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A Cleave within the Piney Woods: Nacogdoches, Stephen F. Austin State University and How Racial Integration Divided the Town and Gown

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A Cleave within the Piney Woods: Nacogdoches, Stephen F. Austin State University and
How Racial Integration Divided the Town and Gown

By

Caitlin R. Hornback, Bachelor of Arts

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Stephen F. Austin State University

In Partial Fulfillment

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May 2022

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ABSTRACT

Stephen F. Austin State University was once the pride and joy of the city of Nacogdoches, Texas. When the Texas State Legislature began to look for a location for their new state normal school, the people of the East Texas town fought to have it built there and the Stephen F. Austin Teacher's College opened its doors in September 1923 to a proud community. Through the trials and tribulations of early twentieth century events, the school managed to stay afloat and grow in numbers. Dr. Ralph W. Steen became the president of the college in 1958 and he oversaw a multitude of significant changes including the integration of the school in 1964. While this shift in the student body did strike a nerve with the surrounding community, it was not until those involved with the campus changed their political views and joined their fellow African Americans in the fight for civil rights, did the support for the university change. The actions of the faculty and students against the traditions of Nacogdoches divided the town and gown to where the relationship has never fully recovered.

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I would like to take a moment to thank all the people who have supported me throughout this journey. This has been an incredibly long and difficult process and I would not be where I am today without each one of you. Your love, support, and guidance helped me get through some of the most difficult periods over the last few years and I honestly cannot thank you enough.

First and foremost, I need thank everyone who helped me with the actual completion of this thesis. To my committee, especially Dr. Sosebee, thank you for the support and guidance to help me make this the best work possible. To my friends, Megan and Heaven, thank you for allowing me to discuss ideas and help with my many grammatical errors. Finally, to the people I interviewed, Archie Rison, Don Mills, Paul Jackson, Chip Wade, Judy McDonald, Shelley Brophy, Dr. William Arscott, and my great-uncle Wilbur Johnson, thank you for sharing your stories with me. The ability to get a glimpse of your lives in order to write my thesis is an act I will never take for granted. This paper is truly dedicated to you.

Next, I need to thank my family and friends for their continued love and support. To the friends I had before and the friends I made along the way, thank you for making

me laugh and bringing joy to my life. Thank you to my mom, dad, and extended family for pushing me along and never giving up on me. To my husband, Joshua, none of this would have been possible without you. This degree did not go according to plan, but you stood by my side the entire time.

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INTRODUCTION

On Saturday, June 8, 2019, the 30th Annual Blueberry Festival in Nacogdoches, Texas faced controversy. This incident was not a controversy over a vendor or customer paying the proper fees, but rather a protest over equal rights, racism, and fair treatment from the police towards the black community. The morning of the festival, attorney Kim Coles and Pastor Frederick Hayes led a group from Friendship West Baptist Church in Dallas to march through the brick streets of Downtown Nacogdoches. The group chanted “No justice, no peace,” in honor of the group of African American girls they believed were wrongly targeted by an off-duty police officer outside their apartment complex the night of April 10, 2019. Although no issues occurred during the protest at the festival, the people of Nacogdoches do not take too kindly to the influence of outsiders, or the push of major protests, since the last one in the city had ended with a vandalized storefront and several people arrested. Despite a brief attempt by the acting president of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) to assure the student body that the relationship between the school and the city was intact, the events still left people wondering about the future of African Americans in the community and the relationship between the city and SFA.¹

¹ Ryan Ordmandy, “Group from Dallas protests use-of-force incident at Nacogdoches Blueberry Festival,” *KTRE*, June 8, 2019, <https://www.ktre.com/2019/06/08/group-dallas-protests-use-of-force-incident-nacogdoches-blue-berry-festival/>; Donna McCollum and Jeff Wright, “RAW VIDEO:

From the outside, Nacogdoches appears to be a quaint southern town with a rich history. The citizens proudly proclaim to be from “The Oldest Town in Texas,” which is home to various historic districts including the numerous stores housed in late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings that line the brick streets of the historic downtown. Nacogdoches is also home to SFA, a state university that opened its doors in 1923. While most college towns embrace the culture of their schools, there is a division between the residents of Nacogdoches and the residents of SFA. The animosity between these two groups was not there from the beginning but grew from an era of political turmoil that spread to the depths of even the most isolated of places. Some members of the community have tried to show their support for the college in recent years with Spirit Fridays and purple banners, but beneath these facades laid a wound that had recently begun to scab over and heal. However, the events of April 10 reinforced the idea that the students and people of color are not equal to the rest of the community.²

Nacogdoches police release dashcam video in use-of-force incident involving officer,” *KTRE*, April 11, 2019, <https://www.ktre.com/2019/04/11/nacogdoches-police-confirm-use-of-force-investigation-after-off-duty-officer-arrests-woman/>; Nacogdoches Accountability Coalition, “Statement Regarding the Blueberry Festival Protest Organized by Kim Cole,” June 7, 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/nacoalition/>; Steve Westbrook, “Recent Events,” Email from the Office of the President at SFA to the students, April 15, 2019; *Ogbonna v. City of Nacogdoches*, 4:2021cv00296 (US District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, 2021); “Signs Displayed...March Follows Arrest of Coed,” *The Daily Sentinel*. *The Daily Sentinel* article has an unknown author and date due to it being a clipping from a news article found in “News Clippings Protest and Mickey McGuire April-May 1970,” African American Heritage Project (AAHP) (A-202) Box 4 Folder 32 in the East Texas Research Center (ETRC), Steen Library, Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU), Nacogdoches, Texas.

² Center for Regional Heritage Research, “Downtown Historic District,” from City of Nacogdoches Historic Sites Survey SFASU, 2010, <http://www.sfasu.edu/heritagecenter/624.asp>; Brian Bray, “Historic Preservation,” from City of Nacogdoches, <https://www.ci.nacogdoches.tx.us/883/Historic-Preservation>; Shelley Brophy, Unpublished Interview with Caitlin Hornback, Personal Interview, Nacogdoches, Texas, August 8, 2019; “Stephen F. Austin State University,” *Lone Star Junction*, 2012,

Many cities across the country embrace every aspect of the college they are home to, but those who work for and attend the university could tell any outsider that Nacogdoches and SFA are not one and the same. SFA often comes across as nothing more than financial security for the town. Some residents think of the students as merely guests in their town and if the students do not like the way the leadership runs everything they can just leave. Although being a guest while attending school might be true to some extent, that school and the town become a student's home away from home for at least four years, so they deserve to have their voices heard. For many years, community leaders focused more on making Nacogdoches a retirement town, despite the median age of residents being twenty-four, which meant they neglected a large portion of the population and did not cater to the college students or young adults. The stores downtown were full of antique shops instead of businesses such as the brewery, axe throwing, and bookstore currently in operation, which gives young people something fun to spend their money on instead of going elsewhere for entertainment.³

<http://www.lsjunction.com/schools/sfa/sfa.asp>. All interviews will be released to the East Texas Research Center (ETRC) in the Steen Library on SFASU campus.

³ Paul Howe, "Thank you to city Da for standing your ground," from Your Turn in the *Daily Sentinel*, May 22, 2019; Paul Howe, "A difference of opinion is not racism," from Your Turn in the *Daily Sentinel*, May 29, 2019; Lauren Burrow, "Make SFA students feel welcome, want to stay here," from Your Turn in the *Daily Sentinel*, July 3, 2019; Donna McCollum, "Nacogdoches' Fredonia Brewery set to open this weekend," *KTRE*, February 28, 2017, <https://www.ktre.com/story/34629872/nacogdoches-fredonia-brewery-set-to-open-this-weekend/>; "Ribbon Cutting-The Bosslight," *Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce*, November 16, 2016, <https://www.nacogdoches.org/news-view.php?id=3666>; Brianna Linn, "Nacogdoches welcomes new business which could act as unexpected workout," *KLTV*, June 7, 2021, <https://www.kltv.com/2021/06/16/nacogdoches-welcomes-new-business-which-could-act-unexpected-workout/>; Donna McCollum and Jeff Wright, "New business opportunities changing the face of downtown Nacogdoches," *KTRE*, March 4, 2019, <https://www.ktre.com/2019/03/04/new-business-opportunities-changing-face-downtown-nacogdoches/>; "Texas Certified Retirement Community," *Way Back Machine*,

The relationship between SFA and Nacogdoches was not always this rocky; in fact, the people of Nacogdoches fought to have the state legislature approve the city to be the home for a new school they wanted to build. The leaders of the college managed to keep it afloat during some of the most tumultuous times in history making SFA a beacon of hope for the community. Yet over time, both the city and the university were not immune to the changes that occurred across the nation. For years, the separation of the races was a defining characteristic of the town despite a rich and culturally diverse history. Those in charge ignored the various minority communities and fought to have what they perceived as negative outside influences stay out of their home. When the civil rights movement began to arrive in the South, the people of Nacogdoches fought hard to maintain the status quo, but those involved with the college evolved with the times and adapted to the changes in society. As the years progressed, the continued politicization and acceptance of the college toward racial equality came to a head and divided the town and gown to make it what it is today.⁴

<https://web.archive.org/web/20110303081928/http://www.nacogdochesconnects.com/retire-in-nac/>, accessed April 24, 2020; “Nacogdoches,” *Retire in Texas*, <http://www.retireintexas.org/Home/RVlife/Nacogdoches.aspx>, accessed April 24, 2020; “Nacogdoches Demographics,” *Texas Demographics*, <https://www.texas-demographics.com/nacogdoches-demographics>, accessed April 30, 2020.

⁴ “Twenty-Three Reasons Why the Stephen F. Austin State Normal Ought to be Located at Nacogdoches” ETRC Digital Archives, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas, <https://digital.sfasu.edu/digital/collection/EastTexRC/id/11869/rec/3>; Matthew D. Lassiter, *Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt* (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 2006), 122, 279, 316; David R. Goldfield, *Black, White, and Southern: Race Relations and Southern Culture 1940 to the Present* (Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge, 1990), 85-86, 263-264, 112, 260-261; Jere Jackson, “SFA’s Existence Threatened: Citizens rally once again to defend the college,” “A Brief Chronology of SFA,” from “SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University,” *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <https://www.sfasu.edu/story/>.

While it may seem obvious that a small town in a southern state would not want black people in their white schools in the 1960s due to ignorance or blatant racism, it is important to understand this relationship not only in Texas but also in the United States as a whole. People who identified as white saw those who identified as anything else as less. In order to maintain power, white people for over two centuries practiced slavery by trafficking and trading human beings from Africa to work as free labor. The masters of those enslaved used biblical interpretations to justify their actions and would often beat their property into submission. Many people in the southern states used slavery as a way to make the most profit due to the free labor they exploited. When the government began threatening their way of life with the possible abolishment of slavery, the United States became engaged in a civil war. Ultimately, the federal government outlawed slavery, which led to heightened racial tensions for the next century.⁵

Federal law meant that African Americans were legally equal to whites but they still faced social challenges. Many businesses barred African Americans from being in the same vicinity as their white patrons, while others excluded them completely. Black communities experienced decreased voting and housing opportunities but increased police activity, which led to less representation and greater poverty overall. One of the

⁵ Julie Zauzmer Weil, "The Bible was used to justify slavery. Then Africans made it their path to freedom." *Washington Post*, April 30, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/the-bible-was-used-to-justify-slavery-then-africans-made-it-their-path-to-freedom/2019/04/29/34699e8e-6512-11e9-82ba-fcfeff232e8f_story.html; Larry R. Morrison, "The Religious Defense of American Slavery Before 1830," *Kings College*, <https://www.kingscollege.net/gbrodie/The%20religious%20justification%20of%20slavery%20before%201830.pdf>, accessed June 15, 2021; I. A. Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930* (Louisiana State -University Press: Baton Rouge, 1965), 69, 117-122, 137-140; 1-16.

biggest challenges African Americans faced when fighting for equality was school segregation. Access to a good education often meant the difference in a comfortable living or poverty and education was a luxury not many African American families could afford.⁶

The issues regarding racial inequality plagued every state, but the most egregious actions came from those that were part of the Confederacy. Southern states established social and political barriers for African Americans that became known as Jim Crow Laws. These rules, based on the Black Codes created directly after the Civil War, not only discriminated against a black person's basic civil rights such as voting, one of the main purposes was to dissuade interracial interactions and potential interracial marriages. Such laws also meant it was easier to imprison or lynch an African American for something as simple as looking at a white person the wrong way. Southern states such as Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi made up almost half the total number of black people lynched from 1882 to 1968. Although Texas might not be the first state that comes to mind when thinking of the depths of race relations and the civil rights movement, especially when compared to others like Mississippi or Alabama, the Lone Star State still

⁶ Alton Coston III, "Slavery Ended 155 Years Ago, but the Struggle for Black Freedom Continues," *ACLU Virginia*, June 18, 2020, <https://acluva.org/en/news/slavery-ended-155-years-ago-struggle-black-freedom-continues>; U.S. Const. amend. XIII, § 1; Richard Rothstein, "The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods – A Constitutional Insult," *Economic Policy Institute*, November 12, 2014, <https://www.epi.org/publication/the-racial-achievement-gap-segregated-schools-and-segregated-neighborhoods-a-constitutional-insult/>; Robin Smyton, "How Racial Segregation and Policing Intersect in America," *Tufts Now*, June 17, 2020, <https://now.tufts.edu/articles/how-racial-segregation-and-policing-intersect-america>.

participated in Jim Crow era laws and actions and eventually became a front-runner of collegiate integration.⁷

The state had a complex history of dealing with race relations even before Texas became part of the United States and was originally part of Mexico. One of the primary motivations that pushed people to emigrate from the United States to Coahuila and Texas was that the Mexican state allowed the Anglo settlers to bring their slaves despite Mexico's national ban on the practice. The Mexican government had also declared that slaveholders must free the grandchildren of original slaves after a set number of years so the immigrants made their illiterate slaves sign indentured servitude contracts for ninety-nine years. This law, as well as other political issues such as smuggling in goods to avoid taxes and increased government control, was one of the main reasons for the Texas Revolution. After independence but before the Civil War, slaveholders had to balance being a slave master with knowing they lived next to a slavery free country their property could escape to and never be seen again. After the Civil War ended and President Lincoln freed the slaves with the Emancipation Proclamation, slaveholders in Texas refused to

⁷ Thad Sitton and James H. Conrad, *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow* (University of Texas Press: Austin, 2005), 9-16; "Lynchings: By State and Race, 1882-1968," *Tuskegee University*, <http://archive.tuskegee.edu/repository/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Lynchings-Stats-Year-Dates-Causes.pdf>, accessed February 20, 2022; Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense*, 69, 117-122, 137-140; Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 17-18.

release their slaves for more than a month after the final battle of the war, which forced Union soldiers to storm the state and take over.⁸

African Americans struggled to receive the basic rights technically given to them as freed individuals for more than a century. One of the biggest hurdles during that time was access to equal education. Schools from primary all the way to university level could maintain segregated facilities as long as they claimed to be equal. These schools were never equal compared to the well-funded white schools in order to prevent African Americans from rising to the same social status as or even above a white person. Government leaders also kept schools segregated in order to prevent interracial relationships. If the races mingled together in close company, like in a classroom setting, it could lead friendships into relations that were more intimate. Many felt the races needed to remain separated, especially if it was a black man with a white woman, so many states included anti-miscegenation laws in their Jim Crow legislation.⁹

Due to the severe inequality between the segregated schools, several districts and universities faced lawsuits, including the one against the University of Texas (UT) in

⁸ Emily McCullar, "How Leaders of the Texas Revolution Fought to Preserve Slavery," *Texas Monthly*, October 29, 2020, <https://www.texasmonthly.com/being-texan/how-leaders-texas-revolution-fought-preserve-slavery/>; Paul D. Lack, "Slavery and the Texas Revolution," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, vol. 89, no. 2, October 1985, 181–202, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30239908>; Emily Taravella, "Juneteenth festivities mark end to slavery," *The Daily Sentinel*, June 18, 2000, Box 4, African American Heritage Project (AAHP) (A-202), ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas.

⁹ Charles F. Robinson, "Legislated Love in the Lone Star State: Texas and Miscegenation," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 108, no. 1 (2004), 65–87, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30239495>; Gary B. Borders, *A Hanging in Nacogdoches: Murder, Race, Politics, and Polemics in Texas's Oldest Town, 1870-1916* (University of Texas Press: Austin, 2006), 56; Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 40, 263-267, 513.

Austin. UT became one of the leading cases for southern collegiate integration and the incidents that took place that involved UT became a catalyst for future integration processes including that of SFA. By 1964 when the school finally integrated, it was one of the last four in the entire state of Texas and became the start of the split between the city and the school. The examination of the process of the demise of the relationship will be the primary focus of this thesis. It will examine the action through the lens of the history, the fracture, and the final break.¹⁰

The first topic will be a brief history of the specific race relations in Nacogdoches and the relationship between SFA and the city. Nacogdoches has an expansive history that dates back centuries, which led to Nacogdoches becoming the oldest town in Texas. Unfortunately, the majority population ignored the history that celebrates and represents the minority cultures of the area. The white citizens in Nacogdoches came together to isolate people of color, especially those in the African American community, to the point of poverty and police harassment. All the circumstances that surrounded Nacogdoches were not unique to the area but the town was able to stave off any unwanted changes for many decades due to the strength of what people referred to as the Pine Curtain. The one element that brought the town closer together outside their discriminatory practices was

¹⁰ “Baptist Minister First Negro to Enroll at SFA,” *Daily Sentinel* Clip June 4, 1964, Box 2 Folder 16 “Correspondence-N 1964-1968,” Office of the President Steen, and Box 4 Folder 34 “Arthur Weaver Papers,” AAHP, ETRC; Amilcar Shabazz, *Advancing Democracy: African Americans and the Struggle for Access and Equity in Higher Education in Texas* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 24, 27, 30-31; Rothstein, “The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods – A Constitutional Insult.”

the foundation of SFA. This educational facility became the center of Nacogdoches life and eventually the connection to larger cities.¹¹

The second topic will be the initiation of the cracks in the foundation between the town and gown: the integration of the school. As the college began to grow closer to what it is today, the campus and the people who worked and studied there began to change. The campus community was more accepting, and as the turmoil around the nation surrounding equal rights began to expand, those in charge of the college knew they would have to update their acceptance policies and officially integrate. Although the actual integration process of SFA was somewhat subdued, especially when compared to other colleges in the region, it was still a major culture shock to the surrounding town. The local public schools had not integrated at this time and this change would equal the playing field for the races. Unfortunately for the town, there was not much they could do in regard to change, but the actions of those on campus and how they interacted with the

¹¹ Don Mills, Unpublished Interview with Caitlin Hornback, Personal Interview, Nacogdoches, Texas, July 3, 2019; Paul Jackson, Unpublished Interview with Caitlin Hornback, Personal Interview, Nacogdoches, Texas, July 31, 2019; Archie Rison, Unpublished Interview with Caitlin Hornback, Personal Interview, Nacogdoches, Texas, October 26, 2018; Verdis Daniels Jr., "My Story: Experiencing the Racial Environment of the 60s and 70s in Nacogdoches, Texas," in *Nacogdoches: Integration and Segregation Then and Now* by Dawn Michelle Williams and Brandon L. Fox, (Nacogdoches, Texas: Stephen F. Austin State University Press, 2016), 83-89; Raquel Torres, "Nacogdoches: A day trip to the oldest town in Texas," *ETX View*, May 20, 2021, https://www.etxview.com/archives/nacogdoches-a-day-trip-to-the-oldest-town-in-texas/article_4d69e9a5-1ff2-5e4b-bf47-c081ac1a7367.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=user-share&fbclid=IwAR3YHqhCeN96dE-i1YuGJd-1Qlm_4jz-aZmkWKsgLpFKIPdpuMFuaa-10U; Heather Leighton, "Vintage photos of Houston's Southwest Freeway show how it's changed over the years," *Houston Chronicle*, July 26, 2017, <https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Vintage-photos-of-Houston-US-59-freeway-11438091.php>.

people of Nacogdoches influenced the decision for many in the community to ultimately abandon SFA.¹²

The final topic is the combination of three major events relating to integration and equal rights that solidified the decision for the city to break away completely. The majority of students who attended SFA in the mid-1960s hailed from Harris County and the faculty had a more expansive background having earned their degrees from all over the country, which gave the school a more diverse and accepting group of people. By the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s, Nacogdoches could no longer stop progression toward civil rights within the university and attempts toward change began. The death of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. set off sparks across the country and Nacogdoches was no exception. Several leaders of the school, including the president Ralph W. Steen, honored King. A history professor on campus named Dr. William J. Brophy started the Kings Men, an equal rights organization that began at SFA and grew to include citizens of the city. Although not directly related to King's death, a few days after his demise the Austin Heights Baptist Church broke apart from one of the largest churches in town due to their ideas on integration. The final straw was a protest initiated

¹² Chip Wade, Unpublished Interview with Caitlin Hornback, personal interview, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas, July 7, 2019; Ab Abernethy, Interview by Greg Bailey, October 16, 2013, ETRC Oral History #738, Sound Cloud, https://soundcloud.com/sfa_etrc/oh738; F. E. "Ab" Abernethy (written Abernathy), Interview by Dr. Jere Jackson, August 21, ETRC Oral History #955, Sound Cloud, https://soundcloud.com/sfa_etrc/oh955; Ross Markwardt, "Campus Boom Town," *Scene*, October 1968; Jere Jackson, "Ralph Steen and the Campus Boom Town: Biographer addresses context for Steen's actions," from "SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <http://www.sfasu.edu/story/articles/Nov15-Essay.html>; *The Amazing Grace Baptist Church: Four Decades of Service at Austin Heights*, Compiled by Archie McDonald (Nacogdoches: Austin Heights Baptist Church, 2007), 11.

by an outsider, which became the most violence witnessed by the people of Nacogdoches since the 1902 lynching of a black man named James Buchanan.¹³

The story of Nacogdoches as far as race relations is typical of a southern town, but the story of how it became a college town and the results thereafter is unique. Most legislatures dedicated land to build a college and a town formed from that creation, but Nacogdoches was an established town that begged for a college. Those who wanted SFA had no idea what colleges would look like and were not prepared for the ideological changes that would occur. Nacogdoches wanted a proper institution that conformed to the overall view of the outside people while those involved with the school wanted justice and equality. These two opposite entities collided and created a city and a college completely at odds with one another.

¹³ “College Info: Prepared for TV program,” Box 1, Folder 11 “Correspondence C 1967-1968,” Office of the President Steen (UA-1), ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas; *McGuire v. Roebuck*, 347 F. Supp. 1111 (E.D. Tex. 1972); “A Quiet Night City Tightens Security,” *The Daily Sentinel*, May 15, 1970, in “News Clippings Protest and Mickey McGuire April-May 1970,” from the AAHP, Box 4, Folder 32, ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas; “In Memory of Rights Leader: ‘King’s Men’ Organize To Perpetuate Ideals,” *The Pine Log*, Vol. 45 No. 22, April 12, 1968, 3; *The Amazing Grace Baptist Church*, Compiled by McDonald, 13-17; Borders, *A Hanging in Nacogdoches*, 13-25, 42-43, 55-63; Stephen Delear, “March! The Fight for Civil Rights in a Land of Fear: Nacogdoches, Texas 1929-1975” Master’s Thesis, Stephen F. Austin State University, 2011, ISBN-13: 978-0-9838830-0-5, Kindle Edition.

CHAPTER ONE

The Pride of the Town

The city of Nacogdoches, and the state of Texas overall, has a rich cultural history comparable to that of the vast heritage of the United States, but for far too long the white majority excluded minority stories. Despite Nacogdoches being a great example of a conglomerate of diverse cultures, the city, and East Texas in general, is one of the strongest bastions of traditional ideas. One of the defining characteristics of Nacogdoches is how the white citizens have treated minority groups, especially African Americans, over the years. The ability to keep the races separated and keep outside influences away from the town for as long as they could is a feat that united those in control. One of the only incidents in Nacogdoches history that overshadowed the collaborative racist efforts was the foundation of SFA. For the white citizens of the city, SFA stood as a beacon of hope during the tumultuous days of the early twentieth century, particularly the ravages of the Depression and World War II. The college was the culmination of hopes and dreams that brought the town together in ways no one could imagine, but as the times and leadership on campus changed, so too did the hopes and dreams about the school change for the people of Nacogdoches.

The history of African Americans in Nacogdoches is similar to the rest of the United States. The elite class of citizens needed a way to divide the lower class, so they

changed the servitude status of those with darker skin from indentured servant to slave. For more than two centuries, white men bought and sold people from Africa as if they were property and forced them to work their farms until the end of the Civil War granted them their freedom. Despite a brief moment during Reconstruction where freedmen started gaining political power or simply higher status within society, Jim Crow Laws squashed many dreams of remote equality. Freedom colonies became a safe haven for these new citizens as African Americans surrounded themselves with people from a similar background and away from the scornful eyes of their white counterparts. Nacogdoches was home to at least thirteen different freedom colonies some of which became prolific entities that helped create a sense of security in the years to come.¹⁴

African Americans across the nation experienced harsher punishments and fewer opportunities to better themselves with education or promising work. Most positions available were as day laborers or maids, roles similar to the ones they had when they were slaves. Jim Crow Laws made everyday actions of African Americans easier to punish, especially in their interactions with white people. If a black person committed a crime, proven or assumed, an unfair trial commenced if an angry mob did not get to the

¹⁴ Olivia B. Waxman, “The First Africans in Virginia Landed in 1619. It Was a Turning Point for Slavery in American History—But Not the Beginning,” *Time*, August 20, 2019, <https://time.com/5653369/august-1619-jamestown-history/>; Crystal Ponti, “America’s History of Slavery Began Long Before Jamestown,” *History*, August 14, 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/american-slavery-before-jamestown-1619>; Sitton and Conrad, *Freedom Colonies*, 5, 23, 61, 66, 113, 155, 160; “Family Memories of the Upshaw Community,” *The Daily Sentinel*, June 17, 2008, https://www.dailysentinel.com/article_f6e07f57-5e69-5ffe-9fed-9f4216725f8a.html; Cat Cardenas, “Telling the Story of a Texas Freedom Colony Through Decades of Photos,” *Texas Monthly*, January 29, 2019, <https://www.texasmonthly.com/the-culture/telling-story-texas-freedom-colony-through-decades-photos/>; Robbie Goodrich, “Upshaw family photo project becomes traveling exhibition,” *SFA News*, February 22, 2017, <http://www.sfasu.edu/9197.asp>.

perpetrator first. Nacogdoches had only a handful of lynchings, but they became sensationalized by the local newspaper. The few times the editor of *The Daily Sentinel* even mentioned African Americans involved crimes committed by or against them. White assailants received sympathy for their infractions since their victim most likely provoked them.¹⁵

By the time the civil rights movement was in full swing across the nation, Nacogdoches remained heavily divided. Segregation defined several aspects of Nacogdoches life well into the 1970s, especially with the justice system. Police chief M. C. Roebuck was responsible for much of the divide as he was the enforcer of the barbaric social norms. He did not completely ignore the African American community when they needed him, but he would show up when no one called in order to witness and make arrests for petty crimes. This instilled fear in the hearts of the black citizens, but since white citizens often saw African Americans as guilty no matter the circumstances, they admired and respected Roebuck for his actions. His notoriety spread so far that black people from outside the city knew to take the long way around Nacogdoches for fear of Roebuck or one of his loyal band of officers stopping them simply for being an unknown African American. If an officer arrested an African American, they placed them in the darkest and hottest cells. When it was not the police force terrorizing the black

¹⁵ Archie Rison, Personal Interview; I. A. Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930* (Louisiana State -University Press: Baton Rouge, 1965), 69, 117-122, 137-140; "What was Jim Crow," *Ferris State University*, September 2000, <https://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/what.htm>; Stephen Delear, "The role of Oral History" in "March!;" Borders, *A Hanging in Nacogdoches*, 13-25, 42-43, 55-63.

community, basic citizens enforced the idea that black people were insignificant. Some people prioritized status over safety when in a car. They would inch their vehicle forward at a stop light or speed away when the light turned green as to not be at the same level as a black man.¹⁶

Freedom colonies offered African Americans during those early years after the Civil War safety and community as a major benefit, but the decades of isolation did have consequences. The majority of black neighborhoods and businesses were on the south side of town and everyone had to cater to segregationist policies of the time, while the cycle of poverty remained unchecked. Many families could not afford basic necessities, let alone representation in court proceedings. The discrimination African Americans faced forced local grocer Arthur Weaver to step up and be the voice for the people. Weaver eventually became the founder and first president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), but before the organization's foundation, Weaver was the man everyone turned to in their time of need. He was front and center of the local civil rights movement, but despite his best efforts, there was still a struggle for many years.¹⁷

¹⁶ Rison, Personal Interview; Jackson, Personal Interview; "A Place Where Men Wait," *Free Voice* Vol. 1 No. 1 (SFASU), September 15, 1972, 3; Mills, Personal Interview. The *Free Voice* was the alternative student newspaper at SFA that ran for three semesters. All available copies are available digitally at the ETRC.

¹⁷ "Historical Tour of Shawnee," Box 3 Folder 7 "Histories of Zion Hill First Baptist, Shawnee Church of Christ, Lone Star Primitive Baptist, Sunset Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, African American Heritage Project (AAHP) (A-202), ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas; Arthur Weaver, "Across 'Nigger Main'," *Free Voice*, Vol. 1 No. 2, September 29, 1972, 4; Christine Broussard, "Arthur Weaver: A Life Fighting for Civil Rights," *Longview News-Journal*, February 24, 2015,

Part of the issue was due to the mistrust between the two divided communities, but the majority of this issue was by design by those in charge. Over policing of black neighborhoods became a main contributor of the distrust because the increase in arrests for petty crimes helped perpetuate the overall poverty already established by the lack of financial opportunities. Since one of the best ways for African Americans to rise above the ranks was to earn a degree, the Supreme Court approved the doctrine of “separate but equal,” as a purposeful misinterpretation of the Constitution in order to maintain white supremacy. Schools did not have to integrate as long as the facilities for the black students were equal to that of the white students’, which never occurred. Southern states did everything in their power to prevent African Americans from entering their schools from taking their time to create a “perfect” separate facility to going as far as to set up funds to send them to integrated schools out of state.¹⁸

https://www.news-journal.com/news/local/arthur-weaver-a-life-fighting-for-civil-rights/article_8ff5966d-5048-5dec-8e05-5915af68dc46.html; *Arthur Weaver v. R. G. Muckleroy* (Civil Action No. 5524) in *Extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Ninety-fourth Congress, First Session* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975) page 252, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Extension_of_the_Voting_Rights_Act_of_1965/6WVDrAsWcqgC?hl=en&gbpv=1.

¹⁸ *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896); *Ex parte Plessy*, 11 So. 948 (La. 1892); Rothstein, “The Racial Achievement Gap, Segregated Schools, and Segregated Neighborhoods;” Robin Smyton, “How Racial Segregation and Policing Intersect in America;” Ronald Weitzer & Rod K. Brunson, “Policing Different Racial Groups in the United States,” (Washington D.C.: George Washington University, 2015), 129-145, <https://sociology.columbian.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs1986/f/downloads/Weitzer%20%26%20Brunson%202015%20.pdf>; “Plessy v. Ferguson: Separate Isn’t Equal,” *Jim Crow Museum*, Ferris State University, accessed February 18, 2022, <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/links/mislink/plessy.htm>; Shabazz, *Advancing Democracy*, 24, 27, 30-31, 71, 84, 87-89, 98-99, 118.

Due to the increased poverty, most African Americans could not afford to send their children to college let alone out of the state even with help covering tuition. When people started to challenge these racist policies, many of those in charge of the schools claimed they could not work around their institution's whites only policy established by their founders. The foundation of SFA, like many other southern colleges, was a calculated decision to benefit the white community while exiling African Americans by forcing them to attend school elsewhere. The white citizens of Nacogdoches blissfully ignored the plights of their black neighbors while they rallied behind their new institution and their own misgivings. SFA was the one thing that united Nacogdoches more than discrimination in part due to its elite status as a whites-only college, but mostly because it was the saving grace for the town during times of crisis.¹⁹

The economy in Nacogdoches had been bustling for a while with increased cargo transportation due to the railroad, but the people wanted more. When the Texas State Legislature approved the foundation of three new state normal colleges in 1915, it provided an opportunity to rebrand the town as something more than a farming community. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court of Texas was in charge of appointing a locating committee to scout suitable locations for the new schools, but the court refused delaying the project for two years. The Supreme Court formed a committee in the spring of 1917 and the white citizens of Nacogdoches rushed into action. They formed the

¹⁹ Ralph W. Steen to Willie G. Whitaker, April 15, 1964, Ralph W. Steen to Elizabeth Doreen Allen, May 5, 1964, Ralph W. Steen to Benedict C. Njoku, May 19, 1964, Box 3 Folder 8 "Correspondence Jan-Aug 1964," Office of the President Steen, ETRC; Shabazz, *Advancing Democracy*, 115, 167, 172-179.

Citizens Committee of Nacogdoches, now known as the Nacogdoches Booster Club, for the sole purpose of convincing the location committee that the Stephen F. Austin State Normal needed to be in Nacogdoches. They felt that the school named after the man who settled Texas needed to be in the oldest town in the state.²⁰

There was a designated two hundred acres from the homestead of Thomas J. Rusk, an early political and military leader of the Republic of Texas, and the Citizen's Committee wrote out "Twenty-Three Reasons why the Stephen F. Austin State Normal Ought to be Located at Nacogdoches." Some of the reasons given were that Nacogdoches was a city of health, churches, and wholesome amusements. Nacogdoches won the school and the Board of Regents elected Alton W. Birdwell as president. The people rejoiced and exclaimed,

With the capture of the location of Stephen F. Austin Normal, a new era has been born in the industrial, commercial, and social life of Nacogdoches. . . . The victory is two-fold, for the reasons that it brought our people together in unity of purpose; every man, regardless of financial standing, doing everything in his power, willingly and cheerfully to accomplish the victory, and it was through this impenetrable organization and enthusiastic cooperation that we won - an object lesson on the value of cooperation that we will never forget, and an inspiration that will hold us together in the future.²¹

²⁰ *The Bicentennial Commemorative History of Nacogdoches* (Jaycees: Nacogdoches, Texas, 1976), 125-126; Joe E. Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story: An Informal History* (Bowie, Maine: Heritage Books, Inc., 2000), 120-121; Borders, A Hanging in Nacogdoches, 41-45; Archie P. McDonald, "SFASU," *Texas Escapes*, <http://www.texasescapes.com/AllThingsHistorical/SFASU-AM905.htm>.

²¹ "Twenty-Three Reasons Why the Stephen F. Austin State Normal Ought to be Located at Nacogdoches;" "Nacogdoches gets the Normal School," "Our New Era," "Tyler Congratulates us on Our Victory," "From Mayor Matthews" *The Daily Sentinel*, July 16, 1917, Vol. XVIII No. 270, Microfilm at the Steen Library, *The Daily Sentinel* Jan. 3, 1917 thru Dec. 31, 1917, Missing Files: Aug. 1917; "Normal Committee Here this Morning: Local Citizens Entertained the Visitors, Showed Them Town and Proposed Sites," *The Daily Sentinel*, July 12, 1917, Vol. XVIII, No. 267; *The Bicentennial Commemorative History of Nacogdoches*, 123-126; Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 120-126.

Unfortunately, the United States' entrance into World War I in October 1917 postponed construction of the school. America was only in the war for a year when fighting ceased but the ramifications lasted much longer. Talks of forming the college did not begin again until 1921. The Board of Regents reelected Birdwell as president and the Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College officially opened in September 1923. Over the next few years, the campus moved to its current location and welcomed three new constructions: the Austin Building, the Aikman Gym, and the Rusk Building.²²

The fledgling school faced several challenges and celebrations during those three decades. Birdwell's largest challenge during his presidency was the risk of closing during the Great Depression. Everyone in the country feared the downfall of the nation as more businesses and institutions began to close. Government administrators wanted the teacher colleges to downgrade to junior colleges or become feeder schools for the University of Texas. Many refused and rallied to protect SFA thus by 1933 the threat of closing was no longer an issue but the Depression itself remained.²³

²² "The Normal Delayed" *The Daily Sentinel*, September 25, 1917, Vol. XIX No. 47; "Arranging for Homes for Visiting Teachers," in "The East Texas Focus" in *The Daily Sentinel*, September 1, 1923, Vol. XXV, No. 23; V. R. Cardozier, "Higher Education," *Texas State Historical Association*, accessed June 5, 2020, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/higher-education>; "Stephen F. Austin State University," *Lone Star Junction*; Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 123-125.

²³ Bobby H. Johnson, "Memories of the Depression," from "SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <https://www.sfasu.edu/story/articles/Sept27-OralHistory-Depression-BHJ.html>; Jere Jackson, "The SFA Alumni Association: The Association During the Birdwell Years," "Homecomings and History: The Depression dissipates," "SFA's Existence Threatened: Citizens rally once again to defend the college," "A Brief Chronology of SFA," from "SFA

In spite of the fear growing across the country, SFA had new reasons to celebrate. Former students created the Ex-Students Association, which later became the Alumni Association, in order to connect graduates even if they were from different graduating years. The city and the college worked together to create the first of a decade's long tradition of Homecoming celebrations. Finally, the city voted to move the Old Stone Fort, the first and most prominent building in town, to the campus. Despite a brief discrepancy on whether or not the campus was the right location for the Stone Fort Museum, the optimism for the future of SFA and Nacogdoches looked bright. Birdwell retired as president in 1942 handing over the position to Paul L. Boynton, who then had his own set of challenges to overcome.²⁴

Shortly before Dr. Boynton became the second president, the United States entered World War II. Colleges across the country felt the devastating blow to their enrollment numbers as men left their institutions to fight in the war or enrolled with the armed forces after graduating high school instead of enrolling in college. SFA's enrollment numbers dropped to around four hundred making the risk of shutting down greater than during the Depression. Boynton secured the college as a training facility for a new branch of the United States Army called the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps

Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <https://www.sfasu.edu/story/>.

²⁴ Archie P. McDonald, "Old Stone Fort," *Texas State Historical Association*, accessed March 10, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/old-stone-fort>; Edwin W. Gatson, "Celebrating Former Students: A Brief History of the Alumni Association (1998)," from "SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <http://www.sfasu.edu/story/articles/Oct11-AlumniAssociation.html>; Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 125-128, 131.

(WAACs), later known as the Women's Army Corps (WACs). SFA became the first designated WAAC branch of the Army Administration School in 1943 where the women learned to be switchboard operators, mechanics, and bankers. These women rode the Southern Pacific Railroad from all across the country to the small East Texas town where they then marched down the street from the train depot all the way to the steps of the Austin Building.²⁵

During their six-week training sessions, they lived on campus and joined local civilian life during their time off. Every class would create a program of skits and musical numbers open to the public before their graduation, which brought a sense of community and hope during those difficult days. When the WAACs graduated, they would ship off to their next location and a new group of women started classes. This rotation allowed SFA to survive until the men returned home and a new group of students entered the realm of higher education.²⁶

Congress' establishment of the G.I. Bill led SFA, like many other schools across the country, to an increase in student enrollment, which ultimately changed the dynamics

²⁵ Clarice F. Pollard, *Laugh, Cry and Remember: The Journal of a G.I. Lady* (Journeys Press: Phoenix, 1991), 51, 53; Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 147, 154-160; Jere Jackson, "The Boynton Administration: 1948-58: Boynton attempts to catch up with growth," "The Boynton Administration: 1948-58: Celebrations, Growth, and Building," from "SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <https://www.sfasu.edu/story/>; Matthew Lynch, "Uncovering the Devastating Impacts of World War II on American Education," *The Advocate*, September 2, 2016, <https://www.theedadvocate.org/uncovering-devastating-impact-world-war-ii-american-education/>; "The College during World War II," *Sarah Lawrence College*, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.sarahlawrence.edu/archives/digital-collections/wwii/background.html>.

²⁶ Pollard, *Laugh, Cry and Remember*; 60-61, 64-65, 68; "Historical Markers: Women's Army Corps School," from "SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <http://www.sfasu.edu/story/markers/SFA-WACs.html>.

of how colleges operated. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the G.I. Bill into law on June 22, 1944. Formally called the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, it was to be a reward to those who served in the military. Veterans of World War I suffered economic hardships as they flooded back into the job market and the current administration wanted to do better for this round of veterans. The money from the G.I. Bill helped establish hospitals, provided low-interest mortgages, and granted stipends to cover some of the cost of college or trade school tuition.²⁷

More than seven million veterans of World War II took advantage of this opportunity to further their education by the time this variation of the bill ended in 1956. Although women and African American veterans technically had the same rights as their white male counterparts, many Veterans Administration program directors barred them from obtaining those same benefits. However, this did not change the fact that more people that normally would not have attended college due to the cost of higher education could finally attend. When the veterans returned to SFA they faced many challenges including housing and overcrowded classrooms. Enrollment numbers jumped from a little more than three hundred students in 1945 to roughly one thousand the following year. President Boynton reached out to the Board of Regents for approval for an emergency

²⁷ John Bound and Sarah Turner, "Going to War and Going to College: Did World War II and the G.I. Bill Increase Educational Attainment for Returning Veterans?" *Journal of Labor Economics*, Vol. 20, no. 4, October 2002, 784-815, <https://www-jstor-org.steenproxy.sfasu.edu/stable/10.1086/342012>; Marvin Lazerson, "The Disappointments of Success: Higher Education after World War II," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 559, 64-76, September 1998, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1049607>; Jere Jackson, "The Boynton Administration During World War II: GIs Return - Vet Villages," from "SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <http://www.sfasu.edu/story/articles/Oct25-GIs-VetVillages.html>.

construction grant to begin building new classrooms and dorms. Most of the classrooms during the Boynton Administration were temporary portable facilities but plans were in the works to help support the growing number of servicemen attending college at SFA.²⁸

Over the next decade, major changes in the social and political spheres across America were in the early stages of development. Nacogdoches and SFA were able to stave those influences for a little while longer due to the strength of the Pine Curtain and by focusing more on the collegiate milestones of the late 1940s. One of the greatest achievements during this time, especially considering the previous risk of shutting down, was the celebration of SFA's twenty-fifth anniversary in 1948. The following year, a legislative act dropped the title of "teachers" from all state colleges, thus changing the name to Stephen F. Austin State College. As Nacogdoches moved into the 1950s, enrollment numbers steadily increased and life in the area saw few changes until the first event that would transform SFA and Nacogdoches forever.²⁹

The completion of U.S. Highway 59 broke barriers in ways that no one could have predicted. This major highway connected Nacogdoches to Houston, which was, and

²⁸ Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 165-168; Jackson, "The Boynton Administration During World War II: GIs Return - Vet Villages;" Erin Blakemore, "How the GI Bill's Promise Was Denied to a Million Black WWII Veterans," *History*, June 21, 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/gi-bill-black-wwii-veterans-benefits>; Joseph Thompson, "The GI Bill should've been race neutral, politicians made sure it wasn't," *Military Times*, November 9, 2019, <https://www.militarytimes.com/military-honor/salute-veterans/2019/11/10/the-gi-bill-shouldve-been-race-neutral-politicos-made-sure-it-wasnt/>; "G.I. Bill," *History*, May 27, 2010, <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/gi-bill>.

²⁹ "Vernon's Texas Statutes 1950 Supplement," *Vernon Law Book Company*, May 1950, <https://www.sll.texas.gov/library-resources/collections/historical-texas-statutes/bookreader/1950/#page/235/mode/1up>, 211; C. K. Chamberlain, "Stephen F. Austin State University," *Texas State Historical Association*, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/stephen-f-austin-state-university>.

still is, the largest city in Texas. Within a few years of completion, more students attended SFA from Harris County than Nacogdoches County. This development began to puncture the Pine Curtain by changing the dynamics of the faculty and students. However, the biggest influence on the campus was yet to come; the appointment of Ralph W. Steen as president.³⁰

Ralph Wright Steen would become the most celebrated president in SFA history. A lifelong Texan, Steen was born, raised, and attended schools in the Lone Star State, ultimately earning his Ph.D. in history from the University of Texas. While earning his degrees, he worked at several different schools before joining Texas A&M for his longest teaching stint from 1935 to 1958. Dr. Steen then served as the head of the Department of History and Government for four years. His experience in different leadership positions within academia made him a great candidate to take charge of SFA after several trying years.³¹

Dr. Steen became president of Stephen F. Austin State College on November 1, 1958, after the unexpected death of President Boynton, and held the position until his

³⁰ Leighton, "Vintage photos of Houston's Southwest Freeway show how it's changed over the years;" Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 168-171, 219; "College Info: Prepared for TV program," Office of the President Steen, ETRC; Ralph W. Steen to Mr. C. Anthony Buckley, Box 1, Folder 13 "Correspondence College Park 1967-1971," President, Office of the President Steen, ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas; "Resume of Constituency," Box 2, Folder 19 "Correspondence R 1962-1968," Office of the President Steen, ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas.

³¹ William Harlow, "Steen, Ralph Wright (1905-1980)," *Texas State Historical Association*, accessed February 25, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/steen-ralph-wright>; Jackson, "Ralph Steen and the Campus Boom Town;" "Biographical Data of Dr. Ralph W. Steen President of Stephen F. Austin State College, Nacogdoches, Texas," Box 4 Folder 8 "Personal History, Pictures, and Obituary," Office of the President Steen, ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas.

retirement on July 31, 1976. During his time as the third president, SFA experienced unprecedented growth making it one of the fastest growing colleges in the state at the time. Enrollment grew from two thousand students to more than ten thousand in just a few short years. The campus itself saw the completion of several new state of the art classrooms and dormitories to accommodate those growing numbers. Dr. Steen also oversaw one of the most substantial and controversial events in the university's history, the integration of the campus.³²

President Steen deserves much of the praise he garnered during his time as the leader of the school, but he also receives more than what he is due. Without his push to shake up what he considered to be the sleepy town of Nacogdoches, SFA might not be the university it is today, but it came at the cost of the relationship between SFA and the people of Nacogdoches. Granted, the reality of what he accomplished goes beyond the capabilities of what a college president can do, as there is a higher power behind the scenes. The Board of Regents permits a president to enact legislation they want the school to follow and ultimately these decisions reflect upon the president. The actions taken by the faculty and students also have the potential to affect the public's perception

³² "Enrollment Reaches New High, Record Smashed For Fourth Straight Year," *The Pine Log*, September 20, 1963, 1; Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 213-215; "Enrollment Hits 10,000 For Fall," *The Pine Log*, September 15, 1972, 1; Various, Box 4, Folder 13 "Letters of Congratulations 1958," Office of the President Steen, ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas; Ralph W. Steen to Mr. Wilmer L. McCallum, Vice President, Box 1, Folder 13 "Correspondence College Park 1967-1971," Office of the President Steen, ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas.

of the one in charge and the school as a whole. However, Steen's greatest contribution to SFA came because of foresight and dedication to what the school could become.³³

During his presidency, Dr. Steen oversaw the construction of more than a dozen buildings and saw the number of classes and degree programs increase in pursuit of a university title. The previous president had plans to expand the college since the number of students began to rise during his tenure, but funding was always a source of contention. Exuberant production costs dashed Dr. Boynton's dreams of constructing a fine arts building and auditorium. Steen's plans to reconstruct the campus would ultimately include eleven dormitories, four classroom and office buildings, a library, a coliseum and it all started with a student center inspired by the one at A&M. The Memorial Student Center at A&M was a place to honor those who had fallen in the two world wars as well as be a central location for students to come together.³⁴

³³ "Something About East Texas" by Ralph W. Steen published in *Philosophical Society of Texas*, 1962, Box 4, Folder 10, Office of the President Steen, ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas; "The SFA Board of Regents," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <http://www.sfasu.edu/story/boards/index.html>; "Rules and Regulations Board of Regents Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University Board of Regents*, February 2, 2021, <http://www.sfasu.edu/docs/board-regents/rules-and-regulations.revised02.02.2021.pdf>; Jere Jackson, "The buildings of the 1960s: Haas discusses Steen's building program," from "The Early Steen Administration: An Explosion," from "SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <https://www.sfasu.edu/story/articles/Nov8-Buildings-Early60s.html>.

³⁴ Elizabeth D. Vaccaro, "A Strategic Action Plan For Student Centers & College Unions," Master's Thesis, Ball State University, 2011, 8-25, https://cardinalscholar.bsu.edu/bitstream/handle/123456789/195004/VaccaroE_2011-3_BODY.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y; "Memorial Student Center," *Texas A&M University*, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.tamu.edu/traditions/remembrance/msc/index.html>; Linda Carl, "1970 To Bring A Dreamland SFA," *The Pine Log*, November 3, 1967, 4; Ross Markwardt, "Campus Boom Town;" Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 218.

Colleges across the nation began creating student unions in the early nineteenth century, but after the rise in student populations due to the GI Bill, more campuses wanted a place where the college could become a community. The student center at SFA opened in 1960 and housed a snack bar, bookstore, cafeteria, post office, meeting rooms, and more. With the help from Charles Haas, the comptroller in charge of budgets and contractor bids, Steen was able to move forward with building plans, including the fine arts building. Haas felt Steen had a way of convincing the Board of Regents all these projects needed to happen, and with the rising success of the college, it was difficult to disagree. However, it became much harder to convince those outside the college these plans needed to proceed.³⁵

Ralph Steen had no way of knowing the number of students would rise to more than ten thousand during his eighteen years at SFA, but he knew big changes would need to be made in order to accommodate the growing student population. Dr. Steen had a plan from the very beginning but knew he would not be able to act immediately in expanding the college beyond the initial two hundred acres due to the concern of the public. The city government of Nacogdoches supported Steen in his endeavors as the growing number of

³⁵ Keith W. Olson "The G. I. Bill and Higher Education: Success and Surprise," *American Quarterly* 25, no. 5, December 1973, 596-610, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2711698>; "Reflections on the early 1960s: An Interview with Charles Haas, Business Manager 1959-82," from "The Early Steen Administration: An Explosion," from "SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <https://www.sfasu.edu/story/articles/Nov8-HaasInterview.html>; Jere Jackson, "Steen's Building Program, Phase II - Interview with Charles Haas," from "The Early Steen Administration: An Explosion," from "SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <https://www.sfasu.edu/story/articles/Nov15-Bldgs-Haas-Phase-II.html>; Jackson, "The Buildings of the 1960s."

students added to the growing economy, but it would be much more difficult to convince the everyday citizens of the town to go along with major changes. People from small rural towns often dislike major change and hold on to a strong sense of tradition, which was the case regarding the Griffith Park debate that became the first major point of contention between SFA and Nacogdoches.³⁶

Griffith Park, a plot of land south of the main campus, was the perfect location to expand the school due to its close proximity. This area filled with hundreds of pine trees was originally part of Thomas J. Rusk's homestead, but it eventually became the property of Lycurgus E. Griffith and his daughter Martha. The city obtained this untapped land in 1917 with the one requirement being that the Griffith heirs would inherit the land again if the city no longer maintained the property. With an arrangement made by M. M. Stripling, chairman of the city commission, and permission given from each of the living heirs, Griffith Park would belong to the school. Unfortunately, the process to secure this property would not be an easy one.³⁷

³⁶ Jere Jackson, "Griffith Park becomes an Issue," from "The Early Steen Administration: An Explosion," from "SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <https://www.sfasu.edu/story/articles/Nov8-GriffithPark.html>; Raquel Torres, "Nacogdoches: A day trip to the oldest town in Texas;" Becky McCray, "Survey of Rural Challenges 2017: What Small Town People See as Their Biggest Challenges and What Topics They Most Want Help With," *Small Biz Survival*, December 18, 2017, <https://smallbizsurvival.com/2017/12/survey-rural-challenges-2017-small-town-people-see-biggest-challenges-topics-want-help.html>.

³⁷ Jackson, "Griffith Park becomes an Issue;" Davis Griffith-Cox, "The Griffith Family," *Bedinger Family History and Genealogy*, accessed July 16, 2020, <http://www.bedinger.org/the-griffith-family.html>; City of Nacogdoches, *Minutes*, Vol. 12, 11-12; City of Nacogdoches, *Minutes*, Vol. 6, 412-413.

The acquisition of Griffith Park had two major hurdles to overcome, legal and emotional. M. M. Stripling eagerly agreed to give SFA the rights to the park for free, but there was the prospect of the state issuing condemnation proceedings as well as the task of finding the remaining Griffith heirs for them to sign their rights away to the school. All of the heirs agreed to terminate their rights except for one. This particular heir felt giving the property to the school was a violation of the original agreement between her ancestors and the city and thought that cutting down trees to make way for large buildings took away from the feel of Nacogdoches and the Piney Woods. The citizens became irritated when they heard what was to become of the park. This was the first time a president of the school began to encroach on the traditions or nostalgia of the town instead of adding to them. Dr. Steen pleaded his case to the people at a city council meeting during the summer of 1961. In an attempt to be cordial with the citizens and heirs, Steen offered for SFA to pay ten thousand dollars plus the cost of paving Griffith Boulevard to avoid the Board of Regents from forcefully obtaining the land through legal actions.³⁸

For the next two years, a battle of words and law consumed the town. Both sides wrote letters and articles denouncing the immobility of the town to accept change or the

³⁸ City of Nacogdoches, *Minutes*, Vol. 7, 218, 229; City of Nacogdoches, *Minutes*, Vol. 8, 110; City of Nacogdoches, *Minutes*, Vol. 9, 25, 101, 104, 328, 346, 354; City of Nacogdoches, *Minutes*, Vol. 12, 11, 13, 429, 437, 447; City of Nacogdoches, *Minutes*, Vol. 13, 342; Gerald Yoes, "Bustling Construction Program Changes Face of SFA Campus," *The Pine Log*, November 15, 1963; "Dorm 15 Features Many New Ideas," *The Pine Log*, December 3, 1965, 8; Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 216-217; "Spare Those Lovely Pines," news clipping in Box 2, Folder 3 "Griffith Park Correspondence 1961-1964," Office of the President Steen, ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas.

lack of compassion from an outsider on the memories of the people. No matter how everything played out someone would be hurt, but in the end, Griffith Park became the property of SFA and construction began on two new dorms. In an attempt to make amends for the mess of the legal battle of the property, Steen proposed naming two new buildings in honor of the Griffith family. Those two buildings became the Griffith Fine Arts Building, the fine arts building Boynton dreamed about, and a new dorm built on the former park named the Martha T. Griffith Hall. Despite the gesture to immortalize the Griffith family on SFA's campus, the incident still caused some resentment within the city, but due to the unprecedented growth of the campus the people forgave the school's transgressions. Over the next several years, construction and growth remained within the campus causing little issue with the citizens of Nacogdoches until Dr. Steen chose to demolish a portion of a major road through campus.³⁹

The continued growth of the student population called for new state of the art dorms and classrooms to not only entice students to attend SFA in the first place, but to also keep students until graduation. While the dormitories were on the outskirts of the campus, the classrooms were centrally located often bordering Raguet Street. North Street was the main road through the middle of the city. It ran North and South and

³⁹ Ralph W. Steen, "Something About East Texas: An Article by Ralph W. Steen," originally published in *Philosophical Society of Texas*, 1962, published on "The Early Steen Administration: An Explosion" by Jere Jackson, *Stephen F. Austin State University*, accessed on July 16, 2020, <http://www.sfasu.edu/story/articles/Nov8-AboutEastTexas.html>; Various, Box 2, Folder 3 "Griffith Park Correspondence 1961-1964."

connected Nacogdoches to Houston and Dallas, while Raguet was the street that ran parallel through the middle of campus and was another conduit across the city. North Street was the location of many businesses and crowded, so Raguet had become the route for motorists to make quick passage across Nacogdoches. Unfortunately, having a major road run through the middle of campus became a danger to students walking to their classes as well as a possible noise distraction for those studying or in the middle of lectures. Dr. Steen also wanted a more cohesive look to the campus and sought to connect the two sides. By 1973, there was a walkway built in the middle of campus dividing Raguet Street in half and preventing motorists from making it to the other side with ease.⁴⁰

Despite the completion of University Drive, another street east of Raguet and parallel to North, around the same time which gave motorists another route through town, there was already too much damage. Over the years, business owners moved their locations closer to the campus in order to make access to their stores easier on students, but this, plus the continued rising number of students, caused there to be more congestion on North Street. Nacogdoches was becoming unrecognizable to the people who had grown up in the town. Their way of life was ripping apart and it was all due to SFA and

⁴⁰ Various, Box 4 Folder 8 "Personal History, Pictures, and Obituary," Office of the President Steen, ETRC, Steen Library, Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU), Nacogdoches, Texas; Linda Carl, "1970 To Bring A Dreamland SFA;" Markwardt, "Campus Boom Town;" "Enrollment Reaches New High, Record Smashed For Fourth Straight Year;" "Lack Of Sidewalks Inconveniences Students," *Pine Log*, January 9, 1968, 2; Jackson, "The buildings of the 1960s;" Zachary McSwain, "Building the College Among the Pines: The Expansion of the SFA Campus from 1958 to 1976," Unpublished Paper, Spring 2018; 12-13; Marsha Dulong, "Construction Possible By December," *Pine Log*, July 16, 1971.

the Steen presidency. Although some people might have forgiven these intolerable circumstances due to the prosperity the college brought to the town, the most egregious act came not with the changing campus but rather the changing student body.⁴¹

SFA took more than a decade to comply with the federal mandate to integrate all schools. During that time, many of the new people attending and teaching at the college began reflecting the current social standings. Since the student population was growing, mostly with students coming from the more liberal Harris County area, the college needed to hire new faculty. Many of those professors had taught for only a few years and they earned their degrees from all over the country making them more open to change. When the school was finally able to integrate, many of the professors warmly welcomed the African American students or were at least willing to set aside their biases long enough to do their job.⁴²

When SFA finally opened their classrooms to African Americans in 1964, it was one of the last four colleges in the state of Texas to integrate. Despite no one within SFA having the ability to make that final decision outside the Board of Regents, the people of Nacogdoches were not happy. People across the South did not want African Americans

⁴¹ “Lack Of Sidewalks Inconveniences Students;” Jackson, “Steen’s Building Program, Phase II - Interview with Charles Haas;” Jackson, “Ralph Steen and the Campus Boom Town;” Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 227-229.

⁴² *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954); “Baptist Minister First Negro to Enroll at SFA,” *The Daily Sentinel* Clip; “Integration in Texas,” *The Texas Observer*, accessed May 3, 2021, 8-10, <https://www.texasobserver.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/IntegrationInTexas.pdf>; “College Info: Prepared for TV program,” Office of the President Steen, ETRC; Judy McDonald, Phone Conversation with Caitlin Hornback, February 21, 2022; Jackson, Personal Interview.

receiving the same education as white students; they also feared the possibility of interracial dating, which led schools of all statuses and ages to delay the process. The Nacogdoches Independent School District (Nacogdoches ISD) took another six years after SFA and was one of several schools over the years forced to integrate by a secondary court mandate. Despite taking much longer than necessary for SFA to integrate, the actual process, especially when compared to surrounding colleges or even its primary neighbor, was rather subdued.⁴³

⁴³ “Baptist Minister First Negro to Enroll at SFA,” *The Daily Sentinel* Clip; Interview with Ralph W. Steen, ETRC Oral History #188, Sound Cloud, https://soundcloud.com/sfa_etc/oh188; Judy McDonald, Phone Conversation; Shabazz, *Advancing Democracy*, 111-113; Robinson, “Legislated Love in the Lone Star State: Texas and Miscegenation,” 65–87; Congressional Bills, H. Res. 431 Engrossed in House, 110th Congress, June 11, 2007; “Minutes of Meeting of Board of Regents, State Teachers Colleges of Texas, Austin, Texas,” Texas State University System Board of Regents, 1911-1969, ETRC; *United States v. Texas*, 321 F. Supp. 1043 (E.D.Tex. 1970).

CHAPTER TWO

The Integration of the Gown

When compared to other schools across the country, the state of Texas, and even Nacogdoches ISD, the integration of SFA was relatively subdued. Surely, there were whispers among the citizens, faculty, and students when the Board of Regents came to the decision to allow African Americans to pursue a post-baccalaureate degree, but there were no major incidents, other than the college's previous reputation of being an all-white institution, that prevented students of color from attending. In fact, the actual process of integration at SFA flew so far under the radar it was almost like magic in that black students began registering and attending courses immediately following the Board's decision in June 1964. It would be several years before the number of African Americans attending SFA reached even one percent of the student population, so by having a smooth and uneventful transition into desegregation with few black students, it maintained a sense of normalcy for the surrounding community. The lack of lawsuits, protests, and media attention allowed the small town to continue the overtly racist practices in their own schools and businesses while ignoring the changes starting to erupt on campus until it became too much by the end of the 1960s.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Dr. Raymond L. Hall, "SFA's second black graduate student reflects," from "SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 1998, <https://www.sfasu.edu/story/articles/Integration-Hall.html>.

The notion of integrating higher education was not always a foreign concept particularly in the North, but it became a battle of law in most instances in the South. Oberlin College, originally called Oberlin Collegiate Institute, began operations in 1833 and quickly became the most progressive institution in the United States by allowing both women and African Americans to attend by the end of the decade. Some public high schools, such as Lowell High School in Massachusetts, began integrating of their own free will as early as 1843. Unfortunately, governmental changes at the end of Reconstruction allowed a fundamental shift to occur to divide the races and influence places like Oberlin to abandon its evangelical roots and segregate their black students. These political changes allowed states across the country, mainly in the South, to enact legislation aimed at discriminating against people of color leading to Jim Crow Laws and Supreme Court cases such as *Plessy v. Ferguson*.⁴⁵

Before *Plessy*, the federal government passed laws in a pursuit to make life for African Americans easier. The more well-known attempts are the Civil War Amendments of the Constitution passed between 1865 and 1870 granting slaves freedom, citizenship, and, if male, the right to vote. Other forms of progress at the time include several Civil Rights Acts dating from 1866 to 1875 and range from granting unalienable rights to

⁴⁵ *Encyclopedia of African-American Education*, Edited by Faustine C. Jones-Wilson, Charles A. Asbury, Margo, Okazawa-Rey, D. Kamili Anderson, Sylvia M. Jacobs, and Michael Fults (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996), 339, <https://books.google.com/books?id=Ni2qhq1n1d4C&pg=PA339>; "Oberlin College History: A Town of Firsts," *Oberlin College & Conservatory*, accessed May 10, 2021, <https://www.oberlin.edu/about-oberlin/oberlin-history>; Kendall Wallace, "A Lesson in How it All Began for LHS," *The Lowell Sun*, February 25, 2017, <https://www.lowellsun.com/2017/02/25/a-lesson-in-how-it-all-began-for-lhs/>; Melvin I. Urofsky, "Jim Crow Law: United States [1877-1954]," *Britannica*, July 20, 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Jim-Crow-law>.

people born in the United States to protecting the rights of those native citizens regardless of race in areas like public transportation. Another dynamic reform aimed at higher education was the implementation of the Morrill Act of 1890, which expanded the original Morrill Act of 1862 to include race. These Morrill Land-Grant Acts first established land grants to found agricultural colleges, while the second act forced states to prove race was not a requirement of entry or they had to build a separate institution for people of color so that they may also further their education with limited inhibitions. Around the same time as the passage of the Second Morrill Act, dignitaries in Louisiana passed the Separate Car Act as a continuation of a post-Reconstruction southern trend of more restrictive laws against African Americans, which contradicted previous federal legislation.⁴⁶

When Homer Plessy, a man of one-eighth African ancestry, bought a first-class ticket and boarded a “Whites Only” train car, he was in direct violation of the Separate Car Act and subsequently arrested. Plessy filed a suit against the State of Louisiana claiming the law went against his Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendment rights. Judge

⁴⁶ Morrill Act of 1862 (7 U.S.C. § 301); Agricultural College Act of 1890 (26 Stat. 417, 7 U.S.C. § 321; Thirteenth Amendment, P.L. 38-11, 13 Stat. 567, P.L. 38-52, 13 Stat. 774–775; Fourteenth Amendment, 14 Stat. 358–359; Fifteenth Amendment, P.L. 40-14; 15 Stat. 346; Civil Rights Act of 1866, 14 Stat. 27–30; Civil Rights Act of 1875, 18 Stat 335–337; The statute of Louisiana, acts of 1890, c. 111; “Integration in Texas,” *The Texas Observer*; George W. Woolfolk, “Prairie View A&M University,” *Texas State Historical Association*, accessed May 3, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/prairie-view-a-m-university>; Kenneth Weldon Medley, *We as Freeman: Plessy v. Ferguson* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 2003), 89-110; Keith Randall, “The Morrill Act Still Has A Huge Impact On The U.S. And The World,” *Texas A&M Today*, July 2, 2020, <https://today.tamu.edu/2020/07/02/the-morrill-act-still-has-a-huge-impact-on-the-u-s-and-the-world/>; John Michael Lee Jr., Ph.D. and Samaad Wes Keys, “Land-Grant but Unequal: State One-to-One Match Funding for 1890 Land-Grant Universities,” *Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities*, September 2013, <https://www.aplu.org/library/land-grant-but-unequal-state-one-to-one-match-funding-for-1890-land-grant-universities/file>.

John Howard Ferguson ruled in favor of the state and Plessy's countersuit against Ferguson ended up at the Supreme Court. May 18, 1896 the Court sided with Ferguson and the State of Louisiana in a 7-1 decision claiming the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed legal equality, but it could not prevent social discrimination. The judges stated that it was within a state's right to separate people by race as long as it did not mean to oppress any particular group and it was not the fault of the state if a person of color chose to believe certain laws placed "a badge of inferiority" upon them. *Plessy v. Ferguson* legitimized the idea of "separate but equal" in that all aspects of society such as places of business, transportation, and education could discriminate against someone based on the color of their skin as long as the alternative was equal to that of white Americans. In many instances, these separate alternatives were not close to being equal, especially when it came to education, and this reality provided civil rights groups with a loophole to exploit in order to begin the integration process.⁴⁷

A few colleges across the South began voluntarily integrating their campuses, with some in Texas integrating as early as 1943, but this was a major exception to the rule. In fact, Texas officials even developed a program to pay out of state tuition for African Americans pursuing higher education to prevent them from attending their all-white schools. This route was not always feasible since these funds did not cover the cost to travel out of state. Potential students simply wanted the best education possible closer

⁴⁷ *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896); *Ex parte Plessy*, 11 So. 948 (La. 1892); Harry E. Groves, "Separate but Equal--The Doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson*," *Phylon*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 66-72, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/272323>; Medley, *We as Freeman*, 13-36.

to home, which forced many of them to take legal action. This is how the largest institution in Texas first integrated.⁴⁸

Sweatt v. Painter was the first major integration case in the state and forced the University of Texas at Austin (UT) to allow African Americans to attend classes by using the loophole provided in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. When Heman Sweatt applied to the UT law program in 1946, the university denied his request and instead created the School of Law of the Texas State University for Negroes. Sweatt, along with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), claimed this new school was not as adequate due to the number of rooms and teachers available, which led to the Supreme Court ruling in Sweatt's favor in 1950. Since this case took several years to reach the Supreme Court, UT faced another similar situation in 1949 when Herman Barnett tried to apply to the medical branch in Galveston. Due to the nature of medical school, the makeshift branch would never have held the same standards and Barnett became the first African American to graduate from the medical school.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ W. Astor Kirk and John Q. Taylor King, "Desegregation of Higher Education in Texas," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 318-323, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2293766>; Merline Pitre, *In Struggle Against Jim Crow: Lulu B. White and the NAACP 1900-1957* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 91; *As We Saw It: The Story of Integration at the University of Texas at Austin*, Edited by Dr. Gregory J. Vincent, Virginia A. Cumberbatch, and Leslie A. Blair (Austin: University of Texas at Austin's Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, 2018), 8, 27; Shabazz, *Advancing Democracy*, 6.

⁴⁹ *Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 U.S. 629 (1950); Michele Marcotte, "NAACP celebrates 100 years," *The Daily Sentinel*, February 11, 2009, https://www.dailysentinel.com/news/local/article_b7bd2310-5e50-59c8-8e02-4009a0a0ea1b.html; Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas 1852-1971* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1973), 213-215; Anna Victoria Wilson and William E. Segall, *Oh, Do I Remember! Experiences of Teachers During the Desegregation of Austin's Schools 1964-1971* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 43; Shabazz, *Advancing Democracy*, 67-69, 79-87, 104, 137.

Despite these decisions being a large victory in the grand scheme of integrating every college in America, there were still issues plaguing the system. African Americans could not apply to UT as an undergraduate, which means they were still limited on what schools across the state or nation they could attend. The graduate students could not eat or live on campus and those issues were made more complicated by the rules off campus as well. Segregation continued to affect everyday life and primarily in public schools. Even a separate resolution by the Supreme Court in the matter of desegregation did not affect the issues plaguing education for many years.⁵⁰

By 1954 the Supreme Court declared that the notion of “separate but equal” unconstitutional. In order to comply with the previous ruling in *Plessy*, many African American schoolchildren rode a bus to a segregated school further away from their home. These schools were grossly underfunded, and this type of system often continued the cycle of poverty among black communities. In 1951 when Oliver Brown of Topeka, Kansas needed to enroll his daughter Linda into a public school he chose the all-white school closest to his house. When the school denied his daughter access, Brown and twelve other plaintiffs filed a class action lawsuit against the school district. It took two years before the Supreme Court heard the case, but on May 17, 1954, the justices made a 9-0 decision declaring *Plessy* unconstitutional. *Brown v. The Board of Education* became

⁵⁰ Barr, *Black Texans*, 215-216; Shabazz, *Advancing Democracy*, 156-159.

a landmark decision that made segregation illegal based on the ideas in the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.⁵¹

Many people praised the decision but the logistics of how desegregation would occur became the next problem. Several leaders across the South created their own legislation denouncing the ruling or tried to drag integration out for as long as possible. The process was so unruly that *Time Magazine* even published a grading system of how well the southern states followed the declaration. One of the major problems during this process was that since black schools were so underfunded, many white families within those districts began to engage in white flight and leave to a better district before the policy came into effect. Integration also brought up the issue of eliminating black culture, safety, and equality once they started to attend white schools. Progress was messy, and the Supreme Court made no rulings on how to and how long schools could take when starting the integration process, which led many districts to take their time.⁵²

⁵¹ *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954); Barr, *Black Texans*, 204-219; Robert D. Loevy, *To End All Segregation: The Politics of the Passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America Inc., 1990), 20; Robert J. Cottrol, “*Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), *Center for the Study of Federalism*, October 18, 2019, [http://encyclopedia.federalism.org/index.php?title=Brown_v._Board_of_Education_\(1954\)](http://encyclopedia.federalism.org/index.php?title=Brown_v._Board_of_Education_(1954)).

⁵² Asher Price, “A Secret 1950s Strategy to Keep Out Black Students,” *The Atlantic*, September 19, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/09/how-ut-used-standardized-testing-to-slow-integration/597814/>; “National Affairs: Report Card,” *Time*, September 19, 1955, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,865193-1,00.html>; Aliyya Swaby and Alexa Ura, “It took this Texas school district 48 years to desegregate. Now, some fear a return to the past,” *Chalkbeat*, November 29, 2018, <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2018/11/29/21106328/it-took-this-texas-school-district-48-years-to-desegregate-now-some-fear-a-return-to-the-past>; Dave Cheavens, “Legislature Opens Special Session on Monday Daniel Again Puts Prestige on Line,” *The Levelland Daily Sun News*, October 13, 1957, 1, 4, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht1122809/m1/4/zoom/?q=%22East%20Texas%20integration%22&resolution=4.7371728618905&lat=5551.796238338216&lon=3061.1070272655547>; Dave Cheavens, “Legislature To Take Up Water Issue,” *The Orange Leader*, October 13, 1957, 1, 4,

It eventually took SFA a decade after the *Brown* decision to integrate the campus, but it took Nacogdoches ISD until 1970 and a court case to desegregate their schools officially. The previous school year they gave African American families the option to attend the all-white high school, but it was not on a massive scale and only black families could switch while white families stayed at the main campus. Only a small portion of families made the decision to move because they knew the opportunities would be better and change would eventually come for the rest of the community. That change did eventually come with help from Judge William Wayne Justice. Lyndon B. Johnson appointed Justice to be the Judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, which oversaw *United States v. Texas* (1970). In November 1970, Judge Justice ordered the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to oversee the remainder of Texas school integrations. This court ruling forced the remaining districts to integrate formally leaving Nacogdoches with several options on how to fulfill this obligation.⁵³

Nacogdoches ISD had three options when it came to this process. The first would have been to keep and integrate the two high schools, but they would have remained

<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph558950/hits/?q=%22East%20Texas%20integration%22;> William Henry Kellar, *Make Haste Slowly: Moderates, Conservatives, and School Desegregation in Houston* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 69; Dalane E. Bouillion, "The Story That's Never Been Told: African American Perceptions of Desegregation," PhD. Dissertation, (Stephen F. Austin State University, 2004), 16; Wendell W. Baker Sr., *If Not Me Who? What One Man Accomplished in His Battle for Equality*, ed. Bruce A. Glasrud and Milton S. Jordan (Nacogdoches, Texas: Stephen F. Austin State University Press, 2014), 45; Wilson and Segall, *Oh Do I Remember!*, 95.

⁵³ Wade, Personal Interview; *United States v. Texas*, 321 F. Supp. 1043 (E.D.Tex. 1970); Frank R. Kemerer, "United States v. Texas," *Texas State Historical Association*, accessed May 13, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/united-states-v-texas>; Dr. Osaro E. Airen, Justin Ikpo, Kim Foli, and Alisha Hall, "Paradise Lost," in *Nacogdoches: Integration and Segregation Then and Now* by Dawn Michelle Williams and Brandon L. Fox, (Nacogdoches, Texas: Stephen F. Austin State University Press, 2016), 76.

highly segregated due to the geographic location of the residents. The second option would have been to close the white high school on the far north side of town and have all students attend the more centrally located E. J. Campbell “colored” high school. Instead, administrators in Nacogdoches ISD decided to go with the third option and close E. J. Campbell and send all students to the white school since it was already better equipped and more convenient.⁵⁴

Although there were no overt negative reactions from the locals, especially when compared to more high-profile integration cases, there were still issues. Following this change there were more fights that appeared to be racially motivated. Some teachers even refused to instruct or help the new black students. The biggest but less obvious issue this move created was a big hole in the identity of the black community. By closing E. J. Campbell, the all-star players, cheerleaders, coaches, and administration had to move to second-string behind white staff and students. This included Clarence “Bo” McMichael who moved from the head coach of the Nacogdoches Black Dragons to the assistant of the combined teams despite arguably being the more successful coach.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Taylor D. Whitaker, M. L. Glenn, and Lonnie Wells, interview with Jessy K. Hanshaw, Whit’s Barbershop, Nacogdoches, Texas, June 30, 2010, <https://www.sfasu.edu/heritagecenter/455.asp>; Airen, Ikpo, Foli, and Hall, “Paradise Lost,” *Nacogdoches*, 74-82; “History of E. J. Campbell School,” ETRC Digital Archives, <https://digital.sfasu.edu/digital/collection/Community/id/465>; Texas Historical Commission, “E. J. Campbell School,” Marker No. 18149, Nacogdoches, Texas, 2014.

⁵⁵ Wade, Personal Interview; Paul Jackson, Personal Interview; Archie Rison Jr., Interview with Matthew Tallant, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas, July 7, 2010, <https://www.sfasu.edu/heritagecenter/458.asp>; Matthew Copeland, “East Texas Legends: Clarence 'Bo' McMichael,” *CBS 19*, August 20, 2018, <https://www.cbs19.tv/article/sports/high-school/under-the-lights/east-texas-legends->

Making this move ultimately did a disservice to all minority students as white flight created another era of segregation in Nacogdoches. The phenomenon of white flight was when black families started integrating white schools and neighborhoods the white families already residing there would move further away. This would continue the cycle of poverty as funding for schools and businesses moved away. The neighboring districts, most notably Central Heights ISD, became a haven for these fleeing families. Nacogdoches ISD would remain legally segregated while SFA became a central part of Nacogdoches diversity.⁵⁶

When SFA integrated in 1964, it was one of the last four schools in the state of Texas to do so. The segregated campuses along with SFA were two other all white institutions, Sam Houston State Teachers College (Sam Houston State University), East Texas State College (Texas A&M University-Commerce), and the all-black college of Prairie View A&M. Since SFA Sam Houston and East Texas State were all part of the Texas State University System (TSUS), they had similar integration processes that were rather subdued especially when compared to other colleges in the area such as Lamar State College (Lamar University), and Southwest Texas State College (Texas State

clarence-bo-mcmichael/501-585899002; "Campbell Romps in First Game" and "Dragons, Lufkin Vie Friday," *The Daily Sentinel*, September 14, 1964, 3-4.

⁵⁶ Airen, Ikpo, Foli, and Hall, "Paradise Lost;" Dr. D. Michelle Williams, "Integration and Re-segregation: Voices from the Past and Present" and Dr. Robert F. Szafran, "The Changing Racial and Hispanic Composition of Nacogdoches and Its Educational Institutions," in *Nacogdoches: Integration and Segregation Then and Now* by Dawn Michelle Williams and Brandon L. Fox, (Nacogdoches, Texas: Stephen F. Austin State University Press, 2016), 48-72, 76-82; Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 5-17; Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*, 204.

University). Lamar was slightly more open to the idea of integration after the *Brown* decision but the school faced terrifying protests. In a similar situation to UT, African American students who wanted to attend Southwest Texas State had to take the legal route. SFA, Sam Houston, and East Texas all had a simpler integration process where none of them faced litigation or protests, but it took ten years before anything changed. Although each school had a different path to its destination, they each show the unwillingness of the elite field of higher education to broaden the scope of attendees solely based on race.⁵⁷

Lamar was one of the first schools to desegregate after *Brown*, and they were the only one of this group not part of TSUS during integration. They were an independent college before creating their own Lamar system of schools, which allowed them to face their own battle without possibly interfering with other colleges or their school boards. During the admittance boom of veterans after World War II, Lamar was in the process of earning state funding while still excluding African Americans, even veterans. This notion did not sit well with civil rights organizations, so a group named the Negro Goodwill Council protested Governor Beauford Jester's dismissal of education inequality. The president of Lamar at the time decided to create a branch specifically for African

⁵⁷ "Baptist Minister First Negro to Enroll at SFA," *The Daily Sentinel* Clip; "Minutes of Meeting of Board of Regents, State Teachers Colleges of Texas, Austin, Texas," TSUS Board of Regents, 1911-1969, ETRC; Hans Peter Mareus Neilsen Gammel, "Chapter 5: Creating a state Normal School Board of Regents for the State Normal Schools for White Teachers," *The Laws of Texas*, Vol. 15 (Austin: Gammel's Book Store, 1911), 74-76; "About TSUS," *The Texas State University System*, accessed May 10, 2021, <https://www.tsus.edu/about-tsus.html>; Woolfolk, "Prairie View A&M University."

Americans but it was merely a junior college instead of an accredited four-year establishment. In 1952, a man named James Briscoe applied to the main Lamar campus and the college accepted him. When he walked in on registration day with his acceptance letter, the registrar notified Briscoe that his acceptance was a mistake due to a state law that created Lamar for only white students.⁵⁸

Three years after Briscoe's denial and one year after *Brown*, Lamar accepted the applications of seven African Americans, but they retracted this decision after a night guard found a burning cross on campus. The Board claimed that the ruling that established the school was for white co-eds only and the school was already overcrowded. The NAACP filed a lawsuit against the school and in July 1956 Lamar was required to admit all eligible students. Not even a month later on August 1, six hooded figures set fire to a large cross on campus. This terrorism, as well as picketers from Beaumont's White Citizens Council, continued off and on for several months, but they did not stop the black students from enrolling. Within the first two weeks of the semester, more than twenty-five African American students started to attend classes. Unfortunately, harassment from the picketers was so bad it forced President F. L. McDonald to call in reinforcements. Protestors continued to burn crosses on campus and in front of city hall

⁵⁸ "Black History: The Story of Desegregation at Lamar University," *Lamar University*, accessed May 3, 2021, <https://www.lamar.edu/diversity-inclusion/african-american-history/2012.html>; Brad Wills, "Integration: Lamar's long and winding road," *University Press*, March 1, 1989, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph499884/m1/1/zoom/?q=%22Lamar%20university%20integration%22&resolution=2.2762620691756426&lat=1469.1780849852757&lon=1924.2007615682335>; Shabazz, *Advancing Democracy*, 169-180.

until the court of appeals reinforced the new desegregation policy. It took several more years before the school had their first black athlete and other amenities for black students, but it was a start in the long road of integration.⁵⁹

Southwest Texas State College did not have as terrifying a desegregation process as Lamar did, but they still denied qualified African American students to their facilities despite the federal mandate. Southwest Texas State was part of the TSUS during this period and the Board of Regents had not made a decision on allowing people of color to attend any of the six schools within the system. At least one school within TSUS already had their first black graduate, but that had no effect on any of the other colleges leading to the lawsuit against Southwest Texas State. In 1962, Dana Smith applied to the college and, like many other African American students, was academically qualified to attend but denied due to her race. Smith's father found a lawyer to file a class action suit in an Austin court August that same year. February 4 the following year, District Judge Ben H. Rice Jr. signed an order ending the school's segregation policy. That same day Smith and

⁵⁹ "Black History: The Story of Desegregation at Lamar University," *Lamar University*; News Clip: Pickets, WBAP-TV (Television station : Fort Worth, Texas), video, October 11, 1956; Fort Worth, Texas, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc1532171/m1/>; Wills, "Integration: Lamar's long and winding road;" Amilcar Shabazz, "Racial Terror & the Attempt to Stop the Desegregation of Lamar State College of Technology," Beaumont History Conference, January 2004, https://scholarworks.umass.edu/afroam_faculty_pubs/3/; Ryan S. Clark, "Guillory recalls college football integration period," *Beaumont Enterprise*, December 15, 2008, <https://www.beaumontenterprise.com/sports/lamar/article/Guillory-recalls-college-football-integration-700158.php>; "Integration in Texas," *The Texas Observer*.

three other African American women registered for classes with another woman transferring that next day.⁶⁰

Being the first black students on campus meant there would be an adjustment period both academically and socially. Dana Smith had not attended classes since graduating high school so she had not studied and was behind her classmates. She was also the only one of the five women to have not gone to an integrated school meaning that although she had the grades to attend Southwest Texas, her high school education due to different resources had the potential to affect her performance. Another adjustment that took place was due to the living situation of the African American students. Most campuses took at least one full year, if not more, for the dorms and cafeterias to integrate as well. Thankfully, the five women who attended lived close enough to where they could commute every day. In spite of all the difficulties, these pioneers succeeded in their endeavors even if they did not remain at Southwest Texas State.⁶¹

⁶⁰ “Minutes of Meeting of Board of Regents,” TSUS Board of Regents; “From segregation to integration: The first Black students at Texas State University,” *Texas State University*, February 7, 2020, <https://news.txstate.edu/inside-txst/2020/from-segregation-to-integration-the-first-black-students-at-texas-state-university.html>; Charlie Hughes, “Five Negro Coeds Register as College Desegregates After Court Order Monday,” *The College Star*, February 8, 1963, https://guides.library.txstate.edu/ld.php?content_id=6998834; Leroy Feist and Monique Moore, “Juel Remembers...SWT integration 30 years ago,” *The Daily University Star*, February 26, 1993, https://guides.library.txstate.edu/ld.php?content_id=6998840; Dr. Joni Charles, Dr. Elvin Holt and Dr. Sandra Mayo, “The African-American Presence at SWT: Celebrating Forty Years,” *Texas State University*, 2, 22-23, https://guides.library.txstate.edu/ld.php?content_id=6998821; Becca Nelson Sankey, “BLACK HISTORY MONTH: Integration in city recalled,” *Go San Angelo*, February 10, 2011, <https://archive.gosanangelo.com/lifestyle/black-history-month-integration-in-city-recalled-ep-440027522-356958361.html/>; “History of Angelo State University,” *Angelo State University*, accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.angelo.edu/about-asu/history.php>.

⁶¹ Mary Hale, “Negro Adjusts at SWT,” *The College Star*, February 15, 1963, https://guides.library.txstate.edu/ld.php?content_id=6998837; *As We Saw It*, ed. Vincent, Cumberbatch, and

As more schools across the state and the nation as a whole changed their admissions protocols, people of all races could attend the best school possible for their needs. Despite integration being the policy of more than half the schools in TSUS, the Board of Regents still had not officially changed the policy for the three remaining schools. Since no potential African American student filed a lawsuit, the Board of Regents took until 1964 to make a declaration on the matter. Of course, before this group of regents, most members were vehemently opposed to the notion of black students on their pristine campuses. However, there was hope as Steen responded to one applicant, “the attitude of the Board has changed considerably in the last year or two.”⁶²

No matter the stance Arleigh Templeton of Sam Houston, James Gee of East Texas State, and Ralph Steen of SFA took on the subject of integration, all three knew change would eventually come to their schools. However, before the June 1964 decision all three claimed their hands were tied and could not accept African Americans due to the Board’s rules. Each one responded to admittance inquires with different versions of “the institution is open only to members of the white race” or that “at the present time the school is not open to persons of the Negro race.” After the Board came to a decision, it was up to each president on how to implement the new changes. All three had a similar

Blair, 119; Barr, *Black Texans*, 216; “Integration in Texas,” *The Texas Observer*, 8; “From segregation to integration,” *Texas State University*; Sally Langston, Conversation with Caitlin Hornback, October 2018.

⁶² Ralph W. Steen to Rev. Ulysses L. Sanders, August 12, 1963, Box 3 Folder 7 “Correspondence June-Dec 1963,” Office of the President Steen, ETRC; “Minutes of Meeting of Board of Regents,” TSUS Board of Regents.

approach of desegregating the campuses by having a small number of students in the summer so that way if people argued the following fall they could declare they had already integrated. This decision gave the presidents credit for the “smooth, uneventful racial integration” of each of their respective colleges.⁶³

The first African American to integrate SFA was Ulysses Sanders, a pastor in the neighboring city of Lufkin. Steen chose Sanders as a safe bet for the initial process because “How could anyone object to an elderly Negro preacher who comes hat in hand to get an education?” He also wanted as little spectacle as possible when announcing the news to the faculty. When the process actually began, everyone joined in for the typical pre-semester meeting. Steen walked out in front of everyone, quickly stated, “Well, we have our first negro,” and moved along to next order of business.⁶⁴

The actual implementation of the desegregation process was also quite simple due to the lack of publicity. There was one article written in the city newspaper entitled “Baptist Minister First Negro to Enroll at SFA,” but there was nothing in the school paper. *The Pine Log* often remained uncontroversial in the early years by focusing on

⁶³ Ralph W. Steen to Willie G. Whitaker, April 15, 1964, Ralph W. Steen to Elizabeth Doreen Allen, May 5, 1964, Ralph W. Steen to Benedict C. Njoku, May 19, 1964, Box 3 Folder 8 “Correspondence Jan-Aug 1964,” Office of the President Steen, ETRC; Interview with Ralph W. Steen, Sound Cloud #188; Donald E. Reynolds, *Professor Mayo's College: A History of East Texas State University* (Commerce, Texas: East Texas State University Press, 1993), 137-140, <https://dmc.tamuc.edu/digital/collection/historic-et/id/3550>; “Integration in Texas,” *The Texas Observer*, 8-9.

⁶⁴ Dr. William Arscott, Unpublished Interview with Caitlin Hornback, Personal Interview, School of Art, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas, February 8, 2022; McDonald, Phone Conversation; “Baptist Minister First Negro to Enroll at SFA,” *The Daily Sentinel* Clip; Gail K. Beil, “The Integration of Stephen F. Austin University,” from “SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University,” Stephen F. Austin State University, 1998, <https://www.sfasu.edu/story/articles/Integration-Beil.html>; Hall, “SFA’s second black graduate reflects.”

school functions like sports, the marriages of students, and the occasional global post. Since many of the professors were more open to the idea of integration, any professor who was not comfortable with this change kept their biases away from the school, or at least they kept them away from the more liberal departments. The biggest issue during this time came from outside SFA.⁶⁵

The worst initial reaction came from an anonymous phone call to the president; however, Steen claimed they merely asked him if he was proud of how SFA was turning out. The next hurdle was years later when Steen had to take care of damage control from a baseless news article. In the spring of 1968, staunch segregationist George Wallace, the governor of Alabama, paid a visit to the neighboring city of Lufkin. Protestors, including some African American students, protested Wallace's arrival. A Dallas news reporter named Garth Jones wrote an article about the event and stated, "About 150 Negro students from integrated Stephen F. Austin State College came to Lufkin from Nacogdoches to picket Wallace." Steen made very clear that most of the students identified were Lufkin High School juniors and seniors and that SFA was integrated, "but has considerably fewer than 150 Negro students." Even though every college campus in

⁶⁵ Arscott, Personal Interview; McDonald, Phone Conversation; "Baptist Minister First Negro to Enroll at SFA," *The Daily Sentinel* Clip; *Pine Log*, Microfilm Vol. 5-9 Jan. 12, 1957 thru Aug. 16, 1968, ETRC, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas; *The Amazing Grace Baptist Church*, Compiled by McDonald, 11-13.

Texas had desegregated by this point, Jones still made it a point to include that fact in his article in order to discredit the school and the movement against the governor.⁶⁶

Despite SFA finally joining the mid-twentieth century, many issues still plagued the African American students on campus. By attending a college closer to home, it guaranteed the student a place to stay with a short commute when on-campus housing was not available. Even though classes were open to students of all races, most schools took at least a year, if not more, to open the dorms and cafeterias to all students. It took SFA at least a year to integrate the dorms and other campus facilities, and the lack of accommodations caused issues for student athletes from other schools. This problem was worse before the 1964 policy change, it was still difficult to make special arrangements since both the school and hotels in town would not house the students. In a similar fashion to what occurred at SFA, this issue also happened at other schools for SFA's black athletes. If certain businesses were willing to house an African American team member, those students often chose to remain in their hotel rooms because the dangers of venturing out in a place like Mississippi were too great.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ralph W. Steen to Garth Jones of the *Associated Press*, May 2, 1968, Box 2 Folder 21 "Correspondence-S 1962-1968," Office of the President Steen, ETRC; "King's Men: Local Group Not Involved In Lufkin Demonstration," *The Pine Log*, Vol. 45 No. 25, May 3, 1968, 3; Richard Pearson, "Former Ala. Gov. George C. Wallace Dies," *Washington Post*, September 14, 1998, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/daily/sept98/wallace.htm>; Debbie Elliott, "Wallace in the Schoolhouse Door," *NPR*, June 11, 2003, <https://www.npr.org/2003/06/11/1294680/wallace-in-the-schoolhouse-door>.

⁶⁷ Wilbur Johnson, Unpublished Interview with Caitlin Hornback, Personal Interview, Houston, Texas, November 17, 2018; Sally Langston, October 2018; Interview with Ralph W. Steen, Sound Cloud #188.

Another challenge not often talked about when discussing integration is the isolation and loss of cultural identity. For many students, they spent their whole lives knowing only their black community. Multiple family groups helped raise each other's children and they watched out for one another as if they were one large family. When the schools began integrating, black communities lost an extensive part of who they were or were isolated due to the unique experience they were going through. Students and faculty at Nacogdoches ISD became second-class citizens again while those who attended SFA had a limited number of people dealing with the same situation. They also did not have any mentors for their experiences in higher education until 1968 when Dr. Odis Rhodes became the first African American hired as a professor and not just a custodian or caretaker of the grounds.⁶⁸

The African American students also had a lack of extracurricular activities to participate in for the first few years. The main activity offered to these students was sports, which plays negatively into stereotypes that black students cannot attend college unless provided an opportunity through a sport instead of academic achievement. SFA represented their newfound inclusivity by posting photos of their black athletes in action shots in their yearly school bulletins, yet it took several years after integration for the local black churches to be included. The school also had a lack of clubs for black students

⁶⁸ Mills, Personal Interview; Rison, Personal Interview; Jackson, Personal Interview; Odis Rhodes, Interview by Jake Keeling and Tracy Allen, "East Texas African American Oral Histories," *Stephen F. Austin State University Heritage Center*, June 25, 2012, <https://www.sfasu.edu/heritagecenter/5066.asp>; Williams, "Integration and Re-segregation," 68-70; Airen, Ikpo, Foli, and Hall, "Paradise Lost," *Nacogdoches*, 76-82.

to participate in. Many groups refused to accept people of color including some of the most prominent and popular organizations on campus, fraternities. Several of these organizations remained segregated for years after the Civil Rights Movement and it forced African American students to form their own groups, which did not happen until 1971.⁶⁹

The fact that the overall integration process of SFA was so uneventful it is nothing short of a miracle for this college in the middle of a conservative, deep East Texas town. There were no litigations, there were no burning crosses, and there were no angry protesters blocking the entryways of the classrooms. Even Dr. Francis “Ab” Abernethy, professor of English at SFA, said the integration process was so smooth and practically nothing compared to what he witnessed during his time at Lamar. While it is fantastic nothing more serious occurred during that early period, it is this seemingly innocuous transition into a new age that is key to the undoing of the town and gown. From the schools, to the businesses, to the town itself, segregation was a defining characteristic of Nacogdoches. Up to this point, the divergence from cultural norms had not spilled into the city and Nacogdoches still had its protective pine curtain barrier. It

⁶⁹ Mills, Personal Interview; Student Handbooks 1966-1970, Box 1 Folder 3, Office of Student Development (UA-82), ETRC; Reynolds, Professor Mayo’s College, 170-176; “National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC),” *Stephen F. Austin State University*, accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.sfasu.edu/studentaffairs/920.asp>.

was not until the ideals of the students and professors started to change and affect the city did the ultimate division begin.⁷⁰

Life appeared normal for several years after SFA allowed the first African American student on campus and it seemed the overall hype of the civil rights movement had passed by Nacogdoches. However, the death of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 affected more than just the black communities. His assassination brought a new wave, a more powerful wave, of justice and passion in the hearts of those affected by racist policies and those who stood with them. At this point, Nacogdoches ISD and many businesses had not yet integrated, and Chief Roebuck continued his reign of terror against African Americans. Some faculty and students of SFA saw these injustices and felt they had to do their part to help curb the situation leading to the three unforgivable acts, the collective mourning of Dr. King, the separation of one of the largest churches in town along with the foundation of a new one, and the McGuire March.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Abernethy, Sound Cloud #738; Abernethy (written Abernathy), Sound Cloud #955; Interview with Ralph W. Steen, Sound Cloud #188.

⁷¹ Mills, Personal Interview; Rison, Personal Interview; Wilbert Love, "Memorial Rites Honor King: Activities Suspended for Hour-Long Service," and "In Memory of Rights Leader: 'King's Men' Organize To Perpetuate Ideals," *The Pine Log*, Vol. 45 No. 22, April 12, 1968, 1-3; "Lewis Tells Rotarians: Intelligence Not Needed To Riot, Destroy Property," *The Pine Log*, Vol. 47 No. 29, July 31, 1970; *The Amazing Grace Baptist Church*, Compiled by McDonald, 13-17.

CHAPTER THREE

The Divide of the Town and the Gown

By the mid-1950s and into the 1960s, America was well into the depths of the Civil Rights Movement, but the strength of the Pine Curtain kept Nacogdoches at bay. There were a handful of protests against police brutality, but the primary demonstrators were part of the black community. The city at large ignored the plights of their black neighbors until SFA began to become more progressive. Whether it was compassion for their new classmates or the changes that came with a new generation, the end of the 1960s saw a more involved campus. Those in the city tolerated the changes due to legal and hierarchical factors, but they drew a line when racial acceptance became a personal choice. While SFA was not overwhelmingly involved with civil rights, especially when compared to universities in larger cities, three events became the primary contributors to the fallout between the town and gown. They were the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., the split of First Baptist Church, and the Mickey McGuire March of May 1970.

The assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee caused there to be immense pain in the hearts of African Americans across the country. His death was a turning point in the movement and seen as the end of that era of civil rights. King's leadership, and advocacy for non-violent protest, had made him the "face" of the Civil Rights Movement. Experts consider his "I Have a Dream"

speech as one of the greatest speeches of all time and a reason behind the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Following his death, major cities across the country experienced race riots known as the Holy Week Uprising.⁷²

These actions were a turning point, both good and bad, for African Americans. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which included a fair housing bill King pushed for, but there was also a drive toward “law and order.” Politicians used the phrase as early as the late 1700s, but it became popularized by Richard Nixon during his 1968 presidential campaign. “Law and order” was a conservative loophole to appeal less racist to the masses while continuing to enact racist legislation. This new slogan from more conservative representatives became a focal point in many elections going forward, which in turn increased police interaction and brutality toward black Americans.⁷³

⁷² Michiko Kakutani, “The Lasting Power of Dr. King’s Dream Speech,” *New York Times*, August 27, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/28/us/the-lasting-power-of-dr-kings-dream-speech.html>; Lucinda Moore, “Dream Assignment,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, August 2003, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/dream-assignment-87455860/>; Lorraine Boissoneault, “Martin Luther King Jr.’s Assassination Sparked Uprisings in Cities Across America,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, April 4, 2018, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/martin-luther-king-jrs-assassination-sparked-uprisings-cities-across-america-180968665/>; Peter B. Levy, “The Dream Deferred: The Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Holy Week Uprisings of 1968,” in *The Great Uprising* (Cambridge: University Printing House, 2018), http://tupress.temple.edu/uploads/book/excerpt/2148_ch1.pdf.

⁷³ Jenny Cobb, “Civil Rights Act of 1968,” *Bullock Museum*, accessed June 18, 2021, <https://www.thestoryoftexas.com/discover/artifacts/civil-rights-act-1968-spotlight-102414>; Terrance McArdle, “The ‘law and order’ campaign that won Richard Nixon the White House 50 years ago,” *The Washington Post*, November 5, 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2018/11/05/law-order-campaign-that-won-richard-nixon-white-house-years-ago/>; Walter Shapiro, “The Flawed Politics of a Law-and-Order Campaign,” *The New Republic*, May 31, 2020, <https://newrepublic.com/article/157939/flawed-politics-law-and-order-campaign>; Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*, 234, 274-275.

Immediately following the death of King, life in Nacogdoches did not change for most people. Those in the black community of Nacogdoches felt the same hole in their hearts as other African Americans across the country as they did not know where to go or how to move forward. Since African Americans lived outside the city in their own subdivisions, whites did not pay attention to their issues until those at SFA became more involved. One of the first people to take action was Dr. Francis “Ab” Abernethy of the English Department. To honor King’s memory, Dr. Abernethy lowered the flag to half-mast. With SFA being in the middle of town people driving by can see the actions of those on campus. Some saw this as the college standing in solidarity with the black community and the actions of King and the rioters. Despite the majority of those on campus agreeing with racial equality, not every person was happy with Dr. Abernethy’s decision. He lowered the flag three times and each time someone would raise the flag right back, ultimately forcing Abernethy to stop. It is unknown whether Dr. Abernethy discovered who disagreed with his actions.⁷⁴

President Ralph Steen officially acknowledged that SFA would mourn the death of King and honor his legacy. Steen canceled the morning classes on Tuesday, April 9 to allow students to pay their respects. Several people within and outside the SFA community saw this as a significant act and representative of the college’s beliefs. One student in particular could not see why Dr. Steen would cancel class in order to teach

⁷⁴ Beil, “The Integration of Stephen F. Austin University;” Rison, Personal Interview; Jackson, Personal Interview; Mills, Personal Interview.

“respect for anarchists” and destroy their right to pursue higher education. Despite this, Steen stood his ground on this decision.⁷⁵

Perhaps the greatest form of respect in honoring King’s legacy was the creation of the King’s Movement for Equality Now. History professor William J. Brophy formed this organization, more commonly known as the King’s Men. Brophy was the perfect candidate to start this movement due to his passion for the African American community and his leadership skills. Dr. Brophy would become the first professor of African American history, chair of the history department, and interim president of SFA from December 19, 1991 to September 9, 1992. With his immense influence on the campus during his tenure, Brophy took this opportunity to create The King’s Men initially to give worthy students a scholarship in King’s name, but it quickly became more. This organization, the first on campus specifically designated for black students, gave African Americans on campus a place to gather and voice their concerns and eventually grew beyond the college and welcomed members of the Nacogdoches community.⁷⁶

This coalition of students and residents became stronger and more legitimate in part due to the cooperation of Arthur Weaver the local civil rights activist, businessman,

⁷⁵ Robert Kent Wickware to Ralph W. Steen and Ralph W. Steen to Robert Kent Wickware, Office of the President Steen, Box 2 Folder 23 “Correspondence Students 1968,” ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas; Beil, “The Integration of Stephen F. Austin University.”

⁷⁶ Brophy, Personal Interview; King’s Men and Civil Rights Misc. Papers Clippings, Box 3, Folder 12, AAHP; King’s Men Flyer, Box 1, Folder 13, Student Publications (UA 88), Digital Archives, ETRC, <https://digital.sfasu.edu/digital/collection/UA/id/38>; “Obituaries” from “Historical News and Notices,” *The Journal of Southern History* 71, no. 4 (2005): 975–80, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27648981>.

and president of the Nacogdoches chapter of the NAACP. With Mr. Weaver's help, the organization could strive toward their goal mending racial tensions with SFA and Nacogdoches and then possibly beyond that. The night King's Men formed, the group voted on a set of questions to ask the administration involving issues such as discrimination throughout the campus and classes about black history. King's Men eventually convinced other organizations, like the Student Congress, to support peaceful demonstrations such as the one against the West Side Washateria for declaring which washers and dryers African Americans could use. The group would send out fliers called King's Review to inform students of different community events, local issues particularly about integration of the public school, and legal advice if someone felt discriminated against. From the time of King's death in April 1968 to September that same year, membership grew from twenty-five to more than three hundred and formed a committee to become an official organization. Although Brophy ultimately stepped down due to personal reasons and the organization eventually disbanded, King's Men started a path for future African American specific organizations and helped already established organizations become more accepting.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ *King's Review*, UA 88, Box 1, Folder 13, Digital Archives, ETRC, <https://digital.sfasu.edu/digital/collection/UA/id/42/>; *King's Review No. 3*, Box 1, Folder 13, Student Publications, Digital Archives, ETRC, <https://digital.sfasu.edu/digital/collection/UA/id/30/>; *King's Review No. 10*, Box 1, Folder 13, Student Publications, Digital Archives, ETRC, <https://digital.sfasu.edu/digital/collection/UA/id/40/>; *King's Review No. 11*, Box 1, Folder 13, Student Publications, Digital Archives, ETRC, <https://digital.sfasu.edu/digital/collection/UA/id/39/>; *King's Review No. 12*, Box 1, Folder 13, Student Publications, Digital Archives, ETRC, <https://digital.sfasu.edu/digital/collection/UA/id/31/>; "King's Men Award Merit, April 2, 1969," Box 3, Folder 12, AAHP, Digital Archives, ETRC, <https://digital.sfasu.edu/digital/collection/EastTexRC/id/11794/>; Beil, "The Integration of Stephen F. Austin University."

Support for King and his mission grew after his assassination, and movements such as King's Men showed a quickly growing shift. The locals still saw these factors as more of a nuisance since the Civil Rights Movement remained within a small portion of the community and had not bled out into the surrounding town. However, the first egregious act against the city ruined the idyllic though that life as is would remain untouched. A few days after the death of King, several key figures from SFA split from First Baptist Church and formed Austin Heights Baptist Church. Christianity is a large part of Southern culture and many consider churches the last stronghold of segregation, so the decision of the "College Crowd" to leave the largest church in Nacogdoches over racial issues made a statement.⁷⁸

The division of the races within Christianity is part of the difficult history of the South. Slaveholders used the Word of God to legitimize slavery, but it also gave those in bondage hope for the future. When slaves became free and established their colonies, religion became a central focus for many African Americans. Despite forced segregation being illegal, separation of church and state made it to where the government could not dictate where people worshiped. Many churches remained separated due to cultural differences and the added security of being within similar communities, but some people simply wanted to go a denomination specific church in spite of previous racial hierarchies. Some congregations opened their arms wide for all people to come while

⁷⁸ *The Amazing Grace Baptist Church*, Compiled by McDonald, 4, 18.

others made it known people of color could not attend. Many church leaders felt that God created and separated the races for a purpose, but modern intervention ruined that design, so when the topic of integration arose those leaders held tight to those beliefs. Some simply refused to open their doors while others chose to create human shields to bar African Americans from entering their church.⁷⁹

While a church splitting over differences, even racial ones, was nothing new, breaking off from one of the city's largest and most distinguished churches over integration was unfathomable at the time. The racial turmoil of the world was noticeably seeping into the city in large part due to the changing dynamics of the campus. The "College Crowd" of First Baptist consisted of five families, most of whom had prestigious positions at SFA and the church. When the leaders of First Baptist discussed how to handle the integration issue and they settled on the excluding African American, those five families left to form their own church of love and acceptance. Despite not

⁷⁹ Bob Jones, Sr., "Is Segregation Scriptural?," Broadcast April 17, 1960 on *WMUU*, Greenville, South Carolina, accessed April 7, 2018, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/evangelical-history/is-segregation-scriptural-a-radio-address-from-bob-jones-on-easter-of-1960/>; Harry H. McCall, *Is Segregation Scriptural?* (Greenville: Bob Jones University, 1960), accessed April 7, 2018, <http://faithandheritage.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Harry-H.-McCall-Is-Segregation-Scriptural-Bob-Jones-University.pdf>; "Statements on Race at BJU," *Bob Jones University*, 2008, accessed April 10, 2018, <https://www.bju.edu/about/what-we-believe/race-statement.php>; Bob Jones III, interview by Larry King, *Larry King Live* (CNN: March 3, 2000), accessed April 15, 2018, <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0003/03/lk1.00.html>; *The Amazing Grace Baptist Church*, Compiled by McDonald, 13-15.

having a permanent building, Austin Heights Baptist Church organized a few days after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.⁸⁰

Separating from First Baptist and creating a solid foundation for a “loving” church was no easy task. The largest hurdle to overcome was the lack of a permanent facility for the first two years due to low funds. Redeemer Lutheran Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church were kind enough to allow the fledgling church to rent spaces until the completion of a permanent location. The second more personal hurdle was dealing with the repercussions of the community. Leaving the largest church in a small town over something like race subjected the congregants to ridicule and this action put the reputation of the college on the line again due to the founding families’ association. Although the setbacks hindered the progress the church planned for the community, the members of Austin Heights went beyond forming a church based on equality by forming a relationship with Zion Hill Baptist Church in December 1970.⁸¹

Reverend Lawson Reed founded the Zion Hill congregation in late 1800s after settling in Nacogdoches. Reed was disappointed to discover there was no Baptist specific organization for African Americans and he set out to form one. While other African

⁸⁰ Judy McDonald, Unpublished Interview with Caitlin Hornback, Personal Interview, Nacogdoches, Texas, July 1, 2019; *The Amazing Grace Baptist Church*, Compiled by McDonald, 12-17; Reverend Kyle Childress, Conversation with Caitlin Hornback, Personal Communication, September 27, 2018.

⁸¹ *The Amazing Grace Baptist Church*, Compiled by McDonald, 17-18; McDonald, Personal Interview; Reverend Kyle Childress, “Confessing Whiteness,” in *Nacogdoches: Integration and Segregation, Then and Now*, edited by Dawn Michelle Williams and Brandon L. Fox (Stephen F. Austin State University Press: Nacogdoches, 2016), 117-121.

American churches, of various denominations, formed later, Zion Hill was a cornerstone for the black community and became the bridge to white community. Since the founders of Austin Heights based their foundation on tolerance and acceptance, the members wanted to find a better way to make an impact within the black community and mend relationships within the town. Reverend Jerry Self from Austin Heights and Reverend T. W. Berry from Zion Hill decided the best way to start mending this problem would be to have a joint service between the two congregations. They held the first integrated church service in Nacogdoches on December 13, 1970, a tradition that continues to this day.⁸²

Although the impact of Austin Heights and its initial foundation have waned over the years, it was still a significant event from the late sixties and early seventies. The growth of the college and changing ideals had further interrupted the oppressive utopia Nacogdoches had created. First Baptist was a highly influential church within the community and this split was the first time racial tensions affected a group of people outside SFA and the black community. Ultimately, people have the right to choose where they worship so there was not much the outside community could do. The physical location of Austin Heights in the Appleby area mimicked that of the African American community in that it was isolated due to being far from the center of town and in the

⁸² "Zion Hill First Baptist Church," October 21, 1979, Box 5 Folder 73 "Zion Hill First Baptist Church – 100 Years," Arthur Weaver Collection (A-292), ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas; "History of Zion Hill First Baptist Church," Box 4 Folder 70 "Brief Histories of Little Zion Hill Baptist and of Zion Hill First Baptist Churches," AAHP; Adam Peasley, "Black, white churches host communal sermon," *The Daily Sentinel*, December 7, 2014, https://www.dailysentinel.com/life_and_entertainment/features/article_fde4af38-7e8a-11e4-bdf2-df0a9f478600.html; *The Amazing Grace Baptist Church*, Compiled by McDonald, 28-30, 65.

middle of a forest. This meant that the church had minimal influence, but this division became the catalyst that connected these two racial groups in an attempt to ease tensions.⁸³

Despite the strength of the Pine Curtain, those who wanted to see change continued to chip away at the foundation until it cracked in the spring of 1970. Government officials and the police did their due diligence to make sure the reputation of Nacogdoches remained intact by squashing any confrontations as quickly as possible. Even the local newspaper, *The Daily Sentinel*, intentionally misrepresented any mishaps involving civil rights issues to keep those affairs within the black community. The King's Men was the largest group of supporters, but as the organization began to grow and Brophy had to step down, they started struggling with leadership. At the end of every fall and spring semester the group engaged in different protests, but during the period of mismanagement they had nothing planned for the spring of 1970. Women in civil rights groups, such as King's Men and widespread organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), often felt they had become second-class citizens and they wanted a larger role within these organizations. The women of King's men took this lack of leadership as an opportunity to make changes.⁸⁴

⁸³ Judy McDonald, Personal Interview; Karen L. Willoughby, "Southern Baptist racial barriers broke first in Alaska, California," *Baptist Press*, February 2003, accessed May 2, 2018, <http://www.bpnews.net/15240/southern-baptist-racial-barriers-broke-first-in-alaska-california>.

⁸⁴ Delear, "A Thing Not Spoken Of," in *March!*; Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 252-255; Muhammad Ahmed, "ON THE BLACK STUDENT MOVEMENT — 1960-70," *The Black Scholar* 9, no. 8/9 (1978): 2–11, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41067857>.

The group of women invited Mickey McGuire, a member of the National Black Student Association, to ignite a new fight for SFA. The women felt he was the best choice since he had experience speaking with various civil rights organizations across the country and his fiery personality and fearless demeanor gave others the courage to stand beside him. Unfortunately, civil rights groups such as the SDS started to have more radicalized factions that grew after the death of King and expanded into anti-war protests as the war in Vietnam progressed. The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) began examining these groups leading many communities to fear what they deemed deviant organizations. Due to his affiliation with these supposed terroristic associations, as well as being an outsider from Washington with a criminal record, the police and Nacogdoches community immediately saw McGuire as a threat. Shortly after his arrival in Nacogdoches, an incident put McGuire's leadership skills and experience to the test.⁸⁵

Before McGuire, the arrest of anyone would not have been news worthy, but the arrest of African American student Cubie Nell Dorsey exposed a greater misconduct within the Nacogdoches justice system. Police arrested Ms. Dorsey on April 24, 1970 for using forged checks at several businesses downtown. At least three officers were present

⁸⁵ William W. Riggs, "Students for a Democratic Society," *Middle Tennessee State University*, 2009, <https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/1201/students-for-a-democratic-society>; Todd Gitlin, "What Was the Protest Group Students for a Democratic Society? Five Questions Answered," *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 4, 2017, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/what-was-protest-group-students-democratic-society-five-questions-answered-180963138/>; Delear, "McGuire" and "An Alliance" in "March!"; Helena Abdullah, Oral History Interview with Jasmin Howard, June 30, 2016, [https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/search?filters%5Binterviewees%5D%5B%5D=Abdullah%2C+Helena&q=sfa](https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/search?filters%5Binterviewees%5D%5B%5D=Abdullah%2C+Helena&q=sfa;); Dianne Dentice, "East Texas: From Post Civil War to the Obama Era," in *Nacogdoches*, 41-47; Brophy, Personal Interview; Muhammad Ahmed, "ON THE BLACK STUDENT MOVEMENT — 1960-70," 2-11.

during the arrest, which many felt was excessive for a single female. The officers further embarrassed Ms. Dorsey by bringing her back to her dorm to collect more evidence. Crowds gathered and the police refused to answer why they arrested her as they forced her back out of the residence hall. When Mickey McGuire and others went down to the station to ask what was happening and try to find legal representation, officers refused to let anyone in with the exception of a mutual party to relay messages between Ms. Dorsey and the crowd. When Cubie Dorsey went to the Justice of the Peace Court to be formally charged, no one, not even a stenographer, was present in the courtroom. The civil rights leaders in Nacogdoches decided to take further action to raise awareness against these injustices by holding more fervent protests downtown. Participants made sure to remain peaceful and on the sidewalk in order to comply with the City's parade permit regulations and stave off police. However, as passions increased, so too did the violence.⁸⁶

The anxiety of all Americans grew exponentially after the "Holy Week Uprising," but these protests had occurred in larger cities. Citizens in Nacogdoches did not fear a true uprising from the African American community or the college until McGuire's involvement and the riots on college campuses after the shooting at Kent State. College students across the country had become some of the most vociferous leaders against the war in Vietnam. By the time Richard Nixon became president in 1969, there were more

⁸⁶ Delear, "Dorsey" and "The First Riot" in "March!;" Abdullah, Oral History Interview, *McGuire v. Roebuck*, 347 F. Supp. 1111 (E.D. Tex. 1972), <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/347/1111/1404750/>.

than five hundred thousand troops in Vietnam and he promised he would end the war. By November 1969, the public had heard of the My Lai Massacre and in April 1970, U.S. troops invaded Cambodia, which proved there was not going to be a stop to the war any time soon. College students began their strikes, but they rapidly increased after four students were killed and nine injured by National Guardsmen at Kent State in Kent, Ohio on May 4, 1970. As fearful as the people were of large groups, some students at SFA were able to hold a candlelight vigil for the victims of the shooting even after curfew.⁸⁷

Several members of the Nacogdoches chapter of the NAACP decided to hold a candlelight protest inspired by the students' actions just days prior. On May 13, 1970, people who were black and white, college students and residents, joined one another against police violence. The group met under the cover of darkness with the intent to have as little interaction with the police as possible as well as to avoid being photographed for future incrimination. McGuire, who had been out of town and did not participate in planning the event, started the march with a prayer and words promoting peace before setting off. What started out as roughly fifty people soon turned into more

⁸⁷ Delear, "The First Riot," in "March!," Frank R. Kemerer, *William Wayne Justice: A Judicial Biography* (University of Texas Press: Austin, 1991, 2008), 188, https://books.google.com/books?id=toOhn6cXFIC&dq=m.+c.+roebuck&source=gbs_navlinks_s; Robert B. Semple Jr., "Nixon Send Combat Forces to Cambodia to Drive Communists from Staging Zone," *New York Times*, May 1, 1970, <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/05/01/archives/nixon-sends-combat-forces-to-cambodia-not-an-invasion-president.html>; John Kifner, "4 Kent State Students Killed by Troops," *New York Times*, May 5, 1970, <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/05/05/archives/4-kent-state-students-killed-by-troops-8-hurt-as-shooting-follows.html>; "Signs Displayed... March Follows Arrest of Coed," *The Daily Sentinel*, Box 4 Folder 32 "News Clippings Protest and Mickey McGuire April-May 1970," AAHP, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas. *The Daily Sentinel* article has an unknown author and date due to it being a clipping from a news article found in African American Heritage Project.

than one hundred fifty and possibly up to three hundred by the time the police arrived. Officers stopped the group on Main Street just before they reached the heart of downtown. McGuire encouraged the group to move forward in spite of the officer's request until they quickly arrested him.⁸⁸

After Chief Roebuck's arrival, the group dispersed and the scene became disoriented. Officers began firing mace into the crowd and for a short moment, the crowd threw rocks and bottles at the officers. One African American woman broke some car windows after witnessing an officer battering her friend. Some reports stated that an angry mob was breaking the windows of businesses downtown and at some point, a boat on the corner of Main and Shawnee caught fire. The protesters regrouped at their starting location where a nonviolent standoff between police and the protesters occurred while trying to go home. The night eventually ended with the officers letting everyone go except the nine people they arrested earlier.⁸⁹

Tensions remained high across Nacogdoches over the next few days. Protesters planned a second demonstration for the next day, May 14, but many people feared for

⁸⁸ Robbie Goodrich, "Marching for Equality: Abdullah participated in protests," *The Daily Sentinel*, July 25, 1999, Box 1, AAHP, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas; Delear, "The First Riot" in "March;" Abdullah, Oral History Interview; Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 219-220; Kemerer, *William Wayne Justice*, 187-190.

⁸⁹ Taylor D. Whitaker, M. L. Glenn, and Lonnie Wells, Interview; Mills, Personal Interview; Delear, "The First Riot," in "March!;" Abdullah, Oral History Interview; *McGuire v. Roebuck*; "--- Downtown Melee," clipping from *The Daily Sentinel*, May 14, 1970, Box 4 Folder 32 "News Clippings Protest and Mickey McGuire April-May 1970," AAHP, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas; "Nine Arrested," clipping from *The Daily Sentinel*, Box 4 Folder 32, AAHP.

their lives. The town had never experienced something as radical as the riot that Wednesday night, and the citizens were prepared to fight off any perpetrators. Citizens began carrying guns in their cars, armed men marched along Main Street, and business owners kept an eye out from the roofs of their stores. Rumors began circulating that college students and even some professors were among those arrested. The target placed on Mickey McGuire from the moment he arrived led to a multitude of charges against him with impossibly high bonds. Police charged McGuire with threatening to interfere with lawful employment of the police chief, interfering with administration of judicial proceedings, two counts of disorderly conduct, parading without a permit, and inciting a riot, which initially cost over one hundred thousand dollars. He was not able to receive visitors and the community had difficulty finding a lawyer to represent him.⁹⁰

In retaliation against McGuire's imprisonment, some African American teenagers began throwing Molotov cocktails at a store, and in retaliation against the marchers, at least one white business owner fired their part-time African American worker. At least two SFA professors received death threats for their involvement in the march. One of the most devastating acts regarding the march and impending integration of some East Texas public schools was the bombings by two men from a white supremacist group. Fred Loyd Hayes and Kenneth Ray McMaster planted two flashlight bombs in a black neighborhood

⁹⁰ Delear, "The Second Riot" in "March!;" "A Quiet Night City Tightens Security," *The Daily Sentinel*; "Local Leaders Hear Airing of Racial Complaints," clipping from *The Daily Sentinel*, Box 4 Folder 32, AAHP; "107,000 in Bonds Set for Charges," *The Daily Sentinel*, May 14, 1970, Box 4, Folder 31, AAHP; "Bonds Reduced McGuire Released," *The Daily Sentinel*, Box 4, Folder 31, AAHP.

in Nacogdoches. The bombs in that situation did not detonate, but the same two men successfully blew up several school buses in their hometown of Longview, a city roughly an hour away from Nacogdoches. Hayes and McMaster were charged for their crimes in the bus explosion, but the City of Nacogdoches dropped the charges against them for their failed attempts on the African American community. The lack of urgency and respect after such a mortifying event reinforced the mistrust from the black community toward the police and governing body in the city. The next few months and years were chaotic from not only the march but also the politicization of the college, and the city retaliated even more against both.⁹¹

The African American community of Nacogdoches continued to fight against injustices. After the arrest of Mickey McGuire, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) joined forces with the local NAACP to help with McGuire's case, as well as the downtown boycott movement. At the time, business white owners had allowed African Americans to shop in their stores downtown, but they would not hire them. Arthur Weaver urged the black religious leaders to send the

⁹¹ "Longview Bus Bombing," *WBAP-TV* (Television Station: Fort Worth, Texas, July 23, 1970), <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc1328019/?q=%22longview%20bus%20bombing%22>; Matt Lackritz, "Saturday Marks the 50th Anniversary of Longview Bus Bombings," *CBS19*, July 4, 2020, <https://www.cbs19.tv/article/news/saturday-marks-the-50th-anniversary-of-longview-bus-bombings/501-c7667b63-e3f2-4ec8-9f80-7cdb2f8f7de1>; Mye Owens, "50 YEARS LATER: Community remembers Longview 70's Bus Bombing," *KETK*, July 3, 2020, <https://www.easttexasmatters.com/news/50-years-later-community-remembers-longview-70s-bus-bombing/>; "Two Guilty in Bus Bombings Draw 11-Year Prison Terms" *New York Times*, November 6, 1970, <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/11/06/archives/two-guilty-in-bus-bombings-draw-11year-prison-terms.html>; Delear, "A Tense Peace" in "March!"; Abdullah, Oral History Interview.

message to their congregations to stop spending money where they could not earn money. The stores eventually opened their doors to black employees, but the deep-rooted fundamental problems persisted from continued police discrimination and the challenges of the impending public school integration.⁹²

On several occasions, police arrested a black person for a crime they did not commit simply because they were black and looked suspicious walking around at night. In one incident, a man had just gotten off a shift at work and did not have proper transportation when police arrested him for a violent crime. A new district attorney dropped the case, which removed the charges, but it changed the course of his life. There were even some instances of the police, including Chief Roebuck, mishandling perpetrators, which led to injuries or even death. Besides the outright discrimination, the entire police force also engaged in a more subtle form of bigotry by means of their patches.⁹³

Every patch and police vehicle bore the nine flags that represented Nacogdoches. The largest flag on the patch was that of the Confederate battle flag, not the official “stars

⁹² Delear, “Elections and Lawsuits,” “The First Riot,” and “Boycott” in “March!;” Abdullah, Oral History Interview; Archie Rison Jr., Interview; Charlotte Stokes, Interview with Kaitlin Wieseman, Nacogdoches, Texas, June 29, 2010, Oral History Project SFASU Heritage Center, <https://www.sfasu.edu/heritagecenter/454.asp>.

⁹³ Verdis Daniels Jr., “My Story: Experiencing the Racial Environment of the 60s and 70s in Nacogdoches, Texas,” in *Nacogdoches*, 83-89; “Nahley Sanders,” September 20, 1971, in the Arthur Weaver Collection (A 292), Box 14, Folder 10, ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas; JacKee Lewis, “He murdered my mother’s brother, Pete Adams,” on Bill McCoy thread “How many of you Nacogdoches folks remember Chief Roebuck?,” from “Remember in Nacogdoches When,” *Facebook*, June 23, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/357987866860>.

and bars” banner of the Confederate States of America. It was not until C. L. Simon, one of the few African Americans to serve on the board of directors for the Chamber of Commerce, took up the mantle of this issue in the 1990s. Even though many people felt Simon could have fought for different issues, he focused on this cause because he knew it was one of the few battles he could win for the African American community.⁹⁴

The city’s resentment toward the college for their politicization was not as obvious as their resentment toward the African American community for simply existing, it was more of an understood feeling the college was unwanted. Directly after the march the city council had private meetings where they discussed ways to have some of the professors involved fired. They tried to contact President Steen and even the Board of Regents, but council member and future mayor A. L. Mangham Jr. convinced the rest of the council to stop the witch-hunt so outsiders would not think negatively of Nacogdoches for their actions against the school during such a difficult time. The sense of feeling unwanted became more obvious in the mid-1970s. Some former students reported that businesses, such as the city’s more posh and well-known hotel the Fredonia, were rude to college students of the time. In 1974, the school conducted interviews with

⁹⁴ McDonald, Personal Interview; Michael Bishop, “Flag Controversy Won’t Go Away: Police Chief John Walton Firm On Flag Issue,” “Editorial: Change Flag Now: Nacogdoches Should Not Re-write History,” *The East Texas Focus* Vol. 1 No. 6, November 22, 1994, Box 1, AAHP; Michael Bishop, “No Response From Pierce on Flag,” *The East Texas Focus* Vol. 1 No. 7, December 2, 1994, Box 1, AAHP; Michael Bishop, “City Stalls on Flag Issue; Pierce Insults Newspaper,” *The East Texas Focus* Vol. 1 No. 8, December 9, 1994, Box 1, AAHP; Michael Bishop, “Black Leaders Speak Out On Flag,” “Editorial,” *The East Texas Focus* Vol. 1 No. 9, December 16, 1994, Box 1, AAHP; Michael Bishop, “City Will Remove Flag: Pierce agrees with Eligha Walker: “Stars & Bars” Flag is Correct,” *The East Texas Focus*, January 6, 1995, Box 1, AAHP.

former students, many of whom had stayed in Nacogdoches after graduation. They felt a sense of "cleavage between the town and gown" and many mentioned the McGuire March as the primary turning point.⁹⁵

The earliest and most egregious form of retaliation against the college was the changes made toward the election process. A students' freshman year is often the first time they can vote and some choose to influence their college town by voting in those local elections. Several SFA students wanted to form an alliance to get more minority community members to vote, win elections, and expose the rigged system that was used to keep the same or like-minded individuals in charge of the local government. The city council wanted to limit the influence of the college by changing the election bylaws. Elections typically occurred in April but the commission changed them to June when most professors and students are not in Nacogdoches.⁹⁶

Those in charge were loud and clear that when those associated with SFA spoke out during that tumultuous time their voices would remain silent. For many years, there

⁹⁵ McDonald, Personal Phone Conversation; Donna McCollum, "Former Nacogdoches mayor, civil servant A.L. Mangham dies," *KTRE*, November 22, 2016, <https://www.ktre.com/story/33770902/former-nacogdoches-mayor-civil-servant-al-mangham-dies/>; Doug Wilson, "They always made college students at SFA feel very unwanted back in the early 70s," comment on post shared by Les Stewart in "Nacogdoches Talks," *Facebook*, February 20, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NacogdochesTalk/permalink/5146981742027032>; Basil Barbee, Interview with Joy B. Reeves, January 14, 1974, Madge Stallings, Interview with Joy B. Reeves, October 10, 1974, Earl Elliot, Interview with Joy B. Reeves, November 13, 1974, James Redfield, Interview with Joy B. Reeves, December 31, 1974, Box 4 Folder 6 "Interviews," Office of the President Steen, ETRC, Steen Library, SFASU, Nacogdoches, Texas.

⁹⁶ Delear, "Elections and Lawsuits," in "March!;" *Weaver v. Commissioners' Court, Nacogdoches County*, No. TY-73-CA-209 (E.D. Tex. March 15, 1974); Kemerer, *William Wayne Justice*, 221-225.

was a sense that the college students did not belong and the public made it known that the students could just leave if they did not like the way the leaders ran the city. Those alive and still around town from those years continually resisted change and ignored one of the most important symbols that represented Nacogdoches and also saved the town during those early years of the Depression and World War II. There was no comradery or support, which was evident during collegiate sport games because the majority of game day audiences were current students or alumni. There was an unspoken feeling that the school was representative of early Nacogdoches, before the completion of U.S. Highway 59, before the population boom, and before the destruction of the Pine Curtain. It had become isolated from the rest of the community.⁹⁷

When SFA integrated the people of Nacogdoches were not looking for an excuse to abandon their pride and joy, they were just disappointed that it was no longer “pure.” That decision was out of the hands of those on campus, it was even out of the hands of the president. The true anger came when the faculty and students chose to disregard the racist values of the town and stand up against police brutality. They chose to create groups that stood for equality, they chose to leave the most prominent church, and they chose to invite a rebel who they felt set fire to the town. These final acts were inexcusable and the only choice left was for the town to ignore the school. In the decades

⁹⁷ Howe, “Thank you to city Da for standing your ground;” McCray, “Survey of Rural Challenges 2017;” “Football Attendance,” *Saw Mill* online forum under Homer Bryce Stadium, November 13, 2017, <https://sfasawmill.com/forums/2/topics/549>.

since the changes on campus, the exact reasoning behind the divide has faded and the way of life in Nacogdoches just is.

CONCLUSION

The culmination of the physical changes made to the campus and the issues surrounding racial integration, especially the march in the spring of 1970, changed the relationship between the town and gown to where it was never quite the same. SFA spent less than half of its almost one hundred years as the crown jewel of Nacogdoches before becoming merely the unwanted yet needed educational facility. During this process, Dr. Ralph W. Steen became the figurehead of both the positive and negative sides of this disunion due to his status as president of the university. His actions and vision led SFA to become one of the fastest growing college campuses in the state while simultaneously tarnishing the reputation of both the school and city according to locals. The Maguire March was such a devastating moment that the easiest way to handle the situation was to sweep it under the rug to where incoming residents or students have no idea it happened.⁹⁸

The relationship between the two appeared to be mending, whether it was from ignoring the issue for so long or the revitalization for younger residents, but recent events involving racial equality made it clear officials still need to address the issues. The incident with the off-duty police officer showed the traditions from Roebuck's time as

⁹⁸ McDonald, Personal Phone Conversation; Markwardt, "Campus Boom Town;" "Enrollment Reaches New High, Record Smashed For Fourth Straight Year."

Chief of Police still hold strong and students do not matter to the average citizen of Nacogdoches. It also made people realize there has never been any form of public apology or even acknowledgement of Roebuck's actions, which is most likely due to the majority of the community praising him. The issues surrounding the lack of transparency continued with this newest case. The officer in the use of force incident resigned from the City of Nacogdoches Police due to personal reasons and it is unclear where he went or what he is currently doing. It is also difficult to find information of whether or not the city is still pursuing a case against the women involved. The court dismissed *Ogbonna v. City of Nacogdoches* due to failure to provide proof of service and *Williams v. City of Nacogdoches* is pending as of spring 2022.⁹⁹

SFA campus has also become the site of more small-scale and local protests due to its location on the most populated street in town and greater acceptance of what some deem issues that are more liberal. One of the most recent issues also dealing with race involves the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. More than one hundred people gathered to support the fight against police brutality in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in the summer of 2020. Some people passing by jeered at the group or simply

⁹⁹ *Ogbonna v. City of Nacogdoches*, 4:21-cv-00296 https://www.pacermonitor.com/public/case/39781971/Ogbonna_v_City_of_Nacogdoches; Nicole Bradford, "Student in apartment incident indicted," *The Daily Sentinel*, May 18, 2019, http://www.thepinelog.com/%20article_%205779e3dc-a5cd-11ea-9347-2752b43f0920.html; Matthew Copeland, "Nacogdoches police officer involved in controversial arrest resigns for 'personal reasons'," *CBS 19*, August 19, 2019, <https://www.cbs19.tv/article/news/local/nacogdoches-police-officer-involved-in-controversial-arrest-resigns-for-personal-reasons/501-aca641b9-3b82-4f04-ae4e-365804d31671>; *Williams v. The City of Nacogdoches, Texas et al*, 9:2021cv00071, US District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, April 9, 2021, <https://dockets.justia.com/docket/texas/txedce/9:2021cv00071/205326>; Nacogdoches City Council Meeting, Section 8 Executive Session, Subsection A, May 18, 2021, <https://nacogdochestx.swagit.com/play/05182021-791>.

drove off, but when the protest moved to in front of the courthouse the peaceful protest changed. One man stopped his vehicle to confront the group with a holstered gun when he felt one member of the protest attacked his vehicle. Police dismissed the issue when they determined the protestor stepped too far out of line and made contact with the vehicle.¹⁰⁰

Many issues continue to plague Nacogdoches and SFA and the one question that is too early to answer is whether the relationship between the two will ever mend. The Covid-19 pandemic effectively stopped the majority of public forms of comradery and the college started dealing with financial issues and the faculty's trust with the current president. The town itself and the local public schools are still highly segregated and the use of force incident shows these problems are still very prevalent. It is also difficult to move past an issue when many of the people who were alive during these incidences are still around to discuss it and debate topics such as the effectiveness of Chief Roebuck's policies. Despite the unknown future this topic is still of importance.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Derrick Bryson Taylor, "George Floyd Protests: A Timeline," *The New York Times*, November 5, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/george-floyd-protests-timeline.html>; Larry Buchanan, Quoc Trung Bui and Jugal K. Patel, "Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History," *The New York Times*, July 3, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>; Erin Wides, "Community members protest police brutality outside of Stephen F. Austin," *KTRE*, June 2, 2020, <https://www.ktre.com/2020/06/02/community-members-protest-police-brutality-outside-stephen-f-austin/>; Jocelyn Bradford, "SFA students, community members gather in peaceful protest for Black Lives Matter Movement," *The Pine Log*, June 3, 2020, http://www.thepinelog.com/article_5779e3dc-a5cd-11ea-9347-2752b43f0920.html; Meaghan Morton, "Man interrupts peaceful Nacogdoches protest," *The Pine Log*, June 6, 2020, http://www.thepinelog.com/multimedia/article_e6b54eea-a827-11ea-a129-7b338c661188.html; Josh Edwards, "It's not enough to protest when the blood is on the sidewalk," *The Daily Sentinel*, June 6, 2020, https://www.dailysentinel.com/coronavirus/article_316b8000-f111-5ced-8238-cdfd53eee6a4.html.

Stories involving minority groups previously held little importance to the overall historical narrative. Historical events often revolve around larger cities due to their population, which lead to more people being involved and widespread coverage. When focusing on bigger cities some people might make the connection that those important events were isolated incidents instead of more widespread and what impact they have on smaller towns as well. Although SFA is a college in a small East Texas town, this story is representative of the nation as a whole. There are racist roots that many people choose to ignore and it is important to compare how when people praise something but then ideals change people quickly turn their backs against it.¹⁰²

Unfortunately, stories such as this do have their problems. The majority of the information came from personal interviews with people who experienced these situations,

¹⁰¹ Bill McCoy, "How many of you Nacogdoches folk remember Chief Roebuck," Remember in Nacogdoches When," *Facebook*, June 23, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/357987866860/search/?q=roebuck>; "New Study Shows COVID-19 Impact on College Students," Montclair State University, February 17, 2022, <https://www.montclair.edu/newscenter/2022/02/17/new-study-shows-covid-19-impact-on-college-students/>; Valerie Reddell and Josh Edwards, "Faculty Senate votes "no confidence" in Gordon, asks Regents to revoke contract," *The Daily Sentinel*, September 9, 2021, https://www.dailysentinel.com/social_media/article_5bea5650-c51b-51b3-a968-e14cf85662be.html; Alyssa Coker, "Faculty Senate pass a vote of no confidence in President Gordon," *The Pine Log*, September 9, 2021, http://www.thepinelog.com/article_8339a3ba-11db-11ec-9952-8bbfe804cfd3.html; "Nacogdoches ISD," *The Texas Tribune*, accessed February 28, 2022, <https://schools.texastribune.org/districts/nacogdoches-isd/>; "Central Heights ISD," *The Texas Tribune*, accessed February 28, 2022, <https://schools.texastribune.org/districts/central-heights-isd/>; "Douglass ISD," *The Texas Tribune*, accessed February 28, 2022, <https://schools.texastribune.org/districts/douglass-isd/>.

¹⁰² Nichelle Smith, "The full history of American people of color has never been told. These stories fill in the narrative," *USA Today*, December 16, 2021, <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/nation/2021/12/16/never-been-told-history-people-of-color/6100386001/>; Liz Mineo, "How textbooks taught white supremacy," *The Harvard Gazette*, September 4, 2020, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/09/harvard-historian-examines-how-textbooks-taught-white-supremacy/>; Nathan Nunn, "Historical Development," Chapter 7 in *Handbook of Economic Growth*, Vol. 2, ed. by Philippe Aghion, Steven Durlauf (North Holland: Elsevier, 2014), 347-402.

which makes personal biases very prevalent. There is also the problem of telling a story that is more than fifty years old and due to the nature of the mind and the memories attached to different situations can potentially alter some of the realities. However, it is still important to tell these stories. Those involved are real people who deserve to have their voices heard after the leaders of the city ignored them for so long and with opening this door it will hopefully open people up to a dialog that can help these wounds begin to heal.¹⁰³

There is also the hope that this story will inspire even more research into the history of SFA and Nacogdoches and their relationship or each entity on its own. People often look at how each president of the United States affected the country or governor of a state affected their particular state and they should do the same on a smaller scale with presidents of colleges or mayors of a town. Some say Dr. William R. Johnson, Dr. Steen's successor, caused a greater rift between SFA and Nacogdoches than Steen did. SFA has seen six men become president since Dr. Steen retired and each one left, or potentially did not leave, their mark on the school. There also needs to be more exploration into events post Maguire March that might have had an impact on the

¹⁰³ Rison, Personal Interview; Mills, Personal Interview; Jackson, Personal Interview; McDonald, Personal Interview; Arscott, Personal Interview; Wade, Personal Interview; Johnson; Personal Interview; Brophy, Personal Interview; Abdullah, Oral History Interview; F. E. "Ab" Abernethy, ETRC Oral History #955; Alexandria Boyle, "Remembering events and representing time," *Synthese*, October 10, 2020, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11229-020-02896-6#citeas>; Dr. Jannis Moody, "Sharing Our Stories, Healing Our Wounds," *Province VII Anti-Racism Network*, September 22, 2018.

relationship and feelings toward the students with instances such as the streaking craze in the mid-1970s.¹⁰⁴

Despite SFA being at the forefront of racial justice in Nacogdoches, the university's record has not always been perfect and those instances need further investigation. One great example is the court case *Annie Mae Carpenter v Stephen F. Austin State University* (1983). SFA fired Carpenter for refusing to clean a men's restroom, which led to many female and minority employees to unionize for her wrongful termination as well as for not receiving the same benefits as other employees due to being hourly manual laborers, positions usually given to people of color or women. People need to look into how the college has failed. It will be years before anyone will know the outcome of the current administration and the financial problems the school is facing but that could be another facet to examine.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Arcott, Personal Interview; Jere Jackson, "Presidents of SFA," from "The SFA Story: The History of Stephen F. Austin State University," *Stephen F. Austin State University*, 2016, <https://www.sfasu.edu/story/presidents/>; "Streaking Students," East Texas Digital Archives from ETRC, accessed March 30, 2022, <https://digital.sfasu.edu/digital/collection/UA/id/1705>; Angus Lind, "The streaking craze," *Tulane News*, July 18, 2016, <https://news.tulane.edu/news/streaking-craze>.

¹⁰⁵ *Carpenter v. Stephen F. Austin State University*, 83 F.R.D. 173 (1979), <https://cite.case.law/frd/83/173/>; *Annie Mae Carpenter, Cross-Appellants v. Stephen F. Austin State University, Cross-Appellees*, 706 F.2d 608 (5th Cir. 1983), <https://www.courtlistener.com/opinion/418006/annie-mae-carpenter-cross-appellants-v-stephen-f-austin-state/> Stephen F. Austin State University; "Minutes of the Board of Regents," Nacogdoches, Texas, October 30, 1984, Vol. 70, Motion 85-29 "Settlement of Legal Fees associated with Annie Mae Carpenter Case," <http://www.sfasu.edu/regents/docs/minutes/070.10.30.1984.pdf>; Norma Martinez, "Fronteras Extra: Texas Labor Actions Lead To Reform," *Texas Public Radio*, accessed August 19, 2020, <https://www.tpr.org/show/fronteras/2018-10-12/fronteras-extra-texas-labor-actions-lead-to-reform>; Danica Sauter, "SFA Faculty Senate votes 'no confidence' in President Gordon, asks regents revoke contract," *KETK*, September 11, 2021, <https://www.ketk.com/news/local-news/sfa-faculty-senate-votes-no-confidence-in-president-gordon-asks-regents-revoke-contract/>; Donna McCollum, "SFA president clears up false perceptions about Stephen F. Austin State University," *KTRE*, February 24, 2022, <https://www.ktre.com/2022/02/25/sfa-president-clears-up-false-perceptions-about->

There are so many components, not just with the topic of race but all these supposedly miniscule moments that make up a larger picture, that have not been touched. Nacogdoches has a wonderfully rich and beautiful history and every aspect of that needs a moment to shine. When people ignore issues that plague a large portion of the community, anger, resentment, and mistrust take over to where it is difficult to know where to begin to start fixing those issues. There will be those who push back because they feel there were no wrongdoings. However, by exposing the past of both the good of a once united front and the bad of the racism that divided the two, healing might begin to take place.

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