BLACK AMERICAN FAMILY LIFE HISTORIES: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

by

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DEDICATION

Let the words of my mouth and the mediation of my heart,

Be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

Psalm 19:14

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God is good, all the time and all the time, God is good!

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ABSTRACT

This ethnographic study built upon the tenets of critical race theory and intersectionality theory while documenting the stories of six participants across three generations in a single Black American family unit. The study findings focused on preserving the strength, history, and family culture. Research questions were: (1) What are the life histories of six family members across generations in a Black American family? (2) How can the study framework shed light on the participants' life histories? (3) How does family history inform cultural identity and family learning in multiple generations of a Black American family? Data collection included episodic narrative interviews, artifacts, family memory books, and researcher journal. Coffey's (2018) five phases for data analysis of ethnographic data were utilized. The themes that emerged from the study revealed participants' unwavering commitment, value education, perseverance and vision of possibilities. This study documented the strength and resilience of three generations in the same Black American family by informing cultural identity across generations and the connections to society and culture systems. An important contribution made by this dissertation is the utilization of critical race theory as a familial tool to analyze, document, and preserve the cultural and historical heritage of the Black American family. This example can be used at different educational levels (elementary to university level) to help the future generations make sense of their heritage and daily life happenings living as a Black American.

I. THE JOURNEY BEGINS

They tried to bury us, but they didn't know we were seeds.
Dinos Christianopoulos

The strength and survival of the Black American family in the United States are almost unbelievable. In 1860, at the dawn of the Civil War, nearly half of all enslaved people were under the age of 16, and almost one-third were under the age of 10 (Schwartz, 2001). These former enslaved Black Americans are generational family members who experienced sufferings and tragedy that we could never imagine. During slavery, the family was one of the most important survival mechanisms the African people retained while in bondage (Blassingame, 1972). In African society, family is derived from the concept of kinship within the tribe, and while under the American slavery system, it was in the community of enslaved where individuals found identity (Johnson & Staples, 2005). Upcoming are the historical findings of the researcher's family in the United States. Thus, this dissertation study adds to the existing body of literature focusing on Black American family history.

My story begins with Eliza Waul, my fifth great-grandmother. The 1910 United States Federal Census served as a foundational document for this dissertation since it provides record of Eliza being born a slave around 1822 in North Carolina. The additional information in the federal census recorded that Eliza married Balaam Waul, and from 1836 to 1867, had six daughters and two sons. The 1910 United States Federal Census indicates Eliza had 13 children, but multiple sources account only eight live births. Eliza's picture was taken around 1905 when she was approximately 84 years old (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Eliza Waul, Family Matriarch

In 1830, approximately eight years old, Eliza was moved from North Carolina to Mississippi by an unknown slave owner. No records confirmed, but from supplementary interpretations, her parents and siblings traveled with her. The 1860 United States Federal Census Slave Schedule list Eliza, Balaam, and their four children, 14, 10, 6, and 1 years old, as traveling from Mississippi to Gonzales County, Texas under the ownership of Thomas N. Waul. Additionally, the same documents designated that Eliza spoke English, but was illiterate. Her occupation was a day laborer and housekeeper.

After moving to Gonzales County, Texas, the census and death records confirmed that from the 1850s to 1867 Eliza had four additional children. For example, a piece of information I have been able to come across tells about Tena, Eliza's youngest daughter.

The photograph (see Figure 2) includes some of Tena's family members. From left to right, Walter is her brother-in-law, Roseles is her son, Henry is her husband, and Arneza, on the farthest right, is her daughter. I also learned that, in 1893, Eliza's husband

died. Next, the U.S. Federal Census (1900 and 1910) listed Eliza living with another of her daughters, Kate. On June 6, 1911, Eliza died in Waelder, Texas at 89.

Figure 2. Tena's Family (1895)

Figure 3 illustrates my lineage in an ascending order starting with my father, Alvin Bernard and shows my connection to Eliza as my fifth great grandmother. Learning about Eliza provides a foundation of who I am and where I come from, bringing meaningful connections to my family values and cultural identity. Furthermore, learning about Eliza clarifies that I am at least an eighth-generation Black American citizen. In fact, on the slave schedule, a specific question asks whether Eliza's parents were born in the United States, and this box is checked as "Yes", establishing that my family's citizenship in the United States dates back to the 1700s, which reveals that I am a ninth-generation Black American citizen. Until recently, very little information about my maternal family history was available. Hopefully, this dissertation will bring light to that side of my family history.
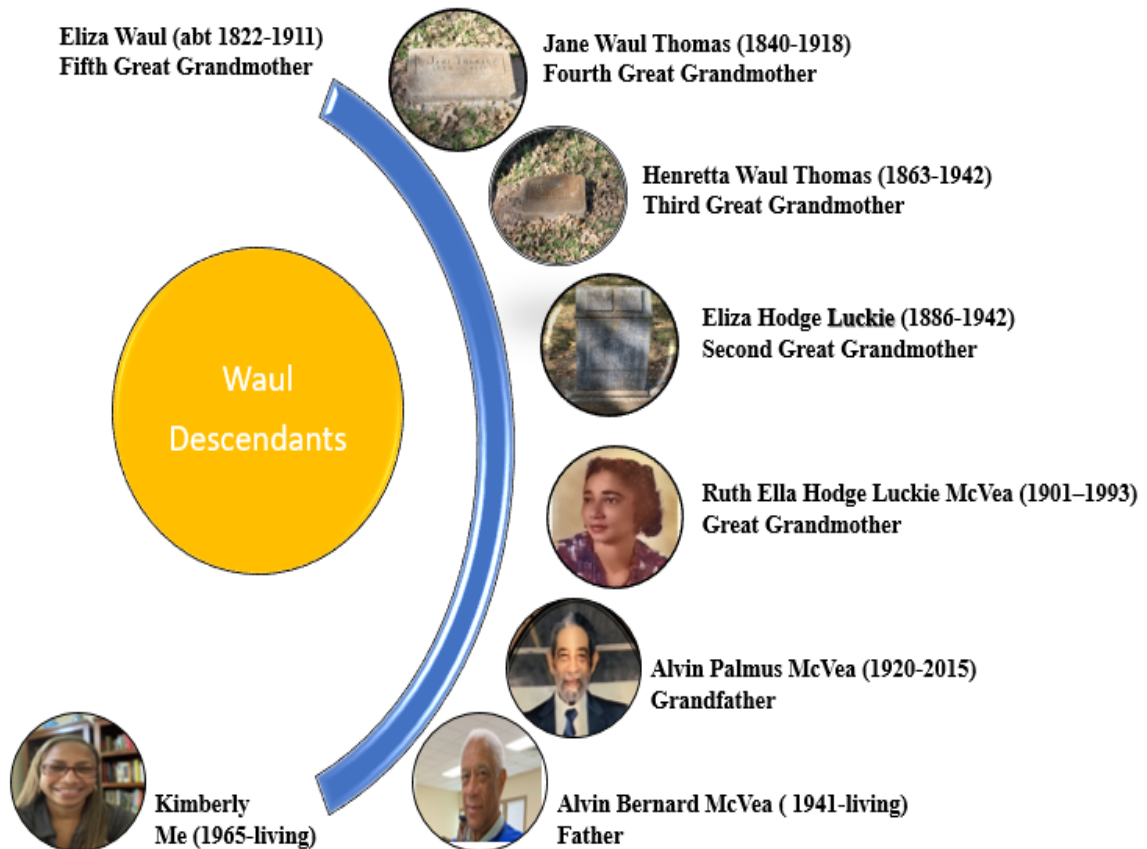
Figure 3. My Lineage to Eliza Waul

The historical moment we are living in of unaddressed systemic racism, coupled with the fact that some of my family members are aging, motivated me to document my family's history for personal and educational purposes. Therefore, building on critical race theory (CRT) and intersectionality theory, this dissertation aims to (a) gain an understanding of my family history across three generations, and (b) highlight the positive achievements and contributions of Black families to American society.

Dissertation Overview

The present document follows the inverted dissertation format (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) to prioritize storytelling and narrative while presenting study findings. This structure will allow study participants and other audience members who are not in

academia to focus on the life stories described in the document (see Appendix A for definition of relevant terms used throughout the document). Presenting the study as an inverted dissertation aligns with the principles of ethnographic research placing stories and learning about culture at the center of the research. As a dissertation requirement and acknowledging the importance of the methodology utilized to conduct this research, Appendix B describes in detail the study design.

The present dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter I provides the context for the study, problem statement, research questions, study framework, and an overview of the historical events impacting Black American life since the 1950s. Chapters II, III, and IV present the narratives of six family members who belong to three different generations in one same family. Each participant narrative brings about honor by preserving and contributing to the family's cultural identity. Finally, Chapter V summarizes study highlights, provides recommendations for practice, presents tensions and challenges and ideas for future research. The Appendix section is equally important because it presents important pieces supporting the study design such as data collection and data analysis.

Statement of the Problem

There has been a host of materials and books published since 1965 about Black American families, but even so collective knowledge continues to be limited (Allen, 1995). One of the reasons is the distribution of Black family life history into the body of literature has been poorly publicized and as a result, remained to some extent obscure (Taylor et al., 1990). Several studies portrayed negative dysfunctional stories of Black welfare queens and images of hyper-masculinized or imprisoned and absent fathers

(Feagin, 2006; McAdoo, 2007). These narratives are damaging and distort the life stories handed down from one generation to the next.

A study by Honey (1999) argued that many researchers realized that studying Black families could not be done using a White person's viewpoint. In contrast, it required historical accounts with clarity, specifics, and the crucial perspective from the Black families that lived it. In other words, to write about an open and trustworthy Black American story required the voice of the Black family.

In addition, Hill (1999) explained that the deep-rooted cultural strength of the African American family are the extended family and the strong kinship networks. Although older family members tell stories, save family photos, and heirlooms, many younger generations do not express an interest in connecting with these treasures. The segments of untold stories in a family's culture and the absence of intergenerational pride created a void and discursive space in the shared knowledge of Black American family life histories (Crawford, 1996). According to Mosley-Howard and Evans (2000, p. 442), the experiences of each family member showed an influence of community and culture across multiple generations. Furthermore, the post-civil rights group are affected by the impact on new economic pressures, families integrated environments, and changing views of race in Black American families.

When looking at the contemporary Black American family, Hill (1999) added, it is vital to incorporate multiple perceptions such as "ecological, cultural, problem and solution identifications in a holistic manner" (p. 10). This viewpoint allows for the larger community and society's impact on the structure and purpose of the Black American family. Overall, without historical awareness, it can be difficult to hold on to the lessons

and celebrate the accomplishments of the family members who lived before us (Graves, 2011). Learning a family's history is necessary to find common ground with others in your life. Hill (1999) argued there is a knowledge gap across generations in terms of cultural roots and history of the Black American family. Thus, a study focusing on preserving the strength of Black American history and family culture is needed, which is the gap that the present dissertation aims to address.

Research Questions

1. What are the life histories of six family members across generations in a Black American family?

2. How can the study framework shed light on the participants' life histories?

3. How does family history inform cultural identity and family learning in multiple generations of a Black American family?

Study findings will be helpful in developing in-depth discussion on specific topics such as the strength and resilience of Black American families and counter the negative statements made about Black American families. In addition, study findings will support recommendations to promote improvement in public policies and self-help initiatives for the Black American community and others across our nation. Lastly, study findings have the potential to contribute to the design of undergraduate and graduate courses in the fields of Black American studies and ethnic studies, human development and family studies, sociology, social work, and adult education.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation builds on critical race theory (CRT) and intersectionality theory to examine the stories of three generations in a Black American family. Using CRT and

intersectionality theory as the framework provides a tool to expose hidden systemic and the everyday ways in which racism functions in a Black American family.

Critical Race Theory

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), CRT education scholar and sociologist respectively, explained that during the mid-1970s, CRT emerged from the work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman, who were frustrated with the lack of progress in racial equality after the civil rights movement in the United States. McCoy and Rodricks (2015) explained that the framework for the critical analysis component of CRT has roots in Critical Legal Studies, which focus on addressing the class and social injustice perpetuated by the symptoms of race and racism.

In addition, Delgado and Stefancic (2017) argued that CRT is a movement among activists, theorists, and practitioners studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, power, and unconscious thoughts and actions within law and society. Parker et al. (1999) affirmed that CRT creates a form of "interjecting of the minority cultural point of view, derived from a common history of oppression with an effort to reconstruct a society crumbling under the burden of racial hegemony" (p. 15). In other words, CRT creates a space for exploring deep-rooted issues affecting Black communities.

Currently, CRT has developed in its claim to challenge liberalists' thoughts in the law of objectivity, neutrality, and color blindness arguing that these principles regulate and spread racism by ignoring structural inequalities (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Abrams & Moio, 2009). CRT scholars support different perspectives to bring value to the political, social, and economic dialog.

The framework of CRT outlines the premise that race and racism are prevalent in society and intersect with other forms of oppression based on gender, class, sexuality, language, and culture (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995). By putting race at the center of analysis, CRT can be used to examine policies and practices that are explicit and hidden to maintain racial inequality. The tenets of critical race theory analyze the different forms of social inequities (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

The first tenet is the permanence of racism, which explains that racism, both conscious and unconscious is a permanent component of American life (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tate, 1997). The second tenet refers to the critique of liberalism, which includes color blindness, meritocracy, and neutrality of the law (Crenshaw, 1988; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tate, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1998). The third tenet is counter-storytelling and majoritarian narratives, which insist on contextual and historical analysis to create doubt and falsehood about the legitimacy of accepted principles or myths held by the majority (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Matsuda, 1995; Tate, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). This tenet encourages Black people to share their success stories as well.

The fourth tenet is Whiteness as property, centering on the history of race and racism in the United States and the role of the country in reifying conceptions of race (Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Matsuda, 1995). The fifth tenet considers race in intersection with other identities and differences (Crenshaw, 1991; Matsuda, 1995). Lastly, the sixth tenet, is how CRT works to eradicate racial oppression and inequities based on race (Matsuda et al., 1993). This tenet entails combating the social structures that continue to reproduce different forms of inequities.

Intersectionality Theory

Coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a United States critical race theorist, intersectionality theory is an outgrowth of CRT. Intersectionality theory explores how group membership can make people vulnerable to various forms of biases (Carbado & Harris, 2019). Intersectionality focuses on marginalized voices and subjugated knowledge as well as people who are at an advantage, with the purpose of examining both ends of the spectrum (Brekhus, 2008). While based on the historical structure of inequalities and a person's life, Collins (2000) found that intersectionality brings awareness to the importance of examining the various dimensions of inequality and recognizing the organization of social disparities into a matrix of power. Similarly, Lengermann and Niebrugge Branley (2004) note that intersectionality recognizes the concerns of ethnicity, class, gender, race, sexual orientation, and other systems of oppression among people.

Similarly, Collins (2000), King (1998), and Norris et al. (2007) noted that the relationship of the intersectionality perspective with the social markers of class, race, gender, age, and sexual orientation inequalities shape a person's experience. The intersectionality lens assists the researcher in listening to the voices and narratives of the participants to construct a more holistic interpretation of their reality. Collins (2019) explained that CRT and intersectionality together establish an agenda to transform and redeem, not just to critique and deconstruct social interactions and phenomena. Gillborn (2008) found intersectionality is often a misunderstood concept when addressing how multiple forms of inequality, based on identity and experiences, overlap over time and in different contexts. Henceforth, using these theoretical lenses together will allow me as the

researcher to highlight cultural identity and family learning across multiple generations in a Black American family.

Figure 4 illustrates the conceptual framework for this dissertation. First, the root system represents the senior family members in the study. The roots provide the nutrients or the cultural foundation that help the family survive, grow, and reproduce. Typically, the tree's root system stays together and grows deeply where originally planted, unless physically uprooted. When moving a tree to a new location, it is important to keep the roots intact to provide for a healthy planted tree. Themes from the literature describe the severe struggles of the Black American family; hence the strong roots of older generations build the foundations of nourishment.

The trunk of the tree represents the strength that supports the family as it grows. The family's culture flows through the roots to the trunk and towards the top of the tree to the branches. The trunk serves as the central support system or the next family generation in the study, which preserves the connection of the family. The tree branches and leaves are important because they represent growth and continuation. The branches mature in multiple directions holding up the leaves, which create a covering and showcase the circle of life in each season. The branches and leaves denote the youngest family generation in the proposed study. Lastly, the multiple generational family stories and experiences related the development of the family's cultural identity.

Thus, the yellow ribbon signifies the awareness of CRT and intersectionality as theoretical influences supporting the study design.
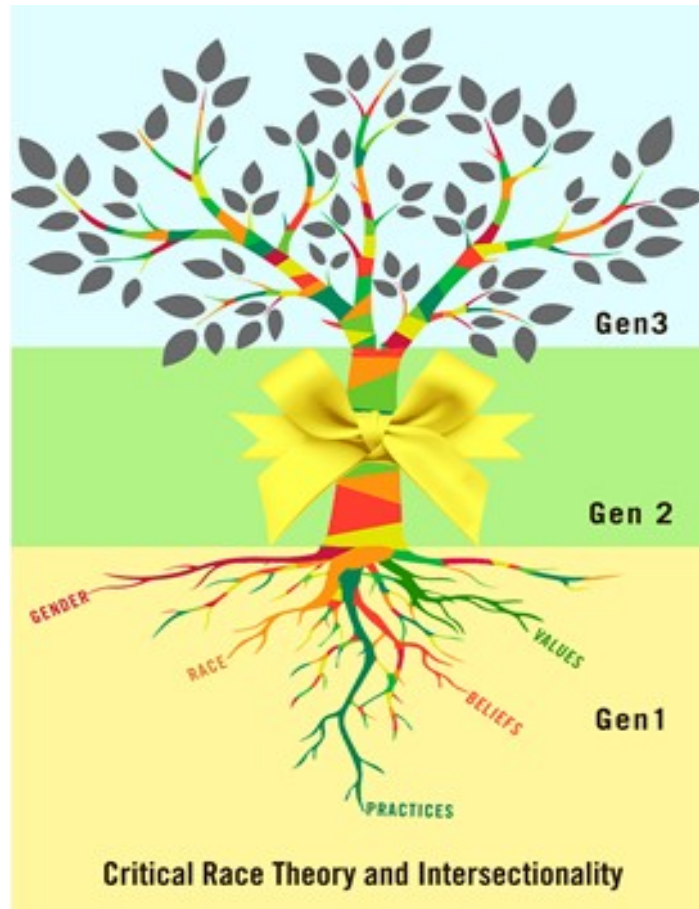
Figure 4. Theoretical Framework for the Study

Researcher's Perspective

Growing up as a child of a military service member required that our family moved homes every few years. The longest time period we lived in a single place was five years. During my elementary and junior high school years, we lived too far to visit my father's family, but we kept in touch by talking on the phone and writing letters. By the time my dad retired from the military and moved us closer to his family, I was a teenager. During these years, we spent more time with extended family and strengthened relationships.

In my view, my grandmother's sister, Aunt Lucky, was the family historian. She created a collage of family photos dating back to her younger days on her bedroom wall.

Fortunate for us, she lived behind my grandparents, which meant that we visited Aunt Lucky as often as my grandparents. It was a joy visiting her because we all wanted to see the new photos she received from family near and far. My aunt's assortment even included my siblings and me, which my mom sent from the different places we lived. Talking about the photos helped me learn the names and background stories of family members. I realized that although I may not have personally met each person, all of us sent Aunt Lucky updated photos and cards knowing that she displayed them for all to see. She was the person who kept the family connected with her photo collection. Her stories united and reminded us that we belonged to a loving and caring family with a solid foundation. Although I always respected my Aunt Lucky and listened to the family stories, I did not fully appreciate the importance and connection of the photos to our family's experience, knowledge, and wisdom as noted in Appendices C, D, and E.

When Aunt Lucky passed away a family member gave me her collection of wall photos with a request to safeguard the memories, organize, and distribute them to the family. This gave me the opportunity to review all the memories, gain an appreciation of who was in each picture, the reason of the photo, and the significance of our family history as well as why it was important to preserve these memories. Equally important, the more knowledge that was shared with me about my ancestors, the deeper my interest grew to learn about my family history with greater respect for the challenges endured by my Black American relatives. Lastly, from what I am learning, I hope to encourage the younger family generations to take an interest in preserving the gift of our family history and strengthen an understanding of our cultural identity.

Historical Overview

Next is a historical and socio-political overview of events affecting the U.S. Black population, spanning 1950 to the present. From 1482 to 1888 approximately 50 million Africans were brought to the Americas through the European Slave Trade, producing first-time wealth and birthing capitalism in the new world (Asante & Mattson, 1992). Although the enslaved ancestors varied culturally, politically, religiously, and in social practice, they used their intellect, creativity, faith, ceremonials, symbols, and ideas to establish a sense of community and tradition (Kelley & Lewis, 2000). Nonetheless, when arriving in the Americas, the Africans experienced brutal uprooting from their homeland and families (Beasley, 1997). The following pages of the dissertation present an overview of relevant historical events connected to race and equality for Black people in the United States of America (see Figure 5).
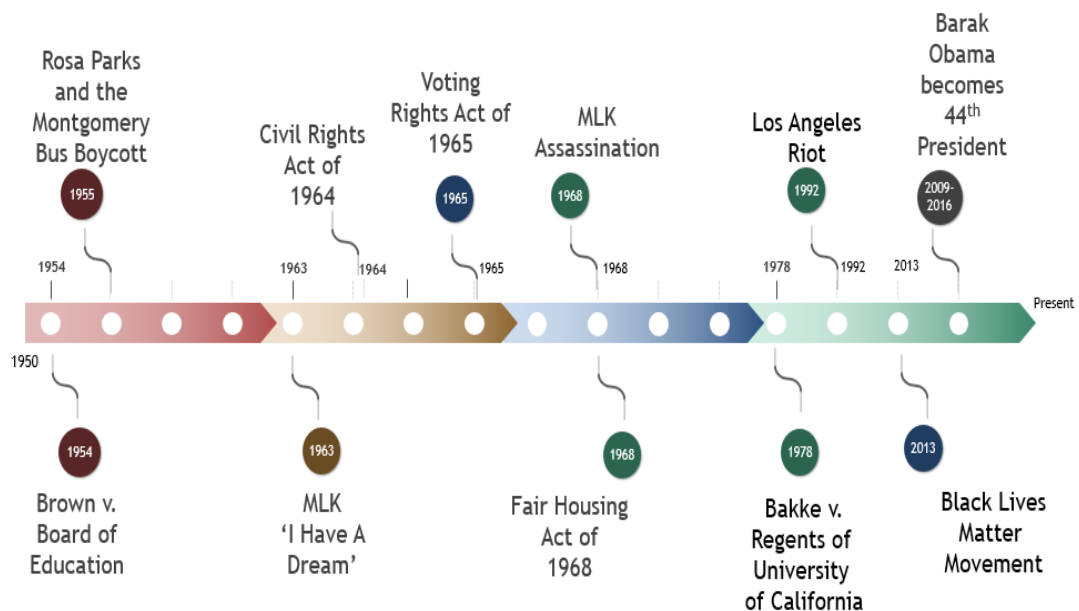
Figure 5. Black America, 1950-2020

The study's historical overview of the Black American population's events began in 1950, at the dawn of the civil rights movement, when Gen 1, the study's oldest participants, were pre-teenagers. Gen 2, the study's next generational participants, were born when segregation in employment, transportation, education, and public accommodations ended with the provision of services under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and discriminatory voting practices by The Voting Rights Act of 1965. Gen 3, the study's youngest participants, were born during Ronald Reagan's presidency, the War on Drugs, the beating of Rodney King, and the 1994 riots in Los Angeles. Later events include Barack Obama's election, the Black Lives Matter movement, The National Museum for African American History and Culture's opening, the Michael Brown killing in Ferguson, Missouri, and most recently, the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Since the 1960s, Allen (1995) explained there have been numerous books and material published about experiences endured by Black American families. However, over the past 20 years, Taylor et al. (1997) argued that the research on Black American families focused primarily on social problems. This perspective restricted the general population's appreciation of the challenges confronted by Black American families. Additionally, the interpretation of social issues removes the sharing and understanding of individual Black American families' life histories, which results in untold stories that weakens the personal pride of a family's cultural identities across generations. Lastly, in the absence of the knowledge of family life histories, there has been a disregard for preserving historical records, memoirs, and affirmation in the Black community (Aulds, 2010). Graves (2011) suggested that without historical understanding, it became difficult to embrace the teachings and celebrate the accomplishments of those who lived before us.

When Black Americans recognized and honored their cultural beliefs and gained knowledge and confidence in the broader culture, Black people, in turn, were in a better position to improve their socioeconomic status and ability to make decisions about their future (Ladson-Billings, 2014). It is the life histories and personal stories that gave a rich interpretation, shared emotional intimacy, and discursive space, which described many Black families (Crawford, 1996). The literature review opens with a timeline from 1950 to construct an in-depth understanding of Civil Rights movements in the United States and the signing of the Civil Rights legislation in 1964, which ended Jim Crow laws.

<p align="center">**1950 – 1964**</p>

Civil Rights Movement

At the end of WWII, the United States was exalted as the world's superpower, had increased population with a booming economy, grew in suburban neighborhoods, and produced consumer goods to more people than ever before. However, Black Americans still lagged in society (Healey et al., 2019). Essentially, during these times, racial discrimination presented an era of inequality and injustice. To end de jure segregation or government-enacted laws in the United States, Black Americans and their allies introduced and organized the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s (Asante & Mattson, 1992). Scholars document that some government officials advocated ending segregation activities, but others believed it a threat to democracy, and capitalism in a free enterprise system.

As decades passed, the United States controlled its domestic and foreign policy relating to the potential influence of communism by using diplomacy, threats, and force (Healey et al., 2019). The policies caused a mockery between the international standing

of the United States and the Black American freedom struggle as the United States claimed to be the leader of the free world, yet made domestic racial discrimination an international embarrassment and the civil rights movement a fierce opposition (Gaines, 2007). Social injustice pressured government justice for Black Americans.

De Jure (Legal) Segregation

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court made a historic ruling by overturning 1896's Plessy v. Ferguson, which upheld separate but equal doctrine. The Court's landmark decision in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, ruled that racial segregation in schools as unconstitutional, ending one de jure segregation (Healey et al., 2019). This case served as a precedent in establishing that separate but equal was not equal in education or any other services.

In 1955, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was a new minister at a local Baptist church. Rosa Parks refused on impulse to give up her seat on a bus to a White passenger, which incited the Black American community to spur the Montgomery bus boycott (Bennett, 1988). It took a collective, sustained effort to make the boycott successful that led to the sit-in movements of the 1960s and the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963, where approximately 250,000 people observed King deliver his famous speech, I Have a Dream (Hampton & Fayer, 1990). This event served as a significant point of national consciousness of racial inequality, placing the discussion of civil rights directly on the United States legislative agenda (Asante & Mattson, 1992). The next section discusses the Black Power Movement, another nationwide narrative rivaling the Civil Rights Movement.

Black Power Movement

Unlike the Civil Rights Movement, Asante and Mattson (1992) stated that the Black Power movement developed a strategic plan in the philosophy of Malcolm X and the cultural nationalist's action. Davis (2015) added in 1966, while America continued to exclude Black people, Malcolm spoke of black pride, self-respect, and an awareness of one's heritage, giving millions of young Black Americans newfound confidence and the foundation of what became Black Power. The activism centered on the Black community's social, political, and economic empowerment with an emphasis on the Black man's identity and rejecting the assimilation of the White culture.

Although the Black Power Movement followed social, political, and cultural change, Bennett (1988) argued the movement did not resonate well with many Whites and some Blacks. The author revealed the Black Power Movement was criticized for the race riots, gun-toting cultural bold afros wearing Black militants, African dashikis, and military poetry. To control the growing movement, the United States government drafted or recruited those Black Americans thought to be interested in the Black Nationalist message for the Vietnam War (Stewart, 1996). Yet, according to Joseph (2009), the Black Power Movement still showed backing through diverse groups of people with the development of Black studies college programs, the election of Black mayors in major Black American cities, the creation of the United States social services, and large support from the White activist in the New Left, Puerto Rican militants in Chicago, Mexican Americans in Los Angeles, Asian Americans in the Bay Area, and Native Americans in the Midwest.

A study by Henderson in 2018 examining the influence of the Black Power Movement in other countries indicated an advancement of the political uprising against Western imperialism. Despite that, Slate (2012) contended that many people considered the Black Power Movement a division and force even when the movement offered new types of unity and collaboration among Black Americans and oppressed people throughout the world. We see the legacies of the civil rights and Black Power movements alive in organizations around the world today.

Ending of Jim Crow

The 1960s proved to be a pivotal decade for America and much of the world. The civil rights issue divided the United States even from the White House, where President John F. Kennedy did not support meaningful legislation until the demonstrations and riots received national attention worse than a declaration of war given the violence and confrontation (Loevy, 1997). Finally, at the urging of President Lyndon B. Johnson, the United States Congress signed the milestone legislation, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, or gender, ending Jim Crow segregation (Healey et al., 2019). The transformation of consciousness continues in the next segment of the historical timeline.

<p align="center">1965 – 1979</p>

Voting Rights Act of 1965

The worldwide outrage captured on camera by the national news media of peaceful marchers en route to Montgomery from Selma, Alabama, was the catalyst and turning point pressuring President Johnson to act on the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Loevy, 1997). During this time, states imposed literacy requirements, poll taxes, and

similar obstacles to Black voters' registration. The federal system of states' rights allowed Southern states to enforce without federal oversight. However, the 15th Amendment of the United States Constitution passed almost a century earlier, guaranteed all citizens the right to vote (Coleman, 2018). The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is the most far-reaching piece of civil rights passed by the United States Congress in history, allowing Black Americans to exercise their right to vote as guaranteed (Healey et al., 2019). This classic marginalization, where most Black Americans lived in the southern United States, would finally change.

The act's impact was dramatic, with nearly 1 million Black voters registered within four years, including over half of the Black voting-age population in every southern state (Kelley & Lewis, 2000). After the 1966 election, the number of Black elected officials in the South more than doubled, from 72 to 159 (Coleman, 2018), and by the end of the 1960s, Freeman (2019) stated the numbers of Black American voters tripled. After these gains, it would still take many more years before Black Americans experienced the satisfaction of the right to vote without fear of voting.

The Assassination of Malcolm X

During this time, not all Black people agreed with Martin Luther King Jr.'s nonviolent resistance message. McAdoo (2007) documented that Malcolm had his idea of advocating for the establishment of a separate Black community with its own military. Remnick (2011) added that Malcolm's forceful and uncompromising belief scared the White community, especially when he criticized the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement by saying statements like "the White man will not share his wealth with his ex-slaves" (Tuck & Gates, 2014, p. 32).

However, before Malcolm's assassination in 1965, he publicized a change in his perspective and expanded his civil rights thoughts. According to Robinson (2014), Malcolm's legacy demanded better treatment of Black people, which, in particular, is a lasting impact on the Civil Rights Movement. McAdoo (2007) continued that not only did Malcolm try to connect the Black community worldwide, but he fought for human rights by teaching that Black Americans need not worry about superficial organizational differences, but bond under common interests such as liberty and social life. The next section discusses the provocations and surroundings of race riots.

Racial Riots

From 1964 through 1971, Collins and Margo (2004) stated that the United States spurs a long and terrible history of race-related riots, exploding in vast geographic urban cities, which resulted in countless injuries, deaths, and arrests. Carter (1986) indicated that urban America experienced 750 unorganized, unplanned, or unscheduled serious race-related uprising and disturbances during the same years, which described a revolution with over 30 participants with visible levels of personal injury or property damage. The frustration of poverty and the Blacks' poor political powerlessness experienced after a police brutality incident frequently set off the riots. While this was occurring, the nation still acquired increased prosperity (Dreier, 2003). The act of race riots caused many misunderstandings.

In 1965, Watts, a Black neighborhood in Los Angeles, California, erupted into violent rebellions after much frustration and anger in the urban Black American community (Healey et al., 2019). Studies by Sears and McConahay (1970, p. 121) after the Watts' riot suggested that segregation, overcrowded, low educational opportunities,

underemployment, and underpay produced fundamental mistrust of White authority by young Black Americans, which created the new race riot phenomenon in 20th century America.

Sociologists characterized these riots as Black aggression, even though the violence was not to physically harm White civilians, as in the past race-related riots with Whites attacking Blacks (National Advisory Commission, 1968). The damage and looting primarily involved attacks by Black Americans against White-owned businesses, who exploited their business services, and the police, who usurped their power with an army-style excessive force in Black neighborhoods (Conot, 1967; National Advisory Commission, 1968; Mozingo & Jennings, 2015). Businesses serving the Black community, namely libraries, schools, hospitals, clinics, and some government agencies and Black-owned companies, usually were not damaged or ruined by the riots (Litwack, 2009). This research showed how the existing institution did not meet the needs or concerns of the Black community. The desperation felt by the isolation in the urban ghetto and the involvement of White business owners, slumlords, and police in perpetuating these conditions changed the fight for American racial policies from nonviolent demonstrations to violent civil disturbances (Lieberson & Silverman, 1965). The next section addresses the need for a proponent of judicial activism on the highest Court to enact the United States' moral authority.

First Black American Supreme Court Justice

In 1967, President Johnson appointed civil rights activist Thurgood Marshall, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) chief counsel, to become the first Black American Supreme Court Justice (Healey et al., 2019).

Marshall, a first-rate trial lawyer, traveled throughout the South, defending Blacks in criminal trials that were little more than legalized murder (Post, 2018). He focused on litigating cases that addressed the heart of segregation.

Marshall became a living icon of civil rights, argued 32 cases before the United States Supreme Court and won 29 before becoming a Supreme Court justice (Heath, 2015). Marshall used his convictions and the law as the principal source to argue Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, and convinced the nine justices to fight for racial justice for all and strike down existing segregation systems in public education (Stewart, 1996). By setting legal precedent for the end of discrimination in education, Marshall constructed change from within the existing system (Snow, 1992). However, the highest court did not specify how the local schools would integrate, leaving this responsibility to local judicial and political management, where continued racial inequalities existed.

Martin Luther King Assassinated

Farris (2009) postulated that many people admired King's advocacy for nonviolence and social justice. However, due to his assassination in 1968, shock waves were sent worldwide, causing social disturbances across the nation (Garrow, 1987). King's death resulted in a turning point in the civil rights movement from peaceful efforts to gain Blacks' political equality toward controlling radical and violent black power (Iannone, 2018). Riots, lesser civil disorders, and a period of national mourning brought attention to the Fair Housing Act of 1968, a goal to rid the widespread housing discrimination under Jim Crow and a path for Black Americans living in the ghetto to

move up to the middle class (Williams, 2018). President Johnson worked assertively before Congress to show continued progress on the racial front to enact this legislation.

Bakke v. Regents of the University of California

In 1978, a form of White backlash occurred when Allan Bakke, an unsuccessful White applicant at the University of California, Davis Medical School, claimed reverse discrimination given that the University admitted Black students with lower test scores to meet their established quota of minority students (Kelley & Lewis, 2000). The question raised in this case did not hand down a unanimous judgment with the Supreme Court Justices, signaling a shift in fundamental American society and law.

The Court ruled in favor of Bakke, by finding that the University of California's affirmative action policy illegally held the use of quotas was unconstitutional, which allowed for a strict examination method that public universities must implement to defend the consideration of race in higher education admission (Jones, 2019). Unfortunately, after forty years of this crucial decision, the author observed that medical schools remained predominately White institutions. The decision validated a lie in the interpretation of laws intended for disadvantaged Black people instead of rules designed to improve the effects of anti-Black discrimination.

Writing for the plurality of the Court, Justice Lewis reasoned that institutions of higher education should strive for a diverse study body. However, it is unfair to the innocent third party who had no responsibility in the past to use race to benefit those who were once historically disadvantaged (Lamparello, 2015). The dissenting opinion and argument from Justice Marshall protested this decision as a tragedy since America is not a colorblind society, and the great melting pot will never be realized for the Black person

because of the color of his skin color and not in the group to be considered (Kelley & Lewis, 2000). The reality of this court decision requires an increased commitment to ensuring that Black Americans have continued opportunities through affirmative action, which now has an unclear interpretation.

<center>**1980 – 1994**</center>

Black American Firsts

The push for equal rights, opportunity, and treatment led to significant positive changes. One meaningful sign of progress was Black Americans' success in various professional areas. In the 1980s, Black Americans saw important firsts for their excellence in politics, science, journalism, literature, entertainment, and sports. In 1982, Bryant Gumbel became the first Black American to co-anchor The Today Show, a major network morning show (Spearman & Harrison, 2010). Gumbel served in this role for 15 years, where he interviewed, reported, moderated conversations, and generally tied the show together in a coherent manner. In that same year, legendary music superstar, Michael Jackson, released Thriller, becoming a cultural success with the best-selling album of all time (Stewart, 1996). In 1983, Guion 'Guy' Bluford, a member of the Challenger mission STS-8, became the first Black American astronaut in space (Bardeen, 2008). Bluford's pioneering work inspired other Black Americans to consider space exploration ranks. Jesse Jackson, America's first Black viable and compelling candidate, won 18% of the party vote while finishing in third place and carrying one state for the 1984 Democratic presidential primaries (Riser, 1992). Jackson's campaign was a successful example on a national level, showing people that a Black American person could seriously compete at the very highest political level.

With more than 20 volumes of poetry, Gwendolyn Brooks served as the first

Black American consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress, known as the Poet

Laureate for the 1985-1986 term (Jackson, 2000). The role of a national poet seeks to

increase awareness of reading and writing poetry. Brooks met this responsibility by

pursuing her interest in introducing poetry to elementary students. In 1987, Reginald

Lewis, a successful businessman, became the first Black American CEO of a billion-

dollar corporation when he leveraged a groundbreaking business exchange with the

buyout of Beatrice Foods, an international food conglomerate (Lewis & Walker, 1995).

The advancement of Black Americans serving in the armed services and military

academies was recognized when, in 1989, retired four-star general Colin Powell reached

the level of Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff (Dagher et al., 2001).

Powell stated that his accomplishment demonstrates the vital benefits of a military career

for Black American families, due in part to the civil rights movement (Billingsley, 1992).

The final example of Black American firsts occurred in 1989, when Art Shell, a former

professional football player, became the first Black American head coach of the Oakland

Raiders (Wiggins & Sharpe Reference, 2004). Shell's appointment influenced how

professional Black athletes saw themselves and their contributions to the organization.

This decade saw Black Americans' progress in numerous areas of socioeconomic life.

Over the last 100 years, Black Americans continue to break through multiple

barriers by earning more advanced degrees than ever before, contributing to American

society on the Supreme Court and other high-level government positions, leading

prominent American companies, and teaching at prestigious universities (Healey et al.,

2019). Despite that, there was still much to do as racial inequality continued in education,

health care, housing, employment, and other areas (Harris, 2010). The next section reflects frustration with the dominant population, which helped the Republican Party capitalize by promoting a smaller government and the robust United States, and landed a victory of President-elect Ronald Reagan, a conservative president in the last 50 years over the incumbent President Jimmy Carter.

President Ronald Reagan

In *Looking Back: Ronald Reagan, a Master of Racial Polarization* (2007), the Reagan 1980 presidential campaign appealed to segregationist Whites over the Black vote. With the support of Richard Nixon's grand Republican Party's Southern Strategy, there was a push for the capsizing of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal and Lyndon Baines Johnson's Great Society social safety net programs. Stewart (1996) argues that the 1980 presidential election of Reagan carried resentment to the White House concerning the opportunities created by the Civil Rights Movement and spending federal funds to desegregate schools. With a different agenda of civil liberties, in 1981, Reagan's administration concentrated on obtaining funds for Bob Jones College, an institution that refused to enroll Black American students and was hesitant to sign the Voting Rights Act's renewal legislation in 1982. Another final telltale of President Reagan's stance on civil rights was the appointment of William Bradford Reynolds, a man who opposed most affirmative action programs (p. 175). As a firm believer in building a big business, Reagan thought a small government would benefit all people with economic profits trickling down to the low and middle class (Kelley & Lewis, 2000). However, the Reagan period marked a weakening in the Black community's social and economic conditions, causing mistrust of the American government. Tripp (1992) further added, as a result,

Black Americans identified with the liberal Democrats leaned toward the moderate Black Nationalist, Afrocentric movement influence. The Black community's alienation in the mid-1980s compounded the arrival of crack cocaine in already devastated communities.

War on Drugs

The war on drugs began in 1973, under the Nixon administration, as a racially charged stern message to restrain crime and appeal to a White working-class who felt threatened by the Black American's gains with the civil rights movement (Lynch, 2012). In the 1980s, President Reagan reinforced the policies with severe penalties for drug-related crimes that devastated many Black American families. According to Benson et al. (1995) and Nunn (2002), under Reagan's administration, there was an increase in anti-drug enforcement spending, a federal drug task force, and a culture that denigrated drug use and drug users. The Black American community criticized the formation of the laws as having racist ramifications because the longer prison sentences for drug offenses impacted Black Americans more than White Americans.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics of The Federal Bureau of Investigation (2008) reported that drug arrests for possession tripled between 1982 and 2007, the largest category of arrests in the United States from approximately 500,000 to 1.5 million (Lynch, 2012). Literature by Tonry (1994b) in 1976 documented the increase of racial and ethnic inequalities in drug-related arrests with Blacks and Whites constituting 22% and 77% of drug-related arrests, respectively, and by 1992 Blacks and Whites accounted for 40% and 59%, respectively, of all drug-related arrests. However, during these years, Blacks comprised about 12% of the total population, and Whites were about 82% (p.48).

Black Americans' high arrests led to conspiracy theories that the government wished to destroy the Black community (Cooper, 2015). However, criticizers argued that there was more down to end drug use in the Black communities than in White areas.

Rodney King Beating

In March 1991, a home video recording of four White Los Angeles police officers brutally beating Rodney King, a Black American speeding suspect, made national and international news (Matheson & Baade, 2004; Healey et al., 2019). Although the police officers faced felony assault charges, an all-White jury acquitted them of crimes against King a month later. This erupted the worst civil uprising in south-central Los Angeles in American history (Murty et al., 1993). More than 50 people died, thousands were injured, 5,000 adults arrested, 700 businesses burned, and 1 billion dollars in property damages.

Less than two weeks later, Latasha Harlin, a Black 15-year-old girl, was involved in a verbal confrontation over stealing an orange juice with the owner of a Korean-owned store, and the store owner shot and killed Harlin (Oh & Hudson, 2017). Upon further investigation, Harlan died clutching money to pay for the juice, yet after the trial, the store owner received probation and a $500 fine. As tension intensified, the King verdict ignited more bitterness and anger toward the criminal justice system and the Los Angeles police for not protecting the Black community.

This historical segment witnessed racial and economic disparity while simultaneously, Black Americans celebrated a number of first achievements in various significant and challenging positions. The next section of the historical timeline opens with the country confronting social, racial, and legal history with a notorious murder trial of the century. Next is a discussion around the nation's struggle with the cultural impact

of 9/11, when a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks occurred on United States soil, and finally, a monumental moment as the United States elects its first Black president.

<p style="text-align:center">1995 - 2009</p>

O.J. Simpson Trial

In 1995, the nine-month notorious criminal trial of former Black college and professional football player, O.J. Simpson received worldwide publicity. Kuhl (1997) commented that millions of people followed the brutal murders of Simpson's ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman, with a parade of exciting personalities, big money, extravagant lifestyles, interracial relationship, and allegations of police misconduct (p. 531).

Early in the case, it was perceived that race would not be a factor due to Simpson's celebrity status and the millions of dollars to defend his case, which separated him from the color of his skin. Conversely, according to Peffley and Hurwitz (2010), speculation of the case and public opinion of Simpson's innocence divided the country along racial lines, with Whites' perceiving the judicial system as mainly fair and colorblind and Black Americans viewing the judicial system as biased and discriminatory. Further studies concluded when the jury reached a verdict of not guilty for both homicide charges, public opinion polls showed that Whites were disgusted, and Blacks primarily supported Simpson's acquittal decision based on past racial injustices in the legal system (Silverglate, 1995). The above literature suggested that a person's life experiences with race and the criminal justice system influenced their view of the Simpson murder trial. The next section discusses the 9/11 terrorist attack on American soil and how White and Black Americans responded to the breach of national security.

9/11 in America

The attacks on the morning of September 11, 2001, constituted the deadliest acts of terrorism committed against all U.S. citizens in some manner when four commercial airliners were hijacked and flown into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania, killing and injuring thousands of people (Harlow & Dundes, 2004).

In the face of this dangerous threat, many Americans, including Black Americans, united together through anger and grief to give their lives freely to our country. However, Curry (2012) explained that many of the pictures of heroes shown across the nation did not include Black Americans as part of this exceptional group, which questioned if they were less patriotic than other groups. Scholars Davis and Silver (2004) stated that Black Americans rallied with the United States and upheld the government's actions that led to the terrorist attacks. However, as more Black Americans were concerned about the likelihood of future attacks, there was less support exhibited to America's political leaders. Regardless, Black Americans mourned for the victims and America after the September 11 attacks, but not for the American government (p. 2).

Rather than characterizing all Black Americans, it is best to conclude that Black Americans may understand patriotism differently than White Americans. Herring (2003) stated if patriotism was the idea of unconditional loyalty, then Black Americans lack thereof was probably the struggle to remain loyal to the United States while pursuing social justice change. The last section within this historical decade presents the nation's first Black president, who raised hopes that race relations in the United States would improve, especially among Black voters.

President Barack Obama

Perhaps the single sign of progress in racial equality in the United States between the dominant and minority groups occurred in 2008 with the first Black American presidential election of Barack Obama (Healey et al., 2019). Although this point of view today may be different, according to Barber (1992), to most Americans, the president's position represented all people in the country. Perhaps President Obama's presidential status improved the relationship between the Black American community and the government institution. Others claimed that having a Black president meant a person's race is no longer a requirement for the delivery of services, distribution of wealth, employment, or equity in the life of U.S. citizens, and neither should the Black community put race in a role to explain personal struggles (Ford et al., 2010). Scholars upheld that although many believed that President Obama transcended race during his campaign and election, in actuality, the studies show a dependency on the race-conscious behavior of the Black community. Rho'Dess (2011) explained that President Obama reaped the highest Black American vote in the 2008 election, some 90% ever for a democratic candidate. Even so, Lawson et al. (2011) claimed that the campaign's race-neutral approach hid critical issues that unintentionally caused backbiting among the people who supported the Obama election and less emphasis on focusing on fundamental racial justice.

Another study by Branch (2018) argued that Black Americans had strong feelings about President Obama's election, although there was a lack of economic growth. To illustrate, in 2010, the Pew Research Center published that Black Americans viewed their economic progress as greatly improved between 2007 and 2009 as compared to any other

time during the last 25 years. In addition to this, the report asserted that the Black

American confidence occurred during the election of Barack Obama, while the country

was in a recession with the recovery of jobs hitting the Black community the hardest.

This difference between Black optimism and socioeconomic stagnation was due to the

Obama effect, which conveys that having a Black man in the highest political office in

the nation elevated Black Americans' hopes for their future (p. 2). The final decade of the

historical overview discusses the ideology and engagement that champions Black

people's humanity. Following is the chronicle of Black American life, history, and culture

with the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture after

decades of hard work trying to promote African Americans' contributions. Lastly, another

killing of an unarmed Black male teen stirs up America's debate over race and justice.

2010 – 2020

Black Lives Matter

The 1960s civil rights movement and the Black Lives Matter Movement gained

global coverage in different ways. The civil rights movement focused on democratic

values of equality, freedom, and justice for all (Clayton, 2018), whereas Black Lives

Matter concentrates on "Black humanity" (Harris, 2015). This movement is expansive,

bringing together all Black people to emphasize human rights and racial equality.

In 2013, the hashtag, Black Lives Matter, originated to fight systematic racism

and violence. Chama (2019) claims the term had become nationally known for its street

protests, as the movement is a mere plea for social justice at a time when the mainstream

political discourse appeared to disregard the Black race with the acquittal of George

Zimmerman. In this case, Mr. Zimmerman, a White man, fatally shot an unarmed Black

American teen, Trayvon Martin. The slogan, Black Lives Matter had a significant impact in 2014 during a civil uprising after a police brutality verdict in Ferguson, Missouri, where a White police officer gunned down another young Black man (Rickford, 2016). The Black Lives Matter campaigns inspired Black Americans to challenge their social and economic difficulties while scrutinizing the historical and contemporary effects of the daily struggles of Black Americans in modern-day America (Chama, 2019). After several decades of advocacy, the next section spotlights the culmination of a national memorial, displaying Black life's dedication and achievement in America.

National Museum of African American History and Culture

In 2016, the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., opened to honor and serve as a national meeting place for Black Americans dating back to 1916 (Bunch, 2017). The national museum is the first time African American history and culture would be at the forefront of the nation's story, next to the symbolic Washington Monument and the White House (Gardullo & Bunch, 2017). The journey to build the national museum was hardly comfortable.

The calling for a memorial began during Reconstruction, and since 1930, activists have continually proposed a national museum (Coyle, 2018). Part of the challenge in building the museum centered on Congress not passing any legislature or offering any seed money for the museum's construction until 2003; once approved, the museum opened with fantastic speed. Dufresne (2017) contends the goal of building the national museum is not to tell the story of one racial group but for each relevant exhibit to share the American account while raising issues of lingering racism and the African American economic disadvantages. The utmost tribute of the museum's lens to the Black American

experience through each exhibit is how it addresses resilience, spirituality, and hope to all American people's values. In the final section of the historical timeline, the review of another shooting involving a Black teen male by a White police officer and how it permeates throughout the national media regarding police brutality and deadly force.

Michael Brown Killing in Ferguson

According to Healey et al. (2019), the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri by a police officer, Darren Wilson, sparked another significant race-related uprising similar to the 1992 Los Angeles protests and riots due to the continued racial inequality, urban poverty and desolation, and the reality of separate communities, unequal and hostile. There are many debates regarding the shooting circumstances, but the implicit point was that Ferguson's Black community felt extreme tension for the institution established to protect them. A Pew Research Center survey conducted immediately following the shooting of Brown found that Blacks are twice as likely as Whites to say the shooting of Brown stems from racial issues (Anderson, 2014). Further research indicates a racial difference by Blacks in trusting that the local police officers used their power and force in an equal manner where a Black person was not shot and killed (Johnson, 2016). These surveys document the difference in attitude toward police among White and Black citizens.

Most recently, in 2020, another shocking killing was added to the list of unarmed Black people killed at the hands of the police with the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota. (National Lawyers Guild, 2020). The brutal police assault was caught on video by a bystander, while other police officers stood watching. Soon after the occurrence, thousands took to the streets, protesting their outrage and mourning Floyd's

death, who pleaded for his life as a White officer, Derek Chauvin, knelt on his neck, refusing to stop for 8 minutes and 46 seconds even after Floyd's body went limp. It is difficult to discuss controversial issues, such as racism and discrimination, but analyzing them from a historical perspective in a meaningful way helps build connections with existing race problems we continue to face in the United States.

The historical overview of Black America from 1950 to 2020 represents a time of intense change and struggle. There were trials and tribulations built to uphold the racial pecking order of persecution, fear, violence, poverty, injustice, and marginalization. Yet, some Black Americans made great strides in pursuing the American dream, but others are left to deal with harsher and stricter conditions. No matter what, the Black American family's story demonstrates a sense of strength, characterized by resilience, revolution, courage, hard work, creativity, and a sense of community. The next section of the literature review concentrates on the definitions, attitudes, and beliefs of race and culture in the Black American community.

Race

For more than two centuries, scientists believed that race had a biological meaning for explaining human differences that resulted in some of history's greatest tragedies, such as harsh exploitation and mistreatment, slavery, and genocide (Healey et al., 2019). Today, scholarly literature on race appears in diverse fields such as biology, cultural studies, social sciences, and philosophy to construct what is and is not known.

According to Minniear and Soliz (2019), the definition and understanding of race have changed throughout the United States' history, sometimes referring only to skin color, and other times as a stand-in for ethnicity. Today's meaning of race fashioned from

historical, cultural, and social events and relationships is unique to this country's life experiences (Omi, 2001; Smedley, 2007). Additionally, race has a prominent historical feature in the Black Americans' daily interactions due to the definition of family. This idea is further explained by Burton et al. (2010) maintaining that "race is a central component of social organizations and systems, such as families," (p. 442) and the struggles that come with racial differences in families "are not fixed objects." In short, to understand race in the Black American community, we must understand the social institutions and policies that were created during slavery times, which legally did not allow Black Americans to sustain families.

Current research provides new insights into race that contests the philosophy of racial classifications and racial legends. Based on studies by Healey et al. (2019), the most critical finding was that genetic variation within the Black race is greater than the variation between all groups (American Sociological Association, 2003). This finding contradicted traditional, non-scientific thoughts that racial categories, like skin color, support scientific truths. The next section will address what we understand race to be as a social and cultural difference between different people.

Social Construct

Many scientists and scholars together found the term race to be nothing more than a social construct used to classify the differences between human beings with no biological construct (Whitmarsh & Jones, 2010). However, racial meanings are real, as scholars further explain that the United States built social rules regarding race with rules to inform the treatment of people and how people behave.

The impact of race as a social idea includes: where one is most likely to live, which schools a person will attend, who will be one's friends and partners, what will be a person's career, how much money a person will earn, how much education one will have, how healthy a person will be, and even how long one can expect to live (Adelman, 2003). Likewise, the understanding of the term race reflected how the Black American communities' perceptions and challenges influenced the viewpoints of the family's cultural identity (Kiang et al., 2006).

According to Jones (1996), the family's cultural identity was critical because scholars who agree that race is culturally determined recognize that the Black American family's culture differed from other American cultures for it was the only subculture in the United States produced by slaves. Subsequently, the Black American family subculture fashioned itself through slavery without having ties to a particular ethnic homeland. Yet, it is one's race that continues to vary across time and place. The next section discusses how the understanding of race incorporates into the United States economic system for Black Americans.

Economics Around Race

Any discussion of race, West (1993) challenged should begin after examining our society's error in using race to shape how people are treated and protected, according to Oluo (2018). W. E. B. Du Bois (1944), a well-known African American civil rights scholar, stated that the interpretation of race in the United States integrated with our economic system. Creating a racially unfair financial system kept Black people from moving ahead and supported mobility upward for the dominant culture.

The significant economic trends that have adversely impacted Black families are back-to-back recessions, double-digit inflation, technological changes, and immigration. Hill (1989) also argued that Black families struggled with the economic policies designed to fight inflation, such as plant closings, imports, foster care, and the increasing use of block grants and per capita formulas to allocate funds to localities to correct for the census undercount. The next section will discuss the racial categories that represent the social-political construct for the races.

Categories of Race

Americans used the categories, Black or White, for their descriptions of race (Von Feigenblatt, 2015). According to Fredrickson (2002), this concept was problematic, as previously discussed, because the word 'race' lacked scientific validity around its social, cultural, and historical constructed category that has a close association to 'racism' as an ideology or attitude.

Du Bois (1944) characterized this difficulty as the color line problem, which he asserted was the most significant problem faced in America. Likewise, Isaac et al. (2010) claimed that race had been a contentious subject in the United States, resulting in lively discussions across all education levels. A significant idea that results in this subject being argumentative declared Mitchell and Salisbury (1999), was the premise in grouping humans which postulates that members of individual racial groups automatically inherited such preordained characteristics as intelligence and other traits. Sadly, this perspective of the origin of race was accepted. However, most social scientists like Andersen and Collins (2007, p. 62-63) pointed out that race roots are "the result of social

and historical processes." The next section discusses how American society creates policies based on race with social differences that existed.

One-Drop-Rule

America's one-drop rule, used legally, socially, and culturally designated how multiracial individuals should be identified (Roth, 2005). In 1910, Tennessee became the first state to codify into law, relying on miscegenation laws to maintain the distinction between Whites and Blacks. People with any known Black ancestral background, or "a single drop" of Black blood, which represented more than five percent in most states, were legally labeled and treated as Black (Davis, 1991; Williamson, 1980). A Black person's treatment included the countless Jim Crows laws, which justified state and local racial segregation in America. These laws impacted the ability of any Black person to accrue wealth or cultural capital to share with future generations.

Despite laws restricting Black Americans to the treatment of a second-class citizen or less, the Black Americans held on to the surrounding community. The next section discusses the strengths of the Black American culture.

Culture

The definition of culture defined by Shiraev and Levy (2013) was "a set of attitudes, behaviors, and symbols shared by a large group of people and usually communicated from one generation to the next" (p. 3). Gregory et al. (2019) indicated that there are many variations of the Black culture. However, the Black Americans' distinct identity was rooted in the historical experiences of the African Americans who went through the Middle Passage.

In 1988, scholar Niara Sudarkasa brought attention to Black Americans' attitudes and behaviors by arguing that slavery did not destroy the Black American culture. However, the American mainstream culture ignored a large sector of African attitudes, brotherhood, and even matrimony (Nobles, 2007). For example, Berry and Blassingame (1977) discussed that the strong West African culture in the Americas is due to the outpost between the 16th and 19th centuries. The authors continue to explain that Africans came to the United States in the following three ways: descendants of enslaved Africans, descendants of Africans from the Caribbean and Latin American countries, and recent immigrants from African countries, and through these travels, they brought all races, cultural experiences, and attitudes that differ from most other Americans. The next section addresses the Black American family and the importance of promoting the culture.

Black American Family

In the Black family, McAdoo (2007) stressed the quality of the family members' lives and how its culture stood in the middle of the people, community, and nation. Similarly, Nobles (2007) contended that the family is important in the culture and the centrality of life-affirming and life-enhancing values. Expanding on the family within the Black American culture, Brown (2013) asserted through the family, the passing to each generation was the tradition of storytelling with the hope of elevating and creating an escape from the poverty of enslavement to a life of personal freedom.

A study on the Black American family structure by Revell and McGhee (2012) focused on providing the children with a strong foundation as the central theme. According to Nobles (2007), scholars shared that family members serve as 'mothers' to

influence and teach essential life lessons, while building a safe and thriving community. The Black American parent-child relationship involves looking at how the community raises children to be ready to live in a hostile, even racist society while providing the cultural support of legacy, family, and faith.

The community represented an extended family network, Kane (2000), stated in several Black American families. These examples include the three-generational household, which allows for the bringing together of financial and human resources, living nearby, separating homes, and the lasting structure is the fictive kin, where friends and neighbors give titles of aunt or uncle to non-related individuals. Gray and Nybell (1990) revealed in West African culture. The kinship system supports the foundation of help to family members, which provided Black Americans with survival skills during slavery and the post-slavery eras of oppression.

The ability to embrace and remove others from the household contributes to a strong sense of communalism. It built the resiliency to survive under policies and conditions intended to weaken them (Fine et al., 1987). Scholars indicate that Black family members live in close-knit communities to produce strong fictive kin relations with neighbors and fellow church members.

In a different study, McAdoo (2007) found that in 1970, 64% of adult African Americans married; by 2004, approximately 32% were married (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004). The rate seems to decrease so strikingly that marriage has been referred to as a "minority lifestyle" for Black Americans (McAdoo 2007, p. 145). Although marriage rates for Black Americans have dropped, Curran et al. (2010) indicated that Black Americans tend to view marriage as a sacred vow and a covenant (p. 360). Likewise, in

recent decades, due to the many opportunities and not a lack of desire, 88% of Black American teens reported that having a good marriage and family life was either quite essential or essential to them (p. 347). According to the literature, Curran et al. (2010) and Gibson-Davis et al. (2005), roughly half of the unmarried Black American parents still advocated that marriage is sacred. Marks et al. (2012) explained from a faith perspective that God created the marriage union. It was vital to establish a relationship with God so that a person's faith can positively influence one's marriage and family life.

Another study conducted by St. Vil et al. (2018) examined the extended family networks' role in Black married couples' life. The theme that emerged regarding the extended network was the positive impact of strengthening family units, but the study also addressed the development of stress from family members' longer lives, childcare concerns, overwhelming advice or emotional support, and interfamilial conflict. Overall, the Black American family's extended family network contributes to family resiliency by encouraging the bond of the marital union to support and pull together in trying times.

Food

Enslaved people used food to maintain a connection to their African heritage; this is part of the influence in today's foodways in the Black American culture (Wallach, 2016). Okra, watermelon, and sorghum, a type of cereal grain, were transported from Africa alongside human cargo during the transatlantic slave trade era and became a part of the American diet. These and other food practices are not only distinctive to the Black community but play a significant role in shaping the style of American cooking.

A study by Opie (2008) contended that enslaved African cooks of various backgrounds used their culinary knowledge to create meals using familiar ingredients and

techniques from their cultures with the rations from the European masters. The enslaved community, according to Poe (1999), had a diet of cornmeal and fatty pork as a staple food and whatever they could grow or scavenge, such as the parts of the animal discarded by Whites, known as chitterlings, the pigs' head, and pigs' and chickens' feet. The study added the slaves combined their ceremonial harvest rituals and new traditions with the American agricultural process. The distinctive cultural food showed how the enslaved ancestors made delicious foods, nourished them, and helped the community survive with the scraps of food.

In the past, we explained the Black Southern rural culture as the melting pot, absorbing and integrating the flavors from various aspects of African and Southern pasts while spicing the American consciousness at the same time (Poe, 1999, p.11). Soul food emerged during the civil rights and Black Power movements as a political statement to illustrate the worth of this cultural food created through black oppression (Bock, 2017). This is one of the primary aspects of the Black American culture which prevails today.

Many aspects of eating for Black Americans represented a culturally defined event (Kittler & Sucher, 1989). Just as in the different parts of West Africa, the ancestors showed reverence to God, leaders of the community, family, and friends with food and music through their well-defined religious life (Opie, 2008). Studies indicate whether intentional or not, certain foods, flavors, food preparation, practices, and meals cultivated traditions, group identity, unity, or healing for survival, status, expressions of caring, or respect. In addition, all these expressions on a wider scale help to preserve the culture of the Black American family. The next section explores the role of religion, a highly valued experience that is the foundation of community life.

Religion

Religion is a distinct aspect of Black American culture. According to Newlin et al. (2002), the cultural influences of Black ethnicity, church, and family were the predominant experiences of Black American spirituality. Black Americans' cultural influences and life struggles demonstrate uplifting attitudes as a source of deliverance, direction, healing, surviving, peace, comfort, and protection.

Many African Americans who converted to Christianity during the late 18th and early 19th centuries states Brown (2013) found the new faith met their distinctive needs and blended with their traditions. Although slavery restricted the Black American family's cultural traditions, the study found that many practices, values, and beliefs survived and incorporated European American culture elements with their rules.

A qualitative study by Marks et al. (2012) addressed how religion influenced Black Americans' lives, their families, and their marriages primarily because the church as an institution reached out to serve essential functions for the community as well as provided opportunities for the Black individual to develop leadership skills (Billingsley, 1992). These two institutions' strength and endurance resulted from mutual reinforcement (Billingsley et al., 1998, p.39). As Littlejohn-Blake and Darling (1993) stated, understanding and enhancing the Black American culture's values made one aware of the Black family's strengths as a contributing member of society, which helped Black families become more capable of meeting the challenges of the changing society. The final section of the proposed study will highlight family learning in the Black community. The Black family's engagement allows the family to learn core values and principles so

that the family grows strong together, but also provides an opportunity for the dominant community to develop a healthy and valuable perception of Blackness.

Family Learning in Black Communities

Family learning is the type of learning that family members engage in over their lifetimes that include social interaction, collaboration, and sharing through conversations and observations with one another, knowledge and thoughtfulness. Paulo Freire, one of education's most significant philosophers of the 20th century, influenced the growth of family learning by his conviction that every human being could look critically at the world and discuss it with others (Freire, 1970, p. 14). This statement spoke to the Black American family as it reflected on the collective learning of beliefs, traditions, practices, values, and history from the American influences and shared experiences of the enslaved family members (Mosley-Howard & Evans, 2000).

To understand how culture influenced Black American families in society, Peters (1985) studied families who recognized that being Black added a different dimension to the learning environment and built coping skills to handle racial prejudice and discrimination. In this study, families designed situations where members learned by observing and practicing when confronted with aggression, prejudice, and discriminatory practices. Whereas, McAdoo (2001) contended the Black American experiences include personal struggles, which prepared individual families for survival in our society. Moreover, Freeman and Logan (2004) described how oral traditions among generations about personal struggles teach cultural survival skills regarding following directions, adopting no defensive attitudes, withholding expressions of anger, and limiting responses. Further studies, by Berrey (2009) and Boyd-Franklin (2013) commented on

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how regular instruction protected family members from racial violence and planted seeds of subversion, including from the critical group of parents, additional relatives, neighbors, and other essential adults in the community.

The cultural heritage of Black families includes observing family learning that includes fictive kinship networks. These are social agreements with people who were friends, not blood, adoption, or marriage relations that experienced a deeper bond of mutual obligation (Chatters et al., 1994). According to Clark-Lewis (1994, p. 24), the core of the Black American fictive kinship community's focus was on the survival of the group rather than the individual since the relationship with a kin group was a significant aspect from birth. These relationships are associated with maintaining psychological health in the Black community, especially the creation and retention of family integrity during slavery times that has carried over to current times (Hall, 2008). The next section will discuss intergenerational family learning conditions and how learning in the family characterizes the family members' life experiences.

Intergenerational Learning

Intergenerational learning is a process through which individuals of all ages acquire skills and knowledge, but also attitudes and values, from daily experience, from all available resources and all influences in their own "life-worlds" (Hatton-Yeo, 2008, p.3). The most important feature is the focus on the participants belonging to different generations.

According to Rabusicova et al. (2016), learning occurs in specific family life situations and during multiple generations' shared activities. The learning can be intentional and unintentional, conscious and reflective, sensory-motor, verbal-cognitive,

social, lifelong and life-wide, and primarily informal. Social learning includes values and attitudes, cognitive learning, knowledge and information sharing, and sensory-motor learning, which focuses on skillsets. Learning in the family setting requires openness as it changes due to the ages of the family members and their life stages, independence, maturity, and relationships. The learning is not restricted to a specific timeframe and can occur in different ways, with different information, and how it is received. The next section will discuss the contributions of family traditions.

Traditions

Traditions are statements, beliefs, customs, or information handed down by orally or in written form from one generation to the next generation. Sharing these interests among family members can maintain memories and celebrate those no longer living.

The custom that is significant to Black American culture is the family reunion. It encourages family cohesiveness and helps the older generation share customs and traditions. A time to come together, McCoy (2011) describes family reunions as contributing to the natural health and endurance of the Black American family. Family reunions have been a way to the foundation of the family legacy and affirmation. It is a time when families pay homage to past struggles and look forward to the future.

Kwanzaa, Swahili for 'first fruits' was created and classified as an "invented family tradition" in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, an African American scholar, to bring the Black American family together during the holiday season with hopes of building a sociohistorical consciousness (Flores-Pena & Evanchuk, 1997). The authors further explain that Kwanzaa celebrates both the African and Black American experience by reaffirming the time for the family to come together to celebrate the good in our lives,

history, culture, and the building with one another towards the goal of full human freedom (p. 283). The spirit of pride in the Black American heritage is evident through the celebration of Kwanzaa. The next section moves beyond traditions, but discusses the beliefs and motivations of Black Americans.

Values

The definition of values is the social principles, goals, or standards held or accepted by an individual, class, and society (Plunkett, 2014). According to Ladner (1998), Black Americans in each previous generation, whether a parent or not, have attempted to teach the next generation to have a sense of identity, faith in God, respect for others, honesty and sense of responsibility, self-reliance and respect for hard work, resourcefulness, courage, and integrity (p. 8).

The intended values shaped the character of Black Americans who struggled out of slavery and the poverty that followed in the harsh years after emancipation. Moreover, these values serve as a foundation upon which Black Americans build their lives and structure their families.

<div align="center">

Study Participants

</div>

The research study participants are six family members from three different generations: Cardinal and Eagle constitute Generation I, Dove and Heron are Generation II, and Peacock and Owl represent Generation III (see Figure 6). Following the metaphor of the family tree, I am assigning names of birds to showcase the unique characteristics of each participant. Trees offer birds a place to nest, feel protected, and grow. The bird species selected to identify study participants depict their personalities and family roles.

Generation I

Cardinal: signifies celebration, rejuvenation, hope, health, and job. This bird is energetic, eager to take care of and help others. The Cardinal is a 79-year-old Black female, retired Nurse.

Eagle: showcases independence, bravery, loyalty and a hard worker. This bird is authoritative, persistent, and an excellent leader. The Eagle is a retired 79-year-old Black male Army veteran.
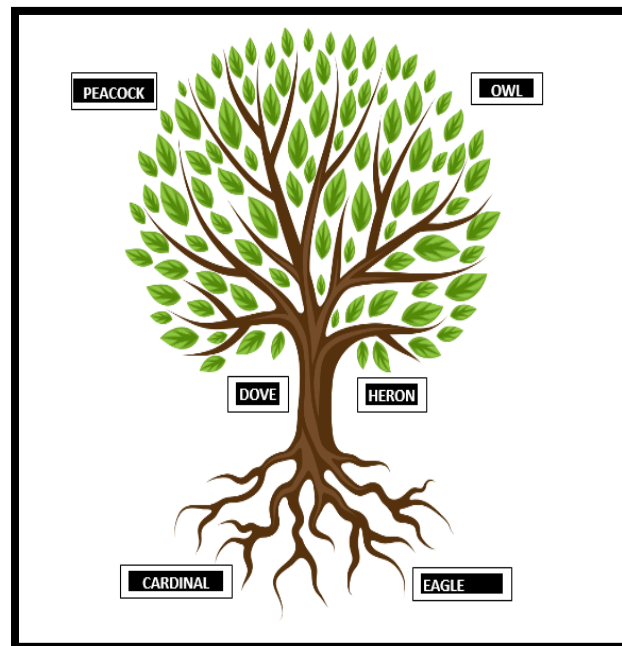
Figure 6. Research Participants

Generation II

Dove: represents kindness, honesty, friendliness, and consistency. This bird is romantic and likes to do things useful for itself and others. The Dove is a 51-year-old Black female attorney.

Heron: exemplifies dignity, tranquility, and a strong personality. This bird is at times considered arrogant as it is not afraid to wait for opportunities and is excellent at

teaching others how to be patient. Heron is a 53-year-old self-employed Black male.

Generation III

 Peacock: is a good communicator, pragmatic, adaptable, and an influencer. This bird is honest, loyal, and prefers meeting people directly rather than having long-distance conversations. The Peacock is a 21-year-old full-time Black female undergraduate college student.

 Owl: represents discipline, methodological, meticulousness, and conscientiousness. This bird lives within the rules, pursues excellence, and will always consider the pros and cons of each situation. The Owl is a 23-year-old Black male, who is pursuing a graduate degree.

II. GENERATION 1

This chapter continues Eliza's family story with the introduction of her fourth great-grandchild, Eagle, and his wife Cardinal. The two met on a blind date in May 1963 (see Figure 7). As part of narrating the life stories of Eagle and Cardinal, this chapter reveals the cultural identity of a Black American family with three generations. Cardinal and Eagle portray Gen 1, Dove and Heron represent Gen 2, and Peacock and Owl exemplify Gen 3.

Figure 7. Cardinal and Eagle met, May 1963

Individual conversations with Eagle and Cardinal were held prior to the pandemic of the COVID-19 virus and two additional conversations were hosted separately in a virtual session using an online platform. To begin the narratives, Eagle and Cardinal were born in 1941 to low-income working families during segregation in different regions of the United States.

Eagle's Story

My father and mother were 20 and 15 years old, respectively, when I was born. I'm the oldest of eleven children, and was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, with my loving parents, siblings, and extended family. When I was seven years old, my sister was born. So, I was an only child for a while. As a young boy, my dad, mom, and I lived with my mother's parents, providing a strong family foundation. Deed records show that my grandparents purchased their home around 1919 and raised their six children. I affectionately refer to my grandparent's home as a community house because my grandparents opened their home to family members who needed a place to stay.

The house was not big, it just included a kitchen, living-dining room, two bedrooms and a two-piece bath. This includes a tub and toilet, but no sink. As a kid, I did not see sinks in bathrooms, and most, like us, did not have a hot water heater. Many houses in the neighborhood were shotgun houses with an outhouse. As people hustled and saved money, they attached indoor plumbing to their homes. Now, in my grandparents' house, so that everyone had a place to sleep, each room turned into a bedroom. This is the closest to a middle-class Black family that I knew of in the late 1940s to early 1950s. After working 42 years as a boilermaker at Southern Pacific Railroad, in 1952, my grandfather retired due to a stroke. I know he would have worked many more years if his health allowed.

There were three Catholic churches in our neighborhood - one for Whites, Hispanics, and the Black parishioners. We belonged to Holy Redeemer, the Black catholic church. I am proud to say, there is a stain-glass window representing my

grandparents' family as founding members (see Figure 8). I served as an altar boy in our church and started primary school under a catholic elementary school (see Figure 9). When I was a pre-teen, I moved in with my parental grandparents to allow room for our growing family and transferred to public school. Living under the influence of older grandparents, I picked up a solid work ethic.

Figure 8. Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, established 1915

Figure 9. Eagle as an altar boy, around 1948

My grandparents expected me to take care of my schoolwork and not lollygag or waste time. So, if you are not in school, you should have a job or be about looking for one. It did not matter what type of work because this was during segregation, and there were only a few types of jobs that Blacks could get. Unlike the standards of today, in my junior and high school years, I worked six days a week, for a total of 40 hours. Because my boss appreciated the hard work that I showed, during the school year, he allowed me to come to work at 4pm instead of 2pm but still paid me for those extra hours. This was a big deal that encouraged my dedication to my job. I had older cousins who were in the army and I knew the draft would probably call me up sooner or later. So, I decided to leave high school and enlist in the army just a couple of months before my graduation. Because I scored high on the entrance exams, I qualified for technical training in the Medical Services Corps. Many fellow Black soldiers received assignments in career fields within the infantry artillery or transportation. Soldiers I knew told me to try to get into something different, but I didn't know how that happened. When I landed in a skilled career field, I was around highly educated soldiers. Pretty soon, I learned that I was just as intelligent as they were, but these soldiers just had more education and training than me. Fortunately for me, a few senior officers recognized my talent, placed me under their wings, and gave me guidance. After completing my first tour in Germany, I was assigned to Ft. Jay Army post at Governors Island in New York. Ft. Jay is where I met and eventually would marry Cardinal. She not only valued learning to improve herself and others, but had faith and inspired me to dream and pursue higher goals too.

Cardinal's Story

In this section, Cardinal recounts her childhood and experiences growing into a young adulthood, which includes meeting Eagle.

The fourth of six children, I grew up with my caring parents and close-knit siblings in a railroad flat apartment in Washington Heights, a neighborhood in the upper Manhattan borough in New York City, New York. I do not remember learning much about my father's upbringing, except he was born in the coal-mining town of Connellsville, Pennsylvania and lost both of his parents as a teenager. Still, my dad went on and graduated from high school. My mother was raised in the country of Norfolk, Virginia and in 1933, she also earned her high school diploma. I am not sure where my parents met, but they married in 1935 and settled in New York City. When I was a young girl, my father worked as a subway conductor, but was transferred to the position of watchman in the subway yard and my mother worked seven days a week as a housekeeper until 1969 when she accepted a job as a token booth clerk with The New City Transit Authority, a position she proudly and dutifully served until she retired at age 65. We lived in a diverse community, with people of different nationalities and backgrounds. All of the kids in our neighborhood grew up together and basically went to the same school (see Figure 10). We played stick ball, jumped rope, and other activities year-round, but I also loved to read and spent many days at the local library.

Figure 10. Cardinal's elementary class at PS 169

I dreamed of attending Howard University to become a librarian, but my parents could not afford to send me to college. After graduating from high school, I found a job with a family-owned stock exchange company near what is known today as Wall Street. I was the only Black person working there, including the janitorial staff. It was a lonely feeling being the only Black person. One day, I saw a Black man working at a restaurant called the Chock o'Nuts lunch counter. I went there every day just to be around someone that I could relate to. As time passed, I knew that working at the stock exchange company was not for me. So, I submitted my resignation. The owner tried to get me to stay by telling me that I was doing a great job and how much everyone liked me. He even offered me a bonus, but I did not want to stay and left. I accepted a job with a company that manufactured coolers. The pay was the same, but there were more Black people working there. In hindsight, I realized that I left a good job where I was learning new skills for a mediocre one, but that was the choice I made. Soon, I learned about a job

program in the city, and I applied to work at Harlem Hospital. I was offered a

position as a ward clerk. Working in Harlem was another cultural experience, but

I liked it. It was my first time being around Black professionals and seeing

different professional job opportunities that someone like me could pursue. To my

surprise, I even met a Black medical librarian, who became my mentor and close

friend. While working at Harlem Hospital, I also got to know the nursing students

who encouraged me to apply to the hospital's nursing program. Harlem Nursing

School was the only training ground that provided practical hands-on patient

care skills for Black nurses. It had a long history and I could not believe that no

teachers or counselors in my high school ever mentioned it. In fact, as I thought

about my future, I had no idea what was involved in attending nursing school, but

I stepped out on faith and took a chance based on the support I was given. I had a

short window to get everything in. Despite that, I completed the application

materials and asked a doctor I just met to write a recommendation letter for me.

He gave me a great reference. Then, in 1961, I received my acceptance to the

program and moved into the dormitory at Harlem Nursing School. I loved it and I

knew I made the right decision that would be life-changing.

My classmates came to Harlem Nursing School from different states.

Unlike me, most knew that they wanted to be a nurse and were familiar with

Harlem Nursing School to reach their goals. All I knew was that I wanted to do

more with my life and I had an inner drive to push myself. It did not hurt that the

school had a family-centered environment and a strong sisterhood. One of my

classmates described Harlem Nursing School as a "finishing school where the

girls became women." The instructors taught us skills that would not only benefit

us in our careers, but in life. We learned how to apply hands-on healthcare

techniques. Our school did not have the modern equipment, but we managed and

were still competitive and competent registered nurses. In May 1963, I completed

another year of school and looked forward to graduating the next semester, when

I met Eagle on a blind date. Soon after we met, Eagle left New York for an

advanced technical training class in Texas. While he was in training, we kept in

touch long-distance. Within a couple of months, we talked about getting married.

Given that I was on my summer break, we decided I would travel to Texas, get

married and return to New York together. Eagle talked to my dad, and neither he

nor my mom objected. So, I prepared to go to San Antonio. This was my first long

bus trip outside of New York City. Looking back, when I was 9 or 10 years old, my

siblings and I traveled to Virginia by bus to visit our grandparents and cousins.

My mother prepared a box of chicken for us to take on the trip because she knew

we could not purchase food along the way. While riding, we passed the Mason-

Dixon Line and I saw signs that stated Whites only restrooms and Whites only

drinking fountains. When the bus stopped, the Black patrons followed an arrow to

a wooden building in the back to use the bathroom and get a drink of water from

a sink. I do not remember seeing those signs where I lived, but I also did not

venture outside my neighborhood. I was comfortable being around my school

friends, and as a kid I did not understand the de facto segregation prevalent in

New York. However, as I grew into a young adult, I became more conscious of

what was going on and preferred being around my Black friends with their style

and willpower to make something of themselves.

Nonetheless, traveling to Texas by myself was scary. No family or friends

went with me. Yet, just like my bus trip as a child, my mother gave me a box of

chicken, but this time she also pinned money on the inside of my blouse in case

Eagle did not want to marry me and I needed to get back home. I could tell most

thought there would be no wedding, but they were wrong. Eagle and I were

married in August 1963 (see Figure 11). It was a small ceremony in a Catholic

church arranged by Eagle's mother and aunt. It meant a lot to my mother-in-law

that we were married in a church. After the wedding, Eagle and I returned to

Governors Island, where he continued his military assignment. I finished my final

semester and then graduated from Harlem Nursing School (see Figure 12).

Figure 11. Wedding Day 1963

Figure 12. Harlem Nursing School Graduation 1963

Eagle and Cardinal's Story

A number of events changed the course of the United States in the 1960s. One such event occurred within weeks after Eagle and Cardinal married and returned to Governors Island. In August 1963, Martin Luther King gave his famous speech "I Have a Dream" in front of two hundred and fifty thousand people signifying the historic March on Washington. Cardinal reflects on the unrest in the nation.

> *The 1960s was a great time of turmoil. Riots across the country. Black people were treated so horrible. I mean, there was segregation, poor voting rights, and the laws did not protect Black people. Things needed to change. In Harlem, I saw Malcolm X giving speeches and people stopped to hear his message. Although I did get involved as one of the followers, I knew what he was sharing was powerful. Now, when the March on Washington happened, I wanted to be there. So, my friends and I went to DC to show support and experience just*

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being there with all the people. Another part of the 1960s that makes it a sad and angry time is because the leaders who were fighting to make things better for Blacks were assassinated. I'm talking about John F. Kennedy in 1963, Malcolm X in 1965, Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, and Robert F. Kennedy in 1968. It was a hurtful and confusing time, but Eagle and I had to take care of each other and our young family the best we could.

While the United States experienced major civil rights events occurring, Eagle received military orders overseas to Germany. Eagle shares his experience during this period.

In 1965, I received orders back to Germany. This was Cardinal's first time outside the country and she looked forward to the adventure of a new place. Yet, before, we moved, I went to Denver for another training school. Cardinal was expecting our first child and while in Denver, our oldest was born. Soon after, we left for Germany. Living in Germany was nice, we had a tight-knit group of Black friends. Although we were somewhat isolated from the riots and demonstrations in the United States, the Black soldiers and their families were aware of the social unrest. "Everyone kept their ear to the ground, so to speak, to hear the footprints, foot beats, or horse beats or whatever you call it". The armed forces network did an excellent job of newscasting, like 3 - 4 times a day with things happening in the states. Really important though, while in Germany, our Black friends were like family and we looked out for one another, networking and guiding each other along the way.

I entered the military in 1959 and the army integrated about ten years earlier. I thought most soldiers were getting used to working with people of different races and backgrounds, but racial tension still existed. As a form of self-preservation, I stayed on the straight and narrow because, I knew, the person I had to report each day, outranked me. I felt like the dominant group looked for something to charge against me. So, I walked on thin ice most of the time. After a while, it became a habit walking the straight and narrow. It was very similar to what I heard growing up. Black people quoted the law as if it were the bible because that helped Blacks live. Now other people did not consider the law in the same way because laws are not applied the same throughout the community. You go on one side of town there was over-policing, or there was a posse or vigilante to keep you in your place. A minor infraction like jaywalking meant a person received an immediate citation. However, the same behavior was ignored on the other side of town. Now when the police saw a person who looked out of place, the law was enforced. So, the one thing I learned in the military that became a habit was if ever stopped or pulled over by the police, my immediate job was to walk away and survive that incident.

We had our second child in 1967 and I completed my tour in Germany in 1968. We returned stateside and I was sent to further technical schooling in Denver, before my next assignment which was Ft Meade, Maryland in 1969. This was when our youngest daughter was born. Cardinal and I wanted to find a nice apartment off-post with more space for our growing family. So, first I reviewed the list of apartments, next called to make sure the apartment was still available

and it was, so then I scheduled an appointment with the manager. After multiple visits, apartment managers would tell us that the apartment was rented. At the same time, the 'vacancy' sign at the complex and the newspaper notice were still listed. I knew that the apartment managers preferred renting to soldiers and their family, but after the manager met us, each time, the apartment was no longer available. The managers purposefully asked you to meet in person because you cannot tell a person's skin color over the phone. As this happened over and over, it was clear, the apartment managers were not going to rent to a Black person, regardless if a soldier or not. After a while, Cardinal and I quit looking and moved in post-housing.

Later, Eagle received word of new orders; a 12-month deployment to Vietnam beginning in January 1971. Eagle explains how the family prepared.

Cardinal and the kids moved to Texas to be closer to my family. I left for Vietnam, where I served as a repairperson in the medical maintenance department (see Figure 13 and Figure 14). My goal was to do my time, my assignment, and get back home. After the war, I received the Bronze Star Medal for my meritorious work during the Vietnam conflict (see Figure 15).

Figure 13. Camp Baxter, Da Nang Vietnam 1971

Figure 14. Vietnam memorabilia 1971

Figure 15. Bronze Star Medal 1972

Below Cardinal described their relocation out of Texas.

In 1972, we moved from Texas to Georgia. Eagle and I decide it is best to caravan. The two younger kids ride with Eagle while our oldest rides with me. As we were traveling through a small town in Alabama, I went through a traffic light as it turned yellow to red. A sheriff pulls me over. When he walked up to the driver's side door, he said "Gal, do you know what you just did?" At that moment, I was so scared just hearing the tone of his voice and what might happen that I started to cry. I told the sheriff that I was following behind my husband as we traveled from Texas to Georgia with our kids. I did not know the area and only

tried to stay close to his car when the light turned yellow while I was in the

intersection. The sheriff asked for my identification and noticed the out-of-state

license plates with the military decal. I guess he believed what I said. While this

was going on, Eagle pulled off on the shoulder close by, watching the sheriff look

inside and around the vehicle. Finally, the sheriff said he would let me go with a

warning. All I could think about was what I heard how Black people were treated

in small southern towns. I just wanted to get out of Alabama and make our way to

Georgia. When we arrived in Georgia, we moved into military housing again,

even though we really wanted something nicer for our family. So, we decided to

buy our first home (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. First home in Atlanta suburb

We were excited to have our own place in a safe and friendly neighborhood.

Although, it looked friendly, the people were not warm or welcoming. Both

neighbors on each side, who were White put their homes on the market right after

we moved in.

Eagle added his perception of the move to Georgia below.

The entire neighborhood demographics shifted due to "White flight" as Black families moved into the community. You could also see what was happening when you looked at the neighborhood school that became majority Black. At the military depot, the number of civilian employees outnumbered the military employees. This employee dynamic shaped a greater negative racial undertone than when most of the staff were military personnel. The White people at the depot did not like having to report to a person of a different race regardless if the supervisor was military personnel or not. Regardless of the work environment, I continued to demonstrate ethical principles, meet high-level tasks, and show a strong sense of pride and accomplishment in my work (see Figure 17 and Figure 18), which brought forth promotions.

Figure 17. Eagle's promotion 1972

Figure 18. Eagle's promotion 1973

In the next segment, Cardinal recounted her work experience in Georgia.

I worked in a dialysis clinic with an all-Black staff, except for the

manager, who was White. I got along well with my manager and enjoyed the

camaraderie I developed with my co-workers. In 1973, Eagle received unexpected

orders to move to Maryland again. I was use to leaving jobs after short tenure,

but the letter of appreciation I received from my boss was a nice sendoff (see

Figure 19).

I want you to know how sorry we are to see you leave the Georgia Medical Care Foundation. I especially want you to know that I will miss you personally. You have added a great deal to this organization during the time you have been here. If there is ever anything I might do to be of assistance in the future, I hope you will call on me. I want to wish you success and happiness in your new endeavors, and I hope you will use my name as a reference at any time you feel it is appropriate.

Figure 19. Cardinal's letter from supervisor

The move back to Ft. Meade felt like going home since we were not far from

family in New York or Virginia. So, we made a point to visit often and create

lasting memories. I also appreciated living in the military community again where people had a common experience and appeared to show concern for one another. Our kids flourished in and outside of school. While there, I had a chance to return to college and complete my bachelor's degree, which was my personal goal. So, after Eagle finished his bachelor's degree, I returned to school in the evenings and graduated with my degree in 1978 (see Figure 20). This was the only time I did not work outside the house. I was not only proud of myself for completing my degree, but the way I balanced our kids and family, volunteering at school, and keeping the kids involved in extracurricular activities. Today, I see the benefits of this decision.

Figure 20. Cardinal's baccalaureate graduation 1978

Now, Eagle interjected his views during this time.

I was not naïve about the subtle and blatant forms of racism around me as we juggled work, family, and personal responsibilities. We stayed connected to our Black military friends. Many who we met in Germany and other places where I was stationed. In 1979, I retired after a 20-year military career and moved from

Maryland to Corpus Christi, Texas, where I accepted a leadership position at a

regional county hospital managing over 40 employees. I had been away from my

own family for such a long time and missed them dearly. I also wanted the kids to

get to know my side of their family too. Culturally the adjustment moving to South

Texas was more difficult for the family than expected. Working in the environment

was probably more challenging because the organizational culture was

homogeneous, and not open to change from an outsider like me, but I was up for

the challenge. I was a qualified and experienced professional and accustomed to

handling and managing big-picture situations.

While Eagle adjusted to his new work environment, Cardinal expressed her own

encounters in their new city.

I found the job search challenging for Black professionals compared to

the east coast. You did not see Black people on hiring committees for positions

that I interviewed. It did not feel like the nursing teams were very diverse. I read

job postings where companies stated they wanted diversity, but when I

interviewed, saw no Blacks. I constantly felt left out or at the bottom of the barrel.

I did finally find a head nurse position, but had to deal with employee issues that

in my previous jobs were not tolerated, such as tardiness or just not showing up at

all with no excuse. The office senior managers were White and the rest of the

office was Hispanic. My director was Hispanic and even told me that I did not

understand the culture in this part of the country. I felt insulted by the director's

comment and undermined in my authority to manage my team. I also felt unvalued

in my role as the head nurse.

In 1984, Eagle accepted a position as a Divisional Engineer for a retail company in San Antonio. *I was excited about moving to San Antonio because we have family there and it has a large retired military community. It will be nice to be around people who have been to different parts of the world. I found a position at a research institute, which I thought would be good opportunity. It turned out the office culture was very cliquey and as much as I tried to fit in, I normally felt like an outsider. On a particular occasion, a co-worker decorated the department's wall for Halloween. The co-worker cut out white, orange, and brown pumpkins. She labeled the pumpkins with the names of the staff. The White people were written on the white pumpkins, the Hispanic co-workers on the orange pumpkins, and my name and another Black person were written on the brown pumpkins. I immediately commented that the pumpkins did not look right and seemed discriminatory. My co-workers said it was only a picture, and I was overreacting. The other Black person laughed and said it was just fun. Even our director, a White doctor, thought it was a harmless and funny. He walked past me and said he knew who the brown pumpkins were without anyone labeling them and laughed. I walked away feeling very demeaned and knew I needed to get out of there, but I needed this job. So, I kept to myself and did not really socialize with anyone. Fortunately for me, in the early 1990s, Eagle's job transferred from San Antonio to the Ft. Worth. We found a beautiful home that I was so excited about in a great location. I was very happy (see Figure 21).*

It's really a nice-looking place. It reminds me of the houses that ere in the Country Club sub-division in Corpus. The area is convenient to many different kinds of stores for shopping and also close to the

> *expressway if need be. I will only be about 5 miles from work and I don't even have to use the express way. Well, I just wanted to write you and let you know how excited I am for this blessing bestowed upon us. We did not have to borrow any funds just used savings for the down payment. Thank God we have been blessed to save for this special need. Pray that your daddy and I remain in good health to keep our jobs to maintain the house we have. We are so blessed. We hope to own it before we become too age to appreciate.*

Figure 21. Cardinal's letter about a new home in 1997

Once again, we lived in a neighborhood with very few Black families and. during Barack Obama presidential campaign, I placed a sign on the front lawn to show my support (see Figure 22). We were the only home in the entire neighborhood with an Obama sign. All the other yard signs were for John McClain. Each day when I looked at my sign, I wondered if someone would remove it or knock it down, but that did not happen. You just felt out of place showing support for Obama, but I did not care. I wanted people to know that I was in support of a Black man for the presidential election.

Figure 22. Supporting Obama 2008

Eagle wrapped up this segment talking about his retirement and impressions on how the United States should handle the current racial tone.

In November 2009, after 55 years in the workforce full-time, I decided to retire (see Figure 23). It was not an easy decision, but the time seemed right. Cardinal retired four years earlier in July 2005 and we wanted to spend our days on our own time. Since I was 13 years old, I dedicated myself to my job and met the challenges head on. I am proud of the responsibilities that I assumed along the way and the many projects that I had a hand in problem solving. I met many people along the way who supported and contributed to my success, but I also had people who came across my path that were a hindrance and tried to tarnish my reputation. Not everyone is in your corner or wants to see you succeed. Yet, I look back and am grateful, because Cardinal and I learned how to recover and keep moving forward together even when we made tough choices. When I retired,

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I thought our country was moving in a positive direction with race relations. I mean, in 2008, we elected our first Black president, with a background and culture that represented many who have been marginalized for years. It appeared as a country we finally turned the corner in judging a person by the color of the skin, but focusing in on character and integrity. However, today we are actually seeing a repeat of what I experienced growing up. Black men and women are more educated than when I was a kid. They are in leadership positions and live in nicer neighborhoods than I could imagine. Still, we watched a large percentage of our society vote a person in the highest office who incites racist behavior and supports White supremacy. How does anyone think that is "Making America Great" and don't forget the word "Again"? And I'll never forget the picture of a White police officer with his knee on the back of a Black man's neck, cutting off his ability to breath, killing him, and later hearing people say the police officer was justified. What year are we living in? We all know it was wrong and time for the dominant culture to decide what they are going to do about this. Just like you hear people say, the ball is in your court. The ball is in their court. It's their move. Black people have been fighting this fight too long and now it's time for the dominant people to do the right thing. In this last election, it was great to see the large number of people who have typically felt disenfranchised come out and vote. We have to make our voice count and if you cannot vote, help someone else get to the poles to make a difference. These are the ways we can stay alert, be vigilant because over 70 million Americans voted for a man with a background of discriminatory, sexist, and racist behavior. The dominant culture is showing a

deep fear of being stripped of what they believe are their natural rights when a

person of color is in control or has more decision power. There are very angry

people waiting behind the scene for a signal to incite evil actions like the killing

of innocent people at churches, schools, and shopping centers. Like I said, people

see the wrong actions happening in our country. It can't be covered up. It's time

the dominant culture does the right thing to make things better for everyone.

Subject: My Retirement

Dear Family & Friends,

This FYI note is to let you know that today is my first day of full-time retirement.
You can expect the U.S. Social Security Program to make some adjustments now that my annual
contributions will stop after 55 years (smile).

On the positive side…I was in the full-time work force for more than 50 years. Twenty years of
active service in the U.S. Army Medical Department, five years at Memorial Medical Center in
Corpus Christi, and 25 years with Dillard's.

Also, on the positive side…I will return to outside work. Please pray for Shirley since I'll be at
home full-time and under her supervision.

Figure 23. Eagle's email 55 Years of Service

Chapter Discussion

This chapter presented the stories of Gen 1; Cardinal and Eagle shared their life

histories participating in a series of conversational interviews together with Appendix C,

indicating their view of key historical events that have affected Black Americans.

Observing their narratives, it was evident that the tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT)

and intersectionality theory are prevalent in their life histories. In light of CRT, the two

main tenets prominent are permanence of racism and counter storytelling. With respect to

intersectionality theory, the social-historical context, class, gender, and race appeared as identity traits existing in Gen 1 narratives.

The permanence of racism refers to both conscious and unconscious experiences toward people of color in American life (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tate, 1997). Racial segregation was commonplace at churches, schools, and amongst neighborhoods. Both Cardinal and Eagle started school when segregation was still part of the educational facilities and services. As they told their stories of growing up in different parts of the country, their experiences were not exactly the same. Despite that, the context and information discussed were symptomatic of the *de jure* and *de facto* segregation around them. As a young adult, Eagle was more aware of the conditions imposed on Black people by segregation and racism than what Cardinal initially understood. After Cardinal traveled outside of her sheltered home life, she saw the world in a different manner as a young Black person.

Eagle and Cardinal were teenagers when the 1954 historic case of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas removed the constitutional sanctions for segregation by race in schools and made equal opportunity the law (Healey et al., 2019). Although public schools in the United States had to desegregate, the quality of education offered in the communities where Eagle and Cardinal lived did not change.

As we continue to understand the permanence of racism illustrated in Eagle and Cardinal's stories, two additional milestone legislations occurred. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin or gender was signed into law within the couple's first year of marriage (Healey et al., 2019). Eventually, Jim Crow laws ended and Black people could access restaurants,

transportation, and other public places. Eagle and Cardinal still felt the cycle of racism when trying to rent an apartment, that was suddenly unavailable after they met the manager and later watched the adjacent White neighbors put a for sale sign in their yards and move within days of Eagle and Cardinal unpacking their belongings into their new neighborhood. The second legislation, The Voting Rights Acts of 1965, which guaranteed all citizens the right to vote (Coleman, 2018) was by far the most extensive piece of civil rights legislation passed in over 50 years. Eagle acknowledged the right to vote as an important tool that each Black American should support one another exercise. CRT challenges the view of the permanence of racism by showing how deeply embedded racism is into our government policies and institutional practices which causes difficulty in eradicating the exploitation and neglection of the Black person (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Lynn & Parker, 2006). This exclusion targeted by race is deeply entrenched and difficult to end.

The depths of racism can be underestimated, but Eagle and Cardinal's narratives provided examples of continued racism through hierarchy and discounting bad behavior. These episodes left Eagle and Cardinal alone and isolated. As a case in point, Eagle described how he learned to walk a straight line for self-preservation. He knew those in authority watched him closely, looking for a reason to find fault because of his race. He was aware of how even a minor situation escalated into a major account with marks against a Black man. As a kid, Eagle saw how White people in authority usurped their power with over-policing in Black neighborhoods. In contrast, the same offense was overlooked in White neighborhoods, unless you did not belong there. Eagle's self-preservation was to survive and keep harm from himself or his family.

A further reflection of the Gen 1 narratives explained that counter-storytelling provided a description, an opportunity to learn of a Black person's perspective and experience that are otherwise not heard (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Eagle and Cardinal revealed the social conditions that a Black American family experienced over multiple generations. In this way, the stories promoted social justice by putting a human face to the experiences of a marginalized group, the Black American family. For instance, the story of Eliza, my fifth great-grandmother documented significant inspiring moments. Born enslaved around 1822 in North Carolina, Eliza was brought to Gonzales County, Texas by her slave owner with her family. She lived through the Emancipation Proclamation, raised her children and died in her mid-80s. Learning of Eliza's life story and her legacy extending to Gen 1 has strengthened and enriched the family's connection by honoring her experience, humanity, and preserving the family's cultural identity across generations.

Researchers, Berry, and Blassingame (1977) explained that the American mainstream culture ignored the large sector of attitudes, brotherhood, and even matrimony as part of the life experiences of the African people, which specifically added context and legitimacy to the Black family (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Furthermore, Sudarkasa (1988) argued that literature supporting the culture of the Black American family was not destroyed by slavery. Through counter-storytelling, the voices of Black families become the authority in such a way that traditions and values are shared among generations from the struggle of slavery to the present day.

By 1959, when Eagle joined the army, the armed forces had been integrated for ten years. Eagle expected most soldiers to be comfortable working with people from

different backgrounds and nationalities, but racial tension existed. Tension continued due to the resistance of change by a number of Whites. With a competitive entrance exam, Eagle was assigned to a skilled career field in the Medical Services Corps besides White soldiers who had more training and educational experience. However, Eagle being a quick learner and hard worker persevered and exceled through advanced technical training, pursued post-secondary degree, and advanced in rank.

Regardless, Eagle's rank did not serve as a status to some White people. While stationed at an army depot in Georgia, the civilian employees outnumbered the military workforce. This dynamic shaped the racial attitude at the depot and towards Eagle, who was the supervisor. The attitude of the White community in the area influenced the interactions of the White employees towards the Black military personnel. Once again, the White community challenged the advancements for Black Americans.

Throughout Eagle's military career, the relationships with his Black friends resembled a close-knit family. The friends supported and looked out for one another while stationed in the United States or abroad. The soldiers kept each other abreast of the social unrest in the United States and navigated the military life. For instance, when Eagle joined the army, he disclosed how experienced soldiers encouraged him to steer away from careers in transportation or infantry artillery so that he could develop a stronger future career path. These accounts showed how using counter-storytelling, marginalized populations can create a space with insight and knowledge of one's culture and community that changed the validity of accepted claims or myths typically held by White people.

That said, race is not an isolated component as there are other forms of

oppression. Intersectionality theory acknowledges that social identities or differences are interconnected and mutually reinforcing within the oppression and forms of biases in the United States (Carbado & Harris, 2019). Gen 1 experienced oppression also based on the overlap of different identity markers, including social-historical context, class, and gender experiences.

For instance, during Eagle's primary years, he discussed that he and his parents lived with his grandparents. It was a modest home with indoor plumbing, tub and toilet, but no sink. Many homes in the neighborhood were shotgun-style with an outhouse. The neighborhood was segregated not only by the housing communities, schools, but religious gatherings. Eagle's family practiced Catharism and within blocks was a Catholic church for the White, Hispanic and Black parishioners. Things were not that different for Cardinal. Her neighborhood was more ethnically diverse, but still it included low-income flat railroad apartment buildings in for low-income residents. Eagle and Cardinal may have lived in different parts of the country, but because race intersects with other identity qualities, like social-historical context and class, these traits served as a basis for marginalizing Black Americans.

In addition, Cardinal depicted a cross-country trip where she and Eagle caravanned through a small town in Alabama. While driving behind Eagle's car, Cardinal went through a traffic light that turned yellow while in the intersection and was pulled over by a police officer. As the officer approached her car, she was nervous and worried as she recalled the awful stories of the treatment of Black people in southern towns. The police officer spoke to Cardinal in a patronizing manner, which felt belittling. However, he allowed Cardinal to leave with a warning after he acknowledged her military

affiliation. While everything was happening, Eagle parked far enough to observe, but not interfere, especially since his oldest daughter sat in the car as the police officer looked in and around the car. Both Cardinal and Eagle recognized no traffic violations were committed, but the White man in authority-controlled that day's interaction on account of the intersectionality of Cardinal's gender and race.

Cardinal felt a similar sense of inferiority after confronting a co-worker who placed a Halloween decoration on a department wall that had an insensitive racial undertone. The situation was further stressful for Cardinal when the department director added a racially inappropriate Blackness comment while the group laughed. The only other Black co-worker also joined the group so Cardinal was the brunt of the jokes. In this incident, Cardinal's position in the office and gender overlapped causing conflicting identities that made Cardinal feel inferior (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993). At a previous company, Cardinal received a superb letter of recommendation from her White manager upon her moving to a new city. Cardinal expressed gratitude for her kindness, recognizing the company was predominated staffed by Black nurses except for the manager. Deep down, Daftary (2020) argued that the unique combination of identities causes a person to feel either marginalized or privileged at any point, which causes different life experiences.

In summary, this chapter narrated the life stories of Gen 1, represented by Eagle and Cardinal for over 50 years. Their stories revealed the larger socio-historical context related to the cultural identity of a Black American family among three generations. The next chapter will describe Gen 2, portrayed by Heron and Dove who were born near the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968. Therefore, the chapter focuses on the CRT

tenets, interest convergence, critique of liberalism and additional discussion of the

intersectionality theory.

III. GENERATION 2

Eliza's lineage continues in this chapter as we learn about her 5th great-grandchildren. Heron and Dove represent the second generation (Gen 2) of family narratives. Prior to the COVID-19 virus pandemic, individual conversations were conducted with Heron and Dove in the same fashion as Gen 1. Subsequently, two additional narratives were collected in separate virtual sessions using an online platform. In this first section Heron tells his story.

Heron's Story

I am the only son, born in 1967 in Frankfort, Germany (see Figure 24). My older and younger sister were born in the states. As a toddler, I was a quick learner and entered school younger than my classmates. My earliest memories are of a happy and caring environment. My dad was career military, which meant I settled in a new home every few years. Even though we didn't live close to our relatives, we always kept in touch and we developed longtime friends from my dad's journey.

Figure 24. Heron in Germany, 1967

Living on the base. I played with kids of different backgrounds, races,

religions, and interests (see Figure 25). I loved reading comic books, drawing,

and playing sports. Home and school is where I fostered my curiosity and

creativity. I even formed a neighborhood club called the Mid-Air Club. When

someone shouted our club name, we'd run around like super heroes with towels

tied to our neck resembling a cape. We played in our front lawn for hours, which

is why my parents' yard never had grass.

Figure 25. Neighborhood playmates in the 1970s

I can remember two major events in elementary. The first was the Iran

hostage crisis and the other was the tv series Roots. The Iran hostage situation

was important because our family supported President Jimmy Carter. We wanted

him to be successful in ending the hostage crisis and bring the Americans home. I

heard how President Carter was making things better for minorities. He showed

this was by appointing Blacks on his cabinet. Unfortunately, the Iran hostage

crisis was a disaster for Carter, and he lost the re-election race.

What I also remember around this time was the airing of Roots on

television. I never forgot how the White kids in my class acted at school. They

cried and apologized for the way the White people treated the Black people

during slavery. I don't remember saying anything, but I bet today our country

would have better race relations if more White people reflected on how slavery

impacted our country, especially the structural design of our country and who it

favors. As a kid, my family watched tv together, especially when a tv show had a

Black theme and cast. So, when Roots aired we watched every episode as a

family. That was the first time we saw slavery and its cruelty on television. I paid

attention to the dynamics of the Black family. I wanted the Black family to stay

together and win. I saw the slave owners as the bad guys. It was good versus evil

or the Black families against the slave owners, and I wanted the Black families to

win. Interestingly at the time, I don't remember thinking that my ancestors were

those slaves that I wanted to win.

As I mentioned earlier, my classmates came up to me apologizing for the

mistreatment of the Black people during slavery. I didn't know what to say. Now,

my elementary history teacher was a nice lady and she acknowledged the Roots

series, because kids had questions, but she did not explain much. Discussions

around slavery were short, quick, and primarily focused on President Lincoln

freeing the slaves. In all honesty, that is the way slavery was discussed anytime

the topic was the nation's beginnings. The Black people's experience was glossed over until I entered college.

As I stated, I thought it was ordinary to be around people from different places and to see Black people in different jobs, even positions of authority. However, when my dad retired and we moved to South Texas. I didn't see many Blacks much at all, least to say any in charge. The culture was just different and as a 7th grader, I found it really hard to adapt. The kids in my new school said things to me like, "Oh, you're a Black person", which at the time I did not understand why they were pointing out the obvious. In my mind, I knew things felt weird, but did not know how to define racism. I had not experienced being singled out because of my skin color. Looking back, being around people who lived in different parts of the country or world insulated me from those attitudes and I experienced a delayed individual introduction to racism. Even so, my parents talked about how I needed to be cognizant, because they knew as I got older I would feel and see many of the exact situations that I did not understand as a child. Now, my parents did not tell me that I should only have Black friends, but they did explain that I needed to know that I was Black and realize that other people may respond to me based on my skin color, but regardless to be proud of who I am. Hearing that helped me understand that all people have similarities and differences. That being so, treat people with dignity and respect, and expect people to treat me the same.

Living in South Texas was so delineated. I had to find my own way in school doing things that I liked. While in junior high, a teacher/coach assumed

that since I was pretty tall, I would be a good on his basketball team. So, he asked me to come to the gym for try-outs. Now, as a kid I loved sports, but I never played organized sports. I just played in the neighborhood. It wasn't long after I went to the try-outs that I heard the coach say that he had never seen a Black kid that could not play basketball until me. After I heard that I thought this is going to be a tough transition. At my old school, I was around Black kids who were involved in all kinds of extra-curriculars from art to sports and I don't remember being stereotyped.

Another experience occurred in my junior high years while swimming in the backyard of our White neighbor's house. There were some other White girls on the other side of the fence, throwing rocks and yelling the "n" word to my sister and me. I got angry and threw water towards them. One of the girls told her father and this man comes to my house when my parents were not home and confronted me. He brought his daughter to the door as well so that she could apologize for her part. After his daughter apologized, the man told me that I should say I'm sorry too, and then accept his daughter's apology. He told me that is what you do when someone apologizes to you. I was nervous with this man on my porch and my parents not home. It was also intimidating having this dad tell me I had to say sorry for a situation his daughter started and then tell her that I accept her apology. If I didn't go along, I was the mean kid. Again, I didn't do anything to cause his daughter to call us names, but I needed to say "it's okay", so they went home feeling better. All I cared about was what I would tell my parents. I knew they would be upset that I was at the neighbor's pool. Regardless,

if we did anything wrong and just playing in the pool with my sister, I was a Black boy in our White neighbor's backyard pool. And just like I thought, when my parents found out, they were upset over the whole thing including the dad coming to our house when they were not there. I knew I wouldn't go over to our neighbor's house again.

In high school, I experienced different forms of prejudice or racism. One time, a couple of White friends stopped by our house to see me. I invited them in and the first thing they noticed was the collection of Black books in our living room. They asked why we had so many books about Black people? I said, "I never noticed. Don't all Black people have books in their house to learn about their culture?" For as long as I can remember, my parents kept books on Black culture, which included movies, music, art, fashion and African languages. As little kids, my parents even gave us special meaningful Swahili names. I'm certain I developed my love of different genre of music through all I've learned about my Black culture (see Figure 26).

Figure 26. Music big influence in family

On a side note, hanging around my high school friends, I noticed that their parents had a collection of books, music, and art about their culture in their homes. It was the same as our home. We all took pride in our culture, but I guess my White friends did not think Black people had a culture to learn about. To me, learning about my Black culture was not only a Black thing to do, it was my parents' way of keeping our family grounded and centered in who we are and help us to be exposed to things that we might not get in school.

Although it took a while for me to settle in South Texas, when I did, I decided that I had to make the best of it. So, I ran for student council president and won the election (see Figure 27). Besides participating in student council, I joined a journalism class and wrote articles for the school newspaper. I loved what I was doing because I was finding my niche, doing well and contributing to the school community. I set my goal on becoming the editor-in-chief, but I did not realize the politics involved. We actually had teachers who did not want a Black student in that position. Actually, I was the sports editor before I showed interest in the editor-in-chief role and the teacher/sponsor asked me to resign without giving me a reason. So, I had to drop the journalism class. That really hurt because I really liked writing and being involved in that way. All I literally heard from students in my class was that I liked things that that Black kids were not involved in. Now, teachers did not say this to my face, but their actions said the same message that I heard from the White students. Finally, in my senior year, the journalism teacher/sponsor let me enroll in the class, but it was after the editor-in-chief was selected. I still ended up writing articles for the editor and my

articles won city wide contests. While all these situations went on, I did not know

the people were demonstrating racist actions. I knew there was bad behavior

going on, people did not like me, and it was unfair. I did not complain at home

because I knew my parents wanted me to stay focused on my school work and not

get distracted by extracurricular stuff. My parents knew that I was a good writer

and encouraged me to write all the time. They knew I joined activities that mainly

the White kids did and would remind me to not be surprised if my classmates

acted threatened or standoffish from my involvement. I was an outsider and not

really welcomed in the circle. Still, what I was going through was small compared

to what I later learned my dad dealt with on his job. He supervised a White

person who kept KKK brochures on a desk. My parents just wanted me to stay

focused on getting into college and having a better life than what they

experienced. The best way they knew to help me do this was to get a good

education with strong grades, but I also liked being involved in the high school

community.

Figure 27. Council president campaign

I always knew that college would be my next step and being a top student, I looked for support from my guidance counselor. Unfortunately, the guidance counselors treated me as if I was aiming too high because I wanted to attend an ivy league. They talked to me about going to a community college and then transferring to a local four-year university, but that was not what I dreamed of. I was grateful I had a Black teacher who guided me in my college search. Although, it was still frustrating when I saw counselors give scholarship announcements to students who had grades and college entrance tests lower than me. I had to search for scholarships on my own and find other adults to help. I ended up applying to number of elite public and private universities. In the end, I followed my older sister to Rice University. Attending a predominately White university, I found myself looking for others who looked like me to build a community of support. Many of the Black students shared similar experiences that I did that cultivated lasting friendships. As an undergraduate, I joined the Black Student Union and served in a leadership position. We had a successful event where community leaders spoke to our organization about social justice issues (see Figure 28). I was not so interested in a career in politics, but I did care about social and civic matters.

Figure 28. Congressman Mickey Leland, Texas 18th District

One of the most memorable events that I attended with my college friends was one

of the presidential inaugural balls for Barak Obama in 2019 (see Figure 29).

Witnessing his first swearing-in was a proud moment. When President Obama

won his 2nd term in 2013, my sister and I traveled to DC for this inauguration (see

Figure 30). Both were great experiences.

Figure 29. Inaugural Ball

Figure 30. Inaugural parade

Heron concludes his story by attending President Obama's second term

inauguration in 2013. Heron did not go into detail about his professional career journey.

However, in 2014, Heron decided to start his own business leaving a senior management

position with a top 10 Fortune 500 company. Today, Heron's position affords him the

opportunity to work remotely from places he chooses. After a vacation in Brazil in 2013, Heron has enjoyed revisiting Brazil and the Dominican Republic. These days, Heron extends his travel abroad to both countries because he has found a sense of belonging and solidarity. Heron said in the United States, the dominant culture appears to live unconsciously and as a Black man, when Heron leaves his home he has to calculate every step he takes to feel safe. He does not have that same experience in Brazil or the Dominican Republic. The next section continues the insights of Gen 2 with the conversational life history of Dove. The narrative began in the 1970s when Dove was a young girl.

Dove's Story

This last participant representing Gen 2 is Dove, also Eliza's 5th great-grandchild. Dove commences.

> *I grew up the youngest in a military family. However, I did not have as many new homes as my older sister and brother because my dad retired when I was 9 years old. Our family life was fairly traditional in the sense that my dad was the ultimate decision maker, protector, and provider. We did not always get everything we wanted, but my parents gave us everything we needed, which really was unconditional love and support. Being the baby in the family, I would definitely consider myself a daddy's girl (see Figures 31 and 32). I've always looked up to him and wanted to make him proud.*

Figure 31. Roasting marshmallows 1974

Figure 32. Dove's wedding 1996

In my own family, I consider my husband the head of the household. However just

like my parents' home, my husband and I try to work as partners and build on

each other strengths. Overall, I do value traditional families, especially in Black

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families where dads are the cornerstone. I didn't grow up around many family members, like cousins. My best friends were my siblings and we have always been there for each other (see Figure 33). It was not easy to see our grandparents and other relatives regularly, but we kept in touch especially with our grandparents with weekly phone class, cards, and letters.

Figure 33. Dove with siblings

 School was always important, like a job. I always tried to give my best and was a good student. I remember as a little girl, my parents talked to us about going to college after high school. This meant setting goals and believing in yourself to reach them. I encourage my own kids in the same way; letting them know that they can accomplish even more than my generation.

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My parents set expectations not only for their kids, but also for themselves. When my dad retired, we moved to South Texas and settled in a neighborhood that had a reputation for strong schools. However, my parents didn't realize at the time that the city had a court-mandated busing program. It was a result of a ruling with desegregation that applied to Latino and Black children. So, every other year, certain grades were bused outside of their neighborhood to a school across town. Because of this law, I was bused from the predominantly White neighborhood school to the "Black and Brown" school. It was tough, since we were new to the city, did not know where anything was located, and I had to leave the house early to catch my bus. No one was happy about this situation, especially my parents. I did not understand, especially since my brother and sister walked to their school and I rode by a school with my grade. Another argument was regardless of what school I attended, I was the minority student so it was hard to understand how the district was attempting to integrate the schools.

On my first day of school, a White girl who lived on my street asked me "what was my breed"? I didn't know what she was talking about. I finally answered, "Black" and then sat there too myself quiet and uncomfortable. I guess this little girl knew what a Hispanic person looked like and maybe Black people with darker skin tones, but she was confused by me since I said I was Black and I had the same complexion as her. She was definitely trying to figure out who I was and where I belonged. This was my first racialized experience and also the first time I noticed that White kids thought all Black and Brown people were the same. When we lived on the east coast, I went to a predominately White school, but the

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military environment was more diverse that I felt people were comfortable being around others who were different than you in any way. That was my normal, but now I found myself as the only Black person around White people who rarely interacted with someone who was Black like me.

I'm not much of a risk-taker and prefer to stay close to things I know. So, when it came time to select a college, I went to the same university as my brother and sister. My brother and I have always been close and it was good to be near him.

My college roommate was a White girl from Tennessee and in her first 18 years, she had never been around not even one Black person. She only saw Black people on television and however the actor portrayed the character was her impression along with what she heard from people around her. We were roommates for two years and during that time, she made many racist comments based around stereotypes. The weird part was she felt I would fit into her neighborhood. In her mind, I studied and was a smart Black girl because I took tough classes, and was not in her opinion a dumb jock or whatever. I guess since I went to her highly competitive college and she lived with me made me a different type of Black girl. It all made me shake my head and sigh.

While in college, I had no real idea what I wanted to do. My parents wanted me to pursue medicine or engineering, but I did not go down that track. Now, because I didn't follow that direction, I knew I had to do something professional, which is why I decided to attend law school after graduation. My parents encouraged me to earn a strong degree with a good future. After all, I am

a Black woman and will always need to work harder and be better prepared than my White counterparts. So, the two things that my parents talked about were to graduate with a degree with earning power and look for job security.

Even though I tried to get the best grades, my undergraduate years were average. Many of my classmates looked to me for assistance, and I felt like I was struggling to figure everything out just like they were. The professors purposefully taught the material so that it was difficult for everyone to get a good grade. You really had to teach yourself or know someone who could explain the professor's lecture. Today I am like oh, that's what all that stuff was about, especially in law school. It was a different world. It helps tremendously to have someone who can help you unpack all the information as you are trying to learn the concepts, procedures, and adjust to the environment. It was a sink or swim environment. I wasn't considered a first-generation college student, because my parents had bachelor's degrees, but I felt like there was so much we as a family did not know about going off to college. I mean, my parents obtained their bachelor's degrees later in life. They did not know what I was experiencing. I didn't know who to comfortably ask for help and it did not feel like my success was a top concern to my professors. My siblings shared what they could, but overall, we learned through trial and error. Through all this, my parents always tried to be supportive and giving up was not an option.

Once I completed my bachelor's degree (see Figure 34), I followed my brother to law school (see Figure 35). Once again, I was in uncharted waters,

Figure 34. Dove graduates with bachelor's degree from Rice
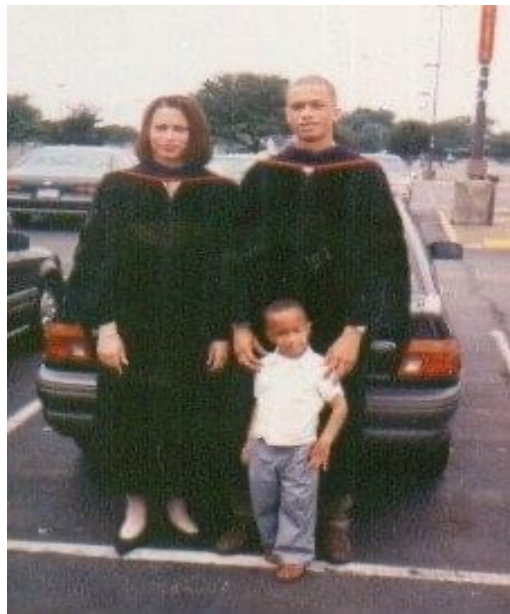
Figure 35. Law graduation

but pressed through. After I graduated from law school, it was stressful trying to

pass the bar (see Figure 36). On my second time, I reached a major milestone

when I successfully passed the bar (see Figure 37). Next, I landed a stable and

secure position with the government and have been in this sector for over 20

years.

Figure 36. Dove's hooding

Figure 37. Dove passes the bar

Because of my skin tone, I've been asked many times if one of my parents

was White or from another country. It was even assumed that I identified with

white girls, but I always hung around my Black friends. When I got married, my

husband and I chose to live in a predominately White neighborhood, which is what I was used to. I do like where we live, but it feels somewhat isolated. We're cordial when we see neighbors, but it's not much more than that. My next-door neighbor always mentions when a party happens and the whole block seems to be there except us. I guess they feel that the Black family on the corner would not fit in or want to attend. Maybe that's true, but they would never know since we're not invited. Another thing about living in this neighborhood is you definitely feel the pressure that your house should always be immaculate. It's annoying when the HOA (Home Owners Association) sends a notice that your grass is too long. One time we received a letter about a weed in our flower bed and I immediately felt singled out. So, I researched and found out it was actually a type of grass and not a weed. Feeling vindicated, I took pictures and sent a response letter. Soon after, the HOA folks apologized for their mistake. These situations really frustrate me because most people have yard companies maintaining their yards, but we do our own.

We enrolled our older children in catholic elementary school and even joined the church to receive a tuition discount. Now I grew up catholic, but my husband and kids did not have a connection. We felt more comfortable at a non-denominational Black church, where a good number of other Blacks in the community attended.

As I met other Black professionals in my community, I got involved in a few social organizations to help new Blacks families get to know one another. A part of this was also helping each other find services like Black barbershops or

hair salons, grocery items, and other cultural activities, even organized play

groups for the kids. This led to me helping form a regional Jack & Jill

organization. This is a national organization with a mission to bring Black

families together socially, culturally, and through educational opportunities.

Looking back, the Black church and Jack & Jill organization developed

friendships and support with other Black families. This was important since my

husband and I are not members of a Greek organization. We did not have that

connection and we noticed that most Black professionals in the area were

members of fraternities or sororities that gave them an automatic sense of

community in our White community.

The civil rights movement occurred before I was of age, and with that a

number of laws to protect Black people. However, it seems like things go around

in a circle and return back to where we were. I mean Black Lives Matter

organized over the same misjustices that happened before I was born. Now, I

never imagined witnessing a Black president in this nation. Watching Barack

Obama get sworn in was amazing and I felt it showed our kids that a person who

looks like them can be elected to the highest office (see Figure 38). I like them to

believe there are no limits on what they can do, but deep down I know there are

roadblocks. Still seeing a Black president gave faith that dreams can come true.

We even have the first female Black vice-president that is also great example for

my daughters. Yet, with these strides, we are seeing real resistance. My kids are

beginning to see how Whites do not want minorities in positions of power and are

finding ways to make it that much harder. In my opinion, things are becoming

harder and it's an eye-opener to understand who is really running this country.

Figure 38. President Obama's Inauguration 2013

After the 2020 election, I thought it was unreal to hear that the election

was stolen from President Trump. I mean, it's crazy. Too many times, the person I

was pulling for loss, but I just move on. It's pitiful how people are acting. For

example, in a city nearby, a school district discussed adding diversity coursework

in the curriculum, but the predominantly White well-to-do community fought

against it. So, today it's okay for Black families to live in certain upscale

neighborhoods if you are hand working and your White neighbors know how you

are raising your children. White kids will even play sports with Black kids, where

everyone learns cooperation, teamwork and healthy competition. Yet, advances

for Black people or others of color are monitored by the same White parents, who

fight to keep people who are different out of their community. Again, they will

accept one or two Black people, but you had better be at the top of your game

because the community only wants to keep an eye on a handful of minorities.

Black people will always have to deal with being the only one and prove they belong to reach their goals.

Dove describes growing up in predominately White communities where she appeared to fit in, but in reality, experienced racism that was implied, systematic, or direct. Nevertheless, Dove's family nurtured her confidence and ability to thrive in school. She ultimately completed her Juris Doctor and is the first practicing attorney in the family. As Dove raises her family in predominately White neighborhoods and schools, she recognizes that regardless how comfortable they live, it does not curb the subtle or indirect racism. Following is the chapter discussion explaining how CRT and intersectionality theory continue to occur in the lives of Gen 2, Heron and Dove.

Chapter Discussion

This chapter describes Heron and Dove who were born in 1967 and 1969 respectively. When Heron was less than a year old, in 1968 when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated and in the same year, the Fair Housing Act, the third law of the groundbreaking 1960s civil rights legislation became law. This act pushed through due to the civil unrest occurring after the death King's death and aimed to make amends for the racially explicit laws and policies that allowed segregation and housing inequality for Black Americans (Franzeset & Beach, 2019). In 1969, Dove was born and Shirley Chisholm, educator, and politician became the first Black woman in the U.S. Congress. A few years later, in 1972, Chisholm was the first Black person and first woman to win delegates for the Democratic presidential nomination. As Heron and Dove are entering school age, a number of firsts occur across the country for Black people in different areas. During the 1974 Major League Baseball season, Hank Aaron, a Black American,

broke icon Babe Ruth's homerun record. Then, in 1976, based on the research and advocacy work dating back to the early 1900s from historians like Carter G. Woodson, the month of February was recognized as Black History Month. On Appendix D, Heron and Dove included additional important historical events impacting Black Americans.

As mentioned above, Heron and Dove entered elementary school after the establishment of the federal civil rights laws meant to guarantee equal treatment and forbid discrimination against all people as well as a number of important milestones for Black Americans. To some degree, Black Americans progressed in the areas of politics, academia, entertainment, and business. Yet, as we unfold the accounts of Gen 2, similar to the narratives of Gen 1, racial issues and race in intersection with other identity traits are prevalent in Heron and Dove's life stories. Delving into Gen 2 stories, the permanence of racism, racial microaggressions, counter story-telling, color-blindness, an example of the critique of liberalism, and intersectionality theory became visible. The following paragraphs take a closer look at the narratives provided by the Gen 2 participants in relation to the aforementioned concepts.

In Heron and Dove's life stories, racism and discrimination as defined by the formal disenfranchisement and segregation from the Jim Crow laws do not appear to be noticeable. However, properties of *de facto segregation* are present as another way to keep people living separate and in seclusion of one another. In other words, on the surface, neighborhoods and schools were still segregated, but what is believed to be by choice and not due to laws.

Frankenberg and Taylor (2018) explained that while the Civil Rights Act created a distinction between *de jure and de facto* segregation, at the federal level many

inconsistencies arose when trying to distinguish between these forms of segregation that were never politically or legally defined (p. 191). This hands-off approach resulted in a different form of segregation and created the false impression that everybody had the same opportunity or equal access, which in reality was not true. De facto segregation is a myth; the local, state, and federal governments have passed laws and policies promoting discriminatory patterns that still exist today (Rothstein, 2017). This speaks to the permanence of racism conveyed not only in Gen 1 but in Gen 2 life narratives.

Scholars stated racism is permanent, persistent, and an expected component of American life (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tate, 1997). The narratives provided by Gen 2 supports this research. Heron explained as a youth he regularly interacted with people of different backgrounds and observed Black people working in various professions. Yet, when his family moved from one area of the country to another, Heron observed that his new city did not feel integrated and he did not see Black people in the same positions that he was accustomed. He summarized that the opportunities in his new city were different for Blacks than for Whites. In addition, Heron's interaction with the dominant culture made him feel 'less than' or inferior. In another narrative, Heron explains an example of the permanence of racism when young neighborhood Whites girls yell the "n" word over the fence as Heron and Dove play in the backyard of a friend's pool. There was no mistake that these little girls did not realize the term they used was derogatory, and used it to show their resentment and belittle Heron and Dove as second-class citizens, not deserving of having the same privileges as the White person. Hearing the word, illustrates the deep undertone that is still present when directed at a Black person. Obviously, the young girl's father understood what his daughter did, but

instead of waiting to teach his daughter a lesson with Heron's parents at his side, he visited the little boy when he was alone. Heron is no older than his daughter and to entreat his like he can navigate this uncomfortable situation that the father would probably not want to see his daughter handle on her own was insensitive. Th father used his size as an intimidation towards Heron and spoke as if he had authority to accept an apology from the little girl and also apologize for splashing water towards the fence.

In the narratives of Gen 2, another dominant form of the permanence of racism is racial microaggressions. The openly offensive, violent verbal attack meant to hurt the victim through name-calling is described by Sue et al. (2007) as an overt microaggression called micro assault. As we discuss the permanence of racism, Milner (2017) noted that racism manifests both intentionally and unintentionally. With that said, Solórzano et al. (2020) described racial microaggressions as "subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color, frequently automatic, or unconscious" (p. 60). These subtle jabs occur on a daily basis and can create lasting scars.

Heron and Dove were still in elementary when their dad retired from the military and relocated the family to a different part of the country. In this new city, Dove was bused to a school on the other side of town in an effort to integrate the school grade. Yet, the school Dove attended outside her neighborhood did not place Dove in an integrated grade school. She was still the minority Black child in her class. Racial microaggressions often occurred as she was the 'only one' and viewed as the person to represent her Black community to the class as well as thought of as different because her skin tone was as light as her White classmates.

Heron's introduction to his school, was not better. He heard comments by White students that he was 'one of them' or the 'other…a Black person'. These covert remarks infer that Black students are something strange or outside of the norm. The students might have said a microinsult, which is a rude offense without trying, and could be unconscious (Sue et al., 2007). Regardless of the fact, it is an example of the permanence of racism. Another racial microaggressions directed toward Heron while in junior high occurred when a gym teacher singled him out to try-out for basketball team assuming that he could play the sport. The underlining thought is all Blacks play basketball and are born athletes. Yet, when the teacher saw that Heron did not know how to play structured basketball, he regarded him as a waste of time and made a sly remark. On the other hand, White students treated Heron 'inferior' for participating in activities, like journalism or student council because in their minds, these doings were reserved for White students and Heron should just play sports. In high school, Heron's journalism told him to requested drop her class in order for her to less qualified White student in the role as editor-in-chief. With Heron out of the class, no one would wonder why he was not given appointed editor-in-chief, a position that he could perform. The teacher's response was a microaggression, a subtle for of racism that she was conducted with no questions asked.

Heron's guidance counselor also used microaggressions regarding the college selections. The only assistance the counselor was willing to offer Heron was to attend a community college. This was the counselor's indirect way of telling Heron that he was not fit to look at other universities, although Heron was a top student in the class. The other top students were White and were encouraged to apply to well-known four-year institutions, but the counselor did not give Heron the same guidance hoping to stop his

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pursuit of a top public or private institution in the country. Since racism is ingrained in social practices, microaggressions seem to be accepted, are not addressed, and often people are not aware of these transgressions.

Even as adults, Gen 2 experience microaggressions. One of Dove's neighbor gave block parties and invited each family on the street, except Dove's family. Dove's family is the only Black family in their area and after each party another neighbor shared the happenings. The family organizers have elected invite everyone on the block, but Dove's family. Although, microaggressions may be unconscious and seem harmless (Dana, 2016), they devalue the person and degrade through the hidden meaning.

The CRT tenet, counter story-telling contends that contextual and historical analysis to create doubt and falsehood of the legitimacy of accepted beliefs held by the majority is required to dismantle beliefs of people whose stories are often not told (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Matsuda, 1995; Tate, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). There are a number of examples found throughout the Gen 2 narratives in which counter story-telling reclaims and reaffirms the perspectives of the life stories.

One common perspective depicts Black families as not in tack and with no father present. Heron and Dove's family included both father and mother who provided a loving home and supported their children, helping them explore new activities, develop their talents, and challenge themselves. In Heron's story, he described a tough time adapting to a new school, and for the first time, experiencing what he later learned was racial microaggressions again, growing up with positive images that lifted the Black culture assisted Heron to stay the course when he faced challenges intended to lower his self-

esteem. If Heron had listened and believed that he was not worthy to participate in interests he enjoyed, he may not have developed self-confidence, cooperation, and conflict resolution, all skills that are essential for growing into adulthood.

Regarding the narrative that Black girls are brash and unapproachable. Dove describes growing up in a traditional family with her father as the cornerstone and her mother an equal partner in the home. Heron and Dove grew up comfortable with people different nationalities and backgrounds, so they learned adaptability and resiliency. Love (2019) explains that culture is not as biological as we believe, but a group's knowledge production process that occurs as they understand and respond to their reality and create ways to survive or thrive in their daily lives (p. 128).

The critique of liberalism embodies color-blindness, meritocracy, and neutrality of the law (Crenshaw, 1988; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tate, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Color blindness is explained as neutral principles of constitutional law and the equal treatment of all people regardless of the differences in historical and present-day experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Color-blindness negates difference on the basis of race to suggest we are all equal when we clearly are not. As young kids, Heron and Dove were taught that race did not matter. They grew up believing the message that everyone will be treated equal and judged by the content of their character. Yet, their stories introduced racism in the form of color-blindness.

While in high school, Heron's White friends stopped by his house and as they waited, noticed the family's collection of Black history and cultural books. At that point, they asked why they had so many Black books? Heron's well-intentioned friends did not consider the significance or value a Black family would have in learning about their

Black culture. These students were not exposed to Black contributions in our country, so they failed to connect the richness of the materials with knowledge to gain. Yet, when Heron visited their homes, he noticed their parents also had large collection of books, artworks, and music that represented their heritage and culture. Heron would recognize the book titles because readings are required in school of the dominant culture, whereas many Black historical readings are not included in the school curriculum.

Dove recalled a racial interaction in school regarding her fair skin tone. The White children wondered if she was White or something other than Black. When she identified herself as Black, the White people told her that was not important because they did not see color. In discussing color-blindness, one may believe it is positive to say that one does not see race or race does not matter, but this contributes to ongoing racism. By not acknowledging race, we do not appreciate that children learn to distinguish race and gender early in life and disregarding race removes social indicators, which reveal an individual or group's unequal access to resources, privilege, power, and control in society along with a person's lived experience (Neville et al., 2016). Stating that we do not see color or we live in a colorless society is untrue. In fact, researcher Chiles (2013) argues in 2008 after the election of President Obama, the membership in hate groups rose about 60% over a 5-year period. Americans are not as color blind as we tend to believe.

Color blindness, another tenet of CRT is apparent as Dove discussed the racism in a neighboring school district when the administration tried to add more diverse coursework and training to the curriculum. The predominate White community quickly came together and fought against any changes. The few Black families that lived in the community were ostracized and discounted.

Intersectionality theory is also revealed illustrated among the Gen 2 narratives. With intersectionality theory, race is studied in intersection with other identities and differences (Crenshaw, 1991; Matsuda, 1995), such as ethnicity, class, gender, race, sexual orientation, and other systems of oppression.

Dove narrative spoke of her White college roommate, who grew up in a middle-class racially segregated community and before coming to college had never been around a Black person. After getting to know Dove, her roommate felt comfortable and shared that Dove is like someone she knew from her neighborhood back home. Dove was considered different to her roommate because Dove displayed a strong work-ethic, enrolled in challenges classes, and was not lazy, like a dumb jock. Dove's physical appearance was non-threatening as her skin tone was that of a White person.

Dove's appearance, class, and gender coupled with her race create an overlap of experiences. Love (2021) indicates that researcher Kimberlé Crenshaw points out that the identity markers are not only enough to list our identities, but a tool to explain the complexities and realities of discrimination recognizing that "multiple oppressions reinforce each other to create new categories of suffering." (p. 7). Throughout Dove's schooling, it was pointed out that she did not look Black, which meant that she was different. In addition, growing up in a predominately White community, Dove was considered in a different class from other Black students. By some, Dove was regarded as trustworthy, smart, and honest because of her appearance and where she lived.

Researchers, Dixon & Telles (2017) explain that colorism situates a person across a spectrum of racial groups between Whiteness and Blackness. It is a psychosocial device that White racist people affirmed and enforced allowing privileges to those who had

features that looked more White (Wilder & Cain, 2011). Therefore, lighter-skinned Black people, on average, experience less discrimination and stereotyping than darker-skinned people (Keith et al., 2017; Nosek et al., 2007). When Dove's roommate speaks negatively about Black people, she may not be referring directly to Dove, but no less degrading because Dove is a Black and identifies as such. If Dove's appearance were different, she would be included in the way Dove's roommate expresses her feeling about Black people.

Another identity marker for Dove as part of the intersectionality theory is her gender. The social disadvantages pertaining to being a Black female requires resilience and we see this demonstrated in Dove's story. Dove is highly educated, ambitious, and her drive to succeed is in step with her husband. She looks to pursue her goals as his partner and promote their family together. Outside of her work responsibilities, she supported and contributed to the establishment of a regional Black organization that brought social and cultural relationships to Black families in her area. Yet, the racial microaggressions aforementioned began at a young age in school with Dove learning to be the only Black person in the room. Dove heard that as if it was astonishing that she had taken challenging courses and had strong study skills. In addition, her classmates looked to her to explain the professor's lectures. The experience of being the 'only one' is not shared to the same extent by White women. Dove is left with the responsibility that her actions represent the way others view the Black community. When we do not talk about the role of multiple identities and its injustice, Love (2021) inserts there are missed opportunities in understanding a person's full humanity (p. 7). This causes us to miss the unexpected qualities to care for and help those who are marginalized.

In closing, even though we opened this chapter with a list of achievements across many fields for Black Americans when Heron and Dove entered school. It is thought since schools were desegregated over 15 years before the two were born that the United States educational systems would not tolerate marginalization of people of color, but Heron and Dove's narratives shared describe the racist behavior that not only occurred with the students of their same age, but also with the adults in authority. Just as Gen 1 narratives shared narratives demonstrated covert and overt racist behavior, the narratives of Gen 2 continued to express the same racism behaviors, but the traits are somewhat subtler. The final chapter discusses the narratives of Gen 3, Owl and Peacock. Their life histories explore the continued prevalence of the CRT tenets evaluated in the prior chapters.

IV. GENERATION 3

The last two narratives are the life stories of Eliza's 6th great-grandchildren, Owl and Peacock. They are first cousins who were raised in different sections of the United States. They are both hard-working and top students, who have excelled academically and athletically. Individual conversations were conducted with Owl and Peacock prior to the pandemic of the COVID-19 virus. Then two additional separate conversations were hosted in virtual sessions using an online platform. We begin with Owl sharing his life history account (see Figure 39).

Figure 39. Peacock and Owl

Owl's Story

I was born 1996 in Ohio, the youngest of four children. I have two older brothers and one older sister. Our family is very close and in my early years lived within ten minutes of my dad's parents and cousins, who we spent a lot of time around. Both of my parent's graduated from college and had professional

careers, but when I came along my mom did not work outside the home. I was in first grade when my mom went back to work full-time. My dad made a career change as well, from managerial role in banking to a high school teacher and basketball coach.

I grew up in a mostly Black modest working-class neighborhood. At a young age, I was assigned chores and taught discipline. I don't use the word discipline as punishment, but I do mean we learned to hard work, with structure and expectations. I knew how I should act, get things done, and wanted to meet the expectations. As the youngest, I watched how my brothers and sister responded to different situations and learned right and wrong by their example. Today, this informs how I look at life and interact with others.

We went to church regularly and helped in different ministries. My dad was a church leader and as I watched him, I learned the importance of showing gratitude and being a good steward. My parents in general are kind to one another and others, like the golden rule, which is what they taught me. Because I was always around family, my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins,

I value my family and like being around them. It is very important to me (see Figure 40 and Figure 41). Most of my early memories are having family dinners for the holidays, like Christmas, Thanksgiving, and getting together for birthdays. I loved birthdays because everyone came over to the house and it wasn't about gifts, but just having everyone together.
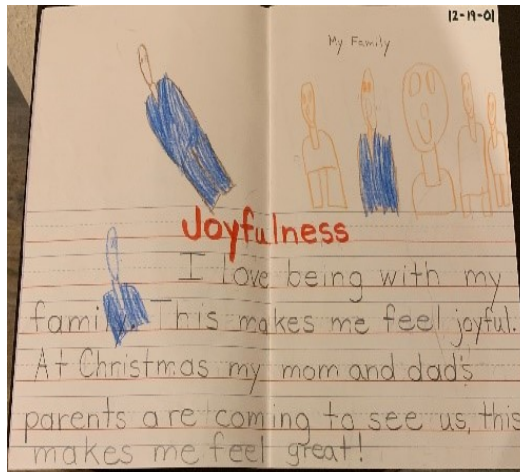
Figure 40. Owl's elementary artwork

Figure 41. Owl's school poem

We sang happy birthday, then ate cake and ice cream. Those are special

memories (see Figure 42). Another past time are road trips with my brothers and

sister, playing board games, or other activities we did as a group (see Figure 43

and Figure 44).

Figure 42. Owl's 4th birthday

Figure 43. Playing monopoly

Figure 44. Riding bikes with siblings

Basketball has always been a part of my upbringing. My dad is a basketball junkie and we all grew up playing the game. Every day I worked on skill development, which helped me learn the fundamentals of the sport, create plays and be a team player. I spent many hours playing pick-up games, watching games on tv with my dad and brothers, and traveling together to tournaments. This is how we lived, and the game played a big role helping me with my career path.

When I was 8 years old, my family moved from Ohio to Texas to be closer to my mom's side of the family. This move was a major transition for me as I was accustomed to being with my siblings during the day, but now we all went to different schools with different schedules. In addition, I didn't have my extended family around me on a regular basis. Living in a larger city added a longer work day for my parents because of the commute to and from home. My mom's job had more responsibilities which seemed more stressful. At our old house, we got home at the same time from school, but now I had my own house key to let myself in since it could be about an hour before my brothers or sister arrived home. I had to do more around the house too. I knew when I got home, I should start my homework, sometimes I sat around. Now when my brothers and sister got home, my sister made sure things were in order.

My mom's parents live about five hours away and I thought we would see them more often, but it is too far to visit each week. We went there as often as we could. Our new house was nice, bigger, and had more amenities. There was a neighborhood pool, tennis, and basketball courts. We could tell my parents were making more money, but as nice as everything was, I missed being in Ohio.

It was a culture shock when I went to my new school. In Ohio, I went to a private Christian school and there were Black and White kids there, but at my new school, I was the only Black in my class (see Figure 45) and most students did not speak or read English. That was new for me. Many had not been around Black kids before either, but they were nice to me. In gym, the kids thought I was a super athlete, whereas in Ohio there were tons of kids my age good at sports. One of my first friends at my new school invited me to his house, but before I could go, my mom wanted to meet his mom. Now, my mom did not realize that his mom did not speak English, and when she found out, she spoke to her through my friend's older brother. The moms were able to understand and connect. My parents even let me stay overnight with his family. I remember my friend's mom telling my mom, through her older son, that she liked having me over and was glad her son and I were friends. Through all this, I learned the importance of understanding people even when you are from different backgrounds. Another thing that I learned while I helped some of the students with their English, they helped me with Spanish. The teacher even liked me in her class. Some of the White parents talked badly about having a class where the teacher code switched between English and Spanish. They thought their kids would fall behind or something. But not my mom, she thought it was a benefit to my learning. My parents said that was a racist perspective and my teacher appreciated my mom not asking that I be moved. I didn't realize it at the time, but I think my upbringing in Ohio helped me settle in to our new home. I did not act like I was privileged or entitled to things around me, which was the many acted.

Figure 45. Owl's elementary class

It was my dream to play basketball for my dad. So, when I entered high school, I decided to enroll at the school where my dad taught, and my older brother attended. This school was on the other side of town in a lower economic area. When I got there, I felt another type of culture shock and I lost contact with the friends that I had made since moving. That was hard because I had to figure out where I fit in again. The kids at this new school were not friendly and they knew I was the coach's son who lived on the other side of town. I hung around my brother and stayed in my dad's office when I could. I did not like the way I felt, although I did well in all my classes and my basketball skills were developing. It was tough being alone and feeling unaccepted. After a while, I settled in, but I never felt that I was welcomed. The school had a lot of support services and my parents encouraged me to get involved and take advantage of the opportunities (see Figure 46). Some guys on the basketball team did just enough school work to get by, but my parents stayed on me to study harder regardless of what others did.
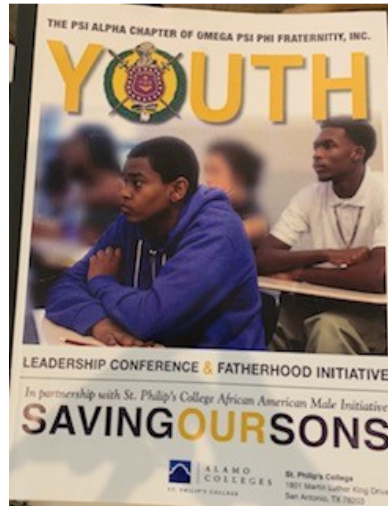
Figure 46. Participating in a Leadership Conference

In my junior year, my dad accepted a teaching and coaching position at a predominately White school. So, I transferred there for my last years of high school and it was another transition. It is a big school, like over 900 seniors and super competitive. I transferred with a high-grade point average, which dropped a student out of the top 5% of the class and put me in the thick of things. People were not happy. My dad and I heard gossip about how a new kid enrolled from a poor and uncompetitive school and now was in the top of the class. Whoever I replaced, grew up in the district and was part of a tight group of friends in the top of the class. I told my dad to tell the principal and other administrators that I did not transfer with the intent of taking another student's rank. I know I worked hard for all my grades too, but I didn't want the recognition at the expense of being singled out like this. I felt the glares and didn't like the way the White kids talked to me in class. They treated me like I robbed someone to get to the top of the class. To add to everything, it was hard to make friends, but this time I felt it was

because the students saw me as the Black kid from a poor school, who did not belong in this White school. There were just a handful of Black kids in my grade, and they grew up around the White kids. You could tell the White students and parents were used to those Black kids and did not see them as taking away something from the White students. Now me, I was the coach's son who transferred in and had to prove that I belonged in the higher-level math and science classes. This attitude was coming not only from the students, but the teachers. I could feel it, but again, I adjusted and showed them that I was a strong student and could compete with anyone. In my senior year, the school organized a ceremony to honor the top graduating students. As part of the ceremony, each student selected their favorite teacher or staff member who made a significant impact in school. I selected our athletic trainer, who is a Black man. He told me in all the years he worked there, no student ever selected him as having impacted his or her high school experience. I thought that was interesting. Anyway, for me he was an obvious choice, outside of my dad, because it was my goal to become an athletic trainer and he served as a great mentor, role model, and friend as I adjusted to my last year in high school. And he shared the ropes of his career and guided me on the best college program to pursue. He really encouraged me to keep pushing because nothing in life is easy. I knew that as one of the only Black athletic trainers in the school district, he carried a lot of weight on his shoulders.

Because I understood what type of athletic training program to pursue, I enrolled at an accredited school close to home. I decided not to look into playing college basketball. However, after growing four inches in my freshmen year and

playing pick-up games with team players that I knew from high school days,

people suggested I talk to the coach about walking on the team. Classes were

going really well, so I figured I had nothing to lose. But then again, when you

walk on a team, you have to prove yourself to the coaches and players because no

one wants another player taking their game minutes, especially a walk-on. Well, I

made the team and played for a couple of years. Soon, my degree responsibilities

began to conflict with team practices and traveling, so I decided to stop playing

and focus all my energy on my studies. My advisor knew I was capable of keeping

my grades up while playing basketball, but I thought about what was most

important to me. As a little kid, all I wanted to do was play professional

basketball, but that was not my fate. I was happy to be on a direct path to a career

that I was passioned about and would allow me to stay close to the game that I

loved. In 2019, I received my bachelor of science degree in athletic training with

honors (see Figure 47).

Figure 47. Graduation celebration in 2019

Now that I'm older, I see the subtle forms of prejudice that went on

around me. At the time, I did not say much and just tried to ride out the situation.

But looking back, the worst part was knowing that the teachers who are in authority did not try to correct the behavior in their class. They really did nothing. For example, I sat in my high school class, the only Black person, and a student asked the teacher why should colleges offer a certain number of admission spots for African American students from lower competitive schools? The students felt that colleges should just take the best students from the highly competitive schools. This student went on to say that the college seats were taken from students at schools who were better prepared for college, which in code were the White schools and not a school that I transferred from. All my teacher did was nodded like she agreed with his comment. After that, the topic shifted to affirmative action and that's when I spoke up in a respectful way with an opposite viewpoint from the student who felt that affirmative action was not necessary. I began by telling the class that many students at other schools are not offered the same classes that are available at this school and it has nothing to do with those students not being capable of doing the work. The students in his former high school are not given the same opportunities as this district. This means that when they enter college with someone from this school, they have not been given the same playing field as someone from this school. I went on to say this is very similar to why we have affirmative action. There are still policies and procedures that allow some people to be at a different starting line than others. The students didn't understand anything that I shared. All they wanted to believe was things are unfair to them. They didn't create the rules, so why should they be felt to be responsible. They worked hard and deserved to have what they want. I say you

can't change that mindset because everything they want, they get handed to them

without interacting with someone like me. I felt outnumbered. I mean, the students

were so fixed on what they are taught from home and reinforced at our school.

Owl ended his narrative realizing that his current classmates had no idea that there is systemic injustice that is at work, which effects the types of classes even offered at different high schools about an hour away. His classmates' way of thinking is not only reinforced at home, but basically the adults in the school building have the same thinking. He felt the students had a fixed mindset and it was worthless trying to change their thinking. Lastly, the adults around him thought the same way. The last story is about Peacock, also representing Gen. 3 and Eliza's 6th great grandchild.

Peacock's Story

I am the oldest of four kids, born in 1999 near north Texas. This has been my only home. My grandparents live close, so we see them regularly (see Figure 48). My dad is an IT professional, and my mom is an attorney. They raised us in a

Figure 48. Peacock, sister, and grandfather

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predominately White suburban community, which I did not notice until I was

older.

My mom was raised Catholic and my dad, Baptist. As a kid, I didn't have a main church home. I went to mass as a kid sometimes but felt more comfortable at my dad's church. When asked my denomination, I'm really not sure. Since I didn't grow up in one church, I feel uncomfortable visiting churches because everyone knows each other and as a guest, you are singled out to the congregation. I really hate that feeling, to the point that it stops me from looking for a church to belong to. Even so, I do like attending bible studies at times.

My mom introduced us to Jack & Jill, Inc, an organization for Black families with children through high school that offered programs for leadership development, awareness of cultural heritage and community service. I didn't understand the purpose of the organization or realize it was created for Black folks. I just thought the people were friends we hung out with. I was in kindergarten, when I realized the difference between my Black friends I went to school with and those I met from Jack & Jill. A couple I knew from both places.

I remember in elementary, while playing, a White friend held out her hand and began to compare my complexion to hers. Then, my other school friend, a Black girl that I also knew from Jack & Jill placed her arm out and said, 'I'm Black'. I said, 'Oh, I guess I'm White' and then my Black friend said, 'No, you're not White, you're Black'. Later that day I asked my parents what color am I and

my mom said you are Black. That is how I remember learning that I was called

something different than the White students around me.

I met many Black friends through our affiliation with Jack & Jill, Inc and

they lived basically in the same area as us. We went on field trips and cultural

activities such as Black museums. I had fun, but sometime in elementary, we

stopped attending the meetings. I learned that my mom cancelled our

membership. Now the only Black kids I would really see were the handful at

school.

In 2005, I was in 2nd grade when Hurricane Katrina, a massive category 5

hurricane, hit New Orleans. I remember hearing about it when my grandparents

stayed with us for a while. They did not live in the direct path of the hurricane,

but there was a lot of flooding in their city too. In my school, I met a Black girl

whose family relocated from Louisiana because of the hurricane. She did not say

much else. Now in 2015, when I was a high school student I realized that

Hurricane Katrina catastrophe was probably the first racialized event to occur

around me. As part of a high school community service project, I chose and was

selected to attend a week-long environmental service trip to New Orleans

Through this trip I learned about the city and the conditions that led up to the

environmental crisis. This introduced me to systemic and environmental racism.

When we arrived in New Orleans, I met people who were affected by the

hurricane. One woman actually filmed her entire experience with her cell phone.

She did not have much, but she was able to share with the world what was

happening to people in her neighborhood. We also helped an elderly man clean

his house and listened to him share his story. I learned how the crisis effected people who looked like many people in my family. One of my biggest takeaways that helped me reflect was the journaling activity that we had to do every day. I was asked to be the ambassador for the program, and I advocated for the work we did.

The first thing we did was tour the city of New Orleans and there were still boarded up homes with signs and boards spray painted with numbers that represented how many dead bodies were inside the home. I couldn't believe this because we are touring the city ten years after the hurricane and you still saw the same images as if the hurricane just happened. Now, on the flip side, I saw mansions near the Tulane area that looked brand new. I learned that they were rebuilt only five or six months after the hurricane. The new homes were about four miles away from the boarded houses that had a sign with number of deaths inside the home. That has stayed with me and I wanted to mention it because once the White rich people's needs are met, the crisis is over and most people just moved on like nothing happened.

This is the attitude we have seen, but then the Covid-19 pandemic occurred. I thought okay, we had a crisis that in the beginning people said did not discriminate thinking anyone could get the virus. After a while, I learned that the people who are most affected are those who do not have health care where they live or unable to work remotely. Many are the essential workers. This looked a lot like the marginalized people during Katrina. There's been no change in behavior from our country's leaders when dealing with crises. Now, if it was the leader's

responsibility, but not the leaders' fault, maybe the system was not designed to

help black and brown people, but another group that the system selected to save

and help when there was a crisis. I think we need changes, but as a country we

keep putting new people in office with the same fundamental systematic issues of

race and inequality.

When I was in the 3rd grade, I moved to a new school and on my first day,

I met a new friend who was biracial. Anyway, she approached me saying that

we're going to be best friends because we are the only Black kids in the class. I

was like, okay since I did not know anyone else. Over the next year, I started

running in a summer track program, with majority Black kids from other schools.

Joining the track club (see Figure 49) was my informal immersion around Black

kids, which was different than the formalized

Figure 49. Participating in track event

experience with Jack and Jill, Inc. I noticed, but I did not reflect until a few years

later of the diversity among Black people.

I was in the 7th grade when I had my first Black teacher. I think about this a lot because this was a formative experience. My 7th grade teacher was so cool, and I felt that she taught the most important subject that we all need to know, English. I always liked reading, but what she taught me was to pay attention to what I read and how I analyze the reading. During 7th grade, we read the suggested books for the grade and even a book from the 8th reading list, To Kill A Mockingbird. Soon my teacher basically flipped the script and we read African American literature, like the narrative life of Frederick Douglass, which was above an 8th grade reading list. We analyzed Negro spiritual, Raisin in the Sun, and other books like that.

After a while, parents complained about the reading list, and wanted our Black teacher out. I had her for English in my 7th and 8th grades. It was not like the students complained about the reading list, if anything our teacher was strict on the writing analysis, and this is what the kids complained about. From what I saw students loved her because of her passion and how she wanted her students to be strong in grammar, the concepts, and analytical skills. I received my first B when I was in her class. And I thought I was a good writer, if not the best in the class, but she told me I could do better. So, I worked harder, improved, and earned an A the next grading period. Her standards were high for everyone, and she expected all of us to push ourselves. She would tell us that she did not care so much about the grade, but improving in our writing skills.

Now, before the parents started complaining, I could tell that the other teachers tried to impress her or kiss up to her, but when parents started making

waves, the other teachers backed away too. The teachers and students ostracized

her. Finally, she was moved from an English teaching position to a 10th grade

project-based class which I took. She had little role in this class because the

students were in an independent study and just needed an adult to supervise.

Soon, I guess she got tired because she left. We had a couple of other Black

teachers by now, but I guess they taught safe courses with curriculum, like math

and gym.

I was in 8th grade when the Sandy Hook shooting happened and that had a

profound effect on me. I began to think and paid more attention to policies about

gun laws, like who can purchase a gun, what type, and are their background

checks. I wondered, which organizations influenced the lawmakers. I thought

about all of this because my brother was in kindergarten, and I could not imagine

something like Sandy Hook happening where I lived, but I also realized that it

was not an isolated event. Today we hear about school shootings all the time.

Also, I was in the 9th grade when Tamir Rice was killed. This is when the Black

Lives Matter movement was on the news regularly and I started expressing my

thoughts about what I heard and read. I appeared more out spoken in my thinking

than my parents. I noticed that people might say that they are a Democrat and

vote that way because they are Black let's say, but actually think like a

Republican. It's like someone being fiscal conservative, but socially liberal. I

think both are related and you can't be one without the other.

Another interesting example I noticed, was the two signs in a neighbor's

yard, one for Biden/Harris and the other Blue Lives Matter. In my opinion, I

thought that those two signs contradicted each other. The reason why is

Biden/Harris aligned themselves in support of Black Lives Matter, which fought

for police reform. The Blue Lives Matter implied that you are supporting the

police officers and, obviously did want to see their more money and authority.

In high school, we had a Black college counselor who was well liked and

very good at his job. He took care of the Black students, by not discouraging them

on the schools they wanted to pursue. His approach was to help students learn

how to find the best fit. Like with me, I wanted to attend Stanford and he told me

that was a reach. I ended up not applying. However, by researching and talking

about my goal to attend an ivy league schools, I was able to honestly think about

why I liked a school, what qualities are they looking for, and reflected on where I

would excel. He never told me not to apply to any college, but he helped me make

a solid decision that was based on my goals and personality (see Figure 50).

Figure 50. High school graduation

When I was trying to figure out my major, my parents and grandparents said I was good at math and should study medicine. I never thought I was good at math, and I didn't really like it, but I did practice it. What helped me figure out my major was my attendance at a three-week Summer Institute program sponsored by the African Studies department at University of Pennsylvania. It was a great opportunity for Black students to get acclimated to the campus, take classes, and meet other students from all over the diaspora. Through the program, students also get to know the Black faculty in the African Studies department. It really helped with the college transition because the African Studies department is not a reflection of every department on Penn's campus. This department is predominantly Black, and you get a chance to learn not only about the school, but race. I did not want to major in African Studies, but I did like the director. I took a class with her called Sociology of the Black Community, which I loved and that helped me realize how much I enjoyed sociology as a major. It's a great mix between practicality and analytical skills. I get to read, write, and do some math skills, like statistics. And lucky for me, the sociology classes cross-listed with the African Studies, so I could take more classes within the department.

Another topic that I've learned is that I don't agree with respectability politics. I do not like the idea that someone must look or act to be accepted by dominant culture. I am not a conformist. For example, when I listen to news, I find different sources for information other than regular news stations. You don't always get the full story. So, you need to search multiple sources. I think this will serve me well, because you have to think for yourself and now that I have

graduated from college (see Figure 51) and moved into the working world, I see

so many things different than when I was a kid. One day I hope

Figure 51. Bachelor's degree grad 2021

to pursue a law degree, so that I can help change policies that improve lives for

marginalized communities. I think we need people who are not afraid to be on the

outside of the system, but be well educated in the ins and outs of the system.

Peacock is comfortable finding alternative ways consistent with her own values to support marginalized communities and promote change. As Peacock prepares to apply to graduate school, she continues to volunteer with social advocacy groups.

Chapter Discussion

Counter storytelling, the permanence of racism, color-blindness practices, as well as Whiteness as property are apparent in the narratives provided by Gen 3. With respect to intersectionality theory, the social-historical context, class, gender, and race appeared as identity markers in Owl's and Peacock's narratives. Appendix E provides the important historical events that supports Gen 3's narratives and impacts Black Americans today.

The chapter presents two different but related life stories. Owl's and Peacock's narratives are examples of counter storytelling. They were raised in positive and supportive family environments. They both engaged in extracurricular activities to make the best of their school years. Their families held and taught important life values and work ethics. In fact, Peacock was raised in an upper-social class household with many educationally supportive activities. She has already gained some social mobility. She explains her goal to return to law school in order to improve the lives of marginalized communities through public policy. This requires adapting to challenging circumstances, which occurs as we continue to grow.

Counter storytelling contends that contextual and historical analysis to create doubt and falsehood of the legitimacy of accepted beliefs held by the majority is required to dismantle the beliefs of people whose stories are often not told (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Matsuda, 1995; Tate, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). In the case of young Black men, the dominant culture's narrative is that young Black men are considered people who instigates, threatens, and comes from poverty. Owl's narrative begins with sharing his emphasis of immediate and extended family in his life. When attending the first high school where his dad worked, Owl and his brother modeled the father-son relationship that the support groups tried to exemplify to the young men who did not have the same connection. He acknowledged his challenges in moving schools but did not let each environment alter his course in reaching the academic and professional goals he set for himself.

However, at some point, Owl and Peacock were both the only Black child in their respective schools or classes. They both witnessed racist practices by the adults at school.

Black teachers were marginalized and ostracized in their stories. Owl realized how adults reinforced racist practices and were not able to correct injustice. As the literature explains it, racism is permanent, persistent, and an expected component of American life (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tate, 1997). In Peacock's narrative, we see the permanence of racism through her comparison of the marginalized communities that are primarily impacted by Hurricane Katrina catastrophe and the Covid-19 pandemic. Her reference of environmental racism, such as historical zoning laws as a contributor to the effect of Hurricane Katrina on the Black people. With respect to Covid-19, it was assumed that the virus was non-discriminatory, but many affected are marginalized communities who are essential workers without appropriate health care. These are structural discriminatory practices and policies that have created ongoing inequalities during crises.

Color blindness is explained as neutral principles of constitutional law and the equal treatment of all people regardless of the differences in historical and present-day experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Even though Peacock did not learn that she was Black until she was in kindergarten, she still went through school with White students, wondering if she was something other than Black. Peacock fit in with her school and extra-curricular environment. Unlike Owl, Peacock grew up with her White classmates, which made them very comfortable around her. She was viewed as acceptable in the circle of her White friends and welcomed to their functions. Her White friends saw her as one of them. As a psychosocial device, White racist people affirmed and enforce allowing privileges to those who had features that looked more White

(Wilder & Cain, 2011). The bottom line is colorism finds its roots in racism, since it is racism that interprets value and control based on the shade of the skin.

Whiteness as property centers on the history of race and racism in the United States and the role of the country in beginning the existence of race (Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Matsuda, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). It provided the basis for allocating societal benefits just for being White (Harris, 1993). This became evident in Owl's account of how he had to prove himself and live with the discomfort of knowing that his classmates and teachers saw him as a person who was stealing a benefit that belonged to a White student. According to Gaffney (2015), the best way to show the power of whiteness is to analyze its social construct or to make it visible. In transferring to this new school, Owl's strong grades ranked him in the top 5% of the class. This disrupted the prestigious tight-knit group. White students and teachers expected certain benefits as a given.

According to Dixson and Rousseau (2005) and Dixson and Anderson (2018), identifying strategies to contest how race continues to marginalize and oppress people of color is an important step within CRT, but more emphasis is required in the form of action and using knowledge to positively impact schools and communities. Supporting this tenet, Peacock recounts her week-long environmental high school service trip to New Orleans in 2015, ten years after the Hurricane Katrina catastrophe. Participating in this service trip exposed her to systemic and environmental racism. Although Peacock was only a high school student at the time, the experience influenced her to pursue a law career in order to uproot policies in our country that affect marginalized and oppressed communities. According to Love (2021), CRT embraces the notion of abolitionist

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teaching and Peacock's narrative shows her readiness to take charge and put into action the initiatives that will change, not just reform the community.

Furthermore, intersectionality theory allows race to be studied in intersection with other identities and differences such as ethnicity, class, gender, race, sexual orientation, and other systems of oppression (Crenshaw, 1991; Matsuda, 1995). The identity markers identify for Peacock overlapping with race are class, gender, and appearance. She attended predominately White schools with a small number of Black students. Likewise, Peacock was raised in an upscale white community. As a young child, she participated on a summer track team that recruited Black runners from the area. Being around students from across the city was Peacock first time working side by side with young Black students of diverse backgrounds. Peacock does not discuss her relationships with the other track runners, but she does state that she had not thought much about the diversity among the Black community before she met her track team members. Prior to this, Peacock was mainly involved with activities with other Black children from her school or who were members of Jack & Jill, Inc. Most Black families who join this organization are professionals living in nearby neighborhoods such as Peacock. There is certainly a commonality in the socioeconomic lifestyle.

In summary, CRT provides a lens to understand the racial inequities in the life stories of Owl and Peacock. By embracing the socio-historical context, each tenet reveals the attitudes, behaviors, and actions necessary to address the racial injustice and intergenerational inequalities.

V. THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

If you're going to live, leave a legacy.
Make a mark on the world that can't be erased.
Maya Angelou

This Black American family's journey continued from the inspirational history of daily struggles as well as achievements. This journey began with the documented lineage of my fifth great-grandmother, Eliza Waul, who was recorded as born enslaved around 1822 in North Carolina on the 1910 United States Federal Census, traveled with her husband, Balaam and children across multiple states with a slave owner, and after arriving in Gonzalez County, Texas, this family built a life for one another. When Eliza was in her 70's, she became a widow and lived with one of her daughters. Then, at the age of 89, Eliza died on June 6,1911. The rich legacy of Eliza is celebrated as she connected me to my heritage and cultural identity. Through her documented life, I can share her story.

Supported by the framework of CRT and intersectionality theory, this qualitative ethnographic study examined the stories of six participants' life histories across three generations in a Black American family with the focus of preserving the strength, history, and family culture by highlighting cultural identity and family learning. The following were the research study questions: (1) What are the life histories of six family members across generations in a Black American family? (2) How can the study framework shed light on the participants' life histories? (3) How does family history inform cultural identity and family learning in multiple generations of a Black American family?

According to Hill (1999) the deep-rooted cultural strength of the Black American family are extended family and the strong kinship networks. Through this study, my

Black American family benefitted from having healthy tree roots buried underground and out of sight, but the roots are anything but invisible. The continued racism in the United States is also deeply embedded in the structural systems causing my Black American family to suffer. At times, the roots of the tree appeared unhealthy or undernourished, which affected the entire tree. The roots were the highways that get the tree the proper nutrients in order to bring structure and anchored to the ground. Roots grew where the conditions allowed their growth.

The dissertation helped me gain an understanding of my own family history across three generations and documented the family learning that occurred while studying. Unlike an actual tree that may be planted in a specific area accordingly to the species and adaptability to the climate, the Black family cultivated its family tree through the foundational values, which were unseen, and dreams, like the topsoil with minerals, water, and oxygen that encouraged and supported future growth while navigating the continued unaddressed systemic racism.

Figure 52. Gen I and great-granddaughter

To honor the lineage to my fifth-great grandmother, Eliza, and share that the roots to this Black American family are not an afterthought, the family journey continues with the birth of her 7th great-granddaughter, born in 2021 (see Figure 52). Blassingame (1972) stated that during slavery, the African people retained family as one of the most important survival strategies.

The study created a space for an in-depth discussion of Black American families on topics such as the strength and resilience of Black American families, but most importantly an opportunity to counter the negative impressions of Black American families. Lastly, study findings may contribute to the design of undergraduate and graduate courses in the fields of Black American studies and ethnic studies, human development and family studies, sociology, social work, and adult education programs in the community which offers opportunities to preserve and share stories in the community. This section of the dissertation discusses the following: (1) study highlights, (2) summary of findings, (3) recommendations for practice, (4) tensions and challenges, (5) future research, and (6) final thoughts.

Study Highlights

Chapter IV described the positive achievements and contributions of my Black American family and illustrated the intergenerational differences, the impact on family structure and the race-related implications. This section of the chapter presents study highlights organized by research question.

RQ-1:

What are the life histories of six family members across generations in a Black American family?

The life histories of six family members across three generations revealed that in the United States racism has always existed and continues to exist. It was visible when members of the First Generation were young, and it is still present today. Over the years and in different parts of the country, the injustices towards Black people appear different, but regardless visible or subtle, the intent to the oppress is the goal. The practices of systematic racism, which are the processes, policies, and procedural organization are still in place.

The Black American family needs to understand how to navigate many forms of oppression. The older generation grew up with segregation, Jim Crow laws, Sundown laws, Civil Rights Movement. Although the older generation experienced discrimination practices mandated by laws, the younger generation had to navigate structural and systemic racism which on the surface are not as apparent. Regardless, each individual expressed a willingness to take risks, whether big or small, pushing themselves outside of their comfort zone. This required each participant to adapt to their changing situations with fortitude, an unyielding motivation, and desire to prevail. There was the cohesion that working hard whether on your job or in school prepared you for the opportunity to arrive and continue moving forward.

In reference to the men, Gen 1 exemplified dedication and provided for his family without an emphasis on whether he considered his job as a passion. He worked and demonstrated the actions of excellence, being effective, and productive. The men in Gen

2 and Gen 3 revealed they are not afraid to work, but the type of work and more importantly, a career needed to align with their interests and passions. Since the older generations provided a comfortable lifestyle for their family, middle generations were afforded different windows of opportunity. For example, Gen 2 and Gen 3 explained having mentors and belonging to professional networks, which offered direction and contacts with career opportunities. Whereas Gen 1 doubted if they had the abilities to compete with their White counterparts. Overall, even though Gen 2 and Gen 3 went to top schools and gained social connections, in fact the standards and expectations set by Gen 1 equipped the Black American family to move out beyond the family protection.

Regardless of the generation, the women exhibited strength, ambition, grit, and valued education to build a stable and respectable professional career. In addition, the women in Gen 1 and Gen 2 demonstrated a strong commitment to their families and served as equal partners in their marriage. While at the same time, the older generation showed confidence in her husband as the leader, protector and provider. Gen 2 and 3 were ready to participate as leaders in society and work life.

RQ-2:

How can the study framework shed light on the participants' life histories?

The study framework (CRT and intersectionality theory) shed light on the participants life histories by placing race at the center of the analysis and examining policies and practices that remain hidden to maintain inequality. Using the lens of CRT, each of the tenets, (permanence of racism, critique of liberalism, counter-story telling, whiteness as property, intersection with other identities, and eradicating racism and

inequalities) were used to analyze the social inequities and learn about difficult situations that the family participants experienced.

With respect to intersectionality theory, the relationship with identity markers such as class, race, gender, age and sexual orientation inequalities shaped the experiences and provided a lens to reconstruct the stories. Bringing both CRT and intersectionality together allows a person to transform and redeem by highlighting cultural identity and family learning across the Black family's life histories. It highlights achievements and contributions of the Black family to American society because storytelling connects the differences in how we interpret the family's journey.

Without documenting these life stories, the assumption is that our nation had achieved the racial equality by the passing of the civil rights laws, over 50 years ago. Yet, this study revealed that the life histories of Gen 1, Gen 2, and Gen 3 showed how individuals must continue paying attention to contemporary actions, behaviors, and the historical legacy of the injustices inflicted upon Black Americans.

RQ-3

How does family history inform cultural identity and family learning in multiple generations of a Black American family?

The family history informed cultural identity and family learning across the three generations of a Black American family through the CRT framework, which analyzed different forms of social inequalities with the collection of rich narratives and stories from the family participants, artifacts, such as photos, news articles, and public documents, plus family memory books were relevant to provide a more complete picture. The rich narratives allowed family participants to share events and social experiences,

opinions, beliefs, and feelings as they shared key pastimes of their culture. Artifacts symbolize information on the family participants habits and experiences, as well as give flavor to narratives and cultural context. Family memory books were a collection of memories as they happened, and the books aided in the communication among family members by allowing older family members to record their life and experiences and younger family members were able to learn from past generation to preserve the culture and family history. The researcher journal captured details of events and dialogues with family participants. As the researcher, I collected family stories and my own memories of family events and historical discoveries.

Summary of Findings

Study findings support and substantiate the theoretical framework. CRT outlined the premise that race and racism are prevalent in society and intersect with other forms of oppression based on gender, class, sexuality, language, and culture (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995). By putting race at the center of analysis, CRT examined practices, explicit and hidden, used to maintain racial inequality. The tenets of CRT analyzed the different forms of social inequalities (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Whereas, intersectionality theory focused on marginalized voices and subjugated knowledge, with the purpose of examining both ends of the spectrum (Brekhus, 2008). Collins (2019) explained that CRT and intersectionality theory established an agenda to transform and redeem, not just critique and deconstruct social interactions and phenomena.

Much can be learned from the narratives provided by the study participants. Three aspects can be highlighted from their narratives: (a) Unwavering commitment, (b) Valued education, and (c) Perseverance and possibilities are visible.
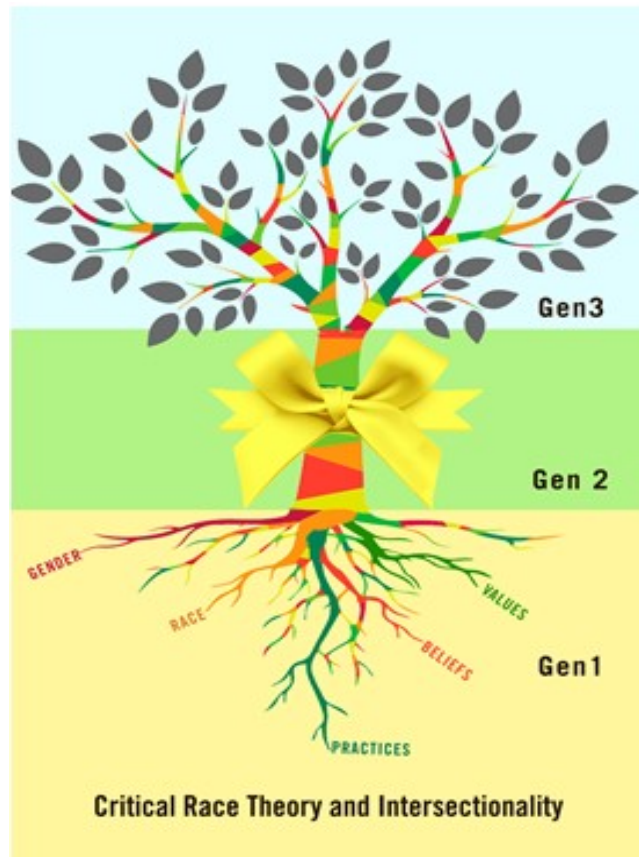
Figure 53. Revisiting the Study Framework

Unwavering Commitment

Eagle and Cardinal (Gen 1), the oldest generation (see Figure 53), grew up during

segregation in low-income families, but each came from strong family-centered

environments. Although they both lived in different areas of the United States, one in a

rural community and the other in a city, both were touched by racial discrimination.

Despite the fact, both were willing to leave the comfort of their home to build a better

life. When the two met, they became a solid force with loyalty, resourcefulness, and hope

that together they could withstand the trials of life, which included struggles of racism

and other oppressions. The study's framework displayed Eagle and Cardinal (Gen 1) as

the roots of the family providing the nutrients and the cultural foundation (race, gender,

values, practices, beliefs) that helped the family to survive, grow, and reproduce. By analyzing the cultural foundations under the study's framework, Eagle and Cardinal's (Gen 1) narrative revealed a strong work-ethic, inner-drive and resourcefulness which supported a stable home environment with a place for refuge when needed. Yet, it is Eagle and Cardinal's (Gen 1) unwavering commitment to one another and the family like an anchor, that kept the family strong. In addition, as Eagle and Cardinal (Gen 1) nurtured genuine relationships with their younger birds, they knew when their children were ready to leave the nest and set out on their own. Thus, Heron and Dove (Gen 2) became the trunk of the tree or the central support system that preserved the connection of the family between the roots and the leaves and branches. Owl and Peacock (Gen 3) developed in multiple directions holding up and creating a covering that showcased the circle of life in each season. They are the continuation of the family, and their fruit will give seeds to have the family and cultural history going and going for generations to come.

Valued Education

Each generations valued education. The participants attended different types of formal education from parochial, public, segregated or integrated. 1940s Cardinal's NYC public schooling class was integrated, while in Texas Eagle's primary schooling was at the all-Black Catholic school. Soon he transferred to the Black public junior and high school, but entered the army before graduating. In 1954, at the age of 13, Eagle and Cardinal (Gen 1) experienced the declaration from the U. S. Supreme Court that states were unconstitutional to establish separate public schools for students of different races. Eagle never attended an integrated school. In 1970s, the Black family watched a public

school convert to predominately Black school due to 'White flight' in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1979, in South Texas, Dove had mandatory busing to a school across town for integration of school grade. In 1984 in South Texas, Heron high school journalism teacher asked to him to withdraw from her class so that he would not be considered for the position of editor-in-chief school newspaper. In 1988, Dove's White college roommate entered college at and met for her first time a Black person. In 2017, Owl transferred to new high school with a high-grade point average and displaced a student from the top 5% of the class which disrupted the status quo. In 2015, Peacock participated in an environmental service project in New Orleans and learned about systematic racism which occurred from the Katrina Hurricane catastrophe.

The CRT and intersectionality theory lens revealed the ongoing discrimination across each generation in the educational system. Even though a landmark law occurred when Gen 1 was a pre-teen stating it unconstitutional for the public schools to segregate students by race integrated, Gen 2 met her roommate over 25 years later and this White girl had not interaction with a Black person except as seen on television. Gen 2 and Gen 3 both experienced marginalization in their respective schools over 10 years apart ; they attempted to exempt them from participating in school affairs. Through Gen 3's social mobility, they had the opportunity to see the aftermath of an environmental catastrophe 10 years later. Katrina destroyed homes and schools in marginalized communities of New Orleans. At the time of the visit, the image was still the same as if the hurricane had just happened. Yet and still, Cardinal was focused and earned her nursing degree after getting married. Cardinal's drive encouraged Eagle to pursue his education although he was somewhat unsure of his ability to stand toe to toe with his follow educated soldiers in the

workplace. Eagle learned that he could compete at work and in the classroom. Gen 1's work-ethic, confidence, and determination are the values that strengthened the family tree.

Perseverance and Vision of Possibilities

The influence of Gen 1 encouraged the Black American family participants to take advantage of every opportunity, pushed past obstacles with the vision of something greater. Equally, cultivated a family learning, which gave the family participants a vision of not only themselves but their culture as a whole. The family members learned of their ancestors' life histories which inspired from apathy to possibility. All the life stories offered the same message that racism and oppression are still present, but do not forget who you are, where you came from, and the next generation looked to you just as you looked to your older family members. The different forms of racism regardless of the generation are still forms of oppression, but the Black American family stood on the shoulders of those who have come before and endured this journey.

<div align="center">

Recommendations and Implications

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Understanding the Black American family begins with reflection and essentially, listening to the voices of those traditionally underrepresented throughout society. Unfortunately, prior research was limited, primarily because the distribution of Black family life history into the body of literature has been poorly publicized and has remained obscure (Taylor et al., 1990). In addition, the history of the Black family has not been told from the perspective of Black scholars and the people who have lived it. Honey (1999) states that many researchers realized that studying Black families could not no longer be done using a White person's viewpoint.

The following recommendations for practice pertain to understanding how Black American family life histories inform cultural identity across generation and the connections to society and culture systems, such as historical events, social issues, race issues, and socioeconomic systems.

This study suggests that scholars and practitioners consider using the race-centered lens of CRT as a familial tool to explore how individual family life histories can rediscover and recover their roots to reclaim their own culture, history, and traditions. Bruner (1991, p. 21) explained that people use narrative schemas to help them understand narrative as a method of sense-making, and that narratives provide a scaffolding for the human experience.

Scholars and practitioners should consider ways to bridge the home/school connection by aligning course objectives with parental goals. Again, by using CRT as a familial tool explore how individual family life histories can offer insight into helping learn about the real lives of students and by working with the parents, teachers are connected the society and culture systems into the learning environment. Love (2019, p. 148) adds that all decisions must be guided by our moral compass of intersectional social justice because our choices are designed from an understanding of oppression and how it works structurally. By engaging with CRT as a familial tool with engage in the three relevant aspects of race, culture, and family learning in the Black community.

Tensions and Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic occurred after the initial face-to-face conversations with all participants. To ensure safety and follow the COVID-19 protocols outlined by the Texas State University IRB, I collected data through videoconference and phone

calls. A challenge with the online sessions was recognizing that a few of the participants must use virtual session all day for their jobs because of the pandemic and there was a sense that the participants were tired of interacting virtually. At time, the participants energy level appeared low. Another point is that it is difficult to gauge what the participant is thinking or see their body language with their facial expression. As the researcher, it is harder to remember certain points in the conversation since in face-to-face conversation, a person's body language would help you recall those unique reactions. One of the sessions was disrupted by slow internet connections and another with loud talking from their family members, which was distracting very a moment.

Another challenge during the virtual conversations was at times the participants held back on telling full stories. It may have been because they felt too vulnerable telling me the story or they forgot different parts of the story. It was less natural and organic to have a virtual conversation with a screen in between than in person and having drink. Technology was of great help, but it hindered some participants' interactions. Finally, I found myself listening to story segments while I was riding in my car and missed the opportunity to write down the details of the conversation. When I would try to return to the conversation at a later time, the family participant did not tell the story with the same amount of detail and excitement. Some conversations can never be duplicated.

Future Research

My recommendation for future study is to look at women across different generations and races. As I have learned the life stories of the women in the current study, it has prompted me to explore and further document the similarities and

differences across generations with the goals of highlighting the positive achievements and contributions to American society.

Researcher, Branch (2011) suggested that the increase in Black women's life circumstances, such as increase in the number of households headed by women, the decline in marriage rates for this population, and the lower education relative to White women, have contributed to wage inequality. Findings like these, prompt me to account for the historical awareness to discuss common ground for Black and White women. CRT and intersectionality theory could address class and social injustice perpetuated by the symptoms of race and racism.

Final Thoughts

In this study, I have attempted to show how using my own family life histories and artifacts preserved the rich history of honor and pride over the generations. The life histories express a respect for formal learning, but also intergenerational learning that happens out of genuine relationships with one another. For example, the 1958 issue of the *San Antonio News*, "Former Slave Girl 100 Years Old", was an article that I had heard of, but did not have a personal copy. This article recognized the centennial birthday of my 2nd great-grandmother, Elsie Branch Henry's. This memory builds on the documented history collected, which adds a unique and worthy representation of the contributions of my family to the American way of life. At this time, I have another document to add from a 1908 issue of the *San Antonio Light* newspaper. It is an ad documenting the purchase 300 plus acres from my 3rd great-grandparents, Wesley and Elsie Henry to William Friesenhahn and my 4th great-grandparents, Cellia and Sam Henry also sold to land to Friesenhahn (see Figures 54, 55). The two fascinating shares are (1) Elsie Branch Henry,

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my 3rd great-grandmother who is in the 1958 article I referenced above is the same Elsie Henry who married to Wesley Henry which sold farm land to Friesenhahn and (2) today, I live minutes from the farm land that was sold. I think about how life was for Black people in Texas and this country during 1800s- early 1900s. How did my family come to own the farmland and under what circumstances was it sold? I feel a mix of emotions imaging being a Black family with farmland ownership. It represented an asset with a source of income, and exemplified self- determination, self-sufficiency, and from what I see of White families a form of economic wealth, which is passed down from generation to generation.

Lastly, this article is a reminder of how interweaved my Black American family's experience is in my own city that I did not know. Throughout this dissertation I have been afforded the opportunity to add to the existing body of literature focusing on Black American family history using personal life histories.

Figure 54. SA Light Dec 1908

Wesley and Elsie Henry, of Bexar county, to William Friesenhahn, of Guadalupe county. Nov. 21, 1908

deed to 151 ½ acres of Forribio Herrena league survey 68, on Cibolo creek: $550

Cellia and Sam Henry, of Bexar county, to William Friesenhahn, of Guadalupe county. Nov. 21, 1908.

deed to 151 ½ acres of Forribio Herrena league survey 68, on Cibolo creek: excepting 47 acres, heretofore sold: $1295.

Figure 55. Ads of purchased land

While the study highlighted the positive achievements and contributions, from each family member's perspective, it also illustrated the intergenerational differences, the impact of the family structure, and the implication of racism. It is the undercurrent theme of racism that continues to remind me of the forgotten chapters in our family life stories and the importance of preserving it. I am honored to be a part of this dissertation and my family. Hopefully, the Black American family's legacy and this research reflect highly on my family's values, strengths, and even the challenges we have experienced. The truth is the journey really does continue.

APPENDIX SECTION

APPENDIX A

RELEVANT TERMS

Black

Person having origins of the Black racial groups of Africa (e.g. Haitian, Panamanian, Kenyan, Cuban, etc.). Adapted from the U.S. Census Bureau.

CRT

A collection of activist and scholars engaged in examining and transforming the relationship between society and culture as they relate to categorizations among race, law, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Cultural identity

The significant ways a person is defined or defines oneself as connected to culture, customary beliefs, traditions, practices, values and language (Berry & Candis, 2013).

Culture

Characteristics features of everyday existence, as diversions or a way of life, shared by people in a place or time (Carrier, 2014).

Ethnography

A type of qualitative research allows a researcher to understand a group's shared culture, conventions, and social dynamics. (Coffey, 2018).

Family life history

A chosen form of narrative that a person tells about individual and collective, private and public, structural and agentic and real and fictional worlds of the family (Goodley et al., 2004).

Intergenerational

It involves two or more generations (Watts, 2017).

Intersectionality Theory

Provides the framework to examine interconnections and interdependencies between social and political categories and systems which create different forms of discrimination and privilege. (Lengermann & Niebrugge Branley, 2004) **.**

Storytelling

Central and most widespread social activities in our everyday lives, where people share personal memories and cultural information in a collaborative conversation focused on the production of narrative discourse recounting a sequence of past events, including the leading person's actions and how it contributes to changing an initial situation. (Bietti et al., 2019).

APPENDIX B

STUDY DESIGN

This ethnographic study drew on critical race theory (CRT) and intersectionality theory to document the stories of three generations in a single Black American family unit. The study focused on human society and culture and subscribed to the principles of ethnographic research. As Hughes (1992, p. 443) explained, this method required rich, holistic insights into people's worldviews and actions. Similarly, Fetterman (1998, p. 1) addressed the strengths of ethnography as the different data collection sources useful to the researcher such as extensive interviews/conversations, material records, patterns of interaction, and perspectives.

As a member of the family and as a Black American, I have insider knowledge, or an *emic* perspective and I was able to empathize with family life and narratives. However, adhering to ethical research principles, I was intentional to consider the *etic* perspective to be truthful to the participants' voices and stories. During the study, I documented how my family life histories informed cultural identity across generations and connected to society, historical events, social issues, race issues, and socioeconomic systems. This section of the dissertation includes: researcher roles, ethnography, study participants, data collection sources, data analysis, building trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

Researcher Roles

Bloomberg and Volpe (2019, p. 45), stated the collection, analysis, and interpretation of stories and visual data were the responsibility of the qualitative researcher. I gathered and collected all the data from every day activities that gave a

holistic viewpoint of my family. Being that I am a member of the Black American culture, I shared the story of different generations in my family with rich data based on a collaborative relationship among each family member. Bolak (1997) explained how this personal relationship placed me at the center of the research experience. As the researcher, it was important to understand the meanings and experiences gathered directly from family members. Since description, understanding, interpretation, and communication were the goals of qualitative research, I was the tool and filter for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009). To this effect, Patton (2002, p. 267) explained two important concepts, emic and etic. The examination of the *emic*, an insider's view, and *etic*, an outsider's view, were essential to remain reflective about my own voice, perspective, values, and biases. Therefore, my roles included researcher as a participant and participant-observer, researcher as recording device, and researcher as narrator.

Researcher as a Participant and Participant-Observer

In the role as a participant and participant observer, I gathered empirical insights, such as shared beliefs, practices, artifacts, and behaviors typically unknown (Reeves et al., 2013). Ethnographic researchers held participant observation from a phase described by Wogan (2004) as 'deeply hanging out,' where the researcher moved in a relationship with the study's community, which allowed a clear understanding of the way of life, and therefore made sense of the happenings by studying the group's culture. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I was not able to physically visit with my family participants, but I did still very familiar with the physical surroundings of each of my family participants which helped me to understand where they were during our virtual sessions.

According to Glesne (2011, p. 64), as the researcher, I had the involvement level as an observer and participant. My association defined the range across a continuum of the research from mostly observations to mostly participation. This meant my participation looked through the development of the observation continuum, ranged from a researcher who became a full unaware observer to what I described as a full participant that turned out as a member of the family.

Researcher as Recording Device

Research conducted by Shank (2006) provided guidance for a researcher as a *recording device.* In this role, I listened closely, without altering the family members' stories, and documented the different cultural and daily events in each their life. In addition, to understand my family members, I focused every effort to explore and observe characteristics in their individual day-to-day settings. Even though I am a family member and very familiar with the lifestyle, there were some times that I did not fully understood each story shared. Therefore, it required me to be a good listener and learner as I gathered data. Yet, I told the stories with accuracy and respected the individual family members' narratives as I monitored my personal biases. According to Dibley (2011), the important part of my family's stories embodied each family member's viewpoint. I performed my best effort to listen with an open mind and an open-heart to promote storytelling.

Researcher as Narrator

With regards to my role of the researcher as *narrator*, I told the stories of my family members in such a way that enabled an outside person to interpret the lived experiences and crafted meaning of the study (Shank, 2006). Additionally, as narrator, I

shared stories that connected each family member's events and experiences while I reflected vivid cultural pictures that emphasized actions, language, and culture.

Ethnographic Study

Ethnography provides researchers the ability for identification, exploration, and connection to social phenomena, which on the surface, derives little association to one another (Reeves et al., 2013). Ethnography challenges assumptions by telling the stories of the individuals' lived experiences that made it helpful in pointing out stereotypes. This type of research serves the life histories and experiences of the study participants on their own terms (Dennis, 2009). Thus, the story of daily lives and meanings informed the design adopted for the study.

In respect of data collection sources, Van Maanen (2006) suggests the use of observations, interviews, and artifacts to describe and interpret cultural behaviors, values, and practices as part of this ethnographic study. The integrated family artifacts engaged me with exploration and provided a rich background of my family's culture (Reeves et al., 2013). The final product, the narrative account, included charts, diagrams, and additional artifacts which described the story (Harris & Johnson, 2000). Ethnographic research documents the meanings that participants assigned to behavior (Wilson, 1977). During the casual conversation each family member spoke on their views and attitudes related to the topic at hand (Best & Kahn, 2003). In this study, I incorporated small talk at the start of casual conversations to create a comfortable and relaxed environment for my family to share enriched stories.

According to Jackson (2002, p. 267), storytelling transforms and reshapes our lives by various personal experiences displayed to others. Some of the oldest and best

ways reflect and preserve our understandings occurred by assembling, telling, and listening to stories (Bönisch-Brednich, 2018). As an ethnographic researcher, my desire became to express holistic stories which showed I understood the practice and process of telling stories, instead of a certain text and selectively found within the sociocultural situation. The end goal constituted with my family members in storytelling.

Study Participants

The study participants included six family members: Cardinal and Eagle, Dove and Heron, Peacock and Owl (see Figure 56). Next in conjunction with the metaphor of the family tree presented in the first chapter, I assigned names of birds that showcased the unique characteristics of each participant. Trees offered birds a place to nestle, feel protected, and matured. The bird species selected depicted the study participants' personalities and family roles.

Cardinal: celebration, rejuvenation, hope, health, and work. This bird exhibited strengthen and energy, eager to take care of and helped others. The Cardinal was a 79-year-old Black female, retired Nurse.

Eagle: independence, bravery, loyalty and industrious. This bird displayed authority, tenacious, and an excellent leader. The Eagle was a retired 79-year-old Black male Army veteran.
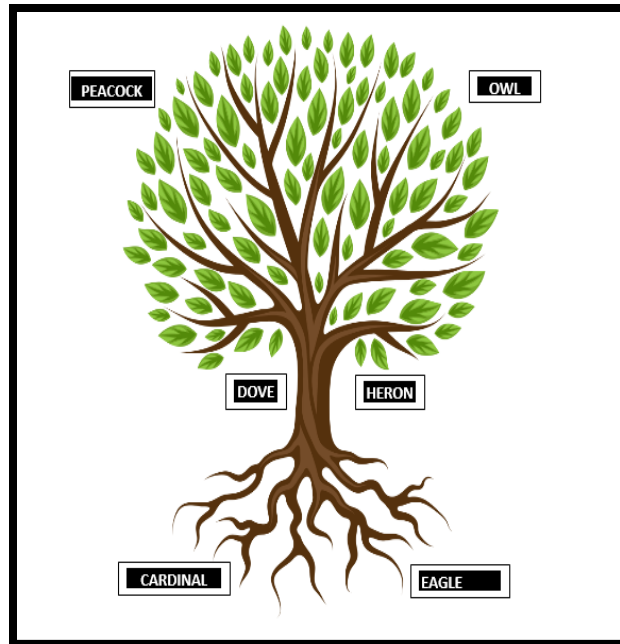
Figure 56. Study Participants Assembled by Generation

Dove: kindness, honesty, friendliness, and consistency. This bird represented love and liked to do things useful for itself and others. The Dove was a 51-year-old Black female attorney.

Heron: dignity, tranquility, and a strong personality. This bird exemplified at times arrogance as it was not afraid to wait for opportunities and showed excellence at teaching others how to be patient. Heron was a 53-year-old self-employed Black male.

Peacock: good communicator, pragmatic, adaptable, and an influencer. This bird showed honesty, loyalty, and preferred meeting people directly rather than having long-distance conversations. The Peacock was a 21-year-old full-time Black female undergraduate college student.

Owl: discipline, methodological, meticulous, and conscientious. This bird lived within the rules, pursued excellence, and always considered the pros and cons of each situation. The Owl was a 23-year-old Black male, who was pursuing a graduate degree.

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Data Collection Sources

As stated before, in ethnographic research, it remained important to collect rich narratives and stories from the study participants. To this effect, data collection for this dissertation included: episodic narratives, artifacts, family memory books, and the researcher journal (see Table 1).

Table 1

Data Collection Sources

Episodic Narratives	Artifacts	Family Memory Books	Researcher Journal
Narratives/stories, Collected from six key family members Conversations held prior COVID-19 and Two-telephone conversations with each participant after IRB approval	Existing documents such as slave schedule, U.S. census record, property titles, military assignment, news articles, photos, wedding and death announcements, and family albums.	5 family memory books collected through-out the last 30 years.	Written record of thoughts and feelings. Documented once a week. Diary entries.
Gather relevant data from key family members.	Provide material evidence to build the oral histories.	Record family reunions, events, stories, and history.	Written record of thoughts, feelings, and reflections, as well as significant events and every day family stories.
Collected and noted in the researcher journal prior COVID-19 times	Memorabilia/ Photographs	Hard cover binder	Notebook

Episodic Narratives

Conversations allowed participants to share events and social experiences, opinions, beliefs, and feelings together which highlighted the distinctions of the culture (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The conversations served a common data collection strategy for qualitative methods because it amounted as rich, thick, and descriptive (Charmaz, 2015). The focused conversations of specific events helped participants with concrete events, situations, and episodes around each unique experience (Flick, 2000), in this case a Black American in the United States. This technique encouraged storytelling, which advanced the insight of the participants' experiences (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000). The storytelling provided a comfortable way to share detailed information and helped to build proper context to the information that I thought I knew, but needed clarity.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) and Spradley (1979) classified three main types of questions for the creation of episodic narratives: descriptive, structural, and contrast questions. The intent of descriptive questions documented the cultural scene. The structural questions fine-tuned, clarified, and explored descriptive information (Vaughn & Bos, 1994). Contrast questions complemented the structural questions which gave background of different terms and organized the knowledge provided by the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Spradling, 1979). For this dissertation, a series of conversations took place during family occasions prior to COVID-19 and were recorded in the researcher journal during the last five years. Conversations were casual, but centered around different family occasions as we talked with about happenings and artifacts. After the COVID-19 pandemic and IRB approval, two 60-minute conversations transpired after using a virtual platform. The two-telephone conversations were

conducted with each family participant asked a flow questions as noted in Appendix F and Appendix G. The descriptive form of conversation helped my family participants move into a comfortable flow during our conversations. During the first virtual conference, I sensed that each family participants thought the meeting was designed a question and answer type interview, but I quickly reminded them that I was not going to control the direction of our conversation.

All my family participants were able to keep their set appointments via video conference. During the Round 1 conversations, one family participants had a work interruption while on our call, which caused the video conference to be cut short by 15 minutes. Another family member had internet issues that interfered with our connection causing that session to end early. The other video conferences lasted the appropriate time length. Each video conference started with a review of the verbal consent and all sessions were recorded. Each participant on the Round 1video conference appeared formal and quiet, but soon our conversation felt very organic. I believe part of the formality that occurred was because I tried to make sure that I did not forget to record our session and review the verbal consent, which probably caused me to appear very stuffy and meticulous to my family. We typically talk at the kitchen table with a number of conversations going on around us, which means that we jumping in and out of different conversations at the same time. No one else was in the room with each participant and the conversations did began more relaxed and organic as if we were on a phone call instead of each person sitting in a chair in front of a computer screen. The Round 1 topics centered around my family participants (a) telling me about themselves, (b) educational background and career experiences, and (c) spirituality and culture. Some family

members spoke in chronological order beginning with their birth and others shared from the what they experience that week and then went to a past story. The Round 2 video conference occurred two weeks after Round 1. Each family participant once again kept their scheduled appointments and this time appeared more relaxed and readier to go. Each family participants had an idea of the general topics for this video conference since I shared a general idea after the last video conference. Round 2 allowed each family participant to share their thoughts about (a) social justice movements/civil rights, (b) intergenerational knowledge and perspective, (c) personal beliefs and talents, and (d) future concerns. One of the family participants felt he did not know much about social justice movements and another family member described enjoying discussing social justice concerns.

Artifacts

The study included documents such as family albums, military documents, newspaper articles, photos, property titles, United States Census Bureau records, United States Slave Schedule, and wedding announcements. Artifacts served as objects found within the study setting (Merriam, 2009) and enabled "triggered memories of important times, people and events" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 114). According to Hurdley (2006), artifacts provided ways into the participants' narratives. Artifacts symbolized information about the participants' habits, experiences, stories, and meaning-making (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010; Rowsell, 2006; Rowsell & Rajartnam, 2005). For this dissertation, featured artifacts collected existed over the years (e.g., photographs, documents, heirlooms, objects). Each artifact provided a useful way to illustrate and gave flavor to the overall family's narratives and cultural context. I collected artifacts

throughout the writing of the dissertation because as Rowsell (2011) stated artifacts as an approach to data collection not only conceptualized research in space, time, and through identities, but also respected the things in our world as a reflection of people's real-lives and real-world settings. Each artifact provided gave a feeling enthusiasm with the family's overall participation in the study.

Family Memory Book

According to Torretta (2003), the family memory books aided in the communication among family members by allowing the older family members to record their life and experiences with the younger members as well as provide an activity where the younger members shared what they enjoyed about being a family member. The basic idea of the family memory book began as a collection of memories as they happened, and each book presented a slightly different look. This brought forth feelings of acceptance, family values, and bonding with no limit or restriction on what each book contained. The family memory books included family photos, texts, cards, newspaper clippings, drawings, and passing exchanges from family and friends.

I had five volumes of family memory books created over the last 30 years. Each family memory book was created at a momentous occasion, such as the birth of our children, college graduation, family reunions, and a 50th wedding anniversary, which served as the opening of each memory book. The memory books are designed with a large binder and included a collection of special people in our life with a photo and memory. The books also included clippings, captions, and mementos in chronological order that captured the occasion. Each memory book signified some of the same family and friends, but the photos came from other family members. When I visited family

members or friends, I browsed their photo collections. When I find a photo that included my immediate family or me, I made a copy of the photo and added it to my memory book with a caption. The family memory books became an on-going activity that included events that are joyous as well as unexpected or sad. The tradition started after visiting a family friend who self-published hardbound short picture books about her family's history a few times a year. The books served a creative and fun way to document our family's history and stories.

Researcher Journal

Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) stated the quality and credibility of the dissertation rested on the forms of reflective thinking and writing. To keep an account of changed ideas and written discoveries in a journal and diary became vital steps throughout the research process. Friedemann et al. (2011) added that the research journal captured the rich detail of events and dialogues, but the diary entries with the researcher's reflections deeply shared true perceptions and reactions to the happenings that allowed the reader to experience the same culture as the researcher. I collected narratives and stories of my family for this study. The journal continued to be a space to collect stories documented by my family members, my own memories of family events, and historical discoveries. As Borg (2001) and Glesne (2011) explained the research journal reflected the notes, hunches and opinions, commonalities/differences among the participants' stories, and interrogated the data. With many conversations happening with my family participants prior to the COVID-19 pandemic while driving in my car, my researcher journal served as my reflections each day after my commute to and from work where I spent at least 45 minutes each day talking to a different family participant. In addition, after the Round 1

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video conference, family participants recalled additional stories that they felt were important and the research journal is where I documented their conversations or clarifications to date already shared.

Data Analysis

Data analysis of this ethnographic study began with the start of data collection rather than after the study completed (Coffey, 2018). Over time, this study collected an enormous amount of details to describe people's habits in everyday situations (Roper & Shapira, 2000). As ethnographic researchers acquired different directions, they choose what focused aspect of social life with data collection and analysis or the analytic lens (Jerolmack & Khan, 2017). As a critical and intimate form of inquiry, ethnography remained close to participants' lived experiences.

In this dissertation study, the theoretical framework (CRT and intersectionality theory) played a crucial role in the data analysis process. The study framework upheld that race exhibited a central feature in our society and intersected with other social and economic forms of oppression. CRT and intersectionality theory guided and identified overt and covert policies and practices which sustained racial inequality. In addition, I identified emergent themes regarding my family members' life experiences across three generations (see Figure 55).

With respect to Coffey (2018, p. 93), data analysis formed an integral part of a systematic, rigorous, flexible, and imaginative research process. For example, a historical timeline for each generation under Appendices C, D and E, enabled me to make a connection to the larger sociopolitical and historical context related to Black American events and detailed engagement in the community based on the understanding that we

learned "about" and "with-in" the community (Coffey, 2018, p. 16). Engagement undertook a constant process of "testing the fit" as new data integrated (Green et al., 2007, p. 546). As the study continued, I focused on the intentional data collection, narrowed the scope, known as "progressive focus", engaged with the study's data and adopted strategies to support creative ideas (Coffey, 2018, p. 78). I guarded against presumption and focused deliberately.

The overall approach summarized by Coffey's (2018) five phases for data analysis consisted of (1) immersed of data, (2) coded and categorized, (3) theorized the data, (4) interrogated the ethnographic data (5) concluded (see Figure 55). Coffey stated there remained an ongoing dialogue between data collection and data analysis in ethnographic research. This is a process where the research worked back and forth from gathered data to organized data.

Step one focused on the data and adapted strategies to create ideas, process and organize the data. This is the progressive focus where it is important to pay attention to meaningful data collection. The video conference recordings were transcribed for verbatim by a professional service. After I received the transcriptions, I listened and read through the document to correct any errors and verified clarification with the transcripts where information was needed. In addition, any written notes, necessary artifacts, and photographs were transcribed as needed on an ongoing basis. This step required getting to know the data which is the reading, reflecting and thinking about the meanings around the transcripts that I had from each family members and their stories.

Step two involved coding and categorizing. I identified for concepts and created, segments of large data into smaller more manageable groups to analyze. Next, I thought

about codes, categories, or themes that were labeled and organized in order to find a

retrieve under the assigned codes, keywords, categories, or themes. I then organized and

made associations by labeling with single words or phrases that spoke to the idea. I used

different color markers that helped with the coding on a separate sheet of paper. I found it

challenging and required on-going review of the transcripts. The codes created were not

fully developed. I changed and reorganized many ideas.

Step three reviewed the data with respect to theorizing (CRT and

intersectionality theory) the data. I reviewed each of the CRT tenets and thought carefully

about what ideas to consider with data collection and data analysis ongoing.

Step four expanded my focus with more emphasis on theorizing or speculating

which began while observing and getting a clear meaning of the particular situation. I

questioned and broaden more thoughtful ideas around the theory thinking about the

stories with a sharp eye and gaining a clear meaning of the particular event for overall

themes.

Step five formed the conclusion.

Lastly, as a qualitative researcher, I found it necessary to have a reliable and

efficient method for tracking and maintaining data in addition to data analysis.

MAXQDA was used to organize, code, visualize the data. Developed in 1989,

MAXQDA is a Computer Assisted Qualitative Analysis (CASQDAS) software program

which allows researchers to upload and store various forms of data while also "carrying

out the analysis process" and "searching for patterns in the material" (Peters & Wester,

2007, pp. 636- 637). MAXQDA is applicable for a wide range of data, from interviews,

audio to video files, and manages your entire research project.

According to Jorgenson and Bochner (2004), storytelling, unlike other forms of communication, produced meaning while in the process of telling. Individual or group storytelling experiences examined practices and the inferences to construct the identity of those who spoke and listened (Huisman, 2014). Each participant contributed a piece of a story, and my job as a researcher resulted in putting the pieces together. To describe this concept (see Figure 57), the puzzle comprised of logical pieces separated from each other with the family members who were a part of the same generation. A closer look at each puzzle image included a tiny checkered surface which signified each individual's unique personal experiences. After joining the puzzle shapes together, it displayed a holistic picture that represented this Black American family's life history.

Figure 57. Ethnographic Data Analysis

Building Trustworthiness

The criteria of dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability represented the qualitative approach to validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shank, 2006). Trustworthiness meant conducted honest, truthful, and dependable research.

Trustworthiness or rigor of a study referred to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used in the study (Pilot & Beck, 2014). The research that was presented began in a believable manner, reflected valuable and engaged the reader (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, according to Bailey (2007) the findings were not signified, but the reader understood how the researcher arrived at the study findings being claimed. Similarly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) believed that providing accurate details about the study guided the readers to discover their own truth of the analyses.

Dependability meant upmost to trustworthiness because it showed the results of the research that informed stability and consistency (Brown & Patterson, 2002; Morrow, 2005). The best way to make sure my findings symbolized thoroughness and tidy work required an audit trail. To address dependability, I stayed true to the study design and held myself accountable for all I promised to the study participants.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) credibility and dependability work together, whereas, without credibility, it appeared difficult to show dependability. *Credibility* or the confidence in the truth of the findings amounted to an important criterion (Polit & Beck, 2014). Therefore, to build a credible study, I conducted sustained engagement with my participants and collected a variety of data. A strategy I used to ensure credibility composed of the verbatim transcriptions of conversations and stories shared by my family participants, kept accurate records, and connected to the theoretical and methodological choices for the study (Brown et. al., 2015; Jacelon & O'Dell, 2005; Morrow, 2005). In addition, plenty of data and sources presented in the study findings contributed to its credibility.

Confirmability showed concern that study findings developed from the result of the experiences and ideas of my family participants rather than the ideas and words of the researcher (Patton, 2002). According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019, p. 203), researchers acknowledged and explored their biases and prejudices through reflexivity, journaling, and triangulation. I continually monitored my own ideas and biases with recorded notes in a journal throughout the research process. Historical documents helped to ensure confirmability, as well as provide thick description and storytelling.

Transferability suggested the study exhibited practical soundness and usefulness to persons in other settings (Angrosino, 2007). The descriptions emerged by developing thick and rich descriptive content. Authenticity and transparency of study context, location, and people provided a vivid picture that resonated with the readers and helped them see what they benefited from this study and applied to other contexts such as the engagement of a similar study with a different population.

Ethical Considerations

Many ethical standards equaled through the qualitative research, and interested constituents provided different opinions regarding, which ethical considerations became important (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). As an ethical researcher, I followed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures for acceptable and competent research practices, protected and honored my human participants, and was thoughtful of the politics of the study's topic and setting throughout the project. In other words, I showed attention to the ethical principles in conducting research such as respect for human dignity, provided free and informed consent, safeguarded participants' right for confidentiality and privacy, minimized harm, maximized benefits, and created a fairness of their view and voice.

As a way to get started and before the requested consent to participate, I shared chapter one of my proposal with my family members, so they read it and formed a good idea of what the subsequent chapters in the actual dissertation looked like. It placed them at ease when they understood that I planned to tell different stories of our family. I did not mislead, hide the truth, or promote an idea for my own personal gain. I stayed positive and showed respect for each participant's dignity, promoted openness, and fairness. I placed myself in each of my family participant's place, showed a caring research relationship and avoided careless mistakes. Since I kept many family photos, newspaper articles, and other artifacts in my possession, I practiced critical listening skills to each participant's story with mutual understanding and decency (Sprague & Stuart, 2008). No one's ideas received belittlement and I looked for clarity before the assessment and response to a message or phone call.

In short, I established safeguards and requested verbal consent (see Appendix E) at the start of the study (Blumberg et al., 2005). Since the study participants included members of my own family, it was awkward to ask them to sign a consent form that looked more like a legal contract. Therefore, following ethical guidelines, I informed them about the purpose of the study and I listed the activities I wanted them to participate in (e.g., two conversations, phone calls, and created a timeline). I gave them the opportunity to express agreement to participate in the study or to decline participation. In addition, the verbal consent conversation provided me the opportunity to answer possible questions my family participants expressed about the study.
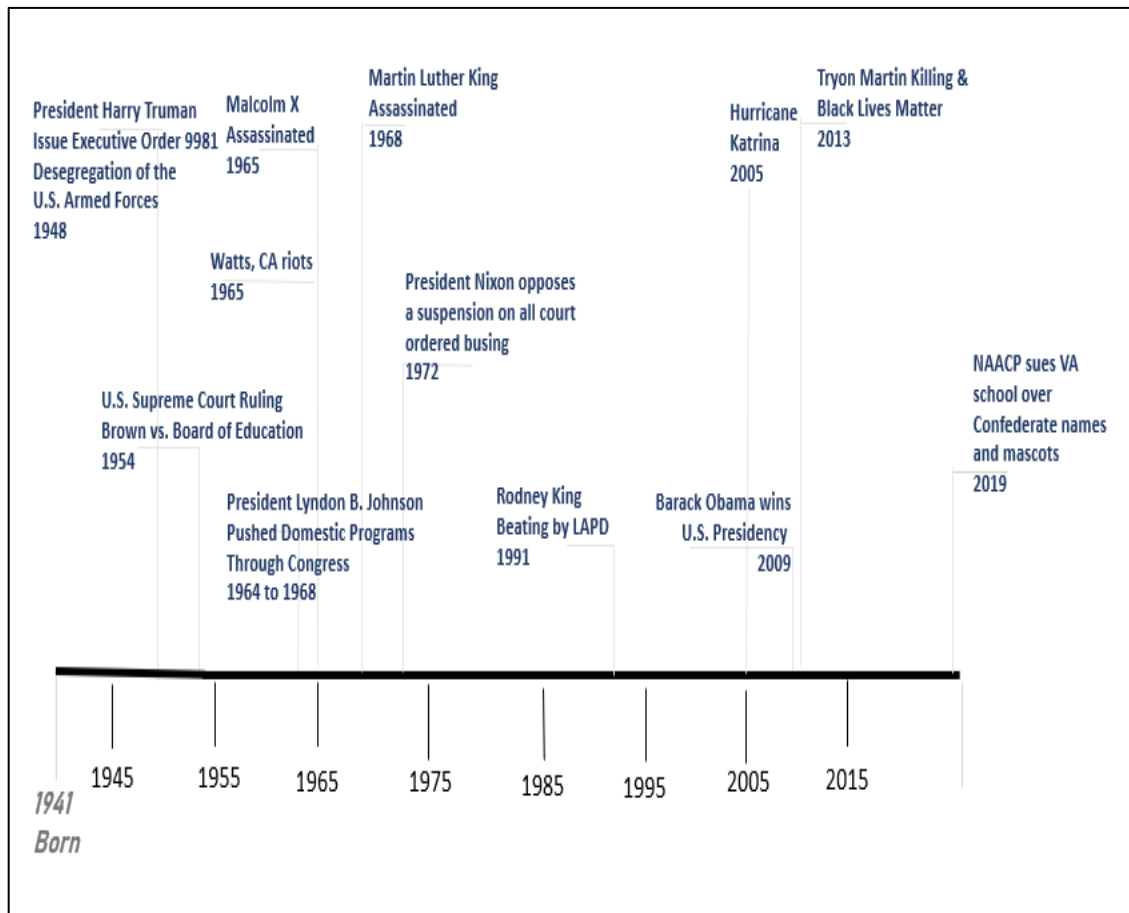
GEN 1 HISTORICAL TIMELINE
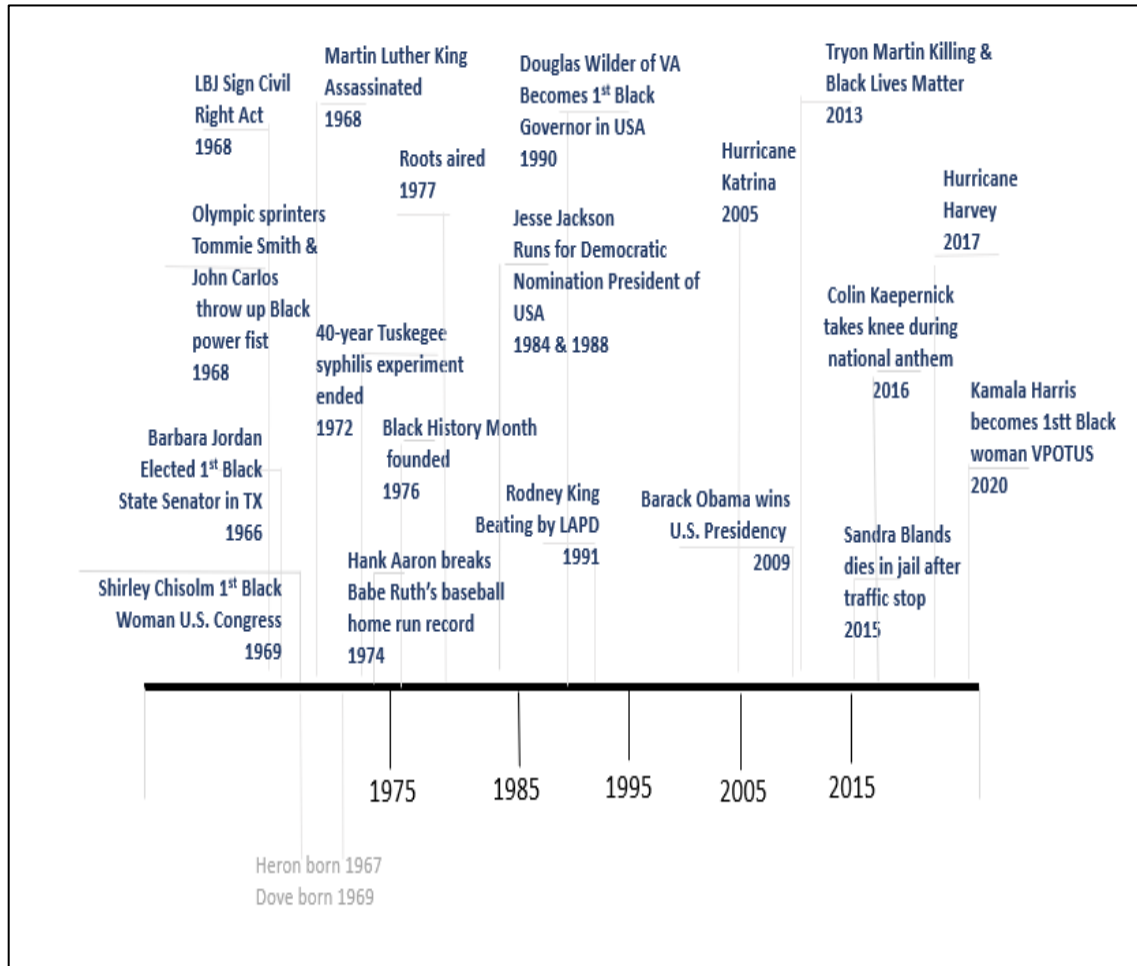

Figure 58. *Gen 1 Historical Timeline*

Figure 59. *Gen 2 Historical Timeline*

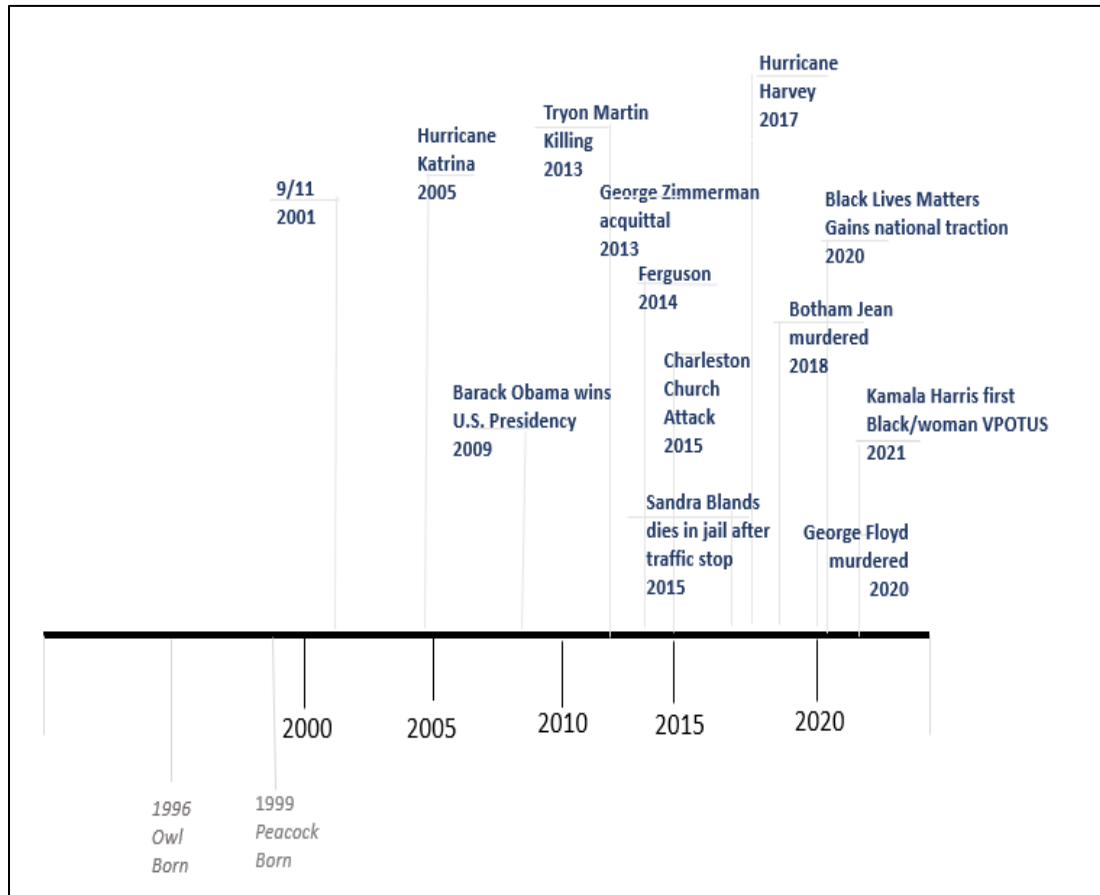# GEN 3 HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Figure 60. *Gen 3 Historical Timeline*

APPENDIX F

VIRTUAL CONVERSATIONS ROUND 1

1. Please tell me about yourself. What is your story?

    a. How can you describe your culture or ethnic background?

    b. Describe your family's values.

    c. Describe any unspoken family expectation growing up.

    d. Describe a significant childhood memory.

    e. What is the most important lesson your parents taught you?

    f. What challenges or difficulties did you experience growing up?

2. Let us talk about your educational background and career experiences.

    a. What were your primary and post-secondary school experiences like?

    b. How would you describe your neighborhood growing up?

    c. Please tell me about your professional goals and aspirations growing up.

    d. How did you decide on your career plan?

    e. What was your first job like?

3. Regarding spirituality and culture…

    a. How important is religion/spirituality in your life?

    b. Describe a significant spiritual experience in your life.

    c. What has influenced your life culturally?

    d. What would you like to learn <u>more</u> about our family history and ancestry?

    e. How do you describe the relationship in our country between Blacks and Whites?

APPENDIX G

VIRTUAL CONVERSATIONS ROUND 2

1. Depending on the age of the participant, focus on the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s

    a. Describe any memories of movements.

    b. If a family member was discriminated against, what were you told, both positive and negative, about the situation?

    c. How has the Black family changed over the years?

    d. What world events had the most impact on you as a child?

    e. Describe how it personally affected your family.

    f. How did you react when you learned about the assassination of MLK Junior?

    g. Describe an occasion when you felt you were treated unfairly because you are Black.

2. Intergenerational knowledge and perspectives

    a. How would you describe the Black Family of the 21st century?

    b. How do Black generations differ?

    c. Describe how the world has changed.

    d. Describe your feelings about marriage between Blacks and Whites.

    e. How do you feel about the state of the world today?

    f. What is one thing you would change?

3. Personal beliefs and talents

    a. What are sources of strength for your family during times of crisis?

    b. Describe something you felt you could not defend.

c. How can the government address economic inequality for Black people?

d. What do you want others to remember you for?

e. What would be your legacy for the next generation?

f. What hidden talents do you have?

g. What is your proudest accomplishment?

4. Regarding what the future holds

   a. Thinking back over your lifetime, how do you feel civil rights for Blacks have changed in this country?

   b. How has Barak Obama's presidency impacted Blacks in the U.S.?

   c. What should the government do in terms of reparations to Black Americans who are descendants of slaves?

   d. Describe advice you were given that has impacted how you live your life.

5. Civil Rights

   a. What would reduce the number of deadly encounters between Black men and police officers in the U.S.?

   b. How would you describe the American Justice system for Black people?

   c. Describe civil rights in this country in the next ten years.

   d. Who is a U.S. leader who should speak for you on issues of race?

   e. What positive influence has the civil rights movement had in your life?

6. Is there anything else you would like to add to our conversation?

VERBAL CONSENT

Study Title: *Black American Family Life Histories: An Ethnographic Study*

Principal Investigator:	**Co-Investigator/Faculty Advisor:**
Kimberly Thornton	Clarena Larrotta, Ph.D.

As you know, I am a graduate student at Texas State University. I am currently going through the dissertation process. For my research, I want to conduct a study to document our family history across three generations. In addition, I want to explore our cultural identity through storytelling and look at the generational knowledge gap, the impact of family structure, and social-political issues affecting us. This study aims to highlight the positive achievements and contributions of Black families to American society. Therefore, I will also be using newspaper articles, archival data, and our family memory books.

I am asking you to take part in this study because you are a member of my family and belong to one of the three generational groups that I want to study.

Next, I will tell you more about the study procedures, so you can decide if you want to become a participant.

If you want to take part in this study, you will participate in:

- Two virtual meetings

At this point, I would like you to know that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to answer a question or stop participation in the study all together at any time without any consequences.

Do you have any questions for me?
Do you want to take part in the study?

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