly

indicate that more and more Blacks were moving to Des Moines, which became a city in 1850.¹

Schwieder classifies the migration of Blacks to Iowa in the early years into three general categories: (1) those who came in the 1840s and 1850s along the Mississippi River, (2) those who came during the same period but traveled up the Missouri River, and (3) those who came during the post-Civil War era to work as coal miners.² This means that the highest concentrations of Blacks at that time were found in cities like Dubuque, Sioux City, Davenport, Burlington, or Council Bluffs. Only the lower paying jobs were available to Blacks because higher-paying jobs were given to Whites. While Black men worked as laborers, lead and coal miners, porters, and waiters, Black women found employment as domestics, laundresses, cooks, and housekeepers.

Iowa followed suit in legislation established earlier in Indiana and Ohio, in passing laws that practically excluded Negroes from Iowa Territory. The First Territorial Assembly met in Burlington on November 12, 1838 to determine laws for the new Iowa Territory. Twenty-six of the thirty-nine members, southerners by birth, feared Negro migration into the territory. Just as CRT demonstrates, law, legislation, and legal action are major forces in solidifying racism and inequality in the United States since the writing of the Constitution and the concept of slaves as three-fourths of a person and who were considered property by their White owners. These laws and legislation further demonstrate a second CRT tenet in that the laws that are passed and the rights seemingly granted to Blacks are done so only when they ultimately serve the interests and benefits of Whites. Most frequently, these benefits translate into economic benefits for Whites and the ongoing oppression of Blacks.

As a result of the First Territorial Assembly in Iowa in 1838, the legislation withheld citizenship from Blacks and Mulattoes. Legislation that was passed on April 1, 1839 further denied Blacks permission to settle in Iowa unless they could present a fair certificate of actual freedom that carried a judge's seal, in addition to posting a \$500 bond as surety in the event they became a public charge. However, allowing slaves to accompany their owners into Iowa was still permitted.³ The legislature passed an act on January 6, 1840 declaring that all marriages between Whites and Negroes or Mulattoes were illegal and void.⁴

Thus, even though Iowa was a free territory and later a free state, White men in positions of power in the governing body set about to fashion Black Codes, not unlike those found in the oppressive southern slave states, which defined, governed, and limited the movements and behavior of Blacks. Iowans did not necessarily believe in racial equality, even though there were many Iowans who were in favor of abolishing slavery on the basis of religious and moral grounds. Scientific racism and the belief prevailed that Blacks were inferior to Whites and as humans and that the two races should remain separate. In 1735, Carolus Linnaeus, a famed biological taxonomist, was one of the first to classify humans on the basis of the social construction of race. His typology used both skin color and personal characteristics and divided people into White, Black, Red, and Yellow. His classifications are fundamental in classic racial stereotypes that exist even today.⁵ As early as 1854, Arthur de Bogineau of France promoted White supremacy in *Essai sur l'inegalite des races humaines*.⁶ Iowa historian Sage notes that,

On the question of the status and rights of Negroes, convention members and many of their constituents proved themselves to be no more and no less liberal than their contemporaries throughout the country. The Missouri Compromise may have saved Iowa from slavery; it had not saved the Negro—in Iowa or elsewhere—from a status of inferiority. In this era there was little disposition to think of the Negro as a human

being. It is almost startling to find the convention members seriously considering a proposition to exclude Negroes from residence in the state; startling, that is, until one recalls that the biological science of that day taught that the Negro belonged to a lower order of beings than the white man. Even advanced thinkers who believed in abolition of chattel slavery were not ready for the idea of Negro equality.⁷

According to the Federal census reports for 1840, there were 188 Black residents in the entire Iowa Territory, 16 of whom were listed as slaves, just four years before Iowa became a state in 1844.⁸ Even with the small numbers of Blacks present in the Iowa Territory, the political and social climates did not invite Blacks into Iowa. Dykstra called Iowa "one of the most racist territories in the North in the 1840s."⁹ Territorial and state constitutions most commonly used the word "white" when delineating citizenship privileges such as voting and serving in official government capacities, thereby effectively excluding Blacks from these basic rights. These same statutes excluded Black children from attending public schools.

An example of the contradictory and inconsistent nature of Iowa's response to Blacks is found in the case of Ralph, a slave, in 1839 in the Iowa Territorial Supreme Court's first case. Ralph persuaded his Missouri owner to let him come to Dubuque, Iowa in 1834 to work as a lead miner. Ralph's intention was to buy his freedom and his owner had determined that Ralph's value was \$550. Ralph struggled in making a living amidst the high cost of living that he found in Dubuque. Five years later, when Ralph's owner was having financial difficulties, he sent two agents to bring Ralph back to him. The agents appeared before a justice of the peace and swore out an affidavit stating that they represented Ralph's owner and that Ralph was still the man's property. Ralph was turned over to them and they left to take him back to his owner in Missouri. However, Alexander Butterworth heard about Ralph's arrest and counteracted it by obtaining a writ of habeas corpus on Ralph's behalf,

thus securing Ralph's release.¹⁰ It is interesting to note, however, that this Iowa decision predated the 1857 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the *Dred Scott vs. Sanford* case in which it stated that Negroes were not U.S. citizens and denied to Congress the power to prohibit slavery in any federal territory.

When Iowa became a state in 1844, the final draft of its constitution denied voting privileges to Blacks, barred them from holding legislative office, and prohibited them from service in the State militia. Even though Iowans rejected this constitution, the status of Blacks remained unchanged when another convention was called in 1846 and the constitution was accepted and went into effect the same fall.¹¹ Other restrictions on Black citizenship in Iowa included not allowing them to serve as witnesses against Whites in any court cases, nor were they eligible for statutory relief, and their children were not allowed to attend public schools.

An early educational law was passed in 1847 that denied Black children the right to attend the public schools in Iowa. The 1847 law stated that, "Schools would be 'open and free alike to all white persons in the school district between the ages of five and twenty-one years.'" In a law written even earlier than 1847, county assessors were instructed to list only "the white inhabitants of all ages" in each county.¹² This serves as another example of White Iowa legislators incorporating the word "White" into law that was exclusionary to Blacks.

However, in 1850, 17 Black children evidently attended public schools. The 1850 census listed 12 males and five females from a total of 122 Blacks who were legal school age and who were attending school.¹³ The Black children continued to attend school, however the practice varied from county to county.

The General Assembly continued their hostile assault on Blacks in Iowa by passing an exclusionary law in 1851 that prohibited Blacks from coming into the State of Iowa. Evidently Iowa was the first Northern state to pass such a law. The law allowed Blacks who were already living here to remain and own property, however any Black newcomers to the state were notified by officials within three days of their arrival that they had to leave. If they did not leave, they were subject to a fine of two dollars per day for each day that they remained. Interestingly, even though the law passed, it never became effective. All laws that were passed by the General Assembly were supposed to be published in the Mount Pleasant *True Democrat*. This was a necessary prerequisite for legislation to go into effect. The editor of the *True Democrat* held antislavery views and failed to publish the law. The result was that the law never went into effect. This did not, however, change the fact that Iowans, along with most Northerners of the time, found the presence of a Black population in their state undesirable.¹⁴

Approximately thirty-three Black delegates representing various Black communities in Iowa gathered in Muscatine's African Methodist Episcopal Church on January 5, 1857 for the state's first "colored convention." In addition to opposing colonization and encouraging Black Iowans' movement into agriculture, the attendees' minutes were paraphrased by an editor with their intent "to petition the Constitutional Convention to extend the right of the elective franchise to native born negroes and to bestow upon them all the rights and privileges of citizenship." Their minutes further supported "the utility of pressing forward to obtain education over every opposition," as upon this "depends the moral and political elevation of the colored race." Thus, the delegates appealed "for some aid from the school fund of the State, and very justly demur to being taxed for school purposes and at the same

time being deprived from its benefits.” The delegates then proceeded to sign a petition that demanded Black suffrage and addressed it to the forthcoming convention of 1858.¹⁵

In 1858 the General Assembly passed a comprehensive school law that specified that the district boards of directors should provide separate schools for the education of Black children. The only exception to this was when those Whites whose children attended the public school unanimously agreed that Black children could attend the same school as their White children. This act was held unconstitutional because the constitution of 1857 created a Board of Education, which held the authority to enact school laws. Although no reference to racial discrimination has been made in Iowa school laws since the act of 1858, separate schools for Blacks and Whites existed in some Iowa districts as late as 1874.¹⁶

Results of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act ultimately brought well-known New England abolitionist, John Brown, to Iowa. The Kansas-Nebraska Act sought to repeal the Missouri Compromise, which guaranteed that all area north of 36 degrees 30 minutes latitude in the Louisiana Purchase would be free from slavery. The end result was that Kansas and Nebraska territory settlers would ultimately decide if the areas were free or slave. This situation resulted in at least four trips to Iowa made by John Brown from 1855 through 1859. He visited Tabor, Des Moines, Grinnell, and Springdale. He was welcomed particularly by the Quakers in the state. While in Springdale in 1857, he prepared for his attack on Harpers Ferry. Brown’s presence in Iowa compliments the efforts of the Underground Railroad in the state, which began prior to 1850. Supporters of the Underground Railroad were primarily Congregationalists and Quakers. Penalties for assisting runaway slaves increased after the passage of the strengthened Fugitive Slave Act as part of the Compromise of 1850 wherein people risked fines up to one thousand dollars and sentencing of up to six months in jail.

One well-known underground route ran from the southwest corner of the state in Tabor, through Lewis, Fontanelle, Winterset, Lynnville, to Grinnell. From here people moved on to Iowa City and to Clinton, where they crossed the Mississippi River into Illinois.¹⁷ Other underground routes directed people North, i.e., following the North Star, on their way to Canada, where they would be free. The fact that Blacks were not safe in ending their journey in Iowa, and the very existence of the underground railroad, speaks to the racism that pervaded the state for the most part.

Suffrage was extended to Black Iowa males in 1868. The reasons for this move remain subject to speculation. Some assert that it was morally the right thing to do and that the right thing was done for the right reasons. Others believe that Iowans continued to be racist in their views and that the motives were more politically motivated along party lines than having anything to do with moral high ground. Nevertheless, Black males were granted the vote, accomplished by removing the word "white" from the constitution, in addition to the removal of the word from census and militia clauses. Only five New England states had granted suffrage to Black males prior to Iowa's enfranchisement in 1868. During the 1860s, Minnesota was the only other state to join Iowa in taking the action.¹⁸ Although Blacks would continue to witness more changes in legal and educational areas over the next fifteen years, barriers to employment, housing, and equal access to services remained unchanged. As continues to be the case, legislation does not ensure equality of opportunity or of access.

Legislative barriers to the education of Black children in Iowa were eliminated in Iowa in 1868, when Alexander Clark sued the Muscatine school because his daughter, Susan, was not allowed to attend the school there for White children. The Iowa Supreme Court ruled that the school board could not require children to attend a separate school because of

“race, religion, or economic status,” which resulted in a victory for Clark and his daughter. Successive cases in 1874 and 1875 supported the 1868 decision. It also was ruled by the court in 1875 that it was illegal to segregate passengers on Mississippi steamboats, which then extended to common carriers throughout the state.¹⁹ It is interesting to note that the Iowa decisions on education in 1868, 1874, and 1875, predated the United States Supreme Court doctrine of “separate but equal” in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* in 1896.

In 1884, the Iowa General Assembly passed the Civil Rights Act that was patterned after the federal Civil Rights Act of 1875. This law stated that “all persons within this state shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges of inns, public conveyances, barber shops, theaters and other places of amusement.” More categories were added to this law in 1892, which included restaurants, lunch counters, bathhouses, and “other places where refreshments are served.” In a sixteen-year time period, Iowans legislated voting rights to Black males, opened public schools to Black children, and access to public facilities. In spite of these legislative advances, the real circumstances for Blacks in Iowa remained difficult at best. They were still subject to economic hardship with few if any opportunities in more lucrative or professional employment, along with continued difficulty in finding decent housing. The legislation did not ensure equal opportunity or equal access.²⁰

From the 1860s through the 1870s, as the Black population in Iowa continued to increase, there was little coverage of their affairs in newspapers. Items detailing their activities actually decreased as their numbers rose. These infrequent reports by the late 1880s and 1890s were almost always located on the page devoted to criminal activity depicting crimes such as murder, rape, and thievery. The numerous worthwhile social and

educational endeavors that Black citizens were involved in seldom received coverage in the media. As a result, the *Iowa State Bystander* was established in Des Moines in 1894 to both elevate the Black race and to promote better race relations.²¹ The weekly paper covered items of national and local interest, as well as the social activities of the Black community. Negative media coverage of Blacks by Whites, as well as graphic images, continued to work against a positive image of Blacks not only then, but into the present time as well.

A Des Moines City Directory offers insight into the Black Des Moines community for 1895-1896. The occupational status of 517 people listed as Blacks indicated employment in the following areas: Laborers: 98; Porters: 53; Barbers: 41; Waiters: 36; Cooks: 31; Janitors: 16; Domestic service: 16; Bell boys: 8; Miners: 7; Plasterers: 6; Students: 6; Coachmen: 4; Dressmakers: 4; Ministers: 4; Bootblacks: 3; Musicians: 3; Teamsters: 3; Printers: 3; Firemen: 3; Police: 2; Broommakers: 2; Chiropodists: 2; Laundresses: 2; and Butchers: 2. There was one person listed for each of the following occupations: constable, lawyer, physician, engineer, restaurant owner, manager, foreman, bookkeeper, bailiff, rodman, mail carrier, carpenter, mason, whitewasher, shoemaker, expressman, gardener, housekeeper, and bootstand operator. Through this time, Black barbers still had a substantial White customer base. This changed to a completely Black clientele after World War I.²²

By 1900, Des Moines had the largest Black population in the state of 2,041. This move was made by Blacks likely because of Des Moines' increasing size and the prospect of increased employment opportunities. Even so, employment open to Blacks remained limited and in the lower paying, less skilled jobs. One historian noted that,

The average black [in Des Moines] held a menial job and could hope for little or no upward mobility socially, economically, or politically. Generally blacks . . . received

the same treatment as their counterparts in the heavily industrialized cities convulsed by more violent racial tension.²³

Nevertheless, the professional community was growing in the Black community in Des Moines. In 1902, the Iowa Negro Bar Association was founded with Blacks from Illinois and Missouri. Black Iowans who participated in this founding included George H. Woodson, Charles P. Howard, Sr., S. Joe Brown, Gertrude E. Rush, and James B. Morris, Sr.²⁴ These emerging community leaders, along with the formation of Black organizations, witnessed advancements for the Black population in Des Moines, and Iowa, as a whole.²⁵

The formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) made its debut in Des Moines in 1915. The Des Moines chapter followed only six years after the formation of the national organization. The charter membership of 35 increased to 200 by September of the founding year. S. Joe Brown, a prominent Black Des Moines attorney, led the NAACP effort in Des Moines and served as its first president. More Iowa Chapters followed in Council Bluffs, Davenport, Waterloo, and Cedar Rapids in 1920 as a result of Brown's state district organizing efforts. The *Iowa State Bystander* reported NAACP activities, in addition to the NAACP's own national publication, *The Crisis*.

World War I brought its own changes to the Des Moines Black community in 1917 when the War Department informed the city that it was the site for a three-month Black officers' training camp. There were 1,250 candidates admitted between the ages of 25 and 40. This campaign was national in scope and seen in its broadest sense by some as continuing the effort to gain full citizenship rights for Black Americans.

Gabriel Victor Cools, a Black student from New York at the University of Iowa, made a firsthand report of Black life in Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, and Iowa City during

1918. He noted that although Blacks lived in various parts of Des Moines, the majority of them lived on the west side of the city. Because of interracial marriage, one group formed a colony and lived in a most undesirable part of the city because they were rejected by both the White and Black communities. Housing for Blacks ranged from shacks to well-built and comfortable dwellings ranging in price from \$2,000 to \$3,000. Occupations for Blacks in Des Moines improved during World War I, when they moved into semi-skilled and skilled labor. Prior to the war, Black businesses were few. However, it is speculated that the Black training camps at Fort Des Moines and Camp Dodge encouraged Black established businesses. Blacks who migrated to the North were used to doing business with their own race and complemented the boom in Black businesses in Des Moines. Even though Blacks participated in the political life of the community, their vote in the city and in the state had little impact on the politics.

Cools further noted that approximately two-thirds of the 5,000 Blacks in Des Moines in 1918 were church members. The majority of the church-going Blacks were affiliated with the Baptist and Methodist churches. There were no public recreational centers in Des Moines for Blacks at that time. It was in 1919 when the Crocker Y.M.C.A. branch opened its doors on July 1 with Ernest C. Robinson as its first Executive Secretary. In the 1920s, there was a Negro community center housed in the old Franklin School building. Wilke House, the Black community center in Des Moines, opened in 1930.

There were 20 or more clubs for Black women functioning for educational and social purposes in Des Moines in 1918. There were local chapters of the National and State Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, and a University Women's Club. In addition, there were 14 Black secret societies, including

Masonic lodges, Odd Fellows, Knights Templars, Knights of Pythias, United Brothers of Friendship, and the Elks. Separation between Blacks and Whites on a social level remained strict.

Discrimination against Blacks was the norm in Des Moines. It was most evident in the theatres, restaurants, and hotels. Blacks were directed to inferior seats in the theatres and there were no first or second class hotels that would provide accommodations for Blacks in the city. Intermarriage between Blacks and Whites continued to be a taboo by both races.

Police records in 1918 revealed that the Black criminal activities were only 1.2 percent greater than that among Whites. Twenty percent were women offenders. Most of the arrests and convictions of Blacks were for assault and battery, carrying concealed weapons, larceny, gambling, intoxication, being present in disorderly houses, and vagrancy. There was less juvenile delinquency in the Black community's children than that in the White children's population.²⁶

Blacks helped in founding the Des Moines Interracial Commission in 1925, whose purpose was to eliminate inaccurate views about Blacks, as well as to promote cooperation between Blacks and Whites. The commission called for the elimination of segregated bathing beaches, of the exclusion of Blacks serving on grand juries, as well as the end of discriminatory practices in rental and property selling practices. Another focus of the commission was calling for at least one Black teacher to be hired by the Des Moines school board.²⁷

Black teachers were not given the opportunity to teach in Iowa, except in the town of Buxton. From the 1890s through 1910, most Black teachers were forced to go South to practice their profession. The schools in the North remained dominated by Whites. The

Black school student population in Des Moines between 1930 and 1940 was around 1,200 to 1,300. In 1945, Harriet Curly Bruce became the first Black teacher in the Des Moines Public School System in a kindergarten classroom.²⁸ Although some school board members objected to the hiring of the first Black teacher, they were defeated in the school board election. In 1947, there were three full-time and four substitute Black teachers in Des Moines. In a public discussion that took place later, the Black teachers expressed their belief that they were fully accepted without discrimination by parents, students, and faculty.²⁹

Although there was some progress for Blacks in Iowa during World War I and the 1920s, the Depression years created more setbacks and created prejudice where none had existed before. Blacks were seen as competition for White laborers, thus causing more resentment in a strained economy during times that were difficult for everyone. Even though Blacks were less than one percent of the Iowa population during the Depression years, they remained confined to unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. The Iowa Blacks' experiences paralleled those of Blacks across the nation and were impacted earlier by the Depression than were Whites. Even though married Black women had always worked outside the home in greater numbers than White women, the Depression heightened their dilemma. Many were laid off as the country sank deeper into the Depression. This put more Black families in Iowa in jeopardy because it often was the five-dollar weekly wages earned by women that kept families intact. The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as President, brought the era of the New Deal to the United States and to Iowans. It was during his administration that the Works Project Administration (WPA) and the National Youth Administration (NYA) sought to bring work, education, and a paycheck to economically depressed Americans. Mary McCleoud Bethune, a Black American, became the Director of Negro Affairs for the

Roosevelt administration's NYA. The arms of the WPA and NYA reached Iowa, but still did not relieve much of the depression-related problems for the Black community in Des Moines. The Davis-Bacon Act passed in 1931, which favored hiring White workers who belonged to White-only unions over non-unionized Black workers, exacerbated these problems.

In 1930, almost 42 percent of Blacks in Iowa owned their homes. This increased to 44 percent Black homeowners in 1940, or more than four out of every ten Black households owned the dwellings in which they lived. One historian indicates that home ownership is somewhat indicative of the character of Iowa Blacks:

It is in the main a lower middle and working class group. A few know poverty, a few prosperity. The bulk are quiet, anonymous, hardworking wage earners. About half of them attend church. Approximately 30 per cent of them have gone through grammar school, 30 per cent attended high school, 12 per cent finished high school, 6 per cent have attended college, and about 2 per cent have graduated from college. Over 95 per cent of them own one or more radios and receive one or more newspapers, usually the Negro weekly, *The Iowa Bystander*, in addition to a daily paper.³⁰

As a result of the period following World War I and the decline in jobs for Blacks, there was a gradual departure from Iowa of several thousands of Blacks by 1940. A glimpse into a 1939-1940 Negro Business and Information Directory provides additional insight into the Des Moines Black community during that time period:

Drug Stores

Community Pharmacy, Mr. J. W. Mitchell, Prop. Special attention given to our prescription department. 1200 Center Street, Phone 3-9860. [Mrs. Mitchell A., Pharmacist, as noted by Eleanor.]

McLeaine, Morris P., (Community Pharmacy). A licensed Pharmacist. 1200 Center Street, Phone 3-9850.

Walker Street Pharmacy, Mr. Harry W. Hammitt, Prop., 1554 Walker Street, Phone 6-1875.

Dentists

Ritchey, Dr. Wm. J., 517 Mulberry Street, Phone 3-8411.

Willis, Dr. L. R., 205 Watrous Building, 6th Avenue and Mulberry Street.

Dress Designing Modiste

Mrs. James Otis, 1169 14th Street, Phone 7-4705.

Morris, Mrs. Georgine C., 955 17th Street, Phone 4-7776.

Fant, Mrs. Goldie, 1654 Walker Street, Phone 6-5242.

Extermination and Fumigation

The Uneedor Chemical Company, Mr. Lawrence J. Chapman, owner. We offer complete exterminating service for all household insects, and use gas indorsed by U.S. Government. We Moth-Proof. 3005 3rd Street, Phone 3-5068.

Funeral Homes

Estes Funeral Home, John M. Estes, Mortician and Director. Home completely remodeled. Our own complete rolling stock. Lady attendant. 811 14th Street, Phone 3-5944.

L. Fowler and Son. "Funeral Home Beautiful." One of the Oldest and Best equipped Funeral Homes in the Middle West. 1701 Walker Street, Phone 6-2713.

Garages

Saunders Auto Repair, John Saunders, Prop., 1306 Day Street.

Tucker & Carter Paint & Body Shop. Tucker and Carter, Props. 20 years of experience in gendreeks. 3443 Des Moines Street, Phone 6-4446.

Warrick Auto Service, F. B. Warrick, Prop. General service, battery repairing and service, oil, tires, glass installed, ignition, starter and generator repairing, body and fender work. We specialize in brake service. 22 years experience on all makes of cars. 1320 E. 18th St., Phone 6-2553.³¹

In 1948, Edna Griffin of Des Moines was a leader of civil rights in Iowa. Even though Iowa law established many years prior that discrimination was illegal, it remained a practice in the state and in Des Moines for decades. It was Edna Griffin and two other Black Des Moines individuals who challenged Katz drugstore's policy of refusing service to Blacks at its lunch counter in Des Moines. Misdemeanor criminal chargers were filed against the Katz store manager under an 1882 Iowa statute that made it a crime to refuse service based

on race. The Iowa Supreme Court upheld the manager's conviction and the precedent was set. The case of Ralph, a slave, and Alexander Clark's efforts to secure an education on behalf of his daughter, Susan, were strengthened by the Katz decision.

The ten years between 1950 and 1960 were the largest increase in the Black population in Iowa, matched only by the Reconstruction period of the 1870s. The Black population in Iowa reached 25,354 in 1960, indicating a growth of 6,000 in a ten-year period. Forty percent of the Blacks in Iowa lived in Des Moines in 1960. The Black population combined for Des Moines and Waterloo equaled sixty percent of all Blacks in Iowa. In 1963, Lacey D. Spriggs became the first Black administrator in the Des Moines Public Schools when he was named Vice Principal of Irving Junior High School. Spriggs later became Principal at Brody Junior High School in Des Moines. Iowa became one of the first states to enact a civil rights statute consistent with the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964. Dr. James Bowman became the first Black Iowan to be appointed Director of Elementary Education for the Des Moines Public School District. He stayed in this position until 1980, when he was promoted to Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. He retired in 1989 after serving the Des Moines Public Schools for 35 years. It was not until 1990 that Dr. Augusta A. Clark became the first Black principal of an Iowa high school at Waterloo East High.³²

The Black population in Des Moines increased from 32,956 in 1970 to 42,228 in 1980—an increase of 29.5 percent. Three counties represented 68.8 percent of the Black population living in Iowa. Polk County (Des Moines) had a population of 13,844 Blacks; Black Hawk County (Waterloo) had a population of 8,733 Blacks; and Scott County (Iowa Quad cities/Davenport) had a population of 6,453 Black residents.³³

This brief historical account of Iowa's beginnings and the Black Americans who came here to live seeking a better life for themselves and their families, is the backdrop for Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's family history and her biography. The laws and legislation, along with the prevailing contradictory practices in Des Moines and throughout Iowa, demonstrate the tenets of CRT. Laws, legislation, and written documents such as the state's constitution excluded Black Iowans from full participatory citizenship in the territory and the state, as well as from education. Inherent in these laws and practices were racist attitudes, particularly from the time of the First Territorial Assembly, whose membership constituted 26 southerners by birth fearing Negro migration into Iowa territory out of total of 39 assembly members. Even though laws and legislation later granted full citizenship and education rights to Blacks in Iowa, actual practices in the state remained exclusionary and racist for the most part. The struggle of Blacks in Des Moines to establish churches, equal education, societies, organizations, and a community represent the tenets of BFT, as do the role of Black women in striving to accomplish their goals in their professions and in attaining education. The tenets of BFT identify the formation of clubs, churches, societies, and organizations as venues for activism as central in Black women's uplift, just as education was viewed in the same light for racial uplift. "Lifting as we climb" was the motto of the National Association of Colored Women, founded in 1896, and further illustrates the longstanding tenets of activism in concert with racial uplift advocated by Black women.³⁴ It is through counter-narratives such as Eleanor's that follows, through the stories of an individual's experiences, that history and truth begin their revelations.

Notes for Introduction

- ¹ Bergmann, 1969, pp. 34-35. See also Frances E. Hawthorne. 1995. *African Americans in Iowa: A Chronicle of Contributions: 1830-1992*. African American History Project, Iowa Humanities Board.
- ² Schwieder, 1996, p. 84.
- ³ Bergmann, February 1969, pp. 8-9.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ W. Watkins, 2001. *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, New York, NY: Teachers College Press, p.27.
- ⁶ Ibid., pp. 25-26.
- ⁷ Leland L. Sage. 1974. *A History of Iowa*. Ames: The Iowa State University Press, p. 83. Regarding the idea of Negro inferiority, Sage references William R. Stanton. 1960. *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes towards Race in America, 1815-1859*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- ⁸ Bergmann, p. 11.
- ⁹ Robert Dykstra. 1982. White Men, Black Laws: Territorial Iowans and Civil Rights, 1838-1843. *The Annals of Iowa* 46, p. 403.
- ¹⁰ Richard Lord Acton. 1989. To Go Free. *The Palimpsest* 70, pp. 53-55. This article is now in the book by Richard Lord Acton and Patricia Nassif Acton. 1995. *To Go Free: A Treasury of Iowa's Legal Heritage*. Ames: Iowa State University Press. Refer also to Joseph F. Wall. 1978. *Iowa: A Bicentennial History*. New York: Norton, pp. 91-92.
- ¹¹ Bergmann, p. 14.
- ¹² Annie Cooper. 1986. A Stony Road: Black Education in Iowa, 1838-1860. *The Annals of Iowa* 48, pp. 119-120.
- ¹³ Ibid., p. 122.
- ¹⁴ Robert Dykstra. 1984. The Issue Squarely Met: Toward an Explanation of Iowans' Racial Attitudes, 1865-1868., *The Annals of Iowa* 47, p. 431. See also Bergmann, p. 15 and Schwieder, p. 85.
- ¹⁵ Dykstra, 1997, p. 151.
- ¹⁶ Bergmann, p. 20. See also Cooper, p. 129 and Schwieder, p. 88.
- ¹⁷ Schwieder, pp. 70, 71.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 87.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., p. 88.
- ²⁰ Bergmann, p. 54. See also Schwieder, p. 89.
- ²¹ Bergmann, pp. 44-45.
- ²² Ibid, p. 47.
- ²³ Jack Lufkin. 1980. The Founding and Early Years of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Des Moines, 1915-1930. *The Annals of Iowa* 45, pp. 455-459.
- ²⁴ In 1925, the organization was incorporated in Des Moines as the National Bar Association. Hawthorne, p. 33.
- ²⁵ Schwieder, pp. 198-199.
- ²⁶ Bergmann, pp. 60-63.
- ²⁷ Schwieder, p. 201.
- ²⁸ Dates for when Harriet became the first Black Des Moines schoolteacher vary between 1945 and 1947. Hawthorne cites Mrs. Bruce as "Henrietta." Eleanor recalls that Harriet became the first teacher in 1945. Bergmann notes Mrs. Bruce as becoming the first teacher in 1945.
- ²⁹ Bergmann, p. 87.
- ³⁰ Ibid., p. 76.
- ³¹ Barnes and Bumpers, p. 66.
- ³² Ibid., p. 96. See also Hawthorne, pp. 56, 57, 61.
- ³³ Hawthorne, p. 65.
- ³⁴ Giddings, 1984.

1 The Path Leads to Iowa

Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer was born in 1918 and raised in Des Moines, Iowa, where she resides today. Her ancestors can be traced to the late 1800s, where they lived in Kentucky and Missouri before moving to Iowa. Ancestral heritage and tracing genealogical records is taken for granted by some White people in the United States. Often times, for some White people, their genealogical roots provide a source of pride, as well as their basis to the accumulation of wealth and power in a country whose Constitution rests on the precept of property. It was this underlying and foundational basis of property, resulting in White wealth and power, that provided the irrational, inhumane, and oppressive practice of slavery and racism in the United States that has been perpetuated for hundreds of years. Black Americans continue in their struggle for equality amidst institutionalized racism through the present time. Genealogical records were not kept for slaves. Most frequently, slaves were named by their “masters,” and took on that individual’s family name. Given these practices, it is remarkable that Black Americans today can trace their genealogical heritage at all. However, Eleanor is a remarkable woman in every sense of the word. Her ancestral heritage, to the extent that it is known, is delineated in the following pages.

For reasons unknown, the paternal ancestors of Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer traversed the path from Cumberland County Kentucky to the Cooper County area in Missouri by covered wagon following emancipation and the aftermath of the Civil War, around 1870. Lucinda Rice, Eleanor’s great-grandmother and her father’s, Roy Estelle Powell, grandmother, was the property of Nathaniel Rice, a White plantation and slave owner located in Cumberland County Kentucky.¹ Lucinda was the mother of eight children. One of Lucinda’s eight children was Millie Ann, Roy’s mother and Eleanor’s grandmother, Millie

Ann Rice Powell. Nathaniel Rice, the White plantation owner, was Millie Ann's father.

Millie Ann, born around 1857, was eight years old when she learned of their freedom.

Eleanor's paternal great-grandfather, John Young, lived on a plantation neighboring Nathaniel Rice's plantation, where his wife, Lucinda, lived. They were not allowed to visit each other very often.

Around 1870, Millie Ann left Kentucky with her family at the age of eight years. The move from Kentucky to Missouri was made by two brothers, Jessie Young and John Young, who secured covered wagons to go North.² On their journey, they traveled roads that were mostly paths. John Young's covered wagon broke down in Cooper County, Missouri. The other brother, Jessie Young, who was ahead of his brother, became separated from John. Jessie waited, but younger brother John was lost and so far behind his brother. As a result, the brothers did not stay together. Jessie, who was ahead, proceeded to Minnesota, where he settled. Twenty years lapsed before the two brothers, John and Jessie, contacted each other again.

In 1890, the White plantation owner, Nathaniel Rice, traveled from Kentucky to Missouri and visited with Eleanor's grandmother, and Rice's daughter, Millie Ann, for one month. Rice also had a son, Rarzie Rice, who looked White and who came from Kentucky to visit with his relatives at one time in Cooper County Missouri. Millie Ann grew up in Missouri and married a man named Albert Powell. Millie Ann and Albert were the parents of eight children, one who was Eleanor's father, Roy Estelle Powell. Jessie and John Young, the brothers who traveled by covered wagon, lost contact with each other again after Millie Ann Rice Powell, Eleanor's grandmother, passed.

Eleanor's maternal Grandfather Alexander Cephas Payton was the son of a slave who lived on a plantation in Missouri. Alexander was born March 27, 1865 and was 78 years old when he passed in December 1943. Freedom came before he was put into servitude. His mother's owner saw to it that he received enough education to read, write, and to do basic math. He also had the opportunity to learn the bricklaying and plastering trades. He and Eleanor's Grandmother Anna Rebecca Marshall Payton were from plantations in Knox County Missouri.

Eleanor's Grandmother Anna Rebecca Marshall Payton could read and write, but it is not known how she was taught. Born in 1876, she was 68 years old when she died in May 1944. June 1880 census records for Newark Fabius Township in the County of Knox, State of Missouri are coded "Mu," indicating "mulatto," and "W" to indicate "White." Anna Rebecca Marshall Payton's entry, at the age of 14, is coded "Mu." Grandmother Payton's mother died when she was young and her father allowed her to marry possibly as an older teenager, but her age when she married is unknown. Grandmother Payton's sister, Sophie, moved first to Quincy, Illinois, and later to Chicago. It is unknown where her sister, Mabel moved.

Grandmother Anna Rebecca and Grandfather Payton had three daughters. Flossie was born in 1890 and lived to the age of 61 years, passing in 1951. Jeanne, Eleanor's mother, was born March 29, 1896 and passed April 1972 when she was 77 years old. Marie was born in 1902 and passed in 1944 when she was 42 years old. When the two younger daughters, Jeanne and Marie, were elementary school age, sometime between 1902 and prior to 1908, the family moved from Edina, Missouri to Des Moines, Iowa.³ It is unknown what motivated Grandmother and Grandfather Payton to make the move from Missouri to Des

Moines, Iowa. It is speculated, however, that Iowa was viewed as a less oppressive environment for Blacks, as well as offering public schools that were not segregated.

The three Payton girls began their education at Olive McHenry Elementary school at 17th and Crocker Streets in Des Moines. Jeanne, Eleanor's mother, then attended West High School located at 15th and Center. She later attended Des Moines University in Highland Park and was enrolled in the commercial office training program.⁴ She took piano and organ lessons as a young person. All three of the Payton girls, Flossie, Jeanne, and Marie, were musically talented, as was their mother, Anna Rebecca. Flossie played the tuba, Jeanne played the piano, Marie played the slide trombone, and Grandmother Anna Rebecca played the snare and bass drums.

Grandfather Payton did reasonably well at securing bricklaying and plastering work. He usually had a car to drive and sometimes a truck for hauling materials. His two older grandsons and son-in-law often helped him. The grandsons were the children of his oldest daughter, Flossie Payton Wilson, and her husband, Charles (aka Rabbit.) During the depression, Black Americans experienced a lot of discrimination and Grandfather Payton's jobs fell off as the Davis-Bacon Act was passed on March 31, 1931, which kept non-union members from working.

The Davis-Bacon Act required federal construction contractors to pay their workers "prevailing wages." The intent of the act was clearly to favor White workers who belonged to White-only unions over non-unionized Black workers. By the 1930s, most of these unions excluded Black membership completely. The construction industry in the south provided Blacks with more jobs than any industry except those in agriculture and domestic service in the 1930s.⁵ Blacks were migrating north at the same time. Just as Blacks experienced in the

south, they held a disproportionate share of unskilled construction jobs in the north. As historian Kruman notes, "By 1930 Black workers had obtained a foothold in the northern construction work force, but the low proportion of skilled construction workers who were Black suggests that the foothold was a tenuous one."⁶ The Davis-Bacon Act effectively eroded Blacks' foothold in both the north and the south.

When Bacon introduced the discriminatory bill, Congressmen immediately recognized its implications. They passed the bill because they saw it as a way to protect local, unionized White workers' salaries during the Depression era years. White union workers were particularly angry when Black workers, who were barred from unions, migrated north for jobs in the construction industry and undercut White wages.⁷ When Davis-Bacon became law on March 31, 1931, the federal government was initiating a public works program that accounted for approximately half of all the money that was spent on construction in the country. Within the boundaries of the discriminatory intent of the act, almost all of this money went to White workers.⁸

In 1935, the act was amended from its original \$5,000 minimum contract amount to a \$2,000 minimum contract amount that provided the determination for the prevailing wages. Contractors frequently limited their hiring practices to more highly skilled union workers because they gained no economic advantage in hiring less skilled workers who needed training and experience. As a result, most workers were recruited through the White-only AFL union. This practice further disenfranchised Black workers. Not only did these practices have substantial effects on Black skilled workers, such as Grandfather Payton, they were devastating to unskilled Black laborers. George Nichols, historian, remembers that in his youth in Des Moines, there existed a thing known as common labor. He recalls that there

were opportunities for Blacks when he first came to Des Moines from Louisiana through Missouri along the Mississippi River. "In those days they had janitors, elevator operators, window washers, manual work with shovels, picks, and wheelbarrows. That's something that doesn't exist today. There's no such thing as common labor."⁹ In 1920, when the Black population attained one of its peaks in Des Moines, Iowa, employment opportunities existed. Through their employment, Des Moines Blacks moved from menial labor to semi-skilled and skilled occupations.¹⁰ As a result, any gains that were made by Blacks living in Des Moines during the 1920s, such as those made by Grandfather Payton, were thwarted and diminished greatly because of the Davis-Bacon Act.

One venue that opened employment for Blacks during the 1920s and 1930s was that of being a train porter. Eleanor's cousin's husband, Clifford J. Stafford, is one man who survived the racist practices and made this his life's work. Stafford had a degree in languages from Wilberforce University. However, as in many other spheres, Black men were excluded from employment in their professions because of racist practices. Stafford, his wife, and son lived in Chicago, which is where he began his career as a porter. He chose this career because he could make more money being a porter than he could being a teacher. The Pullman Palace Car Co., founded in 1867, became a corporate giant in the U.S. by providing comfortable railroad travel to the American public. Some of Pullman's first employees were Black porters, many of whom were recently freed from slavery. The company employed 12,000 porters by the 1920s, but Blacks were excluded from being conductors. Few Blacks were hired in the Pullman repair and construction shops, nor were they invited to live in the community established by George Pullman, founder, for the company's employees just south of Chicago.¹¹

In 1925, Black porters formed The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters to battle the Pullman Co., which was once the nation's largest employer of Blacks. The Brotherhood was founded and headed by A. Philip Randolph in New York. In Chicago, the chief and organizer for The Brotherhood was Milton Price Webster. After ten years, the union garnered government certification as the porters' bargaining agent in 1935. Labor historian William H. Harris noted the 1935 achievement as "one of the longest continuous struggles for recognition in the annals of American trade unionism."¹² When The Brotherhood was formed in 1925, Blacks remembered suffering from a depression worse than the one during the 1980s when the article was written. The end of World War I found young Blacks who had secured jobs because of the shortage of White workers, being laid off. The Brotherhood survived in spite of much opposition and attempts by the big railroad unions to undermine them.

In 1941, Stafford became a porter and remained in that profession until he retired. Even after serving in World War II, he opted to return to the railroad. In 1980, he was the chairman of the Chicago District of the union, since merging in 1978 with the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks.¹³ His background in languages was an asset while traveling the routes from Chicago through New Mexico and on to Los Angeles. He spoke Spanish, French, and German and used all of those languages as a porter. Even though Stafford's employment as a porter began in 1941, he experienced events similar to those of Grandfather Payton that parallel the results of the Davis-Bacon Act.

Grandmother Payton did not work very much. She volunteered as a traveler's aide at Union Railroad Station in Des Moines. Both Grandmother and Grandfather Payton were dedicated to St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) and involved in various

responsibilities connected with the church, for example, class leader, steward, Deaconess, and Sunday school teacher. Grandmother Payton had her evangelist license, but did very little preaching.

Jeanne Payton, the middle daughter of Anna Rebecca and Alexander Payton, married Roy Estelle Powell around December 1917 in Des Moines, Iowa. As noted earlier, Roy's family was originally from Cumberland County, Kentucky and came to Iowa after first living in Cooper County, Missouri. Eleanor Rebecca Powell (Archer) was born at home on December 23, 1918 at 1107-11th Street, Des Moines, Iowa. The attending physician was Dr. Alvin Jefferson, an African American. Eleanor lived at the 11th Street location with her mother, Jeanne Payton Powell; her father, Roy Estelle Powell; her maternal grandmother, Anna Rebecca Marshall Payton; and her maternal grandfather, Alexander Cephas Payton. The location of Eleanor's birth home now is part of the 235 freeway, which was built in 1956 through the city. The destruction of numerous homes greatly impacted the African American community in Des Moines with the construction of the freeway.¹⁴

Eleanor remembers the house where she lived with her parents and grandparents, as well as the White neighbor boy she played with who lived across the street. Her maternal grandparents always lived in a house with indoor plumbing and central heating during the time she and her mother lived with them.¹⁵ Grandmother and Grandfather Payton always took the daily paper and *The Bystander*.¹⁶ They started every morning with prayer on their knees before breakfast and always had dinner together as a family.

Eleanor lived on 11th Street with her family until she was four and one-half years old, when her parents divorced. Shortly after her parents' divorce, Eleanor moved with her mother and grandparents to 949-17th Street, near Olive McHenry School. The new home

had a large living room, a dining room, kitchen with built-in cupboards on one wall, one huge bedroom, and one small bedroom. There was an open, large front porch with banisters around and an enclosed back porch. Eleanor never heard from or saw her father again and her mother never talked about him. Eleanor always remembered him and wondered about him. She remembers until this day, the last visit that he made to their new home. She did learn that her father moved back to Missouri, presumably where he lived with family members, and then later moved to California.

Eleanor accompanied her maternal grandparents, who always attended the softball games between African American Churches in Des Moines. The site for the playing field was located at Martin Luther King Drive and High, which is now the vacated Oldsmobile parking lot. They always attended the annual church picnics, which included many of the African American churches at a city park site. The support that Eleanor received from her family, her community, and her church provided her with the foundation and racial pride that she needed to begin school in Des Moines as a youth. Although the Des Moines schools were not segregated, racist practices existed in the community. As an only child, Eleanor received as much protection as could be provided by her family and community to shield her from the most damaging insults caused by racism in the community. For example, in 1926, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) marched in downtown Des Moines. They targeted not only Black citizens, but also Catholics and immigrants. In 1933, a Black Des Moines resident found a note on the door of his home stating the following:

If-you-niggers-let-the-sun-go-down-on-yours-heads-in-Clive-tonight-look-out-for-a-band-of-white-caps-who-will-come-to-string-every-one-of-you-to-the-first-tree-that-can-be-found.

Now-take-this-as-a-fair-warning-and-get-out-of-town. Never-to-come-back-and-tell-your-friends-that-niggers-can't-live-in-Clive.

Signed:

A-White-Cap [KKK member]¹⁷

In addition to these racist acts, many Des Moines businesses refused service to Black customers. The Black community responded by opening their own businesses to provide services to their community. In spite of the racism, the Black community established their own identity. This is evidenced in the photographs in the Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display at the Iowa Historical Building, Des Moines. Calendars, posters announcing cultural and other events in the Black community, family photographs, and numerous other artifacts attest to the richness of spirit within the Black community in Des Moines to which Eleanor's ancestors came, and in which Eleanor spent her youth.

Notes for Chapter 1

¹ Property as used in this context refers to the ideology of slaves as property of White owners in the U.S.

² The names of these two brothers, Eleanor's paternal great-grandfather, are not confirmed or absolutely certain.

³ The span for these possible dates is determined from the photograph picturing Eleanor's mother, Jeanne, at a St. Paul's A.M.E. annual picnic in 1908 in Union Park, Des Moines, Iowa.

⁴ Quentin R. Mease, executive secretary of the segregated YMCA in Des Moines, also attended Des Moines University. He notes about Des Moines University that it was a Baptist school that no longer exists and that he did undergraduate work in liberal arts there. Quentin R. Mease. 2001. *On Equal Footing*. Austin, Texas: Eakin Press, p. 12.

⁵ Mark W. Kruman. Winter 1975. Quotas for Blacks: The Public Works Administration and the Black construction worker. *Labor History* 16, p. 38.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁷ Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris. 1931. *The Black Worker*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 178.

⁸ David Bernstein. January 18, 1993. *The Davis-Bacon Act: Let's Bring Jim Crow to an End*. Briefing Paper No. 17, Crowell and Moring Law Firm, Washington, D.C. Available online at: <http://www.cato.org/pubs/briefs/bp-017.html>

⁹ George Nichols. 1985. *Black Des Moines: Voices Seldom Heard*. ½" VHS color, sound. 58 minutes. Distributed by WOI-TV (WOI.)

¹⁰ *Black Des Moines: Voices Seldom Heard*. (1985). ½" VHS color, sound. 58 minutes. Distributed by WOI-TV (WOI.)

¹¹ Steven Morris. November 13, 1980. A brotherhood that worked: Union gave porters better station in life. *Chicago Tribune*, p. 1, p. 4. From Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁴ It is noted by Hawthorne, 2000, that "Urban Renewal and the Des Moines freeway wreaked havoc with the African American community in the central city, uprooting many beautiful, well-kept homes and yards." p. 54. The date, 1956, for the freeway construction in Des Moines is contradicted in a newspaper article quoted later in the text. Mary Challender, June 7, 1998, in her article, Coming Home, from *The Des Moines Sunday Register*, p. 1Q and p. 3E GC, notes the date of the Des Moines freeway construction as 1959. The freeway construction and displacement of homes in the community predates the construction of Interstate 35 in Iowa approximately seven years later in 1963, which condemned the homes of numerous small farmers and split farm ground of family farms to make way for the interstate highway's construction.

¹⁵ This is significant during these times because many families in rural areas and who lived on farms did not have indoor plumbing until the 1950s. As a youngster growing up on a farm southeast of Ames, Iowa in the 1950s, my family did not have indoor plumbing or bathroom facilities until the early 1950s.

¹⁶ *The Iowa Bystander Newspaper* was founded in 1894 by I. E. Williamson. It was purchased by J. L. Thompson in 1896 and operated by him through 1920. From 1920 through 1922, Laurence Jones, founder of Piney Woods School in Mississippi, operated the publication. In 1922, James B. Morris, Sr., attorney and Eleanor's uncle, purchased the newspaper and published it through 1971. Morris became a leading journalist in the realm of African American publishers in the U.S. He and his wife, Georgine, were civil rights champions in Des Moines. Morris' grandsons were noted as trailblazers in electronic media and journalism. In 1971, the paper was sold to someone outside the Morris family and renamed *The New Iowa Bystander Newspaper*. (Hawthorne, 2000, pp. 28, 29)

¹⁷ From the Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display at the Iowa Historical Building, Des Moines.

2 Des Moines, Iowa School Days

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Eleanor's education began at Olive McHenry Elementary School, one-half block away from her home and was the same elementary school attended by her mother and her aunts. She was very shy, but made one close friend by the name of Josephine Gaiter early during her school experience. Her friend lived nearly two blocks from her and they were in the same Sunday school class. Throughout Eleanor's public school career in Des Moines, all of her teachers were White.¹

Eleanor did not like her kindergarten teacher. She does not remember why, but recalls that she seemed to possess little charisma. Although she does not remember her first grade teacher, she does remember that her second grade teacher was warm and caring. It was at this time, when Eleanor was seven years old and in second grade, that her mother married Clyde Morris, Eleanor's stepfather. They continued to live with Eleanor's grandparents. Eleanor recalls that she felt somewhat like an outsider with the entrance of her stepfather. However, she continued to be extremely close to her grandparents.

Clyde Morris was born in Covington, Georgia about 1896. Although Eleanor knows little about her stepfather's education, she notes that he attended Hampton Institute, a vocational school in Hampton, Virginia. She does not know exactly when he came to Des Moines, but her mother and he were around 30 years old when they married at home. Clyde, her stepfather, had a brother in Des Moines, James B. Morris, who was an attorney and who purchased *The Bystander* in 1922, the African American newspaper for the area, and published it until 1971. James' wife, Georgine, was one of the best seamstresses in Des

Moines and did sewing for the Hubbell and the Meredith families.² Clyde and James Morris' mother lived with James and Georgine and cared for James' and Georgine's children.

Another brother of Clyde and James, William, lived in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Eleanor's stepfather primarily waited tables and sometimes was employed doing janitorial work until later in life. His decent employment ended in 1934 and during the depression, he secured work through the Works Projects Administration for a short time. For nine months to one year, he was a custodian at the Shelfount and Glenheim Apartments at 15th and High Streets in Des Moines. He also was a custodian at his church, Corinthian Baptist, a block away at 15th and Linden.

Eleanor recalls that her third grade experience was pleasant because of a good teacher. Books in her school system were provided and did not require a fee payment. Paper and pencils were purchased from a supply window that was open at a designated time each day. Classes were self-contained in grades one through three, but Eleanor recalls that she did change classrooms when she was in the fourth grade. It was in the fourth grade that the teacher, nor anyone at home, took the time to diagnose the problem Eleanor experienced with long division. She was kept after school, but no attention was given to determine the real difficulty she was having. Eleanor was separating the divisor number as she tried to divide, rather than taking the number as a whole. Eleanor's grandmother came regularly to get her from school when she did not come home on time from staying after to work on her math. Eleanor does not know about her grandmother's math ability, but feels that her mother, grandfather, and by then her stepfather, could have helped her if someone would have taken the time. The result was that Eleanor failed math in the fourth grade.

Eleanor had a long walk to school that year. Following her fourth grade year, Eleanor and her family moved back with her grandmother to live until Eleanor was nine years old. Olive McHenry Elementary School, which Eleanor attended, was closed permanently and she subsequently had a greater distance to travel to Grant Elementary School at 23rd and Cottage Grove. Eleanor was in fifth grade and made many new friends that year. Classrooms at Grant were not self-contained; they changed classrooms for her studies in history, geography, math, art and music. The music class focus was vocal and music appreciation. The class often was in a large room where they listened to a radio school program by Walter Damroush.³

Eleanor Powell's classmates at Grant School in her sixth grade class 6A included: Herma Bellman, Maurine Smith, Elwood White, Maxine Gambs, Helen Kubacky, Maxine Sandburg, Louie Hater, Betty Jacobson, Braddie Morris, Helen Bailey, Ava Cassell, Marjorie Stone, and Louise Jordan.⁴ Class 6A wrote the following poem as they neared the end of their elementary school years and as they looked forward to junior high school:

When it's winter in Des Moines,
and the snow is on the ground,
The 6As will be leaving,
For junior high's around,
To Grant School we will say good-bye,
and we hope we leave good cheer,
When it's winter in Des Moines,
our work is all done here.⁵

It took time for Eleanor to adjust to her stepfather and she did a lot of daydreaming in school. She recalls that she did not read her history and geography assignments. She failed a semester, but since she began school at just past the age of four and one-half years, she was not that far behind most of her classmates who started school when they were five years old.

Most of her teachers were pleasant and her history teacher is remembered as especially so. She sometimes picked up Eleanor and her cousins on their way to school and gave them a ride. Otherwise, Eleanor walked with her cousins by marriage and sometimes her cousins' parents gave them a ride. Eleanor's cousins lived a block from her folks. Eleanor notes that the racial relations in her school seemed good, or were good at least in her class. There were three to five African American students in her class throughout her school years.

In 1929, Eleanor started piano lessons at Drake University. Eleanor's music lessons at Drake became more difficult for her family to pay for during the years that followed. Her first music teacher was not very effective, but the next one was a gem. However, Eleanor states that she was "too lazy and stupid to practice," and she now regrets it very much because her teacher said that Eleanor had talent. Eleanor's teacher was generous to the end when money was so limited due to the depression years. Eleanor participated in recitals and experienced no discrimination in that situation.

Eleanor also began taking tap lessons, along with three of her friends. The same summer in 1929, Eleanor and several of her friends started Red Cross summer swimming at West Junior High, which she continued through junior high school.⁶ It was also at this time that Eleanor had her first YWCA camping experience. The Red Cross swimming and YWCA camping are among the discrimination experiences that Eleanor recalls. African Americans could swim only during the last period of the day in Des Moines and during the last session at the YMCA camp located in Boone, Iowa. When the YMCA built the swimming pool at their camp, the African American girls at the YWCA camp had to go during the same camp period as the African American YMCA camp period for African American boys.⁷ The African American girls walked to and from their camp to the YMCA

camp and rarely saw the boys because the boys were in other activities away from the pool. On Sundays, families exchanged visits in both camps. Paralleling this experience was the friction in Des Moines at the public swimming pools. Eleanor never went into a public swimming pool until one was built the summer of 1936 in an African American neighborhood at Good Park, located at 17th Street and south of University Avenue. It was a lovely pool with a promenade, showers, and locker room, which charged a small admission fee.

In an article entitled, “Coming home,” author Mary Challender provides insight into the Y where Eleanor remembers some of her experiences as a Black youth growing up in segregated Des Moines, Iowa. The following excerpts from the article corroborate Eleanor’s memories and expand on the social climate in Des Moines during those times.

“[Crocker YMCA] was a place where you could be you. You didn’t have to cope with not being wanted.” –James Bowman, 75, A former assistant superintendent for Des Moines Schools.

Sixty years ago at the Crocker Y, black kids in Des Moines learned the lessons that made them successful in an unfair world—and they haven’t forgotten. . . . They remember when there were restaurants they couldn’t go to and parts of town they couldn’t live in.

When their career options seemed limited to custodial work or the packing plant.

When a high school diploma represented the pinnacle of parents’ dreams for their children.

They are old men now, but the boys of the Crocker Street Y have not forgotten—or forgiven—that a group calling itself the Young Men’s Christian Association once maintained separate facilities in Des Moines, one for white kids and one for black kids.

The parents who supported them and the Y leader who made them believe they could overcome anything, even segregation.

Those were the days, they say, when they learned what it meant to be black in a white man’s world.

Of course, it wasn’t equal.

The white kids got the big downtown building at Fourth and Keo with a pool and a gym. The black kids got the one-room shack at 12th and Crocker with a pool table, a coal furnace in the recreation area and an outdoor basketball court.

Still, there might not have been a Y for blacks at all without the lobbying efforts of local black attorney S. Joe Brown.⁸ He persuaded the YMCA board to pay the salary of an executive secretary for the branch if black citizens could come up with a building.⁹

The Crocker Street Branch YMCA—or the Negro Y, as many whites referred to it—was formally opened on July 1, 1919. . . . Despite their Y's shortcomings, the boys developed a fierce loyalty to it. East side boys like Frank Kaiser, 77, a retired Des Moines police officer, walked all the way across town just to hang out there.

"It was home," explained James Bowman, 75, a former assistant superintendent for Des Moines schools. "It was *ours*. Stop and think back to what times were like in those days. That was a place where you could be you. You didn't have to cope with not being wanted."

One of the places where the boys understood they were not wanted was the downtown Y. Once a year, Calister said, the downtown Y opened its pool to the Crocker boys for swimming lessons.

"Those were some hard days," he said with a smile and a shake of his head. "As soon as we got done swimming, they drained the water out."

It was the same story at the YMCA's annual summer camp near Boone. Every summer, the YMCA offered dozens of sessions for white campers. Black campers had to wait until the end of August for the single session allotted to them.

Still, to members of the Crocker Y, the annual camps remain some of their fondest boyhood memories. . . . Bevely Roland, 68, of Minneapolis, who went to Y camp 16 times, first as a camper, then as a cabin leader, recalls sitting around the campfire listening wide-eyed to scary tales that always concluded with the storyteller taking his hand and laying it on the fire's hot embers.

To a bunch of mostly poor kids used to doing without, the Y camp seemed like the land of plenty, especially when it came to the food, Bowman said. . . . For young black men growing up in Des Moines in the early 1930s, the dreams were usually modest.

"Most of us had jobs shining shoes or doing custodial work," said Sy Forrester, 62, director of the John R. Grubb YMCA in Des Moines. "My parents' goal was to make sure I got out of high school. They didn't even mention college. Out of five of us, I was the only one who graduated from high school."

Even with a high school diploma, the job prospects for a young black man in Iowa were "zero to none," recalls Jesse F. Taylor, 73, who retired from Meredith Corporation.

"You had to leave Des Moines to get any kind of job," he said.

Everyone knew these barriers were discriminatory, Bowman said, but it would be another generation before the sit-ins and marches and court fights would begin.

"My parents didn't talk about it; they probably didn't think there was anything they could do about it," he said. "Looking back, we didn't spend much time lamenting what we didn't have. We targeted doing the best we could in any way we could." . . . But the Crocker Y wouldn't survive long at that location [relocated in 1945 to a former USO building for black soldiers and WACS at 1333 Keosauqua

Way.] In 1959, it was closed after 40 years of service to make way for a new freeway coming through.

At any rate, the days of official segregation were at an end. It was announced that the new Central YMCA building at First and Locust streets would be headquarters for *all* YMCA groups.

Few today would disagree that creating a segregated Y was wrong and contrary to the principles of a Christian organization.¹⁰ But, the former members of the Crocker Street Y say out of that injustice, something wonderful emerged.

“Out of that segregation, we were able to become leaders,” Forrester said. “It became something that was important. It carried us through our lives. Out of that place came doctors and lawyers and policemen and judges.”

“I’m trying to think of anyone who participated in the Crocker program who got in trouble he said. “I can’t think of anyone off the top of my head.” . . . “We knew by comparison we didn’t have what other people had, but I don’t think we were ever unhappy,” Bowman said. “Some of the fondest days of my life were spent in that old shack.”¹¹

During her late elementary through junior high school years, Eleanor participated first in the segregated bluebirds and later, the segregated campfire girls. She belonged to an African American Junior Federated Club, called Junior Modernistics, sponsored by leaders in her community who were federated club women. Eleanor always attended church and Sunday school and was a member of the missionary collection group made up of young girls from her family’s church. These activities provided the foundation and framework for activities in which Eleanor remains active today at age 81.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

January 1931 Eleanor completed elementary school and entered West Junior High. This building was previously a high school, which Eleanor’s mother attended. Because it was once a high school, it was the only junior high with a swimming pool. In seventh grade junior high school, Eleanor took course work in science, math, English, social studies, music, art, home economics, and physical education. At noon after lunch, Eleanor attended movies,

which were paid for by an activity book for the experience. Eleanor's eighth grade coursework included math, English, social studies, music, gym, art, and home economics. Ninth grade course work consisted of Latin, algebra, English, vocations, civics, and gym. Eleanor's ninth grade year was the first year that one course was cut from the school curriculum and study hall began. Eleanor's friendships were maintained into and through her high school years. The principal, Mr. Shropp, and vice principal, Lula Lexa, at West Junior High were effective and caring people. Junior high days were Eleanor's happiest school memories, in large part due to losing her shyness and to the caring administrators.

Junior high school class size ranged from sixteen to twenty-five students. The junior high curriculum also offered history of music, as well as vocal classes and chorus. The textbooks and songs made Eleanor and other students uncomfortable. The study of slavery in her social studies class and the "darkie" songs in music were not complimentary to the image of African Americans.

The young people in West Junior High School got along well regardless of race. One young lady from Louisiana became educated quickly in the gym dressing room. There was no fighting involved, but after she used the word "nigger," Eleanor remembers an African American girl talking to her firmly. The White girls were supportive. There were no more problems about race in her class of which Eleanor was aware.

NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

Eleanor completed her studies at West Junior High School in January 1934 and entered North High School, eighteen blocks away from her home, located at 8th and College Ave. Her high school classes included history, second year Latin, two years of French,

clothing, and physical education. She took business law and business math, as well as English, grammar, and literature. Eleanor belonged to the French club while in high school. She dropped physics after a bad jaw infection her senior year.

Eleanor attended one football game while in high school. She never understood the game. She usually attended Friday afternoon after-school socials in the gym where the swing band played. Students had an activity card that allowed them to attend the activities. With the activity card, they could see plays and view one reel a day of school movies. Even though her family's finances were low, they managed for Eleanor to have a lunch ticket. Sometimes Eleanor and some of her friends went two blocks to a Coney Island stand for lunch. She usually had a stomachache afterwards in history class in those days.

During her high school years, Eleanor did not experience the joy that she had previously in junior high school. This was due in part to worry over finances and the more distant feeling that she experienced among the friends with whom she was close in junior high. A few of her friends remained the same, but there were 1,800 students in the high school and she never saw some of them due to the differing schedules.

The only popular African Americans in high school were the athletes. Race did not seem to matter. During assemblies, noon movies, or socials, African American students gathered in one area. No one made them do that. Eleanor was one of the few students who sat where it was convenient. Eleanor and her friends questioned why some students segregated themselves and then complained about someone else forcing it on them.

One of the monthly outside activities centered around a monthly formal dance for high school teens, sponsored by The African American Episcopal Church. Eleanor would go to Younkers to see the new styles or check their ads in the newspaper. She would then buy

fabric and go home to try to combine or to change patterns to make her dresses like the ones that she saw. While Eleanor was in high school, her mother went back to work. For Christmas, Eleanor was given fabric so that she could sew clothing that would be appropriate for her wardrobe into her college years.

Eleanor's senior year in high school was interrupted by a severe infection in her left jaw. Her face was swollen on the left side about the size of a grapefruit. Neither the doctor nor the dentist knew what to do. The dentist finally suggested going to the drugstore to buy Denver Mud to make a pack and using a hot water bottle on her jaw. After many days of missing school, the infection broke on a Sunday morning and brought great relief. Because Eleanor dropped physics, she was short one credit that semester. She took an extra subject her last semester so she could graduate. The girl's advisor told her that was a bad decision and that Eleanor should remain enrolled in physics. Eleanor believed that because she missed so much physics and was totally lost, that taking the extra subject was the best decision. Eleanor graduated from North High School June 1936.

As a result of taking clothing in home economics in high school, Eleanor's teacher, Irene Mahoney, suggested that she attend Iowa State or Colorado. Due to finances, it was not difficult to make a decision about where to go. Eleanor's high school teacher, Irene Mahoney, was still teaching twenty-five years later when Eleanor returned to Des Moines to teach. During that time, Eleanor had worked several places, married, and stayed home with her family for six years before her employment with the Des Moines Independent School system as a home economics and science teacher. The other reason that Eleanor decided to major in clothing was because of her family's financial situation. Her decision turned out to be a blessing. She was fortunate to have a whole credit beyond college preparatory courses.

FAMILY FOUNDATIONS, COMMUNITY, AND ACTIVITIES

Racial pride came from Eleanor's home. Most of the families with whom Eleanor and her family associated were members of the NAACP. A magazine called *The Crisis* is published by the NAACP. The organization and magazine fostered pride, hope, and courage in and for African Americans. *The Bystander* was another source for building racial pride in the Des Moines Black community. It provided news articles of local and national interest, as well as coverage of social events and occurrences for Des Moines' Black citizens.

Eleanor's church was established when Richard Allen, an ex-slave, broke membership with St. George's Methodist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Slaves were discriminated against in seating and in receiving communion. Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was established in Philadelphia in 1787 by Richard Allen. There are churches now in parts of Africa, the Caribbean, Canada, and throughout the United States. Eleanor's church did much to build pride in her and the community. She attended Sunday school and worship services at her home church, St. Paul A.M.E., regularly from the time she was a child through her high school years. Eleanor was a Junior Missionary for St. Paul's and picked up the penny collection on Sundays.

The segregated YMCA and YWCA offered numerous community activities, which helped the youth tremendously. The first YMCA recalled by Eleanor did not have running water. The source of heat was a coal stove. Toilet and water facilities from the St. Paul A.M.E. Church across the street at 12th and Crocker were used. The first YWCA had limited space, but held dancing classes. Meals were cooked so that Eleanor and her peers could sell dinners to earn money to attend Y-Camp in Frazier, Iowa during the depression years. In later years, both Ys attained better facilities. For the YWCA, better facilities were achieved

during the 1930s, and for the YMCA, it was in the later 1940s. Eleanor was a member of the girl reserves at the segregated YWCA during her junior high school years.

Another young people's activity was teen dances at the YWCA. This was located one-half block from West Junior High School. Music was furnished by a pianist. The building was a historic beautiful old house with shining floors, lavish woodwork, and enough room to move around. Junior and senior high school youth participated in the dances. For many young ladies Eleanor's age, a young man would walk them home, but they did not date because parents were strict. Eleanor's mother told her that she would not be allowed to date until she was 18 years of age.

During their early and mid-teen years, Eleanor and her friends attended Christian Endeavor or BYPU, young people's Sunday evening church service. The former was Methodist, the latter was Baptist. Before attending either service, they gathered at Good's Park in their Sunday best and visited. Following the gathering, they strolled to one church or another. During those years, Eleanor continued her Red Cross summer swimming lessons at North High School. She also continued to attend the YWCA camp at Frazier, Iowa. They traveled by the Interurban one car rail system from Des Moines and back to attend the camp.

While in junior high school, Eleanor's class had the opportunity to sing at the Iowa State Capitol and the city jail, which were unique experiences. Four of them took dancing together and performed for club groups that were sponsoring programs to raise money for their organization. This usually took place by renting the Jewish Community Center, which was at 9th and Forest. Eleanor and her friends always attended vacation Bible school during their early teen years at the Methodist or Baptist church and sometimes both.

Just before Eleanor entered junior high school in 1931, her mother and stepfather moved one and one-half blocks from her grandparents' home to 1046-17th St. Eleanor finally had a room to herself in her family's own house. It was a two bedroom home with one bath and a living room, dining room, kitchen, enclosed back porch, and open front porch with banisters all around.

Eleanor's folks raised rabbits and chickens. Her stepfather, who she called "Daddles," built rabbit hutches at one end and across the back of the yard. On the other end there was a hen house. Eggs, and sometimes rabbits, were sold by her family. It was the original intention of Eleanor's parents to raise chinchilla fur rabbits that they purchased from an advertisement in a magazine. Most coats did not meet the specifications because they had to be perfect. After several years, and her family's dwindling income during the depression, they ate the rabbits and chickens.

Jeanne's income, Eleanor's mother, was poor because doing housework did not pay very well. Jeanne worked before moving into the family's first home in a laundry, as a secretary, and in a small jewelry store as a caretaker, wrapper, and mailing packages. On Saturday mornings, she cleaned the jewelry store owner's apartment. Sometimes, Eleanor helped her mother work because it was close to their home, in back of Hoyt Sherman Place. Eleanor, at age nine, was still in elementary school when her mother worked cleaning the apartment of the jewelry store owner. The family's financial condition was good enough after those years when Eleanor was age 11-14, that Eleanor's mother quit work when they moved into their home. At one point, when Eleanor was in her early college years, the taxes had not been paid on their home. It was cheaper for her family to move out and buy the house back in her first cousin's name. During the interim, Eleanor was in Ames and her

parents stayed with her grandparents for a short period. Eleanor's grandfather's work was practically nonexistent. Her parents were finally able to have the house put back in their names.

Eleanor's home had a large yard with many iris and peonies along the side of the yard in a border. Even with the rabbits and chickens, there was a large, green area with a clothesline. There also were lilacs, roses, a yellow flowering bush, and bridal wreath on the north side of the house. Daddles planted a hedge across the front and a short area along the south, up to the iris and peony border. Since they did not have a hose during the early years, Eleanor and her mother carried buckets of water to keep the hedge alive and it thrived. Later, in the front of the house, hydrangea bushes were planted. Years later, roses were planted in a small area by the house south of the porch.

Eleanor's grandparents, her Aunt Marie and her husband, Donald, Aunt Flossie, and a few of their friends formed a singing group that simulated a radio broadcasting to entertain at churches. This probably was during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Sometimes Eleanor attended rehearsals, but not often because her family no longer lived with her grandparents at that time. Grandmother Payton played the snare and base drums. Aunt Marie played the trombone, and Aunt Flossie played the tuba. In the mid-1920s until the 1930s, they were members of the African American Ladies Band. The band met weekly at the Negro Community Center. The first Center was located in an old public school building at 13th and Crocker. It later was moved to 15th and Crocker in a large house. The director of the band was a man named Mr. Washington, who also directed a men's community band. Aunt Flossie's husband, Charles, nicknamed Rabbit Wilson, played the tuba in the community band.

Segregation was practiced at many of the downtown theaters, but it was not a law. When Eleanor and her friends were young kids and wanted to see famous African American bands like Earl Hines, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway and others, they turned up their noses at the ushers and sat in the first row of the main floor instead of the balcony, where the ushers wanted them to sit. In the 1940s, Eleanor returned to visit her hometown of Des Moines as a young adult and was with her mother at a small neighborhood theater that had changed hands. The usher insisted that they sit in the front row to see a movie. They were given no choice, so they asked for their money back and left. Both were in a state of shock because Eleanor's mother had gone with friends often before without any problems. Eleanor was in town only for a short time and does not know how it came out in the end.

Eleanor had a younger first cousin, Wayne, who was the son of her mother's youngest sister Marie and her husband Donald Platter, who learned to dance quite well. A few times toward the end of high school and during Eleanor's early college years, the two cousins danced together on holidays and vacations to earn money. Eleanor's next to the oldest of her five first cousins had a combo and played regularly after his regular work at clubs. Now and then, Eleanor and Wayne made three dollars apiece for one or two dance numbers. Eleanor's aunt and uncle drove the two cousins to the club in time to entertain and then they left immediately. During the summer, the youngest cousin was on the WHO barn dance frolic in his later high school years. He was in entertainment in the armed forces.

Eleanor's family was always close and helped one another during times of need. Christmas Eve, Thanksgiving, and all holidays were days when everyone was together. In the fall on the weekends, the family went nut gathering for black walnuts and hickory nuts, if

there were any to be found. In the spring, Eleanor's youngest, her oldest aunt, her grandmother, and Eleanor went wild green hunting.

Eleanor's parents and grandparents were supportive of good music groups and lectures. She remembers going to hear John Phillip Sousa's Band with her grandmother when she was very young at the State Capitol lawn. Thus, through Eleanor's familial bonds and those that she formed through her church and related activities throughout her youth, Eleanor's youth was rich with experiences in spite of the segregation that she experienced growing up in Des Moines. Through the encouragement of Eleanor's high school home economics teacher, Irene Mahoney, Eleanor graduated from high school prepared to begin her undergraduate studies at Iowa State College in Ames. Eleanor's family, church, and community provided a firm foundation for her to begin her new life adventure in Ames where she would prepare for her future in the professional world.

Notes for Chapter 2

¹ Mease expresses the same recollection as Eleanor about his school days in Des Moines: "But what sticks out in my mind about my high-school days is that all my teachers were white. In Buxton, of course, they were all black. I never saw a black teacher in elementary or high school in Des Moines." p. 10.

² The Hubbell and Meredith names remain prominent in the Des Moines community today.

³ The correct spelling of Walter's last name is uncertain.

⁴ This list is from a handwritten list from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

⁵ The poem is handwritten on the same page as the handwritten list of names of Eleanor's 6A Grant School classmates and is from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

⁶ Swimming is an activity that remains one of Eleanor's favorites to this day. For several years she participates three times weekly in water aerobics at the Des Moines YWCA.

⁷ Hubbard, 1999, notes recollections similar to those of Eleanor about his boyhood YMCA experiences in his autobiography. Mease, 2001, further corroborates Eleanor's memories of the segregated conditions.

⁸ S. Joe Brown's wife was one of Eleanor's Sunday school teachers at her church in Des Moines during her youth.

⁹ The tactic of expecting Blacks to provide the building and money to support activities for themselves and their children parallels the same tactics that were used by Whites in providing schools for Black children. See Vanessa Siddle Walker's, 1996, account of a Black school in *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

¹⁰ Historically, Christianity and the Bible were used to justify slavery, degradation, and reinforcement of the White belief that Blacks were inferior to Whites.

¹¹ Mary Challender. June 7, 1998. Coming home. *The Des Moines Sunday Register*, p. 1Q and p. 3E GC from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection. It is interesting to note that James Bowman was a few years younger than Eleanor and that they attended Iowa State College during some of the same years. Eleanor and James (aka Jimmy) are friends and still visit with each other.

3 Iowa State College

At the time Eleanor was ready to begin college at Iowa State, many people nationwide were experiencing financial hardships. Some Black students gained admission to Iowa State College, but their numbers were few. Racism, racial prejudice plus power, and its companion, scientific racism, the attempt to establish White superiority on the basis of genetic differences, in concert with tight financial times, likely played a significant role in the admission practices that Blacks were subjected to and experienced. Iowa State College was a leader in its field of science and technology and set high standards for admission. High standards become problematic only when the instruments used to evaluate and assess students are culturally biased. Advances in this direction have been made since the time Eleanor attended ISC, however discrepancies that result in bias and promoting inequality still remain. Blacks in the U.S. were historically first denied education all together, followed by racist and discriminatory practices that attempt to exclude them from attaining their goals in higher education.

In September 1936, after a family financial struggle, Eleanor and her family went to Ames to see about Eleanor entering Iowa State College. The first stop they made was at the loan office in Beardshear Hall. Since her mother was not well because she fell in the shower stall where she worked that morning, Eleanor's grandfather provided the transportation for the drive to Ames. They climbed the steps carefully, due to her mom's condition, to Miss Marie Robert's office. Miss Roberts seemed stern, but was kind and helpful. A \$36 dollar loan was made for Eleanor's first quarter's tuition. Somewhere on campus, Eleanor was given the name of Mrs. Madison on Third St. and Hazel Avenue in Ames who was African American and who rented rooms to students of color for \$3 a week.

Eleanor's roommate was a graduate student from Louisiana and there were two male graduate students who lived in the rear of the house. The lady who rented the rooms had four sons, one of whom was a freshman at Iowa State College. Since all of the adults were from the South, they liked rice as a vegetable instead of the cereal to which Eleanor was accustomed. They also liked grits for dinner and Eleanor had difficulty adjusting.

That did not last long, however, as Eleanor came down with a fever, 104° F temperature, and rash within two and one-half weeks of her arrival in Ames. At that time, Eleanor's fever and illness was a mystery, as well as its source of contagion. Eleanor entered the hospital for an examination. She and her family were too poor to go to Iowa State at the time to get the physical and other tests before her classes started. Instead, Eleanor received a physical at the hospital at the time of her illness, without the benefit of any background information or diagnosis. It seemed that every doctor in Ames came to help diagnose her case. They decided that it was streptococcus throat, which meant scarlet fever or diphtheria. It ended up being scarlet fever and Eleanor was quarantined for 21 days. All of her visitors were required to sit in the hall. Her mother, grandparents, and sometimes her aunt came to see her in the hospital. Eleanor's Aunt Marie saw to it that she had a small radio. Another girl who had the flu also was quarantined and came into Eleanor's room to visit. They were the only ones on that wing, but the other girl did not stay long. When the day came to leave, Eleanor had to shower, shampoo her hair, and go across the hall to change into fresh clothes that were brought from home.

Eleanor remained enrolled in school until she was officially dropped or dismissed from the hospital. The hospital rate for a student was one-half the rate for a non-student; then Eleanor was dropped. Eleanor was instructed to return home to rest and work on her skin

and scalp. Winter quarter Eleanor returned to Iowa State and came down with the flu at mid-term and missed an exam because of the bus schedule. She did poorly the first year, even though she was enrolled two full quarters. She took coursework in English, history, physics, applied art, and physical education during her first year.

As time went on, Eleanor was in her second year and was summoned by Dr. M.D. Helser, Dean of Personnel. He questioned Eleanor and talked to her about her grades, family, and financial problems. She was given a diagnostic test that commonly was given to all freshman students. The talk with the Dean centered around Eleanor not doing as well as in college as she did in high school. The Dean discussed Eleanor's concern and worry about her financial situation. Part of Eleanor's concerns included the situation with her family's home, and her parents' difficulty in securing decent employment. Her mother started working two jobs again for as little as \$3 a week from each job and was successful in increasing her income over time. Eleanor's piano was nearly paid for and was taken back due to negligence by her stepfather. Eleanor's grandmother had a stroke.

After the diagnostic tests, Eleanor was placed in a how-to-study course, which was a great help to her. She had done poorly in inorganic chemistry and took it over to raise her grade. Dr. Naylor was her inorganic chemistry teacher and was very caring and faithful in checking her laboratory work. If Eleanor's work was not complete, Dr. Naylor asked her questions that Eleanor could answer. Dr. Naylor encouraged Eleanor to be more careful in recording what she did and understood. Eleanor did earn good grades in both inorganic chemistry courses.

These experiences with the Dean and Dr. Naylor made a new beginning for Eleanor. Dean Helser advised Eleanor that if her mother was able to go to work, that Eleanor should

not worry about her and try do her very best in school. Eleanor's grandmother caused her to feel guilty because she told Eleanor that her mother had to work so hard. Eleanor's mother believed that she was responsible for Eleanor's college expenses. Eleanor does not recall hearing her stepfather complain, but his employment was not good then or the during Eleanor's last years of high school.

During the years at Iowa State, Eleanor majored in textiles and clothing with a minor in science. Her coursework included organic and inorganic chemistry, physics, as well as quantitative chemistry. She took zoology, physiology, and bacteriology in addition to English, grammar, literature, history, psychology, and sociology. She also took production, distribution and the consumption phases of economics. In home economics, she took numerous applied art courses, sewing construction, flat pattern making, draping, the study of fabrics, foods and nutrition, household equipment, consumer economics, and home management.

As a student of color, Eleanor was not allowed to live in the home management house her senior year because of the segregated conditions at Iowa State and discrimination by the home management department head. Eleanor was the first African American student at that time at Iowa State in costume design who ever earned a grade above a C in Miss Rathbone's class. She most commonly assigned a grade of D to most African American students. These other students were graduate students and made excellent grades in their classes with other instructors, but they were few in number. At the same time, Miss Rathbone was inconsistent in grading some White students. Black graduate students also encountered difficulty in selecting areas of study or thesis topics that were meaningful to them. As a result of being excluded from living in the home management house, Eleanor had to take graduate courses

in financial management to make up the difference in her credit hours that she lost from the discriminatory home management housing. Eleanor does not recall if people of color from backgrounds other than African American were segregated and prohibited from living in the home management house, however, only seniors or home management majors were eligible to live there. It is Eleanor's understanding that she was the last one who was segregated and denied access to the home management housing facilities. She was told that this was the last year of discrimination and that the dormitories also became available for students of color. Eleanor believes that she was instrumental in making strides and progress in desegregating housing for students of color while she attended Iowa State. At the same time, Eleanor expresses that she was glad that she did not live in the home management house because growing up as an only child, she did not know anything about babies. She had no experience with small children, so in one way, it was a relief for her. However, Eleanor notes that because it was an issue of race, segregation, and discrimination, she resented it.

Eleanor was seeking new living quarters anyway. She ended up living at 153 Hyland in a private home. Eleanor's roommate, a 28-year-old White lady, had a choice between Eleanor and a Philippine student. The lady preferred Eleanor because she was an American. The lady was a graduate student in the Home Economics Education program, as well as a supervising teacher. She and Eleanor met previously in one of the graduate home management courses. They got along with each other beautifully and occasionally had dinner together or attended a concert. The news traveled quickly within the home economics building from department to department. One of Eleanor's instructors in textiles said to her, "Hon, I have heard the news; how is it going?" People were curious about the interracial roommate arrangement.

When Eleanor attended Iowa State in the late 1930s and early 1940s, many White students had never seen a person of color. The children in the child development laboratory school asked Eleanor if her color washed off. Most disturbing to Eleanor was that the school's head faculty member would not let Eleanor, or anyone else, provide an explanation to the children. Eleanor and her peers were "given looks" to remain silent about the questions referring to race and color. Eleanor observed that there was a lot of ignorance on the campus regarding people of color. Eleanor and her African American peers were not allowed to attend dances at the college. Instead, they went to the bandshell downtown and rented the basement for their segregated homecoming party. The separation and segregation was social, but not in the classroom setting. These experiences were further confounding to Eleanor because during her years at Iowa State, money was tight for everyone. This necessitated live-in arrangements for some students of color because of segregated housing on the campus, who performed housekeeping and other duties in exchange for their room and board.

One home in Ames where African American students found housing was at the Martin home located at 218 Lincoln Way.¹ Eleanor noted that although she never lived there, that was where just about every Black male person who went to Iowa State in those days was sent to live.² Eleanor remembers that there was a short time when women and men lived with the Martins, however the women were graduate students. Eleanor also recalls that one of the Martins' daughters lived at 118 Sherman in Ames. One of the Martins' sons lived at the corner of Sherman and Lincoln Way. Another Martin son had a nice house farther south of Lincoln Way. Eleanor once lived with one of the Martins' daughters, Nellie Martin

Shipp. Eleanor also knew Esther Martin, who was a Jackman from Avoca, Iowa. Esther had a twin sister named Ethel, who married Paul Martin.

Eleanor recalls a few other places in Ames at the time where housing was offered for Black students. One was a woman who lived somewhere south of campustown whose last name was Ewing.³ Eleanor remembers her as a gem. Another family where Black students could find housing lived farther north in Ames, where you had to “step lightly in her house.” The Lawry, Shipp, Martin, and Ewing families were where Black students living in Ames and attending Iowa State could find living accommodations.

During Eleanor’s undergraduate years at Iowa State, the social life in Ames for Black students changed depending on who was there. Social activities were segregated and self-contained for the most part and took place away from the campus. The largest number of Black students were graduate students. There were more males than females, some of whom were married and others Eleanor never knew well enough to know their marital status. One year during this time, there were six undergraduate girls. The worst year that Eleanor recalls was the year that she graduated in 1940-1941. Eleanor was the only African American female undergraduate. One of the graduate females, Eva Dixon, was there to complete her masters degree in home economics education. Eva and Eleanor belonged to the same sorority and Eva was instrumental in assisting Eleanor with her successful application for her first job with the National Youth Administration (NYA) in Kansas City after graduation from Iowa State.

There were a few other young Black females who attended Iowa State for two years as graduate students, working on their masters degrees. Eleanor and one of the students went to the Memorial Union daily to hear the organ recitals at noon. They ate their lunches

brought from home in the lounge in the original home economics building. Eleanor recalls one White couple who invited some of the African American students to their home one evening to visit, and most likely to be kind. Eleanor and her friends had activity tickets that allowed them to see Marianne Anderson, Horowitz, and the symphony. They were eligible to attend football games, however Eleanor was not interested in that sport.

The African American students used the lower level of the bandshell for their homecoming party on two occasions. The undergraduate girl majoring in food and nutrition planned a formal dinner at a landlady's home near campustown, possibly during the year when there were around six undergraduate African American girls. Eleanor did date some, which consisted of an evening visiting or going to see a movie.

For female Black students, the home economics lounge was the place where they met and to visit when they had the time. During her years in Ames, Eleanor ate half of her meals in the home where she stayed and the other half at the Memorial Union, The Wayside Inn located in downtown Ames, and in campustown restaurants. Transportation in Ames until 1941 was by foot, carpooling, and sometimes the bus, especially after dark when returning to Ames from the campus. As remains true today at Iowa State, the closest location for Black students and faculty to obtain services specific to their needs is in Des Moines. Black students then traveled to Des Moines to have their hair styled or cut because these services did not exist in Ames. A barber shop recently opened in Ames for African American men. The only hair salon in Ames for African American women today is scheduled to close.

During most of Eleanor's student years at Iowa State, she was employed by the NYA. She began by washing large equipment in the quantitative cookery or the Tea Room. Later on, she set the tables for the noon meal served in the Tea Room. After working in

conjunction with Tea Room duties, Eleanor worked in the textiles department where she cut textile samples, children's clothing patterns, and swept trash from the sewing tables and machines for the custodian. Eleanor was complimented on the accuracy of her children's clothing patterns. She believes that the textiles professors she worked for in the NYA at Iowa State College were pleased with her work and that they liked her.

Eleanor never took any education courses during her undergraduate study at Iowa State College. She found it easy to take the graduate level courses as a senior. Her focus was textiles and clothing and applied art in home economics and so she continued to take as many courses in that area as she could manage. Her perspective was that she could take education courses anywhere if she needed them, which she ultimately did later in life.

During Eleanor's last year at ISC, she was the only Black undergraduate female student on campus. The only other Black female students on the campus were two graduate students. Eleanor Rebecca Powell completed her undergraduate studies at Iowa State College and graduated with her B.S. degree from the Division of Home Economics, Curriculum in Textiles and Clothing on July 22, 1941 in commencement exercises held in the Great Hall of the Memorial Union. Eleanor recalls that her department head expressed concern for Eleanor's future employment and was unsure where Eleanor would find employment in her field. In spite of the obstacles that Eleanor faced while at ISC, she said that she felt twice as good when she successfully completed her study there and attained her degree because she overcame the segregated housing, the segregated socials, and the racist attitude held by numerous faculty and students alike on the campus. She does feel that ISC prepared her for her profession well and that she received an excellent education there. Well

prepared, Eleanor looked forward to pursuing her professional goals and putting her higher education to work for her.

Notes for Chapter 3

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- ¹ This house still stands in Ames, Iowa today and is pictured in Barnes and Bumpers, p. 10.
 - ² The Godmother of Eleanor's daughter, Yolaine, lived with the Martins while she attended ISC.
 - ³ The correct spelling for the last name of Ewing is not certain.



Cumberland County Kentucky, from 1895 U.S. Atlas
 Source: <http://www.livgenmi.com/cumberlandKY.htm>



Cooper County Missouri, from 1895 U.S. Atlas
 Source: <http://www.livgenmi.com/cooperMO.htm>



Front left: Maternal Grandfather Alexander Payton; front middle: unidentified young boy, possibly adopted; front 2nd from right: perhaps Alexander Payton's sister; far right front: Jeanne Payton Morris, Eleanor's mother; Back left: Marie Payton, Eleanor's aunt and sister to Eleanor's mother; standing middle back: Eleanor's maternal Grandmother, Anna Rebecca Marshall Payton. Numbered photo on the back 47187, taken by Patten. A larger copy of this photograph is in the display, Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community at the Iowa Historical Building, Des Moines, Iowa.



Anna Rebecca Marshall Payton,
 Eleanor's maternal Grandmother.



Grant Payton, brother of Alexander Payton and great uncle of Eleanor.



Eleanor's maternal great-aunt, Sophie Marshall Berry, sister of Anna Rebecca Marshall Payton.



Roy Estelle Powell, Eleanor's Father.



Jeanne Payton Powell Morris, Eleanor's mother.



Jeanne Payton Morris, Eleanor's mother attending the wedding of her niece on September 14, 1950.



Seated center, third from the left: Eleanor's aunt and sister to her mother Flossie Payton Wilson; Seated, fourth from the left, Jeanne Payton Powell Morris, Eleanor's mother. The remainder of the people are unidentified.



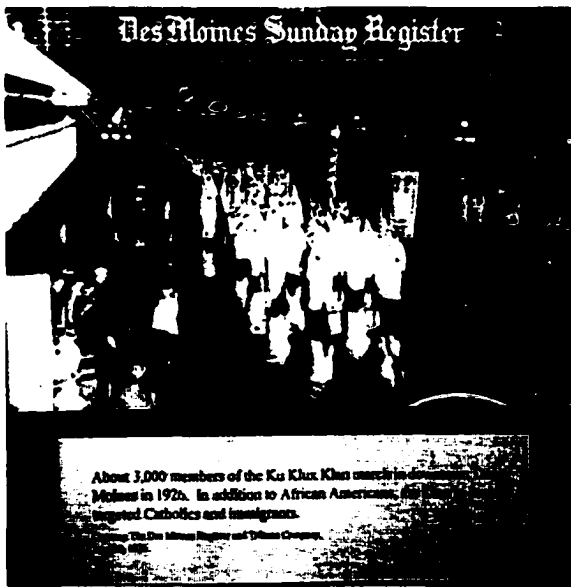
The Ladies Band played for Labor Day picnics and other special events during the 1920s and 1930s. Front center: Aunt Flossie Wilson (tuba.) Middle left: Aunt Marie Platter (slide trombone.) seated second front from left: Grandmother Anna Rebecca Marshall Payton (snare drum.) Photo taken at 13th and Crocker in front of an old school building where they sometimes performed. The building served as the community center before Wilke House opened in the 1930s.



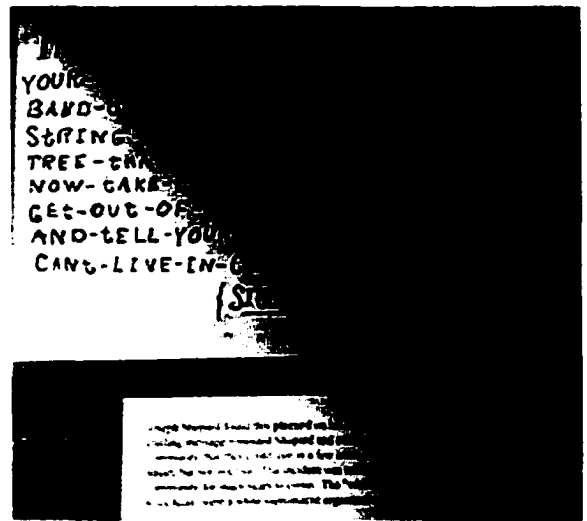
The family of Eleanor's step-father. Left to Right: James B. Morris, attorney, Des Moines; William Morris, Salt Lake City, Utah; Clyde Morris, Eleanor's step-father. Seated front: Selema Morris, mother of the three Morris boys. William is the uncle Eleanor stayed with during the summer of 1944 when she worked for the U.S.O. in Salt Lake City. William is reputed to have such a keen memory that he remembered every number from coat checks and is listed in *Ripley's Believe It or Not*.



St. Paul A.M.E. Church Picnic 1908, Union Park, Des Moines: Eleanor's mother, Jeanne Payton, front row, fourth from the right.



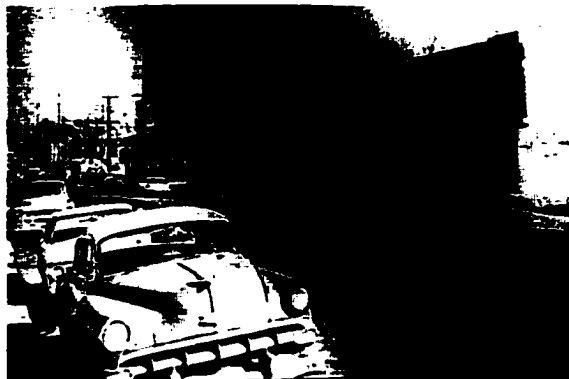
A photograph that was taken by the author June 2001 from the Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display at the Iowa Historical Building, Des Moines. This picture depicts the 1926 march by 3,000 members of the Ku Klux Klan in downtown Des Moines. Original photograph is from the June 20, 1926 issue from *The Des Moines Register and Tribune Company*.



A photograph that was taken by the author June 2001 from the Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display at the Iowa Historical Building, Des Moines. This note was found by a Black Des Moines citizen on his door in 1933 posted by a local KKK ("White Cap") member.

Des Moines business owners refused to serve
 Blacks. In response to this discrimination
 many lawyers opened and managed their own
 professional practices. Most of these
 modest families were among the
 display shows that are the
 pieces from different eras.

A photograph that was taken by the author June 2001 from the Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display at the Iowa Historical Building, Des Moines. The descriptive placard notes the discrimination of Des Moines business owners toward Blacks.



A photograph that was taken by the author June 2001 from the Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display at the Iowa Historical Building, Des Moines. This photograph depicts the Center Street Community as the hub of activity for the Black Des Moines community during the 1950s.

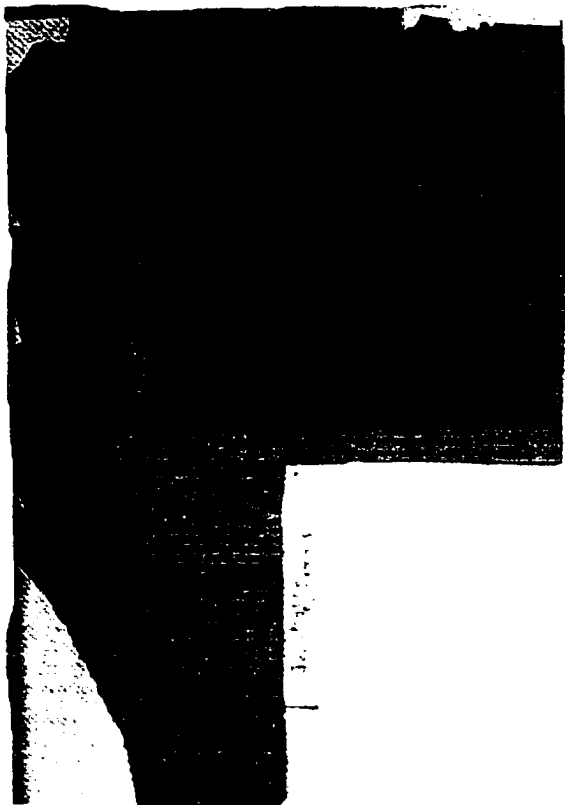


A photograph that was taken by the author June 2001 from the Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display at the Iowa Historical Building, Des Moines. This photograph depicts some of the numerous positive aspects that Black Des Moines residents created for themselves in spite of the racism that they faced in the city.

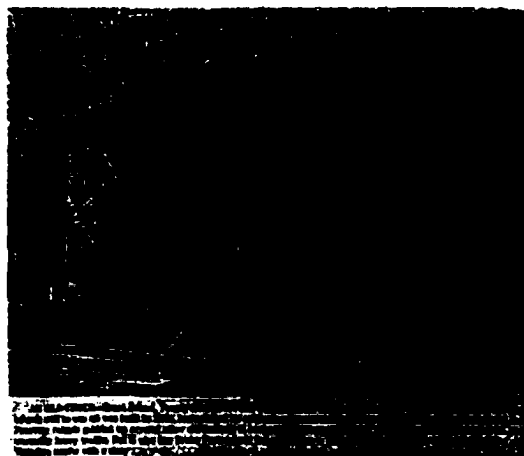


This generally a white owned company sought black employees,
 possibly to attract black customers.

A photograph that was taken by the author June 2001 from the Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display at the Iowa Historical Building, Des Moines. The ad is from the November 8, 1945 issue of *The Iowa Bystander* and indicates that occasionally White businesses sought Black employees to attract Black customers.



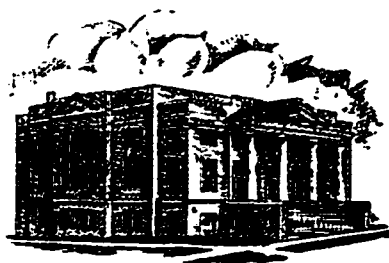
Olive McHenry Elementary School newspaper clipping from *The Des Moines Register*, November 22, 1944. Eleanor's mother, Jeanne Payton and her sisters attended Olive McHenry Elementary School, as did Eleanor during her youth. The school is now demolished.



Old Grant School in Des Moines, Iowa where Eleanor attended 5th and 6th grades. Clipping from the November 14, 1964 issue of *The Des Moines Tribune*.



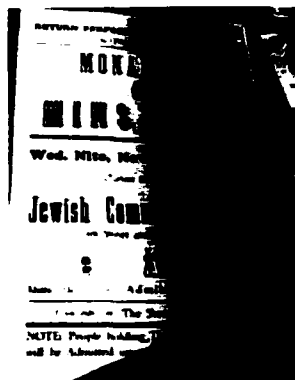
Photograph of the National Advancement Association for Colored People charter for Iowa taken at the Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display at the Iowa Historical Building, Des Moines, June 2001. Eleanor's aunt, Georgine Crowe Morris, wife of attorney and *Bystander* publisher from 1922-1971, founded the NAACP State Conference in Iowa in 1939 and the Des Moines chapter of Links. Source for information about Georgine Morris available online at: wysiwyg://92/http://desmoinesregister.com/extras/civilrights/morris.html



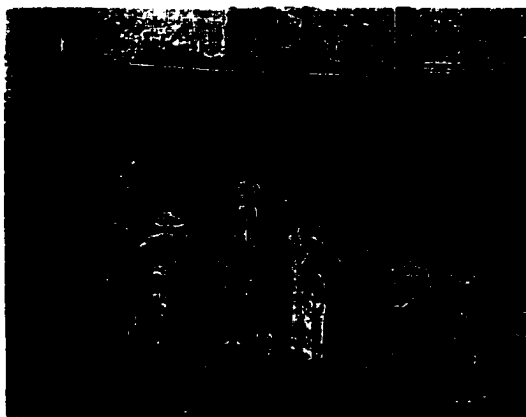
St. Paul A.M.E., Eleanor's church: Notecard Litho by Spalding Publishers, Chicago 20, Illinois USA.



Eleanor and her dance partner, first cousin Wayne Platter, son of Marie and Donald Platter. Eleanor's aunt, Georgine Morris, made her costume.



Photograph of a Jewish Community Center flyer from Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display at the Iowa Historical Building, Des Moines, June 2001. The Jewish Community Center, Des Moines, provided space for African American social activities during the years of segregation in Iowa. This is where Eleanor and her cousin, Wayne, danced.



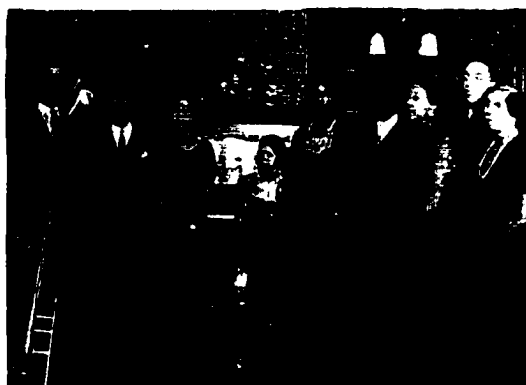
When You Rode to Camp on a Train

The Des Moines Y.M.C.A. camp near Boone this year is observing the fifteenth year of its founding. This train, from Y.M.C.A. line, recalls the days when young men from the country crossed a train route from Des Moines at the Port Des Moines and Southeast. This photo, with the state Capitol dome in background, was taken prior to the time of the dropping of passenger service in 1911. (Hurry, More Photos on Page 2)

Article from unidentified issue of *The Des Moines Register* depicting the Interurban train that Eleanor rode when she attended the YWCA camp in Frasier, Iowa during her youth and through her junior high and high school years.



Unidentified article, likely from *The Bystander*, about Eleanor's mother, Jeanne Morris and her election as the President of Iowa Women's Clubs.



Relatives and their friends in the radio show simulation group. L to R: Uncle Don Platter, Rev. Smith, Aunt Marie Platter, Mrs. Winslow, Maude Wyatt, Grandfather Payton, Aunt Flossie Wilson, Edward Perkins, Grandmother Payton.



Bob Martin from Dubuque, Iowa was one of Eleanor's friends while an undergraduate at Iowa State. Bob studied electrical engineering at ISC. Unidentified newspaper clipping, likely from *The Bystander*.



Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer in Ames at Iowa State, 1941.



Eva Dixon, one of Eleanor's friends while at Iowa State. Eva assisted Eleanor in securing her first job after college graduation with the NYA in Kansas City, MO where they worked together.

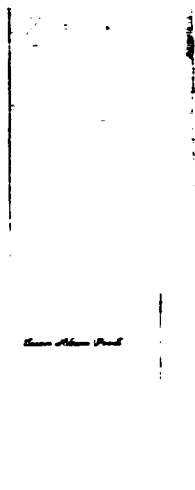
Miss Powell Gets Degree From Ames

Miss Eleanor Powell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Morris, 1048 Seventeenth street, received her Bachelor of Science degree in textiles and clothing from the Iowa State College, at Ames, at the graduation exercises held Tuesday morning.

Miss Powell is a native of Des Moines, having graduated from North High. She is a member of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority.

Another Negro graduate in the class was John Quincy Casruthers of Atlanta, Ga., who received his Master of Science in Physiological Bacteriology.

Attending the commencement exercises from Des Moines were Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Morris and Mrs. Marie Platter.



The Faculty and Graduate Class
of the
Iowa State College
have the honor of your presence
at the
Commencement Exercises
Tuesday evening, July 22, 1941
at 8:00 o'clock
in Jones Hall
Ames

Digitized copy of the front and inside of Eleanor's commencement announcement from Iowa State College, July 22, 1941.

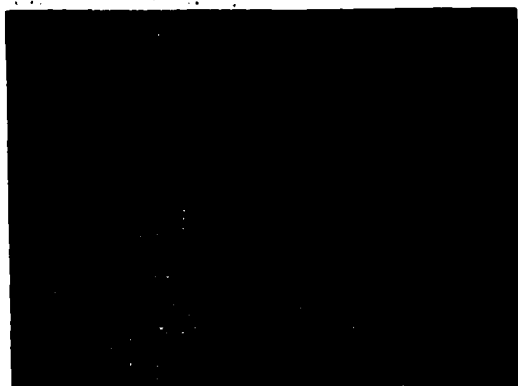
July 17, 1941 clipping from *The Bystander* announcing Eleanor's graduation from Iowa State College. The clipping was in a complete, original copy of *The Bystander*.



Eleanor and parents, Iowa State College, 1941. Left: Mother, Jeanne Morris; Center: Eleanor; Right: Clyde Morris.



Eleanor Rebecca Powell on her graduation day at Iowa State College in 1941.



Photograph of Eleanor's initiation into Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, May 1938, age 19, at the Y.W.C.A., Des Moines, Iowa. Eleanor is seated, front row, second from the right.

MISS POWELL TO DETROIT FOR SIGMA THETA CONVENTION ¹⁹⁴¹

Miss Eleanor Powell, who spent the Christmas holidays with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Morris, 1646 Seventeenth street, left the city Sunday night to attend the national meeting of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority which convened at Detroit, Mich. She is the house guest of Miss Margaret Matthews, music instructor in the schools of Detroit.

Unidentified newspaper clipping, likely from *The Bystander*, of Eleanor's first trip to the Delta Sigma Theta convention in Detroit where she saw Mary McCleod Bethune.

4 Employment Following Graduation from Iowa State College in 1941

NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, 1941

Eleanor is clear that she never intended to teach school. As noted previously, she elected to take no education courses while studying for her bachelors degree at Iowa State College because she felt that offerings in education were easily accessible at a later date in the event she chose to take them. However, upon her college graduation, Eleanor realized that her career and her life were framed within the societal and institutional confines of racism and gender discrimination in the U.S. As in her undergraduate college career through the support of Roosevelt's New Deal National Youth Administration, the NYA became the venue through which Eleanor embarked on her first job following her ISC graduation. Unlike many Black women whom Eleanor knew, she was young, single, and mobile, which positioned her to pursue employment beyond her immediate geographical area. Her employment with the NYA was enhanced through one of the friend's she made while attending ISC, Eva Dixon. Eva told Eleanor about the NYA sewing project at the area headquaraters in Kansas City, Missouri. During 1941, the depression years and experiences were fresh in the minds and lives of people in the U.S. World War II was raging in Europe, although the U.S. was not yet a participant.

Eleanor took a week after graduation to recuperate from school. She needed money to finance her move to Kansas City and for her wardrobe. Once again, Eleanor visited Marie Roberts at the ISC loan department. Eleanor received a loan of \$25.00 to replenish her wardrobe and to move to Kansas City, which she repaid after receiving her first paycheck

from her NYA employment. Even when she began her NYA employment in Kansas City, the federal program was being downsized and phased out.

Eva Dixon assisted Eleanor with the necessary information to apply for the NYA position. As soon as Eleanor's employment was confirmed, arrangements were made for Eleanor to room in the house of Eva's aunt, where Eva and her mother also lived. Eva's mother did Eleanor's laundry and cooked for them. It was an arrangement for which Eleanor was appreciative and grateful.

During the first month of Eleanor's employment, Eva and Eleanor worked in the same building. Eva was the supervisor of the food service preparations and Eleanor was a textiles supervisor. Their employment activities were housed in a school building that was no longer used by the Kansas City, Missouri School System. Eleanor likened her duties to being more like a factory that taught girls how to use power machines, in addition to supervision. She had never seen a power sewing machine in her life nor during her coursework at ISC. Eleanor recalls that the first time she put her hand on the machine to stop it as was customary with the regular sewing machines, it was going so fast that it burned the skin from her hand. This experience provided a quick introduction to the power sewing machines as well as a learning experience for Eleanor.

The NYA at Eleanor's location in Kansas City had as many as 20 young ladies in training. Each was assigned her own machine on which to sew. There was an area for fabric layout for mattress tops and bottoms where they were cut and assembled. Eleanor does not recall the hiring criteria for the employment positions. She was unaware of hiring practices based on race. She was 22 years old and the young ladies Eleanor supervised were supposed to range in age from 18-25 years. Some of the women claimed a younger age when they

applied in order to secure the job. However, Eleanor had no occasion to deal with the application and hiring process. She notes, however, that the women's ages likely ranged between 18 and 30 years.

All of the Kansas City, Missouri NYA projects were segregated and Eleanor recalls that there was much segregation in Missouri. The second project in which Eleanor was employed had three shifts located in the downtown area. The earlier two were White shifts who made dresses before Eleanor's late shift of Black workers. Eleanor worked from 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. For two of the hours, Eleanor taught regular home-type sewing and was paid by the Kansas City, Missouri Board of Education. For the remaining hours, Eleanor worked under the NYA federal government program.

The employees on the NYA staff were not professionally trained in their area and Eva and Eleanor met resistance in their positions as newcomers. As an example, Eva encountered a situation in which the youth workers signed a petition stating that the food was supposedly unsatisfactory. When the notice came to Eleanor's area of supervision, it designated that all students who wanted lunch should sign the form. Those who signed their names then became associated with negative information as a result. Eleanor had seen the petition, read all of the information, and knew that it was underhanded. Eleanor and Eva made an appointment to see the area supervisor in downtown Kansas City. During the meeting, Eleanor explained what she witnessed and that what the students thought they were signing was something completely different. She and Eva were instructed by the supervisor to go back to their building and to say nothing about the incident.

In the meantime, Eleanor discovered that the individual previously supervising fabric cutting for mattress covers allowed waste of two to three inches with every length of cut,

which added up to many inches per day. The sewing area was set up with long cutting tables where fabric was laid out and piled. The thick piles were then cut with an electric cutter. Eleanor remembers working on mattress ticking for one month at the Kansas City school site, where the staff and students all were African American.

In the downtown location where Eleanor worked during the next months that the project was in existence, parts for dresses were assembled and the results of the work were inspected. Each of the supervisors used a different technique to finish the dress sleeves. When earlier shifts of White women did not want to correct their errors, they dumped their work on the shelves for Eleanor's shift of Black workers. Eleanor spoke to each of the supervisors about allowing their workers to do this. One night, Eleanor encountered serious discipline problems with her workers and asked her supervisor to visit the site and talk to the young ladies. He also talked to Eleanor about speaking up and being more forceful in dealing with the young ladies she supervised. Eleanor recalls that the supervisor's advice worked and that she did not encounter any further discipline problems.

The NYA dress-making project had straight sewing power machines, double needle machines, button machines, and buttonhole machines. There were long tables for cutting fabric with the large electric cutters. Kansas City, Missouri had dress factories, and Eleanor described the experience as one that was excellent training for employment.

While living in Kansas City and working for the NYA, Eleanor traveled by streetcar to work and walked home the one and one-half blocks at night after 11 o'clock. She never experienced any threatening or harmful situations on her walk home at night. If she was hungry when she arrived home after work, she ordered a sandwich and a soft drink, which was delivered from the drugstore with no problems other than the indigestion that followed.

Church remained an important part of Eleanor's life and she attended Bethel A.M.E. Church regularly in Kansas City. It was located one block from the Baptist Church that her friend, Eva, attended, so they rode the streetcar together to and from church. Eleanor dated some while living in Kansas City, but not very much because her stay there was relatively brief. She did make important acquaintances and connections with women from her sorority, Delta Sigma Theta, which proved helpful for her in securing employment two and one-half years later.

Eleanor's work with the NYA in Kansas City lasted from the first week in August 1941, until just past mid-December 1941—approximately four and one-half months. Each project area was phased out during a different week or month. She remembers it as quite a blow because the pay was good. Thus, Eleanor returned to Des Moines and lived at her parents' home.

FIRST DELTA SIGMA THETA CONVENTION, DECEMBER 1941

At the end of December 1941, Eleanor took her first long trip to Detroit, Michigan, which was the site of her first Delta Sigma Theta national sorority convention. While there, she stayed with a teacher who had been neighbor of her last boyfriend while at Iowa State. As Eleanor recalls, "In those days, the YWCA or a private home was all that was available for someone of color who was away from home for lodging."¹ While at the convention, Eleanor saw her newly made Kansas City friends and made new friends and acquaintances. She had the memorable opportunity to see, but not meet, Mary McCleod-Bethune.² The meeting location for the 1941 Delta Sigma Theta Convention was at the Detroit YWCA.

Attendees included a small group primarily comprised of teachers and social workers. Other professions and careers were represented by the conference participants, such as lawyers.

Eleanor's return from the Delta Sigma Theta Convention represents a point of realization for her in terms of her future and her career path, "When I returned from that trip, I realized that I would have to prepare to teach, as there would not be other supervising jobs available. There were factories in Kansas City, Missouri, but my background was not in industrial-type sewing." Thus, Eleanor enrolled at Drake University in Des Moines to take two education courses, which commenced late in January 1942. During the semester Eleanor was taking education courses at Drake, she worked at Boyt Harness Factory in Des Moines on an evening shift. The harness plant made straps for some type of equipment that was used during World War II. At the same time, she took courses in typing and shorthand in adult education.

While enrolled at Drake, Eleanor sent out over 60 letters seeking employment. Most of her letters of application were sent to southern colleges, as well as to some city public schools in geographical areas where Blacks were employed. These applications did not include southern public schools. Most of the responses that she received stated that some teaching experience was required for the position. However, she received a positive response from Georgia Normal College, which became Albany State College the following year. She was offered a 12-month contract at a salary of \$1200 a year.

TEACHING AT GEORGIA NORMAL COLLEGE, 1941-1942

Eleanor recalls the protests and concerns of her relatives when she accepted the position at Georgia Normal College, a liberal arts school. Her grandmother cried at the train

station when Eleanor departed to head south to Georgia. They feared for her safety, as well as the racism that Eleanor would face in the Jim Crow South.³ Lynching Blacks was still widely practiced there and another fear of Eleanor's relatives. Eleanor recalls that Blacks in the midwest remained bitter about the treatment that they received in the South and would not return there to work.⁴

Traveling to Georgia gave Eleanor the opportunity to experience true Jim Crow treatment from Terre Haute, Indiana to Georgia. She traveled from Iowa to Chicago on a state-of-the-art streamlined train. From Chicago to Terre Haute, Blacks usually were free to ride in any car they chose. One exception was during Eleanor's first trip to Georgia, when she could not ride in the front car, but was permitted seating in the second car. The Black passengers had the second car to themselves. However, the situation worked in reverse wherein many Whites had to stand in their allocated car, even when there was room in the car designated for Blacks only. The time period was during World War II and U.S. involvement in the war when many people were traveling. However, from Chicago to Atlanta, Georgia, Eleanor recalls that the rail transport was too often a coal-operated train. In recalling her travel by rail to Georgia, Eleanor notes that,

Despite the segregation, it was an interesting trip. The scenery was breathtaking in Western Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia. The red earth contrasted in the hills with the evergreen trees; seeing cotton, moss on the trees, and some of the blooming plants were overwhelming.

It [Georgia Normal] was built between the Albany River and a huge sand dune. The location lies 96 miles north of Tallahassee, Florida, near a highway to that location. The road that went through the campus was lined with palm trees. An alligator lived on campus in a cage between the library and the oldest dormitory.

The sanitation system was a cesspool. I can remember members of the Georgia chain gang being brought in to work on it. One faculty member, who was an art instructor, contracted intestinal dysentery and passed. Malaria was always a possibility and the matron in our dorm was a victim. Mosquitoes loved me and I was

always in fear that I would get it. In the summer, I helped out in the library to fill my time schedule. The mosquito rate behind the desk was high.

At Georgia Normal, Eleanor was in charge of the clothing and art department. The first classes that she taught were primarily for public school teachers. Most of her students were women with families, but Eleanor recalls that they were good people with whom to work. During the fall term, traditional students were enrolled and Eleanor had a pleasant experience teaching them. Her classes had under 20 students in the areas of clothing design and applied art. She remembers the classroom equipment as satisfactory. Of all the places Eleanor was employed, she states that she has the least memory of the activities while at Georgia Normal. She notes that while she was at Georgia Normal, it was wartime and that might be one reason why there were not many social activities there. She has no recollection of any intercollegiate sport activities while she was there, which also may have been due to World War II.

The World War II effort was evident at Georgia Normal during Eleanor's tenure there in a three-page notice release from the Office of the University System Chancellor S. V.

Sanford, 100 State Capitol, Atlanta:

The University System of Georgia in Wartime

On June 8, 1942, the University System of Georgia enters upon a Wartime Program for a Victory-Minded People. Students graduating from high school this June can immediately enter the units of the University System, instead of waiting until next fall as they would normally do.

The high school graduate of 1942 has an obligation to his country to complete his education in the least possible time so that he may be available for productive effort as soon as possible. All new students will be doing less than their duty, if they do not enter college, June 8, and continue to carry full academic loads four terms each year until graduation or the war is won. Women too should carry on and complete their college training. If the war lasts as long as it looks, as it may, women are going to be called upon to perform many of the tasks and assignments now being filled by men. There is a growing demand for trained women scientists.

University System on Calendar Year Plan

All the units, with their scores of departments of instruction are cooperating in the acceleration of course work, to the end that young men and women enrolling may be prepared more speedily for the important work of the world. All the units will operate on the four term plan, 48 weeks instead of 36 weeks.

New Courses

To meet urgent war needs some of the new courses added are listed, but by no means the complete list: military for civilians; [end page -1-] military explosives, chemistry in warfare; offensive and defensive gasses; aeronautics; principles of Aviation; college algebra; trigonometry; calculus; general physics; mechanics; practical electronics; descriptive astronomy; practical astronomy for navigation on sea, on land, and in the air; South sea island geography; advanced organic chemistry; military and navel law; psychology of adjustment; health; Spanish; French; German; Portugese; first aid; nutrition; machine accounting; bacteriology; landscape architecture; nursing; secretarial training; sanitary engineering; recent American History; American diplomacy; administration of athletic programs; coaching; contemporary economic problems; naval science; radio technicians; physical education for men and women; the principles of democracy; and an extensive physical education program required by all students.

May 8, 1942

Excerpts from release from Chancellor Sanford's Office.

-2-

In keeping with the speedup program inaugurated in the University System as of June 8, 1942, the Georgia Normal College will operate on the four quarter schedule.

Under this new setup all persons attending the Summer Quarter will have no opportunity to do a full Quarter's work of 18 to 20 quarter hours credit. It will also be possible for students to enter school any quarter during the calendar year without handicap.

Persons attending under the new plan will be able to complete a four year course in three calendar years, or three fourths of the usual time. Persons interested in the two year program may complete the course in one and one-half calendar years.

All persons who plan to enter school this year are urged to take advantage of their opportunity and register for the entire summer Quarter on June 8th. The expense for the Summer Quarter, under the new setup will be the same as that of any other Quarter of the school year, which is as follows:

<u>Expense for Summer or First Quarter</u>			
<u>Boarding Students</u>		<u>Non-Boarding Students</u>	
Tuition	\$10.00	Tuition	\$10.00
**Athletic Fee	3.00	**Athletic Fee	3.00
**Medical Fee	4.00	**Physical Education Fee	<u>3.00</u>
**Physical Education Fee	<u>3.00</u>	Total Fees, First Quarter---	\$15.00
Total Fees, First Quarter	\$20.00		

Fees Each Succeeding Quarter,	\$10.00
Board, (Per Month)	\$13.00
Room Rent (Per Month)	<u>2.00</u>
Total (Per Month)	\$15.00

For further information, write
 Dr. J. W. Holley, President
 Albany, Georgia

-3-⁵

As is historically the practice in the United States, public schools and institutions of higher education are mobilized to contribute to the nation's efforts during times of war. Georgia Normal was no exception, as demonstrated from the directive from the Office of the University System on May 8, 1942. This directive likely supplemented and expanded Georgia Normal's more traditional summer session bulletin for 1942. Courses from their summer bulletin are stated as:

**List of Courses
 Both Junior and Senior College
 Course Will Be Offered**

Nutrition and First Aid
 English Composition
 Literature
 Physical Science (Survey)
 Biology (Survey)
 Mathematics (Survey)
 Education
 Psychology
 Sociology
 Social Science (Survey)
 Art (Elementary School)
 Rural Problems
 Curriculum Development
 Music (Public School)
 Home Economics
 *Curriculum Planning for Home Economics
 *Curriculum Planning for Rural Schools

In addition to regular courses a demonstration school for the benefit of teachers of one, two, or three teacher schools will be operated on or near the campus.

Instruction will be offered in Band Music by the College Band Master.

*In this course workshop techniques will be employed.⁶

An interesting opportunity offered during Georgia Normal's 1942 summer session for grade school teachers is detailed on the inside of the pamphlet:

Special Projects in Curriculum Study

A work-shop will be conducted during the summer by the Department of Education for the benefit of grade teachers.

The purpose of the work-shop will be to provide opportunity for teachers to work under the direction and guidance of persons who have had broad experiences in their fields of specialization. The procedure is highly flexible in order to meet the needs and desires of individual members of the group. Members of the work-shop will be given an opportunity to work on various problems pertinent to their respective schools.⁷

Other items of interest to prospective students that were addressed in the bulletin include a calendar, the session dates, fees for boarding and non-boarding students, credits, registration instructions, and an application blank.

PAINE COLLEGE, AUGUSTA GEORGIA, 1942-1943

Eleanor applied for and accepted the offer of a home economics faculty position at historically Black Paine College, a Methodist-sponsored liberal arts school in Augusta, Georgia, the following academic year because the salary, at \$1,125 for a nine-month appointment, was better. At Paine, the faculty was integrated, but the student body was all African American. Eleanor's teaching duties included art appreciation with a class of about 24 students. The foods and nutrition and clothing classes that she taught had under 20 students in each class. She taught nutrition to a group of approximately 20 students from a nursing program associated with the segregated University of Georgia nursing program that

was not a regular part of the campus. Her experiences at Paine were broader and more challenging in terms of time management, particularly when the nurses' program was added to her regular schedule for a quarter. The biggest problem that Eleanor encountered in her teaching at Paine was the wood cook stove. The classroom also had gas and electric stoves, but Eleanor did not know how to use the wood cook stove. She recalls that she was too embarrassed to ask for help with the wood cook stove and as a result, it never was used. Eleanor remembers the classroom equipment at Paine as satisfactory.

While at Paine College, there were basketball games and more student enthusiasm and activity than Eleanor remembers while she was at Georgia Normal the previous year. In the spring, there was a junior and a senior prom. She regrets that there was no opportunity for her to attend church in the community because she was expected to attend the campus chapel. She does not remember shopping for groceries for her classes at Paine College, and as such, assumes that she called to have them delivered, particularly because she did not have a car at that time.

While Eleanor was at Paine, the individual in charge of the dormitory food and who also was the high school home economics teacher resigned. The president of Paine asked Eleanor to assume those responsibilities. Eleanor recalls her response to the president,

I told him that I was not a jack of all trades. He said something to the effect that Iowa State trained people to be too highly specialized. That would have been two people's jobs. I think he did get someone else for the high school teaching and asked her to also take over the dining hall as a previous employee had done.

The summer of 1944, Eleanor left Paine College for a summer job in Salt Lake City, Utah as a secretary for the segregated United States Organization (U.S.O.) Catholic division. While in Salt Lake City, she stayed in the home of her uncle, William Morris, her step-

father's brother. William was well known for his keen memory. He reportedly could remember an infinite number of coat check numbers and his name appeared in *Ripley's Believe it or Not* because of this feat. Eleanor's summer duties involved office work, depositing money at the bank, and giving directions to GIs for lodging or food when they passed through. She helped with socials in the facility when entertainment was brought in or assisted in coordinating outside affairs, which included bands, canyon parties, and other in-house socials. She remained at this job well into August until it was time for her to go to Kansas City, Kansas to teach at Sumner High School.

SUMNER HIGH SCHOOL, KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

In 1941 before graduation from ISC, Eleanor saw an article about and picture of Sumner High School, Kansas City, Kansas in the *Home Economics Journal*. She decided then that if she ever taught school, Sumner was the school where she wanted to teach. Sumner High School, the only all Black segregated school in Kansas, required its teachers to have two years of teaching experience in addition to a masters degree. After graduating from ISC, and after attending her first Delta Sigma Theta convention in Detroit in 1941, Eleanor realized that in spite of her aspirations for a career in textiles and clothing outside the domain of teaching, she needed to prepare herself to teach. The societal and institutional restrictions imposed on her due to her race and gender rendered teaching as one of her limited viable career choices. After teaching at Georgia Normal and Paine Colleges, Eleanor secured the two years of teaching experience that she needed to apply for a position teaching clothing at Sumner High School in Kansas City, Kansas.

Sumner High School has a rich and unique history of its own. There are at least three different accounts describing what is cited as the basis for establishing Sumner High School. The 1904 incident involved a shooting between White student, Roy Martin, and Black student, Louis Gregory, in which Martin was killed. As one version of the story goes, the day following the shooting, 80 Black students found their paths blocked by some 700 White students when trying to enter Kansas City High School, Kansas City, Kansas.⁸ This created the impetus for White residents to push for segregated schools in Kansas City, Kansas.

As a result, the Kansas State Legislature passed a law in 1905 that exempted only Kansas City, Kansas from the state law that prohibited racially segregated public high schools. E. W. Hoch, Governor of Kansas, signed the “school segregation bill,” while successfully convincing the Kansas City, Kansas voters to finance a newly constructed high school building for the Black students in the community. He proposed that the new school would cost not less than \$40,000 and specified that the new school should be as well equipped as the existing high school building.⁹

Sumner opened the doors of its original building in 1905 as a result of the state legislation and was the only segregated all Black high school in the state of Kansas. Interestingly, Sumner’s founding follows closely the landmark *Plessy vs Ferguson* case of 1896 and the rhetorical Supreme Court legislated conceptualization of “separate but equal.” However, as too often was not the case in numerous White-controlled school districts after the separate but equal legislation, Sumner does exemplify an equal facility representative of a successful undertaking to establish a tradition of academic excellence.¹⁰ The original Sumner building remained from 1905-1940. A new building for Sumner High School was opened in 1940 until the school was closed permanently in 1978 and converted into a science

center or academy. Its closing was the result of a federally mandated plan for racial integration in the schools.¹¹ It is an interesting observation that racial integration of schools was federally mandated through the Civil Rights legislation of the famous *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision in 1954. In this particular instance, Kansas did not implement the mandate until 24 years later. This practice was, however, more the norm throughout the United States than not.

Eleanor's interview to teach at Sumner High School was successful. In her teaching contract, it was stipulated that she complete her masters degree because all teachers at Sumner High School were required to have one. Thus, Eleanor began making plans to pursue her masters degree. Shortly following her interview and acceptance of the teaching position, she learned that the Northeast Junior High School clothing teacher was taking leave to complete her bachelors degree. Eleanor was to take her place until she returned and, as a result, the Sumner High School teacher who Eleanor was intended to replace had to remain in her position another year as well. This was a disappointment to the high school teacher who was planning to leave because she had adopted a baby and wanted to be home with him.

Eleanor found her nine-month Northeast Junior High School work experience challenging. At Northeast, she was the clothing teacher for the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. She was the most impressed with the seventh graders, who in many cases she remembers as being so small, but who were like busy bees. In August 2000, she had the pleasure of seeing three of her former Northeast Junior High School students at a funeral dinner in Kansas City, Kansas.

Each clothing class that Eleanor taught at Northeast had 24 to 27 students enrolled. There were at least five class periods each day. Supplies for the class were sufficient,

however sometimes students experienced difficulty obtaining the sewing supplies that they needed. Students who found themselves in that situation were offered assistance from the school advisor.

Northeast Junior High School was built in 1924. The building had four floors and Eleanor's home economics room was on the top floor. The auditorium faced the gym. Curtains in the auditorium created a backdrop for school assemblies. When the curtains were open, the basketball games were open to the public for viewing.

At the end of Eleanor's first year of teaching at Northwest Junior High School in 1944-1945, she was told that she would teach at Sumner High School beginning fall 1945. It was a thrill for Eleanor to begin teaching at Sumner. She notes that the faculty was top-notch and the first principal, John A. Hodge, was the cream of the crop in the city. He was a man respected by everyone. Eleanor fondly recalls John Hodge,

The principal that I had in Kansas City [Hodge]—this was the one that was the gem and I just idolized him. Phi Beta Kappa with all of the earmarks of culture, refinement, education. He always said there's a method—attach it to something to help you remember [names.] I tried. I'm so thankful for that experience.¹²

She found her students to be interested, well-behaved young people who were very eager to learn. The school facility was modern and well-equipped. The supervisors and superintendent overseeing Kansas City, Kansas schools were White, otherwise, all of the teachers and staff at Sumner were Black. Sadly, the Sumner principal after Mr. Hodge's retirement was not blessed with talents and skills of his long-tenured predecessor.

At Sumner High School, Eleanor taught clothing and family living for several years and then taught only clothing. A third home economics instructor was hired to teach family living, which was taught previously by Eleanor. Eleanor also worked with Y-teens, an

organization that she was active in during her youth in Des Moines, during the nine years that she taught at Sumner High School.

In Eleanor's home economics classroom at Sumner High School, there were tables for 36 students with a space to place their own drawer that was housed in the wall. The cutting table was of a reasonable size and there were approximately eight sewing machines. Eleanor's class size averaged around 24 to 28 students. The room also housed a laundry, a sitting room, a triple mirror, a drying rack, a washing machine, and rinsing tubs, which were built against the wall. There were two built-in ironing boards in the main room. For family living classes, there was a living room furnished with a maple davenport with cushions, cushioned chairs, end tables, and a desk. Draperies were hung on the window and there was a rug on the floor. A White male visitor to Sumner said to Principal Hodge, "What a luxury this must be for most of these students." Mr. Hodge said, "On the contrary, this is nothing compared to many homes in this area. Due to segregation, their home is their castle."

The new Sumner High School building was built in 1940-1941 and designed by an eastern architect named Ratatinsky. The principal's office sported the latest technology in two-way sound systems for the school. Northeast Junior High had a system, but it was not two-way. The new high school building had a football stadium with bleachers and a stand to sell tickets for football games. The gymnasium was on the opposite end of the school from the auditorium so the public could enter the building, go to the built-in ticket booth, and then enter the bleachers in the gym for basketball games or other activities.

The Sumner High School auditorium was at the end of the building, which made it accessible for evening and community programs as well as school assemblies. The main part of the school was locked when there were outside community programs held in the

auditorium. The high school had a metal shop, a wood shop, a printing lab, and a science laboratory. The school entered contests and won recognition for science projects. French and Spanish were offered, as well as art, social studies, history, government, math, English, and literature. Sumner also offered business training courses and a cosmetology course program where students received training their senior year and prepared to take the state board exams for their license. Many Sumner students continued their education at Kansas University or Kansas State in Manhattan.

There was a marching band. A few students in the home economics department made uniforms for the band because there were no funds. While scurrying to complete the marching team's uniforms, the classes were being neglected. Eleanor was sewing and helping the students who were cooperating on the project in their preparation for the Kansas City Royal Parade, a big event in Kansas City, Missouri.

Eleanor was happy with teaching because she was in an ideal setting with students who enjoyed learning and she was working with an enjoyable staff. The teaching experience at Sumner High School was the happiest teaching experience for Eleanor in her lifetime. She was active in numerous Sumner school activities during her tenure there. For example, on April 22, 1950, Eleanor and eleven of her home economics students took a trip to Manhattan, Kansas where they participated in the annual Hospitality Day sponsored by the Home Economics Division of Kansas State College. Eleanor participated in the play, *Spring Time for Patsy*, produced in 1950 featuring a faculty and student cast and in which Eleanor played one of the parts. During 1952, the play, *The Mikado*, was produced at Sumner by a teacher who now lives in New York. Eleanor was in charge of the costumes and make-up. The Style

Revue by Eleanor's home economics students was a major production for Eleanor and students alike and one that was well received and looked forward to with anticipation.

Eleanor became aware that her teaching qualifications should be upgraded while she was at Sumner High School. As a result, she enrolled at University of Kansas to take practice teaching. Eleanor's practice teaching was supervised by the same instructor who supervised a student-teacher in Eleanor's classroom. Because most school systems were requiring supervised practice teaching, this was a smart move for Eleanor to make.

Eleanor remained current in her field and in the early 1950s enrolled in the Bishop method of sewing that was in vogue at that time. This method implemented sewing by pinning and machine basting instead of using hand basting. Iowa State was teaching the same fundamental method under a different name.

While teaching at Sumner, Eleanor was not allowed to marry. If she chose marriage, she had to give up her job. Eleanor's supervisor at Sumner confronted her when she was trying to find out if she could keep her job if she married. Sumner's White superintendent was negative about Black men and made derogatory statements that Black men could not get a job or support a family. When Whites faced the same situation, they could find other employment, but teaching was one of the few fields open to Blacks at that time. But, once a Black teacher gained experience teaching, if she married, she was fired and a younger teacher was hired. This was cheaper in terms of the salaries paid by the school district because younger, less experienced teachers received lower pay. Sometimes a teacher was lucky if a replacement could not be found.

Even though she was living in Kansas, Eleanor kept her membership at the Kansas City, Missouri church. It took her one hour for a one-way journey by streetcar, but she

enjoyed the service. She remained active in Delta Sigma Theta sorority and has held every office at some time in addition to being president of the Greater Kansas City, Kansas/Missouri and Des Moines, Iowa chapters. Eleanor continued to date occasionally. She also became engaged while teaching at Sumner, but if she married while teaching there, her job was not guaranteed and she needed money to complete her masters degree at Teachers College.

Eleanor's personal papers and album collections reflect her love of teaching, the students, the faculty, and the school while at Sumner High School. Her remembrance of Sumner being her happiest days teaching is further testament. She was fortunate to have what is likely a once in a lifetime experience to be in an environment where excellence was the standard and the expectation in a supportive community devoted to the success of their children's futures. Many students and teachers received the foundation and education that they needed at Sumner that led to numerous successful careers in later years as they often worked against the odds in a discriminatory society and culture. Dr. Edward Beasley is one such example and was featured in an article by Alan Hoskins. In the article, Beasley describes his experience teaching at Sumner and his colleagues there in the following manner:

I am very appreciative of my years at Sumner High School. My experiences there provided me with the opportunity to advance where I would never had a chance to advance anywhere else.

It provided me with a golden opportunity to interact with students and superior faculty members. When I first came to Sumner, I was shocked at the educational backgrounds of the instructors. What people overlook is that those teachers were of the highest quality.

At that time, African American teachers on the secondary level had only one high school where they could teach and so they got the cream of the crop. They were extremely well prepared with advanced degrees.¹³

Eleanor's teaching colleagues at Sumner High School in 1954 included J. D. Ruffin, A. T. Edwards, Marcelene Rogers, Delbert W. White, Norma Jean Watson, Robert N. Clark, E. Allen Charlton, Wilma Robertson, R. Rostell Mansfield, Beatrice E. Penman, W. J. Smith, Roberts W. Jeltz, Edna N. Hoffman, William Boone, Bessie Isaacs, Eugene M. Banks, Georgia Gray, C. L. Turpin, John W. Henderson, Henry McCary, Arthur O. Johnson, Jr., Lillian Adams, Robert H. Jackson, Audrey Fortenberry, Rebecca S. Bloodworth, E. A. Taylor, Geraldine Coverson, Noah Mansfield, Eugene H. Wilson, Miss Doris Mosley (sister-in-law of deceased Alex Haley,) Sam Betts, Arthelia Alexander, and Julia M. Bell.¹⁴

GRADUATE SCHOOL AT TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK

One of the stipulations when Eleanor was hired to teach at Sumner was that she complete a masters degree to keep her teaching job there. Eleanor was determined to meet Sumner's requirement to complete the study for her masters degree and she worked hard to accomplish this. The first year of her masters study she attended University of Chicago because she had not received a reply to her application from Columbia University Teachers College in New York City. When she returned home the day that she registered at Chicago University, the information was waiting for her from New York. At this point it was too late for Eleanor to attend Teachers College in the summer of 1945. However, thereafter, during the summers of 1946, 1947, 1948, and 1949, Eleanor went to New York City to attend Teachers College at Columbia University and to complete the work for her masters degree there in textiles and clothing.

Eleanor's budget contributed to her graduate education. She took an advance on her summer pay in order to pay for her schooling in New York, but she has no regrets about it

and remembers it as a great experience. Each weekend she tried to find something enriching to do. There were activities available such as plays, an outdoor concert, a park, a beach, or going to a borough other than Manhattan. She found the Hyde Park district in Roosevelt Estates interesting.

She could only afford to attend the summer program at Teachers College, which meant that she would earn a master of arts degree. Science courses were not available in the summer, which would have earned a master of science degree for her. Attending Teachers College gave her the opportunity to see and experience the design clothing industry firsthand and to get it out of her system, which was her main reason for choosing a New York school in the first place. A design school did not meet the requirements for Eleanor to keep her job in Kansas City. Many trade school students in New York at that time graduated from high school well prepared for design, pattern making and directions, and grading patterns. A degree was not necessary to work in the pattern laying or sewing industry, which was Eleanor's original career choice. New York University offered a merchandising program, but Eleanor learned about this too late. It would have meant another lost summer for her because there were so many hours required for her degree in one school.

Eleanor was excited to travel east to New York City to attend Teachers College. It was the hub of the fashion industry for the United States and she reveled in the thought of taking courses in textiles and clothing while having the opportunity to explore and experience the industry in its midst. Another driving force that compelled Eleanor to attend Teachers College was to experience the culture of New York City and to meet some native easterners. Meeting native easterners proved to be a disappointment for her, however. Eleanor expected that her classmates would be comprised primarily of students from the east.

What she soon discovered was that the majority of her classmates were from the South. The student composition of the home economics classes was usually around one-half Blacks and one-half Whites, mostly from the South. Black students from states such as Florida, Texas, and Oklahoma had their graduate education paid for by their own state if their home state could not provide them with their choice of study.

A promotional newspaper article for studying at Teachers College at the time Eleanor attended emphasizes many of the things that prompted Eleanor's excitement to study there during the summer session. The article heading entices young women by its opening invitation, "Sewing, study, sightseeing and shopping are crammed into the six precious weeks that Home Economics teachers spend at New York City's famed Columbia University."¹⁵ The body of the text in the newspaper article reads as follows:

The summer vacation that is the dream of a large number of the country's teachers consists of attending the six-weeks-long session (July 1 to Aug 15) at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City. The reasons: A chance to learn more new methods and acquire refresher material, to earn eight points of credit which often means a pay raise, to travel, and to see New York. Of the 12,000 enterprising students who converge on Columbia every summer, about 6,500 descend on Teachers College. They arrive from every part of the world, fill the campus dormitories, attend intensive classes, eat in the baronial cafeteria, and spend every extra minute and every extra penny seeing Broadway plays (at \$1.20 a seat), shopping along Fifth Avenue, and visiting the U. N., Rockefeller Center and the Statue of Liberty. Most of them manage side sightseeing trips, traveling half a dozen in a car and billeting with friends. At summer's end they return to school with their new ideas, their credits, their theater programs, bargains, memories and inspiration, all set for the term ahead. And since summer students tend to be eager, enthusiastic and responsive, they not only gain from Columbia but they contribute to it and to each other while they are there.¹⁶

The caption of a photograph of the campus states that, "Teachers College covers one city block on Morningside Heights, has own library, dorm, offers complete teaching program."¹⁷

A photograph of young ladies seated outside at a picnic table at Teachers College offers an enticing picture:

Outdoor luncheons under beach umbrellas in Russell Court are a Teachers College institution, as are the milk and sandwich carts from which they're served. Student discussion groups, also a T. C. institution, meet here on warm summer days for their talks. Lively exchange of ideas is a characteristic of summer sessions.¹⁸

For someone enthusiastic and interested in textiles and clothing like Eleanor, the article contents, along with the lure and intrigue of New York City, would generate the excitement and enthusiasm that Eleanor felt about attending there.

At Columbia Teachers College, her curriculum included education courses, two of which were very broad in nature with many students. The classes had a one hour lecture and then broke into small groups for an hour. Each small group had an elected leader to report back to the professors during the last hour of class. Eleanor was elected as one of the leaders in the second year of her coursework. One of the professors there asked her if she could get a degree in child development. She told the professor that she was seeking her degree in textiles and clothing. Eleanor took courses in clothing construction, pattern making, draping design, art, and other courses that she does not recall. The two main instructors for textiles and clothing were not fond of Black students, but they were better than the head of the textiles department when Eleanor was at Iowa State. In the end, the ISC department head offered to do whatever she could to help Eleanor with her employment.

Notes for Chapter 4

¹ Segregation in housing, hotel accommodations, restaurants, etc. was still the norm in the country at this time.

² Mary McCleod Bethune is a well-known figure in African American history. In addition to founding the Bethune-Cookman College in Florida, she was an activist, innovator, and leader for equal rights and equal opportunity for African Americans. Perhaps most interesting, and also ironic, is that Mary McCleod Bethune was appointed to oversee the National Youth Administration Division of Negro Workers by FDR—the very program that was just phased out in Eleanor’s Kansas City employment.

³ Mease also describes the challenges faced by Blacks when traveling: “For black people, traveling was always an adventure. I don’t know if that is actually what you would call it. Not knowing exactly where you were welcome and where you weren’t could put you on edge, and many people just preferred to stay where it was safe and familiar and not venture out. . . . You had to learn where you could go and where you couldn’t. You just never knew how you were going to be received, but when you were young, you had a reserve built up, and you would go on and test things.” P. 20.

⁴ These recollections are from the interview with Eleanor on March 13, 2001.

⁵ Retyped from the original copy from the Office of the University System, Chancellor S. V. Sanford, 100 State Capitol, Atlanta from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer’s personal collection.

⁶ This information is taken from an original copy of Georgia Normal College Bulletin Announcements 1942, Summer Session June 8—August 18 from Eleanor Powell Rebecca Archer’s personal collection.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Available online at: <http://www.arthes.com/community/sumner/>

⁹ Available online at: <http://www.ukans.edu/~spencer/exhibits/sumner/history.htm>

¹⁰ Siddle Walker, 1996, provides a powerful and provocative view of another segregated all Black school that provided an environment of support, success, and achievement for its students in spite of attempts by an all White school board to undermine them.

¹¹ Available online at: <http://www.ukans.edu/~spencer/exhibits/sumner/history.htm>

¹² From Eleanor’s tenth interview on July 10, 2001, which took place in her Des Moines home.

¹³ Alan Hoskins, unidentified issue, Teaching at Sumner High Laid Foundation to Beasley’s Career. Published in *The Call*, Kansas City, MO from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer’s personal collection.

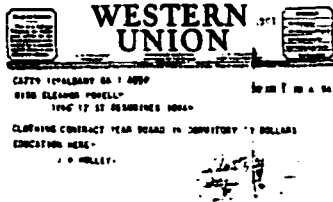
¹⁴ The names of Eleanor’s teaching colleagues at Sumner High School in 1954 are from a handwritten list from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer’s personal collection.

¹⁵ From undated and unidentified newspaper clipping about Teachers College from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer’s personal collection.

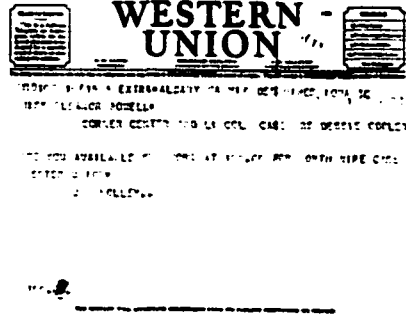
¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.



Digitized copy of the Western Union telegram that Eleanor received asking her to teach at Georgia Normal College. "Are you available for work at 100.00 per month."



Digitized copy of the Western Union telegram that Eleanor received confirming her teaching contract at Georgia Normal, "Clothing Contract Year Board in Dormitory 20 Dollars."

TO GEORGIA



Unidentified newspaper clipping, likely *The Bystander*, announcing Eleanor's departure to teach at Georgia Normal.

MISS ELEANOR POWELL
 Miss Eleanor Powell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Morris, 1904 Riverside street, left the city Thursday noon to take up duty as teacher and clothing instructor at Georgia Normal A. college at Albany, Ga.
 Miss Powell received her Bachelor of Science degree from Iowa State College at Ames. She was a textile supervisor of the N.Y.A. home-making school in Kansas City, Mo., last year. A member of the N. Y. P. S. A. S. S. E. Miss Powell was affiliated with the Delta Sigma Theta society and the Home Economics club of Kansas City.



Photograph of the dormitory where Eleanor lived while teaching at Georgia Normal College, 1942-1943.



Postcard of Georgia Normal dining hall.



Photograph of the new Georgia Normal dormitory.



The oldest dormitory at Georgia Normal College. 1942-1943.



Photograph of some of Eleanor's adult students at Georgia Normal College, summer school, 1942.

Eleanor Powell Merrill Williams

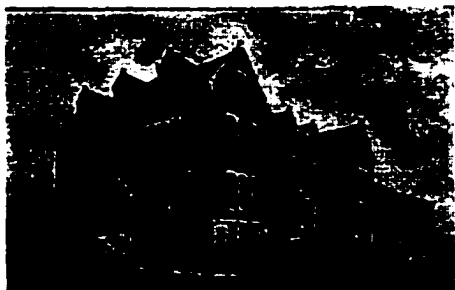


JEW 1943 Detroit

Eleanor Rebecca Powell, pictured center, in Detroit, the year before going to Salt Lake City, Utah to work for the U.S.O. The man on the left later became Eleanor's fiancée. The man on Eleanor's right is friend, Merrill Williams.



The segregated U.S.O. building in Salt Lake City, Utah where Eleanor worked the summer of 1944. It was during this time that Eleanor stayed with her step-uncle, William Morris.



1910

Sumner High School's original 1905 building. The 1910 graphic clipping is from an unidentified source.



The new Sumner High School built in 1940-1941. Digitized 1951 postcard.



JOHN A. HODGE

John A. Hodge, principal of Sumner High School and Eleanor's favorite. Hodge retired May 1951 from Sumner. S. H. Thompson, a graduate of Sumner, became principal after Hodge. Photo of Hodge from an unidentified source. Information about S. H. Thompson from *The Sumner Courier*, May 1951.



Eleanor's photo in the 1953-1954 Sumner High School Yearbook, *The Sumnerian*. Digitized copy from the yearbook.

ELEANOR R. POWELL
 Acting
 Iowa State College,
 Drake Univ., Chicago
 Univ., Columbia Univ.,
 Wayne Town, Des Moines,
 Iowa



Superintendent P. L. Schlagle and assistant pictured in the 1953-1954 Sumner High School Yearbook, *The Sumnerian*. Digitized copy from the yearbook.



Cover page from the 1953-1954 Sumner High School Yearbook, *The Sumnerian*. Digitized copy from the yearbook.

Guidance in Home Economics

Career Day sponsored by the Home Economics Association of Greater Kansas City and held at the University of Kansas City, April 22, was attended by groups of girls from Wyandotte High School and Rosedale High School. There were talks, demonstrations, films and skits which showed vocational opportunities offered through home economics training.

High School Day at the University of Kansas, April 29, was attended by representatives from Rosedale High School home economics department.

★ Eleven girls from Sumner High School spent April 22 at Manhattan attending the annual Hospitality Day, sponsored by the Home Economics Division of Kansas State College.

All of this is evidence of the work done in vocational guidance in the home-making classes of our high schools.

Teachers accompanying the girls on these trips were Misses Reva Lint, Reba Smither and Helen Scheve of Wyandotte High School; Miss Helen Priestley of Rosedale High School and Misses Mary Catherine Faulkner and Eleanor Powell of Sumner High School.

Clipping from the May 1950 Kansas City, Kansas, *Kansas School Bulletin*, page 4 describing the trip that Eleanor's students took to Manhattan, Kansas for a career day.

PERSONNEL

Produced by the Sumner High School Dramatic Club

Director	Miss Helen Priestley
Assistant Director	Miss Mary Catherine Faulkner
Stage Manager	Miss Eleanor Powell
Costume Designer	Miss Eleanor Powell
Make-up Artist	Miss Eleanor Powell
Music Director	Miss Eleanor Powell
Lighting	Miss Eleanor Powell
Sound	Miss Eleanor Powell
Properties	Miss Eleanor Powell
Stagehands	Miss Eleanor Powell
Actors	Miss Eleanor Powell
Actresses	Miss Eleanor Powell

The names of persons with the permission of C. C. Burdett, Chgo.

Sumner Presents

THE MIKADO

THE TOWN OF TITIPUS

A COMIC OPERA

by GEORGE & JULIUS

February 26, 27, 1952

ALFORD 260-400 P.M.

A digitized copy of: Left: Back page of the play, *The Mikado*, produced at Sumner High School February 26, 27, 1952, for which Eleanor was in charge of make-up and costumes. Right: Front page of the play.

CAST

The Mikado of Japan	Charles Reed
Madame Poo	Betty Morrison
Keefe	George Shaw
Madame Keefe	Gene Thoma
Poo Poo	John Taylor
Yoo Yoo	Joseph Miller
Poo Poo	Miss Helen
Keefe	Betty Morrison

Chorus of school girls, ladies, guards and soldiers

Ad. L. ...

Ad. R. ...

ARGUMENT

The story is set in Japan, where a young girl named Keefe has been taken to the Mikado's palace. She is to be married to the Mikado's son, but she has a secret. She is in love with a young man named Poo Poo. The Mikado's son, Keefe, is to be married to the Mikado's daughter, but she has a secret. She is in love with a young man named Poo Poo. The Mikado's son, Keefe, is to be married to the Mikado's daughter, but she has a secret. She is in love with a young man named Poo Poo.

A digitized copy of the center fold-out pages from the play, *The Mikado*, produced at Sumner High School, February 26, 27, 1952.

SUMNER COURIER

February 1953

Volume 22

141 Students Listed In Honor Roll

Number 5, Anniversary 1931 - Address: Suburban - Town of Arva



Victorian Favorite's Life in Drama Here

Summary of *Wanda Gág's* 'The Mikado' To Be Presented by Class at Sumner English

Chorus of school girls, ladies, guards and soldiers

Ad. L. ...

Ad. R. ...

A digitized copy of *The Sumner Courier* from February 1953 featuring the style revue of Eleanor's students.



Eleanor's Summer High School students modeling in their Style Revue, February 1953.



Eleanor's students, modeling in the Summer High School Style Revue, February 1953.

Clothing Classes Style Teen Age Apparel

A large crowd of parents and patrons were present at the style revue, "In Tune With Fashion," presented by Miss Eleanor Powell's students in clothing in the auditorium, for the program of the regular meeting of the P.T.A. Tuesday, February 3, in the auditorium.

Against a colorful background of a large silver musical staff hung with gold, crimson, green, and blue notes and soft background recording of summertime melodies, 123 models and 5 boys displayed what the well-dressed teen-ager will wear in cottons, street costumes, date dresses, and formals.

Elizabeth Mason and Betty [unclear], seated in two easy chairs, modeled the motif with large fashion books and a record player.

Word pictures were written by [unclear] Tiller, Joanne Lockett, Myra [unclear], and Daphne Thierry.

Assisting in the review as escorts were Donald Williams, Andre waney, Sylvester Jacques, Maurice Clemmons, and Harvey Maxey.

"Protecting Our Children," a panel discussion, followed the revue. Speakers were Mrs. Juanita Goodman, Rev. E. A. Freeman, Mrs. John Malion, and D. W. Lewis.

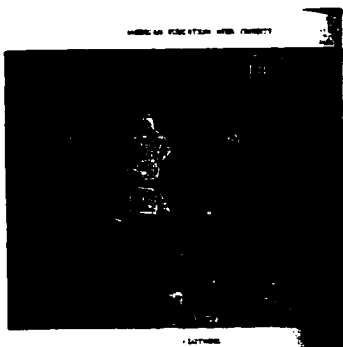
(Continued on Page 3)

Administrators

(Continued from page 1)

of Grant School; Paul L. Mobiley, Attucks; Miss Sipora Miller, Dunbar; Miss Rosa Lee Gamble, Lincoln; Coleman Wells of Fort Scott, Kansas; E. J. Hawkins; Fred Wilhoite, Manhattan; Harrison Caldwell, Topeka; Raymond Mason, Bonner Springs; Joseph Barnes, Olathe; Richard Warren, Leavenworth; John Anderson, Wichita; T. D. Early, Parsons; Miss Lillian Webster, Lawrence; E. I. Bassett, principal of Stowe School; D. W. Lewis, supervisor of colored elementary schools; Miss Leah Crump, principal of Kealing School; Miss Doris Kerford, Douglass; B. C. Easter, Salina, Kansas; Earl Lawson, Leavenworth; Joseph Collins, principal of Northeast Junior High School.

A digitized copy of the article from the February 1953 *The Sumner Courier* about the Style Revue presented by Eleanor's students. The article is cropped from the complete copy of *The Sumner Courier*.



Clothing display from Eleanor's Sumner High School classroom. Digitized copy from the 1953-1954 Summer High School Yearbook, *The Sumnerian*.



Eleanor's Sumner High School Homeroom. Eleanor is in the back row, third from the left.

PROGRAM

Processional, "Triumphal March," from Aida.....York
 (The audience will please stand until after the procession)
 The National Anthem
 Invocation.....The Reverend R. L. Janssen
 Pastor of English Street Christian Church
 "Deep River Song".....Brooks
 Sumner High School Band
 Robert H. Cook, Director
 Theme: "PREPARATION FOR LIVING"
 Knowing Its Worth.....Justin Weaver
 Developing Suitable Skills.....Marvin Knight
 Committing to God.....Dorothy Warren
 Advancing Intelligently.....Yona Strassman
 Reaching Definite Goals.....Harold Jackson
 "Greatest Ye People".....Johnson
 "He's Got the Whole World in His Hand".....Dr. Ruffin
 "You'll Never Walk Alone".....Empire Harmonettes
 Sumner High School Choir
 I. D. Ruffin, Director
 Presentation of Class.....S. H. Thompson, Principal
 Remarks.....F. L. Schmidt, Superintendent
 Confering of Diplomas.....Ralph Brown
 Member of the Board of Education
 Benediction.....The Reverend R. L. Janssen
 Reception, "Pomp and Circumstance".....Map
 (Please remain standing until after the reception)
 Sumner Plans Furnished by
 JENNINGS MUSIC COMPANY

CLASS ROLL

Charles Allen Thurgood Allen Barbara Jean Bailey Brian Lee Bacon Ruth Ann Berry James Theodore Birch Doris Jean Birch Cary May Burke Herbert Lee Burkham Leaven Burdick Clarence Orlin Burns Chas May Burns Barbara Albert Burns Emma Yvonne Buzzard Wendy Elaine Burns Joyce Marie Bus Don Joe Campbell Mack Campbell, Jr. Norma Jean Carter Grandpa Chevrolet Joseph Clay Don Virginia Christian Eugene Clay Hester M. Collins Amanda Marie Covel Thomas Edward Coffey Adolphus T. Coleman Sylvia Ann Collins Joyce Cox Delores Crowl Shirley Jane Cushman Colton Dalley Shirley Jean Deegan Shirley Madeline Deane Howard David Len Edna Dwyer Johnnie Orlan Eady Lucina Doris Eike "Emerson Brown" Callie Elaine Evans Len Mae Egan Ronald Fagan Chas May Bell Clarence Jerome Fields Frederick Lee Finney McKinley Fletcher Gladys Louise Fogg Myra Louise Ford James Gardner Gladys Louise Gardner Joe Ann Gastner	Ronald Gentry Ruthie Marie Goble Russell Bruce Gibson Dorothy Gorch Millie Gombosi Carl Gony James Andrew Gonyea LaToya Phyllis Griffin Howard Hagan Robert Hall Arthur Young Harsh John Wesley Harsh Raymond Harsh Charles Clifford Houston Melvyn Houston Charles Lee Hunsicker Dorothy Hunsicker Charles Monroe Hurme Leonard Hurst Opal Marie Hill Norma Yvonne Hill Bruce Hines Willie Jean Hines Loraine Hines Harold L. Johnson Kathryn V. Johnson Clara John James Lee Jones Johnson Kathryn Johnson Frances Johnson Alby Paul Jones Robert Lee Jones "Helen Day Hany" "Constance H. Harkwood" "Marion Knight" Betty Jane Leonard John W. Lewis Paul Long Mary Esther Long Charles W. Lutz Carolyn Ann Mahler Harvey G. Mann Margaret Adelle Marshall LeGren F. McBrine "Doris Ruth McGarry" William Henry McDaniel Raymond C. McQuibbin Thelma Marie McQuinn John Miller Sumner Mitchell "James Monthly Marshall" Ruth Micham	Margaret Minton Ma Louise Mitty Raymond Andrew Moore Rudolph C. Moore Willie Ann Moore Nancy Jean Mosby Wendell Mosby Monroe Chester Nash Allan Newman Donald Edward Newman Barbara May Norwood Harold L. Oates Leo Perry, Jr. Mae Pearl Pope Charles Edward Price "Constance Robinson" Thelma Ross William Louis Ross Donald E. Rossignol William David Longman John Henry Roberts, Jr. Rose Lee Rose Charles Edward Rowe James Marie Row Mary Jane Smith Noel Jane Smith LeRoy James Allyn Strassman "Yona Strassman" William J. Stuchlik Aubrey Dorothea Strucky David Eugene Strong James Harold Tatum Clarence Myron Taylor Gaius H. Taylor, Jr. Norma Lee Taylor Rebecca Mae Thelma Dayton John Thoney William Lee Thomas Alma Annette Thompson Lawrence H. Thompson Wyatt Louis Thompson Barbara Jean Thumel Leo Wade Thur Albert C. Turner, Jr. Nancy Mae Turner Constance V. Walker Marjorie Walker Beverly Jean Walker Rebecca Ward, Jr.
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John Clayton Warren	Glenn Dean White	Hilda Frances White
Hilda Fern Warren	*Jan Veronika White	Robert White
*Dorothy Ruth Warren	Lorraine White	Mary Winick
Earl William Warren	Maude Lee White	Henry Jackson Wilson
John Warren	William Alvin White	*Linda Mae Wynn
Mathew Warren	Donald Charles Whitman	
Norman Jean Warren	Ronald Williams	*Lilla Ann Yates
*John Warren	Wesley Lee Williams	Rene Jean Young
Verona White	Norman White	Jacqueline Ann Young

Students whose names are marked (*) are members of the Sumner High School Chapter of the National Home Society
 Colors: Green, Pink, and Rose-Red

Motto: "Aspiring Far and Doing it Word Doing Well"

MEMBERS OF THE COSMETOLOGY COURSE

Helen Bernice By	Mildred P. Johnson
Doris Jean Blanks	Woodlyn Elaine Madden
Chas. Mae Brown	Lillian Rosemary McBride
Jan Burns	Bessie Mitchell
Joyce Chaslin Cox	Ruth Ann Hendon
Ann Kay Davis	Everettine Madeline Thompson
Chas. Mae Fells	Mary Weisman
*Lila Frances McHenry	Bessie Jean Young

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

DONOR	RECIPIENT
My's Market	John Warren
Kanawha College	Bessie Jean Wilson
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority	Constance Kirkwood
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity	Mary Knight
Companions Club	Vera Swenson
John A. Hoag Scholarship Fund	Gwendolyn Kirkwood
John A. Hoag Scholarship Fund	Mary Knight
Kappa Youth Scholarship Foundation, Inc.	Jessie Mitchell
Kappa Youth Scholarship Foundation, Inc.	Edith Marie
Kappa Alpha Phi Sorority	Bessie Jean Young
Delta Kappa Theta Sorority	Dorothy Warren
DeWitt Club	Jan White
Kanawha Co. Kanawha Council of Colored Parents and Teachers	Maria Knight
Sumner Parent-Teacher Association	Jan White
Sumner Parent-Teacher Association	Margaret Jackson
American Legion, Argonne Post No. 21	Laura Wynn
Edna Park	Edith Marie
Bessie O'Leary Study Club	John Warren
U-Better Club	Laura Wynn
Sam Point Club	Bessie Jean Young
Knights Club	Bessie McHenry
Sam V. Bruden Lorenz of Art Club	Constance Kirkwood
Coltman Ice & Cream	Dorothy Zella Thayer
Dorcas Home Club	Bessie Jean Young
The Neighborhood League	Vera Swenson
Westmore County Association of Colored Women	John Warren



Digitized copy of Sumner High School Class of 1953 commencement program back cover, page 4.

Unidentified newspaper clipping, likely published in *The Bystander*, announcing Eleanor's completion of her masters degree in textiles and clothing at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

5 Marriage and Children

ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE

Eleanor had a few young men friends while attending ISC, after her graduation, and during the years following. Bob Martin, from Dubuque, Iowa and majoring in electrical engineering, was one of Eleanor's young men friends when she was a student at ISC.

Eleanor remembers following Bob around the golf course one time and that experience was enough for her to decide that she was not interested in the sport.

There were students whom Eleanor visited or attended movies with regularly on the ISC campus, but she did not go out on dates. She recalls another young man she liked very much and who was a good friend, Leonard Proctor from Detroit. Eleanor and Leonard remained friends the longest. He was a year behind Eleanor at ISC and entered the service the end of 1942 after Eleanor graduated from ISC.

In 1947 or 1948, friends close in age to Eleanor's mother drove a boyfriend Eleanor had been seeing for some time from Kansas City with an engagement ring for Eleanor. Eleanor was flabbergasted because, although she liked and respected the young man, she was not really in love with him. She accepted the ring, but their relationship fizzled. This is the suitor who the Kansas City, Kansas superintendent discouraged Eleanor from marrying because he was not settled from the aftermath of the war.

Eleanor met a student from Liberia while she was in summer school at ISC in 1953. She declined his proposal of marriage, even though she loved him, because his plans included returning to his homeland in Liberia after he graduated. As an only child and one who was close to her family, Eleanor chose to decline the marriage proposal and also because

she wanted to remain geographically close to her family. Even at her young age, she looked to a time in the future when, as her parents aged, they might need her care or assistance.

While teaching at Sumner High School in Kansas City, Kansas, Eleanor pursued and completed her masters degree in textiles and clothing at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City during the summer months. During these summers, she always made sure that she had time to spend in Des Moines with her parents and family, as well as returning there for holidays. It was around 1951 when she met Jean N. Archer, a 1949 graduate of Iowa State College in veterinary medicine, who was working temporarily in Des Moines as a government meat inspector. Jean had completed his B.S. degree in agriculture at the University of Haiti in the mid-1940s. In describing him, Eleanor remembers him as handsome, intelligent, and most charismatic and her friends thought so too. He was a native of Haiti and not yet a U.S. citizen. He had just resigned his temporary position in Des Moines before Eleanor met him, however Jean told her that if he had met her first that he would have not resigned. At the time Eleanor and Jean met, he was depressed, lonesome, and wanted to return to his home in Haiti.

After his resignation from the temporary position, Jean went to Louisiana to stay with a friend who was a medical doctor, and who Jean's mother helped rear in Haiti. Jean's intention was to return to his home in Haiti, but he was advised by his mother not to do this because of the political situation there. Jean thus found himself without a job because he did not realize how the process worked in the U.S. His perception was that because he spoke fluent French and it was his native language, he could teach college-level French in the U.S.¹ However, Jean had no U.S. credentials to teach French.

After a two-year geographically distant relationship, Jean Archer and Eleanor became engaged to be married. They were engaged for one year. In 1953, Jean returned to government employment where he inspected meat in Chicago. In Chicago, he experienced a great deal of prejudice and decided that he would apply for enlistment in the Army.² The Army accepted him during the summer of 1953. In the Army, Jean felt that there was less discrimination than he experienced in the public sector.

Eleanor and Jean were married on May 30, 1954, just after Eleanor's last year of teaching at Sumner High School in Kansas City, Kansas. The wedding ceremony was held in Des Moines at St. Ambrose Catholic Cathedral. Jean was Catholic and because Eleanor lived in Kansas City, Kansas during their engagement, she never received the required instruction from the Catholic Church before their marriage.

On the weekend of their wedding in May 1954, Jean and Eleanor traveled to Des Moines for their ceremony from different cities. There was much scurrying around, but Eleanor's mother had her part well under control. Eleanor made the dresses for her three bridesmaids, as well as her mother's dress for the ceremony. There were finishing touches that Eleanor needed to make for one of the bridesmaid's dresses. With her talent in and love of textiles and clothing, this is not surprising. Eleanor's dress and veil were made by her Aunt Georgine Morris, who was an outstanding seamstress. Georgine sewed for the wife of the owner of Meredith Publishing Company and the Hubbell's in Des Moines.³ Making the wedding dress and veil of Eleanor's choice was Georgine's wedding gift to Eleanor. Eleanor purchased the fabric for her wedding gown and veil in Kansas City, Missouri. The bridal gown chosen by Eleanor was one that was pictured in *Vogue* magazine. Following the wedding, the reception was held at the old downtown YWCA at 9th and High. In 1954, as in

the years before and following, practices of discrimination were the rule and Blacks were barred from using the hotels and most other facilities that were controlled and owned by the White population sector.

FROM DES MOINES TO KANSAS CITY AND ON TO CHICAGO, 1954

Following the wedding reception in Des Moines, Eleanor and Jean left for Kansas City, Kansas to go to Eleanor's apartment. In Kansas City, Eleanor had work to complete in her department at Sumner High School. After completing her obligations at Sumner, Eleanor and Jean rented and packed a trailer. In June 1954, they left for Chicago, where Jean was employed and stationed, and arrived at Lake Meadows apartments the same day. The next day Jean completed the formalities for his U.S. citizenship. While Jean was doing this, Eleanor returned the rented trailer to the West side of Chicago. By the time Eleanor unhitched the trailer and returned for Jean, he had obtained his U.S. citizenship papers.

Eleanor and Jean returned to their apartment, which was a housing development undertaking by a New York life insurance company. It was 1954 and the Chicago slums were being torn down and being replaced with high rise, low-rent housing in other areas of the city. Eleanor and Jean's apartment was located near the low-income area, but their complex, Lake Meadows Apartments, was geared toward middle income people. Lake Meadows was comprised of five buildings at that time and their apartment was in the last building. Because most of the units were already occupied, they had to rent a more expensive apartment. The Archers' apartment on the seventh of twelve floors had two bedrooms, living room, kitchen, bath, balcony, and a generous entrance. The rooms in the apartment were a decent size. The building had an elevator, a laundry room, and a buzzer

system for entry, but there was no guard or doorman. Lake Meadows was south of Michael Reese Hospital and across from an elementary school, which Eleanor prayed that her future children would not have to attend. Within five weeks, the furniture that Jean and Eleanor selected in Kansas City arrived and was arranged in their new apartment. They purchased three more pieces of furniture in Chicago after Eleanor arrived there with Jean as his new wife. Their bedroom set was selected earlier so it would be in their apartment when they arrived.

Jean returned to work, but that was short in duration. He became severely ill with stomach ulcers and was admitted to the naval hospital six weeks after their marriage. It was a long drive for Eleanor to visit him in the summer months and the car had no air conditioning. Regardless, Eleanor made the 100-mile roundtrip to visit her husband about two times each week during his hospital stay.

Shortly after Jean's hospitalization, Eleanor realized that she might be pregnant, but had to wait until September for a diagnosis. She went to the Fifth Army Headquarters for medical care. In the meanwhile, Eleanor filed an application with the Chicago Teachers Office for a teaching position. Eleanor had the required physical, but was requested to turn in some other papers. Because of her morning sickness, she felt uncomfortable taking the bus. Nevertheless, Eleanor finally completed the additional information and when turning in the papers, the person taking the information told her that, "We hire pregnant teachers." This experience was different from the circumstances that Eleanor encountered at Sumner, where teachers rarely remained on staff if they married. By this time, it was November 1954.

THE FIRST BABY: DAUGHTER YOLAINE, 1955

Eleanor's last trimester of medical care was provided at Great Lakes Naval Hospital, after receiving her second trimester of prenatal medical care at the Fifth Army Headquarters. During her first visit to Great Lakes Hospital she was told to go home, select a name for the baby, pack her bag, and that there were two months remaining before the birth of her baby. It did not work out that way. In February 1955, Eleanor's water broke and she was panicked. This happened only two weeks after she was at Great Lakes for her first doctor's appointment. Eleanor called Fifth Army Headquarters because it was closer to her home, instead of calling Great Lakes Naval Hospital. Fifth Army told Eleanor to remain lying down in bed. She did this for about 40 hours, however she experienced pain and an ambulance was sent to take Eleanor the 50 miles to Great Lakes Naval Hospital. Great Lakes would have taken her the previous day to try to slow her labor, but the information Eleanor received when she called the Hyde Park Office in Chicago and the information that she was given from Great Lakes were conflicting. Through a great deal of discomfort, Eleanor gave birth to a five pound baby girl, Yolaine Augusta Archer, who was born six weeks early. Yolaine's birth weight dropped to 4 pounds 10 ounces and she was put in an incubator for the next two weeks. They forgot to give Eleanor drying pills at the hospital, since she could not breastfeed, so she endured that discomfort as well.

In two weeks, Jean and Eleanor returned to Great Lakes Hospital and came home with their infant daughter. They were very busy keeping up Yolaine's feedings. Almost immediately, she developed indigestion accompanied by crying. To relieve her indigestion, the doctors recommended many different formulas and finally found that the Enzelac product, which was delivered to their apartment door from the dairy, eased Yolaine's

indigestion. However, Eleanor and Jean experienced difficulty preparing the formula when they left Chicago.

During a visit to relatives in Des Moines made by Eleanor and infant Yolaine, Eleanor took along a tablet formula from the Chicago dairy for the baby's feedings. The tablet made homogenized milk curdle and it would not pass through the hole in the nipple of the bottle. Eleanor made a telephone call to Chicago and talked to the chemist in the dairy, who told her that the tablet worked only with pasteurized milk and not with homogenized. After three months of daily crying that lasted for four to six hours each day, the new parents were sent by the doctor to buy a truss for their seven-pound baby girl with a hernia. From that point on, things became smoother for parents and infant. Jean decided that it was acceptable if Eleanor did not work outside the home and so she did not work outside the home for a six-year period, from 1954 through 1960.

Even though they lived on a tight budget, they managed. They bought a television for their entertainment. During the summer of 1955, Yolaine was baptized at Corpus Christi Catholic Church on Martin Luther King Drive, then South Parkway and 49th St., which was the church that Jean attended in Chicago.

When Eleanor attended church while living in Chicago, she went to Quinn A.M.E. Chapel. In addition to entertaining themselves by watching television, they visited Eleanor's cousin and family often. Other times they visited a high school chum living in Chicago and their family. Occasionally, she and Jean treated themselves to a movie prior to the birth of baby Yolaine, but they did not attend movies at all after the baby's birth.

THE SECOND BABY, SON JAN GERARD, AND JAPAN, 1957

Two years later in 1957, Eleanor and Jean were blessed with a son, Jan, whose birth was uneventful. Jean's duties in the Army assigned him to service in Japan. When he was first assigned to depart for Japan, Eleanor was seven months pregnant. Lives were at risk because of Eleanor's pregnancy and the unborn child, so Jean was deferred a second time until one month after Jan's birth. By this time, Jean was temporarily deferred from being sent to Japan, but Eleanor, Yolaine, and Jan could not accompany him because of infant Jan's age at the time of Jean's departure.

One month after Jan's birth, the whole family took the train to Des Moines from Chicago. Jean returned to Chicago to complete emptying the apartment. Their furniture was put in storage and their personal things were shipped to Des Moines. Eleanor and the children lived with Eleanor's parents for two months until their orders to leave for Japan arrived. Being given only one week's notice to prepare and pack for a three-year station in Japan with two young children was difficult for Eleanor.

Jean's third set of orders to leave for Japan made it sound like the entire family was departing together, but Jean was already there. A woman at Fort Des Moines speculated to Eleanor that perhaps Jean was stationed someplace else. Eleanor informed her that she had received mail from him. As it turns out, Jean never received Eleanor's mail because the base in California from which Jean departed to Japan was different from the address of the base that Eleanor was given. But, Eleanor did hear from Jean and Eleanor told the lady at Fort Des Moines that she knew that Jean was where he was supposed to be.

Eleanor's mother helped her pack for her departure to join Jean in Japan. Left alone with the children, without husband and father Jean to accompany them, Eleanor was

devastated. The stress of traveling alone with an infant and young child began with the short notice to prepare to leave and continued when her stepfather accidentally broke Jan's ceramic feeding dish at the train station just before they boarded. A baby buggy was stored somewhere on the train to use during their overseas processing at Oakland, California. The buggy was second hand and did not have brakes. It had a seat that fit over the front part so a child could ride on the top. Baby Jan, who was not old enough to sit upright, could sleep in the main part of the buggy. Yolaine, now two-years old, was born with weak ankles and was late walking alone. When she walked, she was slow and needed assistance. Eleanor recalls that she does not think that the fellow who assisted them from Oakland was a father. He questioned why Yolaine could not walk alone when he was asked to carry her. Yolaine had ear trouble on the plane and does to this day.

By the time Eleanor and the children arrived in Hawaii, Yolaine had vomited on her last clean outfit that Eleanor had packed in her carryon bag. Eleanor was exhausted from her rushed departure preparations in a one-week time frame, the traveling, along with everything else. As she disembarked from the plane, Eleanor began crying. A friendly man in a pickup provided by the army took her to find help at Hickman Air Base. They asked Eleanor what the problem was. Mostly Eleanor was exhausted from holding Yolaine through the night on the back of the seat, which worked like a tilted flat surface, to keep her from falling. By the time Eleanor managed to drop off for any sleep or rest, Jan was sleeping on her legs.

At Hickman Air Base, Eleanor was provided with a place to wash out Yolaine's soiled garments and hung them to dry. Eleanor and the children ate and repacked. She was assigned another fellow to help her who was a father who was returning alone due to the death of one of his parents. The Hickman Air Base personnel also insisted that the first

helper continue. Yolaine was toilet trained at twelve months, so it was necessary to carry diapers only for Jan. When the plane landed at Wake Island for refueling and food, Eleanor's ears were plugged and she could not hear well. Eleanor finally was able to understand the announcement that they were landing there only for a few hours. The layover was long enough for them to eat and then get back on the plane again. The fire trucks paralleled the plane as it took off as a precaution in the event of an accident because the island was so small.

Finally, exhausted Eleanor and the two children arrived in Tokyo in April 1957 and Jean was there to meet them. From Tokyo, they went to Yokohama, Japan to the Prince Hotel. The weather was cool and there was little heat or warm water in the building. When there was heat or warm water, it was available mainly in the morning and only for a short time. Baby Jan wore a bunting to keep warm.

After several days, arrangements were made for the Archers to move into what was called an American-style Japanese house. Government housing was available only to those who were stationed there for a longer period of time. Their house was at the edge of the Japanese neighborhood. The Archers always smiled and nodded to their neighbors because the Japanese families did not speak English. Their landlord's home was on the other side of their home and was a new structure, more modern, and not a typical Japanese-style home. Bordering the Archers on the other side were the government woodshop, bank, and other small facilities. Two blocks away there was a commissary and another building that offered personal items. They were advised to buy their food only from the U.S. commissary because the local vendors used nightsoil, which was soil mixed with human fecal matter that could carry disease.

Jean was assigned to the medical corps where he inspected meat, fish, and poultry for the service personnel and their families. He also worked in the veterinary clinic. Their house had two bedrooms, a living room, dining room, a small kitchen, and bathroom, which had a deep square tub, a regular stool, and a shower. The necessary furniture was loaned from the government. The two-burner stove, water heater, and space heater were all fueled by kerosene. Eleanor had difficulty adjusting to the kerosene burners so that they did not blacken the cooking pans. The floors in their house were left bare because of tracked-in soil. Baby Jan was never allowed on the floor. The playpen was rarely used, which took up too much space anyway.

Jean secured a very likeable and helpful maid named Sadako to help Eleanor. All of their laundry was done with a washboard and tub. The clothes were hung outside to dry during all but the rainy season. Jean's shirts and uniforms were sent to the laundry. Eleanor used disposable diapers for travel, but used cloth diapers at home. Eleanor did the cooking and lit the water heater during the early morning when she arose to heat the baby's bottle. This also ensured that Jean would have hot water for his morning shower. Sadako ironed the clothes, washed dishes, and cleaned. Eleanor recalls that on one day, Sadako tried to light the water heater and it blew up in her face, singeing her eyebrows and hair. Eleanor also took care of the children and did the grocery shopping.

Eleanor and Jean attended separate chapels while living in Japan. Jean attended the Catholic Chapel and Eleanor went to the Methodist Chapel. Jean made friends with two couples during his first month in Japan and they exchanged visits with these couples frequently. One of the couples lived in Clear View of Mount Fujiama. Both of the couples had been stationed in Japan for quite some time and lived in government housing. The

government housing offered plenty of space and electrical appliances. One couple had children older than those of Jean and Eleanor, while the other couple did not have any children. On one occasion, one of the couples joined Jean and Eleanor to visit a large theatre in Tokyo where they saw a Haitian dance troop.

Eleanor had the opportunity to tour with the wives of the servicemen and see a university in Tokyo. While there, they ate lunch and toured the campus. Another time, Eleanor and Jean went to a Chinese restaurant for dinner with another couple, where they dined in the typical Japanese fashion sitting on the floor. Sometimes they took the children sightseeing. It was difficult for Eleanor to go on very many tours because she had no one to care for the children. In order for Sadako to do the housework successfully, she could not babysit for the children too. There was one tour in particular that Eleanor regrets that she could not attend because she had a migraine headache that day. This tour visited a Japanese silk mill. As a textiles and clothing major and after having read about the silk mill process in books, it was quite a disappointment to her to miss.

One evening, Sadako stayed to care for the children while Jean and Eleanor attended an officer's dinner party. As they entered the yard after taking Sadako home following the event, they saw smoke coming from their landlord's home. Jean turned and quickly ran to the nearby fire station while Eleanor went in the house to call the fire station. The fire department came and fought the fire from two levels. They were prepared to put water on the Archer's house because of the kerosene drum in the front. Fortunately, it was unnecessary because they were successful in getting the fire under control.

The family living in the traditional Japanese house extended their arms to take Yolaine and Jan out of harm's way. As it turned out, the Japanese wife of their Chinese

American landlord deliberately lit an Obon candle and left it burning so that it would set the fire. The landlord's wife was anything but faithful and later ran off with a dog trainer. Sometime after that, the landlord's wife left an insurance stamp for the house with the Archers. Stamps were used in Japan instead of the insurance policy papers used in the U.S. The more Eleanor listened to Sadako talk about the landlord's wife, her conduct, and her relationship with her husband, Eleanor determined that the woman was planning this for some time in advance. The husband/landlord was a Chinese American merchant marine and was away at sea most of the time. The landlord's wife remained in the city a while after the house burned and before her husband's return. While there, she gave some of her husband's things to her boyfriend. When the husband/landlord returned from being at sea, his home was gone. The dog trainer boyfriend ran out on the landlord's wife and somewhere along the way she became involved with a veterinarian. On his return, the landlord came close to catching her, but never did, even with the help of the woman's brother.

After the fire, Eleanor and Jean lived next to a burned-out shell. Yolaine played on their porch and in the house with her toys. Sadako taught her origami. Another event that Eleanor took Yolaine to see was the Obon Celebration, a festival honoring the dead. Drums beat all day and all night and candles burned in the homes of the followers. One evening they watched a performance in one of the neighborhoods where the women and men performed Japanese folk dances to Japanese music. The costumes were brilliantly colorful and made from dyed fabrics. Eleanor held Yolaine all evening so she could see the performance, but Jan was too young to attend or watch.

An armed forces personnel reduction was underway before, during, and after the Archers' stay in Japan. Eleanor was not aware of the reductions while they were in Japan

until Jean suffered a nervous breakdown. He had not told Eleanor about the personnel reduction. One morning, it was impossible for Eleanor to awaken Jean. She called a friend who was a registered nurse. Her friend knew about the personnel reduction and told Eleanor that many people were upset. They called an ambulance and Jean was taken to the local infirmary and then transported to Zama, Japan, where there was an armed forces hospital. The doctor there confirmed that it was Jean's concern about the personnel reduction that triggered his condition. Eleanor sought counsel for Jean from the Catholic chaplain and she did the same for herself from the Protestant chaplain.

The severity of the nervous breakdown experience with her husband scared Eleanor tremendously. They wanted to ship Jean to the United States immediately to begin therapy, but Eleanor protested. She put on an act and cried. She had a terrible time overcoming the idea that he would be sent back before she and the children. The situation was compounded for Eleanor because of the mix-up of Jean's original departure orders from the United States to Japan, through no fault of his, that left Eleanor alone with the two children to make the journey to Japan in the first place when all other families traveled together.

Jean made up his mind previously that his goal was to be a career officer. He and Eleanor became eligible for government housing in a short time and they were elated. However, Jean never shared with Eleanor that he was one of the officers who was cut in the most recent personnel reduction. As a result of his breakdown, Jean was hospitalized first in Yokohama, then moved to Zama, then to Tokyo Hospital, and finally to San Francisco, California. While he was in Tokyo, a friend's husband showed Eleanor how to travel from Yokohama to Tokyo on the trains. Eleanor learned to ride the train on the first two trips to and from Yokohama to Tokyo. She recalls that twice she got off at the wrong exit on the

return trip. This required paying more taxi fare, because the driver had to travel farther. The Japanese got off the train at one stop, and the Americans were supposed to get off at another stop closer to their housing. One time Eleanor was confused and got off the train at the wrong place and could not speak Japanese. All she could say was, "Yokohama Ecki, Yokohama Ecki," which means Yokohama Station. She received the help that she needed and was once again on her way.

The wife of a Texas captain who was in the veterinary clinic stayed with Eleanor at night while Jean was hospitalized. She left her husband and maid to care for her own children while she stayed with Eleanor. Eleanor's experience with this southern White woman was a delightful surprise. She found her to be empathetic and amiable, which was an experience different from many that Eleanor encountered during the early 1940s when she taught school in Georgia.

Eleanor was left to deal with the chore of packing to leave Japan with her children and her husband after arriving only five short months earlier. She remembers having to take all of their possessions out of their car for shipping. Possessions that he brought with him from the United States to Japan were not allowed to make the return trip home in the car. The weather on the day that Eleanor was unpacking the car was hot and Yolaine, age two, could not walk very well. Eleanor was lugging things out of the trunk of the car and remembers trying to carry them to the Yokohama house as a horrible experience. The situation was further complicated because the car was registered only in Jean's name and Eleanor's name did not appear on the registration

Eleanor's experience with Jean's nervous breakdown while they were stationed in Japan formed the basis of why she became so unsettled about depending on him or anyone

else but herself. At that point, Eleanor believed that she could never follow him around in his career moves again. She feared that if something else bothered him, he might have another breakdown. She decided that she never wanted to take the chance that she would have to relive that experience. She knew that Jean had a previous breakdown prior to their meeting and engagement, perhaps sometime between 1949 and 1951. As a result, this was Jean's second breakdown and Eleanor felt that she could not risk the uncertainty of this type of health problem. She began serious consideration of upgrading her qualifications to teach.⁴

FROM JAPAN TO HAWAII AND HOME TO DES MOINES, 1957

When Eleanor finally completed the packing for their return to the U.S., she and the children traveled together on a hospital plane to Hawaii with Jean, where they stayed for four days. She, Jean, and the children did as much sight seeing as they could by cab and stayed at the barracks. They ate at the mess hall and were served beautiful, fresh, Hawaiian fruit, which is one of Eleanor's favorites. Eleanor, Jean, and the children traveled to Oakland, California. In Oakland, they separated and Jean went on to San Francisco to the hospital. Eleanor and the children had a night or two in Oakland before boarding the train bound for Ames, Iowa. At the Ames train station, Eleanor's mother met them to help her travel home to Des Moines by bus. On the return trip, Eleanor recalls that she was allowed only a stroller, which had a second seat on the back. She found the adjustment a little difficult.

When Eleanor and her children arrived at her parents' home in Des Moines, the baby had diarrhea and Eleanor was having more migraine headaches. Her headaches put a burden on her mother because Eleanor was usually helpless for three days and her mother was still working as a housekeeper for a lady who owned a feed company. However, most days

Eleanor felt well and sewed for a limited number of customers. She also did the housework and laundry for everyone in the household.

Jean was hospitalized from October 1957 to January 1958. Their car was shipped from Japan to San Francisco, where he could drive it back to Iowa from San Francisco after his release from the hospital. When he returned, arrangements were made for him to attend graduate school at Iowa State College in 1958 to study for a masters degree in pathology in the College of Veterinary Medicine. Jean lived in Ames during the week and came home to his family living in Des Moines on weekends. On the weekends they grocery shopped for everyone and then he again returned to Iowa State for the week. Eleanor used the baby buggy to do her shopping in Des Moines at a nearby store if needed during the week. Eleanor prepared many of the family meals, but her mother loved to cook. However Eleanor's mother, Jeanne, prepared and served dinner in the home where she worked and welcomed Eleanor's assistance.

IOWA STATE COLLEGE IN AMES, 1958 AND 1959

After Jean was at ISC for a year and one-half, he was offered a research assistantship sometime in 1959. His desire was to gain more experience as a teacher and to secure a teaching assistantship, but his race, religion, and French accent worked against him and resulted in discriminatory practices. Research was all that Jean was allowed to do at ISC, however, the salary was the same for the teaching and research assistantship programs. Another obstacle and frustration that Jean endured at ISC during this time was that other students who came into the department were placed ahead of him in the lab. This angered

Jean, although he did not create a scene, but the racist practices that he encountered disturbed him greatly.

For Eleanor, life remained about the same while she lived with her parents in Des Moines. In 1958, Eleanor took out a loan against her annuity so she could attend Iowa State College and take summer coursework to upgrade her education credits for teaching in Iowa. Because her money was limited, she elected to take nine credit hours and also applied some of the money for weekly childcare. Georgia Travis, mother of Greg Allen Williams, cared for Eleanor's children during the week when Eleanor again began taking classes at ISC in 1958.⁵ Eleanor, Jean, and Eleanor's parents were all at her parents' home on the weekends to care for the children and her mother took care of the children at night during the week while Eleanor was in school.

Because of the number of credit hours that Eleanor was enrolled to take at ISC in 1958, she was not considered a graduate student because her number of credits exceeded the number of allowable hours for graduate coursework. During the ISC summer school session in 1958, Eleanor lived in Pammel Court with her husband, Jean. However, she was not willing to live in Pammel Court during the cold months because she suffered from sore throats and sinus difficulties.

In mid-to-late spring of 1959, Eleanor had a nervous breakdown because of depression. She was hospitalized and their children were placed temporarily in the Christ Child Home in Des Moines, a Catholic facility, for approximately five months. Later in 1959, after Eleanor's hospitalization, she and Jean rented an apartment for a short time in Ames that was owned by the Collegiate Methodist minister. The children were not with them at this time. When they arrived at the apartment, they found it covered with enough

beer cans to fill a large garbage bag. The minister's wife helped them clean the apartment. The washing machine was in the basement and the kind that Eleanor's grandmother had when Eleanor was not yet ten years old. When the wringer popped up, it was impossible to wring the water from the clothes. This upset Eleanor greatly because she had been released only recently from the hospital. She and Jean did not live there long, but they became good friends with the minister and his wife. They missed them when they retired and moved to California.

Later in 1959, Eleanor, Jean, and their children moved to Iowa State College in Ames and lived in the new Hawthorne Court student housing. They enjoyed being in the new environment. Their house faced a court where the children had a playground and plenty of room to run and play. They became very close with five families in their court area. One family lived in front of them, another lived across the way in the court, and the other two lived next door. The fifth couple lived at the gate on 13th Street. Eleanor remains friends with one of the couples to this day. She maintained contact with a second couple until two years ago. While living in Hawthorne Court, Eleanor became a member of the veterinary wives group. She became a member of the Methodist women's group within their housing court.

ELEANOR BEGINS TEACHING IN DES MOINES, 1960

In 1960, Eleanor was enrolled in summer school at ISC to complete the required hours in education in order to get her Iowa teaching certificate. Shortly after completing her coursework, Eleanor applied for and was interviewed for a teaching job in Des Moines at Amos Hiatt Junior High School. When she was offered the job and accepted it, she gave

considerable thought as to what the best arrangement would be for her children while she commuted from Ames to Des Moines to teach. She decided that it would be best for the children to be in the same geographical area where she would be working, which was in Des Moines. This decision was prompted by Yolaine's enrollment in kindergarten in 1960, and three-year-old Jan's adventuresome nature.

Jan began his adventures as a three-year-old by crawling under the gate of Hawthorne Court on 13th Street and venturing onto the Iowa State campus. The first time he did this was on a Sunday. He became lost and sat on the curb crying by the armory. A young man stopped to help him and put him in his pickup truck. After Jan was in the man's truck he told him where he lived. Jan tried his adventure several more times, but Mrs. Arnold, who lived next to the gate, caught him and called Eleanor to notify her. Mrs. Arnold kept Jan safely with her until Eleanor arrived to bring him home.

After checking around Des Moines for nursery care, Eleanor decided that Jan could go to St. Joseph's nursery and preschool. Since the Catholic schools did not have kindergarten, Yolaine attended St. Joseph's kindergarten program at the same school. After making these plans for the fall and completing her requirements for her Iowa teaching certificate, Jean planned a family trip to visit his home and relatives in Haiti.

VISITING JEAN'S HOMELAND IN HAITI, 1960

At that time, Jean and Eleanor had a four-door 1954 Chevrolet. Jean had a platform built over the back seat so the children, ages three and five, would have room to sleep. They took off for Miami in their Chevrolet, where they would board the plane to Port Au Prince. On their way to Miami, they stopped by Tuskegee Institute in Alabama where Jean worked

for a short time when he first graduated from ISC. They visited the veterinary school where he was employed when he had his first nervous breakdown. Stops were made in Orlando and many other places along the way for food. When they finally arrived in Miami, they stayed overnight. Jean made prior arrangements with priests in Ames who contacted a parish in Miami where the car could be parked for the next three weeks.

The Archer family flew to Haiti and was taken to Petionville, Haiti, where Jean's mother made her home. She made arrangements for everyone to stay in Kenscoff in the mountains. This location provided the space for much of the family to be together. The nights were cold and it was warm in the daytime. The house was situated on a hill in a lovely location. Rain had been scarce for the past months, so people were paid to carry water on their heads to the home for cooking and drinking. The water for the shower, basin, and stool as well as the kitchen was caught in a container on the roof. Because there were so many family members staying there, the family used the outdoor toilet and Eleanor, Jean, and the children used the indoor flushing stool and all used the shower. All of the cooking was done outdoors with assistance from hired help, although Eleanor never went where the food was prepared.

Jean's mother, his only sister, her five children, and two of their cousins stayed in the house. Language barriers made it awkward for Eleanor in communicating with her in-laws, but they had a wonderful experience anyway. The only two things that she never learned to like were the dark, very sweet coffee, and cassava, a cereal, that was eaten for breakfast.

Eleanor and Jean visited with some of his friends. One friend took them to a nightclub, which Eleanor found very interesting because of the music. They had dinner with Jean's middle brother, a lawyer, and his family and visited his vacation cabin where there

were coconut trees. One of the nephews climbed and picked some fresh coconut for them. Jean's sister-in-law and her mother were originally from the Dominican Republic. Eleanor and the children met Jean's oldest brother, who was an engineer. Jean felt uneasy about one of his friends because of the political situation in Haiti, however he was comfortable with his friends overall.

In the morning, when everyone was dressed and breakfast over, the women left to shop for fresh baked bread, fruit, and other items. Jean's mother had a mango and an avocado tree in her yard in Petionville with huge fruit that was most delicious. The mountains were rocky and made it impossible for farm families to grow much. They saw the sugar fields and plants in the plantation area of Port Au Prince. While there, they took an open bus to sightsee because the mountain roads were not good. Those who were in political power in Haiti provided some beautiful homes to see. In some instances, there were homes under construction, but they were never completed. Some of the potential owners disappeared and were never seen again.

Jean's mother died after the Archers moved to Des Moines where Eleanor still lives today. Jean and both of his brothers are deceased. Jean's sister, who lives with her youngest daughter in New York, is near death. Jean's brothers always remained in Haiti, but all of his sister's children came to the states except one. His niece, who stayed in Haiti, lives in the family home since her divorce.

DETROIT BY TRAIN, 1960

During the same summer of 1960, Yolaine's godmother sent Eleanor's family train tickets for a roundtrip to visit her in Detroit. While in Detroit, they met another mother who

lived there and who had a small son. Eleanor's friend also had a very young son. Among their adventures in Detroit was visiting the Detroit zoo. They also traveled to Cleveland, where they enjoyed a lake cruise that took them back to Detroit and they always enjoyed the visit to the Renaissance Center.

THE TREK FROM AMES TO DES MOINES TO TEACH, 1960-1962

In the fall of 1960, Eleanor began her morning routine to prepare herself and her children for the drive to Des Moines when she began teaching at Amos Hiatt Junior High School. Eleanor arose between two to four o'clock in the morning. During this time she graded papers if there were any to grade, or worked on her lesson plans. Jean was busy in graduate school, so Eleanor went to bed as soon as he left in the evening to go study and after the children were bathed and in bed. She usually prepared a hot breakfast for everyone and then everyone was dressed and ready to start the day. Eleanor first drove Jean to the veterinary building and from there left for Des Moines with the two children. She traveled the two-lane highway 69, which was the main thoroughfare at that time, and was never late in arriving at work. Her next stop was St. Joseph's nursery and preschool for Jan and Yolaine's kindergarten on the west side of Des Moines. Eleanor's school, Amos Hiatt, was on the east side of Des Moines. For some years, Eleanor was expected to arrive at the school by eight o'clock in the morning and some years later the time was changed to a seven-thirty morning arrival time.

Eleanor used taxi tickets when she was not available to transport the children from place to place. The taxi tickets also were used for transportation to the drama lessons for the children, which were a gift to them from Eleanor's mother. The lessons were held at Drake

University and were given by Portia Boynton. The taxi tickets were advantageous for other transportation needs for the children as well.

Eleanor returned home to Ames as soon as she could collect her children from St. Joseph's Preschool and Kindergarten. Sometimes the children were at the house of Eleanor's mother or a babysitter. Once in Ames, Eleanor picked up Jean at the veterinary clinic. After everyone arrived home, Eleanor prepared dinner for the family.

As a teacher, Eleanor was affiliated with the Des Moines Home Economics Association. With her hectic and demanding schedule of driving, teaching, household responsibilities, and trying to attend her organizational meetings, Eleanor sometimes found herself sound asleep in the meetings. On the nights that the Home Economics Association met or Eleanor was required to remain at school during the evenings for meetings such as PTA, she and the children stayed with her parents in Des Moines. When weather was bad, Jean drove them to Des Moines. On these mornings, Eleanor and Yolaine walked one and one-half blocks to meet the Amos Hiatt school nurse, who then picked them up at 17th and University. Yolaine got out at 5th and University and walked one-half block to St. Ambrose School. Jan used the taxi tickets during the second year that Eleanor taught, a year during which the winter weather was extremely bad.

AT HOME IN DES MOINES, 1962

The summer of 1962 was the last for Jean and Eleanor at the ISC campus. Eleanor learned about a six credit hour National Science Foundation course offered through ISC. Eleanor submitted her application and was accepted. The course was a six-week program where classes met every day and had evening projects. During one of the weeks, Eleanor and

her classmates toured places in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin to study the different environments and the life it supported. She remembers it as a wonderful experience. She was the only one who could not bring herself to sleep on the ground. Instead, Eleanor had a light, collapsible folding bed. Everyone slept in tents. They cooked and ate together. There was group work as well as individual work when students sometimes sat alone for a long time in one place to observe the life in that area. They made notes and then later came together to discuss their observations. Eleanor notes that this provided an excellent background for her teaching job at Amos Hiatt in Des Moines in the area of science.

In 1962, Jean worked with a new graduate student from Japan and they became lasting friends. In the meantime, Jean was despondent about being on a plateau with his career, not being given consideration for advancement, nor being given the opportunity to gain any experience teaching. Eleanor knew one Black ISC veterinarian who graduated before she did and who was successful in buying a retiree's practice in Omaha. Another graduate had worked in Minnesota doing meat inspection, which is what Eleanor recalls as the primary employment available to Black veterinarians in those days. This work created constant moving because when the meat plant closed, the inspectors relocated to a different plant. However, a life that involved moving constantly was not the kind of life that Eleanor wanted for herself and her children.

Jean completed his masters degree in pathology and completed most of the work for his Ph.D. Due to an oversight by someone in veterinary medicine, Jean was informed late in his program of study that he still needed to complete 15 credit hours in education. No one told him about this requirement previously because he had completed all of his coursework in veterinary medicine. All of his data was compiled and he thought that all that remained for

him to do was to write his dissertation. Eleanor relayed the experience of a Black woman she knew at ISC that somewhat parallels Jean's experience. Trandailer Jones was completing her masters degree at ISC. Trandailer wanted to study for her Ph.D. degree in nutrition at ISC, but she was told by the faculty that she should not pursue Ph.D. studies in that area. The implication was presumably because she was not intelligent enough to do so, or ignorance on the faculty's part as to what she would do with the degree. Nor did ISC promote Blacks pursuing Ph.D. degrees in education. However, Miss Jones was not deterred by ISC and proceeded to Columbia University, where she successfully completed her Ph.D. degree. She later became the director of Nutrition Science in the Department of Health, the Virgin Islands of the United States. She was the first person to hold the office, which is described in a published 1952 journal article by Miss Jones.⁶

Jean applied to Tuskegee Institute to teach since that was the only place an African American could teach veterinary medicine at that time. Shortly after he made his application to Tuskegee, he also applied to teach at a college in Kenya. Eleanor thinks that he would have accepted the position in Kenya, however he was offered and accepted the Tuskegee assignment before receiving the offer that followed for Kenya. She also believes that she would have accompanied him and lived in Kenya. She noted that life in Kenya was much different than living in the South in the United States in terms of racism, discrimination, and prejudice.

After looking for a home to buy, Eleanor and Jean moved their family and belongings to their new home at 663-26th St. in Des Moines in August 1962. Eleanor believes that Jean told one of his friends that he wished Eleanor would content herself by renting a house instead of buying one. He had no idea that she would become so attached to her home and

did not realize that this is what had become one of Eleanor's primary goals when she was in Japan in 1957. However, Eleanor was serious about owning a home. Her coursework in the late 1950s at ISC prepared her to teach in Iowa and in Des Moines. She had commuted from Ames to Des Moines for two years with her children to teach school. Having a secure job and owning a home fulfilled Eleanor's goals and provided her with a sense of security and control over her life and the lives of her children.

And so the move to their new home commenced. Shortly after the purchase, they rented a truck and with the help of one of Jean's old school friends from his undergraduate days, the move was completed and they made do with what they had. The Tuskegee offer came first to Jean and he accepted it. He left Iowa State without completing all of the requirements for his Ph.D. Eleanor tried to get a job at Tuskegee, but there were not any openings for her at the time and she recalls that she was thankful. She found that although living and teaching in Georgia was an interesting experience the first time, she had no desire to live in the conditions of the Jim Crow South again. In order to afford moving a second time, two incomes were needed and they did not have the financial resources to support the move anyway. And so, Jean worked for a while at Tuskegee and then he became lonesome. While Jean was at Tuskegee, Eleanor kept working in Des Moines at Amos Hiatt, where she enjoyed the combination of teaching science and homemaking.

About three years later in December 1965, Jean resigned from his position at Tuskegee and returned to his family and home in Des Moines. He found government employment working in meat packing inspection again where he was one of six veterinary meat inspectors. Jean and Eleanor's work hours were such that they scarcely saw each other. His shift was during the mid-afternoon until early morning and she was teaching during the

day. Because he had been gone, Eleanor continued taking the children to church at St. Ambrose. When Jean returned to Des Moines from Tuskegee, he became a lecturer at Sunday morning service and their son, Jan, was an altar boy at St. Ambrose Cathedral.

MONTREAL: THE WORLD'S FAIR, 1967

In 1967, the entire family took off for The World's Fair in Montreal. They stopped briefly in Chicago to visit Eleanor's cousins. After Chicago, they stopped in Detroit to visit with Yolaine's godmother and family. From Detroit, they continued on their way to Montreal. They were delayed making their entry into Canada because Jean was not born in the United States, even though he had become a naturalized citizen in 1954. The family experienced no language barriers because French was spoken in Montreal and that was Jean's native language.

The family enjoyed seeing the many exhibits and architectural structures. Tasting many different foods and displays from so many countries enriched their knowledge. They found one restaurant that was delightful and another one that was unsatisfactory. After four days in Montreal, the family drove to Maine. There they visited a paraplegic and his family with whom they became friends earlier while living in Ames.

While in the northeastern United States, they traveled to the Atlantic Ocean so the children could enjoy the surf and the ocean. At a lake in New Hampshire, Eleanor thought that her son was going to drown, but she kept coaxing him to make it to her outstretched arm, and thankfully, he did. This frightening experience cured Eleanor from ever entering the water where she could not determine the length, the depth, and the width of the pool. They enjoyed a fresh lobster dinner at their friends' home after first going to the shore to see the

boat that brought in the lobsters and crabs. Their hostess selected the lobster for their delicious fresh seafood dinner.

They were then off to drive through Boston, Massachusetts, where they visited one of Jean's friends. From Boston the road took them to the Bronx, New York. In the Bronx, they stayed with one of Eleanor's friends and her family. There they attended the wedding of Jean's sister's oldest son, who completed college in the U.S. prior to his marriage. After the wedding, Jean and Eleanor attended an elaborate wedding dinner. Eleanor recalls that although many people did not attend the wedding, they did attend the dinner. In the time following the wedding festivities, the family visited the United Nations and took a tour with their children. Eleanor has visited New York three more times since that visit and since completing her coursework for her masters degree there at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her trips to New York total eight in all for both school and pleasure.

The drive home to Des Moines took 22 hours, during which time they stopped only for food. School started the next day after their return for Eleanor. It also was during the fall of 1967 when the biggest obsolete meat packing plant in Des Moines closed and three of the six veterinarians employed doing meat inspection were transferred. Jean was one of the three. However, he accepted a move to Omaha doing the same work. In the meantime, Eleanor and the children remained living in Des Moines in their home and she continued teaching school. Jean came home for most of the weekends from Omaha to spend time with his family.

Following his employment in Omaha, another obsolete plant closed and Jean was moved to the Beltsville, Maryland Pathology Laboratory where he worked for the United States Department of Agriculture. He was the staff officer, Western Laboratory pathologist

in charge, branch chief of pathology. Even though Jean was successful in securing better professional employment, Eleanor's mindset remained the same. She remained clear in her goals in that she wanted to keep teaching in Des Moines and living in their home with the children. Although Jean's professional life continued to improve, he was apprehensive because he never knew when his job would end and where he would go next for employment. His original desire to teach at the college level remained unfilled and his positions were as a professional pathologist in research rather than the academic life that he sought. College teaching and a faculty position still remained largely unattainable to Black veterinarians.

During the school years in the 1960s and 1970s, much remained the same for Eleanor. She taught the same subjects in the same school. In the 1970s, she enrolled in another National Science Foundation workshop offered by the University of Iowa for four credit hours. This program was taught in Des Moines at McCombs Junior High School rather than in Iowa City. Originally, Eleanor planned to join Jean in Maryland during his vacation time, however when presented with the opportunity to attend the workshop at no cost to her, she chose to do the workshop. The workshop assisted Eleanor in earning continuing education credits that were required for Iowa teachers to maintain and keep their teaching certificates valid and current.

During the years from 1967 to 1973, the Archer family collected tons of newspapers that were sold to a West Des Moines Insulwool plant that made insulation for houses. It was in this way that Jan earned money for his Y-chorus trips to Disneyland, Yucatan, Mexico, New York, and other locations. On the trips, many stops were made along the way and they stayed in homes where the lodging was free whenever possible.

After working approximately five years in Beltsville, Jean was sent to work in Concord, California for around five years. During that time period, Eleanor and Jean were divorced in 1976. Eleanor was determined in her long-time desire to be settled in her Des Moines home with her children, which provided a stable environment for them, and in keeping her teaching job in the Des Moines Public School System.

GROWING CHILDREN AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

Eleanor's children, Yolaine and Jan, attended a Catholic preschool, grade school, and high school through the ninth grade. Nuns operated the St. Joseph's preschool where Yolaine and Jan were enrolled during those years. St. Joseph's was a well-known preschool and was located where the College of Osteopathic medicine in Des Moines is now. In order for Jean to receive his sacraments from his Catholic church, he and Eleanor signed that their children would follow the Catholic faith, which was the rule of the church at that time. Eleanor chose Catholic schools for Yolaine and Jan that provided the required religious education and avoided Saturday classes. Although the Des Moines schools attended by Yolaine and Jan were integrated, there were not very many Black students represented in the student population. There were no segregated schools, just as when Eleanor and her mother attended school in Des Moines in their youth.

Yolaine joined the Choral Belles shortly before Jan no longer participated in the Bell Ringers. They continued collecting and selling papers for these activities and even sold cookies. Yolaine took trips to Omaha, Nebraska; Minnesota; Yucatan, Mexico twice; Disney World, where they sang; and to Bogota, Columbia, South America, where she performed with the Choral Belles. During her growing years, Yolaine took piano and flute lessons at

Drake University and still plays the flute. As a youngster, she also took dancing lessons, baton twirling, and was active in Girl Scouts.

Yolaine participated in the marching band at Roosevelt High School in Des Moines from 1971 through 1973. In 1972, Eleanor had the great pleasure of seeing both of her children on the field for the same game. Yolaine graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1973 and then attended Grand View College for two years. Following Grand View, Yolaine transferred to Northwest Missouri State at Maryville, Missouri. She graduated with her B.S. degree in education from Maryville in 1977. In 1978, Yolaine married Steve Wade, following her first year of teaching school during the 1977-1978 school year in Des Moines. Shortly afterward she began her program of study for her masters degree at Drake University. She completed her degree requirements and graduated on May 24, 1984. Yolaine has been teaching in the Des Moines Public Schools for approximately 23 years.

Jan took clarinet lessons for a short while as a youngster, and then took trumpet and drum lessons. Jan participated in Boy Scouts and joined the boys' Y singers when he was nine. He later joined the Bell Ringers, along with Greg Allen Williams, and the boys chorus at age 10, which was sponsored by the YMCA. Jan did not participate in the Bell Ringers after 1972, but did join the drum line for the Dowling High School Stepperettes Drill Team. He was in one of the inauguration parades in Washington D.C., although Eleanor does not remember who was President at the time. He was in the band in ninth grade and the marching band at Dowling High School during the one year he attended school there, just before the building was closed for good. He graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1975.

Jan attended the University of Iowa, Iowa City. He changed majors from medicine to journalism and decided later that he wanted to attend Iowa State University. Just before

entering Iowa State University in Ames in August 1978, he had a serious motorcycle accident. As a result, he was out of school for two-thirds of the school year, but resumed his studies during spring 1979. He was on the ISU campus newspaper staff of *The Daily* and was very engaged in that activity. He left ISU and began working in Chicago, where he stayed and worked for two years. However, Jan returned to Iowa State in 1983 and graduated with his B.S. degree in Journalism in 1985.

After his ISU graduation, Jan worked in the Chicago area at the Helix Photographic Supply business as their creative director for the advertising department. He was there ten years when Helix downsized their staff. He was successful in securing new employment with Ambassador Cannon where he is in post sales dealing with new office equipment and instruction for their clients.

Notes for Chapter 5

¹ Eleanor clarified that Jean spoke French well because it was his native language and that educated people in Haiti speak real French. In Haiti, the peasants speak a mixture of French and African, called Creole.

² Eleanor notes that the discrimination, prejudice, and racism that Jean experienced was similar to that she encountered in her first positions in Kansas City, Missouri and Georgia after her graduation from ISC.

³ As noted earlier, Georgine was the wife of James B. Morris, attorney and publisher/owner of *The Bystander*. James was the brother of Eleanor's step-father, Clyde Morris.

⁴ As it turned out in the end, Jean never did have another nervous breakdown. After his retirement, he returned to and lived in Des Moines in his own home. As Eleanor said, "You never know."

⁵ Greg Allen Williams and Eleanor's son, Jan, participated in Bell Choir together. Greg Allen Williams, also a native of Des Moines, has been recognized by Iowa Public Television and hosted an IPTV program describing his life growing up in Des Moines.

⁶ Eleanor provided me with a copy of Miss Jones' article entitled, Nutrition Program in the Virgin Islands, published in the November 1952 issue of *Journal of Home Economics*, pp. 704-706. The details about Miss Jones are from Eleanor's eleventh interview with me on July 17, 2001, and from the published article. Eleanor elaborated further that it was common practice at ISC to discourage Black students from pursuing a course of study for a Ph.D. there. As such, it is plausible that this parallels Jean's experience during his Ph.D. study. Discrimination and racism were more the norm on the campus than not.

6 Teaching in the Des Moines Public Schools, 1960-1982

AMOS HIATT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, 1960-1978

When Eleanor began teaching in Des Moines, Iowa in 1960, she was one of only a few Black teachers in the school system. She recalls that the very first Black teacher in the school system was Harriet Curly Bruce around 1945, who is still living, retired, and located in Texas. While teaching in the Des Moines Public Schools, Eleanor was the only Black home economics teacher, as well as the only Black female science teacher at that time who remained full time throughout her tenure with the Des Moines schools. Teachers were cut from the staff because of budget cuts and lacking seniority in the school system. Eleanor recalls one Black home economics female teacher who was laid off because she was in the school system for less than three years. At one point, Black women in the Des Moines schools who were associates and wanted to complete their college degree to comply with the State of Iowa's requirements for teachers were offered the opportunity to complete a bachelor of arts degree through the Cop Program, arranged with Drake University in Des Moines. The Cop Program was for teachers of any race and was first under the direction of Ms. Hooks, later Udell Cason, and finally Gloria McCrory, all of whom were Black. Those who already had a bachelors degree could enter the Teacher Corp Program to earn a masters degree. This program was for any race and was directed by Mrs. Barbara James, a Black lady.¹

Eleanor began teaching at Amos Hiatt Junior High School in Des Moines in 1960 and taught there through the spring of 1978. From 1960-1976, she taught seventh grade science. From 1960-1978, she taught home economics to seventh and eighth grade students and

taught eighth and ninth grade special education students. During Eleanor's third year of teaching from 1963-1964, she drove to May Goodwill Junior High School in the afternoons, which was located farther East in Des Moines than Amos Hiatt. At May Goodwill, she taught one eighth grade home economics class each day. The student population at May Goodwill was different from that at Amos Hiatt because there were not any minorities in the school. From 1976-1978, Eleanor taught home economics for the seventh and eighth grade students at Amos Hiatt Junior High School. For one year at Amos Hiatt, Eleanor alternated teaching one science class with John Thompson.² After that, Eleanor taught the science class alone for half days for fifteen years.

Class size during the years that Eleanor taught at Amos Hiatt was usually around 24 students for the regular classes in home economics. Her special education classes usually had anywhere from 12 to 15 students. The science classes averaged 24 to 27 students per class. At May Goodwill, there were around 24 students in the class. The students from May Goodwill were primarily from middle income homes.

Eleanor enjoyed the combination of teaching science and home economics. For a few years, the science book used for the seventh graders at Amos Hiatt covered life science. The seventh graders dissected frogs and worms. Eleanor felt well prepared to teach the class. Her experiences with the course offered through the National Science Foundation in 1962 provided her with an excellent foundation, as well as building on her previous coursework. There were excellent films available for supplementation. Eleanor remembers that overall her students enjoyed the class. On occasion, there was a student who found the dissection in the labs difficult.

In teaching home economics, most students could afford to buy the materials that they needed for clothing construction. There were a few who needed financial help. The Amos Hiatt student body was comprised mainly of some middle-income Whites, some very poor Whites, several Hispanics, and several Blacks. The Black students came from middle-income and lower-income families. For the most part, Eleanor remembers that most of the students got along well with one another.

It was during the 1960s and after 1963 when Eleanor wrote a letter to some of the Des Moines school faculty addressing the unfavorable way in which they portrayed Des Moines Black East High School graduates. Amos Hiatt was a feeder school for East High School and the primary focus for her letter was for the teaching staff at East. She does not recall exactly, but said that it is likely that she sent the letter to everyone in the in-service group with which she was involved. Some of the teaching staff made blanket and unfounded statements about Black graduates from East. Eleanor's letter is retyped and follows:

Dear Fellow School Employees:

The In-Service Meeting at Irving Jr. High School held on February 9 in Room 102 brought out two startling attitudes toward the black graduates of East High School. A statement was made concerning the lack of incentive within the black students at East High and that there were only three successful black students who had graduated from East – namely, J. Walter Thompson, Social Worker at Irving; Lacey Spriggs, Principal at Irving; and James Thomas, presently an attorney in Washington, D.C.

Those teachers, principals, counselors and advisers who would not be in a position to know any of the black graduates of East must have been left with a very bad impression.

For this reason, a partial survey conducted since that meeting has revealed names of a few black East High graduates who have become very successful in their fields –

William Parker	-Judge, Waterloo, Iowa
Lonnie Howard, Ph D	-Former Professor at Harvard, now heading a Foundation in St. Louis
Donald Curley	-Grad. Drake Law School, Corporation Lawyer in Chicago

Frances Lowrey	-Masters Degree – now living in Africa
Reginald Kaiser	-Electrical Engineer
George Lockett	-Masters Degree
Fred King	-M.A. in Music
Grant Thomas	-B.A. degree from Drake, now Employed U.S. Postal Service
Mose Clinton	-Supervisory employee, U.S. Post Office and part-time teacher
Robert Wright	-Attorney
Rhoda Miller, Ginger Miller, Bernice Wright, Joyce Fant, Barbara James, James Harris, Shirley Carter, James Carter, and Max Spriggs ---	-All teachers
Ed Harris	-Social worker and Realtor
Alan McQuarry	-Lawyer

Very sincerely,
(Mrs.) Eleanor P. Archer,
Homemaking, Hiatt Jr. High³

Eleanor was no longer the shy person that she once was as a young girl. In writing the letter, Eleanor took a self-determined and active role in her position within the school system, in her work with the in-service group, and most importantly, in demanding that accurate, representative, and fair information about Black students was put in the forefront of the discussion. Her letter demonstrates her racial pride during the Civil Rights period of the turbulent 1960s and the numerous activities during that time undertaken to demand equality. The necessity of Eleanor writing the letter further demonstrates that some teachers in Des Moines during that time were content to make generalizations that represent damaging stereotypes that are, unfortunately, still held by some people today.

Eleanor remained active in issues involving human relations and multiculturalism while she taught at Amos Hiatt. One of her efforts involved engaging in discussions with

Charlene Lakin, the librarian at Amos Hiatt. Eleanor expressed her concern to Charlene regarding her observation of the lack of books in the school library for African American students. Charlene supported Eleanor in contacting the head librarian for the Des Moines schools in the administrative office. Eleanor spoke with the head librarian about the need for books relating to African American culture and making them available to African American students in the school library. As a result, books about African Americans were gradually added to the library shelves.

While teaching at Amos Hiatt in 1965, Eleanor received an offer from Iowa State. The ISU home environment department chair called Eleanor asking her to consider a position teaching there. The assistant dean of the home economics college at ISU, Julia Faltlinson Anderson, was a former classmate of Eleanor's and recommended her for the position.⁴ Eleanor was flattered by the offer, but responded that she was finally settled in Des Moines where she had started her retirement program.⁵ Part of her decision was based on the preparation that teaching at the college level course would require. Eleanor would have needed to bring herself up-to-date in the research aspect for the course. She felt that teaching the course would require much more extensive time and effort in preparation than her public school courses demanded. Another deciding factor for Eleanor was that she had no desire to commute from Des Moines to Ames after finally being relieved from doing that for the last several years. Eleanor thanked the department chair graciously and declined the offer.

Eleanor attended an in-service human relations workshop sponsored by the Des Moines Independent Community School District during August 10-15, 1969. It was funded as a Title I project under The Elementary and Secondary Education Act and held at Brody Junior High School in Des Moines. The facilitators were William M. Rogge, University of

Illinois and JoAhn Brown, University of Chicago. JoAhn was one of Eleanor's former Sumner High School students and had a Ph.D. degree. The workshop provided a discussion kit for the participants.⁶ Small group exercises and large group discussion contributed to the learning environment, along with numerous worksheets, scenarios, and other activities. Eleanor stated that it was an excellent experience, particularly in expanding communication skills, understanding and relating to others, as well as developing a deeper understanding of oneself. She commented that an understanding of this nature would have helped communication before she and Jean married and into the early years of their marriage.

In 1974, Eleanor's seventh grade science class developed a project called, "Spring '74." This was in response to students not eating their fruits, juices, dark green and yellow vegetables in the school cafeteria for lunch. The project was designed to inform the Hiatt students of the nutrients in their school lunches. However, the project did not bring about the desired change. Eleanor and some of her colleagues discussed it with the principal and kitchen staff and decided that a "breakfast program" might make nutrition more meaningful to the students. The breakfast program began in September 1974 at a cost of \$0.20 and also was available to students who qualified for free meals. Eleanor offered to supervise the daily program, along with another Hiatt faculty member who attended the same junior high school as Eleanor in their youth.⁷ At one point, seventy students were taking advantage of the program, with some students going through the line twice. The breakfast was open to all students and adults at Hiatt and was served from eight o'clock until eight-thirty in the morning.⁸

Prior to 1976, Eleanor's class of all boys at Amos Hiatt was the first one in home economics in the city of Des Moines for ninth grade boys. The class was an elective and the

boys were serious about it. All of the boys remained in the class for its duration but one. That boy seemed more advanced to Eleanor than the others, especially in the cooking area. He hoped to learn more advanced, gourmet-type cooking rather than the basics that were taught in the class. Eleanor states that the boys did a nice job in the clothing unit, as well as with the food unit. In the clothing unit, the boys made ponchos, knit shirts, and pants.

Eleanor made up activities and games for her students to help them learn and understand different concepts that they were studying. One example is the "Snack Food Bingo" game that she designed. Following are the directions of the game for the students:

The purpose of the game is to see who can "Food Bingo" first by drawing an X through pictures that make a vertical, horizontal or diagonal line on the game sheet. Four corners do *not* count.

Several answers may be correct for each question. The risk or chance involved in the game is to select a correct answer that will enable you to "Food Bingo" first. Write the number corresponding to each question in the block you have chosen to use to answer that item. You may cross out only one picture for each question. Do not change a number from one block to another after the next question has been read.

If you have filled in all the blocks that answer a particular question, skip that question and wait for the next. At the appropriate time call out "Food Bingo."⁹

Eleanor typically gave the students seeds, beans, pasta, and other food items to use in playing Food Bingo. Another game made by Eleanor for her students is a matching game. She made square cards all the same size. For example, on one card, she might write a cooking measurement and the student would have to match the card with another one representing the measurement's equivalent.

One of Eleanor's teaching units in home economics while at Amos Hiatt is entitled, "Shape up or strike out with snacks." The topic was "Kitchen Power: Simple basics of kitchen organization, equipment, preparation, safety and cleaning." Her six behavioral objectives, generalizations, and key words and concepts were listed as follows:

The student will be able to:

1. Understand how an efficient kitchen is organized.
2. Locate and put equipment in correct location.
3. Stay at a given work area to save time and energy.
4. Read and follow labels and directions.
5. Practice simple rules of safety.
6. Leave all equipment and areas clean and dry for the next person and/or group.

Generalizations:

1. It is easier to work in an organized kitchen.
2. Learning the names and purpose of an area makes it easier to work.
3. Time and energy can be saved by working in an area made for the job.
4. Time and energy can be saved by reading recipes and assembling equipment and ingredients before starting a task.
5. It is easier and more fun to work in a clean orderly kitchen.

Key Words and Concepts:

1. Types of kitchen organization
2. Preparation area
3. Store area
4. Sink area
5. Time planning
6. Energy and conservation
7. Simple equipment
8. Knives, butcher and paring
9. Spatula, teflon, rubber and metal
10. Cookie sheet
11. Rolling pin
12. Hot pad holder
13. Cooling rack
14. Mixing bowl
15. Mixing spoon
16. Measuring cups
17. Measuring spoons
18. Dish cloth
19. Dish towel
20. Detergent
21. Cleansing powder¹⁰

The two games described earlier that Eleanor created for her students compliment well her kitchen power unit.

Another teaching unit is entitled "Creative Family Living." In this unit, the topic is listed as "Leisure Time Activity for Hands." Eleanor's behavioral objectives, generalizations, and key words and concepts for this unit are:

The student will be able to:

1. Use quiet leisure time in a constructive way.
2. Give gifts to family members and friends that you have made.
3. Begin a project to add on to for months to come.
4. Appreciate craft skills of others, amateur or skilled.
5. Develop interest in salable items as a means of fun and small income.

Generalizations:

1. Using leisure time to make craft items helps one to develop a skill.
2. Carefully making a gift that can be used is often more appreciated.
3. Trying to develop some skills helps one appreciate the skills of others.
4. Some projects can be added to and used for years to come.

Key Words and Concepts:

1. Leisure
2. Craft
3. Constructive
4. Appreciation¹¹

A third unit is entitled, "On the Job Now or Then . . . Then?" The topic is noted as, "Let it All Hang Out: Personal Characteristics, Abilities, Likes and Dislikes and Values."

The behavioral objectives, generalizations, and key words and concepts for this unit include:

The student will be able to:

1. Realize that each person is different from another in abilities.
2. Recognize most Americans work at home or away unless totally handicapped.
3. Understand that most abilities and talents are underdeveloped.
4. Understand that feelings are based on pleasant and unpleasant experiences.
5. Realize that our values result from our personal environment and experiences.

Generalizations:

1. I do not have to be just like another person.
2. Our livelihood depends on working for ourselves or others.
3. Most persons are not willing to work up to their capacity.

4. We can have feelings of likes and dislikes but not be offensive.
5. Few of us value the same thing in exactly the same way as we have grown up with different experiences and environments.

Key Words and Concepts:

1. Intelligent
2. Active
3. Leadership
4. Creative
5. Wealth
6. Critical thinking
7. Responsibility
8. Maturity
9. Stability
10. Abilities (school subjects)
11. Writing
12. Speaking
13. Organizing
14. Good judgement of others
15. Prestige
16. Money
17. Getting ahead
18. Being well dressed
19. Being ethical
20. Being scientific
21. Being artistic
22. Having hand skills
23. Work well with others
24. How do you like to work alone
25. Noisy and confusing environment
26. Active work
27. Under pressure work
28. Work by planning ahead of time
29. Working in an established routine
30. Ability to handle details
31. Desire for immediate results¹²

Two more unit plans created by Eleanor are “Creative Family Living” and “On the Job: How Employable Are You As a Baby Sitter.” The family living unit’s topic is “Family Treasures” and has as its content, “What is your style of creativity or inventiveness,” “Self expression for an individual for joy and preservation, might get to be a hobby.” There are

numerous learning and evaluation experiences provided in this unit. The on-the-job unit's topic is "As a Babysitter." This unit identifies behavioral objectives, generalizations, key words and concepts and is rich with content, learning and evaluation experiences, and resources. The concepts addressed in Eleanor's teaching units are just as valid today as they were during the time she taught them. From this sampling, it is apparent that Eleanor was dedicated in preparing her students to be reflective, thoughtful, and self-sufficient, in addition to preparing them for life outside the classroom.

While teaching at Amos Hiatt, Eleanor was told that the administration wanted her to transfer from Amos Hiatt to Woodrow Wilson in Des Moines. The school administrators wanted Eleanor to teach special education at Woodrow Wilson and also work downtown in the administrative offices for the supervisor of special education. Eleanor sensed that making the change might provide a potential avenue for the Des Moines schools to remove her from teaching because it was unclear if her seniority transferred with her or if it would start over if she made the move, which would then make her vulnerable to being laid off. Eleanor had taken no coursework in special education, although she did have a good rapport with the students. Most alarming to Eleanor was that the school officials tried to implement the change in her position without first consulting her about it. They attempted this while she was home on sick leave with a sore throat. When Eleanor returned to school from her sick leave, she first went to the school nurse's office to call her supervisor after being told of the situation by her co-worker and then went straight to the principal's office. She remembers asking, "To what do I owe the honor?" in reference to the administration making career plans for her without consulting her in the process. Eleanor's supervisor remarked to her that she enjoyed working with special education students, to which she responded that her preference

was working with them on a part-time basis. Her principal responded pleasantly to her and her desire to remain teaching at Amos Hiatt. The principal then made a telephone call to the administrative offices and Eleanor never heard any more about it.

In 1976, the middle school teachers spent a great deal of time developing a new curriculum for seventh grade homemaking. The curriculum focused on short-term projects that lasted for five or six weeks. After that, the students moved to another area, for example, shop, art, or music. The eighth grade program also was cut back. Instead of taking a full year of home economics, the program was reduced to one semester of home economics and one semester of shop. The new program was coeducational for 7th and 8th graders. Eleanor recalls that the shortened program created more pressure for students and made it more difficult for them to complete the projects.

A multi-ethnic workshop, Phase I of Amos Hiatt's Curriculum Development Project was held on April 11, 1977 under the guidance of LaVerne Williams and Dan Gregg, both of Minneapolis Public Schools, Department of Inter-group Education. The units of study shared during the workshop were compiled and put in a spiral-bound book for the participants.¹³ The table of contents has the categories of English, fine arts, health/physical education, instructional media center, mathematics, practical arts, reading (Title-I,) science, social science, loan libraries, and sources for obtaining educational materials.¹⁴ Eleanor's contribution was in the practical arts: "The Striving of Ethnic Groups for Equality." Included in her unit were: Key Concept: Equality; Key Generalization; Intermediate Generalization; Lower Level Generalizations (8); Objectives (7); Activities (6) with guiding questions; Materials: films, filmstrips, books, tapes.¹⁵

CALLANAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, DES MOINES, IOWA, 1978-1982

Eleanor was moved from Hiatt to Callanan to teach in 1978 because the teacher at Callanan retired. Callanan is geographically close to Eleanor's home and made traveling to and from her teaching job less time-consuming for her. Eleanor was the only home economics teacher at Callanan, whereas there were one and one-half teachers at Amos Hiatt for many years because one-half of Eleanor's time was spent in teaching science as well as home economics classes. At Callanan, she taught a new group of seventh graders every four or five or six weeks. The two classes were at the end of the day and tiring because of the shorter time frame when she found herself saying good-bye to her students every four to six weeks. At Amos Hiatt the curriculum determined the classrooms in which the teachers taught. It was much the same at Callanan, where in teaching the eighth graders Eleanor changed classrooms according to the curriculum. Callanan's equipment was not of the same quality as it was at Hiatt. The tops of the tables were rough and the food area was more crowded. However, they did have 14 sewing machines in the classroom, which were moved to Callanan from another school.

Callanan Junior High School students represented families from lower-income Whites, middle-income, to some of the higher-income families. There were many children from middle-income families. Children of the best doctors in town attended Callanan, as well as children of well-known Des Moines business owners. The geographic area served by Callanan was south of Grand from 20th Street to possibly 42nd Street, and to the north perhaps as far as Hickman. Black students had some freedom in choosing where they wanted to attend school because of open enrollment. The Asian students attended school where there was an English-as-a-second-language (ESL) program.

At Callanan, Eleanor had her first experience teaching the hearing impaired. The students always had an interpreter in the classroom. Eleanor took sign language two times, but was never able to keep up with the students, however it did help her better relate to the students. Eleanor taught ninth grade vocational homemaking only during her first year at Callanan. After her first year teaching there, ninth grade became part of the high school and so Callanan then served only seventh and eighth grades. Eleanor taught the special education students at Callanan. And, she taught the seventh and eighth grade regular students. From 1978 on, all home economics classes throughout the city had both male and female students. They took one semester of home economics and one semester of shop.

Eleanor was a conference planning committee member for the Iowa Conference on Multicultural, Nonsexist Approaches to Industrial Arts and Home Economics Programs sponsored by Iowa State University and held in Ames, Iowa on April 28, 1981.¹⁶ Contemporary literature at the conference included an article entitled, "What's Your Cultural Literacy Score?" that began by dispelling the inaccuracy and misrepresentation of the idea of the United States as a melting pot.¹⁷ Penny Ralston, Assistant Professor in the Department of Home Economics, Iowa State University provided a handout entitled, "Multicultural Approaches to Home Economics Curriculum."¹⁸ Some articles in the packet described the foods of different cultures, for example Native Americans, Japanese, and soul food. There were numerous other resources provided at the conference that addressed current literature in working with minority students, handicapped and disadvantaged students, families of different ethnicities, vocational education, and the history of Blacks in vocational education. Eleanor's participation in planning this conference represents her ongoing efforts throughout

her life, in her experiences, in her community, and in her teaching as an activist for equality in education and life.

During the last few years, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Callanan followed the career type program for eighth grade instead of the typical clothing, foods, budgeting, and childcare curriculum. The textbook had the procedures for food management, hotel management, airline flight attendant, etc. This was the last program that Eleanor taught before she retired. The school was planning to make more curriculum changes soon to prepare for the sixth grade program the next year. Eleanor considered the number of curriculum changes that she had been through during her years as a teacher. Although she had not previously given much thought to when she would retire, she was at the point where she could. Given the prospect of the pending curriculum changes, and being in the position that she could retire, Eleanor suddenly made the decision to retire in 1982 and submitted her letter of resignation at the end of the 1981-1982 school year.

While employed at Callanan, Eleanor was the Des Moines Education Association representative to the council. She is a life member of the Des Moines Education Association. She was a member of the Iowa State Educational Association, and still is a life member of the National Education Association. She was a member both nationally and locally of American Home Economics Association. She joined Alpha Delta Kappa, which is an educational sorority geared towards local altruistic projects. While at Callanan, she worked with the Y-teens, as she had at Sumner High School in Kansas City. Betty Grunberg, who was in the legislature, worked with Eleanor and the Y-teens. Betty was a hostess at Eleanor's retirement from teaching at Callanan Junior High School in 1982.

Eleanor was featured in two different articles in the *Callanan Times* after she announced her retirement. In the March 1982 issue, Eleanor expressed that she decided to take an early retirement so that she could have some rest and relaxation. She also stated that she would like to begin traveling again.

“Society has changed,” remarked Mrs. Archer, “and not necessarily just the students at Callanan.” Students in the late 1970s tended to have more discipline problems and Mrs. Archer says she is seeing a gradual improvement. When asked what she hopes the students will learn from what she’s taught, Mrs. Archer said she hopes they gain a clearer knowledge of hospitality, child care, and foods related careers.¹⁹

In the June 1982 issue of the *Callanan Times*, the author noted that Eleanor said that she planned to reorganize her life and get back to the Gym and Swim program at the YWCA. She also reiterated her sentiments regarding her desire to travel and that she was ready for a change. Even though Eleanor opted for early retirement, she had plans for how she was going to spend her time and continue to enrich her life, as well as the lives of others.

In retrospect, Eleanor stated that teaching turned out to be a rewarding career for her. She made many friends over the years and had many good experiences. It gave her the opportunity to be with her own children during the summer months after she married and went back to work. Not only was her teaching career rewarding, but it was enjoyable too.

Notes for Chapter 6

¹ The information provided about the Cop Program and the Teacher Corp Program was provided by Eleanor when she edited the hard copy of this chapter. Her hand written notes indicated that she confirmed the information with Gloria McCrory, the last person who directed the Cop Program.

² John taught at Amos Hiatt for one year and then transferred to North High School to teach drama. John also was involved with the Ingersoll Dinner Theater in Des Moines.

³ The original copy of this letter is in Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

⁴ The Dean of the college at the time was Dean LaBaron.

⁵ Eleanor noted that her retirement program at that time was not the common IPERS one with the State of Iowa. In fact, the retirement program was not provided through the State of Iowa at all, but was one provided locally by the City of Des Moines for school faculty.

⁶ Eleanor has the complete copy of the discussion kit in her personal collection.

⁷ Eleanor pointed out that although she and the Hiatt faculty member attended the same junior high school, they did not know each other during those years.

⁸ This information is taken from an unidentified article clipping entitled "Amos Hiatt," from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

⁹ The Food Bingo game is on a laminated partial sheet of paper that Eleanor made and is from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

¹⁰ This unit plan is re-typed from the original from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

¹¹ This unit plan is re-typed from the original from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

¹² This unit plan is re-typed from the original from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

¹³ Eleanor has the complete copy of the combined units of study in her personal collection.

¹⁴ These topic headings are taken from *Ethnicity*, 1977, a guide reproduced by Des Moines Public Schools Copy Center under the direction of Mr. Robert J. Ruths, "Table of Contents."

¹⁵ These topic headings are taken from *Ethnicity*, 1977, a guide reproduced by Des Moines Public Schools Copy Center under the direction of Mr. Robert J. Ruths, "The Striving of Ethnic Groups for Equality," by Eleanor Archer, pp. 55-58.

¹⁶ Other planning committee members included Gretchen Woeste, Supervisor of Home Economics for the Des Moines School District; Valerie Allen, Waterloo, Iowa; Marie Theobald, West Des Moines School District; Alita Siasoco, Council Bluffs School District; Karen Brinker, Midwest Sex Desegregation Center, Manhattan, Kansas; Margaret Torrie, Home Economics Education Department; Gladys Grabe, Home Economics Consultant, Iowa Department of Public Instruction; Beverly Gillette, Educational Equity Section, Iowa Department of Public Instruction; Tom Anderson, Educational Equity Section, Iowa Department of Public Instruction; Marl Hamersley, Proteus Adult Training, Des Moines, Iowa; Phyllis Yager, Iowa City School District; John O'Hara, Urbandale School District; Vincent Saulino, Burlington School District; Kenneth Collier, Des Moines Area Community College; Elias Garcia, Midwest Race Desegregation Center, Manhattan, Kansas; William Miller, College of Industrial Education, Iowa State University; Harold Dilts, Secondary Education Department, Iowa State University; Harold Berryhill, Industrial Arts Consultant, Iowa Department of Public Instruction; Sheryl Barta, Educational Equity Section, Iowa Department of Public Instruction; Cathlene Sime, Mason City High School; and William Hunter, College of Education, Iowa State University. These names are from the listing for the conference planning committee members, 4110-D59754-4/81, that accompanies the complete conference packet from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

¹⁷ Doris E. Manning. March/April 1980. What's your cultural literacy score? *Illinois Teacher*, pp. 194-195.

¹⁸ Penny Ralston. April 28, 1981. Multicultural Approaches to Home Economics Curriculum. A handout for a presentation at the Iowa Conference on Multicultural, Nonsexist Approaches to Industrial Arts and Home Economics Programs, Ames, Iowa. From the packet in Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

¹⁹ *Callanan Times*, Feature page. Mrs. Archer. March 1982, Issue 4.

7 Life Begins with Retirement

When Eleanor first retired, she did not have too many goals in place because her decision to retire was more spur of the moment due to the forthcoming curriculum changes that were once again being proposed in the city schools, including Callanan. Her only regret is that if she had kept teaching for a few more years, she would have a better pension.

Eleanor held true to her plans that she identified in the *Callanan Times* and returned to her exercise programs. Her exercise regime commenced around 1975, about the same time that her children left home to attend college. She recalls that she likely started exercising before then, but with her children no longer at home she could restructure her time to include more of her own personal interests. Eleanor notes that, "I used to say my exercise program was my second religion. I gave time to the church and I gave time to my body." Thus, Eleanor began a more regular exercise program at the YWCA in Des Moines. Her retirement expanded her opportunities to participate in programs offered during the daytime hours. Regular exercise and keeping herself physically fit represents one of Eleanor's personal philosophies and mottoes: "Respect the temple that God gave me and keep it the very best that I can spiritually, mentally, and physically." Eleanor's lifelong involvement in her church, related activities, as well as her involvement in other service organizations further exemplify her faithfulness in living true to her beliefs.

Eleanor's biggest surprise after her retirement was the news that her daughter, Yolaine, and son-in-law, Steve, gave her. They were expecting a baby. They had not mentioned it to Eleanor because Yolaine lost a baby in a previous pregnancy and was having difficulty becoming pregnant again. They had started adoption procedures when Yolaine realized that she was expecting. Steve and Yolaine decided that they would go ahead with

the adoption. Shortly after their intention to do that, the child's birth mother changed her mind. In the meanwhile, things worked out favorably and a baby girl, Adrienne, was born on Christmas day in 1982. She was three weeks early, but in good health.

Eleanor enjoyed making a few items for the baby and offered to babysit in the free time she had. When Eleanor left her exercise class, she went to the Mercy Hospital Child Care Center to pick up Adrienne. She did this for almost a full year until December 1983, when she twisted two vertebrae that ultimately put pressure on her leg. Her leg was immobilized and totally numb from her upper thigh to her foot. The orthopedic doctor in the emergency room stuck the length of her leg with a huge safety pin and Eleanor could not feel anything. Eleanor could not walk normally and was admitted to the hospital for thirteen days, where she was treated with heat, traction, and exercise.

Eleanor's son-in-law's mother was a L.P.N. in orthopedics and overheard a trio of doctors from orthopedics discussing Eleanor's future back surgery. Eleanor was determined not to have the surgery. She was successful and never returned for the surgery. She did, however, have to alter her lifestyle for four months, but has not had any serious trouble since that time. When she does, she refers to the exercise book and uses the back exercises again.

Alyssa was born around two years after Adrienne and so for the first seven years following her retirement in 1982, Eleanor provided childcare for her granddaughters. Both girls had the benefit of staying with their grandmother until they were ready to begin kindergarten. Adrienne, first born and now 18 years, stayed with Eleanor partial days for four days a week. When Eleanor's back began to cause her pain, she then cared for Adrienne for three partial days each week. This arrangement worked well for Eleanor because she could continue to go to the YWCA for her exercise routine. After Adrienne was two years

old, Eleanor cared for her and her sister Alyssa for two days each week. Alyssa stayed with her grandmother from the time she was an infant until she began kindergarten. Alyssa is now 15 years old.

Many of Eleanor's post-retirement activities were continuations of involvement that she began prior to her retirement. In 1977 she began working with the Hostess Club at her church, St. Paul A.M.E. and continues her active participation. One event in which Eleanor continued her participation was in planning and preparing their annual luncheon style show. This was held the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Each member helped by preparing chicken salad and other foods. They brought card tables, red tablecloths, decorated, and served the meal. One person volunteered to contact ladies' dress shops to borrow clothing for the style show. Church members and their friends were contacted to model the clothing and some women modeled their own. For most of the many years that the luncheon and style show was held, it was a successful money making project for the Hostess Club and something that the group enjoyed doing. Eleanor has held numerous offices in the Hostess Club since 1977. She was a Trustee in St. Paul A.M.E. just before her retirement, around 1980, and continued that involvement for about 20 years. Eleanor also was in the missionary for her church, which she began around 1982.

She belonged to a bridge group for several years in Des Moines during the 1970s and 1980s. The bridge club was just for fun and the only social club that she has ever belonged to in her life. Eleanor has been invited to social clubs as a guest throughout her life, but the bridge club remains the only social club to which she actually belonged. The bridge group members were educators, with the exception of one individual. Being an educator was not a requirement, it just happened that way because they all knew each other. Playing expertise

was not a requirement either, because no one was picky about how the game was played. The group broke up as members developed and pursued different interests. Two of the former bridge club members have since passed.

A highlight in 1983 for Eleanor, the year following her retirement, was serving on the Planning Committee for the Second Ecumenical Women's Religious Council for the State of Iowa. The Council's theme was, "Claiming Wholeness, Living Peace." People were elected from many different denominations to plan and participate in the interdenominational conference that was held September 16 and 17, 1983 at Scheman Center, Iowa State University, Ames. Although Eleanor does not believe that the Jewish religion was included, people were represented from the Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, African Methodist Episcopal, and Baptist faiths. As part of the planning committee, Eleanor attended planning meetings in Waterloo and other Iowa towns. She remembers it as a very interesting experience and that the ladies with whom she worked were extremely nice. The only African American participants were from the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Des Moines. She does not recall that there were any representatives from the Burns United Methodist Church in Des Moines. Although this church was not supposed to be separate, it was somewhat segregated at one time and is a historic church in Des Moines. The interdenominational council met for three or four years.

Eleanor remained active and supportive of her teaching profession during her retirement. In 1984, she was honored with a life membership in the Iowa State Education Association because of the years she devoted to teaching in the Des Moines Public Schools, as well as elsewhere. She volunteered as a calling captain for the Des Moines Area Retired Teachers for seven years. She later was the Calling Coordinator for nine years for all

teachers in and around the toll free calling area of Des Moines. She has belonged to Alpha Delta Kappa, an educational sorority whose focus is altruistic projects, for many years. Memberships for Alpha Delta Kappa are nominated and must be someone who has taught successfully for three years. During her affiliation with Alpha Delta Kappa, Eleanor has served as secretary, chaplain, and courtesy chair, as well as attending some of the organization's state conventions. She remains active in Alpha Delta Kappa.

DELTA SIGMA THETA

Eleanor was initiated into Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, May 1938, at the age of 19 at the YWCA, Des Moines, Iowa. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is a nationwide service organization primarily, but not exclusively, for African American women.¹ In Des Moines, the organization raises money for scholarships for high school students, contributes to Tiny Tots, Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC.) and numerous other agencies. Eleanor has served as Delta Sigma Theta President for both the Greater Kansas City and Des Moines Chapters.² She has held the offices of secretary and treasurer in the Des Moines Chapter. Eleanor took advantage of the opportunity to become a life member during the 1940s. When her daughter, Yolaine, graduated from college in Maryville, Missouri, a Delta Sigma Theta Chapter was established there and Eleanor gave her a life membership as her graduation gift. Because her children, family, and career kept her busy, Yolaine was not active for some years. However, as her children became older, she became active once again.

National Delta Sigma Theta conventions provide not only the opportunity for members to gather on a national level, but offer numerous opportunities for networking and

enrichment. It was during Eleanor's attendance at her first national convention in 1941 held in Detroit, Michigan following her ISC graduation that she returned with the resolve and realization that her professional career was dictated by her race and gender and that she must prepare to enter the teaching profession. In 1950, she traveled with her friend, Eva Dixon, to the Delta Sigma Theta National Convention in Berkeley, California. Segregation was the norm in 1950 and they were not welcome to stay in the hotels. They found accommodations in the International House in Berkeley, where some of the convention sessions were held. This was about the last year that Delta Sigma Theta could not hold their conventions in a hotel. One day Eleanor and Eva traveled to Oakland for entertainment and a meal. Another day they went to San Francisco because the convention was organized in such a way that travel and sightseeing experiences could be accomplished without missing the sessions. Eleanor and Eva saw the play, *The Death of A Salesman*, in Los Angeles on the post-convention trip, where participants did not remain in the large group but could partake in additional events after the convention. Eleanor fondly remembers the experience as wonderful. In 1979, Eleanor attended the national convention in New Orleans, Louisiana.

In 1988, Eleanor and two of her Delta sisters took an Amtrak trip from Osceola, Iowa to San Francisco for Delta Sigma Theta's 75th weeklong anniversary convention. Most of their time was spent in meetings, special events, entertainment, and shopping at the booths in the complex. They toured Sausalito, the Redwood Forest, and Napa Valley wine country. Eleanor was disappointed that she did not get to revisit the cable car, Fisherman's Wharf, and Chinatown. They left San Francisco for Seattle for a few days where they visited the space needle, flea market, and many other sights. Eleanor took the opportunity to visit one of her first cousins she had not seen in years while there. From Seattle, they took a bus to

Vancouver, British Columbia, for three days. Here they visited the glorious park, did some sightseeing, took in some restaurants and shops, as well as taking a tour of the city. The night of their return, they saw a bulletin for a trip to Victoria, British Columbia to the Butchart Gardens. They took the trip and spent most of the day there. The ferry ride leaving and back to Seattle was a long one. They spent a few more days in Seattle before boarding the train for Salt Lake City, where they stayed for around 48 hours. Here they visited the Mormon community and listened to the choir practice. They visited the Kenicott Copper mine and gift shop and spent time at Great Salt Lake as part of a city tour. When they boarded the train to return home, Eleanor became ill from carrying too heavy a load up the steps to the second level. The porter took her to a bedroom so she could stretch out as they traveled coach on this trip. A doctor was on board and checked on Eleanor periodically. The decision was made to send her to a hospital at the next stop. Even though Eleanor did not feel that well, she returned to her seat and the doctor continued to check on her. She was grateful for everyone's kindness and attention. The trip ahead was long, but Eleanor felt much better by the time they arrived back in Osceola, Iowa. More recently, in 2000, Eleanor attended the national convention in Chicago, Illinois, and in July 2001, she attended the regional convention in Kansas City, Missouri with her daughter.

Eleanor notes that the focus and service of the sorority varies depending on the geographical location of the chapter. Some of the larger cities, such as Chicago or Detroit, have a senior citizen category called Delta Dears. Eleanor is uncertain how much service the Delta Dears undertake, but noted that her Des Moines Chapter does not have enough senior members who are interested in forming Delta Dears. Thus, Eleanor works with the main group in which there are only about two others who are active in the senior category. As an

example, she recalled her trip around 1997 to Chicago where her cousin lives. One of her cousin's closest friends in Chicago is a Delta, as well as the friend's daughter. They took Eleanor to a Delta Dear Luncheon, which meets every month. The day that Eleanor attended the luncheon in Chicago, they also had a gift drawing. She noted that this experience is more social than the service activity focus of the alumni chapters. Eleanor described the experience as an enjoyable one.

The Des Moines Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta to which Eleanor belongs provides many services for the community. One of the criteria for considering membership for someone is how involved in service they are with their community. Eleanor notes that over the years, the membership has increased considerably and that she is thankful that she took advantage of the opportunity to become a life member when she did. Eleanor has been and remains an active Delta participant in their service activities. One of Eleanor's friends was one of the founders of Delta Sigma Theta in Des Moines, but she passed three years ago. Eleanor's traveling companion of many years, Jacquelyn, also was a Delta and has passed.

Eleanor plays an active role in representing Delta Sigma Theta and in inviting new women for membership. When she receives an inquiry from an interested woman, she tells people that the sorority is mainly a service organization. Eleanor makes this distinction because the image of White sororities during college years is for socializing, whereas that is not the emphasis or focus for Deltas. Deltas on a college campus emphasize service and likely have a combination of service with some social activities. However, for the adult or alumni group, service is the focus with very little socializing, although they have held a ball in Des Moines a few times as a social activity.

When a prospective member expresses interest, an invitation is issued to attend a rush party. One rush party in recent years was held at Grand View College in Des Moines. Delta membership is serious business and prospective members are involved in the Pyramid Preparation Period where they learn the history of Delta Sigma Theta from its origin in 1913, and then are tested over the material. Eleanor notes that motives for seeking membership have changed over the years since she first became a Delta. For some, it has become a status symbol. Some women join and then rarely participate in the service activities, however an overriding concern of the Deltas is that those who become members of the sorority remain active and concerned about providing service over their lifetimes.

Eleanor noted a difference between Alpha Delta Kappa and Delta Sigma Theta. For example, if a member experiences family or financial difficulties at some time, Alpha Delta Kappa allows the member to resign and rejoin later when the member's situation improves and they do not have to pay dues. With Delta Sigma Theta, even though a member may not pay dues and not be an active member, they still are considered part of the organization. The member can still work and serve on a committee, but can not hold office or chair a committee. It has been Eleanor's observation that in her Des Moines Chapter, most people who can not pay their dues choose not to participate in the service work. Rather, they might attend the Founder's Day function to hear the speaker and then leave.

There is a broad range of service activities that often address major societal issues undertaken by the Des Moines Delta Sigma Theta Chapter. Examples of service efforts in which Deltas participate include helping with voter registration, helping with the AIDS program at Wilkie House, having invited speakers, distributing literature at events—always providing support to a group whether or not it is a Delta-sponsored project. Another example

is service provided for the "Make Me a World" event held at the Iowa Historical Building. "Make Me a World" is an event for African Americans and all people that features the culture, gifts, and traditions of African Americans. It is held around the end of January or beginning of February and was in approximately its third year in 2001. At this event, Deltas hand out brochures and provide directions for people. People of all races attend the event, including girl scouts, students, and many others.

A major 2001 Delta event was the Ebony Fashion Show held on the campus of Drake University in Des Moines. The event was sold out. Businesses like Bankers Trust and Pioneer donated money, in addition to the money generated from ticket sales. The money donated by the businesses, money from the ticket sales, and money from other Delta projects was used to help African American teenagers of approximately middle school age or older reach their college and special training goals. In addition to their more formal service projects, Deltas provide service and help around their community. One recent example of Eleanor's contribution is serving as a volunteer in a reading program for elementary age children at Edmunds Academy in Des Moines. Eleanor went to the school at a designated time each week to work with two children in reading. Eleanor and her Delta sisters contribute numerous hours of service to their community through their efforts and projects.

NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING SERVICES

Since her retirement, Eleanor is active with Neighborhood Housing Services for the City of Des Moines, with the services provided reaching slightly beyond the City of Des Moines. She was Secretary for the Board for four years and is now on the Advisory Committee and was asked recently to chair the Loan Committee. The Loan Committee

approves loans for home repairs and also reviews loans for people who are buying homes. Eleanor has served on other committees for the Neighborhood Housing Services, however after serving on the Board for six years, an individual can no longer serve on the board, but can serve in other capacities. In addition to her activity with the city group, Eleanor is treasurer of her Woodland Heights neighborhood group.

EXERCISE

Eleanor believes that in addition to being committed to an exercise program, an individual needs to make it a habit, a routine, a part of life's activities. Eleanor's established habit and routine is to rise around 6:15 a.m. everyday. Once she is up for the morning, Eleanor first eats her breakfast, then gathers her towel, swimsuit, and other accessories and prepares to go to the YWCA in Des Moines. She and a friend drive together to their water aerobics exercise program and arrive at the YWCA around 8:45 a.m. She states that, "By then, no matter how I feel, I'm determined to go."

Eleanor's current exercise regime consists of walking two miles and water aerobics. She previously also has worked out on weight machines, low impact or step aerobics. and floor aerobics. The oldest person in her water aerobics class is 83 and the youngest person is probably about 71. Her current class is more stable than the classes she participated in before her retirement when she went after her day of teaching. The membership of her exercise groups during her teaching years fluctuated considerably and was never very stable. Eleanor last did low impact or step aerobics around six years ago. Her first impression of senior exercises came from what she saw on IPTV Channel 11. She thought to herself, "Who wants to be with a bunch of old women sitting down? Who wants to do that?" because on

Channel 11 the women are shown sitting while doing their exercises. Unfortunately, Eleanor's floor and step aerobic instructor left the YWCA and is no longer there.

Eleanor used to work out on eight different weight machines. Unfortunately, bursitis affected her arm, so she gave up working out on the machines that necessitated using her arms. Currently, she works out on one weight machine where thirty-some pounds are pushed backward and forward. On another machine, Eleanor first pushes forward, about 30 pounds, and repeats the effort with this machine 25 times. Yet another machine requires hooking one leg over it and pushing it back. Eleanor performs this exercise with each leg about 30 times at around seventy-odd pounds. She was doing the exercise with this machine 40 times with each leg, but cut it back to thirty because of time. The final weight machine that Eleanor currently works out on is one that requires her to swing her leg across while pushing around thirty pounds of weight. She swings her leg with the weight first pushing on the inside and then the outside of her leg and then switches legs. This is done twenty times each way for each leg, totaling eighty times. Eleanor recommends that beginners try ten exercises at first and emphasizes that physical exercise must become a habit.

Another method that Eleanor suggests for beginners is to purchase a videotape, which does not require much in terms of financial investment. Eleanor also has an exercise videotape and continues to check Channel 11 to see what kind of exercises they are doing. Channel 11 exercise programs air early in the morning and Eleanor admits that she has never been able to bring herself to exercise at that early hour. She attributes part of her success with her exercise regime to the fact that she has always liked dancing and physical activity.

TRAVEL

Along with caring for her grandchildren and maintaining her regular exercise program, Eleanor found time to travel during her retirement. Travel has broadened her horizons all through the years since her college graduation in 1941. Eleanor said that, "If I had known I would do so much traveling, I would have paid better attention in geography and history in public school."

In 1983 or 1984, Eleanor took a trip to Bronx, New York to visit with her Puerto Rican friends. The two met in Salt Lake City at the U.S.O. in the 1940s. Eleanor's friend was a W.A.C. and was trained in Des Moines shortly before being assigned to a base in Salt Lake City, Utah. The two women have remained friends over the years. Together, they visited Chinatown, Tower 1 of the former World Trade Center, Trinity Church, and Wall Street. Much of their other sightseeing was done by elevated train and car.³

One of Eleanor's early trips after her retirement was in 1986 to visit a friend living in Tucson, Arizona. She remembers this as an especially interesting trip for her because it brought thoughts about a unit she taught in science dealing with the various biomes and their life forms. To her delight, she was in the desert biome. While there, she had the opportunity to visit Phoenix and Sun City West. The plant life in Tucson was like none Eleanor had ever seen before. It was breathtaking to her to see large areas of saguaro cactus in bloom. In Sun City, the lawns of pebble rocks with a large saguaro were something new to Eleanor. Her trip to Tyler, Texas for a friend's high school reunion two years previously in 1984 was a contrast to her Arizona experience. Tyler is known as the rose capital of the country and had many beautiful displays throughout the city.

The reunion in Tyler was particularly interesting to Eleanor because, at that time, she had never attended a high school reunion. This occasion was an all-school reunion of an African American school that was closed due to desegregation. Even though Eleanor worked in African American schools in Georgia and Kansas, she had never observed a reunion. She remembers that there was much enthusiasm and joy as the attendees greeted one another.

Around the same time, Eleanor attended her first North High School all alumni reunion in Des Moines. Many of her friends from the class also returned for their 50th anniversary. Eleanor hosted a luncheon for her out-of-town classmates and local friends. Their enthusiasm was contagious and Eleanor decided to attend the only reunion she could, as her friends went to their class reunion the night prior to the all-alumni night. At the all-alumni night, Eleanor saw two people from the past whom she recognized. One of her friends from the class two years behind Eleanor returned another year and visited her and they went to the all-alumni night. Even though Eleanor did not know anyone at her table, she enjoyed visiting with the people.

No other African Americans from Eleanor's graduating class attended the all-alumni banquet and dance. Eleanor recalls this as the singular time that she has ever heard of this happening. However, there were only two Black males and only seven to nine Black girls in Eleanor's graduating class, and this may account in part for the low attendance.

Eleanor made two trips during 1987. The first was to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania traveling by car with four other people, Reverend Clemmons, his wife, daughter, and a longtime friend and church member who was experiencing the onset of Alzheimer's disease. Once in Philadelphia, they met with other church members who came for the occasion of the 200-year anniversary of the founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. During the

week that they were there, they enjoyed the Liberty Bell and other historic sites, as well as Wanamaker's store. They visited Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church, which was established in Philadelphia in 1787 because of segregation at St. George Methodist Church. Two slaves, Richard Allen and Absolum Jones, who were helpful at St. George's Church, withdrew and took the segregated members with them to establish their own church, which did a great deal to build pride in its members. Today the church has congregations in Canada, all over the U.S., and in some African and Caribbean countries.

Eleanor's second trip in 1987 was made with three other people by car. Their journey took them through Sioux City, the Dakotas, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. In Alberta, they stopped at Banff, the Columbian icefields and stayed in Edmonton for two days to visit the then largest mall in the world. The mall included amusement rides, a small zoo, a botanical area, European shops, many shops common to the U.S., and Canadian stores. They spent time at the hotel overlooking the beautiful Lake Louise, but found lodging in a more modest motel.

They finally arrived in Calgary where they stayed four nights. Three people in the group were attending an International Delta Kappa Gamma convention. Eleanor was the oddball because of her Alpha Delta Kappa affiliation. While Eleanor's friends were in session, she spent more time at a museum and traveled by train to a nearby community's mall. She attended a few of the convention's open events. From Calgary, they returned to the border and visited Glacier National Park in Montana and continued on to Yellow Stone National Park for a two-day stay. While traveling on their way in Canada, they located large and nourishing muffins for breakfast. They carried lunch food with them and had a good meal in the evening. Sometime during the afternoon or evening, they treated themselves to

ice cream cones. After a stop in Nebraska, the ladies headed home to Des Moines, driving in two-hour shifts.

Eleanor repacked within a few days following her return from her 1988 Delta convention trip and was off to San Antonio, Texas to the Archer-Batraville family reunion. She had not seen some of the family since 1960, while others occasionally passed through Des Moines to visit. They had a good time becoming reacquainted, played games, and visited a lot. By this time, Eleanor's ex-husband, Jean, was retired from the USDA in Beltsville, Maryland and had his own home in Des Moines. He insisted that Eleanor join in on the reunion.

While in San Antonio, Eleanor had the opportunity to visit her graduate college roommate, who was married to a United Methodist Bishop, after the death of her first husband. Eleanor spent two nights with them enjoying their lovely home and company, as well as doing some sightseeing. It had been many years since the two had seen each other. So, after a few days and much interaction with family and friends, Eleanor was back on the plane for Des Moines.

A friend Eleanor met while living in Yokohama, Japan in 1957 later lived in Three Rivers, Michigan. They kept in touch over the years. They planned a twenty-two day trip together to the United Kingdom in 1989. Five days were spent in each of England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. Here they saw many castles, cathedrals, enjoyed the food and the entertainment. They saw much of the city and country life on guided tours that provided both early and current history of the area. The tour group was comprised of Americans from California, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Iowa, Florida, and two originally from South America as was the husband of a Chicago resident. Four were from Australia and three from Ontario,

Canada. Eleanor recalls that the beauty of the group was their interaction by eating with a different pair each evening at dinner. Eleanor and her friend often spent much time with the South American and Chicago pair.

They visited Stonehenge and the Buckingham Palace grounds where they saw the changing of the guard. In Lockness, Scotland, they looked for the monster and then went to a woolen mill in Inverness, Scotland. Eleanor arrived home from London much later than expected due to missing her plane in Detroit. She was heavy laden with tokens and the last to leave the plane because her items fell from her wheeled carrier.

In 1990, Eleanor and three of her friends joined a Marshalltown YMCA tour to Door County Wisconsin. They stayed over in Duluth to enjoy a lake dinner cruise. They dined at a fish boil and traveled to Mackinaw Island, Sault St. Marie, Michigan, and Canada. There they enjoyed an all-day trip to and fro by train and had a sack lunch at the park. Along the way they saw a play and shopped for a few interesting items. After lunch on the waterfront, Eleanor found agate stones, which she left at a shop to make into earrings and a pendant for a necklace. Their last major shopping was for jugs of cider or any other fresh produce that could endure the journey back to Iowa.

When Eleanor's first cousin passed in 1991, she assisted his brother from Houston in making arrangements and followed through when he had to return home. He was so appreciative that he gave her a train trip to visit in Houston, which Eleanor made in May 1991. They toured the parks, the medical facilities, and the restaurants. They visited the Space Center and the Gulf of Mexico. Eleanor renewed her acquaintance with his grown children and met the grandchildren. She also had the opportunity to visit her friends in San Antonio for a few days.

In 1992, Eleanor's newly retired friend, Jacquelyn Harris, and she took the "Heart of Europe" 15-day trip to seven countries. They went to The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Belgium, and Italy. Two days were spent in each country, except Belgium, which was one day. They visited the cathedral in Cologne, Germany, which brought back memories of art appreciation at Iowa State College for Eleanor. After leaving Cologne, they passed the well-known BMW headquarters. In Rotenburg there was a crowded but interesting shop of all kinds of chiming and singing clocks. There were colorful wooden German dolls. Another shop went under the street and was filled with Christmas ornaments. Near Munich was famous for the large animated striking clocks on the front of the buildings, where people gathered to watch on the hour.

They enjoyed the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, and the fabulous shops where they looked only. Transportation was walking by day and an evening tour Seine River cruise that traversed around the city. Those who sought burlesque were let off and found a cab home to the hotel. The show lasted to late into the night and Eleanor chose not to go because they had to be up early.

The one-day visit to Belgium allowed the ladies a walking tour. Their selection was some small items from the lace shop. An extensive tour of the diamond factor was enjoyed in The Netherlands, as was the guided boat tour through the city. The efficient trolley service was interesting to watch. Eleanor found the visit to Venice, Italy very different. The beautiful church, the pigeons, crossing the canal to visit the many shops, gave Eleanor and Jacquelyn a new perspective of a community living on a daily basis. The tour of the church and its history, watching glass blowing and the final product were fascinating to them.

Salzburg, Austria's fall festival was colorful. There Eleanor and Jacquelyn toured the city where they saw fountains, shops, and buildings where musicians once lived. They visited the abbey where the *Sound of Music* was filmed. Austria was mountainous and offered interesting scenery. Their delicious evening meal was followed by music and dance.

Switzerland offered an unique stage show following the dinner meal. It consisted of unusual musical horns and other instruments, as well as Swiss style clothing. The shops and scenery around Lake Lucerne were colorful. After shopping, they took a walking tour and took pictures on the famous bridge that burned. They sat and watched families gathering for a Sunday afternoon of relaxation in and around the water.

For a tour of Central and Eastern Canada, Eleanor and two others roomed together in a 1993 trip. They headed for Detroit after leaving the Marshalltown YMCA. The first stop was in Toronto, Ontario, for a visit to their needle and to view the city and see their urban renewal of old buildings in the downtown area, which was done also in Quebec with remarkable outcomes. They saw the large stadium that could be used open or closed. Next was Ottawa, Ontario where the parliament buildings are located. The interior decoration was beautiful and magnificent. They traveled the Cabot Trail and toured the Alexander G. Bell museum, who had a fascination for airplanes as well as the phone. Travel continued to New Brunswick, Quebec, and Quebec City for more exploring.

The tour of Nova Scotia was extensive and included the past military history of the fort site. Most interesting was the history about the Africville community and its original location. On Eleanor's travels, she has seen a few people of African descent and wondered about their backgrounds and history. The only place she had a good experience was in Nova Scotia. Their community of African descendents was mentioned in a paper that identified

points of interest for visitors, as well as in a book published about the community.⁴

Africville's history began in Halifax in the 1850s. The original community was demolished during urban renewal, so she saw only where the old community had been. The relocated community was off her tour path. Eleanor stated that other countries in which she traveled provided an excellent history of Caucasians. The exceptions were learning the history of people of African descent in Halifax and while traveling in Calgary, Alberta, where their local Indian history was discussed and displayed in the museum.

While traveling through the maple syrup country of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, the ladies observed that process. Many local crafts were for sale in motel lobbies made of dried apples and flowers. They traveled on to New York and viewed Niagara Falls from the Canadian side. On an adventurous narrated boat ride, they were given raincoat and hat protection while traveling on the boat to view the Falls from below. They stayed overnight and chose this chilling night to be away from their group and go to dinner. The next morning, they were on the U.S. side in New York. From there, they headed home with a lunch stop at Madison, Wisconsin. One roommate saw her daughter who taught at the University in Madison and her granddaughter.

An Alaskan cruise was the next trip planned by Eleanor and Jacquelyn in 1994. The original Marshalltown YMCA sponsored group did not have sufficient numbers. At the last moment, Eleanor went to AAA and found a good rate. It was their first cruise on the Crown Princess with an extended tour on land. They had inside cabins high enough that they could walk out on the deck. When they were not on a tour, at a movie, or involved in other activities, they watched the developments with the O.J. Simpson trial in California. There was never a dull moment. The cruise made stops at Ketchikan, Juneau, and Skagway.

They traveled from Seward, Alaska by bus to Fairbanks where they lodged at least two nights. A sightseeing tour of the historic sites, including a Chena River tour of various life styles was enjoyable. The sled dogs were demonstrated, along with Salmon cleaning, a park devoted to dwellings, making and decorating clothing, and some regional animal life. The tour was narrated with stops on the river as well as a walking tour of the park. Eleanor's greatest disappointment was not seeing a Ptarmigan bird, which she and her students studied in the Arctic Biome in science class. They saw all other kinds of life typical of that region and had a delicious outdoor meal in the evening.

From Fairbanks, they took the train to Denali Park, midway between Fairbanks and Anchorage. The park tour was disappointing, but the scenery of Mt. McKinley was lovely when the clouds lifted. During an all day tour, they found no more than five different animals. Their trip from Fairbanks with the park stop to Anchorage was a slow one. They saw much plant life, but little animal life. There was more exploration and sightseeing before they flew from Anchorage. to Seattle, and then home to Des Moines.

Eleanor and Jacquelyn took a Hawaiian cruise in 1995. They spent three days in Honolulu, then cruised to the islands of Kona, Kauai, Maui, and Hilo. Although they never saw any whales while in Alaska, they saw many on this trip. They also visited the memorial at Pearl Harbor, as well as taking local tours, sightseeing, and visiting exhibitions about the history of the plant and animal life and learning about the customs.

Another memorable trip for Eleanor and Jacquelyn was in 1997 when they visited Israel and Egypt. They enjoyed learning the Bible history and visiting sites such as Tiberius, Jerusalem, Cana, Nazareth, Capurnam, Masada, and many more. Their first hotel overlooked the Sea of Galilee. They took a boat excursion, which had a sermon given by Bishop Jordan

from the Iowa United Methodist Jurisdiction. At the Dead Sea, Jacque walked in the water while Eleanor watched. There was a sermon on the steps of the River Jordan and all were baptized by sprinkling from the river.

After being in Israel for a week, they left for Egypt. There were two busloads of tourists with one traveling behind the other. The second bus, which Eleanor and Jacque were on, slid into the first bus on a hill. There was some delay while waiting for the local police and the tourists stood around and visited for two hours until new buses were secured. Everyone was processed in Eilat, Israel for the walk through to Egyptian territory where they boarded another bus with a new narrator. From there, they traveled under the Suez Canal and through the Sinai territory.

Their first motel in Egypt was beautiful, but they had no hot water in their room and exchanged rooms. They were cautious of eating raw vegetables or fruit with skins, except bananas, in Egypt. Daytime visits were made to the Pyramids of Giza and Sakkara. At night, they returned to the Egyptian cultural center for a narrated laser show of the Giza Pyramids and Sphinx. Leaving early in the morning, they saw Sadat's tomb on their way to visit the famous museum in Cairo. The shops that they found the most fun were those with papyrus painting demonstration. Children were hand weaving rugs and welcomed the chewing gum they were given. While in Cairo, they took a Felucca ride on the Nile River. The second location where Eleanor and Jacque stayed was in Nueba, Egypt in a resort-type motel. The beach was sandy and the mountains of Saudi Arabia could be seen from their location.

The last trip that Eleanor took with her friend Jacquelyn was a Royal Caribbean Panama Canal cruise in 1999. They flew from Des Moines to Dallas to Acapulco, Mexico

where they identified their luggage before boarding the ship. After resting for several hours, they arrived at their first stop, Costa Rica. There was entertainment, lecture, and a delicious meal with local music. They watched the tree-climbing animals, the three-toed sloth carry their young and lodge in a tree. A shop with coffee and other keepsakes had such good coffee that Eleanor sent back for more. A day was spent at the Canal Zone going through the locks. Stops were made at Curacao, Aruba, and St. Thomas VI where the pastel colored houses were prominent and different than they were used to seeing in the U.S. They saw Iguanas climbing the trees in St. Thomas and the steep elevation gave them a beautiful view of the bay. There were many shops on each island that were fun for them to visit, along with the beautiful scenery. Each tour provided the history of the people and the economic conditions.

Beautiful artwork was onboard the ship. Even though the ship's food was beautiful to look at, it was not as tasty as that on their Hawaiian Cruise. The theatre and evening shows were excellent. The Calypso band was onboard much of the time to entertain at least two times each day near the pool and by the entrance of the buffet meal that was served. On each island they took a tour, except on Puerto Rico, where there was not enough time before boarding their plane for home.

From Puerto Rico they flew to Chicago and then home to Des Moines. When they deplaned, Eleanor's friend Jacque said that she could not keep up with her. Jacque's illness took hold then and she struggled from March 1999 through January 28, 2000 until her death. She was Eleanor's dear and trusted friend. Since Jacque's passing, Eleanor's travel has been mostly one-day trips with the Des Moines Parks and Recreation. These informative trips are in Iowa and sometimes as far as Illinois and Missouri. They travel by bus and most often

combine a lunch or dinner with a cultural event. One such 2001 trip was to The Creamery Theatre at the Amanas, where they saw a play and had a luncheon at the Ox Yoke Inn. In 2001, Eleanor traveled with the group to Rockford, Illinois to the Rockville Circa 21 Theatre where they had a luncheon and saw a play. Other trips have included business, buffalo farming, a Broadway production of *Les Miserables*, plays, and of course, shopping.

Eleanor missed several one-day trips in 1999 due to the poor health of her first cousin living in Chicago. She spent many weeks placing first her cousin's husband in a nursing home and three months later, placing her cousin in the nursing home. Eleanor took on the responsibility of dismantling their home and selling it. It was a heart wrenching experience for Eleanor because she and her cousin are only children.

Eleanor's more recent excursions took her to the national Delta Sigma Theta convention in Chicago in 2000. In 2001, Eleanor accompanied friends on a trip to New York—a city that she has visited eight times to date, as well as when she studied at Teachers College, Columbia University to earn her masters degree. While in New York in 2001, Eleanor saw the Broadway plays, *The Lion King*, *Aida*, and *The Full Monty*. Also, as previously noted, Eleanor attended the regional Delta Sigma Theta convention with her daughter in Kansas City. From her travels beginning in 1941 through the present, Eleanor has been on three continents and in every state except four and Washington, D.C.

St. Paul A.M.E.

Eleanor's involvement with her church has been and remains central in her life. In addition to regular Sunday services, she attends Saturday Church the third Saturday of every month and attends a Bible study on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. In the St. Paul dining room,

Eleanor is active in preparing dinners for family members following funeral services. She frequents the same kitchen where she assists in preparing meals for the homeless in her community.

Although not a direct involvement with her church, for many years Eleanor has sponsored a child with World Vision. Dansoa Sandra living in Ghana is the young lady supported by Eleanor through the Kwahu Area Development Program. Eleanor receives an annual progress report that tells Dansoa's class/grade, household chores, health, hobbies, academic performance and community projects in agriculture and spiritual nurture. The report also features a photograph of Dansoa and details how the sponsorship affects the life of the sponsored child.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Fairly recently, Eleanor reached the conclusion that she is a recipe addict. When one of the four long bookshelves in her kitchen that holds all of her recipes came loose and required repair, she found herself emptying the shelves of all the books. When she looked around at all of her recipe books, she reached her newfound conclusion.

Eleanor is a life member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She has served on the executive board of the Iowa NAACP for many years and assisted in increasing its membership during the 1980s.

Eleanor often entertains visitors, friends, and relatives from out of town in her home. Her home is the center of holiday events for her family where her grandchildren enjoy fixing s'mores over the fireplace and dining on delectable holiday meals.

Amidst her numerous activities, Eleanor also enjoys reading. Eleanor said that it has gotten to the point when people ask her, “What are you doing now?” and she has to take time to count her many activities. She confessed that her energy does run out, however, I believe that Eleanor outdistances many individuals, in any age group, with her energy and her endeavors. Likely a part of Eleanor’s energy comes from the fact that she enjoys her activities, in combination with these things holding a great deal of meaning for her. They are part of her life, just as Eleanor takes part in life, as well as enriching and giving to the lives of others.

MOTTOES AND PHILOSOPHIES

Eleanor recalls some words of wisdom from her mother: “Be prepared.” by which she meant to be prepared to take care of yourself, and be prepared for the possibility of opportunities. Another of her mother’s sayings was, “Keep putting one foot in front of the other and one can reach the goal.” And from her mother’s mother-in-law, Eleanor remembers: “You never know whose foot you will have to kiss.”

Eleanor’s own mottoes and philosophies that have guided her through life include:

Learn to look out for yourself because no one else will.

Learn to put up with people or situations because there will be two more like it or worse.

Respect the temple that God gave me and keep it the very best that I can spiritually, mentally, and physically.

Another one of Eleanor’s philosophies that she told her students when she was teaching was.

“Think what you want to, but keep it to yourself.” In her later years, Eleanor found that

“This too will pass,” is calming in times of stressful situations. And, finally, another calming philosophy of Eleanor’s is, “Take it to the Lord and leave it there.”

Service, faith, education, and self empowerment are continuing threads woven throughout Eleanor’s life. She is a woman possessing great dignity and a quiet resolve and strength. Negative words do not pass from her lips. As her life and endeavors indicate, Eleanor takes control of her life and concentrates on the positive while she makes the most of her opportunities. In her quiet determination, she was instrumental in breaking down barriers for women and for her race—during her undergraduate years at ISC in segregated social activities and housing; in braving the Jim Crow South that provided her with the experience she needed to teach at Sumner High School and to provide racial uplift for young Blacks through education; through taking Des Moines educators to task in their failure to recognize the achievements of Black high school graduates; through being a devoted teacher and providing meaningful and enriching learning experiences for her students; in her ongoing service to her church and her community; in providing a stable home and education for her children; and in being a role model for her children, her grandchildren, and for all of us whose goal is to live a meaningful life to its fullest while enriching not only our own life, but the lives of all we have the opportunity to touch.

Notes for Chapter 7

¹ Paula Giddings, 1988, has chronicled Delta Sigma Theta's origins and development in her book, *In Search of Sisterhood: Delta Sigma Theta and the Challenge of the Black Sorority Movement*. New York: Morrow and Company. Eleanor notes that there are some errors in the book regarding the history of the Des Moines Chapter.

² At the time Eleanor was Delta Sigma Theta President for the Greater Kansas City Chapter, the Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas Chapters were represented jointly as the Greater Kansas City Chapter.

³ The wording "former World Trade Center," is used because this writing follows closely the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States that leveled both World Trade Towers.

⁴ Africville Genealogy Society, Ed., 1992, with contributions by Donald Clairmont, Stephen Kimber, Bridglal Pachai and Charles Saunders. *The Spirit of Africville*. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Formac Publishing Company Limited.



The reception line at Eleanor and Jean's wedding, May 30, 1954. The bridesmaids are wearing dresses sewn by Eleanor.



Eleanor, front, wearing her bridal dress sewn by her Aunt Georgine Morris, in the background, as her gift to Eleanor.



Eleanor's bridesmaids wearing the dresses sewn by Eleanor.



Eleanor's wedding photo on the society page of an unidentified issue of *The Bystander*, likely circa June 1954.

**Miss Eleanor R. Powell Becomes Bride
Of Mr. Jean N. Archer In Cathedral Ceremonies**



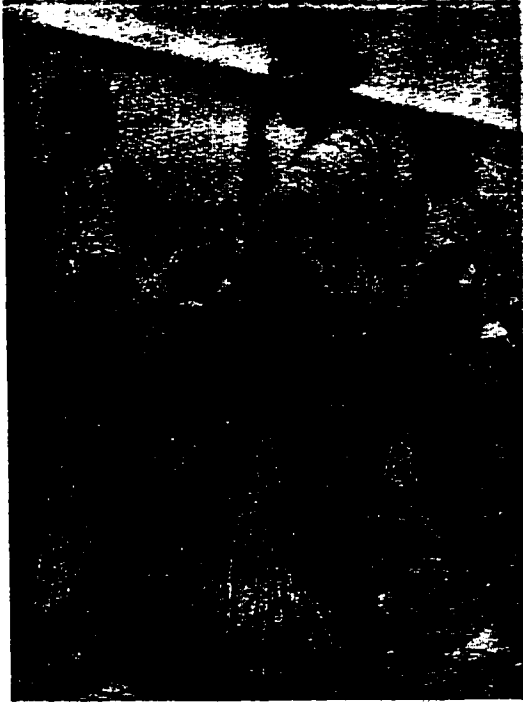
Eleanor and Jean N. Archer exchanging their wedding vows on May 30, 1954. From the society page of an unidentified issue of *The Bystander*, likely circa June 1954.



Eleanor's plane ticket to Japan, dated 26 April 1957.



Left: Eleanor; Center: Yolaine Archer, age 2 years; Right: Hulda Forteau in front of Eleanor and Jean's home in Japan, 1957.



CHATAN DISTRICT dancers were judged one of the best teams attending.

Clipping from an unidentified Army base newspaper depicting the Obon Celebration, a festival honoring the dead, that Eleanor and Yolaine attended while living in Japan in 1957.

the Obon Dance



YUKATA-CLAB MISS dances inside the huge circle of the festival.

SAS Photos By
L/SGT. PITE MGR

Clipping from an unidentified Army base newspaper depicting the Obon Celebration, a festival honoring the dead, that Eleanor and Yolaine attended while living in Japan in 1957.



Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer pictured with Yolaine and Jan visiting Jean's homeland in Haiti, 1960.



Left to right: Jean, Jan, Yolaine, and Eleanor Archer while visiting Jean's homeland of Haiti in 1960.



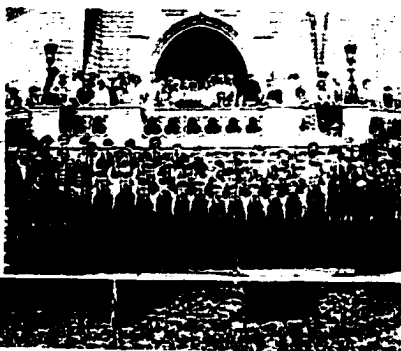
Eleanor participating in the National Science Foundation six-week course offered through Iowa State College during the summer of 1962. They visited places in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

Bell Ringers and Friends

WITH the new season of the Bell Ringers and Friends...
 The group will be...
 at night.

AT 10:00 of their concert at...
 the...
 The...
 at night.

Continued on Page 200



Yolaine Archer pictured with the Choral Belles while singing at Disneyland in Orlando, Florida in a May 28, 1972 issue of *The Des Moines Register*.



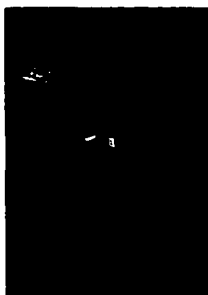
Jan Archer, fourth seat back, on the bus with the Bell Ringers ready for a trip. Greg Williams is in the second seat back.



Jan Archer pictured with the Boys Choir during a performance.



Yolaine Augusta Archer's graduation from Roosevelt High School in 1973. The ceremony was held at Vet's Auditorium in Des Moines.



Yolaine graduating from Drake University, Des Moines, with her masters degree May 24, 1984.



Eleanor with her son, Jan Gerard Archer, at his graduation from Iowa State University, B.S. degree. Ames, May 17, 1985.



Left to right: Eleanor, son Jan, daughter Yolaine, and son-in-law, Steve Wade. Jan's ISU undergraduate graduation in Ames, May 17, 1985.



Boys in homemaking class made ponchos. Modeling them are L. to R. Steve S., David S., Dale G., Terry A., and Raymond B.

Boys in Eleanor's all-boy ninth grade homemaking class at Amos Hiatt. The boys are modeling ponchos that they made in the class.



Ninth grade boys modeling shirts that they made in Eleanor's class at Amos Hiatt.

BOYS TAKE ECONOMICS CLASS
By [illegible]

The new boys' home economics class at Hiatt meets everyday, third period in room 12 with Mrs. Archer.

Up to now the main projects of the class have been making shirts, coffee case and aprons. Right now the class is studying nutrition and how to plan better meals. Later in the second semester, they will move into room 222 for sewing.

The class was started because there was a large amount of interest in the different grades. Here there is only time for one class, it was offered only to the ninth grade boys first. Right now there are fourteen boys in the class. All of them are ninth graders except Billy Jackson who is in the eighth grade.

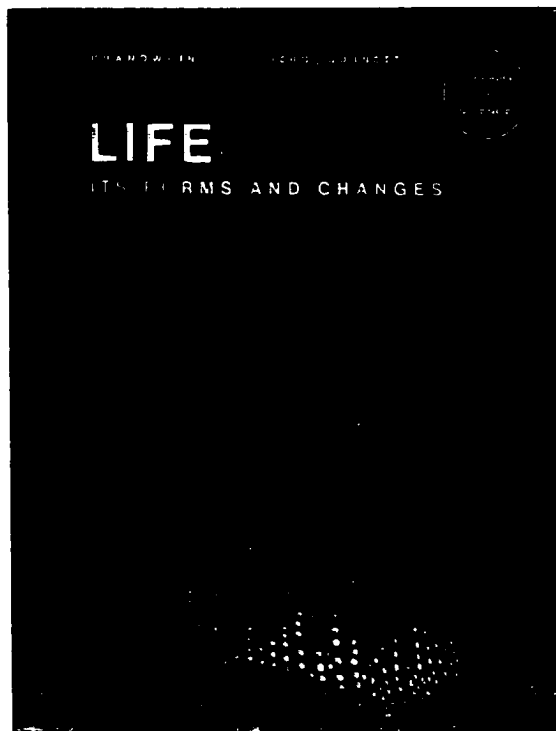
The fourteen boys enrolled in this class are Steve Johnson, Billy Jackson, Terry Baker, Arnold Lyle, David Johnson, Dennis Ginnister, Verle Thomas, Skille Larson, Ray Dimer, Mickey Hardacker, Kenneth Coleman, Dennis Anderson, Dale Hodgard and Raymond Black.

When Mrs. Archer was asked what she thought of the class, she said that the boys could work very well, but some of them acted very immature and held back the rest of the class. She also said the boys performed the first project best in all of her classes. They were best in both efficiency and time management.

This is the first class of its type at Amos Hiatt and as far as Mrs. Archer knows, it is one of the few in the city.



A clipping from the *Hiatt Herald* describing Eleanor's innovative all-boys homemaking class.



The life sciences book used by Eleanor when she taught at Hiatt.

The new Iowa Bystander

Iowa's Only Black Weekly Newspaper - Serving Readers Since 1884

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1979 Des Moines, Iowa Thursday, October 14, 1979

St. Paul AME Choir - The Day On The Hill

In Greater Des Moines, the St. Paul AME Choir sang to Pope John Paul II on his visit to the city. The choir, which has been singing for over 100 years, performed in the presence of the Pope and his entourage. The choir members were dressed in traditional black and white attire. The performance was a highlight of the Pope's visit to Des Moines. The choir's music was a beautiful blend of traditional and contemporary styles. The Pope and his entourage were seated in the front of the church, and the choir performed in the sanctuary. The performance was a memorable event for all who were present. The choir's music was a beautiful tribute to the Pope and his visit to the city. The choir's performance was a highlight of the Pope's visit to Des Moines. The choir's music was a beautiful blend of traditional and contemporary styles. The Pope and his entourage were seated in the front of the church, and the choir performed in the sanctuary. The performance was a memorable event for all who were present. The choir's music was a beautiful tribute to the Pope and his visit to the city.



Pope John Paul II (center) with St. Paul AME Choir members in front of the church in Des Moines, Iowa, Oct. 14, 1979.

















St. Paul AME Celebrates With Pope John Paul II



A highlight for Eleanor in 1979—seeing Pope John Paul II on his visit October 14, 1979, in Des Moines. Clipping from the Thursday, October 14, 1979 issue of *The New Iowa Bystander*.

Eleanor is pictured with other St. Paul A.M.E. Choir members who sang at Living History Farms prior to Pope John Paul II's late arrival in Des Moines, Thursday, October 14, 1979. Clipping from the Thursday, October 14, 1979 issue of *The New Iowa Bystander*.

Y'all Come

B					
I					
V					
G					
O					

SNACK FOOD BINGO

Directions For The Student

The purpose of the game is to win who can find Bingo first by placing an X through pictures that make a vertical, horizontal or diagonal line in the game board. First caller do not read.

Some examples may be correct in each picture. The rule of the game is to win a vertical, horizontal or diagonal line in "Food Bingo". First, draw the picture corresponding to each number in the board and then choose to read to either the top, left, right, or bottom. Do not change a number from one track to another after the first selection has been read.

If you have filled in all the boxes, you have a particular question word the question and read for the next. If the answer is the same as the first Bingo.

The Snack Food Bingo game that Eleanor made for her students.

ON WEDNESDAY,
MAY 19

THE CALLANAN FACULTY IS HONORING
ELEANOR ARCHER

FOR HER YEARS OF SERVICE IN TEACHING.

WE WANT TO INVITE THE WORKING TEACHERS TO BE PRESENT. THE TEA WILL
BE FROM 2:30 - 4:00 P.M. IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY.

WE HOPE YOU CAN ATTEND.

ELEANOR ARCHER TO BE HONORED AT RECEPTION

The Adult Action Group and staff of Callanan Junior High School will honor Eleanor Archer at a retirement reception 2:30-4:30 p.m., May 19 in the school library. Friends and associates are invited.



Announcement for Eleanor's retirement reception at Callanan, 1982.

CALLANAN TIMES

Issue 4

MARCH, 1982

Feature Page

G.M.T.A.M. MRS. ARCHER

I'm sure you all know Mrs. Archer, our newest grade 2 teacher, and sister from New Zealand.

Mrs. Archer was a primary teacher in the village of Dunedin, New Zealand, for 12 years. She came to the United States in 1978 and the second year at Paton Callan in Magnolia, Georgia. The two years of experience made it possible to teach in Kansas City, Kansas - one year at Northwest Junior High School and nine years at Sumner High School. Now if her years teaching in New Zealand were added that would make 21 years at Sumner High School.

Mrs. Archer has decided to take an early retirement and get over 8 & 9, then maybe start traveling again.

"Quality has changed," remarked Mrs. Archer, "and not necessarily just the quantity of Callanans." Students in the late 1970's tended to have more discipline problems and Mrs. Archer says she is seeing a steady improvement.

When asked what she hopes the students will learn from what she's taught, Mrs. Archer said she hopes they gain a clearer knowledge of geography, Child Care, and Health related concepts.

In thank you, Mrs. Archer, for the few years of your life you have devoted to teaching at Callanan Junior High.

—Debbie Appleby
—Debbie Appleby

March 1982 feature article in the *Callanan Times* about Eleanor and her retirement.

FAREWELL DEAR CALLANAN

If you come here and fall to visit your favorite teachers you may be surprised. Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Archer, and possibly Mrs. Copper won't be here.

Mrs. Murphy is going to be at St. Joseph's Catholic Learning English and reading. She has been going to St. Joe for the last three years and had been there another two years after graduating from high school. She will graduate this year and get her B.S. (Bachelor of Science). She is not a P.E. major, just a P.E. minor, and she applied that English to her type of thing.

Mrs. Copper has been laid off and hasn't been promised yet. This is her second time the school laid off and she was good faculty about being laid off again. Mrs. Murphy had promised with her previous ability that Mrs. Copper will return.

There is also one retirement at Callanan this year. Mrs. Archer. After 9 years of teaching, 22 in the United States at Callanan, Mrs. Archer is going to retire. She might be going to teach in the States. She will go back to the Gap and Delta program at the U.S. She also said she is going to do a little traveling. The reason for her "retirement" is that she is tired and wants a "vacation."

For all the 7th graders who are going to "goodwill" next year, you will be able to see Mrs. Murphy. Possibly if you come back to Mrs. Copper will be here. Mrs. Murphy will be here. Mrs. Copper will be here. You might see Mrs. Murphy as one of the volunteers at a wedding. We all wish you the best of luck in your new adventures and life's changes.
By: Chad Kelly

The Second Ecumenical Women's Conference is here. In March, 1983, the New York Ecumenical Women's Conference invited the New York Ecumenical Women's Conference to host the Second Ecumenical Women's Conference. The conference will be held in the New York State Thruway Authority Convention Center in Albany, New York, from September 16 and 17, 1983. The conference will be held in the New York State Thruway Authority Convention Center in Albany, New York, from September 16 and 17, 1983. The conference will be held in the New York State Thruway Authority Convention Center in Albany, New York, from September 16 and 17, 1983.

Women and Spirituality
The Second Ecumenical Women's Conference is here. In March, 1983, the New York Ecumenical Women's Conference invited the New York Ecumenical Women's Conference to host the Second Ecumenical Women's Conference. The conference will be held in the New York State Thruway Authority Convention Center in Albany, New York, from September 16 and 17, 1983. The conference will be held in the New York State Thruway Authority Convention Center in Albany, New York, from September 16 and 17, 1983. The conference will be held in the New York State Thruway Authority Convention Center in Albany, New York, from September 16 and 17, 1983.



Clarity Living
Wholeness Peace

September 16-17, 1983
Albany, New York

MEMBERS	MEMBERS	MEMBERS
... [List of names and roles]	... [List of names and roles]	... [List of names and roles]

Eleanor's program from the Second Ecumenical Women's Conference held September 16 and 17, 1983 at Scheman Center, Iowa State University, Ames. This was an interdenominational conference for which Eleanor was on the Planning Committee.

Inside page of Eleanor's program from the Second Ecumenical Women's Conference held September 16 and 17, 1983 at Scheman Center, Iowa State University, Ames. This was an interdenominational conference for which Eleanor was on the Planning Committee.

ISEA honors ^{June 20} four teachers ¹⁹⁸⁴

Life memberships in the Iowa State Education Association have been granted to four area teachers.

They are: Eleanor Archer of 608 Twenty-sixth St., teacher for 34 years in various Iowa school districts, 22 years in Des Moines Public Schools; Doris Stukenberg of 1813 Forty-fifth St., elementary teacher for 38 years, 27 years in Des Moines Public Schools; Irvia H. Wildman of 1126 Cummins Parkway, industrial arts and driver instruction teacher for over 27 years, 25 years in the Des Moines Public Schools; and Maxine Koun of 901 Twelfth St., elementary teacher for 44 years, 36 years in the Des Moines Public Schools.



Unidentified June 20, 1984 newspaper clipping, likely from *The Des Moines Register*, honoring Eleanor with a life membership in the Iowa State Education Association.

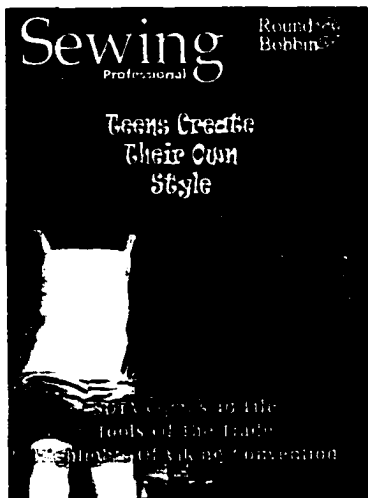
Eleanor in her home, 1989, preparing to attend a friend's family reunion.



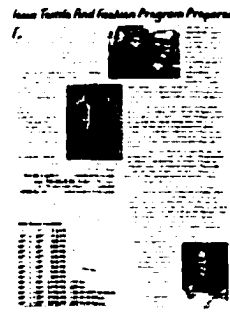
Eleanor's granddaughter, Adrienne, pictured modeling in the October 5, 1998 edition of *The Des Moines Register*.



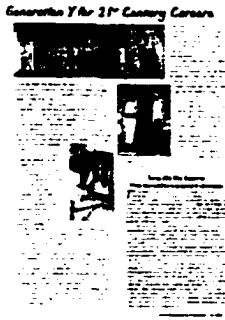
Eleanor's granddaughter, Adrienne, pictured modeling in the October 5, 1998 edition of *The Des Moines Register*.



On the Right: Eleanor's granddaughter, Adrienne, on the July 2000 cover of *Round Bobbin, Sewing Professional*.



The article inside the *Round Bobbin, Sewing Professional*, July 2000, p. 4, describing Adrienne's program at Central Campus in Des Moines.



The second page of the article inside the *Round Bobbin, Sewing Professional*, July 2000, p. 5, describing Adrienne's program at Central Campus in Des Moines.



Eleanor at the Iowa Historical Building in Des Moines, June 2001. She is looking at the picture of her family that is with the Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display.



Eleanor at the Iowa Historical Building in Des Moines, June 2001, when we visited Patten's Neighborhood: Memories of the Center Street Community display.



Eleanor is modeling a cream satin dress and lavender shawl with a lace ruffle that she made. The occasion was a fund raising style show held at the Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City, Missouri circa 1950, while she was a teacher at Sumner High School in Kansas City, Kansas.

Conclusion

Eleanor's life is rich with experiences. Born and raised in Iowa, she grew up in a state that professed equality and opportunity but whose practices and social structure remained, for the most part, racist. These social, legal, economic, and political structures dictated the economic status and professional careers open to Black Iowans. Just as Eleanor's Grandfather Payton was impacted by the Davis-Bacon Act of 1931, as her cousin's husband, Clifford Stafford, was impacted by the impossibility of finding employment in his higher education field of languages, and as her stepfather, Clyde Morris, was impacted in his employment by his race, so too was Eleanor impacted in her career path. Eleanor's dream and goal was to enter the textiles and clothing profession, either in costume design, pattern making, or textile testing. Shortly following the completion of her program of study at Iowa State College, and after attending her first Delta Sigma Theta convention in 1941, she realized that her future career plans were dictated by her race and gender. She never wanted or planned to become a schoolteacher. However, it became evident that this was one of only a few career options available to her at that time. Her college graduation coincided with a time in U.S. and Iowa history when the only employment open to many Black women was that of providing domestic service. It is a time when society and the patriarchy dictated the professions that were "appropriate and suitable" for all women. But, White women had the option of becoming teachers in Iowa, whereas Eleanor did not. Thus, her options within the restricted professional sphere open to her necessitated that she venture into the Jim Crow South to secure the teaching experience that she needed to make her a viable and eligible candidate to apply for a teaching position at the all Black Sumner High School in Kansas City, Kansas.

COUNTER-STORY

An outsider, looking in on Eleanor's life would see a life lived with self-determination, strength, dignity, religious conviction, service, and grace. Eleanor completed her education beyond a masters degree and taught school for many years. She raised her children and provided care for her grandchildren during their early years. Eleanor is active in her community. She owns her own home. In a culture obsessed by the accumulation of wealth and material possessions, Eleanor's life may represent the fulfillment of the "American Dream" to many onlookers. And, without any doubt, Eleanor's life is a story of success. Perspectives take on a new dimension when the question is posed, "What if?" What if Eleanor's life was not restricted by her race and gender? What if Eleanor had been afforded the promise of equality and opportunity that are the professed cornerstones of America and been able to pursue her professional passion? What course would Eleanor's life have taken if America's promise was fulfilled? What obstacles would Eleanor have faced and overcome to achieve her goals if her playing field were level with that afforded to Whites? These questions in no way diminish Eleanor's life and accomplishments, but they do give pause for thoughtful consideration to the rich potential for the lives and contributions that have been and continue to be squelched through racist practices. What brilliance is clouded and silenced into a course predetermined by race and gender in U.S. culture and society?

Throughout Eleanor's recollections in her biography, her references to instances of racism that she experienced are not the focus of her life, nor are they the focus of her narrative. Rather, Eleanor's biography represents numerous aspects of Black Feminist Thought.¹ Central to BFT is bringing voice and scholarship to the experiences of Black

women. In locating and reclaiming the lives of Black women, the intellectual tradition involves examining the lives and ideas of women who were not previously considered intellectuals by academic institutions. This is essential in clarifying Black women's standpoint. Black women's standpoint is at the core of BFT, which is an interpretation of Black women's experiences and ideas by those who participate in them. Through Eleanor's biography, she establishes a reflective account of her experiences and ideas, which are supported by the theories and tenets central to BFT. Failure of scholars to capture these nontraditional accounts as represented in Eleanor's biography, results in losing the intellectual tradition of Black women, which then become lost, remain unknown, and provide no basis for credence in their experiences or the complex experiences steeped in the context of racism that ultimately frames the lives, thoughts, and actions of Black women. In bringing experiences such as Eleanor's into view, a world is revealed "in which behavior is a statement of philosophy and in which a vibrant, both/and, scholar/activist tradition remains intact." "A Black woman's standpoint . . . is rooted in the everyday experiences of African-American women."²

Inherent in locating and revealing the traditions of Black women not previously considered intellectuals, the tradition is situated in truth-telling stories, which often take the form of a biography or an autobiography. Mitchell and Lewter describe this narrative method:

Bible tales are often told for the wisdom they express about everyday life, so their interpretation involves no need for scientific historical verification. The narrative method requires that the story be told, not torn apart in analysis, and trusted as core belief, not "admired as science."³

Stories of Black women's lives fulfill multiple purposes. "What I have learned . . . is that the faith in progress our forebears taught was not only in terms of our status in society, but in our ability to gain increasing control of our own lives."⁴ "This kind of truth-telling, especially by and about Black women, can be risky business because our lives are often devalued and our voices periodically silenced."⁵ Historically, the voices of Black women have been silenced through oppression and marginalization. Nevertheless, they survive and endure through their collectivity and self-determination while maintaining a sense of their purpose and worth for themselves, their families, and their race.⁶ "If there is one theme that can emerge . . . it is the strength, racial pride and sense of community of black women."⁷ In concert with telling the stories of Black women's experiences, there also emerges the role that church, spirituality, and community play in how their lives are lived and the impact that their activities have on the lives of their children, their community, and their race.

Eleanor's personal philosophies, learn to look out for yourself because no one else will; learn to put up with people or situations because there will be two more like it or worse, respect the temple that God gave me and keep it the very best that I can spiritually, mentally, and physically; think what you want to, but keep it to yourself; and take it to the Lord and leave it there, reflect her life experiences and parallel the ideas that are central to BFT, for example, self-determination, activism, church and community, and racial uplift through education. Even though Eleanor grew up in a strong and supportive family and community in Des Moines where her church played an important and influential role, her graduation from college opened her eyes to the fact that even with a degree in higher education, a hegemonic society and culture was not interested in her future or her welfare. She realized that she would have to exercise considerable self-determination to reach her goal of teaching

at Sumner High School, even if it meant entering the Jim Crow South in spite of the grave reservations for her well being that were expressed by her family. Eleanor continued looking out for herself and demonstrated self-determination in her desire to establish a stable home for herself and her children when she returned to her native Des Moines community when teaching positions were offered to at least a few Black women and men in that school system during that time period. Jean's difficulty in securing meaningful professional employment required frequent relocation on his part. Because a stable home of her own was one of Eleanor's priorities for herself and her children, as was securing and keeping stable employment that offered a retirement program, Eleanor made a self-determined decision to remain in Des Moines rather than to uproot herself and her children to follow Jean in his employment assignments.

In her philosophy of learning to put up with people or situations because there will be two more like it or worse, Eleanor takes a realistic approach to her life. Her experiences as an undergraduate student exposed her to the pervasive racist views that were held by faculty members and local citizens in the Iowa State College community, and that reflected the larger society. At the same time, Eleanor does not focus on those negative people and experiences, but rather found strength and resolve in those who generated from a humanistic perspective, such as Dean Helser and Miss Roberts. Eleanor did not allow the segregated housing practices to deter her in her quest to find suitable housing.

It was through some of her experiences that Eleanor demonstrates her activism for herself and her race. For example, in her first job working for the NYA in Kansas City, Missouri, Eleanor encountered unfair practices and took the initiative, along with her friend, Eva Dixon, to bring it to the attention of the supervisor. When Eleanor was teaching at

Amos Hiatt Junior High School in Des Moines, she did not stand by when the accomplishments of Black graduates from Des Moines East High School were slandered. Rather, she researched and provided a letter that detailed numerous graduates and their successful careers after their graduation from Des Moines East High School. She participated in workshops during the 1960s Civil Rights era to build community and communication within the Des Moines school system. In her middle school teaching, Eleanor recognized the paucity of literature representative of Black students and sought out an active solution to resolve the deficiency. She not only participated in, but was a leader and presenter in workshops for her school system when the State of Iowa began its focus to infuse multicultural education in its curriculum statewide.

In respecting the temple that God gave her and keeping it the very best that she can spiritually, mentally, and physically, Eleanor established a routine of physical activity and fitness and continues to practice it to this day. This philosophy further depicts Eleanor's spirituality and her dedication to and involvement with her church and community. Eleanor has provided service to her church and community throughout her lifetime, as evidenced in her numerous previous and current activities and involvement. Her philosophy of taking things to the Lord and leaving them there, is indicative of the strength and conviction of her faith, which is central to her life. Her membership in Delta Sigma Theta since the age of 19 further emphasizes Eleanor's focus on and dedicated service to her community, peers, and race. Many of her activities with her sorority are educational endeavors to build community, harmony, and awareness within the community at large. As part of her activities and involvement with the City of Des Moines Neighborhood Housing Services and her own neighborhood group, Eleanor provides education about home ownership, which indicates her

dedication to securing fair housing for all members in her community. It further reflects the important role that her own home as a child and as an adult and parent represented to her in her life. As a life member of the NAACP, Eleanor assisted in adding to and increasing the membership in her local chapter during the 1980s. This is a further extension of her activism for the uplift of her race. Her service models a humanistic and caring woman who puts her thoughts, beliefs, and ideals into action in the ongoing pursuit of social justice.

Eleanor passed to her students her philosophy of thinking what you want but keeping it to yourself. As she likely learned from her mother-in-law's motto of, you never know whose foot you are going to have to kiss, thoughtless actions or harsh words may close the door to future opportunities, community building, or other avenues that make keeping your thoughts to yourself both a form of self-preservation and preserving future opportunities. It further supports the idea of choosing one's battles that will effect and contribute to the most positive outcome and greatest change. Eleanor has learned through her life experiences that adverse situations do pass. Sustaining this conviction are her deep religious beliefs, her spirituality, and her sense of purpose in life. As such, Eleanor's life is rich and fluid with examples that represent the core beliefs and ideas of Black Feminist Thought.

In addition to representing the core beliefs of BFT, Eleanor's life experiences and biography are a platform that exemplify the tenets of Critical Race Theory. A major intersection of BFT and CRT occurs within the realm of narrative and storytelling. The perspectival or perspectivist approach advanced through BFT and CRT scholarship emphasizes examining the personal experiences of individuals in what is termed "a call to context."⁸ Common venues for giving voice to oppressed groups through CRT storytelling scholarship are biography and autobiography, which reveal counter-stories that "expose the

false necessity and unintentional irony of much current civil rights law and scholarship.”⁹ In CRT, “social reality is constructed by the creation and exchange of stories about individual situations (Bell, 1989; Matsuda, 1989; P.J. Williams, 1991). Much of the CRT literature tacks between situated narrative and more sweeping analysis of the law.”¹⁰ Four reasons are identified by Tate for the centrality of storytelling in CRT:

- (1) to address the manner in which political and moral analysis is conducted in traditional legal scholarship. (Delgado, 1989, 1990)
- (2) the potential of story to change mind-set (Delgado, 1989). Most oppression does not seem like oppression to the oppressor (Lawrence, 1978).¹¹ The dominant group of society justifies its position with stock stories (Delgado, 1989, 1990, R. A. Williams, 1989). These stock stories construct realities in ways that legitimize power and position. Stories by people of color can counter the stories of the oppressor.
- (3) the role story telling can play in community building. Stories help to build consensus, a common culture of shared understandings, and a more vital ethics.
- (4) to help ensure the psychic preservation of marginalized groups. A factor contributing to the demoralization of members of out-groups is self-condemnation. People of color may internalize the stock stories that various groups of society promote to maintain their influence (Crenshaw, 1988). Historically, people of color have used story telling to heal wounds caused by racial discrimination. . . . the story of one’s condition leads to greater insight into how one came to be oppressed. Moreover, Bell (1987) argued that this allows the oppressed to stop inflicting mental violence on themselves.¹²

Ultimately, these counter-stories reinterpret the stories perpetrated by the dominant view, which has dictated whose knowledge is real knowledge and whose knowledge is valid for centuries. Shortcomings in the dominant view become revealed through telling counter-stories and lead to the goal of achieving the possibilities for human freedom, equality, and social justice. Thus, Eleanor’s biography represents a counter-story when situated within the dual contexts of CRT and BFT, in which storytelling is a foundational element.

Briefly defined, the three main tenets of CRT are (1) that racism in the United States is so embedded and widespread that it appears normal in U.S. society and culture; (2) the

principle of interest-convergence—that advances for Blacks and people of color are achieved only when the interests of Whites are served; and (3) that counter-stories and narratives, often in the form of biography and autobiography, is the method used to reveal the truth of the experiences of oppressed groups that debunk the myths about Blacks and people of color, which are promoted by the dominant view. One more important aspect of CRT is that interest-convergence is commonly guaranteed through legislation, the courts, and through laws that are passed, dating to the Constitution of the United States whose overriding interest was controlled by powerful White males through protection of their right to property. By sharing experiences in Eleanor's life through her biographical counter-story, the pervasiveness of racism throughout her life is revealed.

As outlined in the Introduction, even though the territory and State of Iowa were considered free, racism was the norm. This was ensured through the passage of laws and legislation that were exclusionary specifically to Blacks. In spite of this, Iowa appeared friendlier, safer, and to provide more opportunity to Blacks than did many other territories and states. Even with the passage of later laws and enactment of legislation that gave the appearance of employment, housing, and educational opportunity, actual practice remained prejudicial, discriminatory, and racist. Eleanor's grandparents, stepfather, and mother managed to build a life, buy a home, and educate their children in spite of only the semi-skilled and unskilled occupations that were available to them in Des Moines. The KKK was active in Des Moines and marched through downtown Des Moines in 1926. At one time, the KKK headquarters was housed downstairs from the office of Eleanor's uncle, activist, *Bystander* publisher, and attorney, James B. Morris, Sr. Racism in the Des Moines community in which Eleanor spent her childhood was both covert and overt. By the time

that Eleanor's mother and aunts attended school in Des Moines, public schools were accessible to Blacks, as they were to Eleanor during her K-12 education. But, there were no Black teachers as role models in the Des Moines schools for Eleanor or for her ancestors. The first Black teacher did not enter the Des Moines public schools until 1945. When Eleanor began teaching in Des Moines in 1960, there was a handful of Black teachers in the Des Moines schools.

As detailed in Eleanor's biography and in the galleries, the Des Moines White community did not provide services to the Black community during the time Eleanor grew up there and through the time she lived there as a young adult. Eleanor recalled her experiences at the segregated YWCA in attending camp and places that were open to Blacks to swim. However, Eleanor, along with many of her peers, remember more of the positive experiences that they had in the strength of their own Black community and churches. The lack of services, access, and equity provided the impetus for Black citizens in Des Moines to create their own businesses to service their community, as well as furthering the development of Black organizations.

Some of Eleanor's first contacts with racism as a young adult came from her experiences as an undergraduate on the Iowa State College campus. Blacks were segregated in housing and in their social lives. Some of the faculty were openly racist and hostile to Black students and did not grade Black students fairly. In spite of the segregation and racist practices, Eleanor made friends and had a social life as an undergraduate, and she succeeded in securing her undergraduate degree and a good education from an institution that was highly regarded at that time.

Larger racist issues confronted Eleanor in her career path and chosen professional field. After her ISC graduation and attending her first Delta Sigma Theta convention in 1941, Eleanor realized that she was confined by her race and gender to a career in teaching. As noted earlier, there were no Black teachers in Iowa, except in Buxton, when Eleanor completed her undergraduate degree at ISC. Nor had Eleanor taken undergraduate coursework to prepare herself for teaching in Iowa because first of all, she had no desire to teach, and secondly, there were no positions open to her in her home state. As a result, she made the choice to venture into the Jim Crow South, where racism was more overt and openly practiced than in her home state of Iowa. Eleanor recalled the segregation that she encountered as she traveled from Iowa to Georgia by train. Although she did not dwell on racist instances, it is likely that she was subjected to more discrimination, prejudice, and racism than when she was in her home state of Iowa.

Eleanor's memories of her years teaching at the all Black Sumner High School in Kansas City, Kansas are among the happiest during her lifetime. Even though the school was segregated, it boasted one of the most highly educated and capable faculties anywhere in the country. The atmosphere was pervaded by a positive outlook with ingrained goals of achievement and success. This school, in contrast to many of its White counterparts, demanded that their teachers hold a masters degree. These high standards led Eleanor to complete her study for her masters degree during the summertime at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York, which was one of the most highly regarded colleges for teachers. Eleanor's teaching career at Sumner represents the community-building and racial uplift through education that is one of the ideas central to BFT. In this environment, racial

pride is fostered and nourished, rather than subjected to the constant oppression of the White dominant view.

Eleanor experienced further racism through her husband's experiences in attaining his professional career goals. He was not allowed to pursue his dream of teaching at ISC as a graduate student because of his race. He experienced discrimination, prejudice, and racism in the armed forces, even though he believed that the armed forces were less racist than the rest of society at large. His profession, employment, and career advancement were dictated by his race and necessitated frequent relocation by him to keep meaningful employment. Obsolete equipment in plants contributed further to his relocation for employment.

When Eleanor began teaching in the Des Moines schools in 1960, she began during the height of the Civil Rights era. These activities on a national, state, and local level likely worked in her favor to secure employment as a teacher in Des Moines for White administrators who wanted to pacify Civil Rights directives. Not only that, Eleanor may have been perceived as "low risk" because she had a masters degree and several years of teaching experience to offer the Des Moines schools, which positioned her as an ideal teaching candidate to bring into their school system. Her opportunities in Des Moines were further strengthened through her recent coursework at Iowa State, during which time she took the necessary coursework to become certified to teach in Iowa. As a result, hiring Eleanor could serve as an example of interest-convergence in that the agenda of Whites was served through hiring a Black teacher to appease Civil Rights directives.

Eleanor encountered discriminatory, prejudicial, and racist attitudes during her tenure as a teacher in Des Moines. As noted earlier, the letter that Eleanor wrote describing the accomplishments of Black Des Moines East High School graduates denotes an underlying

belief by Whites in the stereotypical images of Blacks that are perpetuated by Whites and that lie within racist parameters. A paucity of Black teachers in the Des Moines schools during Eleanor's tenure, in combination with no access to Black literature within the school library, points to further exclusionary and racist practices. In the 1960s, Eleanor, with the encouragement and support of her Amos Hiatt librarian, saw this as an opportunity to confront the district librarian to add books to the library about Blacks. By this time in Iowa, racist practices were becoming more covert.

One example of the occurrence of the principle of interest-convergence in Eleanor's life is noted earlier in posing a feasible scenario surrounding the timing of her entrance into the Des Moines schools. Early instances of interest-convergence in Iowa are found in the practice of bringing in Black workers from the South as strikebreakers in the coal and lead mining industries. On the surface, Blacks were offered the opportunity to leave the more oppressive environment of the south and to start a new life with guaranteed work in Iowa. This served to keep the White businesses in operation, as well as increasing their profit by paying lower wages to Blacks than were paid to Whites for the same work. As the population in Des Moines increased, it appeared on the surface that there were employment opportunities for Blacks. However, as noted earlier, these occupations were sustained primarily at only the semi-skilled and unskilled levels for both Black men and women. Both national and state laws and legislation reinforced occupational disparity for Blacks, yet maintained the appearance of providing opportunities for Blacks, while Whites continued to increase their own economic advantage and profit on the backs of Black labor.

Hiring practices for teachers at all levels of education in Iowa do not reflect the dedication to diversity articulated by administrators of education. There are few role models

for Black children in Iowa, and children of color in general, of Black teachers in their classrooms. This phenomenon is further complicated by the decreasing numbers of Blacks choosing teaching as their careers. At the university level, one most provocative example is found in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at Iowa State University, Eleanor's alma mater. The first Black faculty member to receive tenure in the department was awarded in the year 2001. Further evidence of the sparse number of Black teachers in Iowa is found in undergraduate pre-service teachers at Iowa State University. This population is overwhelmingly White and from Iowa. Most of the students are from small towns and many have had no interaction with any person of color until they attend Iowa State. When there is a Black student, or any student of color in these predominately White classes, there is great risk that one sole student is viewed as the spokesperson for their entire race and the formation of stereotypes are placed in a dangerously compromising position.

What does this have to do with Eleanor and interest convergence? On a broader scale than Eleanor's teaching in Des Moines, Iowa, many of Iowa's educational institutions continue to give only lip service to the ideals of democracy, freedom, and equality, while in practice these elements remain almost invisible. The interests of Whites are being served by promoting the ideals of diversity, while limiting through covert means and institutionalized racism, the physical presence of Blacks as educators. This leads to the provocative question, "Have things really changed for Blacks in Iowa?"

HAVE THINGS REALLY CHANGED FOR BLACKS IN IOWA?

Eleanor attended Delta Sigma Theta's 2000, "Delta Days at the Capitol," where they met at the state capitol with Iowa's only African American legislator. During this meeting, Deltas received discouraging statistics concerning the state of African Americans in Iowa. Deltas were informed of facts delineating incarceration, school dropouts, teen pregnancy, and infant mortality about Black Iowans before they were published in *The Des Moines Register*. Eleanor states that, "Iowa needs a lot of direction in order to lessen the statistics." She continues by noting that she has seen many changes in her lifetime regarding increased recognition of African Americans as human beings and the contributions that they have made. Eleanor explains that these changes

have allowed many of us to take advantage and make progress in the nation, region, and on the local level. Sadly, some of our people have not had the strength and courage to fight for what they believe in. The Civil Rights movement was an excellent example of strength. Some of our people have excuses and blame everything on the majority population. There have been many obstacles.

Eleanor identified P.E.P., a group of African American males who are predominately businessmen that organized in order to mentor, tutor, and give computers to students who remain in the program. Sisters on Target is a newer group noted by Eleanor, who are endeavoring to make a difference, as well as several other groups who offer scholarships for African Americans to continue their education. Eleanor's church, St. Paul A.M.E., received a grant for an after-school-program for public school pupils and is in the early stages of development. She also notes that Kyle's A.M.E. church, which is next door to the Oakridge neighborhood, has had summer programs and tutoring over the years. As the discussion that follows indicates and as noted by Eleanor, "More programs are needed."

In the examples that follow, the purpose is not to provide an exhaustive examination or listing of events in Iowa or the nation that provide an answer to the question posed, "Have things really changed for Blacks in Iowa?" Rather, a broad overview follows that begins in 1967 and 1968, 1969, and jumps to interesting events in 1986 and 1989, 1998, 2000, and 2001 that provide insight into answering the question posed.¹³ These examples become more compelling when paralleling them to Eleanor's life, her observations and sentiments noted above, and the Des Moines community where she has lived for most of her life. As is the case historically in this country, the futures of Black citizens are dictated within the legal and legislative confines that remain under the control of Whites. Iowa is no exception to this practice. Following the national Civil Rights initiatives in the early part of the 1960s, Iowa examined its progress in the arena of Civil Rights.

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission Report of 1967 and 1968 details several unannounced visits during the summer of 1967 made by Governor Hughes to Black slum areas in major cities across Iowa. The slum areas are not identified, nor are the "general plight and concerns of minorities" that were later called to public attention by Governor Hughes. Executive Order No. 9 was issued by Governor Hughes in October 1967 declaring that "The official state policy is equal opportunity in such matters as employment recruiting, employment referrals, educational and vocational guidance programs (including counseling and testing), contract letting, and licensing regulations." The Iowa General Assembly passed the Fair Housing Law in 1967, which added housing discrimination to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission's jurisdiction. A state supervisor of services to minority groups was appointed early in 1966 to provide advice to the Employment Service's administration and staff on matters of civil rights. This individual was further charged with the responsibility of

investigating any possible discrimination involving the Employment Service. The report details additional initiatives in various facets of employment, including several volunteer-based efforts.¹⁴

Perhaps more revealing is the section of the report that addresses “Continuing Concerns” and identifies “Some Problem Areas.” “Reverse Discrimination” tops the list.

The report continues to elaborate by stating that:

Probably the biggest impediment in intergroup understanding in our society is the common misconception that civil rights legislation is designed to “prefer” minorities. For widespread prejudice ever to be lessened significantly, the general public must realize that the whole philosophy of the civil rights law is to ensure that minorities are allowed equal opportunity with everyone else. In other words, when other things are equal or similar, a final decision must not be based upon a person race, creed, color, national origin, or religion.¹⁵

Other “Problems” noted are those in community relations, in public accommodations, and in housing. Housing was recognized as the area where outright discrimination was the most blatant and widespread. Other “Problems” included insensitive public officials and in education. Regarding education, the report states that

Employers commonly claim that they do not discriminate – it’s just that no qualified minorities ever apply. . . . Some of the problem areas which must be faced include:
 Well-intentioned, but negative counseling in high schools to steer non-whites from traditionally white only positions;
 Lack of proper preparation in matters of intergroup relations for teachers in urban schools with large concentrations of racial minorities;
 The use of textbooks which are offensive to certain minorities;
 Little attention given in schools to Negro contributions and Negro history;
 Unwarranted hysteria over “busing,” and other innovative programs to achieve equality of educational opportunity;
 General insensitivity of school administrators and teachers to interracial and intercultural differences;
 Racial imbalance in many metropolitan schools, too often leaving intact the all-white schools in fashionable residential areas;
 Possibility of lower standards of quality in schools with high minority concentration;
 Feeling of some minority children that they are “pushed out” of school.¹⁶

This is the pervading climate in Iowa and in Des Moines while Eleanor was teaching at Amos Hiatt Junior High School.

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission 1969 Annual Report provided some interesting case studies in discrimination. Topics of the case studies included, “Black students get part-time jobs ‘meeting the public;’” “Affirmative action in recruiting minority employees;” “Black to be considered for city employment at next opening,” after being wrongfully denied a job in the first place; “Indian family moves into housing of its choice;” “Local educational association’s discriminatory housing list corrected;” “Whites with black friends not evicted from apartment;” “Blacks served in tavern at regular prices;” “Black bowling league secures time period.”¹⁷ Once again, this was the time period when Eleanor was teaching school at Amos Hiatt in Des Moines and reflects the continuing climate in Des Moines and the state.

In 1986, four years following Eleanor’s retirement from teaching, an article was published in *The Des Moines Register* entitled, “Iowa losing fight for minority teachers.”¹⁸ Ruth Davis, a Black lady encouraged by Eleanor to enter the teaching profession, was pictured in the article. Ruth retired after teaching for 19 years in Des Moines. The article states that Iowa’s cadre of minority teachers and administrators was never large, and it was shrinking in 1986. In 1986, the decrease in the number Black teachers was called a “looming crisis in Iowa” by state officials. When the article was written, there were 436 school districts in Iowa. It notes that

During the 1980-81 school year, 380, or 1.2 percent, of Iowa’s 31,151 teachers were black, Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian. Last school year, the number of minorities dropped to 356, but so did the teaching staff—29,942. The percentage remained at 1.2 percent.¹⁹

According to the article, it appeared unlikely that the proportion of minority teachers would ever equal their corresponding proportion in Iowa's population, 2.6 percent of 2.9 million people. Some officials in the state's largest school systems at that time stated that it was difficult to recruit minority teachers. Another state school official charged that Iowa schools did not try hard enough to recruit minority teachers, citing lack of commitment to the effort at the state level. Cyndy Reed-Stewart, then consultant for the Iowa Department of Education, stated that, "If the district is in a town where there are no minorities, they couldn't care less if they ever have a minority teacher."²⁰

Des Moines, among the 10 largest school systems in the state, was cited in the article as having the highest number of minority teachers, 7.04 percent, and 14.7 percent minority administrators. Dubuque had the lowest with 0.6 percent minority teachers and no minorities among its 52 administrators. Council Bluffs, West Des Moines, and Burlington reported no minority administrators with Iowa City adding one that fall. Davenport was second to Des Moines in employing the highest number of minority teachers with 4.8 percent. Davenport was noted as having 8.2 percent minority administrators and Waterloo had 18.6 percent minority administrators.²¹

Waterloo and Des Moines school administrators were actively trying to recruit minority teachers, but were unsuccessful. James Bowman, the highest-ranking minority public school administrator in the state at that time, even toured Black colleges such as Fisk University, Tennessee State University, Prairie View A & M, and Texas Southern University in his recruitment efforts that met with mixed success. Bowman stated that, "It did not meet with a great deal of success. Black teachers in the South see Iowa as foreign, cold. People get the idea it snows year-round. . . . They didn't think they had blacks in Iowa."²²

The reaction that was received from the three state universities' colleges of education was "lukewarm." The number of minority students enrolled in education in the three state universities at the time the article was written was 2.8 percent, according to the Board of Regents' office.²³

Likely still a rarity in the Des Moines schools in 1989, Betty Hyde was featured in a "Neighbor of the Week" article in *The Des Moines Register*.²⁴ Originally from Kansas City, Missouri, Betty came to Iowa to attend the University of Northern Iowa. One teacher speaking about Hyde stated that, "After teaching for 20 years, I was suffering a bad case of teacher burnout. Within one year of working with her [Hyde], my enthusiasm was reborn. All the teachers at Hoyt will riot if they transfer her next year."²⁵ Hyde was noted in the article by several teachers who work with her as inspirational and exemplary. Similar sentiments were voiced by student leaders at Hoyt Middle School where Hyde was principal.

One America in the 21st Century: Forging a New Future, was the title of the 1998 report compiled for President Clinton by a seven-member advisory group chaired by John Hope Franklin.²⁶ The advisory group and their subsequent report was part of President Clinton's Initiative on Race, his effort "to chart the course for America as it enters the 21st century and becomes a country of minorities." The report stated that "Ignorance of the legacy of racism in America and deep-rooted stereotypes continue to form a brick wall in the way of constructive dialogue about race." The report concluded that a long-term focus and leadership is needed to break down the wall of racism in the U.S. People lack knowledge and understanding about the genesis and consequences of race discrimination. The board stated that "We as a nation need to understand that whites tend to benefit, either unknowingly or consciously, from this country's history of white privilege." White privilege is a concept

that remains foreign to many White U.S. citizens today. If it was obscure to people in 1998, the odds are favorable that it remains just as obscure in 2001. Some figures that were prepared by the Council of Economic Advisers and released by the President's Initiative on Race included: (1) Population age 25 to 29 who finished high school: Whites: 93 percent; Blacks: 87 percent; (2) Median family incomes: Whites: \$47,023 per year; Blacks: \$26,522 per year; (3) Infant mortality rates: Whites: 6.3/1000 live births; Blacks: 14.6/1000 live births; (4) Own their own home: 71.7 percent White families; 46 percent Black families; (5) 42 percent of Blacks live in the South; (6) By 2050, Hispanics and Blacks will make up 47 percent of the country's population. Overall, the report "confirms that racial discrimination still darkens the nation and calls on the president to strengthen enforcement of civil-rights laws."²⁷

A 1998 forum stated that although the White supremacist movement has dwindled and divided in recent decades, it still has many sympathizers. Betty Dobratz, sociology professor at Iowa State University, identified that there are about 25,000 White supremacists in America now compared to four million in 1924, although there are many more who agree with the politics of the movement. Dobratz said that the focus of the White supremacist movement is moving toward a total separation of Whites from people of color and that these Whites want nothing to do with people of color. Although KKK maps do not indicate any groups in Iowa, Dobratz said that members of these groups still exist in Maquoketa, Iowa. Further evidence of their existence is found in a White separatist event that Dobratz attended in Dubuque, Iowa. An instructor from the Drake Law School, Sally Frank, identified the English only movement and opposition to affirmative action and bilingual education as perpetuating the views of White separatists. Attorney William Morris, grandson of Eleanor's

uncle, James Morris Sr., talked about the KKK's efforts to try to stop his grandfather from publishing the *Bystander*. Active White separatists in Iowa indicate that racism is far from dead in Iowa.²⁸

Barriers to overcoming racism in not only Iowa, but in the entire country are reflected by attitudes voiced by some journalists, who undoubtedly also represent the sentiments of a number of the White citizenry who remain content and settled in their robes of White privilege. It is these same people who believe that social justice is a moot and worn out idea, because in their snug and blinded cocoon worlds, they believe that social justice has been achieved. George Will derides the results of the "limp report" from the advisory board from the President's Initiative on Race. "Some good news has gone unremarked: The Civil War is over. So is its once invaluable echo, the anachronism still called, with a nostalgia impervious to the passage of time, 'the civil rights movement.'" He continues by ridiculing and dismissing that there is such a thing as White privilege and that illegitimacy is the underlying source of the problems faced by Blacks in today's society.²⁹

As reported in the *The Ames Tribune*, "Blacks feel racism most, whites agree in survey," results from the National Conference for Community and Justice study stated that 83 percent of all those questioned said that Blacks were victims of discrimination. Blacks identified that they experience unequal treatment on a daily basis in places that Whites take for granted, such as the grocery store, at work, or in a restaurant. Professional Black Iowans relay similar stories that add racial profiling and a host of other racist encounters to the list. Thirteen percent of Whites reported that they were discriminated against in the past month compared to 42 percent of Blacks. President of a national human rights organization, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Sanford Cloud, Jr., stated that one solution to

helping bridge the “racial divide would be open, honest and what might be painful conversations across racial, political, ethnic and gender lines.” The telephone survey was conducted between January 20 and March 19, 2000 with a total of 2,584 people surveyed. The margin of sampling variance was cited as plus/minus four percentage points.³⁰

The media, whether newspapers, magazines, movies, or TV, plays a significant role in keeping racism alive. As Westin began his work of producing television news with legendary news giant Edward R. Murrow. After leaving network news, Westin became a fellow at the nonprofit Freedom Forum. He conducted a survey of network news colleagues and promised them anonymity and believes that he received truthful responses from them in return. His first conclusion is that closet racism is “alive and well in TV news.” A second finding of Westin’s was from local station managers stating that advertisers from the auto industry and insurance companies create pressure to kill stories and no one ever knows the difference. TV journalists told Westin that when they have a choice to feature a Black or a White family, their producers pick White families because they feel that Whites appeal more to viewers. “My bosses have essentially made it clear: ‘We do not feature black people. I mean it’s said. Actually, they whisper it, ‘Is she white?’” Blacks at CNN complained that stories about poverty and crime usually showed footage of Blacks. Westin found the results of his survey distressing and that they exemplified the current trend in TV news “to soften it up and give the viewers whatever they want,” which results in too few investigative reports. Westin voices his fears that upcoming TV journalists are those whose training emphasizes keeping ratings up and costs down.³¹ George Gerbner, long time researcher of the social effects of television and the media, supports Westin’s views.³²

In December 2000, *The Des Moines Register* published a four part series called, "Isolated and Invisible: African-Americans in Iowa." The first article in the series was entitled, "Some baffling numbers: Why do Iowans who are African-American fare worse than blacks nationally?" This article raises more questions than it answers. The 1998 infant death rate for Blacks in Iowa was higher than the nationwide average according to the National Center for Health Statistics. In 1997, Iowa's proportion of incarcerated Blacks was the second highest in the nation according to a study by the Sentencing Project based in Washington, D.C. Census figures from 1990 indicate that the household income for Blacks in Iowa is far behind the U.S. average for Black families, as well as for White families. Isolation is a topic that comes up frequently for Blacks living in Iowa. The isolation may be greater for well-educated, affluent Blacks who often find themselves the only Black family when dining out in a restaurant. Other Blacks in Iowa continue their struggle with poverty that results in their near-complete disconnection from mainstream society. Poverty and not enough opportunities to escape it is one of the biggest issues for Black Iowans. On the average in Iowa, unemployment is higher, and for those who are working, the wages are lower. Black students drop out of school more often than their White peers. Drug-related crimes place Blacks in Iowa prisons at a disproportionate rate. "The status of African-Americans in Iowa is not on the public radar screen, as if the larger community is unaware, or doesn't care."³³

The second article in the series addresses the high infant mortality rate for Blacks in Iowa. Iowa figures from 1998 showed an infant mortality rate of 18.5 per 1000 births for Black infants compared to 6.1 per 1000 births for Whites, 7.5 for Hispanics, 5.3 for Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 16.3 for those classified as other as reported by the Iowa

Department of Public Health. The 1998 nationwide infant-death rate for Blacks is 14.3. In 1996, Iowa was tied for the highest Black infant-mortality rate in the nation according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. One possibility cited for the high infant-mortality rate occurrence among Blacks in Iowa is the lack of access that Black women have to health care. Another possibility that was considered was attributed to out-of-wedlock births. A report by *The Des Moines Register* earlier in 2000 noted that the proportion of Black babies born to teenage mothers decreased significantly in Iowa, however the rate remained higher than the national average for Blacks and more than double the rate for White Iowans. Dr. Herman Hein, director of the Infant Mortality Prevention Program in Des Moines, believes that the stress faced by Black women in Iowa through subtle racial discrimination plays a role in the higher infant-mortality rates, but he can not prove it. "Efforts are being made to reduce black infant-mortality rates in Iowa. Whether they succeed remains to be seen. Leaving the hard work to a relative few makes that much less likely."³⁴

At least one in 12 Black Iowans is in prison, on parole, or probation. The ratio for White Iowans is one in 110. The ratio for Blacks in Iowa surpasses most of the other states. Not only does this disparity exist, it continues to grow. A 1993 study by the Equality in the Courts Task Force done for the Iowa Supreme Court said that, "In the surveys of attorneys and judges, a significant number felt that minority defendants were at a disadvantage. The observed racial disparities are statistically significant." The Legislature responded by adding more prison beds. Blacks make up two percent of Iowa's total population, but nearly 25 percent of the state prison inmates. In June 1999, 19 Whites per 10,000 Whites in Iowa were incarcerated, while 301 Blacks were incarcerated per 10,000 Blacks in Iowa as reported by

the corrections department. Lack of employment opportunity was cited once again as one contributing factor. The devastation, as noted, escapes measure when the toll on families and children is added into the equation. This sends a message to children that the system is against them. There are no satisfactory explanations why the incarceration rate in Iowa's state prisons is so much higher than that of White Iowans, especially when compared to incarcerated Blacks nationwide. "Racial discrimination [racism] is surely at work, however subtle and hard to prove. White Iowans . . . think of themselves as tolerant . . . there must . . . be some sense of shame when so many African-Americans are locked up in Iowa's state prisons."³⁵

A 1999 *Des Moines Register* article cited more alarming facts about Iowa's incarceration of Blacks. The state's inmate population growth in 1998 was the sixth highest in the nation, despite Iowa having one of the lowest crime rates in the nation. Fifty-eight percent of Iowa's inmates are nonviolent offenders. Within the prisons, about two percent of the budget goes toward education programs. Many inmates spend long, idle hours with nothing meaningful to occupy their time. Even less money is spent behind bars for addiction programs than for education, even though studies show that most inmates have problems with alcohol or other drugs. In comparing the costs of Iowa's prisons to the cost of higher education in Iowa in 1999, the following figures were provided,

With undergraduate tuition, fees, room, board and books currently running about \$8,180 a year at the University of Iowa, it's [the 1999 \$170 million budget to run Iowa's prisons] enough to cover the costs for a year for more than 31,000 students. At Iowa State University, the tab runs about \$7,875; at the University of Northern Iowa, the bill is \$7,643. Of course, the state doesn't pick up those college costs, and under any policies, the government would face substantial expenses for prisons.³⁶

In summing up the flagrant disparities that exist in Iowa for Blacks, more questions are raised in the fourth and last article. Why are things not being changed through a collective political and social will? Perhaps it is too easy for Whites to remain within their comfort zone, "it is as if this is the way it has always been and always will be." The 1989 median income for Blacks in Iowa was over \$3,000 less than the national average. In 1989, 51 percent of Iowa's Black children lived in poverty, compared to 13 percent of White children and 40 percent of Black children in the nation. Black children living in single-parent homes in Iowa was 57 percent, while only 17 percent of White children in Iowa lived in single-parent homes. Education is cited as one answer given by Steve Johnson, Partners in Economic Progress executive director. Jamie Howard, school board vice president for Davenport, said that, "Historically African-Americans have been discouraged by educators from going to college, and that lower expectations for black students persists today, though efforts are being made to change that." In asking the question, "Why is it that African-Americans in Iowa are statistically worse off than African-Americans in the United States on so many counts," Isaiah Johnson, business-community liaison with Job Corps in Denison and vice chairperson of the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans, provided an answer. He said that although there are many factors, one in particular stands out, "The state of Iowa is predominately of another race, predominantly Caucasians. These nice folks have been conditioned, almost programmed, to believe there is just one race in the world. I think Iowans are very subtle with their forms of discrimination." Economics and education are identified as the two major areas where change can begin and effect improvements for future Blacks in Iowa. The process needed is cited as a long-term one. Getting started and being

committed to a course of action follows. The question asked and remains, “When will that be?”³⁷

A crisis in education for Blacks in Iowa was identified by Jonathan Narcisse. Narcisse compiled the second annual *The State of Black Iowa* report in which he analyzed a year’s worth of research and census figures that determine how Blacks fare in Iowa. Areas such as the justice system, health care, and education are examined. Narcisse is the owner of the New Bystander Co., which publishes the *Bystander* and *Communicator* newspapers. His analysis reveals that Black students drop out of school more often and score lower on tests than members of other groups. He said that these findings are part of a bigger problem, because lack of education leads to crime and poverty. Narcisse shared the findings of his research in meetings with educators, parents, and students in Des Moines.³⁸

At the meetings held to discuss Narcisse’s findings, school board members and election candidates fielded questions from the Black community asking what they planned to do to improve the academics of Black children in the Des Moines community. Initiatives that have been started district-wide were listed and included hiring additional reading teachers, adding all-day kindergarten classes in most of the district’s elementary schools, lengthening the school day, and encouraging more volunteers in the schools. The district’s overall goal is to increase the academic performance levels of all students. Some board members believe that it is inappropriate to put students in separate categories. One potential board member told meeting attendees that board members and school administrators need to find the solution in the community.

Sisters on Target is a newly formed group focused primarily on the education of Des Moines’ Black students and who attended all of the meetings. Narcisse, described in one

article as activist and publisher, issued a challenge to school officials to develop a specific plan stating how they will address the district's academic achievement gap.³⁹ Not stated in the article is one compelling fact, which is if the same educational situation of Black children existed for White children, there is no doubt that plans and steps to alleviate the disparities would be forthcoming with all due speed. Another grave disparity that emerged about Iowa schools last year remains unmentioned in the current debate about education for Blacks in Des Moines. Black students are twice as likely to be placed in special education classes as are their White peers.⁴⁰ Most recently, Ruth Ann Gaines, a former Iowa educator of the year, has voiced her frustration with the academic decline of some of Iowa's Black students. She encouraged confronting the issues and stated that, "Too many young African-Americans are falling through the cracks."⁴¹

Census figures for the year 2000 for Iowa indicate a gain of nearly 13,800, 28.6 percent, from the 1990 census figure of the 48,090 population of Black Iowans. Iowans who reported that they were Black and also a member of one or more of the other racial categories on the census numbered 10,659. When the 10,659 individuals are added to the Black census category, Iowa's total for 2000 is 72,512, in which case the gain from 1990 was 50.8 percent. In the 2000 census figures, from 2.1 to 2.5 percent of Iowans are Black, making this the first census where Blacks constituted at least two out of every 100 residents of Iowa. Nearly half of all Black Iowans, 45.7 percent, live in Polk or Black Hawk counties. When adding Black residents in Scott and Linn counties, Black residents comprised more than two-thirds, 69.4 percent of all Black Iowans. These four counties, plus Johnson county, saw increases of at least 1000 Black residents, which was led by the gain of more than 3300 Black residents in Polk County.⁴² Interestingly, even with the disproportionate incarceration of Black males in

Iowa and the higher than national average of Black infant-mortality rates, the Black population made a significant gain from 1990 to 2000 in Iowa as the educational achievement of Black children declines.

It appears that multiple dimensions of interest convergence are at work in the state of Iowa and in the lives of Blacks living here. However, the motives remain so covert and buried, that it is difficult to identify precisely what they may be. On the other hand, it may not be interest convergence at all, but rather, racism. The State of Black Iowa website makes an astute statement,

It has been asserted in countless state documents that Iowa is arguably the best place to raise a child in the nation. Over the years we have opened our arms to Southeast Asian refugees and immigrants from South and Central America, Bosnia and even Africa. Truly Iowa has been a land of opportunity offering a high quality of life to those living within her borders.

Still, it can be argued using that same statistical rationale that Iowa is the harshest place amongst the 50 states in which to raise an African American Child. From infanticide to crippling poverty, African American children living in Iowa are suffering at levels that statistically dwarf not only our White, Asian American, Latino American and Native American counterparts in Iowa, but dwarf our national Black counterparts.⁴³

The website provides another observation about the state of Black Iowans:

Black Iowa exists as two separate and unequal societies. A few have thrived. A segment of Black Iowa exists as a community whose accomplishments rival that of any Black community in America.

For the rest of Black Iowa there is statistically no state harsher to raise a child. From the womb to the grave we are found in a desperate way. Over the past decades we have lost ground in education, employment, justice and ownership. Indifference is at an all-time high. Opportunity and ability are at all-time lows.⁴⁴

Have things really changed for Blacks in Iowa? Sadly, it is my belief that the answer is no. As an undergraduate student at Iowa State in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Eleanor returned to Des Moines for things that White women take for granted, for example, having

her hair done and shopping for nylons. Today, in 2001, Black female faculty members, Black students, and the Black Ames populace in Ames and at Iowa State, travel to Des Moines for the same comforts and services that White Ames residents enjoy in the Ames community. These inconveniences are minimal in view of the overwhelming obstacles that Iowa continues to impose on its Black citizens. Nevertheless, these examples are indicative of the deeper and more evident problems that continue to make Iowa an “unfriendly” place for Blacks to call home.

Is this Eleanor’s story? As noted earlier, no, if you are a White outsider looking in on the material aspects of life. The answer is no from Eleanor’s established standpoint as a Black woman who possesses the incredible ability to adapt to the opportunities and situations that her life provides her. Eleanor’s success story ultimately lies within herself as a self-determined woman, activist, service-conscious woman, who possesses a great spirituality and deep religious conviction that extends to her mind, soul, and body. Eleanor’s success story is that she lived and lives in Des Moines, Iowa and experiences a full life in spite of the racism that continues to surround her. Eleanor’s story is one of change, resilience, and resistance—the legacy of Black women since they were first enslaved and brought to this country by force and oppression. Even though Eleanor never wanted to be a teacher, she, without any doubt, touched the lives of her students and provided a role model and inspiration to her Black students in particular—something that remains underrepresented and sparse in today’s education for Iowa’s Black children. How many more Black children will be denied their potential and their dreams to live their lives to the fullest in a country that continues to profess equal opportunity and access to all? Laws and legislation have not provided solutions. They have served only the interests of the White elite and accomplished creating

an ever-wider chasm of disparity and disenfranchisement. The judges in the courts that interpret and execute the laws are partners in this ongoing travesty. Yes, there are success stories, but there should be as many success stories for Blacks as for Whites. More importantly, those success stories should represent reaching the original dreams and not settling for a dream that is dictated by race or gender.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study poses a challenge to scholars to continue reaching beyond the confines of the traditional hegemonic, dominant view of what is considered mainstream scholarship. There are an infinite number of counter-stories that remain to be told, whether they are situated in Iowa or anywhere else in the U.S. “When we share our stories and seek to unshroud the lives of women who have come before us, the telling empowers us all.”⁴⁵ “Black women have been doubly victimized by scholarly neglect and racist assumptions. Belonging . . . to two groups . . . traditionally . . . treated as inferiors by American society—Blacks and women—they have been doubly invisible. Their records lie buried, unread, infrequently noticed.”⁴⁶ More histories of Black women need to be written. Although the literature is making some gains, the experiences of Black women still remain neglected and obscured, with the exception of a handful of “leaders.” “A general history and regional histories of black women need to be written. Many outstanding women deserve to have biographers . . . it is . . . hoped that historians, researchers and writers will turn their talents to this relatively unexplored field.”⁴⁷ It is my ardent belief that Eleanor’s story is one worth telling and that there remain, as Gerda Lerner says, many stories yet to be told. The dual lenses of BFT and CRT provide an illuminating view through which this may be

accomplished. Further, when situated and viewed within the context of education, the incentive to reveal these stories becomes even more pressing. Black students need role models who can provide inspiration in counteracting institutionalized racism to participate in the ongoing struggle for social justice in what remains an unrelenting and unjust society. Heroines and heroes in everyday life are overlooked too often and dismissed when they are the very people who can offer realistic and attainable sources of motivation and sustenance. As such, the implications for future research are a veritable wealth of untapped resources in the lives of our educators whose stories only await the telling.

In writing a Black woman's or man's biography situated as nearby history, the opportunity becomes one of examining the multiple contexts at work in that community. State laws and legislation, both historically and into the current time, merit scrutiny to determine the extent to which they are framed within the basis of CRT. State, local, and personal artifacts, in combination with narratives and other primary and secondary sources, illuminate past and current practices that either enhance or prohibit the realization of equality and social justice for Black Americans. These counter-stories can provide a basis for pursuing more in-depth analysis of institutionalized barriers that either remain in tact to the detriment of achieving social justice, or those that have been broken down to make positive strides to that end.

Writing and sharing biographies of Black women through counter-stories furthers the invitation to write general and regional histories of Black women. Through multiple stories, shared and unique experiences can be delineated and reveal themes for further investigation. These themes potentially support or refute the tenets of CRT and BFT. It is my belief that further research in this area will provide additional support and verification of the themes

central to the tenets of both CRT and BFT. Adding to this scholarship provides the possibility of discovering new ways to reveal not only the strengths, contributions, and accomplishments of Black women and men, it further may uncover effective ways to counter social injustice and identify paths that ultimately lead to true equality.

From the standpoint of BFT and CRT scholarship, biographies provide the opportunity to marry the storytelling aspect that is common to both. Men are not excluded from participating within the storytelling inherent in BFT. When addressed in concert with CRT, a powerful and compelling basis is established for revealing counter-stories of both Black women and men. For, as Patricia Hill Collins notes, anyone can participate in and be an advocate of Black Feminist Thought.

Therefore, there are both short-term and long-term implications for this study. The short-term implications require more narrative scholarship that brings truth telling to the forefront in the form of counter-stories. The more stories that are told, especially those that reveal the pervasiveness of racism and interest-convergence in the lives of Black Americans, the more difficult inequality is to ignore. The more stories that become available, the more likely others will be to come forward and share their own stories, adding to the body of literature. Because education is seen often in this country as the venue of choice for either blame or panacea, the educational contexts of counter-stories become an important element. They potentially confirm or refute institutionalized racist practices that continue to deprive Black children of the right to thrive. One long-term implication of this research is its contribution to the foundation that is needed to begin writing general and regional histories of Black women. A second long-term implication is establishing a historical context regarding the legal bases in Iowa that contributed to racist practices in the state and from which to

expand through the experiences revealed in counter-stories. This effort holds the potential for examination in every state and city where Black Americans seek lives of equality, which is their Constitutional right. Too frequently the richness of the lives and experiences of our senior citizens are muted and overlooked. When they leave this world, they take with them their vast wealth of wisdom and experience unless we are caring and astute enough to capture their flat-footed truths before it is too late.

Another long-term implication of this research is that with the accumulation of more counter-stories, they offer the opportunity for analysis of common themes that cut across geography. It is my belief that more similarities than differences will be identified, particularly regarding experiences of oppression and racism. In the event this proves true, it underscores the appeal for long overdue and justly deserved reparations from the pervasive racism, oppression, and denial of equality and social justice that Black Americans have experienced since their ancestors were brought to the U.S. by force and through the present time. In Iowa at this time, the result of this inequality manifests itself in higher Black infant mortality rates, higher incarceration rates for Black men, lower educational achievement and success of Black children, discriminatory housing practices for Blacks, and fewer employment opportunities for Blacks.

QUESTIONS INVITING FURTHER INVESTIGATION

First and foremost, the everyday lives of Black women not considered by the traditional faction in academia as intellectuals merit further investigation in the form of counter-stories as biographies or autobiographies to work toward building the foundational basis from which general histories and regional histories can be written. I further expand this

call to context and action to writing the biographies and autobiographies of the lives of Black men. It is my belief that CRT and BFT provide an effective and powerful research base through which to view the lives and experiences represented in counter-stories for reasons reiterated throughout this document. Primary document historical research coupled with biography and autobiography provides not only a valid research base, but the kind of evidence that even the staunchest positivist researchers find difficulty refuting. Although positivists may deem it a valid argument in saying that the study represents only one individual, rather than the many, it remains difficult to refute that if it has happened to one, it has happened to others. It may not take the same form and it may be set in a different context, yet these are the very strengths of this research—that every individual’s experience is unique and belongs to only that person. This embodies the essence of Black women’s standpoint. From these seemingly diverse, yet overlapping and similar experiences, a basis for dialogue, understanding, and ultimately social justice can emerge.

Given the great disparities and contradictions that are the remnants of the “peculiar institution” of slavery in Iowa, much research in a plethora of dimensions offers itself to be undertaken by the strong of heart and fervent soul. As Iowa is not the mecca once promised by its status as a “free” territory and state, likely neither is any other state in the country. The problems and disparities that plague Iowa to this day, in spite of the best intentions, are likely pervasive and divisive factors in every other state in the U.S. The venues for research, given the complex unjust social conditions that prevail, traverse beyond biography and autobiography. There is room for thoughtfully constructed and conceived quantitative analysis that reveals the obstacles to social justice in our country in an ongoing effort to remove the barriers to equal access and equal opportunity.

These barriers to a collective, humanist agency have been centuries in their making. My preference is to see them removed by a magical burst of a wand. Unfortunately, history, along with the current social, political, and economic conditions in this state and in this country reveal that, yes, there remains much work to be done. Implications for research that tell counter-stories are enormous until the collective population finally believes them. They are stories that we are morally and ethically obligated to tell, and re-tell if necessary, until social justice is the norm in this state and in this country. Education remains the venue of choice by many to effect these changes. It is our choice to succeed and accomplish this goal. As we continue to work toward social justice in researching and revealing counter-stories like Eleanor's, it strengthens our resolve to remember the words of Derrick Bell in not measuring success by the progress made, but that our, "satisfaction is in the struggle itself."⁴⁸

Notes for Conclusion

¹ Hill Collins, 1991.

² *Ibid.*, p. 16, p. 207

³ Henry H. Mitchell and Nicholas Cooper Lewter. 1986. *Soul Theology: The Heart of American Black Culture*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, p. 8.

⁴ Giddings, 1984, p. 7.

⁵ Bell-Scott, 1998, p. xix.

⁶ Collectivity, self-determination, spirituality, centrality of the church, and activism are also central to Black Feminist Thought and to the experiences and stories in the lives of Black women.

⁷ Lerner, p. xv.

⁸ Delgado, 1995.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

¹⁰ Tate, p. 210

¹¹ Paulo Freire, 1970, advanced a similar theory in his work. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder.

¹² Tate, pp. 219-221.

¹³ Some of the interesting insights are from Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection, as well as from the author's collection of newspaper article primary documents.

¹⁴ *Iowa Civil Rights Commission 1967 and 1968 Annual Report*. Available online at: <http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/annual68title.html>

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, <http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/annual68concerns.html>, p. 1 of 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2 of 5.

¹⁷ *Iowa Civil Rights Commission 1969 Annual Report*, pp. 1-3. Available online at: <http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/annual69casesstudies.html>

¹⁸ Mark Horstmeyer. August 3, 1986. Iowa losing fight for minority teachers. *The Des Moines Register*. From Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5A.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Julianne Selden. March 22, 1989. Hoyt principal inspires school with her energy. *The Des Moines Register*. From Eleanor Rebecca Powell Archer's personal collection.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Gannett News Service, Washington, D.C. September 18, 1998. Ignorance of struggle blocks dialogue on race, panel finds. In *The Des Moines Register*, p. 3A.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Lynn Okamoto. September 25, 1998. Separatists still active, speakers say at forum. *The Des Moines Register*, p. 5M.

²⁹ George Will. September 26, 1998. Civil War, rights movement are over. *The Des Moines Register*. Will's column is distributed by the *Washington Post* Writers Group.

³⁰ Paul Shepard. May 15, 2000. Blacks feel racism most, whites agree in survey. *The Ames Tribune*.

³¹ Peter Johnson. September 12, 2000. Newsman's survey uncovers TV Racism. *USA Today*.

³² George Gerbner on Media and Culture Series. 1997. *Episode 3: The Crisis of the Cultural Environment: Media and Democracy in the 21st Century*. Color, sound, 25 minutes. Distributed by Media Education Foundation (MEDIAE.) ½" VHS. George Gerbner on Media and Culture Series. 1997. *Episode 1: The Electronic Storyteller: Television and the Cultivation of Values*. Color, sound, 32 minutes. Distributed by the Media Education Foundation (MEDIAE.) ½" VHS.

³³ The Register's Editorials. December 28, 2000. Some baffling numbers: Why do Iowans who are African-American fare worse than blacks nationally? *The Des Moines Register*, p. 14A.

³⁴ The Register's Editorials. December 29, 2000. The infant-death mystery: Iowa ranks above the national rate for infant mortality among African-Americans. *The Des Moines Register*, p. 12A.

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- ³⁵ The Register's Editorials. December 30, 2000. A generation in prison: The incarceration rate for African-Americans in Iowa tops the national average. *The Des Moines Register*, p. 10A.
- ³⁶ William Petroski. July 4, 1999. Tougher laws swell inmate population. *The Des Moines Register*. Available online at: <http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v99.n710.a01.html>
- ³⁷ The Register's Editorials. December 31, 2000. When does it change? It's easy for most Iowans to gloss over the reality. *The Des Moines Register*, p. 17A.
- ³⁸ Madelaine Jerousek. August 23, 2001. Publisher sees crisis in education for blacks. *The Des Moines Register*, p. 6B.
- ³⁹ Kathy A. Bolten. August 29, 2001. Board members defend efforts for D.M. blacks. *The Des Moines Register*, p. 2B. Kathy A. Bolten. August 30, 2001. Blacks bemoan school disparities. *The Des Moines Register*, pp. 1B, 4B.
- ⁴⁰ Frank Santiago. May 13, 2001. 1 in 8 Iowa students placed in special ed. *The Des Moines Sunday Register*.
- ⁴¹ Madelaine Jerousek. September 22, 2001. Black leaders hear concerns. *The Des Moines Register*, p. 2B.
- ⁴² Willis Goudy and Sandra Charvat Burke. 2000. *Black or African American Residents in Iowa's Counties, 1990 and 2000*. Census Services, Department of Sociology, Iowa State University, Ames, IA. Available online at: <http://www.soc.iastate.edu/census>
- ⁴³ From The State of Black Iowa website. 2001. Available online at: <http://www.stateofblackiowa.com/>
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Bell-Scott, p. xvi.
- ⁴⁶ Lerner, p. xviii.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., p. xxxii.
- ⁴⁸ Derrick Bell. 1992. *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*. New York: BasicBooks, p. 98.

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