

In addition to my fieldwork journal which supplies some glimpses about the interview experience in general, I would like to offer a small interpretive essay that speaks about the personalities and social contexts of each informant.

Mrs. Pat Dwmby and Mrs. Maggie Ann Brown are both educated, this despite, ^g racial barriers. Their education made them socially as well as intell^lactually compatible for they have been friends for more than forty years. The obtainment of education also made these two women and their husbands part of a social strata that was well-respected not only for their modest wealth, but for what was to be taken for granted in the African-American community as a natural disposition towards leadership. ^{From} In the African-American perspective, any member with a degree of knowledge was to assume a role of authortiy, even women.

Although both women's deceased husbands were considered local leaders and authorities, each widow distances herself from the community. In Mrs. Dwmby's situation, she is twiced-removed for she is neither a native of Bowling Green nor identifies with its people. In the course of the first interview, she consistently referred to the black population as 'they,' or 'minorities' and those of a lower socioeconomic position than she as 'poor blacks,' or 'disadvantaged.' Her children have often remarked her persistent almost classist, in her terms, clannish

manner. That Owmbly belongs to State Street Baptist Church which is considered by Bowling Green blacks to be the church where upper-class blacks attend is further indicative of her position in the black community. Interestingly, it is here that most African-American faculty members of Western Kentucky University attend services. In the second interview, Owmbly remarks that State Street is considered the mother or pioneer church, and this particular church was her husband's home church and therefore became the place of family worship. The first interview actually began by Mrs. Owmbly dismissing herself as an outsider and non-authority and establishing her husband as the foundation of the minutes of discourse that followed. Her life is described and related in the person of her husband, to whom Bowling Green was native, thus permitting her to be objective, but unfortunately causing her to appear at times apathetic.

Mrs. Owmbly knew very little of how working class blacks lived; narratives of how she met with actual day-to-day race relations via conversations with town leadership, in the persons of her husband and other prominent leaders, accidents (ex. trip to the hospital) and finally a confrontation with segregation that her son experienced which was said to have traumatized him for a period of time provided the interviewer with a perspective on her feelings about this subject. Owmbly was removed from daily occurrences, which in their nature were violent, yet normal to the blacks of Bowling Green. She was one of a few blacks, except for school teachers, who did not work menial jobs. She had a professional position in a black insurance agency, a rarity

an unusual business for a black to own

of ~~black business ownership~~ at that time and at the present in Bowling Green. When this insurance company left the city, she was unable to find suitable work until three years later. Because of her education she was able to secure part-time teaching assignments during this period of unemployment. It is important to note that the jobs Owmbly secured had a measure of prestige for blacks: a secretary, a substitute teacher; however, these positions were in the black public schools, as previously noted, the only space made for black professionals.

It seems ironic that Mrs. Owmbly is from Georgia, generally considered the deep South; yet, I believe it was because she was so accustomed to a segregated way of life that the abuses of Bowling Green seemed minimal, at the least, normal- of course, she couldn't attend Western Kentucky University or find a job suitable for her qualifications; these were all small elements of a system under which she had matured and therefore knew how to live by.

Mrs. Owmbly and Mrs. Brown lived and communicated in a circle which by past standards would have been considered middle class for blacks. Their lives were determined by their families and the occupations of their husbands. Although, Mrs. Brown concentrated more on her own efforts as a professional. Many of Mrs. Brown's disparaging remarks about the 'handicapped,' and the opinion she held about some of her Anglo students may be seen as ambivalent. However, it must be understood, Brown's personal agonies as a student suffering under institutionalized racism

fosterd many of her prejudices; the educational system was reproduced in her twofold: with its hatred for the 'other' and bias toward what it saw as third-class citizens, i.e. 'handicapped individual.' The terms which she used to describe the children are educational institutionalized terms such as 'moron,' and in all honesty and equity, she expressed the pervalent and common feelings of must toward these students, repulsion.

Time is central for Brown. Although Owmby relates much of her life in reference to her husband's activities and movements as a teacher and coach, Brown who is a retired teacher, and therefore a 'career woman' by present standards, examines her life with emphasis on her first teaching day, the day President John Kennedy was murdered. Brown remembered how frightened she was when she went for her first time as a teacher in an all-white school during the period of integration. Fear of harm was pre-eminent in her mind because a white President had just been killed; moreover, a President who pushed for Civil Rights actions was dead. To survive the war of integration, she learned how to play what I term 'the game:' how not to be offⁿensive; helpful, but not dominant; and of course, she did many favors for her white associates.

After the interview, I questionned rather ^{whether} Brown had a positive influence on the education of her pupils. She said she believed she gave her students dignity. I agree with her assessment of her presence in the classroom for if she, as single

black women, had enough self-pride to waltz by herself because the white students refused to partner her, she must have instilled some of that same self-worth in her students. If nothing else, she didn't permit the ethos of racism to penetrate into her classroom and hurt either the black or white children as it had scarred her. Despite the inferences in her tone of voice and the vernacular she used, I believe she was a teacher of justice, which required that she balance the scales of racism within her classroom.

As important as the previous contribution was her mere presence as an African-American women during integration in Warren County schools. She did not allow herself to become a mere token of 'manu^{er}vered' change, but set about being competent and reliable. Maggie Ann Brown was and is a paradox of paradoxes, a teacher of what appears to be immaterial lessons of memorized songs and a holder of what seems as evident prejudice, but one who treated all of her students equally, no matter their social, economic, racial, or physical description. She was so successful that she was able to make a race-conscious people forget the color of her skin and accept her as a person. For those generations of students who sat under her tutelage, there must have been an epiphany of who they were and how to view others.

Brown's stories of one waterbucket, some chalk, and few erasers added to hand-me-done- books were ^{sorrowful} ~~sorrifful~~. She must of need ^{most} ~~had~~ been, as ^{like all} ~~well as~~ all of the African-American teachers, inventive and creative in order to keep the children's attention

and give them a desire to learn from the tattered, used pages of a white child's book.

The limits that racism circumscribed for African-Americans in Bowling Green was phenomenal. It limited many to menial labor. Moreover, two-parent working families were a neccessity, not a means to climb up the socioeconomic ladder. Ownby worked for her family's livelihood and readily admits it was very difficult to manage household expenses without her usual income, and this was with only two children (they had just acquired their house only three years before). By denying blacks access to higher education and adequate supplies and funding during their formative educational years, Bowling Green as a city, and Kentucky as a state, sanctioned the poverty of mind and body of its black constituents.

"pooristic" would be better word choice.

The pitiful narratives of both Brown and Ownby only give us in a small way a view of the oppressive nature of Jim Crowism. Blacks were denied the opportunities to be businessman and women. They owned no grocery or department stores. The few black-owned and operated businesses consisted of a few restaurants, barberships, and beauty salons; these businesses catored to black needs and had almost an exclusive black clientele. In other words, these businesses were segregated according to race; many such businesses provided services refused to provide for the black consumer.

When the period of integration began, it pratically spelled

the demise of black businesses. The Southern Queen hotel, which had in past times, served black travelers from out of town, as well as local boarders, had to be closed. As blacks began to be allowed entrance at motels, they ceased to frequent the Southern Queen. This hotel, owned and operated by a black family, serves as an example of the adverse effects of integration. Moreover, Brown argued that black students lost 'something' when the schools were integrated. In her words, they could no longer 'shine' as they once had when they celebrated their own proms and the like. In my opinion, the problem with integration was still one of racism; the signs were taken down but the restrictions and prejudice still remained. Blacks still had their place, and it was not in a seat of authority or attention, no matter what the social, religious, political, or economical domain.

In reference to the expansion of Western Kentucky University, Owmby remarked, "I was glad to see Western progress, but I still say that to me there should be some kind of marker that says that at one time this was the sight of a thriving black community because there were quite a few blacks that lived in that particular area and ...[t]he major thing about it when they did it a lot of the people were not treated fairly and that was the thing that was hurting about it...". The enormity of this action, taking over the land space of African-Americans without recognizing their existence, is typical of the manner in which blacks were and are presently treated. A mere marker has not been erected though this is several years later. Many thousands

of people sit in the bleachers of Diddle Arena without a clue that this was the site of a thriving black community who for whatever reason decided to close themselves in and thus survived, at least for a while. Such actions or lack of actions mark Western Kentucky University as little changed; as an institution, it is still denying blacks their intrinsic rights to be recognized and have their existence and culture legitimazied.^{SP}

Despite, the severity of instutionalized^{SP} racism, many blacks succeeded; unfortunately, they all left Bowling Green to do so in those early years. And many have not returned. Neither WWII, the Civil Rights Movement, or the generations who have followed have changed the socioeconomic status of the city's African-American populus or their position in the political hierarchy. Perhaps, these are the reasons why Pat Owmbly can not consider herself as heir to Bowling Green despite more than fourty years of living here. In reality, its⁵ too much like home, but not enough.

In my opinion, both women and their husbands attmpted to affect change through education and social activities. Yet, they did not live where blacks spoke if they did, and were not privy to the rebellious thoughts they wished to raise, if any. Owmbly and Brown have been friends and neighbors for more than fourty^{SP} years in two different neighborhoods, but for many obvious reasons.

Conclusion could be strengthened, after earlier paragraph a powerful statement, it just says "changes."