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1.0 CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This inquiry, *A Historical-Comparative Study of the County School Systems of North and South Panola, Mississippi*, deals with Panola County (Mississippi, USA) a rural county encompassing roughly 699 square miles (see Map 1), in which two distinct school systems have emerged.

The Panola County educational system has changed drastically since its conception in the 1830s. Since its formation, the county has witnessed the growth of private academies, a civil war (War of 1861), reconstruction, consolidation, and finally integration of its black[1] population into formerly all white schools. These changes have greatly affected the growth and development of education within the county.

The geography of Panola has also affected education.[2] At its creation on 14 February 1836 the county was relatively square in shape, consisting of the North Central Hills, the Bluff Hills (Loess) and the flat rich Delta region (Mississippi Alluvial Plain) (Vestal 1956:20) (see Map 2). Since the county's establishment, people living in these three distinct physiographic regions have developed their own social and economic diversity. This divergence is most evident in the northern and southern regions of the

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[1] The use of the word "black" in denoting racial background relates to full blooded Negro and mixed race or colored. As used in the United States, this racial or ethnic group was originally called colored (early 1800s), Negro (late 1800s), black (1900s), and most recently African-American. For uniformity, I have chosen to use the word "black" throughout this work.

[2] Geography can and does play a paramount role, whether directly or indirectly, in the historical development of a specific locale. There exists, whether in large areas or small communities a multi-linearity between humans, culture, social structure, and landscape.

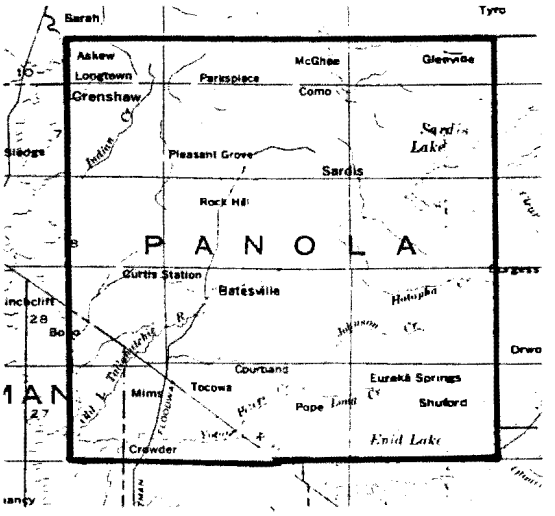
MAP 1 -- CHRONOLOGICAL MAP OF PANOLA*

Chronology of PANOLA

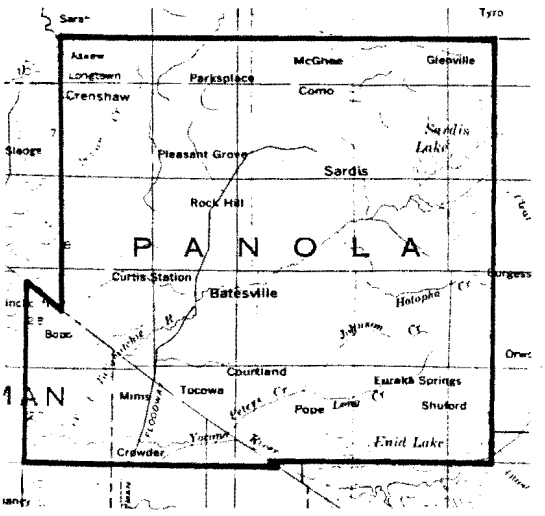
Map	Date	Event	Resulting Area
❶	1 Mar 1836	Created from MONROE, WASHINGTON, and non-county area attached to TALLAHATCHIE	730 sq mi
❷	5 Feb 1841	Gained from TUNICA	760 sq mi
❶	13 May 1871	Lost to TUNICA	730 sq mi
❸	1 Feb 1877	Lost to creation of QUITMAN	700 sq mi

(Heavy line depicts historical boundary. Base map shows present-day information.)

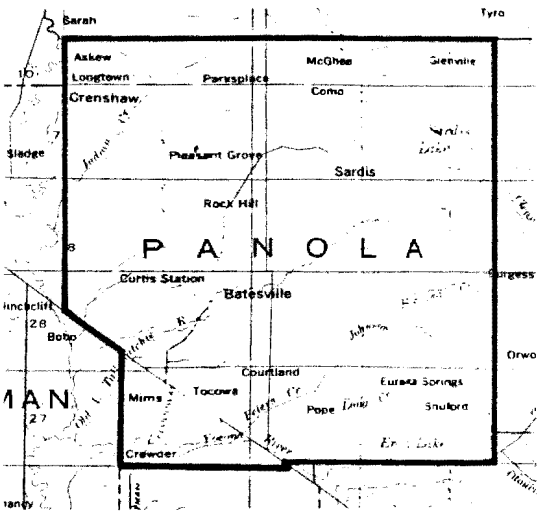
❶ 1 Mar 1836–4 Feb 1841
13 May 1871–31 Jan 1877

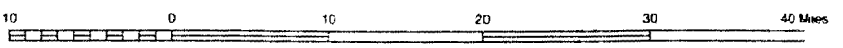


❷ 5 Feb 1841–12 May 1871



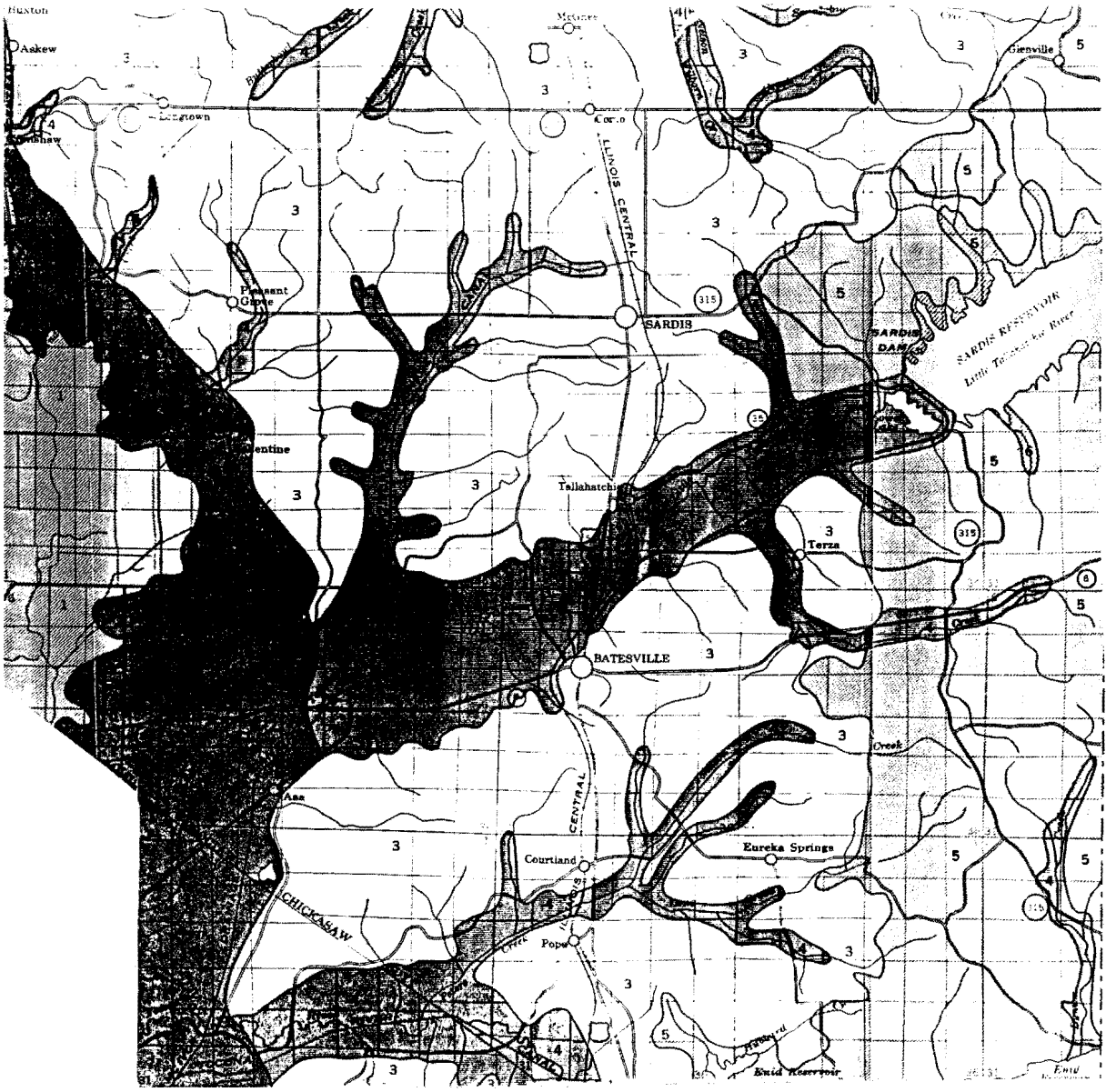
❸ 1 Feb 1877–present





*Obtained from Sinko (1993:152).

MAP 2 -- TOPOGRAPHY AND GENERAL SOIL MAP OF REGION*



North Central Hills - extends from county's 'eastern boundry westward to an indefinite line which could be drawn roughly north-south through the middle of Township 6 West ...'

Loess or Bluff Hills - 'a wide central belt bounded on the east by the same line and on the west by the foot of the Mississippi River Valley bluff ...'

Delta or Mississippi Alluvial Plain -' a strip between the bluff and the county's west boundry... which extends north-south the length of the county and west fron the bluff escarpment to the county's western boundary.'

* Obtained from U.S. Department of Agriculture (1963, n.p.)

county. The Tallahatchie River (see Map 3), whose course flows diagonally across the county, divides these two segments nearly equally (Wren 1988:9). Demographically, the populations of the North and South Panola districts are similar in that they consist of rural Southern whites and blacks. The county, according to the 1990 census is 51.3% white and 48.4% black with the remainder comprising residents of Spanish, Indian (Eastern), and Oriental extraction. The major differences according to Wirt (1970:19) are based on the 'decisions and events, triumphs and mistakes, executed by those who went before'.

At the time of consolidation (late 1950s), into two public school districts, North Panola and South Panola (see section 4.7), the two districts' population profile was quite similar. Since then, both have undergone considerable changes in how they serve their communities (see Chapter 5 and Chapter 6).

This thesis is designed to examine how and why these differences emerged. Emphasis will be on how both external and internal variations led to major distinctions between the school systems. The study will also show how the districts, during the past forty-five years (1950-95), responded to growth, consolidation, racial integration, and final reorganization. Primarily occurring since the 1950s, these educational changes were incubating as early as the 1830s (see section 2.2).

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

As an educationalist and historian, the researcher was surprised by the lack of knowledge residents showed concerning the history and development of their school systems. This limitation applies not only to lay individuals but also to teachers, educators,

MAP 3 -- PANOLA AND THE TALLAHATCHIE RIVER*

* Map taken from the PanGen Collection. The PanGen Room. Batesville Public Library, Batesville, Mississippi (n.d.). No original source given.
Tallahatchie River lined in red. North Mississippi College site marked in red. Oxford marked in blue.

and administrators within the educational community. The significance of comprehending one's educational past is emphasized by Bury (1909:249) in his work entitled *The Ancient Greek Historians*:

> To comprehend the significance of the present we [the Greeks] must be acquainted with the history of the past. This ... is the main reason (according to our present ideas) why a study of history is desirable, if not indispensable, for the man who undertakes to share in the conduct of public affairs, and is desirable also for the private citizen who votes, and criticizes, and contributes to the shaping of public opinion.

It is important in understanding social processes of education that one be knowledgeable of the origins which affect its present situation. These events make causal influences easier to identify and analyze. Reviewing these factors within a historical context can therefore illuminate past and present failures and accomplishments within the two districts. Discovering these catalysts can help the researcher and regional educators to determine the future direction of the school systems of North and South Panola. Further research, based on historical investigation of causative factors affecting today's school systems of North and South Panola, can also help educators and administrators outside the geographic area in making sounder determinations regarding their schools.

Before 1993, an educationalist interested in Panola's educational history had few sources which would provide any insight into the county's short, yet varied, past. These studies were insufficient, often being part of larger non-related works or unpublished theses.[3] Ranging from two to more than one hundred pages, the essays concerned either a specific locale or a general presentation of the county's history. Often, information

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[3] Studies (pre-1993) relating to Panola education are: Fowler, L. M. 1960. Schools and churches: education efforts, 1840-60. History of Panola County, 1836-1860. M.Ed. thesis, University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS; Kyle, J. K. 1913. Reconstruction in Panola County. *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, XIII. University, MS: Mississippi Historical Society; Panola County Genealogical Society. 1987. Schools: The early years. *Panola County History*. Dallas: Curtis Media; Seay, R. L. No pomp or parade. Eureka! a history. Batesville, MS [u.p.]; Vance, S. 1980. Early schools of Panola County. *Panola Story*, 9:1-2.; Wirt, F. M. 1970. *Politics of southern equality*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing; and Wren, T. 1988. Education in Panola County. *Panola Story,* 17: 9-14.

provided was fraught with inaccuracies. The 1994 work, *Panola Remembers* (Lindgren 1994) presented the first comprehensive text on the history of education in South Panola. The book, based on a FCP thesis (Lindgren 1993a) for the British College of Preceptors, although depicting a detailed educational history of the southern segment, left many questions about the diversity of the county's two school districts unanswered. Lindgren's (1993a) chronological study suggests four areas that merit future investigation. Based on the availability of data, these "offshoot" areas include:

1. doing a comparison, based on historical research, between the two educational systems or districts;

2. discerning what impact the Mississippi Head Start program has on Panola education;

3. conducting research regarding the importance of the Batesville (South Panola) Job Corps to Panola's economy and educational system; and

4. comparing the integration of the South Panola Consolidated School System with systems in other counties or states.

Also absent in Lindgren's, and other educational studies (see footnote 3) are any references to the North Panola school system after 1920. Without a comparison of the two school systems' social, economic, and political structure, obtaining a clear and accurate understanding of the county's two districts is impossible. Past works have generally avoided in-depth sociological and economic scrutiny of these two districts. An exception is Wirt's (1970) *Politics of Southern Equality.* The work offers a socio-political analysis of Panola County during the 1960s. Serving as a demographic study (note Beringer 1978:235-53), Wirt's book contains information relating to Panola's economic, educational, and political divergence. The work, however, does not compare the diverse structures which comprise the North and South Panola school systems. Further, Wirt (1970) limits his work to a specific time frame (i.e. primarily the 1960s).

1.3 PROBLEM POSTULATIONS

This study looks at two school systems. Although they serve similar constituents, the school systems differ in how they serve their clientele. Over time, these school systems evolved differently. This was based on certain social, economic, and political differences which affected the way the systems developed. Factors such as business differences, a desire for the county seat, local politics, race, social independence, and community competition continued over a 150 year period to mold each individual community. Due to these factors, the schools within the South Panola district have created an outstanding array of educational opportunities. In-state educators praise the South Panola Consolidated School System for its accomplishments and outstanding student performance (see section 6.4.1.2). The North Panola system, although providing a good school environment, has not excelled to the extent of the southern counterpart. This is evidenced by grades on state mandated standardized tests and other performance indicators (see section 6.3.2.6).

1.4 SPECIFIC AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

Attempting to illuminate these contributing social, economic, and political factors requires a discussion which is geared toward answering the following questions:

1. Who or what was responsible for the development of these factors?
2. When did these factors occur?
3. Was the diversity between the two systems gradual or did some aspects occur spontaneously?

4. How did these social, political, and economic factors, directly or indirectly influence consolidation of the 1950s and racial integration of the 1960s?

1.5 HYPOTHESES

Preliminary reading suggests the following answers to the questions posed above:

1. For over one hundred and fifty years, there appears to have been resentment, hostility and mistrust between residents north and south of the Tallahatchie River. Businessmen of Sardis have resented store-owners in Bateville (see section 3.7.1). Politicians and lawyers of both communities have disliked and mistrusted each other (see section 4.4) Preliminary evidence indicates that at times, residents north of the Tallahatchie have felt superior, to their southern brothers because of their larger land holdings, richer families, and heritage (see section 3.8). Today, residents south of the river appear condescending due to Batesville's industrial and business growth while Sardis and communities in the northern section have been unable to grow economically.

2. As noted, in the past, as now, there was considerable distrust and bitterness between residents of the two districts. This animosity seems to have persisted since the forming of the county's seat in the 1830s (see section 2.2.1).

3. Although coming together during certain periods of the county's history, over the past 150 years residents in the two communities have gradually moved apart in their social, political, and economic goals.

4. Preliminary reading (Lindgren 1993a; 1994) has suggested that these factors, have affected resident's opinions toward what is perceived as educational growth.

5. Precursory research suggests that resentment, economic differences, differing leadership approaches, and differing sociological characteristics (i.e. isolation, community pride, racial attitudes) have continued; this has caused different outcomes which have influenced past and present school settings.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research project is, due to the nature of the problem and data available, the most practical and logical approach and method available for

understanding problem definition and delimitation, collection, evaluation, and synthesis of the aforementioned research (see section 1.1).

Additionally, the researcher has utilized the interview as a research tool. The steps in conducting the interview will be essentially the same as those utilized in mail-out questionnaires (Borg and Gall 1971:211).

1.6.1 Approaches

Primary sources from the 1830s till the present have been utilized to present a balanced approach to issues, factors, and conditions constituting the study. Further, the researcher places emphasis on those pedagogically vital issues about the two district system, concerning the county's culture and social development. In achieving this goal, two approaches (i.e. chronological and thematic) were used.

These two traditional approaches are used by the author for providing the most insight regarding causative factors in a sequential and comprehensive manner. This composite approach to historical subject matter presents a functional organization of historical materials. These sequential, yet practical, approaches provide considerable insight into the social forces and specific activities and problems of the two district system. At times, these approaches overlapped (Nevins 1938:355).

1.6.1.1 The Chronological Approach

The writer leans toward using a chronological approach in documenting factors which led to differences between the North and South Panola school districts. This procedure facilitates a sequential discussion of factors relating to failures and accomplish-

ments in the two districts. Primary sources (see section 1.10.1), covering over 150 years, were used in an attempt to substantiate the hypotheses (see section 1.5).

By using a chronological approach to research, the researcher can present a systematic time line of general occurrences and causative factors (Engelhart 1972:460). According to F. J. Teggart (1972:83), three aspects or ideas are recognized in historical research. These include: 1) an existent present; 2) a beginning point; and 3) a series of occurrences, experiences or events which connect the present with the point of origin (see section 1.6.2 — i.e. research methods).

In presenting a comparative history of the two districts, a chronological approach helps in providing an efficient examination of the topic. Also, presenting a sequential series of historical events makes identification of causal factors easier.

1.6.1.2 The Thematic Approach

The author has integrated the chronological approach (see section 1.6.1.1) with the thematic or topical approach of grouping materials so as to interpret major and minor divisions of school district activities (Nevins 1938:355). This functional organization of materials uses historical data to explain major types of educational activities. Whether one uses a topical or chronological approach, or a combination thereof, the importance of the approach should be the manner in which the research historian is able to interrelate the significance of the facts (Good and Scates 1954:213).

1.6.2 Research Methods

The historical research method in general and the historical-educational method in particular have been chosen due to the type of educational research to be employed.

The historical method provides the greatest insight into the in-depth interaction and interrelationships between historical events. This type of research provides a systematic and objective starting point, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence for yielding facts, and forming conclusions from prominent historical events (Borg and Gall 1971:260).

1.6.2.1 The Historical Method

In researching this topic, the author has chosen to rely heavily on the historical research method. According to Borg and Gall (1971:260) 'historical research is the systematic and objective location, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions concerning past events'.

This method, states Best and Kahn (1986, 66), Borg and Gall (1971), and other educational researchers, involves several scientific and investigative aspects. According to Wiersma (1975:155), historical methodology includes four overlapping principle stages.[4] These steps listed below, however, are only implemented after identifying, defining, and initially delimiting the problem, and an initial hypothesis or hypotheses is/are formed (Wiersma 1975:155):

1. Collection of data. This step takes place after the formulation of the hypotheses or generalizations. It should be noted that the hypothesis in historical research may not always be explicitly stated but merely implied.
2. Evaluation of data (including external and internal criticism).
3. Synthesis of the data — i.e. combining and organizing the information.
4. An acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis, final interpretations, and arriving at probability-type conclusions based on analysis and further synthesis or generalizations based upon deductive-inductive reasoning.

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[4] Engelharts (1972:451) provides more in-depth information relating to stages used in historical methodology.

If constructed correctly, this research method possesses certain characteristics in common with natural scientific research including (Best and Kahn 1986:64).

1. the historian's ability to delimit a problem, evaluate and organize data, form hypotheses, test hypotheses, and formulate conclusions;

2. the historian's conclusions are in many cases reached through principles of probability; and

3. the observations may be expressed in qualitative or quantitative terms.

Although these steps are similar to those in other types of research, a major difference is the way in which the steps are carried out. According to Borg and Gall (1971: 261), it is important

> that the student carefully defines his problem and appraises its appropriateness before committing himself. ... Many problems are not adaptable to historical research methods and cannot be adequately treated using this approach. Other problems have little or no chance of producing significant results either because of the lack of pertinent data or because the problem is a trivial one.

Further, this research method differs from most scientific research (i.e. physical, social, and behavioral) (Best and Kahn 1986:63-64) in that

1. the historian, occasionally, is unable to generalize basis of previous events;

2. the historian is forced to depend upon observations of others which in some cases lack competence and objectivity;

3. at times, the historical researcher is forced to fill in missing gaps by inferring cause and effect; and

4. the researcher cannot control the conditions of observation nor manipulate the significant variables.

1.6.2.2 The Historical-Educational Method

In conducting historical-educational research, the researcher should possess an interest in and knowledge of, not only his specific topic but also general history and history of education (Engelhart 1972:455). Further, the investigator should be acquainted

with relevant educational theory and educational philosophy. An understanding of social and technological change is also essential in attaining effective research (Engelhart 1972:455).

Used to record man's achievements, including the integration of relationships between events, persons, places, and times, historical-educational research should be an attempt at understanding the past and present i.e., understanding 'the present in light of past events and developments' (Best and Kahn 1986:60). Therefore, aspects of the historical-educational method, utilized through the remainder of this research work will provide insight into not just places, people, and things but also their historical inter-relationships.

Therefore, the historical-educational research method used in this paper, and other similar works, are in line with those of the general historical method. Being similar to the historical research methodology, the historical-educational method forms a frame-work leading to a completed paper or project. These steps, according to Venter & van Heerden (1989:112-116), include:

1. the selection and delimitation of the project or subject (see section 1.8);
2. the 'investigation and study of the chosen theme or problem as it exists at that moment in the present';
3. the formulation of a hypothesis which is based on previous research (see section 1.5)

   The hypothesis or scholarly assumption should:

   a. explains occurrences introduced through the research;
   b. attempts to show relationships and underlying principles;
   c. limits the study;
   d. produces awareness;
   e. aids synopsis;

f. provides structure;
g. shows causation and relevance;
h. provides coherence and progression; and
i. defines research parameters;

4. the 'accurate investigation and description of the educational past, in terms of the theme (or problem) of investigation' based on primary and secondary source materials (see sections 1.10.1 and 1.10.2);

5. the evaluation of data based on critical analysis both through internal and external criticism (see section 1.11); and

6. the interpretation of data and finally the written work which consolidates the information into a format to answer questions regarding the problem.

In the final work (in this case a doctoral theses), the historian/pedagogue should be able to 'describe the origin and development of the topic throughout the ages ' (Venter and van Heerden (1989:116). Further, he should provide the reader with a research document which is properly documented, well integrated, balanced, scientific, interesting, and useful (Venter and van Heerden (1989:116). Additionally the document should provide general and specific benefits to the reader in that it should answer specific question and provide the reader with insight into additional avenues of potential research.

1.6.2.3 The Interview as a Research Method

As a research tool, the interview provides essential information not readily available in standard source material. Due to the diverse population interviewed, such as school administrators, teachers, students, bankers, farmers, politicians, doctors, store owners, lawyers, and others, aspects of both general and research interview techniques, explained in Jones (1985:138-39), were utilized. Combining these two techniques provided the researcher considerable insight into the county's educational development.

1.6.2.3a General and Research Interviews

The general interview serves as a data collecting agent that provides a 'face-to-face confrontation between the interviewer and the ... [subject]. It is an oral exchange between individuals' (Wiersma 1975:136) in an attempt to provide new or relevant data.

Like the general interview, the research interview provides social interaction between the interviewer and respondent. Questions posed in a general interview are, however, more spontaneous and answers may range from one word to a lengthy conversation. The research interview, if used independently, can serve to limit the respondent's answers, restricting active participation. One reason for this is that the research interviewer must 'never lose ... track of ... research objectives ... [in that] the *interviewer initiates and varyingly controls* the exchange with the respondent ... for the purpose of obtaining *quantifiable* and *comparable information* ... relevant to an emerging or stated hypothesis' (Jones 1985: 138-39).

Due to the rigid structure of the research interview which focuses on control, there is always the possibility of losing valuable information. Through integrating the two methods, the researcher has limited certain aspects of the research technique. While stressing an interview with emphasis on comparison, the researcher has removed any emphasis on quantifiable results. Therefore, unlike a formal or structured research interview which emphasizes the use of numbered scales or terms (such as yes, very much, yes, some and no, not at all) for obtaining uniform and quantifiable measurements, the researcher employed a combined interview technique primarily concerned with comparison. The researcher's intent is to informally compare answers of group interviewees (i.e. North vs South Panola residents). Interview information and comparison data will be utilized in the Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of the thesis.

In an attempt to regulate comparability it is necessary to prepare an interview schedule. This plan, according to Jones (1985:142), consists of four items:

1. preparing a set of structured questions before the interview;
2. providing a series of instructions for the implementation of probes (additional questions intended to promote clarification or enlargement of an answer) (Engelhart 1972:111);
3. providing a method for recording respondent's answers (either a video or audio recorder with additional transcription); and
4. providing necessary guidelines for dealing with potential problems regarding respondent's answers.

These four items were designed and structured to provide the best method of integrating the general and research interview (see Appendix 1). As an interview used in obtaining historical data, this interview schedule is less formal than those which may have been used in sociological or psychological investigations.

Being more interested in subject content than quantifiable results, the interviewer uses open-ended questions which allow respondents to answer at length and as they wish, as opposed to closed-ended or structured interview questions (Fontana and Frey 1994: 365). This procedure provides the historical researcher with additional information which can be used in the context of the work and for drawing conclusions.

Finally, the researcher, as part of the interview, uses a question format (20 questions) allowing the opportunity to build logically on prior questions (Appendix 1). General questions are provided first with each successive question (in a set of 5) becoming more specific. This semi-funnel sequence (Engelhart 1972:110-111) helps the respondent recall exacting details.

Miller (1991:160-61) notes 14 advantages and eight disadvantages of the personal interview. In this thesis only six advantages and three disadvantages are relevant:

Advantages

1. Personal interviews produce a significant percentage of returns.
2. Personal interview data is more prone to be accurate.
3. Return visits can usually be scheduled.
4. The interviewer is in more control (in contrast to mailout interviews).
5. The personal interview, in this case about 30 minutes in length, provides sufficient time for the respondent to become oriented to the topic.
6. The respondent may take more time during the personal interview than in a mailout or other types of interview format.

Disadvantages

1. The cost of obtaining personal interviews, even in a small rural area, may be relatively higher. The cost factor is much lower in telephone surveys.
2. Conducting personal interviews is time-consuming; with an average interview time of thirty minutes, even 30 interviews, with time traveled to and from the interview sites, can take as many as forty hours of the interviewer's time.
3. An interviewer must conduct the interview at a time that suits the respondent's mood and work schedule.

1.7 HISTORIOGRAPHY

Most historical research works meld varied philosophies and schools of historical interpretation. These interpretations of significant data allow historians and educators to present historical development from many perspectives. There are seven theories or schools of thought which the historian can use to limit or broaden their presentation of historical knowledge. These include (Good and Scates 1954:215-16):

1. Biographical —This theory stresses the importance of great individuals who have molded or directed historical development.

2. Idealistic or Spiritual — This interpretation is concerned with those human spiritual forces acting in cooperation with economic and geographic factors in the production of personal conditions and social relations.

3. Scientific and Technological — This school of historical interpretation stresses the impact scientific discovery and advancements have had on human progress.

4. Economic — The economic theory emphasizes the significance economic institutions and processes have on determining the disposition of resulting social culture.

5. Geographical — This theory states that for human actions (whether individually or as a group) to be understood and analyzed, they must be placed into some type of geographic context.

6. Sociological — Sociological theory states that group actions influence the course of history.

7. Synthetic or Pluralistic — This interpretation states that no single classification of causes explains all developments or phases of history. Rather, historical development is affected by an eclectic or collective psychology of the period.

In writing a comparative history of the development of a rural county's dual educational system, it is necessary to take a pluralistic approach (see number 7 above) to historical interpretation (Tuchman 1994:316). After a cursory examination of sources it becomes evident that many factors played a role in the development of the dual district system. Further, these influences continue to affect the philosophy, direction, and growth of these consolidated school systems.

1.8 DELIMITATION OR BOUNDARIES OF THE STUDY

Unlike a previous thesis (Lindgren 1993a) and later publication (Lindgren 1994), on Panola County, which provided an extensive chronology of dates, facts, schools, students, and social events, the scope of this study is limited by area, time, and purpose.

As this work is designed to assist educators and laymen in these districts to better understand the differences and similarities in the county school system the following aspects were considered to be essential focal points in this thesis:

1. Area — concerns those areas north and south of the Tallahatchie River and to a small degree the county's three distinct physiographic regions (see Map 2);

2. Time — primarily concerns the last forty-five years of the county's educational development and additionally only those factors prior to this period (1830-1950) which would have either a direct or indirect impact on issues of the aforementioned forty-five year period; and

3. Purpose — presenting a historical comparative analysis of the county's two districts based on economic, social, and political factors and their impact on educational policy.

1.9 RESEARCH PROGRAM (Course of the Research)

This reseaerch program, based on the aforementioned boundaries, will consist of the following:

Chapter 2, *A Historical Review of Educational Change in Panola, 1830s-1870*, is limited to those factors both internal and external which produced variations within the county's schools. These differences, especially between schools in the northern section of the county and those in the south, later resulted in diverse school goals, philosophies, and interests. Within this chapter, research is limited to:

1. The resentment and hatred produced in the 1830s by the selection of Panola over Belmont as the county's first county seat. It is the researcher's contention that this incident was the beginning of polarization in the communities of North and South Panola (see section 2.2.1).

2. The marked differences between the curriculum, teaching styles and advertising between schools north and south of the Tallahatchie line.

3. Parent concerns, expressed by residents of both sections of the county, regarding their children's entry into the private school system.

4. State political and legislative factors and their potential impact on education.

Chapter 3, *The Public School System in Panola County, 1870-1950* traces the development and diversity of schools above and below the Tallahatchie. This chapter also concerns the mechanics of setting up a school system within the county and how school growth, federal intervention, social development, and economic progress led to consolidation in the 1950s. Emphasis, as in the previous chapter, is on those social, economic, and political factors relevant to both segments of the county. The researcher, therefore, attempts to show how major factors, such as continued arguments over the county seat of justice, the Radical Republicans, growth of the early public school system, early consolidation (1910-1950), a major depression, and two world wars affected the two small geographic regions of north and south of the Tallahatchie River. Minor considerations regarding pay, tuition, enrollment, teacher training, and student transportation are also covered.

Chapter 4, *The Public School System in Panola County, 1950-1960,* is primarily restricted to the impact of events, personalities, and socio-economic and political factors on consolidation. More specifically it attempts to reveal how these influences created more diverse factors which in turn directly impacted decisions and legislation during the consolidation and dual district issues of the 1950s. To a smaller degree items such as black and white educational achievements and limitations and educational problems and developments are also discussed.

Chapter 5, *The Effect of Black Integration North and South of the Tallahatchie, 1954-1970* is limited to the impact which integration issues, opinions, legislation, and

federal intervention had on residents (i.e. parents, teachers, administrators, businessmen, students, etc.) north and south of the river and how each group confronted these issues. The chapter will also be concerned with the "white flight" of white student to recently created private schools and how this philosophy differed within the two school districts.

Chapter 6, *The Public and Private School Systems in Panola County, 1970-1996*, is limited to four factors:

1. the economic and education growth of the South Panola Consolidated School District;

2. the recent (December 1995) devastating economic problems of the North Panola Consolidated School System and the eventual intervention and take-over by the Mississippi State Department of Education;

3. the lack of major improvement of the North Panola School District during the past ten years (1986-1996) in the fields of curriculum improvement, student test scores, and teacher preparation; and

4. the continued diversity, separation, and at times division of the two systems during the 1970s-1990s.

Chapter 7, *Synthesis*, relates to the chapter summary conclusions, final conclusions, and recommendations. These include:

1. introduction;

2. conclusions of the chapters;

3. final conclusions; and

4. recommendations.

1.10 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The researcher, in finding and assessing data, uses varied forms of computer technology (i.e. CD ROM, Internet, electronic databases). Traditional hands-on methods

of finding data and judging reliability, as discussed by Barzun and Graff (1957), are also used. Relying on local newspaper accounts, statistical reports, Panola County school board minutes, unpublished materials, United States Census reports and State of Mississippi Superintendent's *Biennial Reports*, this treatise employs traditional historical and statistical data in constructing a chronicle of the factors contributing to the internal diversity and external interaction of North and South Panola school systems.

Statistics from various sources (see section 1.10.1) are used in supporting the study. These include statistics documenting: 1) diversity in the two systems; 2) the causes for diversity; and 3) school systems' responses to internal and external stimuli.

Although secondary sources are used, emphasis is on primary source material such as interviews, newspapers, school board records, and state archival documents, while stressing statistical data from United States census reports, Batesville and Sardis Community and City Profiles (North Mississippi Development Association), the *Mississippi Official and Statistical Register*, Panola County Superintendent Financial Reports, Panola County Treasurer's Report, Common and Consolidated Term Reports, North and South Panola County school board minutes, and other local, and state sources.

1.10.1 Primary Sources

Primary source material extends from the early 1830s until the present. Most of this material is found in four major types of sources:

1. county newspapers (over the past 150 years): *Batesville Blade, Panola County Democrat, Panola Mississippi Lynx, Panola Star, Panola Weekly Panolian, Southern Reporter, The Lynx, The Mississippi Lynx, The Panolian, The Panola Lynx*, and *Weekly Registrar*;

2. *Biennial Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Education to the Legislature of Mississippi*, 1884-1995;

3. *Minutes of the Panola County School Board*, 1916-95; and

4. state and federal documents: the University of Mississippi Bureau of Educational Research Surveys, Panola Community and City Profiles (North Mississippi Development Association), *Consolidation of Schools and Transportation of Pupils Bulletin No. 9* (1915), *Consolidation of Schools and Transportation of Pupils* (1917), Laws of the State of Mississippi (1836-1994), *Mississippi Official and Statistical Registrar* (1952-1996), *Mississippi Report Card*, (1980-1994), *Mississippi Statistical Abstract* (1986), *Schools of Panola County* (1955), *Social and Economic Profile of Black Mississippi* (1977), *Southern School Desegregation* (1967), *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1987), and *Census Reports*, (1840-1990).

Primary documentation will also include data regarding Mississippi legislative acts, State Superintendent of Education records, Panola County court decisions, reports of various educational committees, available student records, school surveys, and school advertisements.

1.10.2 Secondary Sources

Secondary sources were *The Panola Story*, an official publication of the Panola Historical and Genealogical Society (Pan Gens); and sociological, political, and historical works by local writers (or those writing about local conditions). Works by regional writers included in this study are: Fowler's 'History of Panola County, 1836-1860' (1960), Kyle's 'Reconstruction in Panola County' (1913), Lindgren's 'Panola Education: A Historical Interpretation of the Educational Factors between 1836 and the Present which Led to the Formation and Growth of the South Panola Consolidated School System' (1993), *Panola Remembers* (1994), Pan Gens' *Panola County History* (1987), Rowland's *The Official and Statistical Register of the State of Mississippi — 1912* (1912) and *History of Mississippi: the Heart of the South* (1925), Seay's *Eureka! A History* (1975), Still's 'Comprehensive Plan to Identify and Meet the Educational Needs of

Exceptional Children in the South Panola School District' (April 1976), and Professor Frederick Wirt's *Politics of Southern Equality* (1970).[5]

1.11 EVALUATION OF SOURCE MATERIALS

In this study, all primary documents and secondary sources are scrutinized using external and internal criticism techniques. The type of data used forced the researcher to rely more heavily on internal rather than external criticism. Regarding this evaluation, the writer is more interested in the meaning or credibility of statements (Good & Scates 1954:188) made in particular works such as newspaper notices and advertisements than style, genuineness, or appearance (Good & Scates 1954:189). In this study, primary materials are taken directly from archival records and are original in content and design.

1.11.1 External Criticism

The object of criticism, in external criticism, concerns the authenticity of the sources. By using actual documents and newspapers from the period, external criticism is not of paramount concern. Research used in this study doesn't present any questions regarding authorship or text authenticity. Therefore, primary sources and government documents used in the study left little room for fraud, distortion, or invention. One small area of concern regards unsigned Letters to the Editor sections of local newspapers. Although this procedure has been halted (editors now requiring letters to be signed), there is a possibility of fraud or invention in earlier letters, either by editors or outsiders.

[5] Items italicized are published works while non-italicized items are theses, and other unpublished documents.

1.11.2 Internal Criticism

After an evaluation of the works based on external criticism, ascertaining the accuracy and credibility of varied statements within the documents is necessary. Due to the age of the documents and disharmony exhibited by residents and editors from the two sections (North and South Panola), discerning the trustworthiness of the reports was important. Emphasis was on 'weigh[ing] the testimony of the document in relation to the truth' (Good and Scates 1954:189). Internal criticism is also important in evaluating responses on the interview segment. As will be noted (see Chapters 3 through 6) that the two public school districts have historically distrusted, resented, and at times been openly hostile toward each other. Due to antipathy of some participants, parts of certain interviews may be "colored" in how particular situations or events were perceived.

Occasionally, interviewees may exaggerate, distort, or falsify to prevent retribution. In such situations, interviews, regardless of the interviewees, are examined for good faith and bias. The researcher, in evaluating the statements (on taped interviews), is forced to be self-reliant when determining where the interviewees may have colored or falsified the source. It is for this reason that a general/research interview method was implemented (see section 1.6.2.3a). Cross and content references will be used to clarify any statement where perception of the truth may be at issue. Information will also be provided when the interviewee expresses anger, resentment, or refuses to answer certain questions.

1.12 SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

After a study of the primary and secondary sources, the researcher conducted an in-depth evaluation in an attempt to compile pertinent material relating to the study.

Relevant data was then evaluated, classified, and systematized. The researcher, further evaluated the data-problem relationship through problem identification, relevant information analysis, and application feasibility (Wiersma 1975:158).

In the final stages of research, the researcher analyzes general and specific bits of information and pulls together relevant items (see sections 1.6.2.1 – steps 3 and 4 and 1.6.2.2 – step 6). During this last stage, Wiersma (1975:158) suggests that inconsistencies are resolved. It is also at this stage where a hypothesis may be revised, rejected or accepted. During this period, the researcher must remain objective, refraining from any discernable bias. Wiersma (1975:159) appropriately states, that 'a historical research study involves a great deal of attention to detail'. This is especially true in the final stages of analysis, synthesis, interpretation, and conclusion making. Although not possessing the control of more traditional experimental research (i.e. natural science), 'educational research should be conducted in the context of hypotheses, and the research procedures should test the hypotheses. Care should always be taken in treating and interpreting the results, but with non-experimental research ... the degree of care and caution required is greater' (Wiersma 1975:160).

1.13 CONCLUSION

In determining this project's significance, it is important that several criteria be achieved. These criteria, loosely stated, are:

1. All research should be of a type which makes progress possible.
2. Regardless of the amount of study or research undertaken on a specific problem, there always exists the possibility for expansion toward new unexplored

inquiries. Therefore a quality of good investigative research is that while answering many heretofore unanswered questions, the research itself multiplies potential future inquiries (Good and Scates 1954:4-7).

3. Research should also expand learning and knowledge, thereby expanding the role of intelligence. Educational inquiry is born out of obstacles and potential problems, therefore, research should be used to detect new and conceivably positive theoretical and practical directions (Good and Scates 1954:8-12).

This study attempts to achieve the aforementioned criteria and offers pedagogues and lay persons within and without the two school districts interesting historical data and insight into how such educational changes take place, their effects and eventual benefit. This new knowledge will assist them in making logical and intellectual decisions. The thesis will also provide statistical and historical information that will be of benefit to pedagogues who are considering or are engaged in similar projects. By providing insight, based on statistics, interviews, and primary documentation, the work may serve to prevent repetition of historical mistakes, human shortcomings or future regional antagonism. Finally, the work is significant in that it can be used by diverse populations wishing to carry out consolidation, integration, or reorganization schemes.

2.0 CHAPTER 2.
A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN PANOLA, 1830s-1870

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The first twenty-nine years of Panola County's educational system were fraught with fluctuation. Panola (see Map 4), established 9 February 1836, was one of the twelve northern counties—i.e. Boliver, Chickasaw, Coahoma, Desoto, Itawamba, Lafayette, Marshall, Panola, Pontotoc, Tippah, Tishomingo, and Tunica (see Map 5)—within the state of Mississippi which was formed in 1817. These counties were created from lands ceded by the Chickasaw Indians under the 1832 Treaty of Pontotoc (Kyle 1913:9). This treaty and a later one of 1834, transferred 6,442,000 acres of Indian land (all lands within northern Mississippi east of the Mississippi River) to settlers from Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and other eastern states (Alexander 1908:1).

Almost immediately, small private schools[1] appeared in the county. By the 1840 Census, Panola County had four primary or common schools. During this early period, however, some parents did not see the importance of sending their children to learn literature, Latin or algebra; therefore, many youths never received a formal education, being required instead to tend to chores on small family farms. Parents, teachers, and other citizens, since the establishment of the county, had also begun feuding over social, economic, and political concerns such as the location of the county seat, lumber and timber rights, school location, and community independence.

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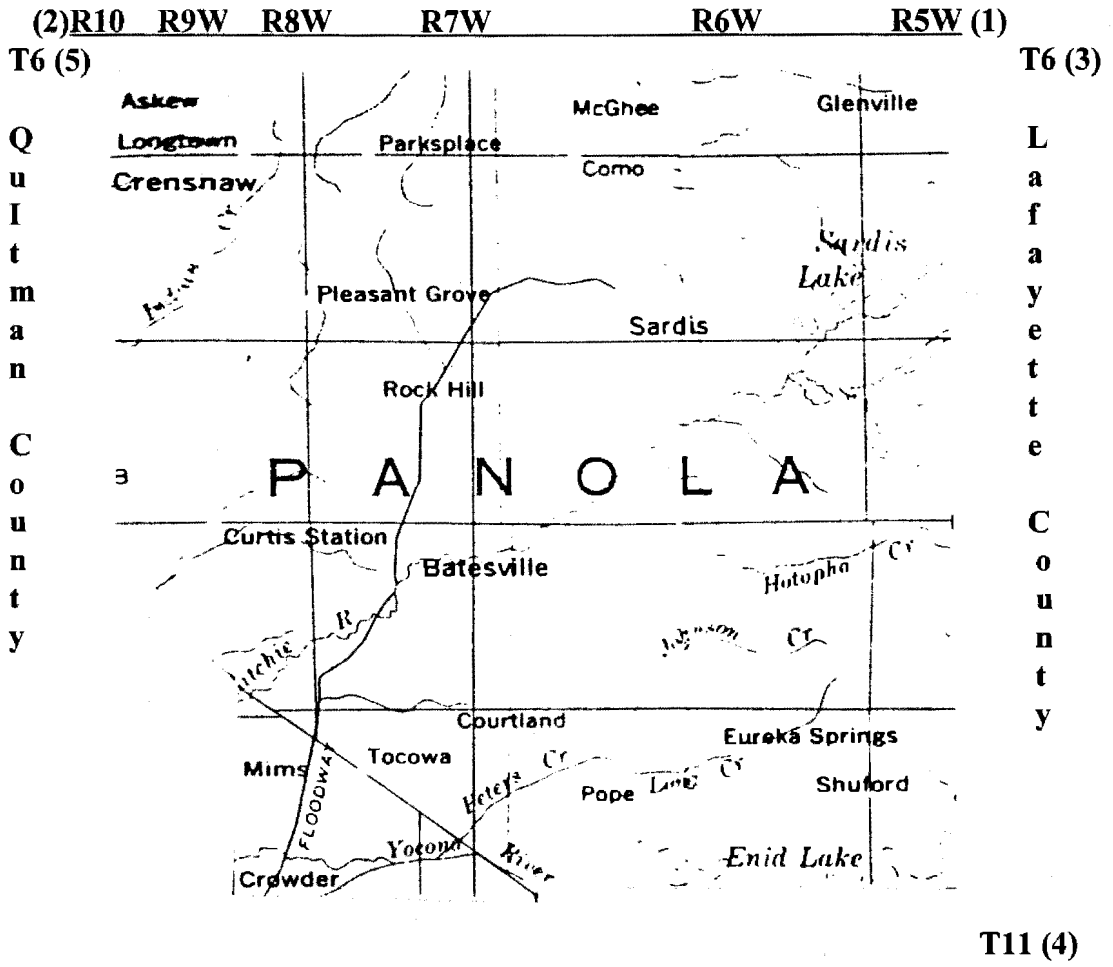
[1] Private schools and academies, referred to those started in the late 1830s in each small community, which received no government or state support but was rather dependent upon funding from the parents in the form of enrolment fees and tuition. Public schools were governmentally funded.

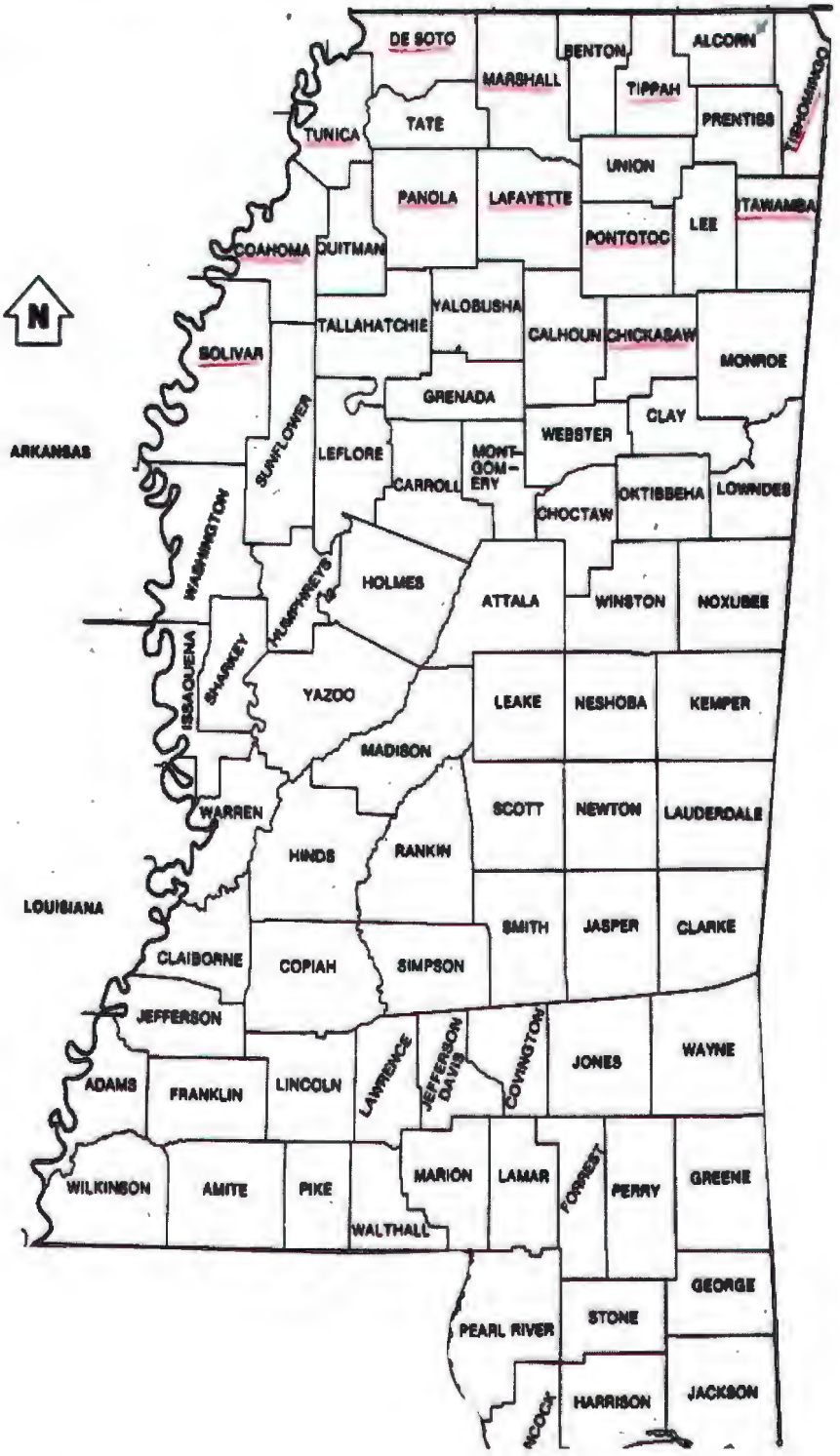
MAP 4 — PANOLA AND ITS BOUNDARIES (Townships and Ranges) *



Top line indicates northern boundary. Panola's 'northern boundary was the center line of Township 6 beginning at the center of Range 5 West (1) and extending westward to the line dividing Ranges 9 and 10 West (2). The eastern boundary was the center line of Range 5 West running from the center of Township 6 southward (3) to the northern boundary of Township 11 (4). The western boundary was somewhat vague; it was the line dividing Ranges 9 and 10 (5) West from the center of Township 6 running southward to the line dividing the Choctaw and Chickasaw cessions then southward to the northern boundary of Tallahatchie County or Township 27 (6). The southern boundary was the northern boundary of Tallahatchie and Yalobusha Counties or the northern boundaries of Township 27 and 11' (Fowler 1960:12).

* Above map presents current boundary with corresponding Ranges and Townships. Obtained from the PanGen Room, Batesville Public Library, Batesville, Mississippi.

MAP 5 — MISSISSIPPI COUNTIES*



The aforementioned twelve northern counties of Mississippi are marked in red.

* Obtained from the PanGen Room, Batesville Public Library, Batesville, Mississippi.
"x" Corinth, Mississippi (see section 2.5.3).

However, from this meager and often confusing beginning local educators formed the academy school system (see footnote 17), a private endeavor, in the early 1840s. This system of education continued to expand for the next two decades. During this period, several ineffective legislative acts were passed and still more impotent educational acts were enacted (see section 2.7).

Although education both within the county and the state would have many false starts, disappointments, and set backs, by the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, there were over twenty small private one-room school houses in the county. However, the war and the creation of a public school system (see footnotes 1 & 16), funded by the state government, i.e. the Public School Act of 1859 (see section 2.7.2) and later during Reconstruction[2] (1865-1877) nearly destroyed the academy style of education.

Political, economic, and social factors, during this era, both internal and external, produced variations within the county's academies. These differences, especially between schools in the northern section of the county and those in the south, would later result in diverse school goals, philosophies, and interests.

This chapter provides a historical foundation for political, economic, and social factors which would continue throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Although some of these variations, as stated in this chapter, had little initial impact on school policy and philosophy (in comparison to later events), the aforementioned events and their social, political, and economic ramifications would gradually continue, picking up momentum

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[2] Reconstruction in a narrow sense referred to re-admission of the South into the Union and the actions needed to determine the status and promote the advancement of the black race. In a larger sense it pertained to the succession of socio-politico-economic 'developments in the nation, the end results of which was the successful retention of power by the Republican Party, the union of the radical wing of that party with the new industrialists, the defense of Civil War legislation from a counterattack by agrarians, laborers, and Democrats (see section 3.7.1.1a), and the passage of new legislation desired by business interests' (Capers 1956:531).

as more and more differences became apparent to local residents on both sides of the Tallahatchie. In turn, these real and perceived differences would only lead to intensify area polarization, personal resentment, community pride, and neighborhood distrust producing a continuing domino effect.

2.2 POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS DURING THE COUNTY'S FORMATION AND SHORTLY THEREAFTER AND THEIR AFFECT ON COMMUNITY EDUCATION

While parents in the various small communities were considering the ramification of formal primary education, certain political conditions within the county were, as early as 1836, polarizing public opinion within the small communities. These conditions (see sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2) would over the years lead to distrust and resentment which in turn would cause parents from north of the Tallahatchie River (see Map 4) to refuse sending their children to facilities in the southern region of the county.[3] To a degree, this resentment would be evident in education between 1850-1870 (see section 2.4).

2.2.1 Selecting a County Seat

This sub-section is geared toward providing insight into an incident during the county's early growth which proved to alienate and antagonize area residents. Most of today's citizens, both north and south of the Tallahatchie, are not acquainted with the

[3] Of the available school records of the period 1840 to 1860 none, in their listing shows a child from one community attending an academy from an adjoining area. Although originally this may have been due to travel restrictions and some communities possessing their own one room school houses, by the late 1850s resentment, community pride, and rivalry had restricted most interaction between schools. This data is based on students south of the Tallahatchie attending schools in the Belmont or Sardis region, or area Sardis or Belmont children attending schools in the southern area (Lindgren 1994, Chapter 1).

early battles over the county seat selection. When questioned, they refer to a nebulous situation which had been orally passed on to them by their grandparents. This event directly, and later indirectly, affected many aspects of social, economic, and political development. This incident, as Chapters 3 will illustrate, led to community isolation, bitterness, and mistrust. Over the years, this affair, as well as others to be later introduced (see sections 3.7.1.1a, 3.7.1.1c, 3.7.1.1d, 3.7.2.1a, and 3.7.2.1c), affected educational development by causing administrators, teachers, businessmen, and parents to adopt different and at times rival approaches to learning, politics, and business endeavors.

In the county's early years, a young immigrant to Panola, provided this vivid description of the county:

> [In Ponola,] the range for cattle and other stock is generally good-especially near the river and large creeks. On these there is an abundance of cane, of which large numbers of cattle feed during the winter and keep fat.
>
> To those who are fond of hunting for bear, deer, turkey, &c., we would say there is almost an inexhaustible supply of these animals in the swamps which lie in the western part of the county. In the lakes of these swamps, fish are said to be very abundant; and upon their borders is many an old cypress tree, filled with honey.
>
> Perhaps there would be no departure from the truth in saying the same of Panola county, that was said of the ancient land of Canaan; that it is a land flowing with milk and honey. Though every washing tub may not be filled with milk, nor every hollow tree with honey, yet there is an abundance of both. And though dimes do not hang upon the blades of grass, yet thousands of dimes, dollars, ... lie within a foot of the surface of the earth which may be found by the use of proper means (An emigrant 1845:2).

This "Utopia", however, was to soon be marred by a political and social battle over territory and community development. Almost from the beginning, residents both north and south of the Tallahatchie line (see Map 3) found themselves at odds. One of the first duties of the county's newly formed Board of Police was its legal responsibility of selecting a location for the county's seat of justice (Laws 1836:48, 4). The main criterion was that this governmental body be centrally located within the county (Fowler 1960:18). A dispute, however, soon arose between residents of Belmont and the small town of

Ponola,[4] located about ten miles down river,[5] over the site for building the new courthouse (see Map 6). Soon, the disagreement became so unmanageable that on 13 May 1837 the state legislature authorized a special election. This county electorate chose Ponola. This was probably due to Ponola's larger population and the passionate efforts of its citizens (Ballentine 1950:2). The election results were authorized on 8 February 1838 by the state legislature (Laws 1838:107, 1). Even after the election, Belmont residents persisted in their bid for the county seat. Belmont citizens knew that with the county seat being located in Ponola, the community of Belmont and other areas within the northern section of the county would be faced with several concerns including:

1. a much greater distance to travel to conduct legal affairs;

2. when the river overflowed it banks, which occurred often, travel to the Panola courthouse by residents north of the river would be impossible, or at best required extra time and travel to find a crossable point;

3. with more business and legal transactions being conducted in Panola, Belmont residents feared that the southern part of the county would advance economically to a greater degree than its northern counterpart; and

4. community pride of northern residents who felt that with the loss of the seat they would be looked upon as perhaps inferior by southern residents, businessmen, investors, and bankers (Lindgren 1996b:7).

Ponola residents, in turn, became fearful and suspicious of Belmont's intentions. From this time forward, resentment and bitterness grew between these two segments of the county. As late as 1840, arguments, secret negotiations at the state and local level, and an occasional fist fight were still occurring over the county seat.

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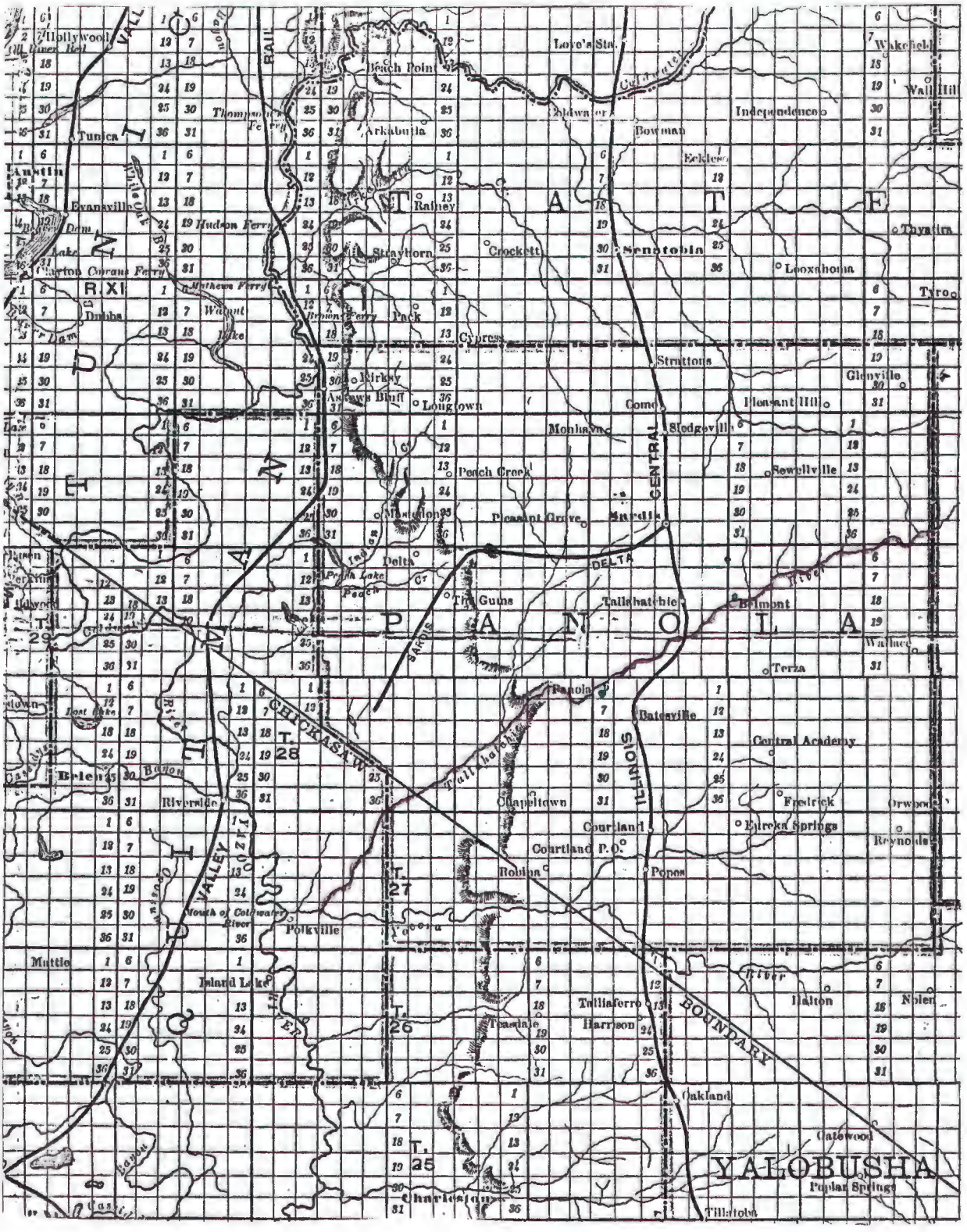
[4] Originally, the town of Panola (later referred to as Old Panola) was known as Ponola. In newspaper articles of the period (1840s) the two names were used interchangeably. By the 1850s, however, the town was officially known as Old Panola or Panola.

[5] Ten miles from Belmont on the south side of the Tallahatchie River.

MAP 6 — PANOLA AND BELMONT*



* Map taken from the PanGen Collection. The PanGen Room. Batesville Public Library, Batesville, Mississippi.

According to Edwin C. Bolton of Panola, in a letter to his brother in Pontotoc (Miss. Archives 1840:[1]):

> Dr Laird [of the Belmont area] was there [at the Legislature in Jackson, Mississippi] & told [State Senator] Hill that he [Hill] had pledged himself to go for moveing [*sic*] the county seat [northward] & it was on those grounds that he was elected [However Hill had not made good on his promise.]... He had seen a written pledge. Hill told him that if he had seen his name to any such a paper that he [Laird] had forged it & that he believed him to be a rascal & a liar. Laird then turned & said that was also his opinion of him upon which Hill & him had a fight & Laird got whipped & has returned home sadly disappointed ...

Although Senator Hill was victorious in his fist-fight with Laird, no issues were resolved. During the same period, General G. Rayburn from Jackson stated that an unrevealed source had offered him ten thousand dollars to work toward the removal of Ponola as the county seat (Miss. archives 1840:[1]).

Early in February 1840, a petition from some outspoken Belmont residents[6] was presented to the Mississippi House of Representatives requesting that the county seat be changed to Belmont (Fowler 1961a:3). Much of this petition, presented by residents north of the river, concerned the fact that Ponola was not centered within the county.[7] This however, changed on 5 February 1841 when the legislature passed a bill adding an additional thirty square miles around the mouth of the Coldwater River to the northern section of the county (Laws 1841:200, 1). Due to this addition of land, Belmont residents were forced to temporarily end their bid for the county seat. They would, however, continue harboring animosity. This resentment would flare-up intermittently, even after most Belmont residents (by the 1850s) had moved some five miles northwest to the newly created town of Sardis. Simmering, for the next twenty-five years, this issue would ignite

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[6] The individuals who presented the petition in Jackson had refused to accept the previous vote or the decision made by the legislature. They felt that by continuing in their battle for acceptance of Belmont as the county seat, in time their dream would be recognized.

[7] According to the Board of Police, the seat had to be centrally located (Fowler 1960:18).

once again in 1871 (see section 3.7.1.1). This enmity, was based on previously mentioned concerns rooted in fear, envy, mistrust, greed and community pride.[8]

Section 2.2 shows that this enmity's initial impact was one of consciously and unconsciously separating children into small communities and not allowing students from the southern sections (below the Tallahatchie) to "integrate" and socialize with those north of the River. There was also evidence that few educational developments, curricula, or methodologies were shared between the two sections (see sections 2.4.2. and 2.4.3).

2.2.2 Other Political and Social-Economic Conditions of the 1830s — 1850s

As politics were playing a role in the development of Panola residents' ideology, relating to pride, resentment, and mistrust, so too was the social and economic development of the county.[9] Although some of these concerns were based on political decisions (see section 2.2.1), they soon became social as individuals in each community became bitter and resentful at other community residents. Economically produced farming and business rivalries occurred in the 1840s. A series of correspondences between 1840-1843 by Edwin Bolton of Panola to his brother Richard in Pontotoc (Lindgren 1996a) reveal the stiff competition which existed between timber, manufacturing, and retail companies of Belmont and Panola.

Another factor which influenced community opinion occurred shortly after the formation of Panola County, when the state government authorized the formation of the

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[8] This enmity would continue to indirectly impact school decisions both north and south of the Tallahatchie throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

[9] It should be restated that these political, economic, and social factors would slowly affect education. This effect was gradual, spanning , and increasing throughout the remainder of the 19th century and the 20th century.

Belmont Turnpike and Bridge Company. In 1841, the Board of Police entered into a contract with Mr A. G. Ellis for the construction of a bridge across the Tallahatchie at Panola. The board also empowered the bridge company to levy a fee on its use for the next 12 months. Later in 1850, the board gave Mr D. Duke the permission to create a ferry near Rayburn's Ferry (Lindgren 1996b:7). Many north of the river, in Belmont, felt that this bridge would provide Panola with an unfair economic advantage regarding the transporting of goods (i.e. cotton and other food staples) to market. Belmont residents feared it could impact their own economic development and eventually lead to the demise of their town and community.

The stage seemed set for what promised to be great expansion. But, on the sidelines, other changes were taking place which were to devastate Panola and its economy. As early as 1845, the first tremors of change were being felt.

On 29 November 1845, *The Lynx* (1845:2) carried an article appealing to the citizens of Panola County to propose the construction of a railroad from Old Panola to the Mississippi Delta (see Map 6). Although river and roads remained the primary routes into and out of Panola, the Mississippi & Tennessee Railroad was snaking slowly southward from Memphis.[10] By 1857, the railroad reached Como (see Map 6). Citizens from Panola traveled to Como by wagon where they caught the train to Memphis (Lindgren 1996b:7). In September 1857 the newspapers announced that the train would soon run to Panola Depot (a mile east of Panola) (Lindgren 1996b:7). Due to considerations, such as distance and cost, it was agreed, to the dismay of Panola citizens, that the

[10] However, as with other forms of commuting, residents' travel was occasionally blocked during high flooding of the Tallahatchie or Coldwater Rivers which occurred during the spring. Restriction regarding travel did not improve until the creation of Sardis Dam in the 1930s (see Chapter 3).

tracks would not lie within the town proper but rather one mile to the east. At this point Panola began losing much of its revenue as businesses moved closer to the tracks. Many residents of Panola, without validation, blamed Belmont and Sardis for these unforseen developments (Lindgren 1996b:7).[11]

As with the fight over the county seat, these aforementioned developments did not initially impede education on a large scale. Rather the ripples of animosity between businessmen, farmers, teachers, and parents of the two sections stifled the interchange of educational ideas, philosophies and curricula (see section 2.4.3). It also during the 1850s led to a segregation of students of the northern and southern sections. Further, this would in time play a major role in forming separate school systems with separate identities (see section 4.7). In later years, this would also lead to intense educational battles regarding consolidation and integration (see Chapters 4 & 5).

2.3 PRIMARY SCHOOLING IN PANOLA COUNTY, 1830s

Little is known regarding the formation of formal education in Panola County during the 1830s. Many of the individuals who helped in forming the county in 1836 were more concerned with merely existing (i.e. providing food and lodging) than in the education of their children. Some parents felt that the education their children needed was Biblical teaching. The Bible was read to them by their local preacher at Sunday services and at the regular revival services held during the spring and autumn. However, by the

[11] According to Jim Evans, a former Panola County resident, his grandfather spoke of this period as a time when residents on either side of the river were constantly blaming other area citizens for their economic, social, or political woes.

1840 Census four small private primary schools[12] were shown to have been formed during the latter part of the 1830s.

2.3.1 Primary Education and Parental Concerns in the Late 1830s and Early 1840s

According to the Census (1840:59) of 1840, there were over 200 educable children within the county. However, only ninety-two children were listed as being enrolled in the four schools which had been formed between the county's creation in 1836 and the census of 1840 (PanGens 1987:139).

Some of the county's parents felt more comfortable educating their children at home. These parents believed education was a luxury in which they were ill-prepared to invest. Others needed their children working on the farm and felt secure that they could educate their children in the necessary Bible studies, rudiments of reading and writing, and simple math. In truth, however, J. H. Ingraham, a noted Southern educationalist of the period, states that '[t]he education of young children on plantations [and farms was] ... much neglected. Many boys and girls whose parents resided five or ten miles from any town or academy and did not employ tutors, grew up ... unable to read or write' (Rowland 1912:286). Even those children who were lucky enough to attend school were seldom encouraged to study.

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[12] Initially, during the late 1830s, the county only had four primary schools. These schools covered the first four grades and were limited in curriculum, scope and staff. It is possible, though not documented, that two of these facilities (i.e. Friendship Academy and Mrs Jordon's Female School) during the 1840s expanded, to become academies. The four primary schools, noted in the text, are only mentioned in the Census of 1840. Their names, locations, faculty, and curricula do not appear in any school records, newspaper accounts, or archival documents. These schools are not to be confused with the later schools and academies of the 1840s (i.e. Friendship Male Academy, Mrs Patton's School for Females, and Danville Academy). Wren (1988:11) however, states that it is likely, though, that one or more of the schools listed [as having opened in 1842] were in operation before 1842. Parents sending their children to either of the four schools, referred to in the text, were required to pay an entry fee plus books and activity costs. In the States, this educational system is known as private schools. It should also be noted that the names: school, academy, and institute were later used interchangeably in Mississippi and throughout the South.

Some parents also questioned the relevance of the schools' curricula. They felt while perhaps preparing middle and upper class children for entry into college and later university life, the Latin based classical curriculum of the early 1840s provided little value to students in financially lower income families. These parents desired a teaching method which stressed practical aspects of rural agricultural life. Relevance, therefore, was of considerable concern to the oft-times uneducated, hardworking small farmer. According to the 1840 Census (1840:59) there were 112 white residents over the age of twenty-five who could not read or write.[13]

Other parents, although seeing the significance of providing a good education for their children, found it extremely difficult or impossible to pay school tuition. This was especially true of many poor whites in the county's hill region (see Map 2) . In Panola and other neighboring counties, school tuition per semester ranged, during the early 1840s, from $20 at Mrs Jordon's School for Young Ladies ([Jordon's][14] Female School 1843:3) (see footnote 12) to $57.50 at the Grenada Female Academy (1843:3), an out-of-county school.[15] These figures depended on the number of courses the student was enrolled in and any elective activities such as music, art, and needlepoint in which the student was engaged. Lodging (included fuel, washing, and meals) increased the cost of an academy

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[13] A total breakdown of residents was not given regarding to age. In this case, the local census only provided the statement that 112 white residents could not read or write.

[14] Brackets are used in some references of this work, to denote citations that possess no author or title. Therefore 'titles' are created by the researcher using the words from the first sentence of the text such as '[Jordon's] female school is located ...'

[15] Grenada Female Academy, although an out-of-county facility, is mentioned throughout this chapter, as many residents in the mid to late 1840s sent their children to this school. Although referred to as an academy, the aforementioned school did not cover the grades of the academies mentioned in section 2.4. Grenada Female Academy is therefore included in this section (2.3.1) on primary education as it taught only the first four grades, while the later academies taught grades 1-8. By the late 1840s the school had begun covering all eight grades. All schools of the period, primary or later academy were private (see footnote 16).

education an additional $5.00 to $10.00 a month. According to Dr Tommy Wren (1988:11) these costs at the academies were considered by many to be extravagant. This was especially true for poor farmers who simply could not pay the lodging and tuition which often exceeded $150.00 a year.

Finally, there was the issue of time. To the farmer, time was important. On the farm, certain tasks such as cutting wood, milking, feeding chickens, and slopping hogs were required to be done at specific times. Some of the earlier schools of the late 1830s and early 1840s operated under a program akin to the old European full day regimen of opening at sunrise and closing at sunset (School hours 1856:2). Five hours in the morning and five in the afternoon left little time for family responsibility.

2.4 THE ACADEMY SYSTEM IN PANOLA DURING THE 1840s-1870

According to Webster (1847:8) an academy (grades 5-12) is 'a school, or seminary between a university, or college level, and a common school [also known as primary school being grades 1-4; see footnote 12] ... in which the students or members ... meet'. The academy concept, suggested by John Milton (1608-1674) in his work *Tractate,* was introduced into the United States from England. In the New England states, the academy took on distinct attributes. In this region, academies, states Hoyt (1910:199) 'were endowed institutions and were organized not so much to prepare men for college as to meet the needs of the middle class by affording a means for a practical ... education'.

In Mississippi, however, the private academy took on a unique style. Providing education side-by-side with the county's private primary (see footnotes 12 and 16) or

common schools (see section 2.3), the private academy[16] served students in grades 1-8 (sometimes only 5-8) and occasionally the higher levels.[17] During the early 1840s, Panola County academies, both north and south of the river, were elitist and emphasized a classical style of education. This classical aspect was derived from the county's 1830s private common or primary schools (see footnotes 12 & 16) which, in turn, was based on the famed Boston Latin School (1635) of Boston, Massachusetts.

According to letters by Edwin Bolton (1841:3), the school system in Panola like most of the state was limited, strict, and unyielding during the early academy years (early 1840s). Corporal punishment was stern and teachers were not overly concerned about the desires of the students or parents. Most emphasis originally was on teaching techniques and curricula of the past.

Curricula of Panola schools, were narrow, being established largely on the teaching of the classics (i.e. Latin and Greek, philosophy, etc.) and the Bible (Hoyt 1910:197-98). Although originally emphasizing rudimentary learning (e.g. reading,

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[16] As previously noted, a private school in the United States receives its funding from individuals who attend the facility or through personal endowments. It is not funded, as are American public schools, by the government (state or federal) and usually receives no government aid. The difference between early primary schools and academies of the 1840s-70s and private schooling of the 1960s is that the former was concerned with providing higher standards of school opportunities while the latter was initially created as a means of continuing racial segregation. Schools in Mississippi, before the Public School Act of 1859, including primary and academy institutions, were private and were paid for by the students' parents. Only after 1859, was the public school system formed and state supported (see section 2.7.2). This act, however was extremely weak and true state support regarding the building of public schools did not occur until the Public School Act of 1870 (see section 3.7.3.1a). The prior Common School Act of 1846 (see section 2.7.1) was only for common or primary schools (grades 1-4) and achieved nothing. Its implementation was little more than on paper.

[17] In reading accounts of primary (or common) schools (see footnote 12), academies, and higher level schools (normal colleges, sometimes called advanced academies), the reports were very contradictory regarding grades taught and levels of education. Initially the primary school was grades 1-4 while the academy was usually levels 1-8 or 5-8 and occasionally 5-12. In some cases, however, certain schools, calling themselves academies only taught through the sixth grade. In small school houses, students of all ages and grades were taught in the same room but on different levels. The normal colleges or advanced academies usually carried students through the 12th grade and were primarily concerned with teacher training.

writing, and arithmetic) and the usual electives such as needlepoint, music, art, and sewing, these early institutes also stressed classical language development,[18] moral instruction,[19] and mental philosophy.[20] Some early academies of the 1840s, such as the Friendship Male Academy and Danville Academy, also included literature and advanced mathematics. By the 1850s, academies had expanded their curriculum to include biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, engineering, surveying, and many modern languages.

2.4.1 Academies[21] in Panola County between 1840-1870

By the mid 1840s, most discord by parents had subsided and education within the county became an item of interest and concern to parents, legislators, and politicians. During the twenty years between 1840 to 1860, Panola County's population increased from 4,657 to 13, 794 (see Appendix 2). Although 8,557 of these individuals were black, the over 5,200 white residents were beginning to expect quality education for all of the county's white children regardless of economic status or location. The 1850 Census recorded an increase of fourteen new schools and a student enrolment of 449 students. By the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, many academies and institutes dotted Panola's educational landscape (see Map 7 and Table 1).

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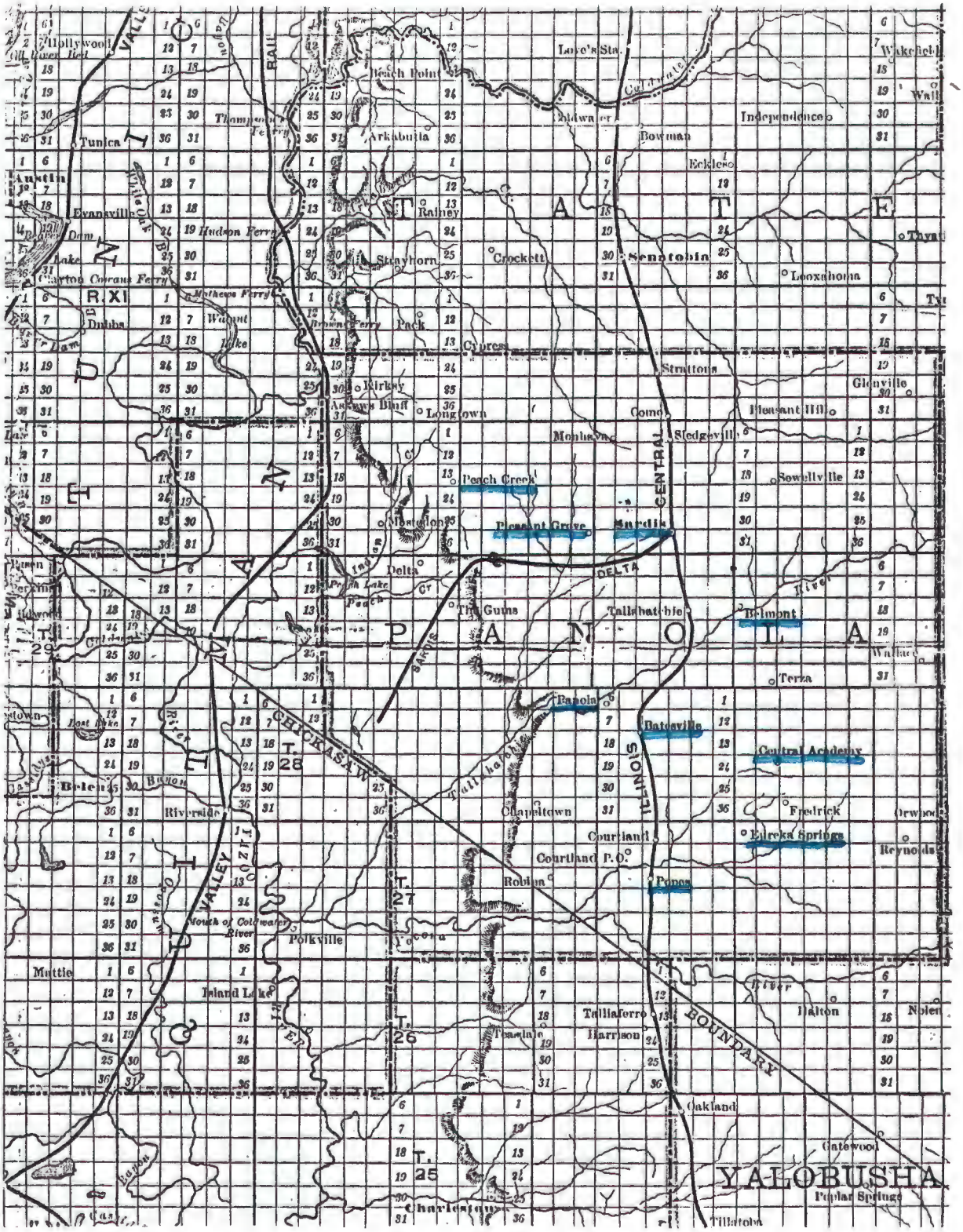
[18] After the Pietism period of the late 1830s (see section 2.4.3) classical language development, in these early schools consisted of not just teaching Greek and Latin but also of their use in other courses. Some of the more progressive teachers while discussing history, mathematics, or English course work would incorporate Latin and Greek terms.

[19] Moral philosophy is involved with ethics, morals, and the principles of conduct (Ladd 1956:774-5; Lindgren 1977:1-3).

[20] Mental philosophy concerns the philosophy of the mind and how the mind perceives reality. This form of philosophy is concerned with the various question posed by religion concerning the origin, nature, and destiny of the soul (Ladd 1956:774).

[21] It should be noted that some of the schools of the period were called academies while others were known as institutes. In actuality, the two names possessed the same meaning and were even used interchangeably in advertisements of the period.

MAP 7— COMMUNITIES SUPPORTING SCHOOLS DURING THE 1840s THROUGH THE 1860s (see Table 1)*



* Map taken from the PanGen Collection. The PanGen Room. Batesville Public Library, Batesville, Mississippi (n.d.).

TABLE 1*

SCHOOLS (ACADEMIES AND INSTITUTES) OF PANOLA AND AREA COUNTIES**
(1840-1868)

Name	*Date Established*	*Town*	*Principal*
Friendship Male Academy	1842	Panola **(S)**	Joseph Y. Boyd
Mrs Jordon's Female School	1842	Panola **(S)**	Mrs Jordon
Mrs Patton's School for Females	1845	Panola **(S)**	Mrs Patton
Danville Academy	1845	4 mi. N. of Belmont **(N)**	Rev Joe Travis, A.M.
A.E. Gibson School for Young Men	1846	Panola **(S)**	Mr A. E. Gibson
Palmetto	1853	unknown	unknown
Jones School, AKA - 'Greasy Smith School House - Pleasant Grove School	1854 (1882)	Shiloh **(N)** Peach Creek Pleasant Grove	Jesse Smith (T)
Eureka Female Institute	1855	Eureka **(S)** 9miles S.E. of Panola	Rev B. B. Brown
Eureka Male Institute	1855	Eureka **(S)**	R. H. Crozier
Good Hope Male and Female Academy	1855	18 mi. SE of Panola **(S)**	Col Eugene Stephens
Mrs S.S.Young's Female Inst.	1856	Panola **(S)**	Mrs S.S. Young
Jerome Hill Male School	1856	**(S)**	Jerome Hill

Masonic Female and Male Schools	1857	Panola **(S)**	Mrs S. S.Young Rev A. W. Young
Central Academy Male and Female School	1857	10 miles E. of Panola **(S)**	Gideon McLeary Mrs McLeary
Sardis Female Academy	1859	Sardis **(N)**	Victoria B. Bowers
Black Walnut Academy	1859	near McIvor Creek **(N)**	Mr J. J. Smith
Sardis Male Academy	1860	Sardis **(N)**	J. C. Williamson
G.T. Rankin's Panola Male Academy	1861	Panola **(S)**	G.T. Rankin
Mrs. M.J.A. Rankin's Panola Female Academy	1861	Panola **(S)**	Mrs Rankin
M. Steen's Panola Female Seminary	1861	Panola **(S)**	M. Stenn
Sparks and Chapman Academy	1861	Caney Creek **(S)**	unknown
Panola Female Academy	1866	Panola **(S)**	S. Stewart Simpson
Male & Female School at Pope	1867	9 miles south of Batesville **(S)**	Mr & Mrs C. J. Bethel
Batesville Academy	1868	Batesville **(S)**	Junius E. Leigh

GRENADA COUNTY

Female School of Grenada	1842	Grenada	Joseph A. Ranney Catharine Sawyer (teacher
Grenada Female Academy	1842	Grenada	H. B. J. Eager (teacher)

Name	*Established*	*Town*	*Principal*
Stuart's School for Young Ladies***	1856	uncertain	Miss S. A. Stuart

* This information was drawn from newspapers and microfilms of newspapers of the period (i.e. *The Weekly Panola Star*, *The Panola Star*, and *The PonolaWeekly Register*). These papers are stored in the Batesville Courthouse and the microfilm are located in the PanGen Room of the Batesville Public Library. Both are located in Batesville, Mississippi.

** As previously mentioned, (see footnote 12) some of the schools of the period referred to themselves as academies while others used the designation institutes. In actuality, the two names possessed the same meaning and were even used interchangeably in advertisements of the period.

*** In *The Panola Star* of 1856 there are two references regarding a school for young ladies. This school was under the patronage of the Masonic fraternity and Miss M. A. Stuart served as principal and preceptor. Nothing was mentioned regarding Miss Stuart after 1856. In one article, the school was mentioned in connection with Prof Hill's Male Academy. This entry is not displayed with the other schools since some individuals believe the school may never have opened or if it did was merely attached to another school, probably the Jerome Hill Male School.

Between 1840 to 1860, schools were formed in most sections of the county. These schools were the following: Friendship Academy (1842), Mrs Jordon's Female School (1842), Mrs Patton's School for Females (1845), Danville Academy (1845), A. E. Gibson School for Young Men (1846), Palmetto (1853), Jones School (1854), Eureka Female Institute (1855), Eureka Male Institute (1855), Male and Female Academy (1855), Mrs S. S. Young's Female Institute (1856), Jerome Hill Male School (1856), Masonic Female and Male Schools (1857), Central Academy Male and Female School (1857), Sardis Female Academy (1859), Black Walnut Academy (1859), Sardis Male Academy (1860), G. T. Rankin's Panola Male Academy (1861), Mrs J. A. Rankin's Panola Female Academy (1861), M. Steen's Panola Female Seminary (1861), and Sparks and Chapman Academy (1861) (see Table 1).

These academies, except for Friendship Academy, Danville, and Sardis Male and Female Academies were either in Old Panola or within the county's southern area (Eureka[22]) (see Map 7). This condition was due in part to the slowness of residents north of the river in seeing the importance that quality education would play on the area's development and economic and social growth. This sectionalism would return to haunt north Panola as shall be seen in Chapters 4, 5, and more dramatically in 6, as the system finally became bankrupt and fell into state receivership.

Of these schools, mentioned in Table 1, one of the most progressive academies of the pre-war period was Eureka Institute.[23] Eureka Institute, located some nine miles

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[22] Most of the information on other academies has been lost over the years. In many cases, all that remains are newspaper advertisements and notices regarding curriculum and examinations. Information relating to Eureka Institute (also known as Eureka Academy) although confined primarily to newspapers is extensive and is compiled in two excellent works by Robert Seay (1975a & b).

[23] Eureka Springs is located in the southeastern quarter of Section 6, Township 10, Range 6 West in Panola County (see Map 7).

southwest of Old Panola (see Map 7), built under John Pritze's direction, became a reality in 1855 (Seay 1975a:18). Gideon McLeary was appointed the school's first principal, being later replaced by Reverend B. B. Brown. For several years, Rev Brown served a dual role as both the institute's president and principal preceptor of the school's female department (Paine 1857:2). The community's (Eureka Springs) newly built Methodist Church served as the institute's female department. This church served for many years as both a place of education and worship. Principal E. Jerome Hill provided the necessary teaching and guidance for the school's male department. Prior to Mr Hill's employment at Eureka, he had opened an unspecified male academy[24] in Panola (Hill 1856:1). This moving of faculty between schools was quite popular, especially in the county's southern section where teachers and headmasters moved sometimes yearly between schools.

As with most other schools, Eureka Academy (male and female departments), due to civil unrest and local Civil War skirmishes, had been forced to close between 1861 to 1865. In 1866, R. H. Crozier purchased the academy's, male and female departments, from Rev B. B. Brown. According to Robert Seay (1975b:30), a historian of the Eureka community, the war brought about several changes in Eureka's educational system. These changes included more community participation in school activities, the vision of a public (state supported) school system, and increased development in school property.

The Masonic Lodge, which had for so many years housed the male academy, was donated in 1866 to a group of individuals interested in forming a black public school

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[24] On several occasions, schools in the local papers of this period were merely referred to as male or female schools (academies or institutes). In these cases, their full or proper names were not given.

(Seay 1975a:19). Although these plans never materialized, the facility was later used as a black church. The Eureka Male Academy, under Mr Crozier's administration was then relocated to the "old Brown house" which was positioned across from the Eureka Female Academy (Seay 1975a:19). This arrangement continued until 1872, when a new school building was built. Starting immediately after the war, Panola Female High School became one of the first schools to advertise, promoting their primary, sophomore, junior, senior, and academic curriculum (Panola Female 1866:2).

Batesville Academy (see Table 1), opened in 1868, brought to the county the exceptional teaching and administrative abilities of Professor Junius E. Leigh of Virginia. The school introduced a new practical course in conversational French (see Table 2) (Batesville Academy 1868:2). Although Panola Female High School used the designation "high school", its course work was comparable to Batesville Academy.[25]

By 1871, the county's academic system made up of private schools to a large degree, was replaced by a state public school system. It would, however, take many years before this public system would equal the education offered by early academies.

2.4.2 Curricula in the Schools

The following section presents information regarding schools (i.e. academies and institutes) of the northern and southern sections of the county. Through this information, a pattern emerges, showing that the reported curricula (in newspaper notices and

[25] During this period, the words academy, high school, and institute became unclear as to their true intent. Basically, the word academy, which was proudly used by private schools before the war to denote quality education, was also taken by the newer public schools to denote a high school standard in education. So the name became interchangeable with the word high school (a public school term).

TABLE 2

CURRICULA OF SCHOOLS OF PANOLA AND OTHER COUNTIES [a]

(1843-1870)

COURSES	Friendship Male Academy	Mrs Jordon's Female School	Mrs Patton's School for Females	Danville Academy
Reading, writing and spelling	*	*	*	*
Arithmetic	*	*	*	*
Grammar	*	*	*	*
History	*	*		*
Philosophy	Moral, mental, natural, and logic	*	*	Moral, mental, natural, and logic
Geography	*	*	*	*
Latin	*			*
Greek	*			also Hebrew
French	*			
Higher Math	Algebra, Geometry, & Trig.		Geometry	Algebra
Higher Science	Botany, Chemistry, & Astronomy		Chemistry & Astronomy	
Electives			Drawing, Painting & Embridery	

* This symbol '*'refers to courses offered in the various schools (e.q. Friendship Male Academy offers reading, writing and spelling). Blank spaces means no information is provided. This may be due to lost records, lack of advertisements in the local papers, etc. The letter 'b' beside a school heading is also used to represent that no information is available.

[a] Information relating to curriculum was derived from newspaper advertisements and notices in *The Lynx*, *The Panola Star*, and *The Panola Weekly Register* between 1843 to 1870. These advertisements appeared on a regular basis, changing only slightly over their (academy's') existence.

COURSES	A.E. Gibson School for Young Men	Palmetto[(b)]	Jones School[(b)]	Eureka Female Institute
Reading, writing and spelling	*			*
Arithmetic	*			*
Grammar	*			also Practical English
History	*			*
Philosophy	*			*
Geography	*			*
Latin				*
Greek				*
French				also Spanish & German
Higher Math				Algebra, Geometry.
Higher Science	Chemistry			Botany,
Electives				Drawing, Painting, music, and Needlework

(b) information not available

COURSES	Eureka Male Institute	Good Hope Male & Female Academy[(c)]	A.W. Young Male Academy	Mrs S.S.Young's Female Inst.
Reading, writing and spelling	*	*	*	*
Arithmetic	*	*	*	*
Grammar	*	*	*	*
History	*	*	*	*
Philosophy				
Geography	*	*		
Latin	*	*	*	*
Greek	*			
French	also Spanish and German	*	*	*
Higher Math	most	Algebra, Geometry & Trig	Algebra, Geometry & Trig.	Algebra, Geometry, & Trig.
Higher Science	*	Botany, Chemistry, & Biology	Botany, Chemistry, & Biology	Botany, Chemistry, & Biology
Electives	music			Drawing, Painting, and Music

[(c)]It should be noted that Good Hope Academy was slightly outside the county limits. The school did, however, have a student population composed of over 80% Panola County residents. For this reason it is included in a listing of county schools.

COURSES	Jerome Hill Male School[d, e]	Masonic Female and Male Schools[d]	Central Academy Male & Female School	Sardis Female Academy[d]
Reading, writing and spelling	*	*	*	*
Arithmetic	*	*	*	*
Grammar	*	*	*	*
History	*	*	*	*
Philosophy				
Geography	*	*		*
Latin			*	*
Greek				
French	as spoken	*	and others	*
Higher Math	*	most	Algebra, Geometry, & Trig.	some
Higher Science	*	most	Botany, Chemistry, & Biology	most
Electives		Drawing, Piano, Guitar, and wax work	Piano and Guitar	Music

(d) curriculum also referred to at times as Primary, Middle and Senior classes

(e) In *The Panola Star* of 1856 there are two references regarding a School for Young Ladies. This school was under the patronage of the Masonic fraternity and Miss M. A. Stuart served as principal and preceptor. Nothing was mentioned regarding Miss Stuart after 1856. In one article, the school was mentioned in connection with Prof Hill's Male Academy. Therefore a curriculum is not available.

COURSES	Black Walnut Academy[(d)]	Sardis Male Academy	G. T. Rankin's Panola Male Academy	Mrs. M.J.A. Rankin's Panola Female Academy
Reading, writing and spelling	*	*	*	*
Arithmetic	*	*	*	*
Grammar	*	*	*	*
History	*	*	*	*
Philosophy				
Geography	*	*		*
Latin			*	*
Greek				
French	*	*	Also Spanish, Italian, and German	Also Spanish, Italian, and German
Higher Math	*	some	Algebra, geometry, trig., and engineering	Algebra, geometry, and trig.
Higher Science	*	some	Botany, Chemistry, & Biology	most
Electives			Painting, drawing, and band	Painting, drawing

COURSES	M. Steen's Panola Female Seminary[(b)]	Sparks and Chapman Academy[(b)]	Panola Female Academy[(d)]	Male & Female School at Pope Station
Reading, writing and spelling			*	*
Arithmetic			*	*
Grammar			*	*
History			*	*
Philosophy				*
Geography			*	*
Latin			*	*
Greek				
French			*	*
Higher Math			most	most
Higher Science			most	most
Electives				

COURSES	Batesville Academy[d]
Reading, writing and spelling	*
Arithmetic	*
Grammar	*
History	*
Philosophy	
Geography	*
Latin	*
Greek	
French	Spanish & German
Higher Math	all
Higher Science	all
Electives	

OUT-OF-COUNTY SCHOOLS

Grenada and Lafayette Counties

1840s

COURSES	Grenada Female Academy (Grenada County)	Female School (Grenada County)	North Mississippi College (Lafayette County)
Reading, writing and spelling	*	*	*
Arithmetic	*	*	*
Grammar	*	*	*
History	*	*	
Philosophy	natural, mental, and natural, and logic	*	
Geography	*	*	*
Latin	*	*	*
Greek			
French	* also Italian	*	
Higher Math	algebra	most	most
Higher Science	most (astronomy)	botany	most

advertisements) of the southern section was superior in the number of courses offered and in the levels (i.e. higher math, science and language) than those offered by their northern counterparts (see Table 2).

One of the first academies (see footnote 12) to advertise in the local papers was Mrs Jordon's Female School ([Jordon's] Female School 1843:3) (see Table 1). This school prepared students in reading, writing, spelling, geography, grammar, history, moral and mental philosophy (see footnotes 19 & 20), and arithmetic (see Table 2). According to the academy's advertisement the facility provided educational opportunities to people within the county, and board for those traveling from outside the county or state.

In 1844, Joseph Y. Boyd, principal of the Friendship Academy (see Table 1) announced his fourth session (term of five months) with the school (Friendship 1844:3). This small school, located eight miles north of Belmont, offered a much larger selection of courses than similar schools within the county. These included (see Table 2): orthography, reading, writing, geography, grammar, history, Latin, Greek, French, and natural,[26] moral, and mental philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, geometry, trigonometry, and several elective courses[27] (Friendship 1844:3).

During 1844 most advertisements of new schools, besides including a full curriculum listing, began including the educational background of their faculty. Schools hoped that such advertisements would show parents the scholarly benefits of their

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[26] Natural philosophy is concerned with the metaphysics of things, or more specifically to questions such as: what are the universal and permanent relationships, essential qualities, purposes, and laws relating to material things? This philosophy is also concerned with the psychology and nature of man (Ladd 1956:774-5.)

[27] Elective courses, noted in the local newspaper (Friendship Academy 1844:3) merely referred to the'elective course as'other studies. The reference may have referred to music and female activities such as sewing and needlepoint.

facilities. This was especially true for academies fortunate enough to have a headmaster who possessed a bachelor or master degree.

By 1845, Panola academies were gradually enlarging their curriculum and placing greater emphasis on educating the "common man". This is evident in a review of news-paper notices of the twenty-seven year period between 1843 to 1870 (see Table 2). Emphasis was on larger selections of courses, more qualified instructors, and the importance of more practical course training. Educationalist and judge, James S. B. Thacher of Boston, was also busy devising a scheme of popular education which was published throughout Mississippi (Rowland 1912:286). This scheme presented a more contemporary view of curriculum with the elimination of classical subjects (i.e. Latin, Greek, etc) and the introduction of more emphasis on mathematics, science and modern languages.

Although many of the teachers had received preparation within the state, more and more instructors were arriving from throughout the country. Examples of this influx of out-of-state educators were J. Y. Boyd, the principal of Friendship Academy (see Table 1) who had received his masters degree at Miami University (Florida), Miss M. A. Stuart, principal of the School for Young Ladies (see Table 1) who had, before arriving in Panola, taught for ten years in Virginia and Miss Catharine Sawyer, of the Female Academy of Grenada (see Table 1), who had received her education at Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary in South Hadley, Massachusetts (Female School 1843:3). These teachers and administra-tors from outside the state provided not only new teaching methods (see section 2.4.3) but also a new array of curricula (see Table 2) with emphasis on higher math (i.e. algebra and geometry), higher sciences (physics, and chemistry) and modern languages.

With the availability of schools, parents began selecting those which they considered to provide the best possible education and curriculum selection. Some residents sent their children to schools in neighboring counties. These out-of-county academies included the Female School of Grenada (Female School 1843:3), the Grenada Female Academy (1843:3), and the North Mississippi College (1845:3) in Oxford. What is surprising and ironic about this action is that advertised out-of-county schools were no better, based on curriculum, than county facilities (see Table 2).

Danville Academy (see Table 1), under the direction of the Rev Joseph Travis, was four miles north of Belmont. Providing standard courses such as algebra, history, Greek, Latin, and moral philosophy, the school also taught Hebrew, logic, and rhetoric (see Table 2) (Danville 1845:3). A school year at Danville, as did most other schools, consisted of two five-month sessions. Although Danville, a school north of the Tallahatchie, possessed an excellent curriculum, it nor any of the other northern schools, possessed the variety or developmental level of schools of the southern section. Eureka and Central Academies were two excellent examples of the county's southern section commitment to education and especially to curriculum development and diversity.

As previously noted (see section 2.4.1), one of the most progressive and popular schools of the period was Eureka Academy (both male and female departments) of the southern section of the county. Several reasons contributed to the academy's growth. These included an exceptional teaching staff, pleasant surroundings, and an excellent selection of courses. The academy's curriculum, a combination of both departments, included courses in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, grammar, practical English, history, philosophy, geography, Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, German, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, biology, botany, and chemistry. Eureka Academy also afforded

students the opportunity of electives in drawing, painting, music, and needlework (see Table 2).

Central Male and Female Academy (1857) (see Table 1), located some five miles from Eureka in Panola's southern section, soon became a formidable rival of Eureka Institute (Seay 1975a:19). As advertised by the school's first principal, Gid. McLeary (formerly employed by Eureka Institute between 1855-56), the academy provided Eureka's exceptional curriculum (see Table 2), quality instruction, and learning environment. Not advertising as often as Eureka, the academy had regular notices in the local papers regarding its growth and development.

Panola Male Academy (see Table 1), under the guidance of the Rev William F. Parker, was yet another school in Old Panola which provided students an outstanding selection of courses (see Table 2). According to a July 1856 advertisement the school, besides offering the classical languages, taught Italian, German, and Spanish. Records of the period tend to support the conclusion that this academy was among the first to offer such a large selection of modern languages. Perhaps more important was the school's introduction of an engineering course. (Panola male 1856:2). Like Eureka, the academy was also known for its training of those who would later be exceptional men of the county and state. Several graduates of the school, went on to become prominent businessmen, judges, legislatures, military leaders, and educators including Messrs Billy Clark, Ira Hall, Harden Taylor, the Hon William Miller, and Captain R. H. Taylor (Early schools 1975:6b).

The Sardis Male Academy (opened 1860) (see Table 1),[28] located some nine miles north of Batesville, offered students courses in reading, mental arithmetic, writing,

[28] Sardis Male Academy was one of the last schools to open in Panola County before the Civil War (1861-1865) (see Table 1). It is uncertain as to whether the school remained opened during the conflict as no accounts of the facility appeared in the newspapers during this period. According to local historians, the school may have closed during the spring semester of 1861.

English grammar, geography, elementary algebra, history, Latin, Greek, and surveying (see Table 2) (Sardis Male 1867:2). This was one of the first schools north of the Tallahatchie to offer such a large selection of courses. The school, however, did not offer any modern languages. The providing of modern languages, however, was becoming more and more prevalent in the southern portion of the county (see Table 2).

The Male and Female School of Pope Station (see Table 1), in southern Panola County opened in 1867. Although not teaching modern languages, the academy emphasized a progressive curriculum of English and higher English as did the schools of Eureka and Good Hope (see Table 2) (School notice 1867:2).

Between the late 1840s, and the mid 1850s, educational goals were gradually changing from classical and theoretical to a pragmatic approach, including more science and math courses and de-emphasizing classical curricula (i.e. less moral instruction, ethics, and mental philosophy). These goals and philosophies were suggested in the advertisements, notices, and letters from community "spectators". Since most of the academies using the services of the local papers were in the southern part of the county (Fowler, 1961b:2) it is difficult to postulate as to the curricula development of many of the schools north of the Tallahatchie. The notices that did exist indicated fewer changes in curricula and educational philosophy. Many of the courses which were begun in the mid 1840s in northern schools were still emphasized by the schools' presidents and principals (see Table 2). These included courses in Latin, literature, and moral development.

Good Hope Academy (see Table 1), although located 18 miles southeast of Old Panola, served many students from the southern section of the county. This school also

was beginning to provide students with a modern curriculum based on advanced mathematics, higher science, and English (see Table 2). According to a notice in the *Weekly Panola Star*, the school's principal placed considerable emphasis on English and higher English than the classical foreign languages of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. This strategy was implemented, according to the principal, until the students had a firm grasp of their own spoken tongue (Good Hope 1859:2). This trend of modernizing curricula continued in the southern section until the Civil War.

Much of the information concerning the academies' curricula was repeated weekly in the local newspapers. Through these advertisements and notices it is evident that curriculum and teaching methods changed little during the 1840s. During the 1850s, however, many of the newly created schools began a program of expanded curriculum. This change in curriculum was also to be reflected in changes in methodology, philosophy, and examinations.

2.4.3 Educational Methodology[29] in Pre-Civil War Mississippi

By the end of the 1840s, teachers within the state became acutely aware of the need for progressive teaching methodology. During the late 1830s, Mississippi education initially consisted of Pietism as presented by August H. Francke which discounted classics[30] as taught in northern schools and adhered to a strict Biblical and religious character based on the importance of individual prayer, Bible readings, humility, and

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[29] According to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary, the term methodology, refers to: '1: a body of methods, rules, and postulates employed by a discipline: a particular procedure or set of procedures 2: the analysis of the principles or procedures of inquiry in a particular field'.

[30] Classics, advanced math, modern and foreign language required a methodology higher than mere recall or recognize. Academies in Mississippi were not to implement this curricula and teaching method until the late 1840s.

patience. The methodology consisted of informal rote and scriptural memorization. Students were daily encouraged, sometimes through the use of physical punishment, to study the Bible and perform routine or repetition memorization which was carried out mechanically or unthinkingly (*Encyclopædia* 1998:1). In Panola, this teaching method had by the late 1840s given way to a methodology that placed emphasis on 'acquiring a knowledge of classical literature, the beauty of which, they [teachers] believed, would win the child with little effort on their part' (Hoyt 1910:110). Teachers' methods changed from mere repetition, Bible study, and physical punishment to the teaching of courses which were thought to generate interest and curiosity. Subjects such as 'grammar and rhetoric were transformed into philological studies not for the sake of pedantic research but in order to acquire a new historical and critical consciousness'.[31] Through this new curriculum of the classics, the instructional methodology changed to one of not just requiring rote or memorization (i.e. mere preparation and presentation), although this was included, but also, comprehension, and application (see footnote 30).

By the 1850s, through the insight of Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), the state schools, and those locally, were undergoing radical change. Herbart, presented an entire system of education based upon the concept that '[t]he plasticity or educability of the pupil is the fundamental postulate of pedagogics. Man alone exhibits plasticity of will in the direction of moral character. Pedagogics as a science is based upon ethics and psychology. The former points out the aim of education; the latter the way, the means, and the obstacles' (Hoyt 1910:113). An important aspect related to Herbartian methodology was the importance that experience and social interaction played in the creation of ideas

[31] This teaching method was influenced by an educational philosophy known as reserved Humanism as noted in *Britannica Online* 1998 p. 1.

(Hoyt 1910:115). The practical application of this concept was instructing students in those areas (courses) which would nurture experience (math and science) (Hoyt 1910:191) and social intercourse (modern language, philosophy, and later sociology and psychology) (see footnotes 33 through 35). Instructional method itself consisted of several steps:

> 1) clearness, or the apprehension of the single object; 2) association, or an elementary stage in the process of apperception; 3) system [logical steps], or the step in which each part of that which is learned finds its proper place in relation to the other parts; and method, the well ordered self-activity in the solution of the tasks and in investigation under leadership of the teacher (Hoyt 1910:119).

2.4.3.1 Changes in Educational Methodology in Panola Schools During the 1850s

By the 1850s, several of the schools, based on their advertisements and comments made by spectators, were implementing the rather innovative European plan conceived by Herbart. Although none of the schools credited Herbart directly, his methodology was evident in academies such as Eureka Academy, Good Hope Academy, Central Academy, and the Panola Academies[32] which emphasized the use of the steps of preparation, presentation, association, systematization, and application in presenting subject matter. These principles of Herbart's methodological philosophy (Alvery 1956: 609) assisted in preparing students for university studies and also provided a practical and logical approach to understanding and utilizing science, math, and skills for working through everyday situations.

Although schools existed north of the Tallahatchie, (i.e. in Sardis, Como, and near the south Desoto County line) these academies did little advertising (Fowler 1960:66). Therefore methodological innovations (especially in the 1850s) were observed mainly

[32] In a review of school advertisements and notices of the aforementioned academies, during the mid to late 1850s, there is a repeated reference to the utilization of preparation, presentation, association, systematization and application.

through advertisements and notices[33] relating to academies in the southern section of the county such as the Masonic Male and Female Academies, Eureka Institute, Central Academy (Male and Female Schools), and Good Hope Academy (Fowler 1960:66).

During this same period (1856) Miss S. A. Stuart announced the opening of a school for young ladies in Batesville. Prior to her formation of Stuart's School for Young Ladies (see Table 1), Miss Stuart taught ten years in Virginia and served as a preceptor of the Senior Literary Department of Memphis (Tennessee) Female College (Masonic School 1856:2). According to the notice, '[h]er aim has ever been to give a *thoroughly practical* education not however, at the expense of such accomplishments,[34] as are usually taught in Young Ladies' Seminaries, but rather combining with them; and to instruct her scholars so that in time they may themselves become teachers' (Masonic School 1856:2). Miss Stuart's methodological approach, which presented many of Herbart's ideas, was one of: 1) introducing practical preparation of course material; 2) a concise yet thorough presentation of data; 3) associating course material to relevant events and activities; 4) systematizing facts and activities; and 5) using this information in a logical application[35] (Masonic School 1856:2). This approach was becoming more evident, as education within the county entered the 1850s.

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[33] Within the advertisements and notices of the period (various school notices in *The Panola Star* between 1853-55) reference was made to the teaching methodology of educational philosophers such as Johann Herbart, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, and Friedrich Froebel.

[34] Theses accomplishments were the more theoretical course materials such as philosophy, Latin, Greek, and algebra. The more'practical courses, mentioned by Miss Stuart, were to include practical English, music, sewing, etc. The reason this school is not listed in Table 1 or 2 is because the school is mentioned only twice and may not have actually been formed.

[35] Although utilized in progressive schools in Panola during the 1850s, Herbart's systematic philosophical realism being scientific and philosophical (i.e. psychological and metaphysical) in nature placed great pressure on the teacher in that he dealt with great principles that must first be understood and accepted, after which they could be adapted to time, place, and circumstance (Hoyt 1910:191).

2.4.3.2 Examinations in the Schools[36]

By the 1850s, schools, especially Eureka Institute, had devised a large curriculum emphasizing not only traditional recitation of lessons (oral and written) but also practical instruction focusing on exercises in common sense and analytical/ deductive judgement (Mr. Editor 1857:2). One spectator of Eureka's examinations, stated that the Eureka system of Practical English Grammar was in her opinion something new as it made provision for a useful and realistic application to English principles and theory in everyday life (Spectator 1858:2). 'The system' according to the writer, 'is an admirable one and ... should be introduced in all our higher schools, ... [groups of students were] examined by a disinterested person, on pieces they [the students] had never seen before and it seemed to be no trouble for them to answer all questions asked them'. (Spectator 1858:2). Traditional English grammar examinations within the county were, until Eureka, more concerned with theory and composition, than practical usage. Therefore, the use of an annual public examination to test practical English skills was a relatively new concept for Panola. The procedure used at Eureka and the Central Male and Female Academy was similar to that being used by the British College of Preceptors and other centers of British learning (Lindgren 1993b:49).

Regarding Eureka's examinations, a spectator from Long Creek community stated that

> I have never witnessed an examination which surpassed that at Eureka in the display of knowledge, both on the part of the instructors and pupils. Unattended by any pomp or parade, which seems to have become the most striking characteristic of many of our Southern schools, its chief excellency consists in the exhibition of good hard common sense, and the exercise of judgement on the part of the students, and not in the mere recitation of lessons assigned and prepared for the occasion . ... (Mr. editor 1857:2.)

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[36] Very little information exists concerning examinations of the period. Most information, which does exist concerns Eureka and Central Academies.

Information regarding Good Hope's examination was also included in several issues of *The Weekly Panola Star*.[37] According to the school's board of trustees, annual examinations, lasted eight days, usually consisted of dialogue, declamation, written defenses, and logical presentations (Good Hope Academy 1859:2). This examination was conducted by the school principal, Professor C. E. Stephen, with a general emphasis toward fairness and thoroughly testing the scholarship of each student. According to notices in the newspaper, information regarding particular aspects of the academy's examinations was not provided, because of space restraints. One letter, however, which appeared in the July 1859 issue of *The Weekly Panola Star* emphasized that Professor Stephen's technique of testing

> would clearly expose and subject to the mortification of a failure those students who were not proficient in the studies they had prosecuted (*sic*) during the preceding session. ... A marked characteristic of Prof. Stephen's system ... is the great prominence he gives to the English branches of education, not suffering his students to lend their attention to the dead and foreign languages until they became familiar with their own; thus laying a firm and broad basis ... to rear a superstructure of learning ... (Good Hope Academy 1859:2).

2.5 FORMAL EDUCATION DURING AND AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

2.5.1 Formal Education for Middle to Upper Class Whites during the War

The American Civil War curtailed education in Mississippi and other Southern states (Rowland 1925, II, 479). Although some of the larger established academies continued in Panola County during the war and thereafter, many would never again open

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[37] Like the examinations of Eureka and Central Academy, the examinations of Good Hope became a regional social event with parents, friends and individuals from outside the county traveling to the school with their family, bringing picnic lunches and reading material, and ready for entertainment and conversation. Most often, the examination period included various forms of entertainment for the parents and others including recites, dances, parades, and spelling bees (Central Academy 1858:2).

their doors. The 1860 Census does not list schools of the period; therefore it would be impossible to accurately determine which schools had closed before the war and which were closed because of the conflict.

It is logical to assume, although not substantiated, that the methodology, curriculum, and staff were not maintained at a level as that before the war. Although no documentation exists concerning education within the county during the Civil War period, there are several reasons for this assumption:

1. the number of faculty and students who joined the Confederate army;[38]
2. the Confederate maneuvers which occurred within the county and the occurrence of a large scale assault on Oxford by Union troops;
3. students, too young to serve in the war, were forced to work regularly in the fields or on their parents property to assist in providing food for those left behind; and
4. the lack of new textbooks, educational ideas, teachers, or school supplies.

2.5.2 Formal Education for Middle to Upper-Class Whites Immediately After the War (1865-1869)

After the war, however, there still remained a rather active educational program for white students (see section 2.4.1). This was evident in the re-establishment of private schools such as Eureka Academy, and the continuation of the Public School Act of 1859 (see section 2.7.2 and footnote 16) which continued to make some county funding

[38] The county was represented by several Confederate military units. According to Seay (1975a:22), 'George P. Foote ... headed the Volunteer unit called the "Panola Vindicators". Green Middleton captained a calvary company. ... Sardis produced the Sardis Blues. Eureka was represented by young men who joined Hudson's Battery. ... From Pope Station, the "Pope Devils" were organized as a volunteer infantry company. In the early part of 1862 the Eureka Volunteers formed an infantry company whose officers were: W. B. Johnson, Captain; W. B. Wall, First Lieutenant; R. H. Crozier, Second Lieutenant; Eugene Stevens, Third Lieutenant. ... The first battle in which the unit engaged occurred at Corinth [(see Map 5)] on October 3 and 4, 1862. It was ordered to destroy the North's iron works at points along the Memphis-Charleston Railroad'.

available for the payment of a few public school teachers, teaching children of poor white families[39] (note, private school teachers were still paid by parents).

Although many of the earlier academies had closed their doors for good, the larger more established schools reopened and for the next two decades continued to grow, providing quality education to those whites able to send their children to private facilities.

2.5.3 Formal Education for Blacks and Poor Whites Between 1862-1870

At the close of the Civil War, Panola possessed no organized public school system for educating the black population (Kyle 1913:87), although some whites received a public education (see footnote 39) through money made available by the Public School Act of 1859 (see section 2.7.2). The few remaining private academies continued educating only white children. These children were mainly from affluent families, as the cost of private schooling (academies and institutions) was still funded by parents. The private schools, although operating, would take the next two years to overcome the economic and social damages of the previous war. By 1867, many of the private schools had reopened.

There had, however, during the war been an asserted effort by some Northern educators to open schools for the educating of blacks and poor whites. One such school was established shortly after Union occupation (1862) in the northeastern Mississippi town of Corinth (see Map 5) (Rowland 1925, II:479).

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[39] As noted in footnote 16, although some public school funding was available, classes for white children were held in churches as there was not enough funding for the construction of public school buildings. Actual construction of public schools would not begin in Panola until 1871. Further, notices concerning the public schools which did exist in the county before 1870 provided little information. In most cases the schools were not named directly.

Black schools were started by the Freedmen's Bureau (1865-69).[40] Established 3 March 1865, the bureau, formally known as the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands was established by the War Department to issue supplies to the slaves who were freed in accordance with the Emancipation Proclamation of 1 January 1863. The bureau had total charge of all operations relating to refugees and freedmen. By the end of hostilities, there were nearly twice as many students, irrespective of their ethnicity, seeking education (Rowland 1925, II:479). Over half of this number were black. Through the Freedmen's Bureau, representatives of the Northern government (The Union) introduced black elementary schools into the Southern states (Redcay 1935:1). By mid-1865, the bureau was well-established in Panola County. Panola's bureau was placed under the capable direction of a Lieutenant Arringdale who according to local residents was of a good and friendly disposition (Kyle 1913:46). Arringdale tried, during his brief stay in Panola (1865-1866), to remain impartial, courteous, and respectful of both whites and blacks. His successor D. S. Harriman, however, incurred the hatred of many of the county's whites by imposing double standards for local white residents and blacks, carpetbaggers,[41] and scalawags. Harriman constantly belittled, cheated, used, and abused the white population (Of whom 1867:2). Upon his removal in December 1867 he was remembered as

> [t]hat incomparable skunk ..., the 'burro' agent, who has been inflicted in this community for some time was carried off last Tuesday by an officer of the United States under arrest. Whether he will return or not we are not informed, but as he took his 'rags'

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[40] Although the Freedmen's Bureau assisted in providing blacks a system of free formal primary education, most white students continued to attend privately unsubsidized academies until the creation of the public school system in the 1870s. Although opened to blacks and poor whites, no white children from Panola County are known to have attended the bureau's free schools.

[41] Carpetbaggers were Northern Republicans and abolitionists who through idealistic or opportunistic motives assisted Southern blacks in gaining national and state representation.

> we are in hopes that he will not. Rumor says he has gone to stand trial on a charge of bribery before the United States court in Oxford. ... He only left a few bills unpaid, such as a balance on board at the hotel, office rent, washerwoman, and subscription to this paper for the time he was here; all of which the parties would gladly excuse him of, not to return again. Good-bye, Exeresence, and may 'dark' visions ever lurk around your midnight dreams. (Of whom 1867:2.)

Another to incur the anger of white residents as a result of his arrogance, double standards, and resentment of Southern whites, was Urbain Ozanne who, having been born in France, traveled from Nashville, Tennessee, settling in Como (see Map 6). (Kyle 1913:36). While in Panola, Mr Ozanne worked for the Freedmen's Bureau and later aided North Panola (north of the Tallahatchie) in moving the county seat from Old Panola to Sardis (see section 3.7.1.1). As a bureau agent and later Republican politician, he was hated by most whites but especially by those in the southern region of Panola (Kyle 1913:37). This contempt for bureau agents was expressed for nearly a year as the *Panola Star*'s editor ran the following on the paper's mast-head:

> Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
> Who never to himself hath said,
> G-d d--n the Freedmen's Bureau

Although despised and resented by most Southern whites, the bureau was instrumental in establishing 4,239 black schools and instructing 247,333 black and poor white students throughout the South (Pierce 1955:40). The bureau, over this period, had created an adequately organized Southern free school system. It, however, accomplished little within Panola County (see footnote 40). Strong resentment, poor leadership by Freedmen's Bureau officers, and lack of funding were to blame for the bureau's failure in Panola (Wren 1988:13).

As previously noted, some Southern schools established by the initiatives of the Freedmen's Bureau did start an integrated program. However, the training at these integrated schools at best, was ineffective and was characterized by ill-prepared teachers,

few teaching aids, and poor, run-down buildings or churches. Teachers at these integrated facilities possessed little or no formal training and most expressed no interest in additional education. This differed greatly from the well trained educator of the private schools (academies and institutes) which still remained active within the county.

The Freedmen's Aid Society, formed in 1866, also served in educating black children. The program, however, was also not successful in Panola. Requiring black co-operation, community acceptance, and local funding, the school project met with apathy and hostility (Wren 1988:13). "Yankee Schoolmarms"[42] working with the Freedmen's Aid Society in neighboring counties were threatened and beaten and a Freedmen's Bureau officer murdered (Swint 1941:123). Many local residents felt that these and other crimes were committed by outside white agitators (possibly Klan members – see section 3.2.1.2) while bureau representatives implicated local militant whites. By the 1870s whites, still being hostile to the introduction of public education for blacks, were more inclined to assist in the process. This was due to their belief that by becoming more involved they could lessen the number of carpetbaggers and scalawags (scoundrels) entering the state.

2.6 PREPARATORY COLLEGES

The first North Mississippi preparatory college[43] noted in the local papers was North Mississippi College (North Mississippi 1845:3). This school facility was five miles

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[42] The name "Yankee Schoolmarms" referred to those Northern teachers who entered the South to teach the Negro population. According to statements of the period, no respectable Southern lady would consider teaching a black child. "Northern trash"' were the only ones low enough and depraved to undertake such a project. (Wren 1988:10).

[43] A preparatory college of the mid-1800s was primarily concerned with educating students for entry into the university level. The few colleges that did exist were usually located near universities and provided courses that proved beneficial to the university bound student. Many of these colleges' curricula were similar to that of the better academies (see section 2.4.2) of the period.

northwest of Oxford in Lafayette County (see Map 3). Although other schools had advertised the excellent preparation they provided to students wishing to attend university studies (see section 2.4.3.1), this was the first local facility directed primarily toward university bound students. Mr Boyd, who previously served as principal at Friendship Academy (see section 2.4.2), was appointed as the college's first dean. According to Professor Boyd, the college was intended as a preparatory facility to the state university (University of Mississippi), located in Oxford. According to newspaper advertisements, the college's curriculum (see Table 2) differed little from those offered by academies in Panola. Later preparatory colleges included Sardis Female College of Panola (1874) and the Abbeville Female College of Lafayette County, which started operation in 1874.[44]

2.7 STATE POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE FACTORS, 1840-1870

Attempting to understand the development of the county's early school system (i.e. private academies and institutes - see footnote 1), later public school development, and any future educational diversity requires a knowledge of the educational laws passed in the state since the 1840s. These laws and legislative school acts were to have an impact on all sections of education within the county, started in 1859 (see section 2.7.2) and again in 1870 (see section 3.7.3.1a).

There is no evidence, during this period, showing that one section, person, or group within the county interpreted or implemented the rulings differently. Rather, the

[44] The curricula for Abbeville Female College, as well as Sardis Female College, are not available in any of the current documents either locally or at the State Board of Education in Jackson, Mississippi.

county appeared to work as a whole in formulating a system which would be conducive to learning. Although working toward a common goal, there did, however, remain continued rivalry between the various academies. Through many advertisements, notices, and letters each school attempted to show that its program, faculty, curriculum, and facility were superior. There was also, as noted, community rivalry (see section 2.2) which had continued since the county's formation. Some schools met with failure. These included: A.E. Gibson School for Young Men, Palmetto, Black Walnut Academy, and M. Steen's Panola Female Seminary (see Table 1). No reason, however, for these schools' demise is given in any of the local papers. However, some later schools (private facilities-see footnote 16 – i.e. Eureka Academy, Good Hope Academy, and Central Academy), especially those in the southern district helped evolve the county's schools into a uniform public school system. This was achieved by an outstanding faculty, diverse curriculum, and exceptional facilities.

2.7.1 The Common School Act of 1846

On 4 March 1846 the Mississippi Legislature passed the Common School Act (Rowland 1925, I:647). In this act, the county police department was given jurisdiction over certain school affairs. These responsibilities included: appointing a board of school commissioners, levying of a special common school tax, and collecting fines and monies from licenses granted to peddlers, liquor dealers, hawkers, gambling proprietors, and billiard table owners (Rowland 1912:286).

The process, however, did not work as smoothly as expected. There were many complaints. Monies were lost and several counties simply did not comply. By 1850 many state officials, including then Governor J. W. Matthews, felt the Common School Act was

a miserable failure. Although a series of new special acts were passed by the legislative session of 1850, little more was accomplished. In fact, the new rulings only aided in destroying what little remained of the former act. As before, most counties either ignored the acts or only half-heartedly complied. In Panola, however, both north and south of the Tallahatchie line, some progress was made. The 1850 Census recorded that eighteen residents listed their occupation as school teachers or employees.

2.7.2 The School Law of 1859

The School Law of 1859, was the first legislative attempt within northern Mississippi to implement a public school system. Not as broad an endeavor, or successful, as the State's future Public School Act of 1870 (see section 3.7.3.1a), the special bill remained in effect only until shortly after the Civil War (1861-1865).[45] This special school bill, pertaining to Lafayette, Marshall, Panola, Tishomingo, and Tippah counties (see Map 8), required the tax assessor to obtain a listing of all county children of school going age between six and eighteen years of age (Kyle 1913:87). It also made provision for basing the payment of teachers on the number of students in the schools. Under this public educational scheme, teachers were paid according to the number of pupils in their classes, never to exceed seven and one-half cents per child. This system of payments differed from previous school endeavors in that the private schools' (i.e. academies and institutes) teachers were paid by the parents. This law did not, however, end the private school system. This act merely made it possible for poorer whites to obtain an education through county funding.

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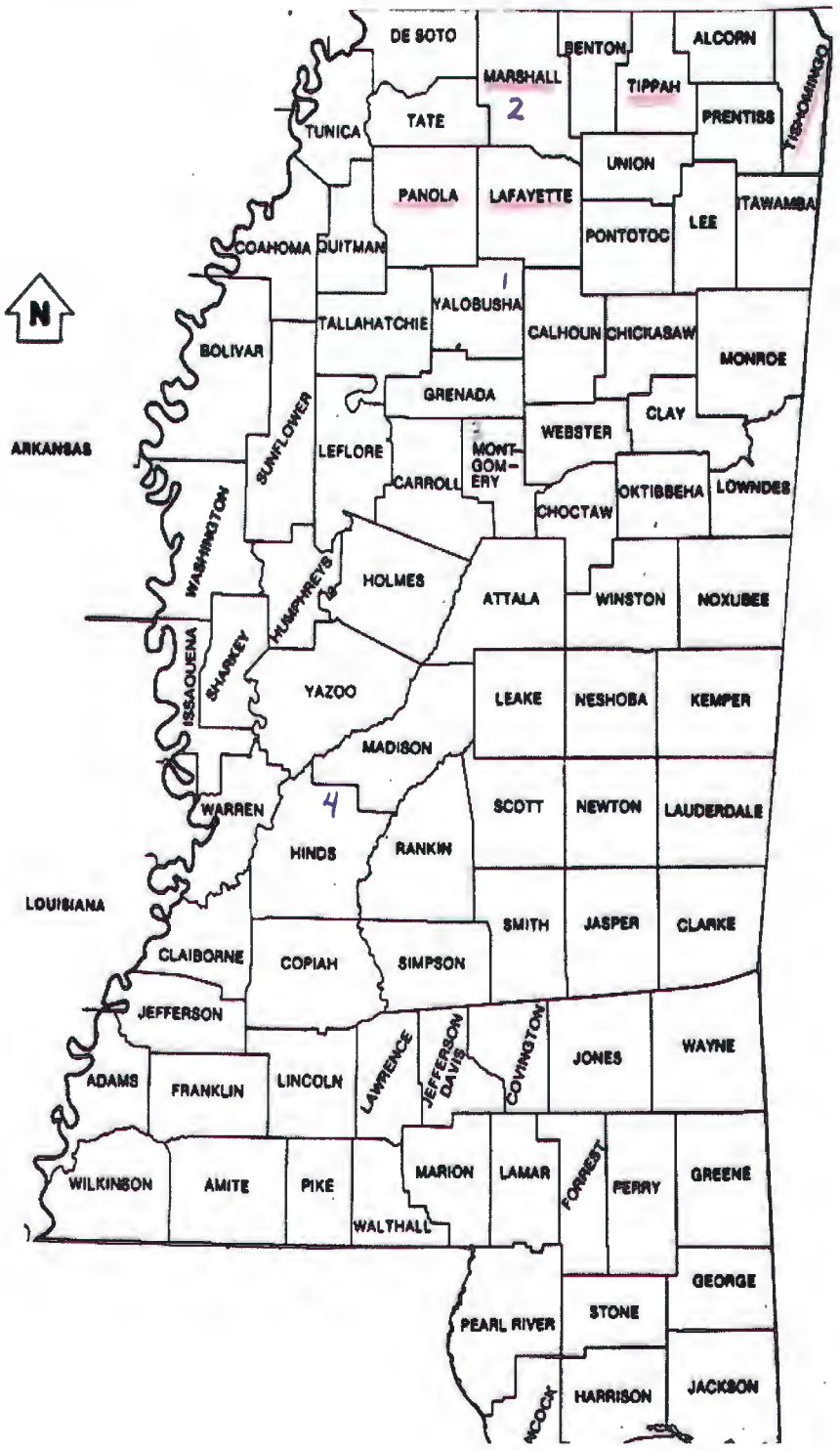
[45] Initially after the Civil War, the private school (academy or institute) was also partially supported by the 1859 general law.

MAP 8 — MISSISSIPPI COUNTIES INVOLVED IN THE SCHOOL ACT OF 1859*



The aforementioned counties are marked in red.

* Obtained from the PanGen Room, Batesville Public Library, Batesville, Mississippi. No original source given. Areas marked by numbers - (1) Water Valley (2) Holly Springs (3) Winona and (4) Jackson.

The law entrusted the general supervision of public education to a board of school commissioners which was a carry-over from the 1846 Common School Act. These commissioners were responsible for appointing five trustees per township who were, in turn, responsible for examining teachers proficiency and maintaining school interests within their districts (Kyle 1913:87). The school act would remain in use until it was rescinded by the Mississippi carpetbagger legislature of the 1870s.

After the war there was in Mississippi, as in other Southern states, a general trend toward forming an adequate system of public schools. Some whites, although not favoring integrated schools, felt blacks were entitled to a public education and trained teachers. A statewide teachers' meeting was held in Jackson, Mississippi (see May 8) on 17 January 1867 (Lindgren 1994:24). The purpose of this meeting[46] was to discuss ways of creating a uniform system[47] of education for the state, and normal (teaching) schools for educating black teachers (Rowland 1912:288). In 1868, the constitutional convention addressed these and other educational concerns by adopting an article of ten sections, which they hoped would put an end to the system of local neglect (Rowland 1912:288).

2.8 CONCLUSION

There are three conclusions which may be drawn from this chapter:

First, the study shows that the rivalry between Belmont (northern section of county) and Panola (southern section) over the county's first county seat led to continued resentment between the two sections (see section 2.2.1). This animosity, although only

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[46] This meeting was attended by the newly formed Mississippi State Teachers Association. This association supported the state's black public school movement (Bullock 1967:51).

[47] A system whereby all teachers would possess certain teacher qualifications and each grade would consist of certain subjects which all students must take.

slightly impacting education, was to have a gradual influence as teachers, administrators, and parents in the two sections, north and south of the Tallahatchie, became more indignant, isolated, and prideful of community accomplishments. This geographical and social resentment continued playing a role in shaping the interaction between individuals north and south of the Tallahatchie River (see section 2.2.2). With Old Panola's selection as county seat, this resentment, bitterness, and suspicion intensified, leading to further alienation and sectionalization of the two regions.

In Chapter 3 and 4, this alienation will be shown to lead to economic and social differences which impacted North Panola's growth and development (see section 3.7). This differing development within the two sections was to, in turn, later affect both North and South Panola's[48] school growth, taxable school revenues, and educational philosophy (see Chapter 6).

Second, academies north of the Tallahatchie simply did not actively advertise as did academies in the southern section (i.e. Panola Academy, Eureka Institute, Central Academy, etc.) (see section 2.4.3.1). Schools, north of the Tallahatchie, that did advertise, advertised to a lesser extent than schools in the southern section (see section 2.4.3.1). In fact, few schools within the northern section (i.e. Como, Sardis, etc.) of the county advertised in the southern paper, while schools in the southern part of the county freely advertised in papers of both locations.

Third, and perhaps most important, schools in Panola County's southern section seemed more progressive in their curricula and philosophical methodology than those in the north (see section 2.4.2). This is evident in their presentation of courses in modern

[48] In the context of this work, the terms North and South Panola will have potential two meanings. One, the terms relates to locations within the county, i.e. North Panola being the area north of the Tallahatchie and South Panola the region south of the river. Second, the terms may refer to the school systems in these areas. Since the 1960s the term also referred to the high school specifically.

languages (i.e. French, Spanish, Italian, and German), engineering, practical and higher English, and science. Schools, such as Eureka Institute and Central Academy were acknowledged by educators throughout the state as providing exceptional educational opportunities. Although schools north of the Tallahatchie River may have had an exceptional curricula, this is not evident in existing primary or secondary sources. Schools in the southern section, such as Eureka Institute, Central Academy, and Male and Female Panola Academies were also known by educators, parents, and students for their professional, scholarly, and progressive system of teaching and public examinations.

Based on these documented findings, the educational system in the southern part of the county provided a more enriching educational environment - an environment, as previously noted, that produced exceptional leaders, statesmen, and scholars.

These aforementioned differences, as will be made evident in the following chapters, had a pronounced impact on the educational development, philosophy and diversity of the two school sections. These same variations, and similar social, economic and political differences, finally more than 100 years later, in 1996, would lead to the collapse and near total destruction of the North Panola Consolidated School System.

3.0 CHAPTER 3
THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN PANOLA COUNTY, 1870-1950

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The period between 1870 and 1950 was one of the most diverse in Panola County's educational history. The county was in a constant state of change. Several events, beginning with a lengthy Legislative Reconstruction period in the 1870s, led to an interlude of gradual educational growth and development in the 1880s and 1890s. During this reconstruction period, residents of the county would once again concern themselves with the location of a new county seat. Business and farming rivalries, the invasion of carpetbaggers from the Northern states, military rule, Radical Republicianism, destruction of property caused by the war, and finally a fear of black domination would occupy the minds of white Panola County residents on a near continuous basis.

In 1910 the first attempts were made at consolidating or combining smaller schools, consisting of as few as three or four students, into larger more workable entities.[1] This consolidating would continue through much of the twentieth century. Finally two world wars and a worldwide economic depression would further define education within the small Mississippi county. These changes would affect segments of the county in different ways. In some cases, the county would work as a whole in meeting challenges;

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[1] By the early 1890s, most of the private schools had closed. This was due in part to the gradual entry of children into the public school system, more funding by the local, state, and federal government, and the desire of private school (see Chapter 2, footnote 12) teachers to become part of an expanding and stable educational system. Between 1870 to 1910, emphasis by parents, teachers, and legislatures had shifted from the emphasis on the private school to near total support of the public school system. For this reason, after the 1880s, the private school played no significant part in education within the county.

in other instances, the northern and southern sections would devise separate strategies of dealing with educational change. These changes, over an eighty year period would lay the foundation for major conflicts in the 1950s, regarding consolidation (see Chapter 4) and the 1960s relating to racial integration, federal intervention, and the introduction of a new private school system (see Chapter 5).

This chapter, therefore, covers a significant part of Panola educational history. Included in this chapter is information regarding the end of the private school system, the beginning of public education, early consolidation beginning in 1910, and education during the Depression of the 1930s. The chapter shows how education was influenced by these factors, both positively and negatively.

Although consolidation is covered in this chapter, Chapter 4 will present a major revamping of the public school system based on super-consolidation and separate educational districts. The date 1950, is generally marked as the beginning of this major transition in Mississippi education.

3.2 THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN PANOLA BETWEEN 1870-1910

In the early 1870s Panola County saw the enactment of the Public School Act of 1870 (see section 3 7.3.1a). With this new law, came numerous political and social problems. This was especially true as the act was passed during Legislative Reconstruction (see footnote 2 of Chapter 2). The 1870s and 1880s saw the increased construction of new schools and the creation of teacher institutes and normal schools. Finally, the period between 1870 to 1910 was also a time of white resentment of black teacher

institutes, white fear of blacks as well as massive public school advertising and school curricula changes.

3.2.1 Schooling during Reconstruction, 1870-75

The newly elected Republican state government (see section 3.7.1.1a) attempted to establish an educational system of a quality equaling those in Northern schools. Their early efforts in Panola failed miserably. Southern whites' resentment of the 1870 Public School Act (see section 3 7.3.1a), and apathy of Panola county's black parents and children (see section 3.2.2.4b(i)) provided little encouragement to Northern Reconstructionists.

3.2.1.1 Education and the Southern Strategy

Panola's Board of Police had in 1869 requested and been granted permission to 'order an extra enumeration [(to ascertain the number)] of the [black and white] school children in the county for the purpose of including colored children that are entitled to the benefits of the school fund' (Kyle 1913: 89).[2] The plan, however, in February 1870 was indefinitely postponed. The reason for this postponement, according to the board, was Mississippi's pending readmission to the Union (Lindgren 1994:47). Apparently the board did not want to enact rules unfavorable to whites, when they could postpone the enactment, transferring the responsibility of such undesirable regulations to any forthcoming administration (Lindgren 1994:47).

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[2] Funding to black students was based on school age and desire to attend class. As long as a potential student was between 6 and 13 years old and was interested in attending, funds would be provided.

An 1871 *Report of the County Superintendent of Education* (Kyle 1913:91) stated that by autumn 1871, the Panola school directors were ready to implement the newly passed Public School Act of 1870 (see section 3.7.3.1a). However, this promised implementation was once again postponed during the autumn session by directors who although expressing confidence in the program stated that:

> ... owing to the lateness of the season and the fact that a large proportion of the pupils were the children of the laboring classes, and must attend school, if at all, during the winter months, it was deemed best to erect no school buildings for the first term but to use such as can be procured. ... The board has experienced considerable inconvenience procuring efficient teachers for some of the schools, particularly colored ones; but we trust this evil will be remedied in time.

For this reason, the act was not implemented until the following year. From statements such as these there seems to have been gradual progress toward public education and education of the black pupil. Integration of the races in an educational setting would not, however, take place until the late 1960s (see Chapter 5). Also evident is the introduction of the so called "southern strategy"[3] as it related to education in the county. This technique was also used during racial integration of the 1960's in Panola (see Chapter 5).

3.2.1.2 Resistance to the Public School Scheme

According to the 1870 census, there were 12,585 free blacks within the county. Many of these newly freed slaves had worked on smaller white farms ranging from 20

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[3] William Safire, journalist and former Nixon aid defines "Southern Strategy",[as] 'an attack phrase attributing racist or at least political motives toward any position taken on desegregation or busing that would be well received by most Southern whites' (Yarbrough 1989:1197). Certain Southerners (e.g., Panola County) use the term to mean the rhetoric, strategy, and mentality of the Southerner in his relation with the federal government, especially on issues such as integration, states rights, and government intervention. Within this strategy are the beliefs that 'it doesn't effect us', 'maybe it will just go away,' and 'if I wait long enough they might forget'. When making a concession or giving in to external pressure the strategy is to assure or promise the individual or agency that progress would be made but to preface the remark with a potential way out. Later, the person may say, 'we are making progress, but ...' or 'we will accomplish the plan, but ...' .

to 100 acres. Although the county, especially in the northern section, had small to medium size plantations that ranged up to 1,000 acres in size (Kyle 1913:83), most of the agricultural holdings were relatively small. Unlike owners of larger plantations in central Mississippi who were known to have during the 1830s-1850s educated some of their slaves,[4] small farmers in Panola had fought constantly against any form of black learning. These small farms were usually worked not only by slaves but also by the owner and his children. On the smaller farms, mental tasks were much easier, physical work was more demanding, and blacks were directly supervised by the white farmer. For these reasons, farmers did not see the need for educating their slave laborers. As an area with farms and small plantations, both the southern and northern regions of Panola County had been less productive than larger 1000 to 5000 acre plantations in many central Mississippi counties[5] (Wren 1988:12)

Lower revenue and a large poor white class made the county's northern hill section (see section 1.1; and Map 2) acutely aware of the costs and obligation of building and supporting a black public school system. Also, much of the black population lived in the northern portion of the county as it still does today. For this reason, Batesville residents did not feel responsible for the burden of educating this black population. Batesville residents were also enraged at the power of Radical Republicans in Sardis and

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[4] Education consisted of reading from the Bible, basic math and writing (Wren 1988:12).

[5] In 1860, there were 1672 farms in Panola County which contained three acres or more. According to Fowler (1960:29) 'the greatest number of these, 576 farms, contained 20 to 50 acres ... there was only one farm of over 1000 acres...' Some areas of Mississippi however, possessed plantations containing thousands of acres. Many of these larger land holdings possessed slaves who could read and write. This ability was obtained during the pre-1830s period, to make the slave more valuable. Wives and children of plantation owners, who felt compelled to educate the "noble savage", also contributed to the education of blacks. Most blacks, who could read and write, obtained their 'schooling' from liberal Christian groups, both north and south, who felt that blacks should be allowed to read the Bible (Woodson 1919:11).

Como and loss of their county seat due to intervention of carpetbaggers, Sardis blacks, and scalawags (see section 3.7.1.1b). The county was also the site of Ku Klux Klan activity (Harris 1979:382), possessing several dens (i.e. lodges) both in the northern and southern sections of the county.[6]

Although residents of the county resented carpetbagger intervention, Legislative Reconstruction, and the formation of black public education[7] (see section 3.2.2), black schools in Panola County experienced little violence or destruction. Actually, the Klan was initially known for acts of "non-violence", playing upon superstition by using nocturnal visits, white sheets, cross burnings, and verbal threats to intimidate and scare black residents. There were, however, a few incidents which had tragic results (see section 2.5.3) (Harris 1979:326).

3.2.1.3 School Building Construction during Reconstruction

The early 1870s, was a period of great economic change, social resentment, and political polarization (see section 3.7). However, the period also saw a boom in white public school construction with forty-nine school buildings in operation by late 1871 (Kyle 1913:90). It is surprising that so many schools could have been built, and education prospered to such a degree, since in 1870 the entire state possessed only $600.00 of

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[6] The Ku Klux Klan was formed in June 1866 at Pulaski, Tennessee by several former Confederate soldiers as a men's mutual-benefits society for amusement and camaraderie. This goal, however, soon changed as the group began a reign of threats, intimidation, and violence. Their goal soon became the elimination, either peacefully or forcible, of all individuals or groups who were not a part of or did not favor the southern hierarchical society which placed the white Protestant male socially, economically, and politically supreme (Stovall 1989:1507).

[7] This resentment regarding black education would lessen as the private school system ended (late 1880s) and more and more white children entered all white public schools. However, during the early 1870s many of the county's children still attended the few remaining post Civil War white private schools. Initially, there was resentment regarding all white public schools as parents who had children in private schools were also forced to support the public school through taxes (Noble 1918:29).

dependable assets and nearly $800,000 in worthless Confederate funds (Rowland 1925, II:163). Through private sources, diligent work, and determination, residents of the county, both north and south of the river, payed out over $11,800 in black and white teacher salaries ($70 per month/teacher) (Kyle 1913:90). By 1 January 1871, Panola tax payers had spent a total of $33,264.14 on public education.

In 1874 Panola County had eighty-six public schools (over half of which were white) and an additional thirty-two all white private institutes (Kyle 1913:90). Many of the private facilities, by this time, were used by white parents as a means of extending the public school term[8] by providing a school environment after the public schools' short term. Parents, therefore, did not have to pay for the full term of private schooling but merely for the additional time children were in the private facility after the end of the regular public school term. For this reason, these schools (private and public) although independent occasionally co-operated together (Kyle 1913:90). Public school construction came largely from taxes. This public school system, however, still lagged behind the few remaining "pay schools" or private academies.[9] While the pay schools provided curricula comparable to high school level, many white public schools would continue (until the 1900s) offering curriculum similar to today's grammar school (PanGens 1987: 139). Black public schools even provided a far more inferior education.

In the zeal to provide public education, far too many white and black public schools were built. In fact, some schools were built around a small community merely to provide employment to its sole teacher, who taught fewer than five children (Rowland

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[8] Some white public school terms or semesters of the early 1870s lasted only two to three months. By the enactment of the Law of 1886, terms were extended (see section 3.7.3.1c).

[9] The early public schools between 1870 to 1900, were poorly equipped, possessed inferior facilities (buildings), and did not have the funds to hire degree teachers. In fact, most of the faculty possessed only an elementary education and did not possess the time or interest in further training.

1925, II:481). In many cases, curricula were poor, buildings were shoddy, and teacher training was near non-existent. For these reasons, some private schools, although not as dominant an educational force as before the war, would remain popular throughout what remained of the 1870 and 1880s.[10] However, by the end of Legislative Reconstruction in 1876, public schooling in the county had been firmly established (Rowland 1912:290).

3.2.2 Schooling and Educational Development, 1876-1910

The concept of public schools was met with open hostility and resentment during the early 1870s (see footnote 7) as some parents felt that their children received a better education from the private schools (see Chapter 2 and footnotes 16 and 17). Others, did not want to pay extra taxes for black education and resented, in some cases, sending their children to private institutions while paying higher taxes to allow poor whites an education. Some of the richer whites, felt that educating blacks and poor whites was a waste of time and tax money. By the 1880s, however, the system was steadily advancing, having been accepted by the general public. There were, however, many grave problems which still faced the Panola County public school system. Like most other Mississippi counties, Panola lacked funds and qualified faculty. Sardis, especially lacked qualified

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[10] Although the pre-Civil War private school system period was primarily a thing of the past, Eureka residents (see section 2.4.1) continued to provide quality private or pay schools during the 1870s. Therefore, Captain J. A. Rainwater, a well-known resident and later superintendent of education, assisted in the construction of a school building which for a short period was home for the Eureka Institute female department. Captain Rainwater, during this period served as principal of both the male and female divisions. Although active, and attended by students from both inside and outside the county, the academy possessed only one formal school building. Parents of students paid tuition monthly, the sum varying according to the scholastic age of each pupil, and ranging from $1.50 to $3.00 for children who lived at home. Those who lived at such distances prohibiting daily travel from their homes, boarded at the school superintendent's home or elsewhere in the village from Monday morning to Friday afternoon, and returned to their respective homes on weekends. The male department, by now located in the community's Methodist church building, also furnished an exceptional curriculum and teaching staff. Many of these male students, as former Eureka pupils, would later become great statesmen, military leaders, government officials and prominent businessmen (Seay 1975a:19-20).

black teachers. This, however, would later change countrywide with the creation of teachers' institutes (see section 3.2.2.1).

The lack of funds and qualified faculty caused the public schools in the state to remain, in many cases, ineffective and inferior to those of other states. Residents, during this era, both north and south of the Tallahatchie constantly complained about poor curricula, second-rate classrooms, and untrained faculty. Because of these insufficiencies, residents within the state forced elected officials, both on their state and local levels, to constantly revise school laws. As Rowland (1912:292) stated, what one session of lawmakers passed was repealed or modified by the next. This revision of laws would continue throughout the 1880s.

3.2.2.1 The Teachers' Institute of the Late 1800s

Since the formation of the public school system in Panola in 1870, emphasis had been on providing the best possible education for students, both black and white. To obtain this education, it was necessary that the teacher be well-qualified. To achieve this goal, local teacher training workshops were formed in Batesville, Sardis, and other areas throughout the county and state. These workshops were therefore created to instruct black and white teachers in the art of teaching. The workshops were also instructive in regards to disciplinary problems which has always been more evident in the black schools than the white facilities (Harmon 1989:1A, 3).

Although the county's first teaching institute was formed in June 1876 at the old Sardis fairgrounds (Valedictory 1881:2) it was during the 1880s that the institute became a popular and progressive tool for the teacher.

3.2.2.1a Inability of Teachers to Attend Normal Schools

Although training for public school teachers had existed since the School Law of 1859 (see section 2.7.2 and footnote 16 of Chapter 2), throughout Mississippi, most were located in large urban areas. Due to the small number of training centers locally and the poor salary paid teachers, especially black teachers who had to attend separate normal schools, most were unable to attend normal schools. Attending these schools in distant counties or out-of-state locations also increased the burden on the local school system which was already limited in the number of teachers available. Also, teachers did not have the money for the training, room and board, and travel expenses needed in attending these training sessions (Cole 1992:5B, 5). It would also mean that area teachers would not be receiving salaries from their own schools while away receiving teacher training. It was therefore imperative that local training facilities be formed either within Panola County or in the surrounding counties.

3.2.2.1b Training Available at Teachers' Institutes

By 1880, the Sardis Teachers' Institute and similar programs in Water Valley and Winona (see Map 8) were actively engaged in assisting white teachers and administrators in their educational development (Educational 1880:3). Education at these institutes included lectures, demonstrations, subject areas (math, science and English) and teacher testing. Teachers both in the Batesville and Sardis areas had little formal training and some, mostly blacks, could barely read or write. Although this annual program, usually conducted during the summer, lasted only a few days to three weeks, teachers were provided with current practical and theoretical training (Educational 1880:3).

The Sardis Institute, was presided over by Panola county's superintendent of education, Captain J. A. Rainwater (Valedictory 1881:2). This institute (also known as the Panola County Normal Institute) provided sessions for white teachers while the Colored Normal Institute in Batesville trained and assessed local blacks. Black teacher education was especially important within the county as the southern portion of the county possessed a student enrollment of over 1,000 black students, three times that of the white student population ([PanGens] 1987:140), with nearly twice that number north of the river. Generally, these programs were well received by black and white residents both north and south of the Tallahatchie and were heralded as a step forward in Panola education. Many black teachers of the area (both in North and South Panola), especially in Sardis and Como, were excited at their advancement. In 1887, Mrs Ida B. Leake (Colored Teachers' Institute 1887a:2), a black teacher from Sardis stated:

> In order that you may see what benefit we have derived from these Institutes it occurs to me that it would be well for us to take a curosy [sic] glance at their origin. In June 1876 when our most worthy Superintendent, Captain Rainmaker, saw the necessity of raising the standard of teachers, he forthwith called them together. ... At this time to call them teachers is flattery in its fullest sense; for indeed only a few of them could read in second or third readers, or even knew the fundamental rules in Arithmetic. ... [Capt Rainwater] ... was working earnestly, diligently and incessantly] to extricate the free school system from the almost chaotic state that it was in . ... Ten years ago these teachers could scarcely write their names on the black board. Today they can solve some of the most difficult examples in Arithmetic or Algebra, ...

3.2.2.1b(i) White Resentment of Black Institutes

Black teacher institutes although providing education and encouragement to local teachers, had their share of enemies. According to an article in the *Batesville Blade* (Valedictory 1881:2):

> It is an almost incredible fact that ours, an institution which aims so high, and is destined to do so much good service in the cause of education, in a county and among a people that feels the need of it so forcible [sic], should be opposed, discouraged, and have its objects misconstrued by those who should encourage its continuance; yet such is not the

> lamentable fact. ... His satanic majesty has emissaries here as elsewhere, who try very hard to do his will; and they will not lose their reward, for he will surely pay them when they come into his kingdom.[11]

By late 1887 the white Panola County Normal Institute was holding sessions in Sardis while the local Colored Normal Institute[12] had moved most of their classes to Batesville (Colored Teachers' Institute 1887b:7).

3.2.2.2 The Teachers' Institutes of the Early 1900s

The teachers' institutes continued throughout the 1890s, providing area teachers with innovative methods of teaching and curriculum development. In 1907, the institute underwent a noticeable change in that State Superintendent, C.P. Cary, suggested an alternative to traditional county institutes in that two or three counties would be combined into a district. Administrators from these educational districts would conduct a compulsory annual workshop for a period of three weeks (The County Institute [1908]:12). Even with the teachers' institutes, until 1903 approximately eighty percent of teachers within the state possessed little more than a seventh grade education (Patterson 1937:51). Gradually, as teacher training and departments of education were formed at regional colleges, (i.e., the University of Mississippi and Delta State Teachers' College) the need for teachers' institutes became a thing of the past.

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[11] Those referred to in the article were businessmen of the Sardis and Como areas who, although not opposed to the white institutes, resisted supporting or encouraging black educational training. Previously, the issue of funding black schools was one greatly resented by many Batesville residents. This was due to the larger black population north of the river (see section 3.2.1.2) and the strong Radical Republican (see footnote 41) faction of Sardis and Como who favored black facilities (see section 3.2.1.1). By the late 1880s, the Radical Republicans were gone and the Democrat party was in power through the county. Therefore the general opinion by whites both in Sardis and Batesville was that of resistance to black education.

[12] In many cases, the instructors of these black training sessions were white. Although occasionally a black would lead a discussion, it was generally felt by most white individuals associated with teachers' institutes that blacks simply did not have the mentality to lead a constructive program.

3.2.2.3 Advertisements and Curricula in Panola Public Schools, 1876-1900

Public school growth after 1876 was dynamic as new facilities were built, better curricula developed, and teachers' institutes and training programs were created. The period of 1876 to 1900 was also a time of advertising and public school notices as more and more school administrators saw the need of presenting their school's achievements.

3.2.2.3a Public School Advertisements

Advertising and public school notices regarding teacher training flourished in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Each issue of *The Panolian*, *The Weekly Panolian*, *The Batesville Blade*, and *The Southern Reporter*, contained between 4-7 notices regarding the activities of schools.[13] Papers north of the River, like in previous years, did not provide school activities or advertisements to the degree as did the papers of Batesville (south of the river). This was true of the period between 1840 through 1870 with the advertising of private school activities (see section 2.4.2) and between 1870 to the 1968 with the black and white public school systems and recently the integrated school system.

By the 1880s, most of the area papers carried only small public school advertisements, stating the school's principal, location, and a listing of several benefits. Advertisements prior to this period were more in-depth with a listing of courses, lengthy paragraphs on the school's growth and a partial listing of courses (see section 2.4.2).

Although notices regarding teachers' institutes (see section 3.2.2.1) monopolized much of the educational scene of the 1880s, public school developments including

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[13] The researcher in reviewing the Sardis and Batesville newspapers for 1889 counted 308 advertisements concerning the public school system in Panola County. Of these, 112 related to schools north of the river. During 1903, there were only 289 notices and advertisements placed in all the area papers. Of these 193 concerned schools in the southern region.

school construction, rural school consolidation, increased teacher pay, and development of agricultural schools were occurring. By 1882, these activities received near constant attention in the local papers (Lindgren 1994:62-66).

Most of the newspaper notices regarding education north of the river were concerned with teacher training. The notices for this area concerning other topics of education, such as school openings and tuition costs, pertained to schools in Sardis. In proportion to other county regions, few school notices concerned schools in Como.

The Como High School (1883:3), a public school located some five miles north of Sardis, was advertised during this period. This, however, was one of the few times that this school received any form of advertisement, paid or otherwise. Although advertising the school's opening and several other small notices regarding tuition, no in-depth information was provided pertaining to the school's (nor any other school north of the Tallahatchie) curriculum or teaching staff (Lindgren 1994:62-66).

The fall of 1883 also saw the opening of two public schools in Sardis, i.e. the Sardis Graded School (The Graded School 1883:3) and Lee Street School (Lee Street School 1884:3). Notices concerning the elementary schools referred to the high quality of teachers and the schools' innovative curricula. Once again, no details were provided concerning what comprised the innovations.

One of the most publicized public high schools of the 1880s and 1890s was Panola High School in Sardis. According to the *1889-1891 Biennial Report*, the school was formed to provide an exceptional facility, school environment, and curriculum, for the children of Sardis and surrounding areas (Gardiner 1889-91:393). The school, whose board president was the noted L.F. Rainwater, was one of the first to hold a nine month consecutive term and had an enrollment of about 235 students. The facility, as with most

other schools, was divided into four sections of Primary, Intermediate, Business, and Normal.

According to the above school's *Catalogue and Announcement* (Panola High 1891:3) its primary aim was to 'teach the pupil to think closely, correctly, and quickly, and, while all are taught thoroughly the most practical knowledge, yet those who graduate here shall be worthy of the honor conferred, and their educational attainments shall be equal to the best'.

3.2.2.3a(i) Participation in Public School Advertising

During the 1890s the editor of *The Southern Reporter* of Sardis (north of the Tallahatchie River) was concerned at the lack of information being received from public schools in the northern section of the county. In a passionate plea simply entitled 'Our Schools', he stated that, 'we would like to hear and publish something about the public schools in the county, but unfortunately we hear little, and publish less, although we cheerfully and gladly publish everything that comes to us' (Our Schools 1893:3). Schools north of the Tallahatchie, with the exception of Panola High School (a public facility) simply did not submit notices to the Sardis or Batesville papers. Additionally, the schools of the southern section of the county declined to send most school activities to the Sardis paper. As previously noted, Captain Rainwater had occasionally provided insight into the various schools' progress both in *The Panola Star* (Sardis) and the Batesville papers. He had also, on numerous occasions, written to the editor, inviting newspaper representatives out to Sardis schools to interview teachers, discuss problems, and meet the faculty. By the 1890s this practice had stopped (Lindgren 1994:71-72).

3.2.2.3b School Curricula of the 1880s and 1890s

Most of the larger public schools of this period in northern as well as southern Panola[14] conducted four courses of study: Primary, Intermediate, Business, & Normal.[15] The Primary level (elementary grades 1 and 2) was also known as the Preparatory Department and included two grades consisting of writing, spelling, composition, physiology, drawing, primary geography, oral history, arithmetic, singing, calisthenics, and language. The Intermediate section (elementary grades 3-5) had comparable yet more advanced forms of the aforementioned courses. Additional, the three Intermediate level grades also included courses in grammar, Latin, etymology, English, history, and penmanship. The schools' higher Business and Normal Departments, which consisted of the remaining three grades after the Immediate level, provided additional courses in English literature, physics, algebra, geometry, botany, chemistry, trigonometry, French, classics, German, Greek, medieval history, and calculus (Panola High 1891:10-11). Additional normal[16] and business courses included: bookkeeping, economics, Constitutional history, government, and pedagogic subjects. Unlike private schools (academies and institutes) before the Civil War and shortly thereafter, all public schools of the 1890s geared their curricula toward higher education.

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[14] During this period, most smaller public schools did not list their departments or courses. For this reason, the writer has no indication as to what may have been taught in the many small schools which dotted the region.

[15] In general during the 1880s and 1890s, most of the larger more progressive public schools both north and south of the Tallahatchie taught comparable curricula and levels of study. It should be noted that despite being called high schools, courses offered at these public schools were taught from the first grade through the 8th grade (Palmertree 1991:3A, 4).

[16] Normal courses referred to pedagogic (teacher training) type subjects as well as pre-college subjects necessary for teaching.

3.2.2.4 Race and Education in Panola Public Schools, 1880-1900

As in previous years, race continued to play an important role in education. White residents within the county continued to call for better teacher training, more professional administrators, better school buildings, and broader curricula. These concerns, however, were aimed only at the white schools. In the black schools, black parents were uninterested, teachers unqualified, and white residents uncaring (Carlisle 1996:BC40, 1).

3.2.2.4a Teaching White Students in Panola

The educating of whites within the county, during this period, was of top priority. Although some black training occurred (see section 3.2.2.4b) emphasis was on the white students. By the 1880s, white public schools, teachers, and administrators, were receiving the support of community businessmen and farmers. Although Panola County was still poor, struggling from the recent war, communities both north and south of the river, continued to support white schools. Whites were also united in their hostility and resentment of the slow progress of black students (see section 3.2.2.4b(i)).

School curricula (see section 3.2.2.3b) within the white public schools continued to expand as did teacher training and school facilities. Emphasis was slowly gearing toward consolidation (see section 3.3.2) and the implementation of agricultural schools (see section 3.3.1) for whites.

3.2.2.4b Teaching Black Students in Panola

Between 1880 to 1900 education for blacks within the county was also gradually developing. Unlike white schools which had in one form or another (i.e. private or public) existed since the 1840s, the black public school was considerably a new development.

According to early reports, black teachers were limited, parents uninterested, and children inattentive. The Negro School of Como (north of the Tallahatchie), which had an enrollment of about forty students was, however, advertised as having an outstanding learning environment for blacks (W. A. R. 1887:8). There was, however, little information regarding the curriculum or educational environment. Most of the articles were about the food served, people attending the school's examination, and various recital exercises such as dances, singings, and debates. There was also reference to the use of the term "Negro" in that the author, a W. A. R.[17] (W.A.R. 1887:8) stated:

> I use the word "Negro" advisedly, because we as a people prefer that designation to the one commonly applied to us. We are not 'colored' but we are Negro just as French are French and Americans are Americans. We are Africans by descent but now American citizens.

3.2.2.4b(i) Black Education and White Resentment

Many whites, especially those of Sardis, were not overly concerned with what area blacks wished to be called but rather with their seeming lack of interest in education. According to an unnamed writer in *The Southern Reporter*, it was distressing to observe the total lack of interest that blacks took in learning or educational participation. This, the writer states, was due to parents who, lacking an education themselves, attached little or no importance to the benefits of an education for their children. One example provided was that although schools for blacks had started in October, most blacks had kept their children out of school with the pretense of picking cotton. In most cases, the children were seen walking the streets of Sardis. Some blacks stated they didn't want to start their

[17] Only initials appeared in the newspaper article. Either the person was well known in the community by his/her initials or the individual did not wish to include their full name.

children until after the Christmas holidays so the children could enjoy the holidays without the restraints of schooling (Sending Children 1888:3).

This disinterest by the black population continued to infuriate white writers in *The Southern Reporter* who felt that since a civil war had been fought, military occupation by Northern troops formerly endured, and Radical Republicans tolerated, blacks should at least have the decency, respect, and intelligence to take advantage of their new freedom which so many northern whites had fought and died to protect. It was this lack of intelligence and general laziness, according to white writers, that prevented the blacks from taking advantage of a public education, seeking work, and becoming productive members of society. As one writer stated, 'a horse can only be led to water; he cannot be made to drink' (Sending Children 1888:3). The letter further states that it is for these reasons that blacks continue to be a liability on the white race (Sending Children 1888:3).

Occasionally, even *The Weekly Panolian* (Batesville) would become involved in chiding the black for his lack of drive. These articles, however, were fewer and more professionally written than those of "northside".[18] In these pieces, the writers usually praised the blacks for their intellectual gains. They, however, like the Sardis paper, held little hope for blacks equality with whites. If this was to ever occur it would not be within the foreseeable future but rather at some distant date. One such article, appearing in the 7 July 1889 issue of *The Weekly Panolian* stated:

> The Negro in most instances has pursued a policy opposite to success in mental culture, and although many of the race have been educated to a standard that is surpassed only by the most intellectual of the whites, their education has given rise to but little in the line of higher pursuits. ... Equality of a social character is never dreamed of by any, but without doubt when the descendants of Ham shall have attained such a degree of intellectual advancement that further submission to a superior race that will not recognize its best representatives as equals, becomes unendurable, then a solution of the

[18] A word meaning north of the Tallahatchie River.

> problem in such a manner as to satisfy all parties will become evident. Their education will continue to advance, but so will that of the intelligent white people. No one is ever content to rest until the highest pinnacle on the mountain of ambition and desire is reached, and that will not be until the millennium levels the distinctions which now separates one class from another, and make equality impossible because there are no equals (The Negro's Education 1889:2).

The Southern Reporter, The Weekly Panolian, and *Batesville Blade* (from both areas of the county), between 1880 to 1900, published an average three to one ratio of negative letters referring to the slowness, laziness, and lack of desire of the black race. If rebuttals to these negative remarks were made, which were seldom, they were made by white educators who stressed the importance of encouraging black students in their quest for learning. No article, however, was found in any of the papers where a black took direct issue with racial remarks made by white parents, teachers, or businessmen.

3.2.2.5 Problems and Solutions in the White Panola School System, 1870-1910

As in the 1870s, public schools of the 1880s were numerous. This was due to the small number of pupils in each school.[19] This concern over the large number of schools had been shared by state superintendents of education in Mississippi since early Reconstruction. According to Superintendent J. R. Preston 'the defect of the original system of 1870-75 was that it permitted, in practice, too many schools although the law required them to be three miles apart' (Rowland 1925, II:481). According to *The Southern Reporter*, during the 1887 school term, there were between fifty-five and sixty white schools in the county with an equal number of black facilities (The Public School 1887:4). There was also a combined school attendance of between seven and eight thousand students (The Public School 1887:4). However, even with this large number of

[19] Although this was characteristic throughout the country, it was especially evident in Mississippi and a few other southern states.

schools, *The Southern Reporter* stated that it would be difficult to find one first-class public school in the county. The article then stated that '[w]e must not be understood as intimating that there are no good schools in the county, for there are. We have them right here in Sardis, and there are others which it is unnecessary to name.[20] But, we know of no school anywhere in Panola county that has a first class building, and arrangements made for the accommodation of boarding pupils' (That School Project 1886:5).

By 1902, a public school year was still five months in duration and compensation for teachers for a year's work made it impossible for most of the faculty to gain additional preparation or provide extra services to students. As in the 1870s-1890s, school buildings were small, uncomfortable, poorly built, and scantly furnished (Rowland 1912:294). Referring to these decades of Mississippi's public education, State Superintendent Preston made the following observation (Rowland 1925:61),

> it must be conceded by any fair minded man that it [education] has been largely squandered, producing inadequate results, doled out month by month to indigent and incompetent school teachers who were placed in charge of the most sacred interests of the commonwealth, in many instances without even the semblance of a test as to their capacity and fitness.

Although public school teacher training, school administration, and school construction gradually improved during the first decade of the 1900s, county educators were still plagued by poor teacher preparation, the abandonment of rural schools (as families moved closer to towns), racial problems, and the inability of residents to understand that 'money put into the development of a child gives ten thousand times better results than the same money given to the child' (Cook [1908]:262).

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[20] In reading the various papers of the era (1870-1950) occasionally writers both north and south of the Tallahatchie used terms, wordings or descriptions which being read by someone unfamiliar with the county's division would remain unnoticed but would be readily noted by members of the other locale (i.e. Sardis or Batesville).

By 1900, Batesville's center of educational development had become the Batesville High School.[21] The facility consisted of some of the county's most able teachers and was supported by local residents who agreed to pay a town tax so the school year could be extended to nine months (Nine Months 1900:3). Until this period, the school term was for only a six month period (three months per term or semester). In July 1900, the Batesville board of aldermen passed an ordinance making Batesville a separate school district[22] (Batesville High 1901:3).

Over the next ten years, Batesville High School would become the county's most progressive center of learning. In 1910, the high school, offered students a four year high school course and fourteen Carnegie units[23] of preparation work (High School 1910:4). Although other schools within the county would later implement these programs, the Batesville High School was the first to combine these educational tools.

3.3 THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN PANOLA BETWEEN 1910-1930

The period between 1910 to 1930 may best be described as a time of diversity, modernization, and consolidation. During this twenty year period there was an expansion

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[21] The Batesville High School (a public school facility) started its first nine month school year (i.e. 4½ months per term) in 1901.

[22] The separate public school districts, established under the Public School Act of 1870, had by 1902 become an important feature in providing elementary through high school education. These districts were established in cities with a population of over 5,000 and later extended to smaller areas providing a degree of autonomy within the schools.

[23] A Carnegie unit is 'a credit representing the completion of a core of high school courses. Developed in the early 1900s to set norms for curriculum and course time in public schools across the country, these are named after the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which first suggested the practice' (Carnegie unit 1997:1).

of agricultural education, an initial consolidation of smaller schools into larger more progressive units, and an elimination of the one-room schoolhouse.

3.3.1 Agricultural Education in Panola County

During the early 1900s, agricultural and vocational education began making strides throughout the county. Parents and teachers became interested in providing students with a more practical teaching format based on vocational and technical skills. Therefore, during this stage of educational growth, administrators and legislators began work on developing a series of public[24] agricultural schools throughout the state. According to the *Biennial Report* of 1905-07, county superintendents stated that the lack of agricultural training 'in our educational system [should] be filled up by creating in every county in the State at least one public agricultural high school. This school should be supported by the county in which it is located by local taxation with State aid and under State supervision' (Agricultural [1908]:13). In 1910, County Superintendent J. E. Johnson requested the county school board to discuss and provide recommendations regarding the creation of a public agricultural high school in the county. On 14 July 1910, a board meeting was held at the courthouse. During this meeting bids and location suggestions were submitted.[25] It was hoped, by Sardis residents, that the center would be located either within Sardis or above the river. By September, however, it was determined that the school would be located six miles south of Batesville in the small

[24] As previously noted, at this time and up to the late 1960s, the term public did NOT denote integrated but referred to either an all white or all black teacher and student population. In the case of agricultural schools, all during this period (1900-1930) were white.

[25] Initially, the bids submitted were: Batesville, $2,000 and 40 acres of land; Mt. Olivet, $3,000 and 40 acres; Courtland, $4000, and 40 acres; and Shuford, $5,000 and 41 acres (Agricultural 1910:1).

community of Courtland. In obtaining this facility, Courtland residents had submitted a high bid ($6,000 and 80 acres of land) for construction of the agricultural training facility (Courtland Secures 1910:4). Although newspapers of the period clearly suggested Sardis' interest in locating the school in their town, the Sardis business leaders, unlike Courtland, Batesville, Mt. Olivet, and Shuford, did not provide a bid of funding or free land. With the advent of this school, the superintendent of education had the difficult task of finding qualified individuals to administer and teach. As stated in the *Biennal Report*, the high school was designed to provide a liberal education and not 'for the sole purpose of making farmers of boys and housewives of girls' (The agricultural 1911:8). In achieving this liberal education, the school in Courtland was,

> (1) To furnish for its pupils a good literary education of high school grade ... (2) To furnish thorough training of high school scope along industrial lines ... (3) To stimulate through extension work agricultural activities of the farmers ... (4) To assist the farmers of the county by securing and furnishing to them literature ... (5) To provide training for the boys and girls who will not be able to take a college course ... (6) To serve as a training center for rural school teachers (Rowland 1919:87).

Many in the northern section of the county felt that the facility was only for Courtland residents or those south of the river. This resentment necessitated *The Weekly Panolian* to state that this agricultural facility was designed for all residents and not just those from a specific locale (Panola County 1912:1). This school was the county's first attempt at providing a practical as well as theoretical-based curriculum. Referring to this practical approach (i.e. technical and agricultural training) *The Weekly Panolian* stated:

> The question of terracing and draining should appeal more to boys of today than who will be senator or governor. What difference does it make who is senator or governor? But it does mean a great deal to us if we know how to redeem the worn out soil. If by scientific cultivation, we can restore to the soil those properties that have been drawn out by years of cultivation.

The *Biennial Report* (June 1919) stated that the concept of the agricultural school had proven to be so successful that Mississippi was slowly becoming a leader in the field

of public agricultural education (Agricultural High Schools [1920]:11). By being provided with practical and theoretical learning, students were able to return home with new insight as to how agricultural yields of cotton, food crops and other farm items could be increased and utilized more efficiently.

Shortly before the *Biennial Report* of 1917, the Smith-Hughes Act (Federal Vocational Educational Act) was passed. This act, established matching state funds which were made available to any public schools interested in the implementation of vocational/ agricultural training courses. In allocating these funds, monies could be distributed to elementary schools, agricultural high schools and newly created Smith-Hughes schools (O'Shea 1918:170). By late 1921, the Mississippi State Legislature had appropriated $1,268,721 to the state board of education for distribution as an equalizing school fund (Thompson 1973:13).

By 1922, the Courtland Agricultural High School had reached a peak enrollment of 200 students. In many ways, the consolidation of smaller schools, transportation of students and the increase of high school facilities led to the demise of the agricultural high schools (Bradley, 1978:1B). The following year, the Courtland high school burned bringing to an end separate agricultural high schools within the county. Many of the other agricultural facilities, throughout the state, evolved into the state's junior colleges.

3.3.2 Consolidation and Educational Change

By 1910, administrators within the county were attempting to face many educational problems which had existed since the late 1870's. One major problem was the excessive number of schools within the county. Many of the schools still had only one to three teachers and as few as ten to fifteen students (Palmertree 1991:3A, 6).

There were, however, several educational developments which were leading education toward consolidation. With the introduction of consolidation there would be problems and concerns. One problem was the need for transportation. Over the next twenty years, administrators and legislators would lead Panola education forever away from the one-room schoolhouse and toward mega-consolidation of the 1950s.

3.3.2.1 Educational Development Leading to School Consolidation

With the continuing growth of agricultural and traditional education, administrators, teachers, and legislatures within the state and county became ever aware of the importance of improving teacher qualifications. By the early 1920s, public schools were provided with a series of guidelines. The newly created State Accrediting Commission expected all four year high schools[26] (grades 9-12) to have an approved curriculum consisting of 15 or more units[27] and the three-year schools, 12 units (High Schools 1922:20). This agency, as a part of the State Teachers' Association, requested that all high schools within the state achieve certain standards before meeting accreditation standards. These standards included (High Schools 1922, 20):

1. [F]ormal action by the Board of Trustees, authorizing the Principal to organize and conduct it in conformity to required standards. ...
2. A Thirty-two week session with recitation periods of forty-five minutes. ...
3. The High School Department must have a teaching force of not fewer than two teachers who give their whole time to high school instruction, ...
4. All teachers must be properly qualified and efficient. It is desirable that one or more shall hold a degree from a standard four-year college. ...
5. The complete course of study should insure for the pupil fifteen units of high school work, ...
6. The number of pupils in any one class shall not e..ceed [sic] thirty; ...

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[26] A high school is a school especially in the U.S. usually including grades 9-12 or 10-12.

[27] A unit refers to a credit in which each course taken was composed of three credits, thereby making 15 units equal to five high school courses.

7. Only exceptional pupils shall be permitted to carry more than four major subjects per year.

These new regulations were readily accepted by facilities both north and south of the river. Panola County educators were determined to have the best public schools within the state. They felt that these new rules would assist in bringing better educational opportunities and a higher level of professional to the teacher education. Rules, such as those mentioned above, made it apparent to educators that there would soon be a need of consolidating the smaller schools into larger, more efficient ones.

3.3.2.2 Consolidation Begins and Transportation of Children becomes a Necessity

One of the most important changes in education had been developing since 1910. Known as educational consolidation, this gradual fading out of white rural one room public schools was to continue to some degree throughout the next forty years. This educational procedure in Panola, as throughout the country, consisted of closing small one room school houses with one teacher and three or more children and consolidating these small units into larger facilities. This merger was initiated by implementation of State House Bill No. 58 -- Chapter 124 of the Laws of 1910 (An Act to Provide for the Transportation of Pupils in Consolidated School Districts), which was an initial conservative approach to strengthening and unifying education. The educational plan (House Bill No. 58 of Chapter 124 of the Laws of 1910) also called for the transporting of children from various outlying district locations at public expense, through levying a new tax (Consolidation [1912]:15).

According to Lindgren (1994:97):

> This act allowed for the transport of children living more than two miles from a consolidated school. According to the guidelines, as proposed by the legislature, the

> transport of pupils was 'accomplished by conveying the children in safe and comfortable vehicles, holding from fifteen to twenty-five children and driven by competent and reliable men under contract ...'

This transporting of children and consolidation in general was to remain a constant point of contention by parents and some legislators. Over the next ten years (1910-1920), hundreds of small schools merged, separated, and recombined with other schools.

Meeting with bitter resentment and opposition, local residents raised questions regarding the need of such a plan. According to one Sardis parent (Elizabeth 1912:6):

> [W]here transportation is provided and there are little ones living say, one half or a mile off the main road ... should they be five minutes late, would they [the children] not be left? Or, on the other hand, should they be too early, would they not have to stand, possibly in an open field, in wind, rain, sleet or snow, ..? And should the distance to the school house be five or six miles, what time would those little ones have to leave home to reach the school house by 8:30? ... This question of consolidation and transportation is going to cost the county that adopts it a lot of money, and, ten chances to one, like the road contract system, the people will not get what they paid for.

There were, however, those who felt that this combining of small schools would provide more adequate facilities, student opportunities, and teacher participation. It was general knowledge that some of the small one room rural schools, both north and south of the river, were still taught by teachers possessing no professional training (Young 1912:2). According to C. B. Young (1912:2), the county's superintendent,

> with an experienced teacher at the head of one of these consolidated institutes, and with three to five trained assistants, we have at once an institution that furnished to all the children of this large county ... the advantages of an elementary and high school education at home.

Within five years of its creation, consolidation had matured into a policy which presented pupils with prepared instructors, above average school facilities and transportation for most of its students (Department 1915:8). Further, consolidation provided education within the county with 'a division of labor, longer recitation periods and the stimulus of larger classes' (Consolidation [1912]:15).

According to the Mississippi Department of Education's (1915) *Consolidation of schools and transportation of pupils*, '[t]he total number of teachers employed in a consolidation school is usually less than before consolidation in the same territory. The cost of tuition per child per month is [also] usually less ...' (Department 1915:6).

For the next fifteen years, transportation became an important part of the consolidation effort. Initially consisting of horse drawn wagons, the transportation system evolved into a system of motor bus wagons which were capable of carrying twenty to thirty children from small communities into the consolidated public schools. According to Mrs. Shirley Joiner (1992:8A, 2), a retired Batesville school teacher:

> By the time that I came along, we had busses but they were privately owned and usually they were a big truck that someone had built a wood thing over. The world in general was changing, we were becoming motorized. I think that trend led to people wanting to become more diversified. Some of our really strong leaders in all fields came out of these little schools. I think, however, that wanting to learn more and as science and all the technology developed, it was necessary to consolidate so that they could offer a more variety of things. They'd be limited in a small school with the basics, reading, writing, arithmetic.

3.3.2.3 Education and Consolidation during the War Effort, 1917-1918

The First World War, changed the direction of public school policy and development by directing its attention toward the war effort. The War Department encouraged newly graduated high school students to continue their education by attending a good college. Through this training, it was hoped that these future leaders would be better equipped at helping to win the war. The community, state, and nation were finally realizing the importance of education in providing effective leadership skills both in peace and war time. Further, it was stressed by the War Department and American Council of Education, that after the war the country would need energetic minds to assist in rebuilding the peacetime industries (Education 1918:1).

Although consolidation continued during this period, it was slow and sporadic. In fact, no major consolidation issues were addressed during this trying period. Local educators and school administrators, however, continued to stress school growth and budget reforms, and increased teacher qualification ([Pan-Gens] 1987:143).

3.3.2.4 The Elimination of the One-Room Schoolhouse

By the 1920s, the one-room schoolhouse was a thing of the past ([PanGens] 1987:143). Slowly, schools, within the county, such as Wesley Chapel, Center Hill, Shiloh, Long Creek, Shady Grove, Ware, Bascomb, and Glenville were closing and giving way to larger and more conveniently located facilities.[28] One example of school consolidation in South Panola was the merging of the Stacy, Fox and Springport facilities into the Black Jack School. Later, students from Shady Grove and Cold Springs were also transported to the Black Jack facility. Furthermore, the length of school terms had been extended from six months to a full term of nine months. The Mississippi School Laws of 1920, assisted in the consolidation movement by instituting a compulsory attendance law and increased appropriations for public schools (School Laws 1921:11)

3.3.2.5 The School Curricula During Consolidation

With the elimination of the one-room school houses, educational standards rose. According to the *Biennial Report* (1921-1923:55), the public white facilities of Black

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[28] Consolidation in the black segregated public schools was virtually unknown until around 1950, and small black one-room schools continued to dot the county's landscape. In fact, in 1950 there existed in the county almost 100 black schools ([PanGens] 1987:143). Even after the 1950s there was still a disproportion of black schools to white facilities. This would only end in the late 1960s when integration occurred.

Jack, Central Academy, Crenshaw, Independence, and Pleasant Grove (schools within the county) had enhanced their curriculum with English, Latin, ancient history, modern history, geometry, civics, arithmetic, algebra, composition, and American history. Although courses similar to these existed during the early private era (between the 1840-1870), these new developments in public education marked a new direction in student training. In Batesville, emphasis was, to a great extent, on the future with courses in advanced math, pre-engineering, advanced science, and current events.

3.4 THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN PANOLA BETWEEN 1930-1939

The Panola County public school system between 1930 to 1939 suffered one of its most difficult challenges. Although there were some advances in teacher education and consolidation, the Great Depression of the 1930s cut school terms, made transporting students difficult (due to fuel costs) and forced most teachers to either quit teaching or go for months without being paid.

3.4.1 School Development and Controversy during the Great Depression, 1930-1939

The period of the Great Depression, marked by the Stock Market Crash of 1929, brought about many hardships on residents both north and south of the Tallahatchie (see section 3.7.2.1b). As the *Biennial Report* (1933:9) stated,

> The depression came down upon the world like a wolf ... and wrought great havoc in every phase of the life of the people. ... As is always the case the children, perhaps, have been the greatest sufferers. The outstanding sin of every generation has been the sin against childhood. Coming into the world not of their own accord, children by the millions have been the prey of hunger, ignorance, crime, disease and death. ... The

> Legislature did what it could under the circumstances in the matter of appropriations and the teachers and the people did the rest.

It was during this turbulent time that legislators, parents, and teachers in Panola County attempted to retain their educational achievements from the past sixty years and strove to make great accomplishments in teacher requirements, accreditation, consolidation, and school growth. The task, however, was difficult in that some months, funds were not available to pay teachers or bus drivers (Harmon 1989:1A, 4).

3.4.1.1 Advances in Teacher Education

For many years, most public school teachers possessed a minimum amount of education. From 1880 till the early 1900s, most teachers possessed at best a sixth or seventh grade education with training gained through the various teacher institutes. Teachers within the county, both in the northern and in the southern section possessed equally meager preparation and educational backgrounds. With consolidation, the developments of various educational departments, licensing and certification, and parent demands, it became apparent that to be a teacher within the county, teachers must become better qualified through more educational programs at the college or university level. This trend of little teacher educational preparation had ended by the 1930s as parents, businessmen and legislatures began to demand higher teacher qualification.

By 1933 most white town public schools in north Mississippi were requiring teachers to possess a high school education. Still, however, public teachers did not possess the quality education of Panola's early private school teachers (1840s-1870s). Many of these early out-of-state private school teachers and principals possessed undergraduate and advanced degrees (see section 2.4.2).

By the late 1930s, many of the larger public schools in Batesville, Sardis, Como, Courtland, Crenshaw, and Pope were accredited.[29] To retain accreditation, public school teachers were instructed to advance their educational preparation by attending workshops and summer classes. This they achieved through classes at the University of Mississippi (Oxford) and Delta State University. In 1938, the Mississippi State Legislature delegated to the State Board of Examiners and the Mississippi State Board of Education the responsibility of certifying teachers within the state. According to the Legislative Extraordinary Session of 1938 (article VII, chapter 44):

> It shall be unlawful for a county superintendent of education or the board of trustees of a separate school district ... to contract with a teacher who does not hold a certificate valid for the scholastic year in which teaching service is to be rendered (Hawkins 1945:60).

3.4.1.2 The Panola Educational Association

In 1930, the county held its first Depression meeting of the Panola County Educational Association (P.E.A.). According to the County Superintendent, Taylor Keys, the meetings of the all white teachers' association were successful in making teachers and educators aware of the various social and educational bonds connecting the county. It was hoped that these meetings would strengthen the union between all residents of the county (Keys 1930:2).

In October, 1932 the P.E.A. met for its first autunm meeting. Although many items were on the association's agenda, paramount was teacher and bus driver pay. The association also attempted to devise plans for helping the public school system remain open on limited Depression funding (Palmertree 1991:3A, 7).

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[29] To recognize (an educational institution) as maintaining standards that qualify the graduates for admission to higher or more specialized institutions or for professional practice.

3.4.1.3 Consolidation and the Supervisor

While educators within the county were busy forming separate black and white teacher associations, the state was attempting through the use of rural school supervisors to further consolidate the counties school systems. Although not as busy as in previous years, the supervisor, by 1931, was responsible for supervising all elementary divisions which included schools in the common county districts, consolidated school districts, special consolidated school districts, rural separate districts, and municipal separate school districts (Calhoun 1933:11). As previously noted (see section 3.3.2.1), consolidated schools had been absorbing small schools throughout the county to such an extent that few rural separate school districts and common county school districts remained. Now, educators within the county were busy consolidating consolidated schools into larger special consolidated school districts (known as super-consolidation) (Calhoun 1933:11). Even with the one room school system being a thing of the past (see section 3.3.2.4) there still remained some one-teacher facilities. The number, however, was so small that by 1933 only 414 such schools existed within the entire state (White 1933:11).

By 1935, the Rural and Elementary Supervisor had done much, even during economically depressive times, to standardize and accredit elementary schools within the state (McKee 1937:9). By the following year, schools had been given classifications of AA, A, B, C, or unclassified[30]. These ratings within the state were based on teacher competence, teacher training and education, student course work, classroom environment, and school activities (Educational 1930:2).

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[30] This classification was for white and black public schools only, as private schools did not exist in Panola during this period. Most all of the black facilities received a C rating. Schools with a AA rating consisted of a four year high school environment where all the teacher had or were near completion of their teacher certification. The rating went down to A, B, and finally C at which stage few if any of the teachers possessed certification or a college degree (Educational 1930:2).

3.4.1.4 Depression and the School Term

Although the problem of consolidation remained a high priority during the Depression Era, teachers and administrators within the county and nation were concerned with problems of continued revenue and school terms. Without continued federal, state, and local funding, teachers simply would go unpaid. This problem became critical as early as January 1932 when County Superintendent of Education Taylor Keys (1932a:5) attempted to quiet fears that public schools would have to be closed down after a five or six month term. According to Keys, '[i]t [was] ... up more, or less, to the people of the county [both north and south] . It certainly would not be wise, business like, or common sense to close down our schools after running five months' (Keys 1932a:5). One month later, in February, Keys (1932b:2) announced that if schools were to remain open for at least seven months, the State High School and State Elementary School Commissions would recognize the credits of the shorter term thereby allowing students to graduate. This action greatly benefited schools in that it retained government funding and students by retaining their credits for the shorter school period. Keys felt that schools within the county could only run for six months, yet advised schools to continue running if at all possible. By mid-February, teachers were being asked to donate two weeks to the school in order to reach the seven month goal (Keys 1932c:6). Surprisingly, most teachers seemed willing to make this concession. By May, Superintendent Keys announced even worse news for the local teachers. According to Keys (1932d:8), the county was to receive about $15,000 less state educational funding for the 1932 fall semester than it had the previous year. Further, the state accrediting committee had passed a resolution stating that in the forthcoming year, schools must remain open eight months in order for students

to receive credit for the course work. Several suggestions were proposed for northern and southern county schools (Keys 1932d:8). These included:

1. consolidation of transportation routes;
2. limiting of transportation services;
3. eliminating all unnecessary small schools;
4. increasing teacher course load;
5. eliminating all unnecessary teachers;
6. operating schools at least eight months; and
7. reducing teachers pay when possible.

By December 1932, in an attempt to remain open, teachers had only received pay for the first month of the 1932 -1933 term[31] (Keys 1932e:5). On 20 July 1932, the following notice appeared in *The Panolian*:

> The credit [funds] of school teachers truck drivers that transport school children ... the credit of the various state institutions have been used to the limit and are now frozen. There is no way to thaw these credits unless the state can pay their creditors ... Some teachers and others have not received a cent from the state in several months and they should be paid off in baby bonds if the state cannot pay off in cash and there is no reason to believe the latter is possible ... [this report proved rather prophetic in nature] (Issue 1932:3)

As the Depression continued, it became more and more difficult to find the revenues to allocate to the county schools. By 1936, the state legislature imposed a cash basis program[32] whereby it was hoped that the "hit and miss" of school financing, which created school closings in 1934 and 1935, would be a thing of the past. Under the Kyle-Cook bill the county superintendent of education and superintendents of separate schools were required to prepare annual budgets before expenditures were approved (Schools Reopen 1936:1). These budgets were then sent to the state superintendent for approval or revision of state funding.

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[31] As schools opened in late August or early September, teachers had not received pay for October and November but agreed to continue working through the month of December.

[32] This meant that any items that were purchased, including supplies, equipment or accessories must be paid for at the time of purchase.

3.4.1.5 Some Notable Schools of the Depression Era

Throughout the Depression Era, as with other periods in Panola's educational history, there were far too many schools to independently discuss each in the scope of this chapter. Even with consolidation, there were numerous white schools. Black schools, during this period, numbered over seventy as black consolidation would not occur until 1950. There were however, during the 1930s, several major public facilities mentioned within the local papers. These included: Courtland High School, Batesville High School, Sardis High School, and Pope Consolidated High.

Courtland High School (south of Batesville), which was guided by Professor R. Burrow, faced many problems during this economically trying period. The school, however, managed to initiate several building and ground improvements. At times, throughout the Depression, the principal was forced to institute a 6-6 plan (six months school year)[33] (Courtland 1933:5).

Facing the economic crunch of the Depression, the Pope School System (10 miles south of Batesville) in an attempt to draw the public's mind away from the nation's and state's economic problems, provided the local papers with articles on the school's agricultural and vocational benefits. The school system emphasized its course listings which were similar to the other agricultural/vocational facilities within the state. Courses included cooking, diet, budget planning, sewing, nutrition, agricultural techniques, and personal management (Lindgren 1994:115). Due to the school's emphasis on agricultural/ vocational activities, local residents were more inclined to support the school as they felt that the school's goals and interests were of great benefit in this time of economic need.

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[33] During this period, the school year was dropped from 9 months to a two three month semester or 6 month school year.

Sardis High, in North Panola, also faced funding problems during the early Depression. *The Southern Reporter,* however, provided little information relating to economic or social problems. Rather, *The Southern Reporter* carried a regular series entitled The Broadcaster which informed residents about the accomplishments of the students and school (The Broadcast 1935:12). This newspaper column, attempting not to alarm parents and teachers during a difficult period, was always filled with "brighter-side" information such as the school's history, school grade notes, honor rolls, athletics, and teacher and staff achievements. The commentary, according to many older citizens, assisted in bringing the school closer to the people.

According to Lindgren (1994:115):

> Other [public] schools operating in the community during the 1936-37 school term included Black Jack, Union, Caruthers, Coleman, Independence, Mt. Olivet, Curtis Station, Pleasant Grove, Shuford, Sledge, Glenville and Lake Carrier. Like larger facilities, these schools also experienced the financial "crunch" of the Depression. Panola County's allotment of school funds had been reduced by over $18,950.00 from the previous year. For this, the county again faced the possibility of a short school term of probably only six months (the six-six session became a "popular term" of the Depression era--note school reports and advertisements in *The Panolian, The Southern Reporter* and *Oxford Eagle* for information regarding other schools which operated a 6-6 term).

3.4.1.6 Consolidation and School Lunches of the Depression

Although Panola county's superintendent was extremely concerned about the need for additional funding to pay teacher and bus drivers, maintain an eight month session, and deliver quality education, there was another concern which had to be addressed. The superintendents of each school district in the state, working with state legislators, the Mississippi State Board of Public Welfare and the Mississippi State Extension Service began, in the early 1930s, a program to provide free hot lunches to needy undernourished children. Lunches consisted of milk, fruits, vegetables, eggs, lean meat,

bread and potatoes (Free Lunch 1933:1). This program was facilitated through the previous consolidation of students into larger facilities. Attempting to set up lunchroom facilities in every previous one room school would have been a difficult task. With consolidation, however, one cafeteria was capable of feeding a large number of students. With such a large number of students and trained personnel to be fed, rescheduling of classes and modern efficient kitchens were necessary (Free Lunch 1933:1).

3.4.1.7. School Transportation during the Depression

In the 1930s, the lack of petroleum products nearly destroyed the county's transportation system. As in times past, the residents above and below the Tallahatchie endeavored to co-operate, if only temporarily, in finding solutions. Due to the world depression in the 1930s, schools simply could not afford to purchase the gas or oil needed to transport children. Through a co-operative scheme residents in the two regions worked together in providing the extra money needed to pay bus drivers salaries and purchase the necessary fuel (Lindgren 1994:111). Further, during certain school terms of the Great Depression, drivers agreed to work temporarily without salary (Lindgren 1994:111).

3.5 THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN PANOLA BETWEEN 1939-1945

The war years in Panola County were active years. This is especially true in regards to education. Teachers encouraged graduating students to enlist in the military or enter college to obtain skills necessary for the war effort. Schools, within the county, also provided patriotic speeches by local government and civil leaders. School transportation also became a concern due to lack of fuel and rubber (School 1943:51).

3.5.1 School Transportation and the War Effort

Just as the Great Depression ended, another emergency threatened transportation within the nation. With the onset of the Second World War, one of the first problems facing education during the war was, again that of transportation. The federal government almost immediately began a policy of regulating the use of rubber, gasoline and oil (School Transportation 1943:51). With the implementation of this war time program, the over 4,000 buses within Mississippi became the target of intense scrutiny. In an attempt to reduce gas and oil consumption while providing the maximum transportation, the county devised a school transportation map depicting each school bus route (School Transportation 1943:51). In a co-operative effort between the county superintendent of education and county school board the plan determined the amount of fuel which the federal Office of Defense needed to allocate for continued school transportation. This plan aided in conserving transportation equipment, rubber (tires), gasoline, and oil (School Transportation 1943:51).

3.5.2 School Development during the Second World War

During the period between 1941 to 1945, emphasis within the educational community shifted from a peace time environment to one geared toward war. Daily, the intercom in the schools would provide announcements relating to war effort. Students were encouraged to apply themselves and study hard. Students who were close to draft age were asked to finish their studies through various accelerated programs and enlist in the conflict. Teachers were provided with education and seminars used in applying their studies toward wartime use (Palmertree 1991:3A, 6).

3.5.2.1 Wartime Activities of the High School

In order to meet wartime needs, public high schools jointly (Special 1943:24):

1. prepared and distributed documents, booklets and pamphlets regarding instructional change and development during the war effort;
2. conducted a series of conferences in an attempt to revise and redesign high school curricula and program studies into wartime use;
3. revised and accelerated high school accreditation requirements in co-operation with military service training; and
4. provided alternative emergency teacher placement through temporary teaching approval.

These programs remained in use throughout the war and aided in bringing the community closer together. The activities also increased student patriotism and teacher participation.

3.5.2.2 Graduation and Patriotism

Graduating students within the Panola school system who were planning on entering college were encouraged, through notices in the area papers (both in north and south Panola), fliers, and school discussions to remain prepared for possible overseas duty. According to Lindgren (1994:120),

> this was accomplished by providing a Class V-1 status[34] to students in the U.S. Naval Reserves. This classification was only available to students who were enrolled in an accredited college[35] or who, as high school seniors, possessed a certificate of admission

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[34] This classification allowed students to remain in school unless the conflict became more intense at which time they were called into active duty.

[35] Accredited colleges in Mississippi during this period consisted of a four year liberal arts degree or specialization in a specific field such as engineering, science, or education. To enroll, a student must possess a degree from a four year accredited high school.

to such an institution. During their second year of college studies, male students were allowed to enter Class V-5 or 7 status[36] whereby they received officer training (Ensign). Upon completing college training they were compelled to enter the U.S. armed services.

3.6 THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN PANOLA BETWEEN 1945-1950

The public school system between 1945-1950 was a time of growth, consolidation, and diversity. With the creation of the Division of Certification a series of new regulations became effective regarding teacher certification. In most cases, this regulation eliminated the entry of unqualified teachers and administrators into the teacher workforce. The late 1940s also saw the beginning of super-consolidation, better lunchroom facilities, better teacher certification, and an increase in student oriented activities and sports (Cole 1996:DC46, 2) .

3.6.1 Advances in Teacher Training

Shortly after the war, the state legislature created the Division of Certification. With the creation of this new agency within the Department of Education, the State Board of Examiners was eliminated (Hawkins 1945:60).[37] Shortly thereafter, the Division of Certification became a branch of the Department of Education's Division of Instruction (Hawkins 1947: 60). The Laws of 1948, authorized the Mississippi Board of Education to develop a series of regulations for teacher certification (Biennial, 1949:12).

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[36] The Class V 5 and 7 ratings were for college sophomores who were in the Navy Reserves. These students received advance military training and entered the arm forces as Second Lieutenants.

[37] The State Board of Examiners had for the last 20 years (since the late 1920s) been responsible for the evaluation of teacher qualifications and the awarding of certification.

On 26 August 1949, the Mississippi State Board of Education adopted a series of new regulations regarding teacher certification (Coleman 1951:57). These regulations assisted in upgrading instructor education within Mississippi. According to Lindgren (1994:119):

> The purpose of this scheme, effective 1 May 1954, was to prevent further entry into the teaching force of non-qualified practitioners. On this date, all teachers in both the elementary and secondary grades were to possess valid and appropriate certificates. The 1949 regulation also stated that by 1 December 1956 all entry teachers within the county and state must possess a college degree (four years).

3.6.2 Consolidation Continues

Although the issue of consolidation (see sections 3.3.2 and 3.4.1.3) had been lessened during the Great Depression and the Second World War, by war's end, the issues of consolidation once more became a heated topic. No more were one-room school houses involved. Rather the discussion centered around the merging of moderate size schools into much larger super-consolidated units (Waldrup 1945a:5).

3.6.2.1 The Super-Consolidation Issue

Some residents within the county felt that it was now time for the various school systems to expand and eliminate many of the weaknesses (i.e. transportation problems, food shortages, poor staff, and inadequate facilities which has gradually plagued the school system since the early years of the Depression). They felt that now was the perfect time to introduce the concept of super-consolidation.[38] In a 24 May 1945 issue of *The*

[38] Although consolidation had existed since the 1890s and had eliminated most white one room school houses by 1920, it was in the mid 1940s that the concept of super-consolidation came into being. This concept was concerned with the combining of various large consolidated schools into one super-consolidated unit.

Panolian, educator W.R. Waldrup (1945a:5), alluding to Batesville's growth felt compelled to suggest that school administrators establish a super-consolidated school for Batesville. According to Waldrup (1945a:5), 'Batesville is located where all children from South Panola [South of the Tallahatchie River] can be transported to school at a minimum cost'.

Suggestions had previously been made regarding the combining of the schools in Courtland, Pope, and Shuford (south of Batesville) (Views 1943:2). Residents of Courtland felt that the facility should be placed in Courtland and assist resident students.

Many outside Courtland did not favor this issue. Pope and Shuford (see Map 3), resented the closing of their schools and further did not favor any consolidation including Courtland. In fact, as with so many other education problems, the controversy soon evolved into a name calling dispute. Suggestions, comments and editorials were twisted and distorted. Soon, Waldrup in a "Letter to the Editor" of *The Panolian* stated, 'I regret that I feel it necessary to take this method to correct some false reports ... about my activities regarding ... my fighting the Courtland high school' (Waldrup 1945b:4). The battle continued to rage for the next few years. Little was accomplished regarding super-consolidation for Courtland.

Mr Robert Carlisle was principal at Courtland High School in the late 1940s. In 1950 the Panola County Board of Education did away with Courtland High School and brought the students to Batesville. This transporting of students to Batesville occurred as Courtland's enrollment continued dropping. Mr Carlisle was selected to be principal at Batesville Elementary School, but died before taking office (Carlisle 1993:4BA, 4).

Batesville, formerly a separate school district (see footnote 22), was able to form a Special Consolidation School District in 1946. This enlarged consolidation program

occurred during the 1948-1949 school term with an enrollment of 791 students in the newly formed Batesville Consolidated School District. This consolidation brought together students from former schools located in Courtland, Curtis, Shuford, and Mount Olivet (communities south of the Tallahatchie) (Batesville Spec. 1948:1).

By September 1948, the Sardis Separate School District issued a general obligation bond for school improvement. The following year, Batesville began construction of a new $420,000 high school facility which would accommodate 500 students. According to the local paper (Lindgren 1994:123-26) the current building's stage, basement and auditorium had been converted into classrooms.

For the next 12 years, until the formation of the South Panola Consolidated School System in 1957, the issue of mass consolidation would continue to be an on going battle between those who like the moderate sized community school and those who desired a more "metropolitan flair" (Cole, 1992:5B, 3).

3.6.3 School Development during the Post-War Period

After the war there were gradual advancements in the county's school system. However, attempts to update curricula, teacher salaries, and school buildings were a constant battle as funds were desperately needed to rebuild America's economy.

3.6.3.1 School Activities

Activities during the years immediately after the war, were geared toward instilling values relating to national loyalty, family importance, and readiness toward any and all future problems. Therefore activities in the schools, especially on the junior high and senior level consisted of more emphasis on the school newspaper (journalism),

school honor societies, clubs (Safety Patrol, Youth Center Committee, The Science Club, The Language Society), and sports (football, basketball, riflery, wrestling, and baseball). Each activity was an attempt to make physically, mentally, and emotionally stronger men and women for the years that lay ahead (Cole, 1992:5B, 4).

3.7 STATE AND LOCAL POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS WHICH DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY AFFECTED PANOLA COUNTY EDUCATIONAL GROWTH BETWEEN 1870 - 1950

Within any environment or community, education can not be studied in a vacuum, isolated to itself. Rather education must be examined through an in-depth understanding of the external economic, social, and political forces which daily exert pressure on its development and growth. Although at times, seemingly distant and remote concerns and factors which apparently bear little influence on education, can over the years dramatically affect educational thoughts and trends within a county. This supposition is evident in the development of education in Panola County between 1870 to 1950. Therefore, throughout this section, the reader will be presented with an array of political and socio-economic conditions that influenced educational growth and development over this eighty year period.

The years between 1870 and 1950 was a time of constant change consisting of political rivalries between North and South Panola, economic growth and depression, peace and war, and school expansion and consolidation. These factors working independently and at times together helped in molding diverse social, economic, and political views which in time influenced educational thought within the county.

3.7.1 Local Political and Socio-economic Factors During Legislative Reconstruction and Shortly Thereafter and Their Affect on Community and Educational Development

Once again, during the early years of Legislative Reconstruction (1867-1875),[39] the residents north and south of the Tallahatchie began bickering regarding the location of the county seat (see section 3.7.1.1). There was also growing animosity between businessmen and farmers of the two areas, something only hinted at in the Bolton Letters (Lindgren 1996) of the early 1840s (see section 2.2.2). This animosity between the two communities, made it extremely difficult for them to work together in creating a strong co-operative educational system.

During the Civil War, residents north and south of the river had attempted to reconcile their differences and unite regarding social, educational, and economic concerns. With the end of the war county residents started to argue over the location of the county seat (see section 3.7.1.1), educational differences, and business growth (see section 3.7.1.1d). These disputes impacted the county's educational system by once again strengthening the isolation of Sardis from Batesville. Schools in Batesville began a campaign emphasizing the excellent school system of the Batesville area (see section 3.2.2.3). Further, the loss of the county court seat to Sardis (see section 3.7.1.1b) produced resentment within the community (see sections 3.7.1.1c and 3.7.1.1d). This resentment led to the creation of a two judicial districts (see section 3.7.1.1c); a division which would over time, lead to the formation in 1957 of a dual consolidated school system (i.e., the North and the South Consolidated School Systems (see section 4.1)).

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[39] See footnote 2 of Chapter 2 for in-depth evaluation of the purpose of the Reconstruction process in the South.

3.7.1.1 Residents in North and South Panola Renew Their Battle Over the County Seat

Almost as soon as the Civil War ended, old resentments and hostilities between the two sections of Panola county (i.e. north and south of the Tallahatchie River) began anew. This time, however, there was a concerted effort to change the county seat from Old Ponola (Panola) to Sardis.[40] According to the 25 March 1871 issue of *The Weekly Panola Star*:

> This removal of the court-house has been a bone of contention in this county since its organization, and the people on the north side of the river, who were defeated by the location of the court-house at this place, have ever been ready to take advantage of any circumstance that would cause the removal, and they now claim as a cause for the removal to Sardis, that it is a growing, active flourishing town, with good accommodations to visitors and immediately on the railroad and very near the centre of the proposed county, and that Panola is a dead town ... (Panola 1871:2).

3.7.1.1a Republican Radicalism and the County Seat

The Radical Republican[41] (see section 3.2.1.2) had, for some time, been involved in this controversy. This political movement made up, in part, of carpetbaggers,[42] scalawags, and blacks, was despised by most Panolians. The Radical Republican, less interested in stability and more in increasing their party's power base, had seen the rivalry over the county seat as a way of increasing control within the county. These politicians, both locally and at the state capital in Jackson, had aligned themselves with residents north of the Tallahatchie. Action by the Radical Republicans, however, reinforced resent-

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[40] Sardis, by this time was a flourishing town, with an eye on progress. The arrival of the railroad fostered the demise of Belmont; many of its residents relocating in Sardis. Railroad service began in Sardis on 25 March 1857 and, as with Batesville, businesses and services soon formed near the station. The only thing Sardis residents felt was missing was the county seat (see section 3.7.1.1).

[41] A Radical Republican, according to John M. Matthews (1989:1193), Professor at Georgia State University, 'was a frequently used but often imprecisely defined term applied to one faction of the Republican party in the South after the Civil War. ... Radicals favored guaranteed equal rights for the freedmen, the establishment of public schools, and sweeping disfranchisement of ... confederates'.

[42] See footnote 41 of Chapter 2 of thesis or refer to Wilson 1989:658-659.

ment felt by those south of the river. Even education suffered as residents in Batesville felt that these Radical Rupublicans, who lived primarily in the northern section of the county, were attempting at best to force Batesville residents to support black education (see section 3.2.1.2 and footnote 11) and at worst to establish school integration.

3.7.1.1b Old Panola Loses the County Seat, but the Battle Continues

Early in 1871, J. H. Pierce, a Republican senator from Lafayette County (see Map 8), had introduced legislation in the state senate to move the county seat to Sardis (Kyle 1913:31-32). The bill, much to the dismay of Panola, passed unanimously (Panola 1871: 2). The Pierce Bill was signed by Governor James L. Alcorn on 1 April 1871. Before being signed into law, residents of Old Panola, and the southern part of the county, began a public outcry against building a new county courthouse. Residents of Old Panola and Batesville felt betrayed not only because of its loss of the county seat (see section 3.2.1.2), but also because of Sardis' alliance with Radical Republicans.[43]

3.7.1.1c The Creation of Two Judicial Districts within the County

According to Franklin L. Riley (1902:363), late secretary of the Mississippi Historical Society, 'an interesting relic of the contest between ... two towns ... is still left in the two judicial districts of Panola county, Batesville being the seat of justice[44] for the

[43] By the mid-1870s residents of Batesville would reflect on the loss of their courthouse and Radical Republican intervention on the side of Sardis as they were called upon by legislators to support black education within the county (see section 3.2.1.2). Residents south of the river did not feel responsible for the burden of educating this mostly black Sardis population. Sardis had, in the minds of Batesville residents, certainly not helped residents south of the Tallahatchie.

[44] Another sign of the rivalry between the two districts was in 1905 when Sardis built a new courthouse. Almost immediately, fifteen thousand dollars was spent on the Batesville courthouse to make it fireproof 'so that in respect to the courthouses, this district [Batesville] will be not behind the First District' (The Contract 1905:4). This division finally led in 1957 to the creation of the South Panola Consolidated school System located in Batesville and the formation of the North Panola Consolidated School System of Sardis (see sections 4.1 and 4.4.2) .

second district and Sardis for the first'.[45] According to Batesville Circuit Clerk, W. Joe Reid (1996:40, 1), this separation into two districts (i.e. county seats), occurring after Reconstruction, was due in part to the animosity of area residents (north and south of the Tallahatchie). Today, under this arrangement, all legal procedures, (i.e. tags, licenses, divorces, and trials) and school activities are conducted in separate districts. Although it would be possible, under Mississippi law to combine the two districts, making a single county seat, no one from either section (i.e. above or below the Tallahatchie) would agree to such a change. Regarding this matter, Dr. Tommy Wren (1988:10), former Superintendent of the South Panola Consolidated Schools, states,

> this division, which has generally become the northern and southern court districts, apparently had its beginnings with the political and economic rivalries between the villages of Belmont and Panola. ... The history of Panola County from its beginning until today illustrates and solidifies the cultural, economical and political differences between the northern and southern parts of the county. In essence, the county is two counties under one common name.

3.7.1.1d Continued Resentment, After Division, Within the Two District County

Although, by the 1890s, much of the overt anger subsided, the county's residents still harbored old animosities. As *The Weekly Panolian* stated, 'we are content to live in two districts and want no change' (The Second District 1882:2). The newspaper then proceeded to provide a lengthy discourse on the exceptional schooling, business and industrial opportunities, excellent farming, handsome courthouse, and diverse opportunities for residents of the second district (i.e. Batesville area). With regard to schools, the paper stated that 'educational ... advantages are at every man's door' within the second district (The Second District 1882:2).

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[45] This refers to the creation of two county seats, one in Sardis and one in Batesville, with Batesville, being responsible for the second district or the region below the Tallahatchie River and Sardis for the first district or the region above the river.

Each remark made by local papers regarding education only seemed to fuel the already existing anger over political and social differences. None of the papers of the two communities (i.e., Batesville or Sardis) ever made mention of co-operating regarding education. Rather each article presented the benefits of their schooling and education over their rival (see section 3.2.2.3a).

3.7.1.2 Additional Economic Factors North and South of the Tallahatchie Line, 1880s-1890s

Although bickering over the county seat continued for nearly two decades, economic, as well as educational, development in the two sections was growing at a similar pace. However, in a review of advertisements in the county's newspapers of the 1880s-1890s (i.e. *The Weekly Panola Star*, *The Southern Reporter*, *The Batesville Blade,* and *The Weekly Panolian*) consisting of the nearly 1,300 advertisements per year (most repeats), a pattern began to emerge regarding the southside's[46] commitment to business manufacturing, and education.[47] This is evident in a statement from *The Panolian* (The Future 1883:2):

> Batesville has grown slowly, but surely; her merchants and business men have been careful, and as a consequence, are solid financially, and able to keep pace with the growth of trade and legitimate enterprise which are presenting themselves. ... Batesville has reached the point where its solid advantages are recognized and appreciated, and a prosperous future assured beyond question.

During this period, as today, many leaders south of the river realized the importance of creating a strong economic tax base (see sections 6.2.2.1 and 6.5). As former

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[46] Southside, was a name used by several writers of *The Panola Star* (Pedro 1883:3) when referring to that region south of the Tallahatchie River.

[47] Between 1880-1890 an average of 300 advertisements appeared in the Panola County newspapers relating to schools. Initially, between 1880 to 1885, the number was equally divided between schools north and south of the Tallahatchie. From 1885 to 1890 nearly three times as many advertisements were appearing relating to schools in the Batesville area.

Superintendent David Cole said, 'a strong tax base equals a strong economy and a strong economy means a strong school system. When a community has a strong school presence new business moves in which in turn means a stronger tax base. It is all interconnected' (Cole 1992:5B, 4). Through community growth and tax revenues the community would be blessed with the necessary funds needed to build more school buildings, hire better teachers, and buy necessary school supplies and equipment (see sections 6.2.2.1 and 6.4.1.2).

Although Sardis at this time was a growing community with many business interests, a form of isolationism was noted. As one writer stated, '... those who ventured into the upper part of the county obviously were people of affluence who had the resources to farm on a large scale' (PanGens 1987:150). This independence (see section 5.5), pride, and economic agricultural stability provided the rich farmers and businessmen north of the river with a feeling of false security and undue arrogance which over the years would lead to economic instability and stagnation within the school community (see section 5.4.1.3).

3.7.2 Political and Socio-economic Factors Between 1900-1950 and Their Affect on Community and Educational Development

The political and social-economic factors of the county and state between 1900 to 1950 impacted South Panola education by greatly increasing revenues, expanding the educational tax base, causing a greater influx of residents to Batesville, providing better salaries for teachers and staff, and creating larger school facilities. This was also a period in which Sardis became more isolated, ignored industrial expansion, and rejected the importance of school development.

3.7.2.1 Local Politics and Economy Mingle, 1900-1940

The creation of the Panola Electric, Light, and Power Company in 1903 was due in part to the increased revenues of the county. Although the initial formation of this power plant in Sardis, in a section north of the Tallahatchie, caused resentment, this animosity led to the formation of a similar plant in Batesville in 1939 which brought electricity to all white schools south of the river.

With the creation of the Tallahatchie Power and Electric Company in 1939, not only was Batesville able to produce it own electricity, the electricity was more affordable and efficient. Being a cheaper source of electricity, there was a greater incentive for businesses to locate to Batesville which increased the city's tax-base thereby providing more revenues to education.

3.7.2.1a Electricity Brings Resentment and Finally Electric Lights to White Schools

In 1903, D. Rush and R. H . Bell formed a co-partnership under the name Panola Electric Light and Power Company (Panola Electric 1903:3). When finally established, this company brought an end to the oil lamps of previous years and was beneficial in bringing electricity to town schools within the county. Electric power in the schools led to better study habits, an environment more conducive to learning, less eye strain, and better health to the students.

However, problems soon arose regarding Sardis' ownership of the electric power company. Batesville residents began experiencing constant breakdowns, brownouts (Packard 1997:1JP, 2), and a lack of interest by Sardis repairmen (The Light Plant 1928:8). This situation led to resentment and mistrust between Sardis and Batesville residents.

This problem, as it related to school and home lighting, caused many Batesville residents to attend board meetings and speak out angrily against the Sardis based company. They also demanded a bond issue to provide Batesville with home owned electric power (Packard 1997:1JP, 3). In part, resentment by Batesville residents over poor service and the fact that Sardis residents were in control, led Batesville community leaders to form the Tallahatchie Valley Electric Power Association (TVEPA).[48] Because of this decision, Batesville was able, through sound management, to deliver to its residents a more efficient and considerably cheaper electric service. With more efficient and cheaper electricity than its Sardis counterpart, Batesville has been able to attract large corporations which aided its economy thereby aiding the local schools through increased tax revenues. Schools, aided by the higher tax base, grew in size and were able to attract better faculty. This in turn created economic growth as more factories moved into Batesville. As former superintendent David Cole (1992:5B, 4) stated, 'one of the first consideration of corpórate executives when moving into a new area is school growth. Not only because of the desire for good schools for their children but also as an indicator as to economic stability and growth'.

3.7.2.1b Economic Growth and Community Development during the Great Depression, 1930-1940

Initially Sardis' reserved outlook regarding education and economic and social development was the right one. Many of Batesville's business during the Depression Era

[48] Today, Batesville has affordable electricity from the government formed Tallahatchie Valley Power and Electric Co. Energy is dependable, affordable and modern. Sardis still remains on the much more expensive Mississippi Power and Electric which is a privately home owner concern. These high utility bills is one reason why large factories continue to locate to Batesville rather than Sardis.

went bankrupt. There was no money to pay teachers, schools were temporally closed (see section 3.4.1.4) , and banks shut their doors. In Sardis the plantation owners had the funds to weather the Depression and even come to the aid of banks in Memphis, Tennessee. However, by the close of the Depression, Batesville businesses were once again flourishing.

3.7.2.1b(i) Federal Assistance

In 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) [49] facility located to Batesville Mississippi. This government agency, boosted the business of local residents during the Great Depression (PanGens 1987:162). Later, President Franklin Roosevelt approved over one million dollars for the Sardis Reservoir.

Government projects boosted revenue and made more money available for area schools and educational projects by bringing new workers and their families to the county. A portion of these individuals settled permanently (Harmon 1989:1A, 4).

Because of these new arrivals, Batesville continued to allocate as much money as possible to the upkeep of their schools and business growth while Sardis and the area north of the river were more concerned with the strengthening of their plantations and retaining their former way of life (i.e., one based on isolation and independence). Sardis, felt that their educational system, which was to them a part of their economic Southern heritage, had worked in the past and should not be changed (Harmon 1989:1A, 5).

By 1940, having weathered the Depression, landowners in Sardis, Como, and surrounding areas saw little need in changing. In fact, according to Wirt (1970:31) they

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[49] The C. C. C. was a program began during President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal Era which was involved in reforestation and soil conservation.

looked 'with disdain upon the industrial boosterism below the river'. This independence, self-direction, isolation, and pride was, however, to later backfire on residents of the northern district during school integration (see sections 5.4.1.1 and 5.4.1.3).

3.7.2.1c Development during and after the War, 1940-50

In 1945, Batesville was selected as the home of the North Mississippi Livestock Show. Batesville had the foresight to offer an eleven acre track of land for the development of the district show barn. This livestock facility would offer prized livestock from Tate, Desoto, Marshall, Lafayette, Yallobusha, Tunica, Grenada, and Panola counties (Panola County 1945:1). With the introduction of these shows, rich farmers and breeders from all the north Mississippi counties co-operated to bring needed revenue into the city. According to *The Panolian*, '[i]t is very easy for us to realize the value from an educational, promotional, and advertising standpoint, of this show to our county' (Panola County 1945:1).

The revenue from the increase of manufacturing and commercial endeavors in Batesville during the 1940s assisted in the upkeep of its schools. Sardis, however, was facing problems with the end of plantation life and the potential demise of cotton as its main crop (Wirt 1970:196). Energies were being focused toward retaining old values while modernizing farm equipment, diversifying crops (i.e. the introduction of soybeans, corn and other staple crops) and the introduction of cattle ranches. For this reason, Sardis residents refused to act on the resources they had in providing a balanced educational system based on better schools, quality school administrators, qualified teachers, and political leadership (Wirt 1970:196).

Planters of the northern region of the county, especially after the Great Depression, had a less than enthusiastic feeling toward industry and business. According to Wirt (1970:167), '[they] demean what they regard as the money-grubbing eagerness of the merchants of Batesville'.[50]

While Batesville's industrialization and economic growth continued after the war, residents in the northern community became more isolated and autonomous in their views and behavior. With a view more toward the past than the future, community leaders ignored new businesses, potential school problems (see sections 5.4.1.3, 6.3.2.6, and 6.4.1.1) and school growth (see sections 5.4.1.3 and 6.2.2). Sardis residents and businessmen lacked, because of their closed mindedness and isolation, the foresight to weather integration successfully (see section 5.4.1.3). This same view caused racial unrest in North Panola schools after 1970 (see sections 6.2.1.1, 6.2.1.2, and 6.3.1.1) as well as forcing their schools into receivership in the 1990s (see section 6.4.1.1).

3.7.2.2 Local Politics and the Economy 1940-1950

According to Circuit Clerk Joe Reid (1997:2), one important incident between 1939 to 1950, was the change of political power[51] from the northern section of the county to the southern region. This change was due in part to the loss of population in Sardis and other communities north of the river, and an influx of citizens into the southern region. This increase of population was due in part to Batesville residents' commitment to

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[50] According to *Panola County History* (PanGens 1987:164), '[i]t is quite possible, with the change in the agricultural economy, that some opinions in the northern section of the county may have changed. To overcome the unemployment problem engendered by the mechanization of agriculture, industrial payrolls may have saved the county from bankruptcy.' This supposed change of heart does not seem evident in view of the later lack of industrial development and growth in Sardis.

[51] The use of the term "political power" relates to the political influence Batesville gained through increased population in being able to influence the vote or decisions of the governor and other officials whose election was determined by large voting sections. The more votes that were in a region, the more influence that region possessed.

industry, economic growth in the business sector (see section 3.7.1.2), and assistance during the Depression by federal government funding. These cash revenues, aided in the construction of roads, community activities, and more importantly, according to Reid (1997:49, 2), to additional school revenue. These revenues aided in school growth, teacher training, the recruitment of new teachers, and the creation of new school facilities. The better schools allowed Batesville leaders to bring more industry into the community (see section 3.7.2.1a).

As Earl Hubbard (1997:53, 2), former supervisor and sheriff, stated:

> People in South Panola during this period just fought harder to get industry to come to Batesville. Residents north of the river, felt that Batesville residents were inferior with their small farms and small straggling factories. The opinion of Sardis and Como residents was that plantations, cotton farming, a closed society, and isolation would remain the norm of the future. This isolation was to constantly affect their economy and schools. Turning their backs on new business and economic development, they were also turning their backs on school growth.

3.7.3 State Political and Socio-economic Factors During Legislative Reconstruction and Shortly Thereafter and Their Impact on Community and Educational Development

As social, political, and economic factors were influencing education and schooling on the county level, so too were these same factors, on the state level molding the county's educational system. State legislation such as the Public School Act of 1870 (see section 3.7.3.1a), the 1876 Amendment (see section 3.7.3.1b), School Law of 1886 (see section 3.7.3.1c), and the School Law of 1942 greatly impacted Panola education.

3.7.3.1 Political Developments at the State Level, 1870-1900

The Mississippi Legislature, which met in 1870, was primarily composed of blacks and Republicans. This legislative group had come to power during the recent

abandonment of Presidential Reconstruction and the institution of Legislative Reconstruction.[52]

This legislature, composed of carpetbaggers, scalawags,[53] and blacks, was bitterly resented by whites throughout the county. Most whites, both rich and poor, took offense at any law passed by these legislators. In many cases, these laws were, because of the political mixture of the state government, detrimental to the economic, social, and political growth of the middle and upper class whites. The recently enacted Public School Act of 1870 was one such issue of bitter contention.

3.7.3.1a The Legislative Public School Act of 1870

The Public School Act of 1870, (see Chapter 2, footnote 16) provided for the formation of a school district in each county and town with over 5,000 residents (WPA 1949:120). These new school districts would contain newly constructed public school buildings which were to be supported by tax dollars. These schools were to remain open for at least four months a year (Rowland 1912:288). This was a substantial reduction from the two five-month sessions of the academies (private schools) during the pre- and post-war period (see section 2.4.2). According to this bill, Panola County, one of eighty-two counties, was established as the unit of local school organization (Law of 1870, I: sec. 19; Noble 1969:31). Under this new scheme, Panola County possessed a board of

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[52] At the end of the Civil War, President Johnson stressed the importance of a gentle assimilation of the South back into the Union with little restitution or vindictiveness to be levied against the South. Through what is known as Presidential Reconstruction, Johnson appointed provisional governors for several of the seceded states to guide the states' entry back into the Union. This plan of reconciliation, however, was not approved by Congress who stressed a stiffer, more immediate solution to the problem (known as Legislative Reconstruction) (Wilson 1989:658-59).

[53] Unlike the carpetbaggers, mentioned in footnote 41 of Chapter 2, the scalawags were seen by southerners as traitorous native southern whites collaborating with the Yankees and freemen.

school directors which was appointed by the county board of supervisors. The administration of the school within the county was administered by the appointed county superintendent. While the superintendent was concerned with examining and certifying teachers, maintaining school grounds, and reporting to the state department and state auditor, the directors were responsible for determining county school location and the selection of teachers (Noble 1969:11 & 31). The law also, in sections 5 and 10, made reference to the concept of mixed schools (see section 3.7.1.1a) and collecting taxes to fund black facilities (Noble 1969:29). It was these two sections which angered and frightened white residents both north and south of the Tallahatchie (see section 3.2.1.2). Many whites felt that these two sections, if imposed, would lead to the continued destruction and final demise of white society in the state and more locally on the county level. With the war debt, property destruction, black legislatures, and unsavory scalawags, the last thing Batesville and Sardis white residents (poor and rich whites) wanted were taxes to support schools and potential racial integration. This integration did not occur until nearly one hundred years later (in the late 1960s) (see section 5.4.1).

3.7.3.1b The 1876 Legislative Amendment

At the end of Reconstruction (1876), a constitutional amendment was adopted allowing for proceeds from liquor licenses, land forfeited for taxes, and fines to be collected and used for the education of both white and black pupils (similar to the Common School Act of 1846) (see section 2.7.1). These monies, used in the so-called "School Fund," were, however, cut in half by the Legislature of 1876. This funding cut was due to the election of a more Democratic legislature, who were pro-states'rights and anti-black education, and the political clout of some white farmers and businessmen who still

did not favor paying for black education. Two years later a general school law was passed by the Mississippi State Legislature which was to aid public high school development.[54] The act, however was ruled unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court (Rowland 1912:290). The next eight years of Mississippi's educational system consisted of little more than complaints by parents and community leaders over what they perceived as outdated educational facilities and the passing of weak and ineffective state laws that were repealed the next session of the legislature (Carlisle 1993:4B, 6).

3.7.3.1c Legislators' Concerns Regarding Education, 1880s-1900

In the early 1880s, State Superintendent Smith stated (Rowland 1912: 291):

> It is with regret that I have to state that Mississippi ... is behind most of her sister states [a reference to most other states in the union][55] in the qualification and efficiency of her public school teachers. And this I attribute to the absence of schools devoted to the teaching and training of teachers. Mississippi is the only State in the Union where normal (teaching) schools are not established for qualifying white teachers for our public schools. We have a normal school for the education and training of colored teachers at Holly Springs [(see Map 8)], and I am of the opinion that it is doing good work.

Parents continued echoing their concerns regarding the poor educational opportunities within the state and more locally in Panola County (see section 3.2.2). A letter, written in the early 1870s reflected much the same concerns as those shared by parents of the mid-1880s. As the letter states (Schools 1872:2):

> We heard a ... citizen say ... that his school bills for the coming term would be at least fifteen hundred dollars, as he was compelled to send his children elsewhere, as he could not rely upon the present school system of this place. And we ask if this is not the case

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[54] All reference to high schools in Chapter 3 refers to public school facilities. The term high school came into existence after 1870 (the creation of the public school system) and was not used in referring to private schools until the late 1960s.

[55] Regarding education, more than one hundred years later (1990s) Mississippi is still usually ranked last among the 50 states, running along side Arkansas for this dubious title.

> with more than one citizen of this town? We think it is, and can name more than one party who has and will continue to send their sons and daughters elsewhere. ... We must have good schools in this place and are determined that our citizens shall no longer remain in lethargy upon this subject.

By 1886 such a crisis existed in the state's education system, that lawmakers were forced to revise the entire school law (Riley 1900:335). This revision was the first major improvement in public education since its formation in the early 1870s (see Chapter 2, footnote 16). The new state law provided: uniform school examinations; new school districting; training institutes for teachers; on-site visits; salary increases based on school size, license grade, and teaching capacity of teachers; the creation of separate school districts; and tax and bond levying for school building (Rowland 1912:292).

Section 45 of this state School Law of 1886 (*Biennial Report 1889-91* 1892:34) also stated that '[e]ducable children may attend the school of any such separate school district in their county, and the county shall pay, during the ... school term, the actual pro rata cost of tuition for all such pupils'. Separate school systems, as previously noted, were formed under the law of 1870 (see section 3.7.3.1a). Initially, to form a separate school district the city had to have a population of 5,000 residents or greater. This rule was later extended to much smaller communities (see footnote 22). Within these districts primary through high school education was provided to residents of the community.

Before the 1886 state school law revisions, county teachers were often uncertain as to when or even if they were to be paid. Another problem addressed by this law was that of instructors who were usually untrained and in some cases nearly uneducated. During the first year of state examinations, 70% of those tested scored below passing (Rowland 1912:292).

Between 1890-1910, several major school laws were passed (regarding schooling and educational development of the period see section 3.2.2). None, however, were more

important than the ones of 1890 (School Laws 1890:2), during the redesigning of the state's constitution. These laws radically restructured school terms and trustee and administrative responsibilities. These laws included (School Laws 1890:2):

1. an amendment of section 67 of chapter 24 of the laws of 1886 which stated that there should be a summer and winter term during 'which a school may be taught[56] at the option of its trustees; [if] a majority of the patrons consenting thereto;
2. an amendment of section 68 stating that all schools shall be in session a minimum of four months or longer depending on the amount of school funding available;[57]
3. an amendment stating that trustees be required to discharge their duties in a professional manner; and
4. an amendment placing greater emphasis on the making of annual reports to the State Board of Education.

By 1892, the state legislature had extended the length of the county institutes (see section 3.2.2.2) from 2 or 3 days to a five-day training session per annum for both black and white teachers. This increase from the former two- or three-day session provided working teachers with more insight into educational philosophy and practical teaching methods, and allowed participants to get a glance at innovative programs outside their region. Although most institute conductors were trained in Oxford at the town's special training school (Rowland 1912:293), some speakers were from outside the state.

3.7.3.2 Political Development Continues at the State Level, 1900-1950

As public education in Mississippi entered the Twentieth Century several issues still plagued educators. These included: the need for a state normal school (see section

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[56] This amendment, in referring to 'which a school may be taught', means classes can and should be held two terms or sessions yearly, being summer and winter.

[57] This amendment strengthens and clarifies the previous amendment (i.e. section 67 of the School Law of 1890) in that each year, school will be held for a period of two or more months per session with two terms per year. The object over time was to bring terms up to their present four and one-half months per term (Carlisle 1993:4B, 3).

3.7.3.1c); increased allocation of funds for small regional normal schools; the establishment of agricultural schools (see section 3.3.1); consolidation of small schools (see section 3.3.2); better training for teachers; newer facilities; better curricula; and teacher certification (see sections 3.4.1.3 and 3.7.3.2b).

3.7.3.2a Politics and School Concerns, 1900-1912

Even with new school laws (see section 3.7.3.1c) in place, the county and state still lagged behind in educating its children. In the 1901-03 *Biennial Report*, the Mississippi State Superintendent Henry L. Whitfield, as so many superintendents before him, stated that 'as a rule our terms are too short, the compensation received by our teachers for a year's work is too small for them to make the preparations to be skilled in their work, and our school houses in the main are uncomfortable and poorly equipped' (Rowland 1912:294).

In attempting to resolve these problems, Mississippi Superintendent of Education Whitfield recommended the following measures to the state legislature for approval (Important 1908:1): the creation of a state teaching school (normal school); the appointment of an inspector for rural schools; the increased allocation from $5,000 to $7,000 ($2000 increase) for normal schools; the establishment of agricultural schools; the further consolidation of rural schools; and the building of more public schools.

It was through these recommendations that schools within Panola County entered the 20th century. These recommendations were, over a period of several years, implemented by all school systems within the county. According to school records, newspaper accounts and superintendents' reports, all educators, both north and south of the river, were excited at these new changes.

3.7.3.2b Politics and School Concerns Continue, 1912-1930

One of the most important issues concerning statewide education was that of teacher education. State Superintendent J N Power's, greatest concern in 1912 was the establishment of a series of state summer normal schools at Mississippi College, the University of Mississippi, Brookhaven, and Newton.[58] This state supported endeavor was to afford teachers the opportunity of attaining their teaching certification and also provide students with better prepared instructors. Although the Law of 1890 had allowed for the creation of such schools none by 1912 had been formed (*Biennial Reports* 1890-1912).

Another state program, yet locally established endeavor was the creation of the Courtland Agricultural High School (see section 3.3.1). According to Lindgren (1994:89) local residents through partial state funding had,

> placed the high bid for construction of a training school in their community. The construction of this facility was both an honor and a great responsibility. Finding trained individuals to administer and teach was the first concern. Dispelling many of the misconceptions regarding the agricultural school was also a necessity. For some, the school was merely being established "for the sole purpose of making farmers of boys and housewives of girls. This was a mistaken idea. These schools opened the door to every calling in life ... [and] provide[d] for a liberal education." It was also, initially, felt by many within the county that the facility was, indeed, a Courtland school. As emphasised by a notice in *The Weekly Panolian*, the school, in fact, was to be built for and used by all individuals of the county.

In 1916, the Mississippi State Legislature was instrumental in creating the Educational Commission. This commission's task was to prepare a school law code and report its findings back to the legislature in two years. The purpose was to, in cases deemed necessary, rewrite school laws which in most cases were twenty-five years old having been written during the public school's formative period. With new goals, directives, and better curricula, teachers and facilities, the legislature stressed the need for a change in the then current school laws (Rowland 1919:73).

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[58] The normal schools, (i.e. University of Mississippi, Brookhaven, and Newton) and the Courtland Agricultural High School were only meant for white faculty and students.

During that same year, the Mississippi Illiteracy Commission was also formed. This legislative formed commission was concerned with the task of removing adult illiteracy in Mississippi (Rowland 1919:72). This Illiteracy Commission, consisting of five individuals, formed a permanent committee to work with teachers, administrators, and illiterate adults to train and instruct them in ways of being better prepared to enter the Mississippi workforce (Rowland 1919:12).

By 1920, the Mississippi Legislature was active in providing new and beneficial laws to the state school system. One important law passed during this session was the Compulsory Attendance Law.[59] This law was the state's first attempt at requiring all counties to impose such a requirement. Although 78 counties had implemented compulsory rules in their counties, four counties had not. This new law provided a uniform code for all counties to follow. It should be noted that Mississippi was the last state in the union to do so (*Biennial Report 1919-21* 1921:11).

Much of the laws and regulations of the 1920s dealt with consolidation (see section 3.3.2). Working with county superintendents, administrators, and teachers, the legislature enacted programs implementing consolidation and the later super-consolidation or the combining of small consolidated areas into massive large school developments which led to better efficiency in the school system and lower costs.

3.7.3.2c Educational Concerns between 1930-1950

Although the Depression (see section 3.4.1) was taking its toll on public schools within the state, the legislature was still concerned with two major aspects of education,

[59] This law was enacted for only white children, as blacks during the summer term were forced to work in the fields and pick cotton. Also, there did not seem to be a demand by black parents or white legislatures to enact laws to make attendance compulsory for blacks (Glover 1992:5A, 4).

that being teacher accreditation and the continued consolidation (see section 3.3.2) of smaller schools within the counties.

By 1930, four types of school districts existed within the state which were instrumental in the development of consolidation within the state (O'Shea [1926]:310):

1. *Municipal separate districts*. These are mostly cities and towns, not subject to county levy for schools.
2. *Rural Separate Districts*. Rural districts are not subject to county levy for schools. Very few of these existed between 1930 to 1950.
3. *Consolidated District*. Part of the county system, and covered by county tax for schools.
4. *Special Taxing District*. Ordinary small districts usually rural, subject to county tax.

This combination of school districts within the state aided in providing the best possible situation for each geographic and social section within the state. It also aided in addressing concerns relating to consolidation, by slowly bringing those areas ready for consolidation under section 3 and by aiding accreditation by providing the best teacher education and methodology for each individual area of the state (Carlisle 1993:4BA, 6).

In 1942, a new school law code was enacted.[60] This law, passed during war time became inefficient during the progressive advancements of post-war Mississippi. In 1948 a new law (Chapter 279, Laws of 1948) authorized the Mississippi State Board to set up rules and regulations governing the issuance of teachers' licenses. Repealing the Code of 1942, this new law provided the board with broader and more 'discretionary powers in the matter of promulgating rules and regulations governing teacher certification' (*Biennial Report 1947-49* 1949:12).

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[60] This school code included a program of school health services, special refresher courses for teachers, in-service teacher training, better salaries, upgrading of teacher licenses, and a more stringent teacher certification based on education, in-service, and teaching experience (Carlisle 1993:4BA, 6).

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter, like Chapter 2, presents a series of events which, when considered separately, seem of little or no significance on the potential educational atmosphere of forthcoming years. However, taken as a whole the economic, social, and political decisions and developments of the two sections of the county, present a diverse and, at times a diametrically opposed, interpretation of how the communities and local school systems were to develop. As in the previous chapter, few of the decisions immediately related directly to education or administrative decisions within the school systems.

Several conclusions which may be drawn from this chapter:

First, the study shows that, shortly after the Civil War, while under the Radical Republican government, in the northern section, Sardis attempted renewing demands that the courthouse be located in the northern region (see section 3.7.1.1). With the assistance of the Republican Radicals (see section 3.7.1.1a), the seat of government was finally relocated to Sardis.

This bickering between the two regions of the county, prevented a co-operative educational atmosphere between Sardis and Batesville. During this period, Sardis parents and teachers showed little interest in the educational advancements of Batesville regarding curricula, educational philosophy, and methodology. This conflict also led to the unusual formation of two judicial districts within the county (see section 3.7.1.1c) and in 1957 to a division in the school district, dividing it into two parts (see sections 3.6.2.1 and 4.1) which weakened education in both areas but more specifically in Sardis.

Second, the loss of the county seat and the intervention by Radical Republicans on the side of Sardis (see section 3.7.1.1a) produced an environment where Batesville

residents deeply resented Sardis and its school problems. Therefore as much of the black population lived in the northern portion of the county, Batesville residents did not feel responsible for the burden of educating this black population (see section 3.2.1.2). This issue presented a division between the two educational systems within the county.

The third consideration presented in this chapter which affected education in later years (especially from 1950 to the present) was the ratio of businesses, factories, and activities advertised in the Batesville paper to those appearing in the Sardis paper (see section 3.7.1.2). While Batesville provided a more enterprising and progressive environment, one which was conducive to education and learning, Sardis continued to look back on the past being content with the plantation way of life. Although this maintained the status quo regarding the have and have nots, it did little to generate the economy or encourage school or business growth. Batesville, through its advertising, civic leaders, and co-operation with the business sector maintained a strong economy and tax base which stimulated educational growth. Batesville learned early that when a community has a strong school presence new business moved in which only leads to help support the educational system (see section 3.7.1.2).

Fourth, the chapter shows how aggressively South Panola schools advertised in relation to schools north of the Tallahatchie. In Chapter 2 the reader saw how the private schools in the area south of the Tallahatchie advertised to a far greater extent than their northern counterpart (based on schools advertised in section 2.4.2). Although initially advertising at a similar rate immediately after the introduction of the public school system in the 1870s after 1890 schools in Batesville were advertising at a rate three times greater than schools in the Sardis area (see sections 3.2.2.3a(i) and 3.7.1.2 and footnote

47). This aggressive advertising showed a greater concern for education as well as an interest in bringing more students into the Batesville area schools.

Fifth, the chapter shows that continued growth by southern area businesses and factories allowed Batesville a continuing and event filled economic base (see sections 3.7.2.1a, 3.7.2.1b, and 3.7.2.1c). Although initially slow, this growth, coupled with a decline in agriculture, led to a firmer tax base, more economic stability, and greater funding for Batesville area schools. With the decline in cotton production, lack of new businesses, disinterest in outside factories (due to Sardis' isolation, resentment, and community pride) and poor foresight, Sardis continued to produce less and less tax revenues which led to a decrease in funds necessary for school development and growth (see section 3.7.2.1c).

Sixth, Sardis's possessed a pseudo security and self-imposed isolation (see sections 3.7.1.1, 3.7.1.2, 3.7.2.1b(i), 3.7.2.1c, and 3.7.2.2) which was caused in part by their ability to weather the devastating Great Depression of the 1930s (see section 3.7.2.1b). The Depression nearly destroyed banks in Batesville but the powerful farmers of Como and Sardis allowed the economy and banks to remain a powerful and viable force. This factor as will be shown in the next chapters, led to a feeling of false superiority which became evident during integration in the 1960s causing the region north of the Tallahatchie to make grave mistakes in education throughout the remaining century (see sections 5.4.1.1, 5.4.1.3, 6.2.1, 6.2.2.1, 6.3.1.1, 6.3.1.2, and 6.4.1).

The aforementioned points, provide the reader with social, political, and economic aspects of the two sections within the county between 1870-1950. These aspects, afford a glance at resentments (both by Sardis and Batesville), dissimilarities, and community

isolation which would have a future influence on the way in which Sardis and Batesville would conduct educational policy.

4.0 CHAPTER 4
THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN PANOLA COUNTY, 1950-1960

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary emphasis of this chapter is the consolidation of schools in Panola during the 1950s. Through the indirect and, at times, direct influence of past events, personalities, and socio-economic and political factors (see Chapers 1 and 2), consolidation during the early 1950s became a major point of discontent.

In comparison to the two previous chapters, the former covering a span of thirty-three years and the latter seventy years, this chapter will consist only of those factors which affected education between 1950 to 1960. Although only spanning a ten year period, the events of this decade marked a major change in education within Panola.

The most prominent concern of county educators, parents, and politicians of the 1950s was that of consolidation (i.e. a county wide one district in contrast to a two-district school system) and its potential impact on local autonomy (see footnote 6). By 1957, most of the small schools within the county had disappeared in their place were two large consolidated school systems, one in Batesville and the other in Sardis (see section 4.4.2).

4.2 EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS WITHIN THE COUNTY, 1950-1954

As one looks back on the 1950s in Panola County education, the controversy over school reorganization and consolidation seems most visible. There were, however, other

concerns which were directing the flow of Panola's educational future. These included integration, teacher education, and increased student enrollment.

4.2.1 Separate but Equal

Legally, one of the most important factors facing Panola County was the five segregation cases pending in the United States Supreme Court, relating to the segregation practices of schools in Delaware, District of Columbia (Washington, DC), Kansas, South Carolina, and Virginia (Gore 1953a:2) (see section 5.2). Integration, as an issue of debate, was in the early stages of development in surrounding states. This was something Mississippi residents, in general, attempted to ignore.

As in these aforementioned cases, two important issues were being addressed. First, the federal court had to decide if existing facilities for blacks and whites were equal and, second, the question whether 'the mere existence of a segregated school system [was] violative of the Federal Constitution' had to be answered (Gore 1953a:2).

The U. S. Supreme Court[1] was asked in a brief (Brown v. Board of Education) (see Appendix 5) to consider the validity of the "separate but equal" school facilities in Topeka, Kansas and to decide regardless of the equality of the facilities if such an arrangement was permissible under the Fourteenth Amendment.[2]

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[1] Chapter 5 continues with the aspect of integration in the landmark United States' Supreme Court decision of Brown v the Board of Education in 1954 (see Appendix 5). This decision was to change the political, economic, and social aspect of not only education but all areas of Southern interaction.

[2] 'All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws' (U.S. Constitution, Amendment XIV, 1868).

In 1896 Supreme Court Justice Henry B. Brown had ruled with only one dissenting vote that in the case of Plessy v. Fergusen that 'Plessy had declared the equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment of the constitution satisfied by a Louisiana law that required "equal" but separate accommodations for black and white railroad passengers'. According to Judge Brown, 'the fallacy of that attack on the statute lay in "the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority." If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it' (Lindgren 1996b:10). According to Dr Ney Gore (1953a:2) a decision against "separate but equal" would spell the end to the system of separate schools for all races.

4.2.2 The Recess Education Committee

At the request of school administrators throughout the state, the Recess Education Committee was formed at the convening of the 1952 Mississippi Legislature. The committee comprised of eight members of the senate and ten members of the Mississippi House (Gore 1953b:2). From the committee's work came a program for (Gore 1953b:2):

> the equalization of schools between the races but also the equalization of the schools in the rural sections with those of the larger municipalities and more prosperous counties. ... The Committee's recommended program is contained in a series of 32 proposed bills and 3 constitutional amendments. ... The backbone of the committee's recommendations is the so-called 'minimum education program' bill. Under this bill the states itself [sic] would guarantee a minimum education program in each county and municipal separate district. The items of cost of the program are (1) teachers salaries, (2) transportation costs, (3) administrative expense, and (4) other current costs.

Through these suggestions, and those of later committees and bureaus, education within the county grew at a much faster pace than in previous years. This was due in part to local educators' and politicians' desire to keep pace with advances made in other states, especially those of the northern United States. These advances, within white facilities,

included better teacher pay (Harmon 1996:18MH, 5) , larger and more diverse curricula, better means of transportation, increased salaries for rural and town bus drivers, more equipment and supplies, and better teacher qualifications (Anderson 1996:20SA, 5).

4.2.2.1 Committee Recommendations as Interpretated and Understood by C. C. Holloman, former Panola County Superintendent of Education

According to C. C. Holloman (1991:30A, 2), the recommendations presented by the Recess Committee were beneficial in several areas. Although naive in their belief that the "separate but equal" would be upheld by the United States Supreme Court, the committee did see the necessity of striving for better school facilities and teaching standards. Dr Holloman (199130A, 2) stated that the committee's report recommended that the county, as well as the state, strive for an updating and revision of its black and white outdated school system. The goal of the Recess Committee was to prompt the state legislature and governor into acting on a policy of providing affordable and adequate educational opportunities to all students (both black and white) within the state. According to Holloman (1991:30A, 3), 'for too long, the state leadership had remained complacent while schools in other states prospered and facilities became modernized. Now, through years of neglect, the educational system within the state required a total remake, one which no one from the governor on down was prepared to devise.'

Regarding this issue, Holloman (1991:3) noted that the Batesville school board (1954) had recently provided a large bond for the enlargement of the white Batesville Elementary School. This bond although making possible the creation of a better school building and assisting teachers in providing better education to area white students did nothing toward aiding blacks. Additionally, the bond was also inadequate for future needs

as Holloman (1991:30A, 4) saw the bond as 'a bandage on a gashing wound [(over-crowding)], a wound which would continue to fester' over the next decade.

4.3 THE CONSOLIDATION PROPOSAL OF 1955

During the mid-part of the 1950s several surveys, the School Law of 1953,[3] and local board action greatly affected the consolidation efforts of educational administrators within the county. One of the most controversial and demanding thrusts for consolidation came in 1955 with the proposed elimination of certain public schools in Sardis, the enactment of new state laws requiring all counties and separate school districts to conduct surveys in accordance with regulations of the newly created Mississippi Educational Finance Commission, and the request for a new black high school in Sardis (Holloman 1991:30A, 3). In building this segregated black facility, the county school board ignored the 1954 Supreme Court's Brown v. the Board of Education decision (see section 4.2.1).

4.3.1 The Bureau of Educational Research

In late 1955, the Bureau of Educational Research at the School of Education, University of Mississippi, conducted a survey regarding the potential consolidation of schools within the northern and southern sections of the county. In their findings it was determined that the North Panola School System should consolidate three of their high

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[3] This law was based on Section 1 of the Mississippi House Bill, No. 3 of the 1953 Extraordinary Session of the Legislature which 'abolished all public school districts, but ... required all districts to present a plan for reconstitution or reorganization by July 1, 1957. The Mississippi Educational Finance Commission ... [would] not consider a county ... public school district plan for reorganization until a survey agency [see section 4.3.1] ... had presented a plan (Bureau of Education 1955:3). Also see section 4.4.2 and footnote 14.

schools and two of their elementary schools (One high school, 1955:1).[4] The survey staff believed that only two white public high schools, grades seven through 12, were needed in Panola County. Additionally,

> the staff recommends ... [that] there should be established a new high school for the pupils residing in the north portion of Panola County to accommodate pupils in grades seven through twelve. This high school should use the present entire school plant of Sardis. All high school pupils from the proposed north portion of Panola County, Crenshaw, Sardis, Pleasant Grove, Union, (see Map 9) would be included. ... Pupils now attending the Crenshaw high school from Tate and Quitman County (see Map 9) should be permitted to attend this proposed high school ... There should be established a new high school for pupils residing in the southern portion of Panola County. ... This includes pupils in grades seven through 12 from Lake Carrier, Black Jack, Shuford, Batesville and grades nine through twelve from Pope, (see Map 9) and these schools should be discontinued offering any of the grades states' (Bureau of Education 1955:64-65).

According to a proposed financial estimate, the upgrade would be $100,000 for the new elementary school and an additional $75,000 for upgrades to the Sardis High School. The proposal also provided an additional expansion of the Batesville High School costing $152,360 (One high school, 1955:1). This expansion would assist in supplying more room to the students who had been taken into the Batesville High School during super-consolidation (see section 3.6.2.1) and provide additional space for additional students.

Regarding potential district consolidation of schools, the Bureau of Educational Research suggested establishing a single school district including all areas of Panola County (i.e. Batesville, Como, and Sardis). It further stated that the office of county superintendent of education be made an appointed position (School survey 1955:1).

This survey of the county schools' needs were required by regulations submitted by the newly formed Mississippi Educational Finance Commission. This commission

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[4] As noted in the previous chapters, private schools in Panola County ceased to exist after the late 1880s and did not reappear until the late 1960s. This reappearance was due to the attempts of white parents to keep their children out of the newly integrated white schools.

MAP 9 — THE PROPOSAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI'S BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH REGARDING CONSOLIDATION OF AREA HIGH SCHOOLS*

* High school areas marked in blue. Map taken from the PanGen Collection. The PanGen Room. Batesville Public Library, Batesville, Mississippi (n.d.). No original source given.

in its booklet, *Criteria for School District Reorganization*, required that certain conditions be met in planning of reorganization or reconstitution. This survey ... [was] presented with that in mind' (Survey follows, 1955:1).

4.3.1.1 Specifics of the Bureau of Educational Research Recommendations, as Presented in Their 1955 Report

In making specific recommendations pertaining to consolidation (see section 4.3.1), the bureau (1955:62) designed a plan based on certain basic assumptions:

1. that the requirements of the new laws and the requirements of the Mississippi Educational Finance Commission would be carried out;[5]

2. that Panola County plans to maintain a segregated school system and that she plans to do so by legal means;

3. that, if each race is voluntarily to choose its place of attendance, according to color, facilities and educational opportunities for one race must be as attractive as they are for the other race; and

4. that the people of Panola County be willing to provide equally desirable educational opportunities for each race, even though this means a rather large expenditure of money.

With these assumptions in mind, the bureau made several consolidation recommendations (see 4.3.1). One suggestion would have a major impact on the future of the county's school districting program. This recommendation was

> that there be established one and only one school administrative district: this district to consist of all the territory in Panola County, including the cities of Como, Sardis and Batesville.[6]

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[5] The 1954 Supreme Court decision of Brown v. the Board of Education was basically ignored by the county and the commission.

[6] This one district system, according to *The Southern Reporter* was to either be a county-wide district with a general county board or a county-wide municipal separate school district with either Batesville or Sardis serving as the municipality. 'Because of Panola County's natural division of North and South of the Tallahatchie River the suggestion ha[d] been made that two districts be set up along those lines. It [was] over that suggestion and the... alternative of [of a single school district proposal by] the survey staff of a municipal district around which ... [a furious controversy would soon be staged]' (Type of district 1956:1).

> There are many advantages in having one and only one administrative district in Panola County. Under it, one school board will be responsible for all children in the county. Two [new] high schools for whites and one for Negroes may be established. This is both economically and financially desirable. Both the pupils and the county should benefit greatly. (Bureau of Education, 1955:62)

One week after the announcement of the Bureau of Educational Research's findings, *The Southern Reporter* headlines read 'Law is Specific on School Program: State will Share in Costs of New Building' (Law 1955:1). In this article, the paper stated that the final decision regarding a one or two district system was in the hands of the Mississippi Educational Finance Commission. Further, regarding recommendations pertaining to consolidation, the paper stated that the bureau had recommended three elementary schools serving students in grades one through six, to be located in Sardis, Como and Crenshaw (see Map 9). These three schools would serve the needs of all white students north of the Tallahatchie river.

Addressing other issues, the article cited the poor quality of the then black schools (Law 1955:1). Qualities including poorly trained faculty, limited curriculum, inadequate facilities (many schools held in black churches), and little funding. This would change if the bureau's recommendations were implemented.

4.4 THE CONSOLIDATION CONTROVERSY OVER SINGLE AND DUAL DISTRICTING

Although the consolidation issue, in and of itself, was not the major concern, the problem was whether district consolidation could follow the natural path of the county's Tallahatchie River, dividing the county into two consolidated educational districts or as some had suggested to form a single super-consolidated district to serve the entire

county (Type of district 1956:1).[7] 'County-wide there [appeared] ... an almost general acceptance of the proposal by the county board of trustees' (Type of district 1956:1) for a two district system divided at the Tallahatchie (see Map 3). Prior to this debate, there were numerous independent school districts (no collective name is given).

4.4.1 Tensions Rise over County Districting

By 1956 three of the county's five major school boards favored two separate school districts. Batesville, Como, and Sardis favored the two district system, while Crenshaw and Pope dissented (Sardis, Como and Batesville 1956:1). Sardis residents, bitterly opposed the possible construction of a singular high school to be located in Batesville to serve all county children (Open meeting 1956:1). According to an article in *The Southern Reporter* (Two school districts 1956:1), 'North Panola County is practically 100 percent opposed to the school survey recommendations for the county. ... From opinion voiced, it was obvious that sentiment of this section of the county is for two school districts, north and south ...' As noted, residents in Batesville as well as their counterpart in Sardis were united in battle regarding the possible creation of a single unit or school district. Batesville and Sardis residents felt that with a single system their independence to make local school decisions would be hampered. With a two unit system, school administrators and board members of each section would be able to deal with potential issues and problems locally and would not have to compromise with their counterparts north or south of the river.

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[7] The issue of the river being used as the dividing-line for the county played an important part in the mental and emotional decisions and actions of the residents. This idea was one favored by those north and south of the Tallahatchie River. According to Mr Palmertree (1991:3A, 2) much of the early support for this action was from the Sardis residents.

4.4.2 Separate Units

In the spring of 1956 the county school board called an emergency session inviting local residents to attend.[8] The assembling board members addressed the various issues of 're-organization, consolidation and reconstruction of the school districts of the county' (Public meeting 1956:1; School district 1956:1). At the meeting, nearly 150 people attended to listen and express their views regarding the issues. The meeting was presided over by Dr C. M. Randolph, president of the Panola County Board of Education and was assisted by W. Todd McCullar, former state legislator (School districts seemed 1956:1). Also attending the board meeting were L. R. White, Panola County superintendent, and W. J. Hill, assistant county superintendent. Both delivered speeches regarding the county's forthcoming school districting controversy (School districts seemed 1956:1).

The divisions as stated by proponents would consist of a northern and southern district (i.e. north and south of the river) (School districts seemed 1956:1). In May 1956, *The Panolian* ran an article concerning support by area civic organizations (Parent Teacher Association, Rotary, Masons, Lions club, and Sardis Teachers' Association) for the proposed two-district school system (Civil organizations 1956:1). *The Panolian* stated that, 'the feared loss of local control appear[ed] to be the idea behind the [two-district] ... movement' (Civil organizations 1956:1).

According to Robert Carlisle (1993, 4B:2), 'many people, especially those of Sardis, did not want to lose control of their schools as they felt that in losing these

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[8] Under a recently passed regulation, local school districts boards were required to have open sessions (Open meeting 1956:1).

facilities they would lose the center of their community, something they had noted in prior times had led to the demise of other communities'.[9] This point was also stressed by educators Palmertree (1991:3A, 2) and Holloman (1991:30A, 4).

Most residents of Sardis and Batesville favored this two-district system. Sam Stafford, Sardis School Superintendent, stressed the importance of the two-district system stating that a two-district system could allow each district to determine and regulate its own curriculum (County board 1956:1).

By mid-summer 1956, speculation and hearsay became rampant regarding the board's proposed action. By late July the Panola County School Board had begun to make their feeling known. C. M. Randolph, president of the board, stressed his personal commitment to the county-wide unit system (Meeting Monday 1956:1).

On 6 August 1956 the Panola County School Board following Randolph's lead announced plans to create a single school district for the county. This decision, although considered for many months, was in total disagreement with the desires of many area residents and board of trustee constituents both north and south of the river (County unit system 1956:1). According to *The Southern Reporter* (Batesville and Sardis 1956:1):

> The county board went on record declaring the [board] members alone will decide where the schools and the districts will be under the reconstitution ordered in the new school law adopted by the Legislature [see footnote 3]. Sardis was singled out because it is in a Separate School District [Sardis Separate School District] and free to act on its own should a local board feel that it is necessary. Batesville, while also favoring the two districts, was not included in the notice because it already is in the county system.

C. M. Randolph, president of the Panola County Board of Education, endeavored to explain why the county board had favored the one district system. According to

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[9] This fear had been present in the minds of many northern residents since the 1830s when Panola was selected as county seat over Belmont (see section 2.2.1).

Mr Randolph, he felt his goal was in agreement with the desires of most Panola County citizens.[10] Randolph (1956a:1), stated that the advantages of this one county system were numerous, including:

1. economy of operation;
2. more representation of the county school system in government affairs;
3. closer supervision by local board ;
4. greater equalization of opportunities between and within the races;
5. more effective and economical pupil transportation;
6. improved quality of instruction;
7. more flexibility of attendance centers;
8. more economical planning;
9. centralized purchasing;
10. improved methods of accounting;
11. broader programs of service;
12. better utilization of school plants;
13. pooling of resources; and
14. educational progress.

Randolph 1956b:1) further stated:

> Your County School Board of Education feeling that it was working to the best interest of all the boys and girls of Panola County has unanimously adopted the County Unit Plan of Administration. We feel that much of the discontent among patrons has been due to the lack of all the facts in the case. The ... Plan ... was recommended by the Survey Committee which made a careful and thorough study of the entire county. ... Each school center, grammar and high school, will have its own local board as it does at the present time. ... Each school will be rated on the qualifications and experience of its own faculty.

On 19 March 1957 five hundred Panola County residents (many from Sardis and Como) descended on Jackson, Mississippi to attend a hearing before the five-member Mississippi Educational Finance Commission. Their purpose was to express their concerns for and against the proposed reorganization of Panola's public schools (Panola countians 1957:1).

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[10] This was certainly not the case as newspapers of the period revealed that most residents both north and south of the river supported the two-district system. The only individuals who did favor a one unit system were residents of small communities such as Crenshaw and Pope (see section 4.4.1). These communities favored the one unit system since they felt schools in smaller communities would receive more representation under this plan as opposed to a dual district program.

Attorney James McClure represented the Sardis Special School District while Attorney Robert T. Riser represented the Batesville School District (Future 1957:1). Both spoke in favor of the two unit system which had the backing of most patrons of the two towns. Riser re-emphasized the fact that Panola County was divided along socio-economic lines by the Tallahatchie River and possessed two courthouses, two jails, and two newspapers. He further indicated that this consideration was one which was acceptable by the survey team as a measure for division of school districts (Future 1957:1).

Attending the meetings were residents of Pope (see footnote 10 and Map 9) who generally favored the county unit system. The plan would in their opinion equalize education within the county.[11] Mr L. S. Davidson, superintendent of the Pope School System, believed that the plan would increase the "democracy" of education within the county and provide more support to rural areas (Future 1957:1). According to Davidson,

> [w]e at Pope heartily endorse the county unit system. ... We hope as soon as possible to become a part of the county unit. We see it as an opportunity to equalize education, not only between races but within the races. We haven't had too much democracy in education in Mississippi ... and towns and cities would fare satisfactorily if more educational advances were offered in rural areas (Future 1957:1).

The Panola County Board of Education's position, defended by Hill Jarratt, Esq was also one which favored a county unit school system (one district system). According to Jarratt, 'Panola County is a horrible example of the two district system, a reference which apparently described the overlapping function of two county seats. ... The county [Panola] has been running a county unit system for Negro schools since

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[11] Equalizing in this regard would mean that small schools such as Pope, Crenshaw, and Crowder would have a near equal say in individual school decisions as would the larger schools of Sardis and Batesville.

1951 and the Negroes seem satisfied with that system' (Future 1957:1). This contention, however was challenged by Dr John Phay, a member of the Bureau of Educational Research survey team who reminded the commission that the black schools were in much worse condition than their white counterpart (Future 1957:1).

No immediate action was taken as the Mississippi Educational Finance Commission's chairman, Louis Alford, was absent (Future of Panola's schools 1957:1). Proponents of the alternative two-district plan stated that it would be more equitable and would preserve the educational tranquility of the county. Attorneys for the dual system stated that it would allow high schools at Sardis and Batesville as recommended by the University of Mississippi survey team. They also favored two Negro high schools in the same set-up rather than one as recommended by the survey group (Panola countians 1957:1).

Following significant consideration the Educational Finance Commission decided to reject the board of education's proposal relating to a one district system and accepted the alternative two-district one (Commission rejects 1957:1). The Commission stated that the Panola County Board of Education had till 1 July to submit an acceptable two-district plan. An editorial in *The Panolian* (The school decision 1957:1) stated that.

> while it is possible that places of residence, old political scares and personalities may have figured in the formation of ranks for one or the other of the two systems which were proposed locally, there is no reason to believe that the state-appointed commission held any pre-conceived ideas as to which of the two systems would be most suited for the county. There is every reason to believe that the commission gave the matter its considered opinion over a period of several weeks and that its ruling is a go-ahead signal for the Panola County Board of Education as it reconvenes to carry out the commission's decision.

Although a surprise to many who had given up all hope regarding the two-district system, others realized that the battle was probably far from being resolved. These concerns indeed proved to be accurate, as on 16 May 1957 *The Panolian* ran an article regarding

a closed session of the Panola County Board of Education in Como. Although the board meeting was to have been held in secret, *The Commercial Appeal* (in Memphis, Tennessee) carried a brief notice stating that the meeting was held in the home of the assistant superintendent of education (County board ... in session 1957:1). Absent from the meeting was Mr J. Wesley Whitten, an area Beat 5[12] board member. According to *The Panolian*, President C. M. Randolph stated that Mr Whitten's absence[13] was due to his stand in favor of the two-district plan (County board ... in session 1957:1). Randolph further stated that the meeting held in Como was not official and that certain members had merely met to work things out (Co. school board 1957:1). Randolph, however, refused to provide any indication as to what had occurred at this "secret" meeting. Whitten, however, stated that although he had wished to attend, the meeting had been called in secret preventing his attendance (County board ... in session 1957:1). According to Lindgren, in his work *Panola Remembers* (1994:143),

> This action by the board was taken by many, including the board of trustees of both Batesville and Sardis, as a deliberate retaliatory act for the SEFC's decision in favour of a two-district system. Later it was discovered that the Panola County Board of Education had met to revamp the previously rejected plan for re-issue to the ... SEFC.
>
> During this period, the county was running the risk of losing nearly two million in school funding. It was becoming evident that the board intended to maintain its position regarding the one county-unit. One of the biggest issues now faced by parents and teachers was that teachers could not be rehired for the following autumn semester until a plan was accepted. Some teachers dissatisfied with the slow pace were seeking employment elsewhere. Parents knew that if there were no teachers, there could be no school.

Many county residents had grown increasingly tired of the board's lack of presentation of their decisions. As one individual tearfully stated, '[a]ll I want to know is whether or

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[12] Beat refers to a section of land in the county which has elected representation by residents of that area.

[13] It was later revealed that Mr Whitten had simply not been invited - a decision which would cause considerable resentment and anger by residents both from Sardis and Batesville. According to Mr Whitten he knew nothing of the board meeting and was not away from Batesville at the time of the session (County board ... in session 1957:1) .

not my children are going to have a place to go to school this fall' (School board 1957:1).

On 24 May the Panola County Board of Education met again to revise their proposal for the one-unit system for the county. They stated that 'the vast majority of the people who are familiar with the schools of said county believe the county unit system to be [the] best ... ' (Revised education 1957:1). Later the following month the board submitted the proposal to the Mississippi Educational Finance Commission. This submission was made, however, only after an angry group of between 45-50 concerned citizens met with Panola County Superintendent of Education L. R. White requesting the proposal be immediately submitted. This conformation came in light of the fact that several of the county's best teachers had accepted employment elsewhere due to the board's indecision and the inability of the current school administrators to legally negotiate contracts for the next school year. According to an article in *The Panolian* the proposal was, upon deliberation, once again rejected by the commission (2nd hearing 1957:1). At this point in the deliberations, any future objections proposed by the board would have to be made before the Panola County Chancery Court. This was, according to the newspaper article, provisional on the board's continued stand for the one-unit system and the outcome of the forthcoming 18 June public hearing. The article further stated that if the board controversy was not determined by 1 July, the state legislature would be required to re-establish the delinquent system (2nd hearing 1957:1).

This reconstruction (i.e. consolidation)[14] was to occur before 1 July 1957 (Panola county faces 1957:1). If the school districts within a given county fail to meet the

[14] The state legislature, under Chapter 12, of the Laws Extraordinary Session of 1953, had previously abolished all the school districts within the state but had allowed their continued existence until such time that the districts were able to reconstitute themselves through an acceptable consolidation proposal. Panola was only one of many such counties that was striving to reach the deadline and produce an acceptable consolidation plan (see footnote 3).

Mississippi Educational Finance Commission's deadline, by state law they could be abolished and not be eligible to receive nearly $2,000,000 in school revenue (Panola county faces 1957:1). Surprisingly, however, the board on Monday 17 June reversed its decision by acceptance of the two-district system. Board's attorney, Hill Jarratt, on 18 June, carried the amended order to the Educational Finance Commission. Shortly before the 1 July deadline, the state commission with consent of the Panola County Board of Education, agreed upon a two-unit system which led to the formation of the South Panola and North Panola Consolidated School Systems. (County board, state commission 1957:1) .

According to the late Van Palmertree (1991:3) this period in educational history was a time of constant change, reorganizing, and debate. Palmertree states that 'the bitter disputes of the late 1950's, [re: the county's reorganisation] was one of the most disruptive in Panola's educational history. [This] ... period was extremely difficult since nearly all the teachers, parents, and students felt betrayed.

Bobby Carlisle (1993, 4B:4) also echos Palmertree's concerns when he stated:

> That was a "bloody" issue. ... [the dispute regarding the one unit vs the two district system] which caused a lot of bad blood that still exists today. There were some people who felt like we should be a one county wide school. [Others felt in favor of the two district system]. The reason [this occurred] ... goes back to the days of consolidation ... in the late 30's, early 40's, when consolidation really began to speed up and ... hit a lot of people and they did not want to lose their schools because once they lost their schools, they lost the center of the community. ... [However] I certainly believe that because of the makeup of the county, going back into the 1800s, [it] would [not] have survived having a single school district.[15]

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[15] Mr Carlisle was referring to the continued battle between residents north and south of the river regarding political, economic, and social conflicts. With one large unit (single unit) resident of both sides would have constantly been in an educational battle over money, politics, and social issues. This separation, however, caused by mistrust, resentment, and a desire to retain local control, was to weaken the northern school system. Within the forthcoming years, a poor economic base, contrasting educational philosophy, poor/corrupt educational leadership (see Chapter 6), would drive the northern educational system into a stage of gradual decay. This apathy on the part of black and white parents during integration (Chapter 5) led to the near destruction of North Panola Consolidated School District (see section 6.4.1.1).

4.4.3 Implementation of the Mississippi Educational Finance Commission Guidelines

By winter of 1957, the Commission approved a long-range strategy for South Panola schools. This scheme entailed the following:

1. that schools be maintained in Batesville, Pope and Lake Carrier;
2. that a new junior high school be built for Batesville; and
3 that there be only one black central high school and elementary school in Batesville with additional elementary schools in the southern and western portions of the district. (Lindgren 1993:146)

Attorney William Corr (1978:29, 3) stated that this school district division was generally beneficial to both sections of the county. However, he felt that it was an issue which should be continually watched and, had in some ways caused potential problems with integration of the 1960s (see section 5.4). He felt, that with this separation Sardis residents must be on-guard in their attempt to keep up with South Panola schools. This was something they failed to achieve (Corr 1978:29, 3) (see sections 6.3.1.1, 6.3.2.6, and 6.4.1.1). Further Mr Corr felt, as had been previously noted (see 4.4.2), that even with school achievements and building of new facilities people will continue to be resentful and fearful on both sides of the river. The division proved to be one which isolated residents in both sections, produced diverse teaching methods and led to the weakening of the Sardis Consolidated School System during integration (see section 5.4) and throughout the remainder of the century (see sections 6.3.1 and 6.4.1.1).

4.5 PROBLEMS RELATING TO BLACK EDUCATION DURING CONSOLIDATION DISTRICTING

During the debates and arguments which were brewing between residents of the county regarding the one or two district system, many limitations were noticed in both

black and white curricula. These shortcomings had existed for many years but were made evident by the Bureau of Educational Research and the Mississippi Educational Finance Commission.

4.5.1 Black Schools and Curricula Unsuited to Actual Needs

During the debate over the one and two-district system it was noted by area educators that the 'more than 3400 Negro boys and girls in Panola County attended schools in 38 different attendance centers ... In addition 300 more attended in the Como Separate School District and about the same number attended in the Sardis Separate School District' (Negro schools 1956:1). Although consolidation of smaller black schools was increasing, reducing the initial number in 1950 of over 100 to less than fifty, there was still work to be done. Many of these attendance centers did not possess transportation requiring blacks to walk the long distance to their classes. Upon reaching their schools the students were met with poor facilities and poorly trained instructors. Most of these schools were still located in area black churches (Negro schools 1956:1).

The curriculum at the black facilities was in most cases limited and outdated. Books were old and out-of-print (Lindgren 1993:143). Many black students had to share books with their fellow students. As noted in section 4.5.1.1, the problem seemed to be one of money, lack of interest by politicians, and a general poor learning environment.

4.5.1.1 Poor Curriculum

The excessive number of black students and few teachers (only 119) were complicated by what educators felt to be an extremely poor curriculum. The black

curricula of the early 1950s was one limited to scope and sequence. In many cases money played an important role in this situation as teachers were poorly paid, and schools lacked most equipment necessary to an environment conducive to learning. None of the upper level sciences, math, or foreign languages were taught. Courses in many other areas were also lacking according to Mr Palmertree (1991:3A, 4). The black schools' curricula were essentially the same as had existed since the Legislative Reconstruction era comprising of reading, writing and simple math. History courses, geography, and grammar comprised the remainder of the course study (Palmertree 1991:3A, 4).

4.6 EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE LATE 1950s, UNDER THE DUAL-DISTRICT SYSTEM

After the creation of the consolidated dual district system, many problems occurred concerning the county's school system and its ability to maintain a progressive and functional school environment. By 1958, North Panola schools were facing the problem of consolidation, increased student enrollment, teacher training and expressing fears regarding not having the necessary funds for school expansion (consolidation) (Lindgren 1993:134-138). South Panola High School (Batesville) was also having several problems including difficulty in retaining a principal, complications regarding increased school enrollment, raising funds, and confusion reigned over the recently implemented dual district decision (Lindgren 1994:144-149).

According to Lindgren's *Panola Remembers* (1994:144-45):

> In June, Malcolm Shackelford applied for the position of South Panola superintendent. After deliberation by the South Panola School Board, his application was rejected. He

was, however, offered the position of principal of the Batesville High School—which, in turn, he declined. During the first week of July, Webster Hill, who had served as assistant superintendent of Panola County Education, was selected as the new North Panola County School superintendent. According to the 4 July issue of *The Panolian* 'harmony' was given as the reason why Shackelford's application was denied by the South Panola Board. The paper further states that "harmony" must not have played much of a role in selecting Mr Hill, as many patrons of Sardis were against his appointment. Resentment was due, in part, to his strong support of the county board's one unit system and the fact that the previous "secret" meeting in Como was held at his home. South Panola [High School] was still without a principal.

4.6.1 South Panola High School has Difficulty in Retaining a Principal

During the month of July 1957, as the Board of Education was amending its proposal for the SEFC, the South Panola County School Board finally selected J. B. Baker as principal. Baker had previously served in Baldwyn as superintendent (Baldwyn educator 1957:1). By March 1958 the board had again selected a new high school principal. On this occasion the board chose Mr C. E. Steele who had previously held principal positions at both Hamilton and Ackerman High Schools (South Panola school appointments 1958:1).[16] Within two years, in March 1960, Mr Steele resigned to assume a position as superintendent of the Water Valley Consolidated School District (Steele 1960:1). Steels's resignation was quite sudden and no reason was given. Almost immediately this vacancy was filled by Joe Hamlin, then principal of the Sardis High School where he had served since 1957 (Steele 1960:1). Mr Hamlin continued serving in this capacity for the next 17 years, during the integration era, one of the educational system's most difficult and trying periods (see Chapter 5).

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[16] Although the high school was experiencing difficulty in selecting and maintaining a principal, the elementary principal's position was quite stable, being held by the capable Vashti (Mrs J.R.) Lewis since 1953. Mrs Lewis retained the position until 1965 when she moved to accept a position at Blue Mountain College. She was replaced by Louise (Mrs E.W.) Crowley (Cole 1996:DC46, 3).

4.6.2 Construction and Development of Educational Facilities in the Late 1950s

Shortly after the formation of the dual district system nearly ten million dollars was approved for school allocation. This allocation was approved by the State Educational Finance Commission. This was achieved through the sale of twenty million dollars in school bonds (Almost 1958:1). The bond issue and the ready acceptance of the local residents to participate, aided in school expansion which would lead to a new high school[17] in Batesville in the mid-1960s (see section 5.4).

Money for school funding, came at a time when it was desperately needed as schools in the northern district boasted 943 white and 2,642 black students (943 White pupils 1958:1). According to *The Southern Reporter* (943 White pupils 1958:1), this trend of massive enrollment was expected to continue in both school districts. Money was therefore needed to provide for new facilities, better teachers, supplies, and curriculum development.

4.6.2.1 Sardis School Construction

After some deliberation it was decided to construct the new white high school[18] for North Panola (Sardis) on Highway 51, north of West Lee Street (New 1959:1). This location was decided on, due to its location, access to adequate drinking water, highway access, and the foreseeable reduction of highway traffic due to the future construction

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[17] In the early 1960s, a bond issue was passed which created a newer elementary school building for grades one through three. 'The [then] present junior high school building [was ...] to be used by grades four, five, and six. Grades seven through nine will use the present senior high school building' (School Bond 1964:1). Batesville also put forth a bond issue providing a new senior high school and administrative faculties for the South Panola School District

[18] The old high school was closed.

of a super (Interstate) highway. The site according to board members was also capable of providing an excellent location for an athletic field and other developments (see Chapter 6 as to how this facility was nearly closed down in the mid-1990s due to poor management and corruption).

4.6.2.2 Batesville School Construction

In Batesville, D. F. Lambert Construction Co. of Belmont had submitted a successful bid for the construction of the South Panola Junior High, gymnasium and band hall. According to *The Panolian* 'construction of the junior high school will remove the seventh and eighth graders from present buildings and ... make possible for county line students to attend . . . in the county of residence' (Belmont firm 1960:1). This building was able for several years to remove much of the overcrowding, leading to a better more stable teaching environment.

4.6.3 Educational and Curriculum Development in the Late 1950s

Along, with the development of new facilities within the county came the realization that if the schools were to continue to grow they must also have trained professional teachers, efficient transportation, and improved curriculum. Batesville High School boasted thirty-eight courses to be taught during the 1960-61 session (Broader curriculum 1960:1). According to *Panola Remembers* (Lindgren 1993:147), 'a partial listing included: English I-IV, French I and II, Latin I and II, geometry, algebra I and II, biology, chemistry, physics, general science, American history, world history, Mississippi history, government, sociology, shorthand, [and] bookkeeping'.

4.7 CONCLUSION

There are four general conclusions which may be drawn from this chapter. These conclusions present a picture of the county's desire, especially North Panola, to retain its independence in terms of education. This chapter also presents, although less evident than in previous chapters (i.e. Chapters 2 and 3) as well as Chapter 5 which relates to integration, a picture of fear, isolation, resentment, and disorder on the part of North Panola politicians in their dealings with consolidation and overall educational concerns.

First, the disagreement over consolidation was one that touched the lives of people on both sides of the Tallahachie River and turned neighbors against neighbors. As Carlisle and Palmertree noted, the consolidation issue (see section 4.4.1) had a more lasting impact than that of integration.

Second, there is evidence according to educators Carlisle and Palmertree (see section 4.4.2) that North Panola residents were concerned about the potential demise of their community if a one school district system was formed. This fear of demise, government intervention, and a desire to isolate, became even more evident during the 1960s when both regions, north and south of the river, were forced to confront educational integration (see section 5.4.1).

Third, residents of Sardis and Batesville were nearly 100 per cent opposed to the 1955 Bureau of Educational Research's school survey which suggested the establishment of a one-school district (see section 4.3.1). This they felt to be an intrusion into their personal and social existence. (see section 4.4.2).

Fourth, as stated by Mr Carlisle (see section 4.4.2), with the continuing battle between residents north and south of the river, since the 1830s, regarding political,

economic, and social conflicts there was the potential with a one school district that residents of both sides would have constantly been in an educational battle over money, politics, and social issues.

Finally it should be noted that this continued separation in the 1950s due to the establishing of the dual district system led to the weakening of the North Panola Consolidated School System. In forthcoming years as noted in Chapters 5 and 6, a poor economic power base, contrasting educational philosophy, poor and corrupt educational leadership (see section 6.4.1.1), drove the northern educational system into a stage of apathy and gradual decay. The South Panola Consolidated School System would from its formation in 1957 continue to grow with school construction, more revenues, better administrators and teachers, higher test scores on state testing (see sections 6.2.2.1, 6.3.2.3, 6.3.2.6, and 6.4.1.2) and stronger legislative representation at the state capital (see section 6.4.1.2).

5.0 CHAPTER 5
THE IMPACT OF BLACK INTEGRATION NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE TALLAHATCHIE, 1954-1970

5.1 INTRODUCTION

While the state and county were concerned with the aspects of consolidation, building repair, improving educational opportunities for white students, and expanding high school facilities, an incident far removed from the county was taking shape, one that would have educational repercussions on North and South Panola. Since Reconstruction (1865-1876) (see sections 3.2.1 and 3.7.1) "separate but equal" (see section 4.2.1) concerning racial issues had remained the status quo throughout the South. Now, in the 1950s, through federal intervention and non-violent protests, blacks were being offered for the first time an opportunity to attend white school facilities.

Chapter 4 of this work provided an introduction to five segregation cases which were pending in the United States Supreme Court in the early 1950s. These court cases were concerned with the segregational practices of several U.S. schools (Gore 1953a:2) (see section 4.2.1). Specifically the court was troubled by the schools' use of the practice of "separate but equal" as a means of separating black and white students.

This chapter provides further insight into the landmark case of Brown v. the Board of Education (see section 4.2.1). Additionally, this chapter will discuss the ramifications of the court's decision as it related to Mississippi public schools, the integration of schools in Panola County, and finally the influence of such integration on North and South Panola education.

5.2 BROWN V. THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In 1954 a landmark case (*Brown v. the Board of Education*, 347 US 483 —1954) was before the United States Supreme Court (see Appendix 5). This court case would for all times change the "separate but equal" doctrine announced in 1896 with U. S. Supreme Court Justice Henry B. Brown's decision in *Plessy vs Ferguson* (see section 4.2.1). Chief Justice Earl Warren stated that the justices had ruled that separate schooling is "inherently unequal" (Bork 1990:74).

Robert H. Bork's book, *The Tempting of America* states that, 'segregation laws of the various states were declared to violate the equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment. [see Chapter 4, footnote 2] ... It was not immediately apparent that all racial segregation by law was unconstitutional' (Bork 1990:75).

Ironically, Mississippi felt immune to the *Brown v. the Board of Education* decision. White residents of the state hoped that if the threat of integration was ignored, perhaps it would go away (Amis 1998:160B, 3). During the 1950s, few articles concerning *Brown v. the Board of Education* or integration appeared in the local papers.

5.3 POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES AFTER THE BROWN DECISION

Initially only a few notices appeared in the local papers regarding the Supreme Court's decision and its possible ramification on local schools. Other papers, throughout the state, however, did begin carrying reports on what they considered to be federal intervention, violation of states rights', and northern meddling (Amis 1998:160B, 3).

5.3.1 Developments in Panola County in the 1950s

As noted, few articles appeared in the area papers regarding integration, *Brown*, or federal intervention. One of the first noted by the researcher pertained to a report (1956) issued by the Bureau of Educational Research at the University of Mississippi (see section 4.3.1). This article entitled 'Negro Schools and Curriculums Said Unsuitable to Actual Needs', states that there were in 1955, more than 3400 black boys and girls (see section 4.5.1) in the Panola County School System (Negro Schools and Curriculums 1956:1). According to the article Negro Schools and Curriculums (1956:1), these pupils attended thirty-eight different small county facilities with approximately six hundred more attending the larger Como[1] and Sardis[2] Separate Schools (see Chapter 3, footnote 22). 'The student-teacher ratio was much larger in the black schools, while twenty-two of the 38 county black schools did not possess pupil transportation. According to the article, black facilities were not on an equal par with the white schools. Many classes were being held in small rural churches. Textbooks, equipment and training still posed grave problems' (Lindgren 1994:130). Another concern was the poor attendance of black students (Situation 1963:1). This was especially true of the North Panola District which during the last week of October 1963 had experienced an overall 72 per cent absenteeism of students. 'Figures show that of the 2759 Negro children enrolled in the four schools of the district, only 772 were in attendance ...' (Situation 1963:1). Unconcern by black

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[1] The area of Como was composed of old rich families with social contacts in Memphis, Tennessee and New York (Carlisle 1993:4BA, 6).

[2] Sardis and Batesville community life was diverse. Sardis had fewer factories and larger farms while Batesville community tended to have smaller farms and more industry. Batesville had a larger population, school, and industrial base. They also possessed a newer and larger courthouse. Batesville residents thought of their northern neighbors (i.e. Sardis) as being backward because of rural occupation and Sardis residents felt that Batesville was too preoccupied with making money through outside northern (referring to the northern US) factory relocations (Amis 1993:11B, 5).

parents was cited by some white parents and businessmen as being a major reason for absenteeism. Another reason was the necessity of black students to forgo their schooling to pick cotton (Negro schools 1963:1). Sometimes pupils, during cotton picking season, were absent from school for as long as a month (Glover 1995:TG29, 3).

With all the years since Reconstruction and *Plessy v Ferguson* (see section 4.2.1) the so-called "separate but equal" naivete was still weighted towards the white schools and students. A follow-up article, referred to a common pattern in Mississippi Negro schools which indicated a relatively large number of children in the first grade with a few scattered throughout the other seven grades (Panola Negro 1956:1).

During the 1950s, black public schools, like those in previous years, were limited economically and socially in comparison to segregated public white facilities. The black schools were housed in inferior facilities, teachers were ill prepared and the curriculum was limited in scope and sequence. Much of this limitation was due to the lack of funding and state financial support. Most whites, whether they were parents, educator, or politicians, ignored the plight of the black student. Whites in Panola, and Mississippi as a whole, were, however, becoming aware of the potential ramifications of the *Brown* decision (Lindgren 1994:131).

5.3.2 Developments in Neighboring States and Counties after the Brown Decision

Southern newspapers by 1957 had begun carrying reports of what they considered federal intervention, northern trouble makers, and southern racial sympathizers. Headlines such as 'Integration Protests Erupt in 3 Southern States', 'Gov. Faubus Talks to Eisenhower on Week-End', and 'Integration Begins in Arkansas High School, Bayonets

Assure It' began to appear. Southern whites were gradually becoming aware of the fate which awaited them. *The Panolian* states that

> violence was a part of protests in three states—Arkansas, Tennessee and Alabama—and the major physical damage appeared to be in Nashville, Tenn. where dynamite destroyed a half million dollar elementary school building in which one Negro first grader was enrolled. ... Governor Orval Faubus ... order[ed] the Arkansas National Guard to prevent entrance of Negro students into Little Rock's Central High School. National Guardsmen were carrying out the orders of the Governor. ... At Phillips High School in Birmingham, Ala., a Negro who was taking his two children to the school on Monday was beaten severely about the head. One of the children sustained a foot injury when a white man slammed a car door on her leg and the child's mother was knifed in the back during the melee (Integration Protests Erupt 1957:1).
>
> . . . on Tuesday, the President had federalized the Arkansas National Guard. . . . The President emphasized that the troops are in Little Rock "solely for the purpose of preventing interference with the orders of the court" which directed the admission of nine Negroes to the school (Integration Begins in Arkansas 1957:1).

In 1962, a riot took place on the University of Mississippi campus in Oxford, Mississippi (located some 22 miles from Batesville – see Map 3). The riot, according to local papers, was due to the use of Negro troops in an attempt to suppress potential violence on the university campus. This threat of violence as perceived by federal law enforcement followed the entry of James Meredith as a student (Negro enrolls 1962:1). The entry of Meredith, a black student, to the all white university was viewed by many whites as the end to a true southern institution of higher learning. This they bitterly resented. The Batesville National Guard as well as other local guard units were federalized by then President John F. Kennedy to provide protection to Mr Meridith and to further prevent the outbreak of additional violence (Negro enrolls 1962:1). By their entry onto the campus, protesters and rioters had become violent, hurling gasoline bombs, burning automobiles and throwing rocks at U. S. Marshals and blacks. After the riot which led to the death of a French journalist and a local Oxford resident, 150 rioters were remanded into custody (Negro enrolls 1962:1). According to *The Panolian*, one

individual arrested was former Major General Edwin Walker who had previous been commander of troops during the Little Rock Arkansas, riots (Negro enrolls 1962:1).

5.4 EDUCATIONAL ISSUES IN PANOLA DURING THE 1960s

Panola County Superintendent of Education C. C. Holloman (1961:1) in a report which appeared in *The Panolian* recommended 'immediate action ... to consolidate the high school grades of South Panola'. He stated that this is in compliance with the plan submitted, on July 11, 1959, to the State Educational Finance Commission by the South Panola School Board.[3] This consolidated plan proposed the transfer to Batesville High School of the Pope school pupils in grades 10 through 12. Students in grades 1 through 9 would remain in the Pope school system. In a later interview with Holloman (1991, 30A:2), shortly before his death, he stated that in his opinion, consolidation was a necessity for school growth and aided greatly in the assimilation of black students.

With added consolidation, by the mid-1960s the South Panola School Board was seeking ways to alleviate crowded conditions in the all white elementary. A bond issue was passed which created a newer elementary school building for grades one through three. 'The [then] present junior high school building [was ...] to be used by grades four, five, and six. Grades seven through nine [would] use the present senior high school building' (School Bond 1964:1). Batesville also put forth a bond issue providing a new

[3] The two district school boards represented different constituencies with South Panola representing small farmers and numerous small industries and North Panola controlled by the large plantation owners (Wirt 1970:198).

senior high school[4] and administrative faculties for the South Panola School District. The bond, in the amount of $1,300,000, provided for the construction of a 'high school building, furniture and equipment, principal's residence, administrative building, athletic facilities, grading of the site, and incidental fees nominally connected by building construction and the issue of bonds' (School board 1964:1).

It was amidst these school improvements, student overpopulation, and the usual school growing pains that Batesville was forced to address integration - something which most white administrators and teachers wished had never arrived.

5.4.1 Integration in Panola County

During integration of the Panola County school system, both North and South Panola confronted the issue with resentment, suspicion and open rebellion. The two districts, however, were slightly different in their style of opposition. Both districts (North and South Panola), however, by 1965, the beginning of freedom-of-choice integration (see footnote 5), fell short of the federal guideline requirements (see sections 5.4.1.1 and 5.4.1.2). This issue originally began with the two districts submitting their plans to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) in early 1965.

5.4.1.1 Integration in North Panola

The North Panola school district submitted their proposal to the HEW in 1965 with hopes that the federal government would accept their freedom-of-choice proposal.

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[4] With the construction of the new high school, Batesville business leaders used this as evidence of their commitment to education and their superiority over North Panola. During this time, as in past years, the two county weekly newspapers ignored school news from the other district (Wirt 1970:199).

In April of that year, North Panola's proposal, like that of the South Panola district was disapproved by the Office of Education. Later that year, the school board from Sardis requested that an HEW representative be sent from Washington, D. C. to approve a new revision. A representative was sent to Jackson, Mississippi to meet with the North Panola superintendent of education as well as nineteen other district supervisors (Wirt 1970: 199). Approval was granted to North Panola for their proposed four-grades-a-year freedom-of-choice plan.[5] This proposal, as submitted by North Panola, stated that grades 1-4 would be integrated during the 1965-66 school term. During the following school term (1966-67), administrators were expected to integrate the next four grades. By the fall of 1967 all grades (1-12) in the North Panola system were to be integrated (Wirt 1970:199). The North Panola School Board and district supervisor also assured the Office of Civil Rights that this would also mean faculty integration. Although accepting federal government intervention somewhat before their counterparts in South Panola, the board was very unhappy with what it saw as the destruction of the local school system and the corrupting of white students (Wirt 1970:199).

The 1966-67 school year produced a very dismal view toward desegregation with only nineteen blacks entering the all-white high school (Wirt 1970:200). By the 1967-68 school term few blacks had decided to enroll in white schools. The federal government realized that the freedom-of-choice option was not working in the North or South Panola Districts. In 1967, the HEW began to formulate the principle of forced integration.

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[5] Although perceived as a freedom-of-choice plan, the federal government expected the local school administrators to actively support the integration program by recruiting students to enter the all white schools. In this manner, children were provided with a choice between attending their former black schools or attending white facilities. However, North Panola school officials although outwardly embracing the freedom-of-choice plan did not actively encourage blacks to enter the all white schools. In fact, students were encouraged to stay where they were (Amis 1998:160B, 3).

By the 1969-70 school year, both districts had met the requirement deadlines. The requirement was simple in that all schools were to be integrated with at least 20% of the black pupils in attendance at formerly all-white schools (Wirt 1970:1).

5.4.1.2 Integration in South Panola

Ten years after *Brown vs Board of Education* (see section 5.2), no school district in Mississippi was integrated (Wirt 1970:183). In that year, the 1964 Civil Rights Act was passed. Within this act, was the now famous Title VI of which one section, stated: 'No person in the United States shall, on grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance' (Wirt 1970:187). Title VI also allowed the U. S. government the power to withdraw federal funds from any program or agency which showed discrimination (Wirt 1970:187). The following year, the federal government acting on the 1964 Civil Rights Act implemented a series of guidelines regarding education.

Also that year, in 1965, the South Panola County School Board[6] and the South Panola County Superintendent of Education announced a gradual plan of desegregation for area schools (School boards 1965:1). In devising this plan, the local boards hoped to provide a scheme, based on voluntary desegregation and freedom-of-choice by pupils,[7]

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[6] The Panola County Board of Education was responsible for all educational activities within the county. The individual school boards (North and South Panola School Boards) were under separate districts (North and South Panola). The Panola County Board of Education served under the county's superintendent of education.

[7] 'Plans based on freedom-of-choice were widely adopted in the South, including Panola County. Here pupils and their parents had to be given adequate opportunity to make a choice of where their children would attend. The choice procedure had to be simply drawn, widely publicized, and guaranteed not to penalize any pupil for his choice. Further, a target date of the Fall of 1967 was set as the deadline for desegregation of every grade'(Wirt 1970:188).

to the federal government consisting of the integration of the first grade in South Panola (as well as North Panola) with an additional grade being desegregated yearly. Although providing such a resolution for government inspection, each document in its foreword provided a detail enclosure of the district's objection to what they considered federal interference. These objections generally stated that in the opinion of the South Panola School Board, the biracial school system was in the best interest of both blacks and whites and afforded all children the best learning opportunity. Further, the board stated that the two races possessed 'differences in traits of temperament, thought patterns, aptitudes and other elements directly affecting the educational potential of the group members' (School boards 1965:1). The South Panola School Board felt that 'separate classes with teachers of the same race [were] academically superior, [and] that separate classes [would] diminish the number of delinquents and drop-outs in school' (School boards 1965:1).

Then South Panola School Board member James H. Moore (1993:9A, 4) agreed with this assertion by stating that 'the main problem was the difference between the mentality of the blacks and whites. You take a black in a third grade class at his original school, put him in the third grade in the white school and he is behind'.

The *Southern Reporter* (School compliance 1965:1) carried the South Panola School Board's resolution. As noted, the board proposed that the preservation of a biracial school system by the county was to be discontinued, starting with the first grade in each school. This was to become effective with the 1965-66 school year which began in September, 1965. Further, the board announced that an additional grade (perhaps more) would be added at the beginning of each school year. The board wanted, however

to retain control over the exact number of grades which would be integrated yearly and by what order (School compliance 1965:1). The South Panola School Board's resolution stated that all children regardless of race, creed, or color, should be allowed entry into the converted schools of their choice. Also in the event that there was not enough space for all pupils in a given school or class, 'priority of admission shall be determined solely upon the basis of reasonably justifiable administrative consideration without regard to race, color, creed or national origin' (School compliance 1965:1). This was the manner in which the South Panola School Board hoped to comply with federal integration.

By 1965 it became evident that the federal government was not interested in the opinions of local board members, north and south of the river, regarding potential differences of the races. The government was also not in favor of the gradual integration of the lower grades yearly but wanted a more diverse throughout approach of the grades. According to Moore (1993:9A, 4),

> The federal government stressed an approach which would integrate the first, seventh, ninth and twelfth grades initially. We had delegations from Washington to come down and meet with us. .... We were interested in trying to keep the school and also comply with the government. We stressed the importance of providing quality education and disrupting the education of the students as little as possible. They mentioned that they did not have anything to do with education, that their job was integration. And they did not care what happened to education as long as ... [the schools] were integrated. You either did [integrate] or [you] did not get any federal money.

In July 1965, one month after the initial rejection of the South Panola School Board's first grade integration plan by federal representatives, the board introduced a proposal which would lead to the desegregation of the first four grades during the 1965-66 school term (South Panola school plan 1965:1). In many ways, the proposed plan followed the scheme which had been proposed by the North Panola Consolidated School System in Sardis (see section 5.4.11) and accepted by the Office of Health Education and Welfare in Washington. The plan was not based on mandatory enrollment but rather a

freedom-of-choice measure which afforded any student black or white the opportunity to attend the previous all white schools. According to a notice in *The Panolian*, '[local] teachers, principals or other school personnel are not permitted to advise ... or otherwise influence the decisions involved; and school personnel are restrained from favoring or penalizing children because of the choice made'(South Panola school plan 1965:1).

By autumn of 1965, registration for grades one through four under the new freedom-of-choice regulations had begun within the county. Only five blacks had enrolled in South Panola schools (Carlisle 1993:4B, 3) (eight blacks had enrolled at Sardis Elementary School while seven registered in Como Elementary) (Negroes 1965:1).

Under the approved Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) integration plan, the first four grades were open to all races, with grades five through eight scheduled for integration in the 1966 term and full integration under free choice to occur by 1967.

In May 1968, the Department of Health Education, and Welfare declared that the South Panola District was not in federal compliance with guidelines set forth by the HEW in that the district had not aggressively pursued a timely integration of these grades. HEW felt that South Panola had been intentionally working against the intent of the plan. Such non-compliance meant that the South Panola schools could not qualify for federal assistance (District 1968:1). According to County Superintendent of Education L. S. Davidson, as of 30 April 1968, the county had received $1,039,429.22 in aid, during the past two years. According to Davidson, schools within the district simply could not run without this much needed assistance.[8] The Department of HEW cited that the withdrawal of funding was due in part to 'the assignment of teachers (faculties have not been

[8] The issue is the old conflict between federal regulation and local tradition. In somewhat of a similar position were 124 other school districts in the South that have lost Federal funds in the past four years and still had not submitted to school integration. Another 355 school districts were under court orders to desegregate (Carlisle 1993:4BA, 5).

desegregated), fear of Negro parents caused by a long history of segregation and suppression, and failure to encourage community support of desegregation plan ...' (District 1968:1). The Department of HEW also cited that the South Panola School Board 'had refused to close schools that are set up for segregated purposes and that school buses had not been desegregated' (District 1968:1).

Regarding the potential withdrawal of federal funding, one local Batesville druggist stated, 'as far as I am concerned they can take their money [the federal government] and jam it' (Wirt 1970:206). Likewise a Batesville banker of the period was quoted as saying 'the Negro schools have got three projectors for each classroom and so many encyclopedias they are using them for toilet paper. I don't know anybody whose worried about losing their funds' (Wirt 1970:206).

According to Mike Amis (1993:11B, 2), a South Panola School Board member in 1967, the general attitude in the South and in the State of Mississippi was 'to hell with what the federal government says. The government did not build the damn schools and by God, they are not going to tell us what to do'. This was, however, not reality. As Amis had been in the Mississippi National Guard he knew that they [the government] could tell Panolians what to do as they had done earlier on the University of Mississippi campus during the registration of James Meredith (see section 5.3.2). According to Amis, 'there was not many points of lets negotiate or lets talk'. So rather than fight it and fuss and feud, we [members of the South Panola School Board] started trying to figure out the best way to [comply].' According to Amis (1993:11B, 2):

> We took it [the letter of incompliance] as a cue and rather than fighting it we decided that this was perhaps our opportunity to get something from the federal government so we adopted the policy that we would give ... [the government] something if ... [the

> government] gave us something.[9] At that particular time we decided that we would totally integrate the high school if they would build these new classrooms for us. They did. We then stated that we would totally integrate the elementary grade by proposing to move the junior high school out to Westside school which was a formerly all black facility. We stated that the purpose being was that we felt like the community would accept Westside more than Patton Lane which was located in the black section of Batesville. And they did.

Amis stated (1993:11B, 3) that during that time (1969) there was talk by some in the white community of buying up all the property down Patton Lane, west of Old Panola (Panola Avenue), and putting up cyclone fences down the street. 'As far as I was concerned that would have been a slap in the face to the black community. We were going to buy up all the little houses, raze them or move them and build a road of cyclone fences' (Amis 1993:11B, 3). The ironic proposal of course never took shape. Although there was resentment, by both whites and blacks within the southern part of Panola county, the local newspaper and school board worked together to ease much of the potential racial stress.

According to *The Panolian* (HEW 1969:1) three federal investigators from the Health Education and Welfare met with officials of the South Panola County School District in February 1969 in an attempt to bring the district into HEW compliance and restore its eligibility for receiving federal funds. Regarding the meeting, *The Panolian* (School Board 1969:1) stated:

> We have no advice, no solutions. It is our hope that Divine Providence will manifest itself at the conference table today. A hope that men of reasonable knowledge, sensitivity and concern, with the grace of God, will arrive at conclusions which will

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[9] According to R. J.(Robert) Miles, Sr. (1993:10B, 2) 'there were very little problems with integration in Batesville because they felt that they were forced to do so or had to do so and initially there was such a small number of blacks going to the white school. Although there were problems in other areas of the county, there didn't seem to be any problems within this area [South Panola]. The blacks and whites, within this area learned to work together for the common good of the people.' Miles has carved for himself a permanent position in Panola history and civil right activities. Serving as a model to other blacks within the county, Miles had founded the Panola County Voters League, been a delegate to the 1964 Democratic Convention, and a candidate in several heated elections.

> strengthen, rather than downgrade, our educational institutions. Do you have time for prayer on their behalf?

In an attempt to comply with the federal mandate,[10] the South Panola School Board requested assistance from the state Title IV Center at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg (Whitten 1969:1). Although the center provided insight into ways in which the board could comply, emphasis was placed upon the fact that a change in "Southern mentality" must occur in the minds of local board members.

During this federally imposed grace period Batesville school board attorney Hill Jarratt died. According to Mike Amis (1993:11B, 3):

> ... when he died [Mr Jarratt], we set about to hire a new ... attorney. Attorney Ted Smith [of Batesville] was probably top candidate for the job ... In the meantime ... a couple of the other board members got together and felt that they ought to hire Bill Corr. They brought Bill Corr to the meeting that night and introduced him saying, ... 'Well, what do you all think about hiring Bill?' The board [in Batesville] had already pretty well agreed on an attorney and then they went to Sardis and got Bill Corr which was, I thought, a mistake. And it was sort of a slap in the face of the legal group in Batesville. ... But, they [certain Batesville board members] thought that he had ties to the Republican party and Republican politics of Washington would be of great help.

In April 1969, after two long months and national attention, the South Panola School District was ruled in compliance with the HEW guidelines (Authorities 1969:1). The HEW agreement permitted a modified freedom-of-choice situation for the fall 1969 school year. The modified South Panola Board's plan provided a higher ratio of integration. According to the plan, 20 % of the black pupils would be enrolled for the year 1969-70 to previously all-white schools (Authorities 1969:1). Also the school board would maintain the present number of teachers by race with no employment discrimination. 'Each child in the district will be given the opportunity to attend the school of his

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[10] The federal government had become impatient with what it saw as a deliberate attempt by the county to slow integration. Few blacks had actually enrolled in the all white schools and this situation did not seem to be improving. Therefore the government demanded that the board modify its plan of integration to provide a higher ratio of blacks (20%) to enter former all white schools the following school term (Amis 1993:11B, 4).

choice prior to the assignment as above set forth and, should more than twenty percent of the black students choose to attend the previously all-white school, freedom-of-choice shall govern and not the percentage as hereto agreed' (Authorities 1969:1).

Perhaps the transition from segregation into full integration could have gone smoother. In hindsight, many believe so. Others who were instrumental in the transition believe all that could have been done within the Southern portion of the county was done. According to Mr Moore (1993:9A, 5), '[w]e went to Washington as a board and met with Leon Panetta'. Panetta was a Republican at that time as well as Bill Corr who served as the school board's attorney. The board was able to make more progress than they originally thought possible and continued to deal directly with Washington for several years. Mike Amis also echoes these sentiments by stating:

> [The federal agency] was looking for a way out ... They didn't want to come down here and create any problems. [But] they were going to enforce their rules. ... We were trying to find a way to improve. We had no reason to be hostile. ... [therefore] the transition was pretty mild. There was already a private school in existence. So it wasn't a matter of a mass exodus [of whites]. It was done over a period of time, in an orderly fashion. ... I think, because the school board made a very bold step forward and said we're going to comply with the federal guidelines.

Bobby Carlisle (1993:4BA, 4) former personnel director at South Panola Consolidated District, sums up the integration process (1969-70) by stating:

> I attribute the smooth transition in South Panola to local leadership – leadership in which both the black and the white community realised that if you were going to have quality education you had to keep the public support in the schools. And that neither side [black or white] could have one hundred per cent of what they wanted ... there had to be a give and take on both sides. ...

Former South Panola Superintendent David Cole (1974-92), echoes Carlisle in stating that 'the thing that seemed to earmark the community [South Panola] was that there was a strong black and white leadership that ... make things work. This was evident in the closing of some of the black schools and of black administrators agreeing to become

assistants to white administrators in an attempt to hold the confidence of the community. Consequently, in South Panola, there was no "white flight"[11] (Amis 1993:11B, 6)

5.4.1.2a The Classroom During Integration, 1968-70

Originally, there was basically one black child per classroom in South Panola. According to Flora Johnson (1993:6b, 3), one of the first black students to enter the all white South Panola High School, it certainly was not an easy experience:

> Basically I felt that they ... dragged the black students into a strained situation when the children were stood up in front of a group of white children who were going to degrade them and call them all sorts of names. ... You could not say anything because you were the only one. ... So they could call you names. ... Who could think about what the teacher was teaching when you have some white boy looking around at you and giving you the eye like 'hey we gonna take you outside and hang you after class'. ... Sure, there was a time when you were afraid because, first of all ... you had a history before you, ... about how they lynched people, ... how they'd come [and got] your father or mother out of the house and did this or that to them. But then you had to make them think that you were strong, even when there were times that you were very weak. You had to stand up and pretend that you were strong.

In the 1969-1970 school term, South Panola High School was the site of a small riot or student uprising (Johnson 1993:6B, 3). This was due in part to the actions of some white children who continued on a daily basis to pick on the black students. Finally, as more and more blacks began to enter the all white school system, they began to stick together for strength and security (Johnson 1993:6B, 3). Johnson (1993:6b, 3) states,

> So we had a few meetings and discussed what we should do. We weren't going to be called any of those degrading names without letting ... [people know we were offended]. Some people still continued to call us names and throw things at us. Finally we decided to act. I will never forget the person they jumped on that day [Fall 1969], their blood was strewed all up the hall. After that time, things got better. In general the name calling stopped and students tried to work out their differences. White girls and black girls just

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[11] This is a very important point. Unlike South Panola leaders, North Panola officials, businessmen in the community, and board members simply did not possess the foresight to rally the white and black community together (see section 5.4.1.3). Therefore the "white flight" of white parents taking their children out of the public school in mass exit and placing them in private schools was inevitable. This weakened the North Panola school system and led to continued problems in poor curriculum, facilities, teaching staff and administration over the next thirty years (see Chapter 6).

didn't get along that well. The white guys were more friendly and tried to make an effort.

According to Mrs Hayden, a former elementary teacher of Batesville (1992:1B, 1), 'originally when there were only two or three black pupils to a classroom, the blacks were pretty miserable as there is comfort in numbers [sic]. During this first year there were minor incidents but usually insignificant and related to fights over boyfriends or girlfriends.'

According to Moore (1993:9a, 3), social change was difficult for the new black students as 'one of the school board's main problems concerning integration was that of the mentality of the students. Blacks, as I previously stated, would fall behind in their studies when integrated into the formerly all white schools'. This was, according to Moore (1993:9a, 3) caused by their former environment, characterized by out-dated texts, poor transportation, old equipment, inadequate spacing, and poorly trained teachers.

5.4.1.3 Different Attitudes Toward Integration in the Panola Schools

During integration, which extended between 1965 to 1970, over 600 newspaper editions were published in Sardis and Batesville. Of this number over 150 papers published by Batesville's *The Panolian* contained articles pertaining to integration. During this same period, only 53 issues of the Sardis *Southern Reporter* referred to integration (Lindgren 1994). Many of these pieces were small paragraph inserts. According to Frederick Wirt (1970:124), professor of Political Sciences, the University of Illinois, there was a much greater dependency of blacks upon whites north of the river than there were south of the Tallahatchie. This led many whites into a false feeling of security that blacks would continue to know their place and not want to be in white

schools. During the 1960s, over one-half of all working blacks in North Panola either worked in the fields or homes of whites. It was always felt by white Mississippians that if the blacks were to get out of line they would be threatened by loss of employment or worse. When things began to unravel in the minds of leaders north of the river, and more and more blacks began to integrate the schools through the forced integration of 1970, many of the white leaders simply lost interest in public schools (Joiner 1998:124A, 1). Although some whites in Batesville were of similar persuasion, the majority of the business leaders, school administrators, and parents remained loyal to the public school effort (Joiner 1998:124A, 1). Another thing to consider was the extensive wealth which had previously existed north of the river. During the Depression (see section 3.7.2.1b), Como had more millionaires per capita than any other town in the United States. This according to Shirley Joiner (1998:124A, 1), a retired school teacher, quite possible led to an arrogant attitude in which they considered themselves above the average people. This in turn led to a false security (see sections 3.7.1.2 and 3.8), in which some rich whites simply felt they could do without the public school system (Joiner 1998:124A, 1).

Another problem faced by North Panola during integration was that there were more blacks in Sardis (see Chapter 3, footnote 11). Also, according to Keating (1998: 123A, 1), Sardis blacks were of a different mentality. Blacks in Batesville were presented with more social and cultural variety through factories, businesses, and creative black leaders such as Robert Hyde and Matthew Landers. Sardis, however, was faced with a black population which had a narrow view of society and economics based on their years of life on the plantations and farm life (Joiner 1998:124A:1).

Retired school teacher, Betty Keating (1998:123A, 2) states that

> it was a sudden event that the whites left the public school in Sardis. In the Batesville schools there was more of a transitional period and it seemed to work for the whites and

> blacks. ... Batesville educators, administrators, businessmen, and politicians realized the stress which both the white and black children were under and attempted to make the transition smooth for all parties concerned. By 1970 we were forced to integrate all levels, this was simply devastation on North Panola who had not foreseen this form of total forced integration coming. The schools in Como, Sardis and Crenshaw, due to the large black population, became nearly all black. White parents immediately took their children out of school and moved them into the private school at Pleasant Grove (see section 5.4.1.4a(i)).[12]

Sardis whites, with their large population of blacks, were basically isolated from many outside activities. It seemed that as Batesville grew, due in part to state and interstate trade, the development of a better highway system, and much lower electricity rates (see section 3.7.2.1a) which encouraged big business, Sardis just continued its agrarian lifestyle. As Ms Keating (1998:123A, 2) stated: 'Sardis is a lovely town with beautiful people in it, a great sense of community, and I have always admired that little town but somehow their foundation simply fell out from under them. Some of the problem was a sense of great independence and a feeling that they could take care of their own problems without any help [(see sections 3.7.1.2, 3.7.2.1b(i), and 4.4.1)]. It simply did not work.'

As Wirt (1970:19) stated, 'Panolians of both races are what they are because of decisions and events, triumphs, and mistakes, executed by those who went before'.[13] A prime example of this was given by Ms JoAnn Autrey, a teacher in the Batesville school system. Ms Autrey (1998:125A, 1) stated that

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[12] The Hon. Leonard Morris (1998:126B, 2), Mississippi State Representative echoes Mrs. Keating's previous statement by stating that the concept of "white flight" simply is the major reason for most of North Panola's educational problems. Sardis and Como white residents simply refused to cooperate with black leaders during integration. In fact many of the whites on the public school board during integration openly supported the private school.

[13] Regarding the varied social, economic, and political factors which have affected education, a series of twenty informal interviews were held over a four year period (1994-1998) in which a series of twenty questions (divided into four distinct parts) (see Appendix 1) were asked to a total of 20 Panola County residents (see Appendix 6). In this combination of general and research interview techniques (see section 1.3.2.3a) a funnel sequence, going from general to specific (sections 1-4 of the interview led from general questions to aspects regarding the schools), helped the respondents recall specific details. The development and results are integrated into this chapter and Chapter 6. See Appendix 6 for a listing of individuals interviewed and the dates of interviews.

> [m]uch of the conditions relating to North Panola is tied into economics. Businessmen and community leaders of South Panola realized during integration and still realize the importance that public education played in creating a better community.
>
> If you are going to have a progressive community it is imperative that you have a progressive school system. Throughout Batesville's history, leaders have strived for this interaction. However somewhere along the way, North Panola simply 'missed the boat' and they missed the economic development and their schools floundered.
>
> Although we [Batesville] still have a strong private school, it has not altered the strength of the public one. This however cannot be said for Sardis and North Panola who primarily abandoned their public school system due to certain social, economic and political considerations. ... Things are simply different on the other side of the river.

5.4.1.3a Social Unrest during Integration

During integration in North and South Panola, there was surprisingly little violence. In general, white residents of North Panola merely pulled their children from the public schools and turned the schools over to the blacks, while south of the river, white parents, business leaders, and school administrators tried to work co-operatively with blacks in creating a more conducive learning environment for the students of both races (Cole 1992:5B, 7). There were, however, two minor incidents which occurred during this period of forced integration (1969-71).

5.4.1.3a(i) The Boycott

In 1969, a black boycott took place at several South Panola schools. Starting in August, students who had originally chosen or were selected for enrollment into the formerly all white facilities refused to attend classes. In a meeting held in the office of Panola County Superintendent of Education L. Stacy Davidson, nearly 200 black parents, represented by a seven-member committee, presented a list of grievances. These concerns included overcrowded school busses, lack of racial integration on the bus, a need for black bus drivers, and the elimination of bus transfers (i.e. busing) (Negroes

1969:1). After the meeting with parents, the board adopted a series of resolution which would partially eliminate the use of unnecessary bus transfers. This incident was the only major confrontation to occur during the first year of forced integration and was resolved through the co-operations of Batesville black and white leaders (Amis 1998:160B, 3).

5.4.1.3a(ii) Vandalism

In November of 1969, a case of vandalism occurred at the Sardis Elementary School which prompted school officials to stringent regulations (Destruction 1969:1). According to *The Southern Reporter* (Destruction 1969:1), more than 30 windows were broken. Although no one was apprehended, many whites and blacks felt that this act was racially motivated. Because of this case of vandalism, Sardis enacted the following regulations (Destruction 1969:1):

> 1. Sardis Elementary School grounds is off limits to all students after school hours unless accompanied by a teacher.
> 2. Any student caught on grounds after school hours will be subject to suspension or expulsion from school.
> 3. The City Police will patrol the school grounds after school and at night and anyone caught on grounds will be subject to arrest and turned over to school authorities.
> 4. Until further notice the old high school gym will not be used for parties, skating, or any other activities.
> 5. Anyone having knowledge of persons responsible for this vandalism should report the information to a teacher or principal.

5.4.1.4 The Private School Movement in Panola County During the Late 1960s and Early 1970s

In the late 1960s Panola County, as well as other counties throughout the south, was the site of private school development. The owners of these schools gave several reasons for the schools' formation. Some headmasters cited religious freedom, while others stated that the private schools provided better learning experiences. Some private school investors felt that American values and morality were in decline and that through

these private ventures, students would be introduced to those values which had made America great. Although some of these reasons were valid, the largest motivating factor was simply to keep segregation alive in the South.

5.4.1.4a A Listing of Private Schools

During the late 1960s and early 70s, three private schools opened in Panola County. These schools varied in size but all three were formed to address the integration issue. It was hoped by whites that this scheme would avert the integration of blacks into the upper strata of Panola society (Carlisle 1996:BC40, 5). Although continuing into the 1990s (see Chapter 6, footnotes 2 and 12), with considerable reorganization, the private school system did not prevent integration. Additionally, over the years, the program became too expensive for many local parents (Carlisle 1996:BC40, 5).

5.4.1.4a(i) Delta Academy

Panola County's first private school was established in July of 1965. The school, known as Delta Academy was established on the site of the former Pleasant Grove School (see section 5.4.1.3).[14] The school, located eight miles west of Sardis, was formed according to Bob Crenshaw (school corporation president) 'to provide a school for children on a non-profit basis and to offer courses of study not available to children in existing schools of the area' (Private corporation 1965:1).

The school, according to Mr Hal West, a member of the Board of Directors, was not to create a sectarian facility but rather to create an environment where Christian

[14] 'The property formerly used as a school building prior to the consolidation of the public schools has been purchased by North Delta School, Incorporated ... because of its central location and the availability of acceptable facilities' (Carlisle 1996:BC40, 6).

ethics, morals and ideas could be expanded and integrated into the school curriculum (Private School 1965:1). Mr Crenshaw stated that the integration of Panola County's elementary grades (1965), had no bearing on the opening of the new school.Crenshaw further stated that the private school had been planned many months before the federal government's announcement of integration within the county (Private School 1965:1). It was, however, generally accepted by white and black residents of the county that the school, as future private facilities, was merely a tactic to delay or prevent integration.

Delta Academy was originally under a Mississippi law which provided state financial assistance for children attending private non-sectarian schools. This assistance, however, ended in 1969 (see section 5.4.1.4b).

5.4.1.4a(ii) West Batesville Schools

In August 1969, a notice appeared in *The Panolian* providing information about a newly proposed school to open in September of 1970 (Meeting set 1969:1). The school, originally charted as West Batesville Schools, Inc. was advertised as a non-secular, non-profit facility which would teach students in grades one through twelve. The school land was purchased from Mr R. L. Milam and consisted of the old Lake Carrier School property (Private 1969:1). According to the newspaper 'concerns over the operation of schools under the Department of Health, Education and Welfare guidelines during the 1970-71 school year was given as the reason for the consideration of a privately supported educational institution' (Meeting set 1969:1).

By 1972, West Batesville Schools had been renamed West Panola Academy. After two years of operation, the school had an enrollment of 295 white students from a three county area (i.e. Panola, Quitman, and Tallahatchie) (Carlisle 1996:BC40, 6).

Later, the private schools of North Delta and West Panola combined and re-located 10 miles west of Batesville (Carlisle 1996:BC40, 6). Today (1999) the private school still provides a quality education to all who are able to pay tuition costs.

5.4.1.4a(iii) First Baptist Parochial School

By the Fall of 1969, private discussions were being held regarding the opening of a private school facility at First Baptist Church. The all white church located down Panola Avenue in west Batesville held their first board of trustees' meeting in April 1970. Attending the meeting were sixty parents of currently enrolled students (Committees formed 1970:1). It was agreed that the school, grades one through eight, would begin former classes in September (Committees formed 1970:1). The First Baptist Parochial School, however, only lasted three years and was closed in 1973 after economic and social problems regarding tuition, school qualifications, and personal disagreements.

5.4.1.4b Private Schools and Federal Funding

Throughout much of the 1960s, the federal government had allowed the Mississippi state government to allocate funding to students for the payment of private schools costs. Due to the use of such schools as a way of preventing integration, a three-judge federal panel outlawed a $240 annual tuition grant to students in 1969 (Tuition 1969:1). This action by the federal panel from 1970 on prevented many white parents from sending their students to private facilities.

5.4.2 School Issues in North and South Panola Immediately After Integration

U. S. Senator John Stennis of Mississippi said that he was both 'surprised and greatly disappointed at the new move of the Nixon Administration to pursue an all-out

massive drive for total integration of all of the schools in the South' (Desegregation 1970:1). According to Stennis, little or nothing was being done outside the South to enforce integration. Further he stated that he had proven on the Senate floor, using official figures furnished by the HEW, that segregation was much greater in many northern areas of the country (Desegregation 1970:1).

During integration, school officials cited several deficiencies which they felt must be addressed by area taxpayers. These inadequacies included the need for more full time consultants and library assistants. School administrators also noted the immediate need for more classrooms (Carlisle 1993:4BA, 6).

While dealing with these educational concerns, South Panola school administrators were informed that in September 1970 a suit had been filed in the Delta District of the U. S. District Court by eighteen Negro parents. This suit was an attempt to reopen the formerly all black Patton Lane School for use by all races (Eighteen 1970:1). Also, the suit demanded the discontinuance of renovation of the old Batesville Elementary School,[15] a curtailing of funds for the construction of a new junior high school, the operation of school busses on a racially and sexually integrated basis, and the elimination of all discrimination against black children (Eighteen 1970:1). The suit claimed that schools in the county still operated on a racially segregated basis. The petition declared that Patton Lane School, was not to be used for the following term simply 'because it is located in a black community and the school district does not wish to have white children attend that school' (Eighteen 1970:1). Additionally, the petitioners stated that the board

[15] These parents felt that with the reopening of the formerly all black Patton Lane school, there would be little need to renovate the old Batesville Elementary School or construction of a new junior high (Eighteen 1970:1).

of supervisors, the defendant in the case, intended to use Westside School[16] (to the complainants, a modern building) on an interim basis only (first two years) with intention to borrow $115,000 to erect an unneeded new junior high school (Eighteen 1970:1).

Over the next few years, many of the initial problems concerning integration and race had been resolved. This is not to say that problems did not exist. Chapter 6 will present an array of continuing racial issues which would plague Panola throughout the 1970s and 1980s. However, by the 1980s Patton Lane facility had been demolished and black and white students who had previously attended Westside in the early 1970s were bused to the district's new junior high school (see section 6.1).

5.5 CONCLUSION

There are three conclusions which may be drawn from this chapter:

First, the study shows that during the period leading up to forced integration, members of the South and North Panola School Boards (see sections 5.4.1.1 and 5.4.1.2) attempted to devise schemes whereby they could postpone racial integration within the county's school system. However, it soon became apparent that integration was to be achieved, if not through freedom-of-choice then most certainly through federal government forced integration. Members of the South Panola School Board resolved to determine ways in which they could co-operate with federal intervention rather than fight a losing battle (see section 5.4.1.2). Although the South Panola School Board desired to

[16] Westside was a formerly all black facility located several miles west of Batesville (see section 5.4.1.2).

retain some degree of white superiority, they realized, unlike members of the North Panola School Board (see section 5.4.1.3), that they must co-operate with black leaders and federal officials if they ever hoped to retain local control. Additionally, community leaders and board members from Batesville realized that if successful in this endeavour they would in time have a more progressive school and receive addition funding from the federal government. Through this farsightedness, South Panola received new facilities and additional funds for teachers and supplies (see section 5.4.1.3). This was something which North Panola leaders did not pursue.

The second conclusion was that Batesville's newspaper, *The Panolian* (see section 5.4.1.2), community leaders (both black and white), and the South Panola School Board members worked together to ease racial tension and bring about an agreeable and workable plan between the races (see section 5.4.1.2). This scheme of working together was noticeably missing from the Sardis community. White leaders from North Panola (Sardis) felt that the blacks should remain in their place and never integrate (see section 5.4.1.3). When forced integration did occur and blacks entered the former all white schools white leaders simply lost interest while leaders, parents and administrators in Batesville supported the public school effort (see section 5.4.1.3). Noted civil right activist R. J. Miles, Sr stated that although there existed problems in other areas of the county in coping with forced integration, blacks and whites in South Panola were able to overcome their differences and work together (see footnote 9).

Third, this study shows that much of the problems facing North Panola during forced integration, besides a much higher ratio of blacks to whites (see section 5.4.1.3) and poor leadership, was Sardis' and especially Como's belief that they did not need

government assistance (see section 5.4.1.3) since they had weathered the Depression of the 1930s (see section 3.7.2.1b). This lack of co-operation by white leaders was based on several factors including: arrogance (see sections 3.7.1.2 and 3.8), false security (see section 3.7.1.2) and a continued isolationism from the 1830s (see sections 2.2.1, 3.7.1, 3.7.1.2, 3.7.2.1c, and 4.7). These social and economic factors caused many white parents from North Panola to reject the public school system of the 1960s and move their children to the private school (white flight) (see section 5.4.1.4). White leaders in North Panola simply did not see the relationship between a strong public school system and a strong economy (see sections 3.7.1.2, 6.2.2.1 and 6.5) . Because of this shortsightedness, businesses in Sardis and Como began to close while potential factories and businesses refused to locate in Sardis, choosing Batesville because of their support of schools and businesses.

6.0 CHAPTER 6
THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN PANOLA COUNTY, 1970-1996

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter shows that the South Panola Consolidated School District (SPCSD), attempted after federal intervention of the late 1960s to bring both races together in an attempt to create a better and more dynamic school environment (see section 5.4.1.3). This was not, however, the case with North Panola.

Business and community leaders in Batesville tried during the early years of the 1970s to maintain the confidence of the community by putting children in locations that were palatable and acceptable to the white community (see section 5.4.2) — for the white community was, in essence, the tax-paying community. It was also the intention of these white leaders, to coordinate educational programs with the black community.

White leaders in South Panola waged a very aggressive campaign to pass school bond issues important to the school and to the community. This progressive and foresightedness at times met with controversy.[1] People within the southern half of the county took sides, and feelings became exaggerated. In retrospect, it was a defining moment in the history of South Panola because at that point, as never before, the community made the decision — to grow, progress, and support their public institutions (Cole 1992:5B, 4). From that point (1970s) the area south of the river started building a school system

[1] This resentment regarding taxes for school revenues has continued since the 1870s when white parents resented the payment of taxes for the construction of black schools and the newly created white public school system (see section 3.2.2).

based on black and white co-operation. North Panola leaders remained indifferent and ignored the problem (Carlisle 1993:4B, 4).

By the 1980s Batesville school administrators had built a twenty classroom elementary school annex and a new state-of- the-art junior high school. The Pope school program had also added a major addition on to their school. Business leaders, local politicians, school administrators, and community-minded citizens sent a message throughout the state that this community (South Panola) was a survival community and that it was going to make it, even when other communities (i.e. Sardis, Como and other areas north of the Tallahatchie) were drying up.

Chapter 6 provides insight into educational development within the county between 1970-1996 with emphasis on integration, school growth, school boycotts, black demands, consolidation, student performance grades, South Panola's continued growth and the failure of the North Panola School District and its eventual receivership.

6.2 EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN PANOLA COUNTY, 1970-1980

South Panola community leaders learned years earlier (see section 3.7.1.2) that there was a direct relationship within the county between the socio-economic status of the community and community education. What Batesville did in the 1970s was to break the cycle of economics and race as being a predictor of success (i.e. education or business). During the 1970s as education advances were being made, school construction was on the increase, and problems still existed regarding integration, South Panola faced each issue as a way to grow and strengthen its economy and educational program.

According to Cole (1992:5B, 6) 'a reason for Batesville's attitude is that the school system in South Panola has always been the point instrument in the community that led the way in race relations,[2] that led the way on progressiveness, and has shown how, by way of an example, things can and should work'. This, however, was something Sardis and other areas north of the Tallahatchie were unable or unwilling to achieve.

6.2.1 Integration in Public Schools During the 1970s

As Panola County teachers entered the 1970s integration issues loomed large on their minds. Many white teachers still felt uneasy trying to teach black students. There was also the fear that they [white teachers] would be forced to teach in formally all black schools (Broome 1992:3B, 3). Although no whites wanted to enter the formerly all black schools, many black teachers decided in order to assist black students, they would transfer to Batesville Elementary, Batesville High School and Pope Elementary and Junior High. There was also in 1970 the issue of forced teacher integration (see sections 5.4.1.2 and 5.4.1.3), whereby some white teachers were asked to teach in a formally all black facility

According to retired Pope principal Dr Carlock Broome (1992:3B, 3), Pope was fortunate in that the black teachers who chose to teach at Pope during this period were exceptional and 'exactly what was needed for the situation'.

The black and white teachers had basically the same fears and concerns. They had been thrust, under federal mandate, into a situation which was at best difficult and

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[2] This was especially true during the integration period of the 1960s and early 1970s when white parents, teachers, and administrators of the South Panola Consolidated School District (SPCSD) continued to support their school system while white residents of North Panola fled the public schools, supporting only the newly created private ones (see sections 5.4.1.2 and 5.4.1.3).

hereto unexplored. Teachers at Pope as well as other schools in South Panola decided the importance of working together. Trouble struck by the autumn term of 1970, when the Pope Elementary and Junior High School's enrollment hit 560 students. The buildings at that time were originally designed to accommodate about three hundred students (Broome 1992:3B, 3). As with Pope, students in all schools north and south of the Tallahatchie were forced into crowded classrooms.[3] One good outcome of this situation was that black and white teachers learned more about each other's culture and became more accepting. Teachers were also faced with some students who had come into the school system in the higher grades who had not been attending school on a regular basis or who were simply not interested in going by any kind of structure or school rules. After the first three or four years, these students were gradually weeded out of the system by either being expelled, moving, or quitting (Broome 1992:3B, 3).

6.2.1.1 Bomb Threats, Arson, and Integration

While students, both black and white, were attempting to gain more insight into each other, several individuals within the community began a well publicized yet short lived campaign of terror. The first incidents of bomb threats began in the fall of 1970 and included most of the schools in North Panola. Even the First Baptist and Methodist Churches in Batesville (South Panola) were threatened. Although no actual bombs were discovered, students for over a two week period were dismissed from school on several

[3] Students were assigned to classes that were much larger than those before integration. The researcher remembers doing student or practice teaching at Pope Junior High School in 1972 when some classes were held in the auditorium with over 50 students. Between 1970-1974, before the building of larger facilities, team teaching existed where all students of the same grade were occasionally put together (i.e. all 7th graders, then all 8th graders, etc) in one large room. In such an environment racial friction was to occur but by the 1975 term, most problems had been eliminated in the Pope Junior High.

occasions while the town police, the Panola County Sheriff's Department, and the Mississippi Highway Patrol looked for the alleged explosives (Bomb Threats 1970:1). These threats continued to cost the local schools much needed revenue. When students failed to attend classes this absenteeism led to a reduction in school revenues (revenues were based on student attendance). As most threats were in North Panola, in just one day over $5,000 in North Panola teachers' salaries were lost (Bomb Threats 1970:1).

Mrs. Marguerite Bland a secretary at the South Panola High School, stated that she had received one of the calls and that the voice seemed to be that of a black man (Bomb threats interrupt 1970:1). Chief Walter G. Murphree of the Batesville Police Department stated that the caller was believed to be a white man but that there might have been fabricated "copy-cat" calls from other people as several of those interviewed stated that the man sounded black (Bomb threats interrupt 1970:1).[4]

In November, 1978 an explosion rocked the Green Hill Elementary School in Sardis (Arson 1978:1). Investigators on the scene determined that the fire had been set deliberately. There was at the time concern that the arson was racially motivated and steps were taken to prevent any potential disruptions (Carlisle 1993:4BA, 6).

The worst outbreak of arson in Sardis came in May 1979 when 14 fires were set during the month. Several of the buildings torched included the Panola County Voters League, the Floyd Lumber Company, the law offices of Bob Short and Doug Johnson, and Delta Hills Educational Association (the office of the district's Head Start Program).[5]

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[4] After several weeks, the calls stopped and no one was apprehended for the calls.

[5] Several of the buildings targeted during this period were related to black enterprises including the Panola County Voters League and Head Start. The Voters League was responsible for helping blacks register to vote while the Head Start program was a government supported pre-school program active in creating an educational environment for blacks and poor whites (ages 4-6).

Due to a co-operative effort by local, state, and federal law-enforcement officers, the case was solved in the summer of 1979 with the confession and conviction of a young white male from Sardis.[6] Although most of the fires were set in black businesses (Delta Hills Educational Association and the Panola County Voters League) or businesses that had ties to black related enterprises, the defendant denied any racial motivations or any links to racial hate groups.

This incident produced considerable strained feelings between whites and blacks north of the Tallahatchie. Arson and bomb threats in the 1970s were far more common place north of the river than in Batesville and other communities of South Panola.

6.2.1.2 School Boycott

In 1972 black students at Como Junior High School began a major boycott of classes (Blacks 1972:1). The boycott was precipitated by the action of the Superintendent of North Panola Schools who refused to renew the contract of then Principal J. D. Leggette. This refusal was due to an earlier investigation by the superintendent's office which had uncovered several problems relating to conduct by the black principal and three black teachers. As the boycott continued, several in the community began wondering whether integration would ever work (Black 1972:1). During this boycott, as there had been several reported threats against some black parents in Sardis, local law officials contacted the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). There had also been an

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[6] The researcher was in 1979 an employee at the Head Start facility in Sardis. Although having been a member of the staff for three years, working his way up from bus driver to coordinator and later director of handicap services, he was, being one of only four whites in the central office, investigated by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, interrogated, and given a polygraph. For a time he was considered a prime suspect until the confession of a young white in the community. Due to later harassment and abuse by blacks within the program, the researcher was forced to resign in late 1979.

isolated case where one white teacher in Crenshaw had been forced to resign due to harassment and abuse. Although the boycott was over by the following week, there were still minor incidents (School situation 1972:1).

6.2.2 Public School Growth and Development in the 1970s

As the Panola County school system entered the 1970s integration, performance scores, school construction, and school evaluation was paramount on the minds of teachers, parents, and administrators. Much of this emphasis relating to better school performance was held by educators in Batesville as most of the whites north of the river had already transferred their children to private schools (see sections 5.4.1.3 and 5.4.1.4).

6.2.2.1 School Construction

One of the major concerns facing North Panola education was lack of funds. Because the tax base was low, due to low paying jobs within the northern section of the county, schools were unable to compete economically with South Panola or schools in other areas of the state. Further, the schools in North Panola became overcrowded when the black schools were closed and blacks were brought into the white school system. The school yards were dotted with trailers and auditoriums were made into classrooms. This was the initial fate of integrated education during the 1970s (Moore 1993:9A, 3).

Therefore with integration and the closing of some black schools, came the need for the construction of large new schools which could comfortably accommodate the integrated student population. On 25 November 1976, a 3.5 million dollar loan was sought by the South Panola School Board ($3.5 million 1976:1). This money was to be used for upgrading existing school buildings and the construction of new ones. Con-

struction was to include Pope Elementary School, Batesville Junior High School, and Batesville Elementary School ($3.5 million 1976:1).

Three years later in 1979, the school board requested a 2.5 million expansion bond for the elimination of the Westside Junior High School (School bond 1979:1). The purpose of the bond was to centrally locate junior high students from Westside, located seven miles from Batesville, and bring them closer to South Panola High School. The bond money was also to be used to expand the already existing junior high building located near the high school, consolidating all junior high school students under one facility (School bond 1979:1). By June of 1980, the South Panola School Board had accepted the bid of the First Tennessee Bank in Memphis, Tennessee for the purchase of 2.6 million in general obligation bonds (School bonds 1980:1). With these funds, the South Panola Consolidated School District began construction and repair on classrooms for the Batesville Elementary School, Batesville Junior High School, and a new gym at Pope School (School bonds 1980:1).

6.2.2.2 School Evaluation

Another important issue in school development is the accreditation of schools with a regional accrediting agency. While South Panola was busy in the 1970s building bigger and better facilities, administrators realized that issues of teacher competency, curricula development, and library efficiency had to be addressed. In 1977 school teachers and administrators at South Panola Elementary and Junior High Schools began a self-evaluation of the achievements and deficiencies in their schools. This evaluation was in preparation for a visit by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) evaluation committee. The SACS is responsible for granting or denying school

accreditation (Visiting 1977:1). Prior to this time, only South Panola High School had held membership in the regional accrediting agency (Visiting 1977:1). The committee evaluated the schools in March of 1977 and accepted these schools into the association. In their initial suggestions, the committee stated that the schools should develop a music program, a more in-depth physical education program, and improve the communication between the South Panola School District office and the area schools in South Panola (South Panola schools 1977:1).

6.2.2.3 Co-op Education

While the South Panola Consolidated School District was busy with varied evaluations and construction, North Panola High School was attempting to expand its vocational program. Through this program, students were afforded the opportunity of working part-time during school hours in a vocational setting. The students received a salary and experience in some vocational endeavor (Co-op education 1971:1).

6.3 EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN PANOLA COUNTY, 1981-1990

During the 1980s, school officials in the county were busy dealing with black student demands, boycotts, and school construction. The era was also a time when issues of educational reform and student performance scores became local headlines.

6.3.1 Integration in Public Schools During the 1980s

Although integration had started some ten years before, in 1970, there were still incidents occurring during the 1980s on a regular basis that were racially motivated or

related to the integration issue. Racial incidents in North Panola were far more common than those south of the river. According to Carlisle (1993:4BA, 7) and Amis (1998:160B, 2) four factors led to the near constant racial issues in the North Panola Consolidated School System. These included the high population of blacks within the community, the flight of white parents and students from the formally white facilities, the over 95% black student ratio in the North Panola schools, and the general lack of interest by whites regarding public school issues (Carlisle (1993:4BA, 7).

6.3.1.1 North Panola Schools Once Again Boycotted

In October 1980, Sardis schools were once more the site of a boycott by blacks (Sardis schools 1980:1). Nearly 900 absences were reported within the district during the second week of October. Only fifty students, however, were picketing in front of the North Panola High School. Once again this boycott, as others, hurt the schools financially as the State of Mississippi used the second and third month's average daily attendance (ADA) to determine the amount of revenues allotted to each school (Sardis schools 1980:1).

By the third week of October 400 students were not in attendance at the district schools. The Panola County Voters League (see footnote 5) had voted not to support the boycott (Carlisle 1996:BC40, 5). By the following week the boycott had ended.

6.3.1.2 Blacks Make Demands to School Board

In 1986, a group of about fifteen blacks, calling themselves 'Concerned Parents of the North Panola Consolidated Schools' presented the North Panola School Board with

a list of grievances and called for the immediate resignation of white school superintendent Dr. Paul Messer (Group 1986:1). The unsigned, unnamed and unsubstantiated list of grievances included:

1. failure to provide schools with necessities [after integration of 1969];
2. failure to show concern for the majority of students [black];
3. superintendent's association with Rotary and Lion's Club [both all white in their membership];
4. attempt to start computer program with outdated equipment;
5. attempt to install expensive phone system;
6. failure to associate with Black Clergy Men and Community leaders and Black parents;
7. [superintendent's] failure to carry out School Board's instruction;
8. [superintendent's] failure to deal with employee's [sic] fairly.

These charges were dismissed but by 1987 Dr. Messer had become so disquieted by his position that he accepted a position as professor at Delta State University (School board 1987:1). Almost immediately, blacks began demanding the selection of a black superintendent to head the North Panola Consolidated School District.

Dr. Morris Kinsey, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (see section 6.3.1.1), who had been active in prior boycotts in Senatobia (thirteen miles north of Sardis) requested a black superintendent stating that 96.9% of the student population in the public school district was black. 'Just a black superintendent is now what we want' Kinsey stressed (School board 1987:1).

With over twenty applicants for the position of district superintendent, James Harris became the first black superintendent ever elected in the North Panola School District (James 1987:1). Harris was elected by a white majority school board to the $35,000 a year position. Previously, Harris was principal of Greenhill Elementary School (Panola County) for 14 years and had twenty-three years of total experience within the district. In taking the position as North Panola superintendent, Harris stressed that he

would concentrate much of his efforts toward curricula development and improving students test scores (see section 6.3.2.6) (James 1987:1).

Within the next few years the selection of Harris would be seen by many whites north and south of the Tallahatchie as a near fatal move by the North Panola Consolidated School Dictrict (NPCSD) (see section 6.4.1.1). Through Harris' leadership, the school district gradually and quite unnoticed by the school board, teachers, and parents fell deeper and deeper into economic chaos (see section 6.4.1.1) (Carlisle 1993:4B, 5).

6.3.2 Public School Growth and Development in the 1980s

School development within the county was taking place and new innovative techniques were being implemented. Most of these positive changes, however, were taking place south of the river in Batesville where community leaders, a strong school board, and white support of the public schools[7] provided the needed catalyst for educational success.

6.3.2.1 Reorganization of South Panola Grade Structure

In January of 1980, the South Panola School District Board of Trustees (formally the South Panola School Board) passed a new plan relating to grade level divisions (note division of 1880s - see section 3.2.2.3b). Starting in 1982, South Panola schools began a '3-3-3-3' plan (Trustees 1980:1). In this plan, the Batesville Elementary School consisted of grades 1-3, Batesville Intermediate School, grades 4-6; Batesville Junior

[7] This support of the integrated public school system has continued for the past 26 years (1970-1996) since forced integration (see sections 5.4.1.2 and 5.4.1.3).

High, grades 7-9; and South Panola High School grades 10-12. This plan assisted schools in Batesville by providing a more equal distribution of children across the elementary, intermediate, junior high, and high school levels.

6.3.2.2 South Panola and the Education Reform Act of 1982

The Education Reform Act of 1982 was a major step toward upgrading schools in Mississippi. This state act provided many practical and down-to-earth suggestions. A controversial suggestion, however, was made regarding the future consolidation of districts (see section 6.3.2.4). According to David Cole, former Superintendent of the South Panola School District,[8] the Education Reform Act would assist in upgrading individual teacher performance, improve salaries for teachers, aid in advanced certification of teachers, help in compulsory school attendance, and standardize the accreditation procedures (Cole 1983:1).

The Education Reform Act also addressed the problem of compulsory school attendance. Budd Hughes, executive director of the Governor's Commission for Children, stated that

> [a]ll parents who have not enrolled their children or whose children are unlawfully absent will come to the attention of the attendance officers hired throughout the state. ... The attendance officer will make every effort to help every family in overcoming problems which are hindering the youngster's enrollment in school (Lindgren 1994:190).

According to Rosa Adams, current South Panola School Attendance Officer, regarding compulsory education, the plan was to have all children in school but rather than starting with all children six through sixteen, which was virtually impossible to

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[8] Although discussed at length in South Panola schools, the act was basically ignored by school administrators in Sardis. No discussions appeared in the Sardis papers.

enforce, the schools in South Panola started out by having six year olds, adding an additional age group per year (Lindgren 1994:190).

Without laws regarding compulsory education requirements, children would simple refuse to attend classes. Mandatary schooling until the age of sixteen had been a difficult problem for educators north and south of the river. According to Bobby Carlisle (1993:4BA:2) the problem was much more difficult in North Panola as there has always been a higher ratio of black students (see section 3.2.1.2). Many of the students did not have a solid home foundation and had little or no parental direction especially with regard to education (see section 3.2.2.4b(i)). Additionally some of the educators in the school system seemed less concerned in making certain that the students attended. In many ways this led to more crime and disruptive behavior as many students were allowed to run free without adult supervision (Carlisle 1993: 4BA:2).

6.3.2.3 Learning Techniques in the South Panola School District

In 1982 the South Panola Board of Trustees voted $20,000 for the creation of a program to enhance guided learning[9] within the South Panola Consolidated School District (Trustees seek 1982:1). This was a new systematic approach to educational effectiveness. With this program, teachers received education in the implementation of management by objective (MBO) which would assist teachers in obtaining predictable success from all learners (Trustees seek 1982:1). Later that year, the South Panola Consolidated School District hosted a Mastery Learning Workshop which provided 30 of the schools' educators training in the Mastery Learning Skills approach. This program

[9] The term was used in management by objectives (MBOs). In this technique teachers provided students with a series of objectives which were designed and managed by the instructor. By following these objectives, student performance and test scores became more predictable.

emphasized departure from a teacher-oriented technology to a learning-centered technology– one in which the student or learner is the star (Educators 1982:1). Within this concept, 'the learner competed not against his fellow students but against him/herself through a set of learning objectives and criteria' (Educators 1982:1). This program was quite similar to today's programs using the "win-win" approach also known as Total Quality Management (TQM) or Edward Deming's techniques on management. In some ways this training placed teachers and educators in the SPCSD (see section 6.1) "on the cutting edge" of advanced teaching techniques (Carlisle 1993:4BA, 5).

The implementation of these programs provided South Panola Consolidated School District with techniques which were not available to teachers in Sardis and other areas north of the river. It is uncertain why administrators in the North Panola Consolidated School District (NPCSD) chose not to implement these techniques and take advantage of the varied training programs (Carlisle 1993:4BA, 5).

6.3.2.4 Consolidation Concerns

In December 1984, Frank Lovell, Jr., executive secretary of the Educational Finance Commission in Jackson (some 150 miles south of Batesville), proposed in writing that the SPCSD should be changed to become a Special Municipal Separate School District embracing the entire county (Consolidation 1984:1). Although the proposal was tentative in nature, it was requested that any alternative plans be submitted before spring. Joe B. Hartley, Panola County Superintendent of Education, stated that the proposed consolidation would be fought through the legislature.

According to Mr Palmertree (1991:3A, 5), the proposed consolidation would cause considerable hardship to teachers, administrators, and children. Palmertree stated

that 'once again, our district is faced with a difficult problem which affects all citizens. It is my contention, that as things currently stand, we are better off with "business as usual" and should not impose new consolidation which would only hurt South Panola' (Palmertree 1991:3A, 5). The proposal, having been attached to the Educational Reform Act of 1982, (see section 6.3.2.2) requested the elimination of county superintendents in Panola and ten other Mississippi counties.

The SPCSD school board agreed, to file an alternative motion creating a Special Municipal Separate School District. According to *The Panolian*, the alternative plan would give the South Panola Board of Trustees discretion to fund their budgets within 10 percent of the previous year's budget through tax millage (School board 1985:1).

According to Mr Carlisle (1993:4BA, 4), the proposed consolidation was largely rumor, which had come about due to the Educational Reform Act (see section 6.3.2.2) where a district that had failed to meet certain standards would come under state authority. In this scheme, they could put individuals from one district into another or combine it with a nearby or surrounding district. In this regard, the proposal was the combining of the North Panola and South Panola school districts into one. However, neither school district wanted such a proposal to become law (see section 3.7.1.1c) and as neither district at that time had any accreditation deficiencies (note North Panola deficiencies in the 1990s - see section 6.4.1.1), the issue finally resolved itself. The initial proposal by the commission in Jackson did however cause concern and anger and the "openings of old wounds" by parents, teachers, and businessmen of the two school districts (Carlisle (1993:4BA, 4). According to Carlisle (1996:BC40, 3) several members of the community had scheduled to meet in Jackson to protest.

6.3.2.5 South Panola School District Construction Continues

By the mid-1980s the South Panola School District was once more facing a classroom shortage (School district 1986:1). From kindergarten to the 12th grades, enrollment had steadily increased. In May of 1987, the school district trustees passed a school bond issue in the amount of 1.8 million dollars (District trustees 1987:1). This money was used to repair, construct, and renovate buildings within the district.

6.3.2.6 Student Performance Grades in North Panola

An area which North Panola Superintendent James Harris emphasized was the improvement of student performance grades (see section 6.3.1.2). Although grade performance (based on standardized testing) was improving in South Panola this did not prove to be the case in the North Panola District. In 1988, a large number of 11th grade students at North Panola High School failed the Functional Literacy Exam (Local test 1988:1). The Mississippi State Department of Education, during the 1980s, required a passing grade of all students who plan to graduate high school. Students failing the examination were required to take summer school remedial courses and be re-examined in December or April (Local test 1988:1). The examination, which had been given since 1985 was concerned with the ability of students to interpret job advertisements, read and follow recipes, and balance bank accounts. With the release of scores, North Panola High School was singled out as having the worst scores of the 155 public school districts tested (Local test 1988:1). However, according to administrators in the North Panola School System, South Panola's scores were much better than North Panola's, simply because the school north of the river served more disadvantaged black children. School administrators from North Panola cited statistics relating to the fact that in 1980, 95% of the

North Panola Consolidated School District enrollment qualified for free school lunches as opposed to 74% of those enrolled at SPCSD.[10] North Panola school administrators believed that there was a direct relationship between being disadvantaged (poor) and low test scores on the examination (Cole 1996:DC46, 4).

With these poor test results, Superintendent Harris guaranteed improvement through a remedial reading program and instructional management. Harris cited that some of the problems were due to the poor attendance policy of the district (see section 6.3.2.2) since most who had failed the test had poor attendance records (Superintendent 1988:1). According to Harris, students who failed had at least two previous failures and 'their failures started a long time ago' (Superintendent 1988:1). Superintendent Harris stressed that a new math course would be added to the curriculum and the expansion of a reading course into the seventh grade.[11] A new policy of school attendance was also suggested which would combine the efforts of the parents, teachers, and administration.[12]

After Superintendent Harris' call for co-operation from parents, the North Panola Board of Trustees held a public hearing regarding school expenditures. Of the 2,200 students attending the North Panola School District only 60 people (parents and concerned citizens) attended the meeting which consisted of discussions on improving math and science programs (Proposed 1988:1).

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[10] By 1983-87, NPCSD had an average of 98% of its student population receiving free lunches. By the 1986-1987 school term, the South Panola Consolidated School District percentage had fallen to only 69% and by 1994 to 59% (Mississippi 1980-1994).

[11] At this time reading was not taught past the 6th grade in the North Panola School District.

[12] As the North Panola schools was 96% blacks, white parents showed little concern for the ailing problems of the district high school. White parents felt that their concern must remain with the support of the private schools (i.e. North Delta, West Panola, etc.) and the safety and training of their own children. For this reason white businessmen and parents provided little support, while black parents in general ignored the problem (Amis 1993:11B, 5).

By September 1988 the North Panola School District had received notification by the Mississippi State Board of Education that the district has been placed on accreditation probation (School 1988:1). The probation was due to the poor showing by students within the district on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT),[13] the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) and the Functional Literacy Examination (FLE) (School 1988:1).

6.4 EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN PANOLA COUNTY, 1991-1996

The short period between 1991 to 1996 was a period of change and adversity north of the Tallahatchie. The period was also a time of great change and constant growth for the South Panola School District. It was also a time which drastically showed the underlying differences of the North and South Panola School Systems.

6.4.1 Integration and Public School Growth in the Early 1990s

By the 1990s most racial incidents within the schools had stopped and students, teachers, and administrators attempted to provide an education which would lead toward gainful employment to each graduating student. The South Panola School System was

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[13] The Stanford Achievement Test Series 'is a standardized battery of tests designed to measure school achievement from Kindergarten through Grade 12. The 13 test levels are divided into three groups: the Stanford Early School Achievement Test (SESAT) for students in kindergarten and first half of the first grade, the Stanford Achievement Test which extends from the second half of first grade through ninth grade, and the Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK) for grades 9-12 as well as beginning college students. The SESAT has sections that test the ability to read words and comprehend brief test passages, understand numbers and use them to do simple arithmetic, select correctly spelled words from several distractors, identify grammatical sentence components, demonstrate basic cultural knowledge, and listen effectively. Most items have three response options, and ten sittings are required to administer all of the subtests with sittings ranging from 25-45 minutes' (Stanford Achievement Test - http://www.ericae.net/eac/eac0167.htm).

attempting to gear its educational programs toward technology, computers, and higher education while North Panola was busy attempting to improve their performance test scores and hire more qualified teachers. Although South Panola's educational future would continue to improve, hopes of having a professional and progressive school system in North Panola were short lived.

6.4.1.1 North Panola Consolidated School District is Placed in Receivership

In 1995 the North Panola School District faced perhaps the greatest challenge of its education history. In November *The Panolian* (North Panola 1995:1) announced that North Panola had been placed on Level 1 (see footnote 17) probation by the Mississippi State Department of Education (MSDE). Although there were other deficiencies, the main reason for probation was that the educational budget reflected a $600,000 deficit. Vernon Jackson, who had only been Superintendent of the North Panola School District for several months faced a year-end deadline to present a deficit reduction plan to the MSDE.[14] In attempting to achieve this goal, the administrative and support staff was reduced. Although having inherited these problems from the previous superintendent, Mr Jackson expressed confidence that the school system would in time overcome the financial problem. According to one educational expert 'it would take years for North Panola to fix the $600,000 deficit' (North Panola 1995:1).

By December 1995, *The Panolian* announced on its front page the headlines – 'State takeover of North Panola likely' (State 1995:1). According to a former school

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[14] Superintendent Jackson also faced the problem of poor achievement scores. According to Jackson, ' [w]ith the financial crisis that was discovered, I have not had time to focus on achievement' (North Panola bailout 1996:1).

trustee of the district there existed 'too much of a buddy system' in the district (State 1995:1). By December Jackson stated that 'at this time we do not have enough funds to cover the entire teachers checks' (State 1995:1). The huge spending deficit that was predicted in December 1995 to reach $1.2 million by the end of 1996 spring semester, had not been reported by former Superintendent Harris in his reports to the school board. According to Mississippi State Senator, the Hon. Nolan Mettetal, 'the school board for whatever reason was assured by the administration that ... [the district was] in good financial shape when in fact ... [it was] not' (State 1995:1). Due to the work of an independent accounting firm, for the first time in years realistic figures were surfacing regarding the economic condition of the school district.

In January 1996, the fate of the district was decided in Jackson, the state capital, by the Mississippi State Board of Education. In this decision, the board evaluated the NPCSD's school plan and the independent auditor's report (North Panola leaders 1996:1). The Mississippi State Board of Education, through new state legislation, was empowered during the early months of 1996 to take over the North Panola Consolidated School District which allowed the state legislature to loan the school district $1.4 million (North Panola bailout 1996:1). In essence, the bill which was passed by the Mississippi State House of Representatives and Senate aided in transferring control of the school district's operations and the hiring of a special administrative officer to manage the school district. The bill also provided the state board with the authority to dissolve the school board and abolish the school district[15] (North Panola bailout 1996:1).

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[15] Dr. James Hemphill, a special assistant to the State Superintendent, aware of the social, economic, and political problems which existed between North and South Panola Consolidated School Districts, stated that if the northern district was abolished it would not be required to merge with South Panola. 'Consolidating North Panola's school district with other school districts [(i.e. South Panola)] would create a whole new set of problems. We don't feel we would be serving the best interest of the students at North Panola if the school district was consolidated' (North Panola bailout 1996:1).

By 4 March 1996, Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice signed the legislative law allowing for the take-over of the North Panola Consolidated School District by the Mississippi State Board of Education (MSBE) (Fordice 1996:1). Four days later, the MSBE had officially taken over the district and placed the school district under the direction of interim conservator Dr. Ray Strebeck. Dr. Strebeck in his first meeting with concerned parents, teachers, and administrators stated that '[w]hen you think of "conservator" you think of things we're beginning to lose. We take steps to try to conserve. There is in that effort, a brightness that we sometimes don't realize and I want to call that hope' (State superintendent 1996:1).

State Superintendent Burnham stated that according to his investigation, 'everyone in the district had been taken care of except the children ... and what is happening to the children ... is wrong. It is absolutely wrong' (State superintendent 1996:1). With this remark the state superintendent told a gathering of parents, teachers, and administrators that once the Department of Justice granted approval, the North Panola School District would be abolished.[16]

On 22 March 1996, the MSBE gave Dr Strebeck permission to sign an educational loan package. Strebeck signed the $1.4 million loan as the North Panola School Board members had earlier refused to sign the loan agreement (State school board 1996: A13). Sterbeck allocated an initial $300,000 to be used to pay back teacher salaries and to pay all outstanding operating bills (State school board 1996:A13).

By the end of the 1995-96 school term (May 1996), the North Panola School District had been abolished, a conservator appointed, and the district granted a loan of

[16] Although the word abolished was used by Dr Burnham, as far as education was concerned, this was not to mean that the citizens would lose their district, rather that the restructured district would remain under the Mississippi State Board of Education until corrections were made.

$1.4 million. The year also saw nearly 25% of the administrative staff resigning or having been fired and teachers from all levels stating that they would not be returning for the Fall school term (More changes 1996:1).[17]

6.4.1.2 South Panola Consolidated School District Looks Forward to a Bright Future

According to former South Panola Superintendent of Schools, David Cole (1992:5B, 5) one of the greatest allies of the South Panola School System was the South Panola School Board. In the early years of integration and thereafter the board possessed commitment and foresightedness which aided in the development of a co-operative program between blacks and whites in South Panola (see section 5.4.1.3). This co-operation led to considerable advances over the years between 1970-1993. Cole states that 'as a consequence we have not had ... the turmoil, unrest, boycotts and threats (see sections 6.2.1.1, 6.2.1.2, 6.3.1.1, and 6.3.1.2) they have had in the neighboring district [referring to North Panola]. It is this accomplishment that has allowed us to maintain an orderly school district'.

During the period between 1989-1996, the North Panola School District was facing poor student performance, probation, and final abolishment. South Panola, however, was looking toward a bright future with what many in the state considered to be an outstanding administration, qualified teachers, and outstanding school facilities (Moore 1998:9AB, 5). With a much better tax base than in previous years, more money

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[17] In August 1997, the state handed back the school district to the people of North Panola. Ms Bonnie Smith took over the role as the new NPCS superintendent during the same month. As of 1998, the school was still at a Level 2 designation which qualifies as a warning. This is however slightly better than their previous Level 1 or probation level (Education 1998:11). South Panola during this period had remained at a Level 3 or acceptable rating (Education 1998:11).

was available for upkeep and new construction. The South Panola School Board envisions construction of a new high school building within the next 10 years (2003) (Moore 1993:9A, 5). According to the South Panola School Board's[18] president James Moore 'I think we will be able to just keep on progressing and adding. Our new five year program calls for an increase in the children that we are going to educate in South Panola. Each year we are seeing an increase in attendance. This looks real good to me.'

6.5 CONCLUSION

There are four conclusions to be drawn from this chapter:

First, the chapter shows the co-operative atmosphere which existed between black and whites south of the Tallahatchie River in the 1970s (see section 6.2.1). This environment, however, was not similar in Sardis and other communities in North Panola as the region was the site of arson, verbal threats (see section 6.2.1.1) and school boycotts (see sections 6.2.1.2 and 6.3.1.1). These social conditions made a severe economic strain on the North Panola Consolidated School District as federal and state funding was based on student attendance (see section 6.2.1.1).

Second, this chapter shows the extensive school construction which took place in the South Panola Consolidated School District shortly after the end of segregation (1970) and its continuation throughout the next twenty-five years (see section 6.2.2.1). Since South Panola was not faced with civil unrest, which was so evident in Sardis, the community had more time to concentrate on economic development. Additionally, with

[18] The South Panola School Board is also known as the South Panola School Board of Trustees (see section 6.3.21).

the strong co-operative effort by black and white community leaders and the strong tax base there was a near constant upgrading, expansion, and new construction (see sections 6.2.2.1 and 6.3.2.3). Since most North Panola whites had fled the public schools (Chapter 5, footnote 11) and the region had a low tax base due to a large black population, few upgrades occurred.

Third, in regard to the unrest in schools north of the Tallahatchie, this chapter shows that there existed evidence of neglect or at least disinterest on the part of white and black teachers, administrators and parents as well as unreasonable demands by some area blacks (see sections 5.4.1.3a, 6.3.1, 6.3.1.2, 6.3.1.2, 6.3.2.6, and footnote 12). Parents attended few of the school business meetings or teacher-parent meetings (see section 6.3.2.6) and the North Panola School District was plagued with truancy. With the lack of white teachers and white administrators as well as poor parental direction at home, black students did not have a solid family or educational foundation (see section 6.3.2.2). This was something which had been evident since the 1880s (see section 3.2.2.4b(i)). This disinterest by black parents, teachers, and administrators led to more crime, unrest, white resentment, and a lowering of state and federal assistance (see section 6.2.1.2 and 6.3.1.1).

Fourth, this chapter shows that one of the reasons for the receivership and "abolishment"of the North Panola School District (see section 6.4.1.1) was the earlier demands of certain black parents and students for a black school superintendent (see section 6.3.1.2). By 1995, the North Panola Consolidated School District was faced with claims of mismanagement, corruption, and bankruptcy (see section 6.4.1.1).

This chapter brings an end to over 150 years of educational development within Panola County. Through various economic, social, and political factors the county's

school system developed and evolved. By 1996, the southern district of the county was entering a new era of school development, leadership, and hope, based on co-operation, desire, and farsightedness (see section 6.4.1.2). The northern school district, including Sardis and Como, by 1996, faced potential economic and educational destruction (see section 6.4.1.1).

7.0 CHAPTER 7
SYNTHESIS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was concerned with Panola County (a rural county in northwestern Mississippi, USA) and its educational growth over a 150 year period. Specifically, the study was undertaken to determine how certain social, economic, and political factors, since the 1840s, have effected the development and diversity of the county's schools which exist above and below the Tallahatchie River (see Map 3). This separation of schools north and south of the Tallahatchie became more defined with the creation of two court districts which were designated along natural lines (Tallahatchie River) (see section 3.7.1.1c)

Books, letters, newspapers, school board records, state archival documents, data from United States census reports, Batesville and Sardis Community Profiles, the *Mississippi Official and Statistical Register*, *Biennial Reports*, Panola County Superintendent Financial Reports, North and South Panola County School Board minutes, and other local, state, and federal sources (see section 1.10) were scrutinized to determine the changes within the county.

This historical and comparative study was further reinforced by a series of interviews (see Appendixes 1 and 6). This interview schedule was used to interview twenty people including teachers, administrators, farmers, and community leaders.

Through the use of these documents and interviews, the researcher provides a comparative analysis of the two educational districts of Panola County and reveals how

they were individually effected by the aforementioned factors. Educationally, this work provides an opportunity to observe the achievements and failures of education within the county's two school systems. Readers of this work may be able to utilize the data in attempting to avoid pitfalls in the quest to develop a sound school setting.

There are several delimitations and limitations in this work -

1. due to the large number of schools in the county, at times reaching over 100 facilities, most of the data examined relates only to the Sardis, Batesville, Courtland and Como schools with particular emphasis on schools in Sardis and Batesville;

2. because much of the in-depth material referring to academies between 1840-1860 was destroyed or lost during the Civil War (1861-65);

3. because during the initial interviews and a later follow-up of specific questions, over ten percent of those initially interviewed had passed away;

4. because it was difficult to interview businessmen, administrators, and teachers in the area north of the river as many who were asked to participate refused due to disinterest or fear from making remarks which might upset or anger fellow residents; and

5. because much of the thesis is based on newspaper accounts as other documentation was limited.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS OF THE CHAPTERS

In providing a synthesis to this research, a brief conclusion and analysis of each chapter of this thesis will be presented after which a final conclusion section (see section 7.3) will be presented.

Chapter 2 shows that

1. there existed a rivalry between residents north of the Tallahatchie River (Belmont) and individuals south of the river (Panola) during the 1830s over the selection of a county seat (see section 2.2.1) and over farming and business interests (see section 2.2.2); and

2. because of this rivalry, there existed resentment, bitterness, and suspicion which intensified over the years (1840-1970) and led to differences in educational methodologies (see section 2.4.3.1), school growth (see section 2.4.1), and school advertising (see section 2.4.2). Also this hostility led to isolationism which allowed schools south of the river to be more progressive in their curricula (see section 2.4.2) and educational methodology (see section 2.4.3). This advertising, better educational methodology and curricula in the south assisted in gaining more students and creating a more enriched educational environment which produced exceptional graduates (see section 2.4.2).

Chapter 3 shows that

1. once again residents north and south of the river began a disagreement over the selection of a new site for the county seat which by now was located in the town of Panola. This dispute once again isolated residents north and south of the river. Additionally Sardis residents were helped in their bid for the courthouse by a group of politicians known as Radical Republicans (see section 3.7.1.1a) who through their political power in the post-war south allowed Sardis (north of the Tallahatchie) to become the site of the new county seat (see section 3.7.1.1b);

2. this battle over the county seat once again caused resentment and hostility which led to the formation of two judicial districts within the county (see section 3.7.1.1c) in the 1880s and by 1957 the development of a two district consolidated school system (i.e. North and South Panola Consolidated School Districts) (see sections 4.1 and 4.4.2);

3. Sardis residents became even more isolated after the 1870s and showed little interest in school advertising (see sections 3.2.2.3a(i), 3.7.1.2, and footnote 47), curricula (see section 3.2.2.3b), agricultural education (see section 3.3.1), and educational advances (see sections 3.4.1, 3.5.2, and 3.6.3). Batesville through co-operation with business leaders, new factories, civic leaders, and capable administrators maintained a strong economy and tax base which led to strong support for the educational system (see sections 3.7.1.2, 3.7.2.1a, 3.7.2.1b, 3.7.2.1c, and 3.7.2.2). Sardis, however, ignored new business and clung to "old ways" which led to isolation, and false security (see section 3.7.2.1c); and

4. because of Sardis' pseudo-security, pride and isolation (see sections 3.7.1.1, 3.7.1.2, 3.7.2.1b(i), 3.7.2.1c and 3.7.2.2) residents made mistakes regarding education which would lead in time to placing the schools into receivership and an "abolishment" of the North Panola Consolidated School District in 1996 (see sections 5.4.1.1, 5.4.1.3, 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.3.1, and 6.4.1).

Chapter 4 shows that

1. consolidation although serving a beneficial purpose to the progress of Panola County education, proved to be a very difficult task for educators, parents, and businessmen during the mid-1950s. Consolidation, as it related to the issue of a single vs. a dual educational district, turned neighbor against neighbor (see section 4.4.2) and almost led to the "abolishment" of Panola County's educational system in 1957 (see Chapter 4, footnote 3). The primary concern regarding the selection of a dual vs. single system of consolidation was that small schools within the county wished for a large single consolidated unit so they would be allowed equal power with the larger schools (i.e. Batesville and Sardis). Sardis and Batesville supported the dual districts as both towns felt that a single system would be an intrusion into their personal, social, and educational existence (see section 4.4.2). Additionally both communities because of their long feelings of resentment simply did not wish to work together in a single district unit; and

2. because of the establishment of a dual district system there was a weakening of the North Panola Consolidated School District which in forthcoming years led to poor educational leadership (see section 6.4.1.1), corruption (see section 6.4.1.1), a low tax base and eventual decay (see section 6.4.1.1) South Panola, however, prospered under the dual system and from its formation in 1957 (see section 4.1) continued to flourish with professional administrators, trained instructors, more revenue, and stronger representation (see section 6.4.1.2).

Chapter 5 shows that

1. during the time of "freedom-of-choice" and forced integration (late 1960s) residents of Batesville and Sardis attempted to postpone racial integration (see sections 5.2.1.1 and 5.4.1.2). However, when the federal government finally declared that integration would be achieved by 1970, South Panola School Board members, civic leaders, *The Panolian* (Batesville newspaper) (see section 5.4.1.2), and school administrators resolved to devise ways through which they could co-operate with federal officials and black leaders (see section 5.4.1.3). Through this farsightedness, Batesville received additional government funding (see section 5.4.1.3) and created a co-operative scheme between black and white leaders, the government, and board members which has aided the South Panola Consolidated School District in becoming one of the best districts in the state of Mississippi. However, Sardis residents rejected co-operation and instead "fled" (see Chapter 5, footnote 11) to the private schools (see section 5.4.1.4). This leaving of the formerly white facilities produced an environment whereby the North Panola School System by 1996 would be in receivership and economic decay (see section 6.4.1.1); and

2. at the end of segregation (1970), arrogance (see section 3.7.1.2), false security (see section 3.7.1.2), and isolation (see sections 2.2.1 and 3.7.1.2) led to a lack of co-operation between white and blacks leaders in North Panola schools as well as in all avenues of the community's economy and social life.

Chapter 6 shows that

1. at the end of segregation there existed until today a co-operative environment between blacks and whites in Batesville (south of the Tallahatchie) (see sections 5.4.1.2, 5.4.1.3, and 6.2.1). This atmosphere in the South Panola School District has aided black and white civic leaders, South Panola School Board members, and school administrators to provide an exceptional school environment for its students (see sections 6.2.2, 6.3.2, and 6.4.1.2). North Panola civic leaders has not followed the same path of co-operation as their counterparts in South Panola. With initial verbal abuse, arson, bomb threats (see section 6.2.1.1) to the receivership of the North Panola Consolidated School District in 1996) (see section 6.4.1.1), Sardis and other regions north of the Tallahatchie have ignored the call for co-operation, school construction, and expansion; and

2. because of a policy of isolationism (see sections 3.7.1.2, 3.7.2.1b(i), 4.7, and Chapter 3, footnote 47) the communities north of the river did not have strong community leadership or a strong tax base based on economic growth. Additionally, at the end of segregation, civic leaders, parents and school administrators of Sardis became disinterested in the public school system (see sections 5.4.1.3a, 5.4.1.4a, 6.3.1, and 6.3.1.2) which eventually led to a near total decay of the North Panola School District (see section 6.4.1.1).

7.3 FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Based on an analysis of the conclusions of the chapters, this study shows that

1. the initial reason for the economic, social, and political division between the regions north and south of the Tallahatchie River was a dispute over the location of the county seat which occurred in the 1830s (see section 2.2.1) and again in the 1870s (see section 3.7.1.1). Because of this dispute, there existed resentment and bitterness between residents north and south of the Tallahatchie which aided in producing diverse educational methodology (see section 2.4.3.1), school growth (see section 2.4.1), curricula (see sections 2.4.2 and 3.2.2.3b), and school advertising (see sections 2.4.2, 3.2.2.3a(i), and 3.7.1.2).

2. because of the isolationism of the north portion of the county, residents refused, or were unable, to attract new industry, increase their tax base, increase school advertising (see sections 3.2.2.3a(i) and 3.7.1.2), or provide needed revenues to education. Also the isolation policy, based on arrogance, pride, and a feeling of pseudo-security (see sections 3.7.1.1, 3.7.1.2, 3.7.2.1b(i), 3.7.2.1c, and 3.7.2.2) mistakes were made in the field of education which eventually led to the decay of the North Panola School District (see sections 5.4.1.1, 5.4.1.3, 6.2.1.1, 6.3.1.1, 6.3.1.2, and 6.4.1.1). However, South Panola residents became aware of the need of co-operating with outside businesses, black and white civic leaders (see section 5.4.1.3), and federal government (see sections 3.7.2.1a, 3.7.2.1b, 3.7.2.1c, 5.4.1.2, and 6.4.1.2 regarding various forms of co-operation over the years. This boosted needed revenues for education and school development (see sections 5.4.1.3, 6.2.2.1, and 6.3.2.5);

3. integration in the late 1960s provided the South Panola School District with an opportunity to co-operate with federal officials, black and white civic leaders, and community residents to form a more progressive school system. South Panola, like North Panola, initially did not desire integration of its schools but by 1970 knew that co-operation between all parties involved was the only course of action (see sections 5.4.1.2 and 5.4.1.3). This decision aided Batesville in obtaining additional federal funding (see section 5.4.1.3). This farsightedness also aided in making the southern district one of the best school districts in the state (see section 6.4.1.2). White residents in North Panola, however, refused to form a co-operative scheme between blacks and whites or the federal government and chose instead to support (see section 5.4.1.3) the creation of private schools (see section 5.4.1.4). This created an environment which led to poor educational leadership (see section 6.3.1.2), corruption (see section 6.4.1.1) and the near disintegration of the North Panola Consolidated School District by the 1990s (see section 6.4.1.1)

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations based on aforementioned conclusions suggest that

1. the county, residents of North and South Panola, must strive together to aid the region north of the river in providing economic considerations and growth. Poor economic growth leads to poor schools. Likewise a poor school system contributes to a poor economy as few factories or large corporations desire to relocate in communities with faltering school systems.

2. the communities north of the river must strive for a better co-operative effort between blacks and whites. This co-operation is especially needed between black and white community leaders. There has to be a concerted effort

between all members of the North Panola community for their economic and school systems to grow and prosper;

3. there is a need for a concentrated effort by the North Panola School System to build a co-operative program between the community and the public school system. The students in the public schools are the same people who will later be working in the community. Therefore a co-operative scheme between the community and schools will effect the future development of business growth and the community's economy; and

4. race set aside, quality school administration is necessary for school development. The community of North Panola must select the best administration regardless of race, creed, or color.

APPENDIXES

A.1.0 APPENDIX 1

A.1.1 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS[1], [2]

A. 1.1.1 Section I

1. Do you believe that the issue of early rich or affluent settlers north of the Tallahatchie, who later became plantations owners, influenced the social and economic mentality of this region causing a false sense of pride and isolation? Support your answer.

2. Do you feel that the controversy over the county's courthouse in the late 1830s and early 1840s played a role in causing social and political strife between the two regions of the county? Do you believe that social and economic events from that period influences events of today? Why?

3. Do you believe that the 1870s controversy over the county seat by Batesville and Sardis residents caused the later resentment and isolation of residents north and south of the river? Why?

4. Do you feel that the growth of the business community in Batesville, as opposed to growth in Sardis and Como during the later half of the century, was due to outside forces (i.e. grants, federal development projects, and state funding) rather than community (Batesville) planning (factory relocation, development incentives, and community-businessmen-factory partnerships)? Why?

5. Do you feel that past experiences, by Sardis and Batesville businessmen, administrators, educators, and farmers/plantation owners, over the past 150 years contributed to the communities varied reactions concerning consolidation in the 1950s and integration in the 1960s? How?

A. 1.1.2 Section II

1. Do you believe that the affluent and isolation mentality of business men in the area north of the River (Tallahatchie) produced an environment which

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[1] Questions used in the interview were designed by the researcher but were also reviewed by members of the University of Mississippi's Office of Research

[2] Note Appendix 6 for interview data (see section 1.3.2.3) and a listing of interviewees.

was conducive to the lack of development and growth of businesses and factories in the area? Why?

2. Do you believe that the affluent and isolation mentality of plantation or large farm owners in the area north of the River (Tallahatchie) produced an environment which was conducive to the lack of development and growth of businesses and factories in the area? Why? How did this occur?

3. Do you believe that Sardis and Como (especially Como) were able to weather the Depression much better than their counterpart south of the river, yet were unable to effectively grow and develop in the latter half of the 20th century? Why ?

4. Do you feel that the disproportionate number of businesses and factories in Batesville as related to Sardis was due to astute planning by Batesville businessmen? Why?

5. Do you feel that the philosophical mentality via growth of businesses, factories, and corporations in Batesville was detrimental to Sardis' educational development? Why?

A.1.1.3 Section III

1. Do you believe that the philosophical differences between Sardis and Batesville effected the way in which schools were run north of the Tallahatchie River? What are these philosophical differences? How?

2. Do you feel that the rivalry first manifested over the location of the county's courthouse in the 1830s and 1870s effected education in the county over the past 160 years? How?

3. Do you feel that Batesville was more inclined to accept consolidation in the mid-1950s more so than Sardis and Como? Why?

4. Do you feel that the issue of integration effected schools differently north and south of the river? How? Why?

5. Do you feel that plantation owners and businessmen of Sardis were more inclined to elicit the 'white-flight' (drawing their kids out of public school and placing them in private ones) manifestation as opposed to Batesville residents? Why?

A.1.1.4 Section IV

1. Do you feel that the constant underlining issue of isolation, affluence, competition, and resentment by Sardis businessmen and plantation owners created the condition which lead to the bankrupt condition of the Sardis schools? Why?

2. Do you feel that the 'white-flight' issue north of the river, effectes current educational conditions in Sardis? How?

3. Do you believe Sardis and Batesville will ever come to a closer, more co-operative relationship regarding education? How?

4. Do you believe that money problems were the only issues causing the current situation of Sardis school system? Why?

5. Do you believe that philosophy of education north of the river, effected discipline problems by students or led to apathy on the part of teachers? Why?

A.2.0 APPENDIX 2

A.2.1 POPULATION BY RACE

UNITED STATES CENSUS REPORTS

Statistics of Population by Counties in Mississippi (Panola)[1]

Race	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910
White	2237	5021	5237	8169	9521	9248	9661	10049
Black	2415	6420	8557	12585	18830	17729	19366	21224
Free Black	5	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	4657	11444	13794	20754	28351	26977	29027	31273

Race	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
White	n/a	10655	13876	13782	12553	13061	n/a	15376
Black	n/a	17993	20545	17489	16238	13768	n/a	14533
Total	n/a	28648	34421	31271	28791	26829	n/a	29909

[1] U.S. Census. *Population schedules*. Census of Panola County in the northern district of Mississippi: *1840-1990*. Washington, D. C.: United States Census Bureau.

A.3.0 APPENDIX 3

A.3.1 NUMBER OF EDUCABLE CHILDREN ENUMERATED

1889-91 *BIENNIAL REPORT* [1]

p. 106

Number of Educable Children Enumerated by Teachers				Number of Educable Children Enumerated by Assessors			
White		Black		White		Black	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1871	1708	3419	3241	1868	1681	3833	3244

p. 110

Enrollment				Average Daily Attendance			
White		Black		White		Black	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1557	1423	2637	2602	802	788	1264	1283

p. 122

Number of Schools		No. Teachers Examined		No. Teachers Licensed	
White	Black	Fall	Spring	White	Black
57	60	177	40	68	71

Separate School Districts (Sardis)

p. 410

No. of Pupils Enrolled				Number in Average Attendance			
White		Black		White		Black	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
113	122	90	127	65	86	35	46

[1] Number of educable children enumerated.1891. *Biennial Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Education to the Legislature of Mississippi*, 1889-91. Jackson, MS: Power Printing Co.

A.4.0 APPENDIX 4

A.4.1 GENERAL STATISTICS, 1900-1901

1900-01 *BIENNIAL REPORT* [1]

p.98

Number of Pupils Enrolled in County				Number of Pupils in Average Attendance			
White		Black		White		Black	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1363	1126	2300	2362	697	631	1146	1171

p. 102

No. of Teachers Licensed				Number of Teachers Attending Institute			
White		Black		White		Black	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
10	49	42	28	3	25	25	15

p. 110

Av. Monthly Salary		Per Capital Each Child Enrolled		Per Capital Each Child in Av. Attendance	
White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
$35.68	$1986	$5.52	$1.40	$10.34	$2.83

Separate School Districts (Batesville)

p. 112

No. of Pupils Enrolled				Number in Average Attendance			
White		Black		White		Black	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
82	69	51	88	60	52	23	37

[1] General Statistics. 1901. *Biennial Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Education to the Legislature of Mississippi*, 1900-01. Jackson, MS: Power Printing Co.

Separate School Districts (Sardis)

p. 114

No. of Pupils Enrolled				Number in Average Attendance			
White		Black		White		Black	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
83	81	96	134	59	62	50	82

A.5.0 APPENDIX 5

A.5.1 BROWN V. THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, 1954[1]

Brown v. the Board of Education is one of the most important ruling ever passed regarding the concept of 'separate-but-equal'.To a large degree, this entire chapter is based on the decision of Judge Warren and the U. S. Supreme Court of 1954.

BRIEF:

These cases come to us from the States of Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware. They are premised on different facts and different local conditions, but a common legal question justifies their consideration together in this consolidated opinion.

In each of the cases, minors of the Negro race, through their legal representatives, seek the aid of the courts in obtaining admission to the public schools of their community on a nonsegregated basis. In each instance, they had been denied admission to schools attended by white children under laws requiring or permitting segregation according to race. This segregation was alleged to deprive the plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth Amendment. In each of the cases other than the Delaware case, a three-judge federal district court denied relief to the plaintiffs on the so-called "separate but equal" doctrine announced by this Court in Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537. Under that doctrine, equality of treatment is accorded when the races are provided substantially equal facilities, even though these facilities be separate. In the Delaware case, the Supreme Court of Delaware adhered to that doctrine, but ordered that the plaintiffs be admitted to the white schools because of their superiority to the Negro schools.

The plaintiffs contend that segregated public schools are not "equal" and cannot be made "equal," and that hence they are deprived of the equal protection of the laws. Because of the obvious importance of the question presented, the Court took jurisdiction. Argument was heard in the 1952 Term, and reargument was heard this Term on certain questions propounded by the Court.

Reargument was largely devoted to the circumstances surrounding the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868. It covered exhaustively consideration of the Amendment in Congress, ratification by the states, then existing practices in racial segregation, and the views of proponents and opponents of the Amendment. This discussion and our own investigation convince us that, although these sources cast some light, it is not enough to resolve the problem with which we are faced. At best, they are inconclusive. The most avid proponents of the post-War Amendments undoubtedly intended them to remove all legal distinctions among 'all persons born or naturalized in the United States'. Their opponents, just as certainly, were antagonistic to both the letter and the spirit of the Amendments and wished them to have the most limited effect. What others in Congress and the state legislatures had in mind cannot be determined with

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[1] Brown v. Board of Education, 347 US 483 —1954. (Brown vs Topeka Kansas Board of Education - Document date 22 March 1997, World Wide Web, Infoseek site - *http://www.theshop.net/tia-ok/brown.htm*. This appendix is a direct quote as taken from the Internet.

any degree of certainty. An additional reason for the inconclusive nature of the Amendment's history, with respect to segregated schools, is the status of public education at that time. In the South, the movement toward free common schools, supported by general taxation, had not yet taken hold. Education of white children was largely in the hands of private groups. Education of Negroes was almost nonexistent, and practically all of the race were illiterate. In fact, any education of Negroes was forbidden by law in some states. Today, in contrast, many Negroes have achieved outstanding success in the arts and sciences as well as in the business and professional world. It is true that public school education at the time of the Amendment had advanced further in the North, but the effect of the Amendment on Northern States was generally ignored in the congressional debates. Even in the North, the conditions of public education did not approximate those existing today. The curriculum was usually rudimentary; ungraded schools were common in rural areas; the school term was but three months a year in many states; and compulsory school attendance was virtually unknown. As a consequence, it is not surprising that there should be so little in the history of the Fourteenth Amendment relating to its intended effect on public education.

In the first cases in this Court construing the Fourteenth Amendment, decided shortly after its adoption, the Court interpreted it as proscribing all state-imposed discriminations against the Negro race. The doctrine of "separate but equal" did not make its appearance in this Court until 1896 in the case of Plessy v. Ferguson, supra, involving not education but transportation. American courts have since labored with the doctrine for over half a century. In this Court, there have been six cases involving the 'separate but equal' doctrine in the field of public education. In Cumming v. County Board of Education, 175 U.S. 528, and Gong Lum v. Rice, 275 U.S. 78, the validity of the doctrine itself was not challenged. In more recent cases, all on the graduate school level, inequality was found in that specific benefits enjoyed by white students were denied to Negro students of the same educational qualifications. Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada, 305 U.S. 337; Sipuel v. Oklahoma, 332 U.S. 631; Sweatt v. Painter, 339 U.S. 629; McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents, 339 U.S. 637. In none of these cases was it necessary to re-examine the doctrine to grant relief to the Negro plaintiff. And in Sweatt v. Painter, supra, the Court expressly reserved decision on the question whether Plessy v. Ferguson should be held inapplicable to public education.

In the instant cases, that question is directly presented. Here, unlike Sweatt v. Painter, there are findings below that the Negro and white schools involved have been equalized, or are being equalized, with respect to buildings, curricula, qualifications and salaries of teachers, and other "tangible" factors. Our decision, therefore, cannot turn on merely a comparison of these tangible factors in the Negro and white schools involved in each of the cases. We must look instead to the effect of segregation itself on public education. In approaching this problem, we cannot turn the clock back to 1868 when the Amendment was adopted, or even to 1896 when Plessy v. Ferguson was written. We must consider public education in the light of its full development and its present place in American life throughout the Nation. Only in this way can it be determined if segregation in public schools deprives these plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws.

Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other 'angible' factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does.

In Sweatt v. Painter, supra, in finding that a segregated law school for Negroes could not provide them equal educational opportunities, this Court relied in large part on 'those qualities which are incapable of objective measurement but which make for greatness in a law school'. In McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents, supra, the Court, in requiring that a Negro admitted to a white graduate school be treated like all other students, again resorted to intangible considerations: '... his ability to study, to engage in discussions and exchange views with other students, and, in general, to learn his profession'.

Such considerations apply with added force to children in grade and high schools. To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. The effect of this separation on their educational opportunities was well stated by a finding in the Kansas case by a court which nevertheless felt compelled to rule against the Negro plaintiffs:

'Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of Negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racial[ly] integrated school system.'

Whatever may have been the extent of psychological knowledge at the time of Plessy v. Ferguson, this finding is amply supported by modern authority. Any language in Plessy v. Ferguson contrary to this finding is rejected.

We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. This disposition makes unnecessary any discussion whether such segregation also violates the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Because these are class actions, because of the wide applicability of this decision, and because of the great variety of local conditions, the formulation of decrees in these cases presents problems of considerable complexity. On reargument, the consideration of appropriate relief was necessarily subordinated to the primary question -- the constitutionality of segregation in public education. We have now announced that such segregation is a denial of the equal protection of the laws. In order that we may have the full assistance of the parties in formulating decrees, the cases will be restored to the docket, and the parties are requested to present further argument on Questions 4 and 5 previously propounded by the Court for the reargument this Term. The Attorney General of the United States is again invited to participate. The Attorneys General of the states requiring or permitting segregation in public education will also be permitted to appear as amici curiae upon request to do so by September 15, 1954, and submission of briefs by

October 1, 1954.
It is so ordered.

A.6.0 APPENDIX 6

A.6.1 INTERVIEW DATA[1]

The following is a list of twenty individuals who agreed to answer the interview questions in Appendix 1. Their names also appear in the thesis' bibliography. The researcher discovered it was extremely difficult to find individuals north of the river to interview. Although many were asked for interviews, most declined. For this reason only 8 were interviewed as opposed to the 12 from South Panola. Some of these individuals had also been previously interviewed between 1989 to 1994.The interviews were recorded on an audio format and will be given to members of PanGen for deposit in the Genealogy Room of the Batesville Library. Finally several individuals who were interviewed have since passed away. These individuals' names are marked (*).

Amis, Mike, former teacher and board trustee, and current businessman (Dir., Dixie Nursing Care). Interviewed by author, 25 August 1998. Interview 160B, tape recording. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

Anderson, Sadie, retired school teacher and businesswoman, South Panola Consolidated Schools. Interviewed by author, 28 September 1996. Interview 20SA, tape recording and transcript. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.*

Autrey, Jo Ann, school teacher and businesswoman, South Panola Consolidated Schools. Interviewed by author, 28 July 1998. Interview 125A, tape recording and transcript. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

Broome, Carlock, principal, Pope Elementary and Junior High School. Interviewed by author, 11 August 1998. Interview 127B, tape recording and transcript. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

Carlisle, Bobby, personnel director, superintendent's office, South Panola Consolidated Schools. Interviewed by author, 15 August 1996. Interview BC40, tape recording. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.*

Cole, David, former superintendent of South Panola Consolidated Schools. Interviewed by author, 26 October 1996. Interview DC46, tape recording and transcript. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

Glover, Thelma, retired teacher. Interviewed by author, 23 August 1995. Interview TG29, tape recording and transcript. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

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[1] A listing of interview questions are contained in Appendix 1. A list of all individuals interviewed between 1989-1998 are listed in the Bibliograpy.

Harmon, Mildred (Mrs Russell), retired elementary school teacher. Interviewed by author, 18 March 1996. Interview 18MH, tape recording and transcript. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

Hayden, (Mrs Jack), retired teacher, South Panola School District. Interviewed by author, 15 August 1998. Interview 130B, tape recording and transcript. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

Hubbard, Earl, former Panola County supervisor and sheriff. Interviewed by author. 14 March 1997. Interview 53, tape recording and transcript. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

Johnson, Flora (Memzie), librarian, Batesville Public Library. Interviewed by author, 11 March 1998. Interview FJ14, tape recording and transcript. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

Joiner, Shirley (Mrs Lloyd), retired teacher. Interviewed by author, 29 July 1998. Interview 124A, tape recording and transcript. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

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Murphree, Walter G., retired chief of Batesville police. Interviewed by author, 24 September 1998. Interview 113A, tape recording and transcript. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

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Randolph, George, retired general manager, Tallahatchie Valley Power & Electric Association. Interviewed by author, 6 May 1998. Interview 101, tape recording and transcript. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

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Riser, Norma (Mrs Robert T.), community organizer. Interviewed by author, 14 April 1997. Interview R25, phone conversation. Lindgren Oral History Collection, Courtland, MS.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Professor Lindgren received his B.A.E., M.Ed. and S.Ed. from the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss). While in graduate school he served as an E.D.P.A. and a Robert A. Taft Fellow. He read Metagogics for his F.C.P. from the College of Preceptors, Essex, where he was later elected Fellow. Fellowships include the Royal Society of Arts, Royal Asiatic Society (London), and the College of Preceptors. Other learned societies include: Royal Historical Society, American Academy of Religion, Medieval Academy of America, and Orders and Medals Society of America. Rev. Lindgren also belongs to several religious orders including associate, Brotherhood of Saint Gregory (Episcopal); associate, Brotherhood of Blessed Gerard (SMOM); and Intl. Order of the King's Sons and Daughters. Decorations include Niadh Nask (Military Order of the Golden Chain) and Knight Commander, Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch (Uniate-Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch). Chev. Lindgren serves as president of the American Society for Chivalric Research, historian of the British North American Command of the Legion of Frontiersmen (Patron: Countess the Rt Hon Mountbatten of Burma CBE CD JP DL AMM), Ambassador of the Russian College of Heraldry, and president of the Institute for Educational Consultanting and Evaluating Services (since 1981). He has authored over 200 articles and ten books on history, education, and photography including 10 inclusions for Oxford University's *New Dictionary of National Biography* and *American National Biography*.

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