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It shall be emphasize that the Councillians interviewed for this historical work ought to be permitted to voice their thoughts about their black schools and that readers ought not to pass judgment on their perspectives. This work is not about being right or wrong it is about what happened or what is perceive to have happened at Council High School. It is about voice.

The task of educational researchers is about digging up oral history that interpret our educational history. Individual stories about life in historically black schools provide insight on what worked and what did not, while validating a group who achieved many extraordinary things while in an oppressive and segregated environment.

Most teachers at William Hooper Council School never underestimated their students, whether it was behavior or academics. They all appeared to be interested in you learning what you were supposed to learn and that included academic and social instruction. Many of the teachers were patient and really seemed to enjoy teaching. They bent over backward to see that students got the information necessary to complete the grade and be successful later in life.

Teachers at Council provided their students with a sequence of lessons so that they could learn "whatever was expected at that level" and then at the start of the next year, the teacher would give them the sequence to start the next level. Lessons were pace based on the needs of the student, but all students was expected to get through the entire sequence before the end of the year.

Council had annual events and activities such as plays and performances that had academic, character development, as well as religious designed to develop the whole child. The elementary and high school programs had the most memorable events usually an "interesting" mix of dance, plays, oratory, singing, and live music that attracted not only students but many community members.

Teachers believed that students could achieve more if they supported one another by working together toward a common goal. During those days, teachers expected their students to obey, to do their work as best as they could, to ask for help if they needed it, and to help each other.

Integration took a lot of this away from the black community. We learned early on that the concept of "separate but equal" was "inherently unequal" and even though the law stated that blacks and whites were to have the same resources, the simple separation of the two educational systems fostered the belief that one educational setting was superior to the other, which in many ways it was.

As the black schools closed, black teachers were either released from their duties or transferred to integrated schools under strict scrutiny. By the end of the 1967-1968 school year almost many black students had enrolled in previously white schools

It was the black teachers who believed in educating black youth in the appropriate habits of mind through punctuality, promptness, orderliness, tidiness, painstakingness, work, and preservation of property. Outstanding work was performed at the school in the areas of moral conduct, music, and penmanship.

Even with few supplies and overcrowded, understaffed classrooms black students made "rapid progress" under the "direction of well-trained Black teachers."

Council like many other black schools in our state was a base for industrial training; cooking, washing and sewing domestic as well as industrial fields; cooking school, gardening, vocational training. Many of our black scholars, intellectuals, and leaders in the society participated within the school to offer a different educational program for academically sound students.

Many of Council's students needed both classical and industrial training programs to enter college. A technical-based school emphasized practical education over classics.

The curriculum required that all black students be given "academic training" as well as domestic service in arts and trades. Our curriculum, were designed to offer students courses in two major fields of study, industrial and academic. The industrial education courses would include housekeeping, cooking, sewing, nurse training, laundering, dairying, care of poultry, agriculture, and trades. All students would participate in academic and social courses that included knowledge and skills, English, common school studies, the Bible, hygiene, chemistry, and morals.

Areas included athletic associations, debating clubs, drama, a Glee club, and the Try-Hi-Y club in fields such as law, medicine, education, music, politics, and business. Many of these individuals regard their experiences at the black schools as central to their personal and career achievements.

Teachers commanded respect, and parents supported the teachers," became places where people worked collaboratively toward the betterment of the community. The teachers, students, and parents of the schools "formed an organic community" that was focused on "schooling" as a "collective responsibility"

In addition to the vocational training, Council had a very "strenuous" academic curriculum and a very demanding classical program that included offering students foreign languages, history, mathematics, public speaking, writing, chemistry, physics, and music.

Essentially, the school focused on preparing students for their future in higher education or work. The school also had many extracurricular clubs and athletic.

Teachers who expected the best of all of their students had "strict rules." The high expectations for behavior and work completion set by the staff was essential.

The results of high expectations set forth by black teachers, parents, and other community members could clearly be seen in the friendly rivalry that developed early on between black public and private schools. They tried to "out play" each other by adding more technical departments, courses, and school programs and by holding community competitions to show off and demonstrate the success of their programs. Whether it was sports, school performances, products from the vocational classes, or placement of alumni, He remembered little physical friction between the schools, except when the two played each other in football, which often became vicious.

The curriculum in both the public and private schools contained both classical and vocational programming. Vocational preparation was believed crucial for blacks seeking employment in local economies.

Jobs quickly transferred from agricultural farming to fertilizer manufacturing and suppliers. Industrial education in the city's public and private schools provided blacks with the necessary training to get access to the new jobs. As a result of these job shifts, many blacks began to push more for even more industrial training opportunities in to ensure that their children had the skills to obtain jobs after graduation. Opponents of industrial training continued to believe that a lack of classical training in these schools would stifle the progress of black Councilians.

Their founders and supporters wanted to prepare more black children with the Intellectual, religious, and industrial schooling that would help them overcome the segregation and discrimination of the racist South. The school taught a mixed classical and industrial curriculum, while building relationships and reinforcing a community sense of citizenship and belonging. Teachers, community elders, and parents provided the necessary spiritual, mental, and industrial instruction to ensure the development of young men and women for the higher callings of life.

Council produced droves of students who were known as being "wonderful

orators, good musicians, well-equipped artists, marvelous songsters, splendid debaters," outstanding athletes, and dedicated community servants

Council students had a very high chance of finishing high school and attending an institution of higher education. Our school had records of accomplishment of producing an established, highly educated black citizenry. Several locals who have worked in and attended our city's black schools have claimed that Council put out "more doctors, more schoolteachers and more responsible people, than the school system we have now."

After college graduation, many of our students returned to Huntsville, or surrounding communities as teachers, physicians, lawyers, dentists, nurses, homemakers, farmers, postmasters, pastors, pharmacists and small business owners. Those who did not attend college were able to use their skills to find good jobs and become satisfied church-attending people and members of stable families

However, I emphasize that community members interviewed for this work ought to be permitted to voice their thoughts about their black schools and that readers ought not to pass judgment on their perspectives. This work is not about being right or wrong about what happened or what is perceived to have happened in Council's black schools, it is about voice.

The task of educational researchers is not only to introduce new ideas to the field, but, as I have sought in this endeavor, it is also about digging up old ones. Oral history has gained "interpretive ground" over the past few years, and educational researchers need to "reorient" themselves about how they gather, look at, and

use educational history. "Not only has educational history expanded beyond the realm of formal institutions and as a result, individual stories about life in historically black schools provide insight on what worked and what did not, while validating a group who achieved many extraordinary things while in an oppressive and segregated environment.