

*To Integrate: Set Boys, Girls Apart?<sup>1</sup>:  
The Integration of the Taylor County, Georgia, Schools*

by

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The landmark 1954 case, *Brown v. the Board of Education*, which ruled that the legally mandated separation of the black and white races in public schools was unconstitutional, ushered in the era of school desegregation. Despite the court's 1955 injunction to proceed with the dismantling of the dual school systems of the Southern and Border states "with all deliberate speed," the school desegregation movement continued for over two decades before most school children of the South attended substantially integrated schools. The struggle for school integration took twenty years because of the entrenched opposition of most white persons in the South, persons who pushed local and state governments to oppose integration by any means necessary. Rural white Southerners, especially, opposed mixing the races in schools because of the large place in community social life that the schools occupied. Depending on local circumstances, rural black Southerners sometimes also opposed school integration, often because black people had measures of power over the black school systems they felt they would have to surrender in integrated systems.

Taylor County, Georgia, the school system examined in this paper, is a rural county in middle Georgia, approximately halfway between the cities of Columbus and Macon. The county has declined in population in almost every census since 1920, from that year's historic high of over 11,000 persons to the 1990 population of 7,642 persons. The county lost population for fifty years while transforming from a county of numerous small tenant- or owner-operated farms to a county of a few large farms, small industries, and home to many who commute to work in neighboring counties.

Taylor County's school desegregation experience was perhaps unique for counties of its size and type. In Taylor County, the board of education noted the *Brown* decision in 1954 by adopting a resolution condemning the precedent. The county board of education did not officially discuss integration or desegregation again until 1965. In that year, they had to decide whether to file a desegregation plan with the federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, or face losing their federal funds. While the board no doubt discussed the progress of school desegregation in private conversations before or after meetings, as other white Taylor Countians discussed events like the 1961 desegregation of the University of Georgia by Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter, white people seemed to believe it could not happen in Taylor County for a generation at least. Whites comfortably believed their social customs would continue as they always

had. At the same time, black Taylor Countians concentrated on improving their own schools, rather than making any concerted attempt to enter the white schools. The pressure on Taylor County to integrate, then, came not from a local struggle, but from the federal government. The challenge for the Taylor County Board of Education after 1965 was to accommodate their schools to federal desegregation standards while at the same time placating their fellow whites enough to keep them in the public school system. Following these two imperatives, the board ultimately took the nearly unique step of reorganizing their school system from racial segregation to sexual segregation.<sup>2</sup>

Taylor Countians of both races reacted to the idea of integration in ways partly reflecting the centrality of the schools to community social life. Even after the advent of television in the 1950s (broadcast from Columbus and Macon) and improved roads to ease transportation to the cities, the schools remained equal to the churches as community centers. School sports, Halloween carnivals, Christmas programs, junior-senior banquets, and commencement activities in the white and black schools were important social occasions for the respective racial communities. School integration in the 1960s thus implied to Taylor Countians the prospect of the social integration of the races, an implication not necessarily apparent in urban areas where the schools did not have the same social importance.<sup>3</sup> Most whites and many blacks opposed school integration so strongly because such a move seemed to threaten an entire way of life.

While before integration the official rule was "separate but equal" facilities for whites and blacks, until the 1950s the schools in Taylor County, as in much of the South, were far from equal. The county's school system was divided into nine school districts.<sup>4</sup> Most districts were very poor and maintained very poor-quality schools for whites, while hardly supporting the black schools at all. The county board appointed boards of white trustees for each district and black trustees for most black schools. Taxes raised in each district mainly supported the respective district schools, so that, in those days before substantial state funding for education, wide disparities existed. Reynolds, Taylor County's second town, was the center of a rich agricultural area along the Flint River. The Reynolds district, while smaller than the district containing the county seat of Butler, was richer and supported a better school for whites. Typically in the 1920s and 1930s, the trustees of the two town districts controlled larger budgets than did the county board of education. The county board, though, supplemented the funds of the rural districts as well as fund the black schools, which had their own trustees but rarely shared in their district tax revenues.<sup>5</sup>

The rural white schools received something of a boost during the Depression when the Public Works Administration built substantial brick school buildings to serve as consolidated rural grammar schools. Many one-room schools were consolidated into eight rural grammar schools, with students after grade seven being transported by bus to the high schools in Butler or Reynolds. The black schools, in town and country, received no such boost, and the county continued barely to support them. The county paid teachers' salaries and paid persons to transport children to school, provided they could supply their own transportation equipment. Salaries of black personnel were, of course, inferior to those of whites, according to an official pay scale.<sup>6</sup> The county rarely supported the physical upkeep of school buildings or equipment. For that, the schools



depended on their own trustees, who either provided funds from their own pockets or organized parents to donate loads of firewood, needed labor, or other gifts to the schools.<sup>7</sup> In cases of extreme need, the county board sometimes agreed to buy building materials for a rundown school, provided the local trustees recruited the labor to make the necessary repairs.<sup>8</sup> Many repairs were made after the Second World War when the county was able to buy surplus army barracks they used as new school buildings for blacks, or as sources of scrap lumber to repair existing buildings. Other school equipment such as books or desks were given to the black schools from the white schools when they later obtained new equipment.<sup>9</sup> While school patrons and outside observers testify that the white schools were poor, a former teacher in the black schools characterizes those schools as "deplorable."<sup>10</sup>

Education in Taylor County began to modernize in the late 1940s, as consolidation of schools of both races continued and the power of the county board of education over local districts grew.<sup>11</sup> Because of the extremely bad condition of Butler High School, which by then drew students from seven of the county's ten white grammar schools, students and parents called for a new high school complex for whites. Butler's grammar school was housed in one of the P. W. A. brick buildings, but the high school was in a poorly constructed, crumbling brick and tile building. The old building, built in 1922, was still being paid for, but only by the Butler and Howard districts, even though in the intervening two decades the school had come to serve seven of the nine county districts. In 1949, the *Butler Herald*, a weekly newspaper, published a series of letters from high school students detailing the poor condition of the school and asking for a new one to serve the entire county.<sup>12</sup>

As the efforts to replace Butler High School were undertaken, black residents began to demand equal facilities. When the county board scheduled a 1950 referendum on a bond issue to build a new county high school for whites, the opponents used black demands as grounds to urge defeat of the referendum. In response to newspaper advertisements admonishing, "Don't Cheat a Child!" the opponents fired back with the following in a full-page ad in the *Butler Herald*:

Recently, a number of suits have been filed in Federal Courts seeking to compel various counties to provide equal educational facilities for Negroes. Probably, such a suit will be filed in every county in Georgia within the next twelve months. It could hit Taylor County at any time. If so, then any money which was held for school buildings by the trustees would have to be expended on a 50-50 basis with the Negro system in the County. That is, if the Federal Courts upheld such a suit, and it is the opinion of many distinguished jurists that the Courts will uphold this contention.

No one denies that our Negro citizens should not [*sic*] have good schools and good teachers. The South, and particularly Georgia, has made a great deal of progress in this respect during the past few years. However, we do not have the money at the present time to provide equal educational opportunities for our Negro citizens, and it must be done on a gradual basis.<sup>13</sup>

The author of the advertisement also argued that the county debt was already too large while farm income was falling. The author also said that less than ten per cent of black Taylor Countians paid taxes, and so the county should not have to spend half its

school money for black people. Prior to 1951, when Governor Herman Talmadge and the General Assembly began a sales tax for education, local funds for education came entirely from property taxes. Large farmers often resented paying higher school taxes voted on them by town residents or rural tenants, neither class having many acres to pay tax on. This grievance would be especially great in the 1950 bond issue, because most of the large farms were in the eastern part of the county around Reynolds. Wealthy Reynolds prided itself on the high academic standing of its high school, which was supported by special taxes in the district. The Reynolds whites resented an attempt to get them to pay for a school in Butler or to close their school and send their children to Butler.<sup>14</sup>

The day before the bond issue referendum on February 15, 1950, black citizens in Taylor County presented a petition to the county board of education demanding facilities and per-pupil expenditure for black schools equal to those for the white schools.<sup>15</sup> The petition was part of an N. A. A. C. P. campaign across the state to contest the unequal conditions of education for the races. In several counties, the petitions had already been followed by federal law suits. The board took no action on the petition, but the referendum failed by 19 votes (the county voted 738 to 719 against the bond issue, while the Reynolds district voted 344 to 12 against the issue).<sup>16</sup> The board of education responded to the defeat by making plans for a future school bond issue to build new schools for whites and blacks in both Butler and Reynolds. The first step was having the state Department of Education's Division of Schoolhouse Planning and Survey conduct a school plant survey in the county. Local and state education officials conducted public meetings for both the black and white communities about the needs of the schools.<sup>17</sup>

In December 1950 while planning for a new bond issue, the board of education received the additional impetus of having Butler High School featured in the *Atlanta Journal's* series on the fifty worst school buildings in Georgia. The short article was accompanied by photographs of the broken auditorium seats, the rotten floors through which a member of the school board once fell, the extension cords draped from the ceilings to provide electricity for the classrooms (which were not wired for lights or outlets) from hallway ceiling fixtures, and the place where an estimated 200 pounds of ceiling plaster collapsed.<sup>18</sup> The Butler principal, Dwight S. Compton, took pieces of rotten flooring to bond rallies, at which he would crumble up a handful to throw out into the audience, demonstrating what the students walked on every day.<sup>19</sup> The board was also careful to announce before the new referendum (conducted in November of 1951) that no school would be consolidated that met the state minimum daily attendance of fifteen students per teacher.<sup>20</sup> The board made this announcement to make clear that a single county high school for whites, to which residents of Reynolds objected, was no longer the object of the bond issue. The board also sweetened the deal by planning that the funds raised would finance projects for both white and black schools in both Butler and Reynolds. This bond issue passed 1, 152 votes to 799, although the Reynolds district still voted no, 364 votes to 14.<sup>21</sup>

Even though the board had adopted a formula by which to divide the proceeds of the bond issue, the members changed their minds when they learned they could obtain



funds from the State School Building Authority to cover part of the building costs. With state funds partly to offset school building costs, the board decided to use \$90,000 of the \$190,000 bond issue to build a high school gymnasium in Butler for the white school.<sup>22</sup> The board received over \$600,000 from the state to build a new Butler High School for Whites and a new Butler Elementary and High School for Negroes,<sup>23</sup> as well as new elementary schools in Reynolds for whites and blacks. Of the \$630,000 received from the state, the board spent over \$400,000 on the black school projects in Butler and Reynolds.<sup>24</sup> This at first surprising figure demonstrates the disparity between white and black education in the county; the county had to build entirely new schools for black people, while for white people they could only supplement or replace particular buildings on existing campuses. The new schools were occupied during the 1955-1956 school year.

Taylor County took two other steps toward modernizing its school system in the early 1950s. In 1951, the county board of education decided to make local boards of trustees optional according to the wishes of each district. The board also decided to reserve the right to reject local trustees' recommendations on teacher hiring, an area the trustees had previously controlled.<sup>25</sup> Shortly thereafter, only the Butler and Reynolds districts continued to have a board of trustees. Then in 1954, the board adopted a plan to reorganize the school system, finally consolidating all the white and black rural schools into either Reynolds or Butler. After the closing of the rural schools, Butler schools taught grades 1-12 for whites and blacks, and Reynolds schools taught grades 1-12 for whites and grades 1-8 for blacks.<sup>26</sup> This completed a process that since 1945 had closed eight white rural schools and 26 black rural schools.<sup>27</sup> While this marked progress for both whites and blacks, another institutional change represented a white realization of nascent black power and the whites' attempt to neutralize it. Before 1951, the county board of education consisted of five members elected in five districts. By action of the state legislature in 1949, ratified by a local referendum in 1951, the board was expanded to nine members, who were elected from the nine school districts by a countywide vote.<sup>28</sup> Some white Taylor Countians today freely admit that leaders did this to dilute black voting strength based on the expectation that more blacks would be registering and voting than had done so before.<sup>29</sup>

The modern, new buildings for the black schools seem to have energized their faculties and administration. Beginning in the middle 1950s, articles on the black schools, apparently written by the principal of the Butler school, "Professor" Robert Lee McDougald<sup>30</sup>, began to appear occasionally in the *Butler Herald*. The then-assistant principal at the Butler school, Charlie Hicks, remembers that it was very difficult to get the newspaper to take any notice of the black community, so they were glad to have the articles published, even under the heading "Colored News." These articles detailed the workshops conducted by Atlanta University professors for the teachers, student activities, and other school news. Interestingly, these articles refer to the black school as Butler High School, the name the whites used for their own school. Despite these interior references, the newspaper editor's headlines for the articles were "Butler Colored School," the name used by the white community for the black school.<sup>31</sup> After they occupied the new building in 1956, Mr. Hicks and some other young teachers promoted

changing the name of the school officially to Eureka Elementary and High School, a name they felt represented the discovery of excellence. The distinctive name also established the school's identity as separate from Butler High. The board of education approved the request.<sup>32</sup>

After the death of Professor McDougald in 1961, Mr. Hicks became principal of the Eureka School. He immediately began to lobby the school board for a gymnasium for Eureka. Hicks argued persuasively that the Eureka School was the only school of its size in that part of Georgia without a gymnasium. After what he describes a hard fight, the board in 1962 authorized a bond election for a bond issue of \$60,000 for the gymnasium. Only about a quarter of the registered voters in Taylor County were black, but they turned out in force for the bond election, while whites seem to have taken little interest. The white community perhaps did not contest this bond issue because they were still attempting to provide satisfactory facilities to black people as a means of preempting any integration campaign. The new gymnasium was clearly a minimal facility for the school, since the amount authorized for its construction was only two thirds of the amount approved for the construction of the Butler High gymnasium a decade earlier. The bond issue was approved by 433 votes to 137 votes.<sup>33</sup> After the gym was completed in 1963, the Eureka school officials planned a dedication ceremony during which they officially renamed the school the R. L. McDougald Elementary and High School.<sup>34</sup> The Reynolds Colored Elementary School followed suit in 1964, with its P. T. A. receiving board approval for changing the school's name to W. E. Parker Elementary, in memory of another black educator.<sup>35</sup> School administrators hung portraits of each man in the school named in his memory.

The new facilities for blacks were augmented with federal funding in the early 1960s. Title I money, earmarked for underprivileged sections of school districts, began to flow to the black schools in 1964. This funding combined with the new buildings and energetic faculty so that Taylor County had what Hicks considers one of Georgia's finest black school systems among counties of its size and type.<sup>36</sup> Because of the white board of education's general lack of interest in running the black schools, the principals of the black schools had wide autonomy. The school board typically allowed the black principals to hire their own teachers, while they approved the white teachers annually.<sup>37</sup> The black community, too, through their parent-teacher associations, churches, and scouting troops for boys and girls, had a close relationship to their schools. Black Taylor Countians took great pride in their schools, which, with their new names, became monuments to local black history.

The Taylor County board of education passed a resolution condemning the *Brown* decision in 1954, but they did not have to confront the issue of integrating the races until 1965. For the first half of that year, the board wrestled over whether to file a certificate of compliance with the federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The board had to certify that the Taylor County school system complied with the federal desegregation guidelines or face the loss of federal education funds. The board made and reversed decisions several times from February to June 1965. At the meeting in May of that year, the board resolved to defy the federal government and call a referendum for additional local property tax to make up for the expected loss of federal funds. During



two meetings in June, however, the board reversed that decision and adopted a "freedom of choice" plan, whereby parents would be allowed to choose which school they wanted their children to attend. Apparently, the board was at first willing to lose federal funds under the misapprehension that actual integration would have to occur to maintain the funding. By June, however, they had learned that the stroke of a pen could convert a *de jure* segregated system into a *de facto* segregated system, thus requiring lengthy H. E. W. investigations and hearings before they could cut funding. The freedom of choice plan caused no stir initially, since the board decided all transfers would be handled by "personal contact" with the superintendent, Herman Elliston, rather than by offering the school transfer alternative to all parents by mailing them school-choice forms.

What was perhaps more important, the white community preoccupied itself that summer with the consolidation of the Reynolds and Butler high schools, and paid little attention to possible integration. Consolidation had been discussed sporadically since the first bond issue election in 1950. In the early 1960s, Butler school patrons began to talk more and more about the benefits a larger school could offer, such as more college-preparatory classes and the possibility of a football program. Reynolds High, always small, now was assailed by rumors that it had a padded student roll to maintain on paper the state minimum daily attendance.<sup>38</sup> Reynolds whites were fiercely loyal to their school, which they insisted was superior to Butler. They insisted that if the Butler people were only willing to spend money on their school, as Reynolds had done, they would not need consolidation to offer a complete college-preparatory curriculum.<sup>39</sup> The Reynolds district trustees, popularly known as the Reynolds city board of education, even consulted with the state Department of Education about the possibility of integrating Reynolds High (black high school students from Reynolds were bused to McDougald High in Butler) to attain the minimum enrollment, but nothing came of those discussions.<sup>40</sup> Finally, in July of 1965, the board voted to close Reynolds High School and transport its students to the Butler school, which they renamed Taylor County Elementary and High School, although grades 1-8 were left at Reynolds Elementary School.<sup>41</sup> School consolidation seems to have provoked more controversy in the Reynolds area than possible integration. Rather than send their children to Butler to school, many Reynolds families preferred sending their children to Peach County High in Fort Valley, which was a larger school about the same distance from Reynolds as Butler was.

The board continued to resist integration, although they were not all constant in this resistance. Taylor County had no confrontationist white power organization like the Ku Klux Klan. Rather, many whites feared and sought to avert black demonstrations. Harold Brown, a member of the board of education, remembers that at one meeting the member from Reynolds arrived very agitated. The member, Dr. Edwards Whatley, had heard that Martin Luther King, Jr., was coming to lead black Reynoldsites in a march to integrate the schools. Dr. Whatley insisted the board had to move to integrate the schools immediately or suffer the march, which he considered a terrible prospect for Taylor County. Several of the more conservative members of the board were absent, and those present were alarmed and ready to act. Brown held out and persuaded the board to calm down and not act before they absolutely had to.<sup>42</sup> Whatever the basis of Dr.

Whitley's rumor, the black people never marched. Charlie Hicks, principal of McDougald School at the time, insists that black Taylor Countians did not want to integrate. Their schools were good and they knew it. Hicks was then president of the Georgia Teachers and Education Association, the major black teachers' organization before integration brought the merger of the white and black associations. While the G. T. E. A. worked at the state level for integration, Hicks, knowing King and other civil rights leaders, persuaded them to stay out of Taylor County. Hicks today laughs that while white Taylor Countians had no idea of it, the county schools for blacks were "aristocrats" among the black school systems in the state.

During the first year of freedom of choice, no students chose to transfer. The board began to receive periodic visits from H. E. W. officials, who investigated systems with few or no black students attending majority white schools to see if there were impediments to free choice. These officials often unofficially recommended certain actions to the board or superintendent, such as "forc[ing] a dependent, old-maid schoolteacher," one who could not afford to look elsewhere for a job, to transfer from a white school to a black school. Such helpful suggestions only enraged the board members and hardened their resolve that their freedom of choice plan was simply the American way.<sup>43</sup> On April 7, 1966, the board expressed this reservation to the certificate of compliance with federal desegregation guidelines it submitted to federal officials:

A freedom of choice plan of desegregation of all grades in all the schools of Taylor County, Georgia, school system was submitted to the U. S. Commissioner of Education for the 1965-1966 school year. This plan was accepted by the commissioner and had provisions for the continued operation of the schools of Taylor County under such a plan for the 1966-1967 school year. This plan will remain in effect for the ensuing school year in Taylor County. All students, regardless of race, color, or national origin will be admitted to any school or schools of their choice. However, in order to prevent disorder in the operation of the public schools of Taylor County and a disruption of the educational program for all children in the schools of the county, the Taylor County Board of Education cannot, and will not, assume the responsibility for making assignments of teachers and students in any manner other than their own freedom of choice of schools.<sup>44</sup>

In April 1966, however, the board did partly accommodate itself to the H. E. W. directives by sending letters to all parents explaining the desegregation plan, including a school choice form that all parents had to return before they could register their children for the next school year. The board ran into trouble when only two students chose to transfer the next year from "previously all Negro" schools to "previously all white" schools. H. E. W. officials told School Superintendent Elliston in telephone conversations that a greater number of transfers of black students into the white schools would be necessary, or Taylor County's federal funds would be cut off.<sup>45</sup> The board understood that only token integration was required, but certainly more than the single elementary student and single high school student who had chosen to transfer. In May the board thus reversed its declaration of April and decided to assign students contrary to their expressed choice. It directed the school superintendent to select six McDougald High students and assign them to Taylor County High.



The board action was met with a lawsuit by Garland T. Byrd, a former lieutenant governor of Georgia, from Taylor County. On May 24, Byrd had entered the Democratic race for governor, joining a field already contested by Lester Maddox and James Gray, avowed segregationists, as well as Ellis Arnall and, ultimately, Jimmy Carter. Later during that campaign, Byrd would characterize the federal desegregation guidelines as "the one overriding issue, the most important one I have ever faced in all my political life . . ."<sup>46</sup> Byrd sued to stop the board from proceeding with the forced transfer of the black students and to stop the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare from cutting off Taylor's funds. Byrd insisted that the assignment of the students to Taylor County High because of their race to meet a quota was illegal under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Byrd, acting as a segregationist, had become the defender of the civil rights of the black students.<sup>47</sup>

The suit, first filed in the Superior Court of Taylor County, was removed on motion of H. E. W. to the federal District Court in Columbus. The federal attorneys argued against Byrd's right to bring the suit, since he sued not on behalf of his children, but as a private citizen. Nonetheless, Judge J. Robert Elliott admitted the suit. In pleadings before the bench, the federal attorneys denied that any H. E. W. spokesmen had insisted on a racial quota for the Taylor County schools. They explained that the Taylor County officials had misinterpreted the federal desegregation guidelines. Federal officials investigated systems with fewer than ten per cent of black students attending white majority schools, but they investigated simply to make sure that there were no impediments to the students' exercising free choice. The absence of black children in a white school alone would not disqualify Taylor County from receiving federal funds. With this clear, Judge Elliott questioned the need for the suit, but Byrd and the Taylor County attorney, Charles C. Stone, asked that the federal attorneys put what they said in writing, which they did in a stipulation signed by all attorneys involved. While the federal attorneys then wanted the case dismissed, Judge Elliott, at the request of Byrd and Stone, continued the suit without scheduling any further hearings on it, so the federal court could enforce the stipulation.<sup>48</sup> Byrd ultimately lost the race for governor after promoting himself as the first segregationist since 1954 to win against the federal government, but, for the moment, white Taylor Countians had indeed won, and no racial quota was enforced by the county board of education.

Freedom of choice did continue however. In May 1966, two students had chosen to enter white schools at the beginning of the next school year. Alton Harris entered the eighth grade at Reynolds Elementary, transferring from W. E. Parker Elementary, and Mable Johnson entered the tenth grade at Taylor County High, transferring from R. L. McDougald High. Looking back, Charlie Hicks speaks of these first black students to integrate the white schools of Taylor County as having committed a folly for which they were unprepared. Hicks himself never encouraged any McDougald students to transfer to Taylor County High because he believed McDougald was the superior school.<sup>49</sup> The teachers at McDougald were continually having in-service workshops conducted by college professors of education and psychology. McDougald had established a wide range of student activities. The school even had a wider range of activities than Taylor County High, since McDougald had a very good marching band that was a source of

pride for the black community, while the white school had no band. Hicks in these years also sought certification for the school by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, while the principal of Taylor resisted the effort, not wanting an outside accrediting team examining the operation of his school.<sup>50</sup>

Hicks believes that "certain community individuals" persuaded Mable Johnson to transfer schools as a civil rights gesture. A teacher at McDougald, Ms. Lillie McCree, recalls that most black parents did not want to integrate, since they felt their students would not do well in white schools without black role models teaching them. Since the schools exercised corporal punishment, too, parents feared unfair treatment for the children at the hands of white disciplinarians. Perhaps most of all, McCree remembers, black people feared that integration would mean that the schools would lose touch with the black community. Despite these fears, McCree believes that some teachers did encourage students to integrate the white schools. They knew integration had to come sometime, and the sooner it did, the more quickly people's fears would be laid to rest. McCree, herself a native of Alabama, liked Taylor County and expected no white violence.<sup>51</sup>

Alton Harris seems to have had little trouble at Reynolds Elementary, but after a year, he returned to the black school system.<sup>52</sup> This may have been partly because after eighth grade he had to choose between McDougald and Taylor County high schools, and Mable Johnson did not have a good experience at Taylor. White students completely ostracized Johnson, according to one teacher.<sup>53</sup> Another person remembers that students teasingly called the girl "Mable Bird Johnson," since she was in the school, in their eyes, because of Lyndon Johnson, whose family included Lady Bird and Lynda Bird.<sup>54</sup>

More serious than this treatment by students was the unprofessional conduct of at least one teacher. No students wanted to sit next to the girl in classes, so an English teacher, Mrs. Jim White, made students sit next to her as punishment for misbehavior. One student so assigned, an "extreme racist" at the time, according to a schoolmate, went to the board of education over the assignment. The board supported the teacher, the boy sat next to Mable Johnson, and he bedeviled her terribly. She ended up transferring from the school before the end of the year.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps because she had "too much pride," as Mr. Hicks thinks, to return to McDougald, she transferred to a segregated black school in neighboring Crawford County.<sup>56</sup>

While Johnson and Harris did not remain in the white school system, and no other students, black or white, transferred between the dual systems under freedom of choice, their one-time integration of the white schools allowed the board of education in their dealings with H. E. W. to refer to their "previously all white" and even "previously all Negro" schools. The board and superintendent went through 1967 facing continuing pressure from federal officials to formulate a plan, such as geographic attendance zones for McDougald High and Taylor, that would dismantle the dual school system without establishing racial quotas for token integration of the white schools only.<sup>57</sup> The school board felt confident in the stipulation arising out of *Byrd v. the United States, et al*, that as long as students were free to make an unhampered choice of schools, the federal government could not cut off funding to the Taylor County schools.<sup>58</sup> Federal officials



began to turn from the question of student enrollment to hiring practices. In February of 1967, in conversation with Superintendent Elliston, H. E. W. officials insisted that at least one black teacher should be placed in each white school and one white teacher should be placed in each black school. The school bus drivers should also be integrated, with some drivers driving routes of the other race. They then reiterated the earlier criterion that at least five to ten per cent of black students should be enrolled in previously all white schools for the system to be considered integrated.<sup>59</sup>

The mills of H. E. W. seem to have ground slowly. Throughout 1967 the school board discussed the new federal demands. They waived an H. E. W. hearing on the system's noncompliance with the federal guidelines that had been scheduled for October of that year. In September of 1967, however, the board, while discussing the federal demands, finally decided to pay black drivers of county-owned school buses the same rate per mile that white drivers received.<sup>60</sup>

Finally, in January of 1968, H. E. W. officials told the Taylor County Board of Education that they would definitely cut off their funds at the end of that month unless they immediately adopted a comprehensive desegregation plan. At Superintendent Elliston's request, a representative of H. E. W. met with the board at a special meeting on 23 January 1968 to explain just what their plan had to include. Frederick T. Cioffi of H. E. W.'s Office of Civil Rights and Albert T. Hamlin, an H. E. W. attorney, made clear to the board what they had to do. H. E. W. required that the board take positive steps toward eliminating the dual system beginning in September 1968, and they must completely consolidate the dual system by September 1969. The board voted six to three in favor of completing integration by September 1969. They voted seven to two to consolidate Taylor County High School and R. L. McDougald High School in September 1968, with grades 9-12 taught at the Taylor campus, and grades 6-8 taught at the McDougald campus. The faculties of the two schools would be transferred according to grade level taught. Reynolds and Parker elementary schools would similarly consolidate their grades seven and eight, with one level taught at each school and with faculties also being transferred accordingly. The school bus routes would serve the individual schools, regardless of passenger race. They would consolidate the elementary grades in September 1969. Cioffi and Hamlin assured the board that the adoption of this plan would ensure that federal funds to the system would not be cut during the 1967-1968 school year.<sup>61</sup>

The white community reacted very negatively to the announcement of this plan. Superintendent Elliston had Norman Carter, then principal of Taylor County Elementary and High, write a letter to white parents, informing them of the plans for the 1968-1969 school year. As a result, Carter initially suffered the negative reaction himself. At the end of the following board meeting, two white men of the community came to fight Carter. School board chairman William Maxwell, though, intervened and convinced them that Elliston, not Carter, was responsible for the plan.<sup>62</sup> At any rate, at the board meeting on February 1, 1968, the board reversed its decision and rejected the plan that Cioffi and Hamlin had outlined. As a substitute, they decided to begin desegregation during the remainder of the 1967-1968 term by integrating the faculties of the schools. They resolved to ask two teachers from both T. C. H. and McDougald and one teacher from

both Reynolds and Parker to transfer between the schools. They still insisted that they would not transfer any teacher who did not volunteer.<sup>63</sup> Adding to this plan a few days later, the board decided to transfer in September 1968 ten per cent of the students enrolled in McDougald to Taylor County Elementary and High, and ten per cent of the students enrolled in Parker to Reynolds Elementary. The school buses serving those schools would continue to do so, regardless of the race of the student attending.<sup>64</sup>

Black Taylor County educators were now caught in the integration dilemma. They generally did not favor the integration of the schools, and none of them wanted to transfer to the white schools.<sup>65</sup> Despite their personal feelings about integration, they could not accept Taylor County giving up federal education funds. Taylor County then received \$200,000 a year in Title I funds for underprivileged areas, ninety per cent of which went to the black schools. The black schools also received funds for specific federal programs, such as Head Start.<sup>66</sup> At the request of the Taylor County unit of the Georgia Teachers and Education Association in March 1968, the board and superintendent met at the McDougald School with them and other concerned black citizens. The board answered questions about the county's status for continued federal funding and assured the people that they would carefully consider the steps necessary to keep receiving federal funds.<sup>67</sup>

H. E. W. did not accept the desegregation plan adopted by the board in February. The school board therefore sent Kenny Fuller, the system's coordinator for federal projects, and Charlie Hicks to Washington in March to confer with federal officials about an acceptable plan.<sup>68</sup> Hicks and Fuller reported to the board what steps the H. E. W. officials recommended. By a five to three vote, the school board adopted these recommendations as their desegregation plan and submitted the plan to H. E. W. For the 1968-1969 school year, the system would take steps to integrate the faculties, students, and transportation facilities of all the county schools. Six teachers from both Taylor County and McDougald (three from the elementary and three from the high school) and two teachers from both Reynolds and Parker would be transferred between the schools. As adopted in February, ten per cent of the students of both Parker and McDougald schools would be transferred to their corresponding white schools, with freedom of choice still being offered to other students. Finally, school buses would be completely integrated. For the 1969-1970 term, the board planned to consolidate the schools completely, with grades 1-3 taught at the Taylor County and Reynolds elementary schools, grades 4-8 taught at the McDougald and Parker schools, and grades 9-12 taught at Taylor County High School.<sup>69</sup>

White Taylor Countians were appalled and angry. In June, the board hosted a public meeting in the county courthouse for C. F. McCollum, the Georgia consultant for federal Title I programs, to discuss federal education programs in Taylor County. The board apparently wanted to explain to people the importance of federal funds for education in the county. A very rowdy minority of white citizens shouted McCollum down. Norman Carter remembers how embarrassing it was, and described the people as figuratively running McCollum out of town on a rail. Harold Brown recalls at least one citizen trying to pick a fight with another board member, but no fights broke out.<sup>70</sup> The school board directed the superintendent to write McCollum a letter apologizing for Taylor



County's unfriendly reception.<sup>71</sup>

That year was an election year, and three members of the board of education, including the chairman, William Maxwell, chose to retire. Norman Carter, the young principal of Taylor and a very popular basketball coach, was approached by a group of citizens to run against Herman Elliston for school superintendent. Carter describes this group, who had already raised money for his campaign, as extreme segregationists. Carter himself was not an extremist, but he felt Elliston had moved too quickly. White Taylor Countians would not accept the complete integration of the schools as Elliston and the board had planned. Carter believed that putting the board's plan into effect would produce massive withdrawals of whites from the public school system, something he judged would damage the schools and the community. For these reasons, Carter ran against Elliston. He defeated Elliston easily. The lack of opposition to the six incumbent board members running for reelection indicates how much people blamed the superintendent and not the school board members.

With the election of a new superintendent, the school board put on hold all desegregation plans. The schools opened in September 1968 as segregated as ever, with no teacher or student transfers.<sup>72</sup> In December, the board received word from the federal Department of Justice that it had received complaints about discriminatory practices in the Taylor County schools. The department demanded to know what steps the schools were taking to remedy the situation. The board simply replied that since a new superintendent and three new board members would take office January 1, 1969, there was the possibility of "reopened negotiations."<sup>73</sup> The Justice Department had been empowered by Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to sue segregated systems. It seems to have finally turned its attentions to Taylor County because the system was now without a desegregation plan other than freedom of choice, which had been ruled an insufficient remedy to the unconstitutional maintenance of a segregated system.<sup>74</sup>

The board continued to discuss alternatives with H. E. W. in 1969, but it adopted no new desegregation plan, and federal funds were finally cut. In December of 1969, the Department of Justice, impatient with the pace of lawsuits against individual school systems, sued the Georgia Department of Education. The suit sought to enjoin it from paying any funds to 81 school systems in Georgia that were still segregated and not under any other court order. Taylor County and most of its surrounding counties were affected by the December 17, 1969, injunction to plan for immediate integration of schools or lose all state education funds by March 1, 1970. Taylor County could not operate without state funds, since the state funded about 85 per cent of the local school budget.<sup>75</sup> Finally faced with total integration, three members of the school board, including the chairman of the board, Emory Harris, resigned.<sup>76</sup>

The local education leaders knew they could postpone integration no further. They thus decided to make it a pill the white community could swallow. Former Superintendent Carter frankly states that they knew the black people had no choice except the public schools, but the whites could withdraw to organize private schools. The whites controlled the economy and government of the county, and for them to dissociate themselves from the public schools would be disastrous.<sup>77</sup> For proof of this, he has only to consider Taylor's neighbor, Talbot County, where only about a third of the population is white.

"Like rats leaving a sinking ship," Carter says, the superintendent and most board members resigned and the whites left the public schools for private academies or public schools in neighboring counties. After over twenty years, Talbot County schools are still almost entirely black.<sup>78</sup>

Before developing a plan acceptable to most whites, Carter and the school board had to prove finally that integration had to occur. Carter, joined by Georgia Governor Lester Maddox, State School Superintendent Jack Nix, the State Board of Education, and the State Attorney General's Office sued the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, H. E. W. Secretary Robert Finch, and United States Attorney General John Mitchell to prevent them from "arbitrarily assigning Georgia children to schools regardless of the choice of their parents."<sup>79</sup> The suit was dismissed since it contested a case still in the federal court in Atlanta. Next, a delegation of the school board visited Governor Maddox to ask him if he could guarantee continued state funding of the schools. Maddox received them and was sympathetic, but they all knew there was nothing he could do.<sup>80</sup> Finally, the board submitted to the federal court a plan to continue freedom of choice for students while assigning teachers to schools to achieve racially balanced faculties. The court rejected the plan.<sup>81</sup>

Having publicly exhausted all other alternatives, Carter and the board of education could begin to prepare white Taylor Countians for the total integration of the races. They held meetings in most white churches to discuss their alternatives. The system then had two options; they could either organize the schools as under the 1968 plan, with some grade levels at the former black schools and some grade levels at the former white schools, or they could segregate by sex, turning the former black schools into boys' schools and the former white schools into girls' schools. The idea of sexual segregation was not new. The school board in unofficial conversations had said for years that if integration ever came, that would be their plan.<sup>82</sup> Most white people accepted this alternative, since, while they may have had many concerns about integration, the major fear was black boys attending school and riding buses with white girls. As the then-principal of Taylor, Jerry Partain, says, "In the South, we have always been very protective of our women."<sup>83</sup> In April 1970, the board finally voted by four votes to three to separate the schools by sex beginning with the 1970-1971 school year. The board later officially renamed the McDougald and Taylor County schools as Taylor County Boys' School and Taylor County Girls' School. Parker and Reynolds schools also became boys' and girls' schools.<sup>84</sup> The board submitted a plan of sex segregation to the federal court, making clear that the faculties and administration of the schools would be racially balanced. Taylor County Boys' School had a black principal and a white assistant principal, while the Girls' School had a white principal and a black assistant principal. The Reynolds schools also had principals of different races.<sup>85</sup> The plan was accepted by the court, although challenged by a lawsuit brought by black parents charging that segregation by sex violated their children's civil rights.<sup>86</sup>

There were other conflicts over steps taken to placate whites. To calm fears whites had about the inferior qualifications of black teachers, the school board in December 1969 decided to require that all teachers take the National Teachers Exam, obtaining a score of at least 950. They exempted teachers with over 30 years experience in the system.



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This was a minimum standard, since a score of 950 then ranked at the tenth percentile nationally, but black teachers rightly considered the requirement more aimed at them than at the white teachers. Twenty-two of the county's fifty black teachers (as well as three white teachers) refused to take the exam and were not rehired for the next school year. The high school students at McDougald responded by staging a walkout and then a boycott of school.<sup>87</sup> Because of isolated cases of vandalism committed by some students and the loss of state money based on daily attendance, the county closed McDougald School for two days. Superintendent Carter told McDougald teachers, some of whom encouraged the walkout according to Principal Hicks, that days of school missed in April because of the walkout would be made up in the summer. Since most teachers themselves had to go to summer school to work on advanced degrees, they cooperated with ending the boycott.<sup>88</sup>

When the racially integrated, sexually segregated, county schools opened for the 1970-1971 school year there were other conflicts with white and black constituents. Some whites initially resisted integration in ways like trying to register boys at the former white school, now the girls' school. Others withdrew from the public schools entirely, supporting a small private school in Taylor County, Mauk Academy, or one in Macon County, Beechwood School (named, in blunt symbolism, after Confederate General John B. Gordon's plantation in Taylor County). Support of the private schools was small, though, with only about ten per cent of whites leaving the public schools.<sup>89</sup> School officials in the first few years of integration continued to try to make the schools attractive to white parents. Soon after integration, the high schools converted from a two-semester school year to a three-quarter school year. Under the quarter system, the schools offered many more courses than previously, with more flexible graduation requirements.<sup>90</sup> The boys' high school also began a football program, something white citizens had been asking the board to do for a decade, after Beechwood announced it would begin a football program.<sup>91</sup>

Blacks objected to the segregation of the sexes and to the racial segregation of bus drivers. The school board had decided without informing the federal court to have the white bus drivers drive the girls' buses and the black drivers drive the boys' buses. Black students boycotted school entirely at first, and then boycotted just the buses.<sup>92</sup> The Justice Department, whose suit against the state covering the 81 school districts continued, filed a motion under the suit to end the assignment of drivers based on race. The bus drivers were integrated by spring of 1971.<sup>93</sup>

While feelings between the races in school were very tense at first, Taylor County came to be an example of successful integration. Teachers and students recall that while there did seem to be more discipline problems, such as fighting, they seemed mostly to involve students of the same race. Interracial discipline problems were very rare.<sup>94</sup> Lillie McCree describes it as a "beautiful" integration. Norman Carter remembers one white extremist telling him at the time that he had been disappointed at how smoothly integration had gone in Taylor County, because it had harmed support for the private schools.<sup>95</sup> When busing to eliminate segregation in urban districts filled the national news in 1972, both the *Christian Science Monitor* and CBS News featured stories on the Taylor County schools. The *Monitor* article, while critical of the white insistence on a need



to defend the girls, described sex segregation as a useful preliminary step towards total integration.<sup>96</sup> In 1978, the board of education decided to consolidate the boys' and girls' schools, which was done for the beginning of the 1978-1979 school year.<sup>97</sup> Some white parents objected at the time, but they were few. Taylor County had received a federal grant to build a new vocational building, and the school board decided at the same time to seek a bond issue to build a new county junior high school (replacing the classroom space of the old Butler grammar school building) as part of the complex. The bond issue election, which passed, was thus a referendum on ending sexual segregation.<sup>98</sup> The old McDougald campus/boys' school became Butler Elementary School, while the old Taylor County campus/girls' school became Taylor County Comprehensive High School. Mauk Academy, always very small, had already closed, after only about five years of existence. Beechwood School continued, mainly supported by Houston, Peach, and Macon Counties, until it closed in 1983.<sup>99</sup>

White Taylor Countians seem to have been most rabidly segregationist when the issue was furthest removed from the local community. The desegregation of the University of Georgia in 1961 and the University of Mississippi in 1962 elicited strongly states rights, anti-integration comments in the local paper. When, only a few years later, Taylor County High admitted its first black student, the local paper did not even take notice of the fact. The segregationist editorial cartoons disappeared. While advertisements and articles about the private schools were featured, they did not replace articles on the activities of the public schools. The paper was edited throughout the 1960s by Verna Griggs, herself a teacher in the county public schools. She continued to teach in the public schools after integration, and no doubt her concern for the public schools led her to moderate the tone of the paper from that she followed in 1962. The editorials of the paper encouraged a peaceful, orderly beginning of the new school year in 1970, not even pausing to express regret for the circumstances of that year.

Taylor Countians have become used to integrated schools during the last two decades. The white community has lost the formerly traditional Confederate Memorial Day activities and the United Daughters of the Confederacy essay contest, and the black community has lost the formerly traditional emphasis on African American history. Some people of each race regret what they have lost, but the county has gained much. Despite continuing social patterns of racial separation (separate churches, residential areas in towns, and some businesses), the county now forms more of a single community because of the single school system. The representative structure of the county commission and the board of education has changed in response to court challenges lodged during the last two decades, so that now both boards represent two black-majority electoral districts and three white-majority electoral districts.

Even now, Taylor County stands out from its neighbors, including Talbot, Macon, and Crawford counties, in the degree to which the public schools are integrated. These neighboring counties have resegregated schools for blacks, while their white students still attend private schools or going to public schools in other counties. The Taylor County schools currently have a greater percentage of white students (about 45 per cent) than they did in 1968 (then about 40 per cent). While the races are still very segregated in social life, they do mix in classes and some school activities. Students and teachers

remain ever conscious of race, but overt racial incidents are extremely rare.<sup>100</sup> Students' attitudes about race may or may not have changed much since 1970, but they have at least learned to study together in school without thinking anything unusual in the activity. While the pre-integration generation of Taylor Countians never encountered persons of the other race except in the relationship of white superiority and black deference, a generation of Taylor County students have grown up knowing teachers, administrators, and classmates of both races. This fact, despite whatever racial tensions remain to be reconciled or whatever inequities were inherent in the 1970 desegregation plan, stands as the essential success of the Taylor County integration experience.

## NOTES

1. This was the title of an article on the Taylor County experience by John Dillin appearing in the *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 April 1972, 1.

2. While sex-segregated schools were not new to Georgia (Atlanta had operated such a system from the 1870s until the late 1940s, and Macon did so from the 1920s until the late 1960s, when with integration it developed co-ed "complexes" which linked formally separate schools), only Taylor County and Baker County responded to integration by entirely separating their schools by sex. The LaGrange city school district reorganized schools upon integration and operated separate-sex junior high schools. For black resistance to the Baker County plan, see S. W. G. P. [Southwest Georgia Project] *News* 15 April 1970. Baker County only kept its schools separated by sex for one year, after which it opened a co-ed, totally integrated school system (Thomas Rogers, Baker County School Superintendent, telephone interview with the author, 9 August 1993). There had been only 378 white students in the public schools before integration, while there were 735 black students, and "[the white students] that could, left for private schools" during the single year of sex-segregation (Baker County Historical Society, *The History of Baker County* [Roswell, Ga.: W. H. Wolfe Associates, 1991] 161. Taylor County was the last public school system in Georgia maintaining separate-sex schools when it abandoned separate-sex education in 1978 (Norman Carter, interview with author, 25 November 1992, Butler Georgia).

3. *The Taylor County News* and the *Butler Herald* files testify to the place of the schools in the social life of the community. That most citizens accepted the ultimate decision to integrate the schools by race while segregating them by sex demonstrates that social integration was the greatest objection citizens held against integration.

4. The nine school districts were the result of district consolidations that reduced the number from the seventeen that existed in 1921 (*Taylor County Board of Education Minutes Book*, Page 1).

5. For example, see minutes of the board of education for October 4, 1921, when the board turned down the Butler school trustees' request for additional transportation funds because the trustees were "better off financially" than the county board.



6. The minutes of the board of education throughout the 1920s and 1930s record unequal salary schedules. For example, in 1922, the board decided to pay principals of all white schools \$65 a month and assistants in all white schools \$50 a month, while paying principals of all black schools \$25 a month and assistants in all black schools \$15 a month. Black and white teachers in Georgia were not paid according to identical pay scales until after federal court challenges of the discriminatory pay in Atlanta in the early 1960s. The county board did not equalize salaries for school bus drivers until 1967.
7. Charlie A. Hicks, interview by author, 24 October 1992, Reynolds, Georgia, notes in possession of author. Hicks, a Taylor County native, attended segregated black schools in the county, began a teaching career in the Butler black school in 1949, and in 1961 became principal of the Butler black school.
8. For example, the minutes of the county board of education for 1 March 1949 record, "Agreed to put a roof on the Pottersville Colored School if the Colored Patrons can give their help with the labor" (*Minutes Book*, 169). Similarly, for 3 April 1951, the board "agreed that new toilets would be constructed at Reynolds Colored School provided that the pits would be dug by local people" (*Minutes Book*, 189).
9. *Minutes of the Taylor County Board of Education*, 6 June 1950 (purchasing surplus barracks from Fort Benning), 5 May 1950 (purchasing new canning equipment for the white schools, moving the old equipment to the black schools) (*Minutes Book*, 179-180).
10. Hicks interview.
11. Georgia's 1945 constitution, replacing an 1877 document, aided in the greater centralization of education. The state began more substantial funding and oversight of the schools.
12. See the Butler Herald, 19 May 1949 - 2 February, 1950.
13. "A Few More Points about the Bond Issue" (paid advertisement), *ibid.*, 9 February 1950, 4.
14. See letters to the editor, *ibid.*, January-February 1950.
15. "Five More Suits Ask Equal Negro Schools," the Atlanta Journal, 26 February 1950, A2, 4. The article names Taylor County as one of five counties recently served with petitions from black citizens, and the article lists petitioner demands, county by county. There is no mention of this petition, however, in the minutes of the board of education.
16. *Minutes of the board*, 16 February 1950 (*Minutes Book*, 176).
17. "County to Have School Plant Survey," the Butler Herald, 2 March 1950, 1.

18. Margaret Shannon, "Falling Plaster and Dry Rot Endanger School Children at Butler High," Ninth in the Fifty Worst Schools in Georgia Series, the Atlanta Journal, 16 December 1950, 12.
19. Margaret Shannon, "Butler Discovers Its 'Muscles,' Eliminates 'Sleepy' Atmosphere," *ibid.*, 11 October 1953, G1.
20. *Butler Herald*, 29 November 1951.
21. The board adopted this formula: forty per cent to build a white high school building in Butler, twenty-five per cent to improve the white high school building in Reynolds, twenty-five per cent to build black schools, and ten per cent to divide equally among the white rural schools. *Minutes* of the board, 4 October 1951 (*Minutes Book*, 189), 29 November 1951 (*Minutes Book*, 191).
22. Shannon, 11 October 1953.
23. This is the form of the names of the schools used on the applications for state funds, preserved in the *Minutes* of the board, 7 April 1953 (*Minutes Book*, 201). The board in other official documents and in general usage referred to the white school simply as Butler High School, while they referred to the black school as Butler Colored School.
24. *Ibid.*, 28 April 1953 (*Minutes Book*, 201).
25. *Ibid.*, 6 March 1951 (*Minutes Book*, 184).
26. *Ibid.*, 2 February 1954 (*Minutes Book*, 207).
27. Verna Griggs, column, the Taylor County News and the Butler Herald (name changed 1962), 24 August 1964, 1.
28. *Minutes* of the board, 6 March 1951 (*Minutes Book*, 184).
29. Harold Brown, interview with the author, 3 October 1992, Howard, Georgia. Notes in possession of the author. Brown, a Taylor County native, is the son of a member of the board of education and himself served on the board from 1964 to 1981.
30. Mr. McDougald was accorded the courtesy title "professor" by both whites and blacks, as was the principal of the white Reynolds High School. Principals of Butler High School did not use the title.



31. For example, "Butler Colored School Gets Off with Splendid Beginning for Fall Term," the *Butler Herald*, 18 September 1952, 6.

32. Hicks interview.

33. *Ibid.*; Minutes of the board, 2 August 1962 (*Minutes Book*, 255).

34. Principal Hicks led the campaign to rename the school. The board approved the petition to rename the school (*Minutes*, 3 October 1963).

35. *Ibid.*, 1 October 1964 (*Minutes Book*, 268).

36. Hicks interview. During these years, Hicks served as president of the Georgia Teachers and Education Association, the pre-integration, black teachers' organization. In this capacity, he visited schools around the state, and on these experiences he bases this judgment of the Taylor County schools.

37. The school board Minutes, while including lists of white teachers approved each year, do not mention hiring black teachers, only principals. One of the rare references to the principal's power to hire teachers is in the minutes for 12 March 1970, when the minutes note that "Mr. Albert O'Bryant [Hicks's successor as principal at McDougald] was given the 'green light' to pursue teacher vacancies."

38. Letters to the editor, the Taylor County News, 1962-1964.

39. Unsigned advertisement, the Taylor County News, 8 March 1963, 4.

40. Norman Carter, interview with the author, 25 November 1992, Butler, Georgia. Notes in possession of the author. Carter in 1965 was a teacher at Butler High School. He later served as principal of Taylor County High School and from 1969 to 1990 as Taylor County School Superintendent.

41. Minutes of the board, 20 July 1965 (*Minutes Book*, 273).

42. Brown interview.

43. *Ibid.*

44. Minutes of the board, 7 April 1966 (*Minutes Book*, 277).

45. Reported by Elliston to the board, *Ibid.*, 19 May 1966 (*Minutes Book*, 278).

46. Henderson, Harold Paulk, *The 1966 Gubernatorial Election in Georgia* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1982) 73-74, 137 (quoting Byrd from the *Augusta Chronicle-Herald*).

47. Garland T. Byrd v. the United States of America, Taylor County Board of Education, and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Civil Action Number 1160 in the United States District Court, Middle District of Georgia, Columbus. The files of the case are preserved in the Federal Records Center, East Point, Georgia, location number B-064-34-7-6; accession number 021-72B1191; box 97.

Comments of the Georgia press on the case and Byrd's use of it in his campaign are quoted in Henderson, 139-141.

48. *Ibid.*, transcript of pleadings, in the case file. The case was ordered dismissed by Judge Elliott in 1970, the issues involved being moot.

49. Hicks interview.

50. *Ibid.*

51. Lillie McCree, interview with the author, 16 October 1992, Butler, Georgia. Notes in the possession of the author. Ms. McCree began teaching in Taylor County at the Eureka School in 1957. She currently teaches at Taylor County High School.

52. Notes of administrative hearing under the Commissioner of Education, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, in the matter of Taylor County Board of Education (Docket Number CR-465), proceedings under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which allowed the Department of Justice to sue state departments of education to withhold funds from noncompliant districts), conducted 5 October 1967. Notes of the hearing are in the Byrd v. the United States, et al, case file.

53. Carter interview.

54. Diane McGlaun, interview with the author, 16 October 1992, Butler, Georgia. Notes in possession of the author. Mrs. McGlaun's younger sister attended Taylor at the time. McGlaun joined the faculty of the county high school in 1972.

55. Mark Harris, interview with the author, 16 October 1992, Butler, Georgia. Notes in the possession of the author. Harris was a student at Taylor at the time.

56. Hicks interview.



57. Notes of 1967 administrative hearing, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.
58. *Minutes* of the board, 13 November 1967 (*Minutes Book*, 286).
59. *Ibid.*, 2 February 1967 (*Minutes Book*, 281).
60. *Ibid.*, 26 September 1967 (*Minutes Book*, 284).
61. *Ibid.*, 23 January 1968 (*Minutes Book*, 287).
62. Carter interview.
63. *Minutes* of the board, 1 February 1968 (*Minutes Book*, 287). Subsequent records indicate that no teachers volunteered, and so no teachers would transfer between the formerly black and white campuses before complete integration began 31 August 1970. A few whites did, however, teach at the summer Head Start program conducted on the McDougald campus (McGlaun interview).  
Harold Brown recalls that the board informed its H. E. W. advisors that if the board were to assign an unwilling teacher to a school across racial lines, the teacher would resign. This was when one of the H. E. W. men advised that the board select an aging, old maid teacher who had a sick mother to support, since such a teacher would not be able to relocate or commute to another job and would be in no position to retire early. The board members met this suggestion with a stony silence, all wanting to hit the man.
64. *Minutes* of the board, 5 February 1968 (*Minutes Book*, 287). According to statistics published by H. E. W., McDougald in 1968 had 890 students in grades 1-12, and Parker had 360 in grades 1-8. Taylor County Elementary and High then had 635 students, and Reynolds Elementary had 215 students.
65. Lillie McCree remembers that some of her colleagues at McDougald were even afraid of the idea of teaching white students, being unsure that the white students would accept their authority.
66. Carter and Hicks interviews; *Minutes* of the board about Head Start program, beginning in 1967.
67. Rufus C. Green, President of Taylor County G. T. E. A., Charlie A. Hicks, Principal of McDougald School, Albert O'Bryant, Principal of Parker School, to W. S. Maxwell, Chairman of the Taylor County Board of Education, 29 February 1968, letter attached to *Minutes* of the board, 4 March 1968 (*Minutes Book*, 288).
68. Hicks believes H. E. W. officials were impressed that the Taylor County board sent both white and black school administrators as its representatives.

69. Minutes of the board, 26 March 1968 (*Minutes Book*, 288); W. S. Maxwell to Dr. Lloyd R. Henderson, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C., 28 March 1968, carbon copy of letter attached to minutes of board meeting.
70. Carter interview; Brown interview.
71. Minutes of the board, 6 June 1968 (*Minutes Book*, 290).
72. Unfortunately, the minutes of the Board of Education for September, October, and November 1968 are missing.
73. Minutes of the board, 5 December 1968 (*Minutes Book*, 293).
74. Green v. County School Board of New Kent County (Delaware), 391 U. S. 430, (1968), quoted in Michael W. La Morte, *School Law: Cases and Concepts*, 3d ed., (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 307-309, 425 (1964 Civil Rights Act). The New Kent County school district had resisted adopting geographic attendance zones, but maintained a dual system with freedom of choice enrollment policies.
75. "Taylor Schools Now Under Court Order," the *Taylor County News*, 23 January 1970, 1.
76. After the federal government began its suit against the Georgia Department of Education, Chairman Harris asked a representative of H. E. W. to estimate how integration would affect education in Taylor County. The federal man replied that at that point, the Office of Education was not interested in education; they were interested in integration. Harris resigned. (Harris interview; Mark Harris is the son of the late Emory Harris.)  
A special election was held February of 1970 to replace the three members who resigned from the board. In each of the three districts to be represented, a single black candidate ran against one or two white candidates. The county then still voted as a whole for each district, and three white candidates were elected.
77. While whites were only about forty percent of the public school population, they were a majority of the total county population and a disproportionate majority of the voting population. Whites could have, as some extremists urged in newspaper advertisements, lowered the local property tax considerably and massively withdrawn from the public schools. Such a move would have stripped the schools of much local tax money as well as state funding, which is dependent on student enrollment. The whites could have used their savings from lower property tax to support private schools.
78. Carter interview.
79. "Carter Brings Suit Against Government," the *Taylor County News*, 6 February 1970, 1.



80. Brown interview.
81. "Taylor Desegregation Plan Rejected by H. E. W.," the *Taylor County News*, 10 April 1970, 1.
82. Brown interview.
83. Jerry Partain, interview with the author, 30 October 1992, Taylor County, Georgia. Notes in possession of the author.
84. *Minutes of the board*, 21 April 1970 (*Minutes Book*, 306), 11 June 1970 (*Minutes Book*, 308).
85. To calm fears of unjust treatment held by both white and black parents, both the principal and the assistant principal (or the principal and a teacher of another race in the case of the Reynolds schools) were to take part in all disciplinary cases, and students could be paddled only by an administrator of their own race (Carter interview).
86. Dallis McCrary, et al, v. the Taylor County Board of Education, Civil Action Number 1476, filed in the United States District Court, Middle District of Georgia, Columbus, 31 December 1970. The case file is located in the Federal Records Center, East Point, Georgia, location number 00415985, accession number 021-75G2118, box 95. A copy of the Taylor County desegregation plan approved by the U. S. District Court in Atlanta is included in the case file.
- The United States Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit (466 F.2d 197) ruled 14 August 1972 in the Taylor County case that for sex segregation to be constitutional, it must be shown to be devised for an educational purpose. Sex segregation because of race is unconstitutional. Taylor County successfully defended its claim that the nature of the existing dual school system, with duplication of science labs, athletic facilities, playground equipment, and classrooms and libraries in two separate complexes, each designed for grades 1-12, made sex segregation the best alternative. They also argued that sex segregation would enable the schools to formulate vocational training programs best suited to the needs of each sex. For a discussion of possibly unconstitutional sex discrimination involved in sex-segregated schools, see Robert B. Barnett, "The Constitutionality of Sex Separation in School Desegregation Plans," *University of Chicago Law Review* 37 (1970): 296. Barnett discusses some Louisiana parishes that established wholly- or partly-sex-segregated systems.
87. Junie Brown, "25 Teachers To Lose Jobs: New Contracts Are Denied for Test Failures [sic] in Taylor," the *Atlanta Journal*, 9 April 1970, A2, 7.
88. Carter interview; Hicks interview.
89. Jerry Partain estimates that ten per cent of white students left the public schools to attend private academies. Norman Carter estimates as high as fifteen per cent for the Reynolds area, which mainly supported Beechwood and had had no love for the schools in Butler since consolidation. Carter believes the figure for the Butler area and the rest of the county to be around five per cent.

90. Partain interview.

91. Carter interview.

92. "Student Boycott At Taylor Schools Continues," the Taylor County News, 29 April 1971, 1.

93. "Suit Charges Bias in Taylor Busing," the Atlanta Journal, 4 May 1971, A2, 1.

94. Partain interview; McGlaun interview.

95. McCree interview; Carter interview.

96. John Dillin, "To integrate: Set boys, girls apart?" the Christian Science Monitor, 8 April 1972, 1; "CBS News Reporters Visit," the Taylor County News, 24 February 1972, 3.

97. *Minutes of the board*, 19 February 1978 (*Minutes Book*, 372).

98. Carter interview.

99. "Beechwood School Closes Doors After 12 Years," the Taylor County News, 11 August 1983, 5.

100. This author attended the Taylor County schools from 1976 to 1988. In that time, students of the different races were often prejudiced against each other (more overt in prejudice at earlier grade levels, less so as students became more mature). There was only one genuine racial disciplinary incident, and that was a fight that occurred between two male high school students 1984. Despite rumors that the Ku Klux Klan from a distant city was coming to march, and that therefore the National Guard had been alerted to protect the school, nothing greater than the suspension of the two students and a school-wide locker search for weapons ever took place. The incident received no out-of-county news attention.