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**“PRICKING THE CONSCIENCE OF THE NATION”: AN IN-DEPTH
ANALYSIS OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE 1961 FRIENDSHIP NINE
MOVEMENT AND JAIL, NO BAIL STRATEGY**

A Thesis in

Media Studies

by

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Abstract

On January 31, 1961, the lives of nine students at the now defunct Friendship College in Rock Hill, South Carolina were forever changed as they sat in at a downtown lunch counter at McCrory's to protest racial segregation. After being arrested for trespassing, the students propelled the "Jail, no bail" strategy when they chose to spend thirty days in jail rather than pay bail to a system that supported segregation and racial inequality. Although the "Jail, no bail" strategy had been previously used by students at sit-ins in across the country, the "Friendship Nine" were the first group of students to carry out their entire sentence.

The students were arrested, tried, and found guilty. Two days later they began to serve their 30-day sentences on the York County Prison Farm. The reasons for what became known as the "Jail, no bail" strategy were two fold. First, the students wanted to place the financial burden onto the city, which would be responsible for feeding and clothing the demonstrators once jailed. Second, the students wanted to draw attention to the desegregation efforts in Rock Hill. The students wanted to effectively spread their message and raise awareness about the discriminatory practices evident in Rock Hill. The students recognized the significant role of the media as an effective tool for achieving social change.

Although under examined and largely forgotten by scholars and historians, my thesis will examine the acts of the "Friendship Nine" and implementation of the "Jail, no bail" movement, which contributed to the success of the civil rights movement and the passing of several significant civil rights legislation. Through extensive newspaper archival analysis and oral history interviews, the purpose of this thesis is to examine local media's coverage of the "Friendship Nine" and "Jail, no bail" strategy in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Prior to January 31, 1961, the newspaper, the *Evening Herald* reported the sit-ins and demonstrations in an objective,

balanced manner, however, their evenhanded coverage did not continue as the “Friendship Nine” carried out the historic “Jail, no bail” strategy.

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Chapter 1 Introduction, Purpose, & Methodology

Introduction

In February 1960, the first sit-ins began in Rock Hill, South Carolina, at Woolworth's and McCrory's lunch counters. Although African Americans were allowed to buy items from the two variety stores, they were not allowed to sit at the lunch counter and be served. Several sit-ins and subsequent arrests took place throughout the remainder of the year. However, on January 31, 1961, the lives of nine students at the now defunct Friendship Junior College in Rock Hill, South Carolina, were forever changed as they sat in at a downtown lunch counter at McCrory's to protest racial segregation. Refusing to move from their seats at the lunch counter after being asked by the store manager, the students were then arrested and found guilty on charges of trespassing.¹

Located in northern South Carolina, Rock Hill is about twenty miles south of Charlotte, North Carolina. Incorporated in 1870, it is the largest city in York County and the fifth largest city in the state. According to the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau, Rock Hill's population was estimated at 68,000 citizens.² Once having a booming economy largely influenced by the textile and cotton industry, Rock Hill has since evolved into an economy dominated by retail and manufacturing. With this shift in its economy, Rock Hill has striven to attract business from national and global companies. Rock Hill is home to three colleges, Winthrop University, York

¹ Friendship College. Rock Hill, Jail No Bail & The Friendship Nine, <http://www.friendshipcollege.org/jailnobail.html> (accessed August 30, 2013).

² Google. Rock Hill, South Carolina. <https://www.google.com/#q=rock+hill%2Csc> (accessed November 10, 2013).

Technical College, and Clinton Junior College and was the birthplace of the now defunct Friendship College.³

According to Friendship College.org, Friendship Junior College, which was originally named the Friendship Normal and Industrial Institute, “served as a place for young African-American to be educated so that they could move forward in society as ministers and educators.” Originally offering only elementary and high school classes, Friendship matriculated and began to offer college courses. Friendship Junior College then became Friendship College in the late 1970s when the college began offering two- and four-year degrees in liberal arts. However, financial hardships forced Friendship College to close in 1981.⁴

McCrorey's, which was based in York, Pennsylvania, was a five and dime store that sold a variety of items ranging from clothing and fabrics to cosmetics and toys. The owner, John G. McCrorey opened his first store in 1882 in Scottsdale, Pennsylvania (see footnote for explanation of name change).⁵ Several of the stores also included a snack bar or lunch counter. In 1918, the first McCrorey's store opened in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Although the store had become known as the “McCrorey's Building,” in 1960 McCrorey's started to become known as “McCrorey's 5-10-25 cent Variety Store.” Similar to several other retail stores during this time, McCrorey's refused to allow African Americans to sit at their lunch counters. Although African Americans could buy items from the store and purchase takeout orders, they were not allowed to eat alongside white customers. In 1960, McCrorey's along with another lunch counter in town, Woolworth's, and other downtown retail establishments in Rock Hill became the target for

³ Best Places to Live. Rock Hill, South Carolina. <http://www.bestplacelive.com/USA/SC/Rock-Hill/Profile/Top-Companies-Jobs.aspx> (accessed November 10, 2013).

⁴ Friendship College. History. <http://www.friendshipcollege.org/jailnobail.html> (accessed August 30, 2013).

⁵ Find a Grave. John G. McCrorey. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=3681> (accessed December 10, 2013); McCrorey legally changed his last name and dropped the “e” to avoid paying the fee for the extra letter in his store signs.

numerous lunch counter sit-ins.⁶ Specifically, on February 12, 1960, protestors from Friendship Junior College started to conduct sit-ins at McCrory's and Woolworth's, which often resulted in the closing of the lunch counters for many days.

Along with students from Friendship Junior College and several members of the black community in Rock Hill, an instrumental figure involved in all of the desegregation efforts in Rock Hill was local NAACP leader, Reverend Cecil A. Ivory. In 1949, Reverend Ivory, helped to organize a group of racially integrated ministers into the Rock Hill Council on Human Relations. Prior to the January 31st, 1961 sit-in and the 1954 *Brown v. Board* court decision, Rock Hill's St. Anne Catholic School became the first school to desegregate in South Carolina. Seven black children were accepted into the school and during the 1953-1954 school year. Similarly, in 1957, the Rock Hill bus boycott began which lasted for a year and caused the bus company to close.⁷

The students who became known as the "Friendship Nine" were Willie Edward McCleod, James Frank Wells, Clarence Henner Graham, Thomas Walter Gaither, David "Scoop" Williamson, Robert Lewis McCullough, Mack Cartier Workman, Willie Thomas "Dub" Massey, and John Alexander Gaines.⁸ With the exception of Thomas Gaither, who was field secretary for Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and a graduate of Claflin College in Orangeburg, South Carolina, the other eight members of the "Friendship Nine" graduated from Emmet Scott High School in Rock Hill. All eight students graduated between 1959 and 1960. Gaines was acknowledged as the leader of the "Friendship Nine", while Gaither prepared the students for

⁶ Rock Hill Old Town Bistro. History. <http://www.rholdtownbistro.com/reviews.html> (accessed December 10, 2013).

⁷ J. Charles Jones. Veterans of the Civil rights Movement. Rock Hill & Charlotte Sit-Ins. <http://www.crmvet.org/info/rockhill.htm> (accessed December 20, 2013).

⁸ Friendship College. Rock Hill, Jail No Bail & The Friendship Nine, <http://www.friendshipcollege.org/jailnobail.html> (accessed August 30, 2013).

their forthcoming task. Previously, several students and protestors had been arrested during demonstrations.

After being arrested for trespassing, the students chose to spend thirty days in jail rather than pay bail to a system that supported segregation and racial inequality. Although the “Jail, no bail” strategy had been previously used by students sitting in across the country, the “Friendship Nine” were the first group of students to carry out their entire 30- day sentence. The “Friendship Nine,” along with several other protesters, had been previously arrested on numerous occasions for protesting. But this time the students decided that they would not pay bail if arrested and that is exactly what happened. The students were arrested, tried, and found guilty. Two days later they began to serve their 30-day sentences on the York County Prison Farm. While serving their sentences, several supporters from around the country, including members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) visited the jailed protesters. Four members from SNCC who were sent to Rock Hill also sat in at a downtown lunch counter and were arrested. The four students, Diane Nash, Ruby Smith, Charles Jones, and Charles Sherrod, were found guilty and also chose to be jailed in rather than pay bail.

The “Jail, no bail” movement spread across the country. The acts of these students helped to inspire larger protests, such as the May 1961 Freedom Rides.⁹ Although not widely discussed and, in some cases, considered a forgotten movement, the “Jail, no bail” movement contributed to the Civil rights movement.

In Rock Hill, the acts of the “Friendship Nine” and the initiation and implementation of the “Jail, no bail” movement captured news headlines across the country. Influential newspapers informed their readers of the nonviolent resistance taking place in Rock Hill including the *New*

⁹ J. Charles Jones. Veterans of the Civil rights Movement. Rock Hill & Charlotte Sit-Ins. <http://www.crmvet.org/info/rockhill.htm> (accessed December 20, 2013).

York Times and the *Baltimore Afro-American*.¹⁰ The Rock Hill newspaper, the *Evening Herald*, also published numerous articles about the sit-ins.

As “race stories” around the nation, such as the story of the “Friendship Nine,” became more prevalent, reporters and journalists flocked to the South covering critical events and stories, but more importantly exposing the nation to the horrors of white supremacy.¹¹ Both local newspapers and national newspapers contributed to the telling of the Civil rights movement. Similarly, both southern and northern newspapers were very instrumental in reporting the injustices, discrimination, and violence being brought upon African Americans, particularly in the South.

Purpose & Methodology

My thesis will thoroughly examine the local media’s coverage of the “Friendship Nine” and “jail no bail” movement in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Through extensive newspaper archival analysis and oral history interviews, my thesis will bring attention to the smaller pockets of resistance that did not necessarily make national news headlines every day.

The goal of my thesis is also to add to the growing body of literature on the Civil rights movement in South Carolina and the role of the local media. My thesis will enhance our understanding of the modern civil rights movement and shed new light on the ways in which some press officials supported and reported activism.

Two types of historical methods, newspaper archival analysis and oral history interviews were employed for this study. The study will begin with an analysis of newspaper articles that covered the “Friendship Nine” movement in 1961. The value of utilizing primary sources when

¹⁰ Claude Sitton, "Negroes' Protest Spreads in South." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), February 13, 1960, accessed December 19, 2013 <http://search.proquest.com/docview/115062910?accountid=13158>; *Baltimore Afro-American*, February 11, 1961.

¹¹ Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The press, the civil rights struggle and the awakening of a nation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 54.

conducting historical methods and data cannot be understated. Because primary sources are viewed as “the raw materials of history”, the analysis of newspaper articles from 1961 will provide valuable evidence and insight.¹² Major emphasis will be put on the coverage of the movement in the local newspaper since the “Friendship Nine” movement occurred in Rock Hill.

Preliminary research indicated that coverage of sit-ins in Rock Hill began in February 1960. As a result of this finding, my analysis of newspaper articles will examine the time frame of January 1960- March 1961. Approximately 100 articles were found that reference the sit-ins and the “Friendship Nine” movement in Rock Hill. Most of the articles were found in *The Evening Herald*, however a few articles were also found in nearby local newspapers such as *The Gaffney Ledger* in Gaffney, South Carolina. *The State* in Columbia, South Carolina, also produced about 12 articles on the sit-ins and the “Friendship Nine” movement. Analysis of these articles will provide insight into the importance level the sit-ins were given as well as how the protests and those involved were covered.

Along with employing newspaper archival analysis, I have also conducted oral history interviews with participants in the protests and members of the media that covered the protests. Oral history interviews provide insight into the thoughts of the individuals involved in the “Friendship Nine” movement. Also, as a way of complementing the analysis of newspaper articles, oral history, “helps to interpret and define written records and makes sense out of the most obscure decisions and event.”¹³ Furthermore, the interviews contributed to understanding the rationale for the amount of coverage given to the sit-ins and “Friendship Nine” movement in the local newspaper. I interviewed five members of the “Friendship Nine”: Willie Edward

¹² Wm. David Sloan and Michael Stamm, “Historical Sources and Their Evaluation,” in *Historical Methods in Communications*, third edition (Northport, AL: Vision Press, 2010), 194.

¹³ Donald A. Ritchie, “Using Oral History in Research and Writing,” in *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*, second edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 118.

McCleod, Clarence Henner Graham, David "Scoop" Williamson, Willie Thomas "Dub" Massey, and John Alexander Gaines.

I also interviewed two staff members from *The Evening Herald* in 1961: managing editor, Donnie "Rip" Wilder and associate editor Marshall Doswell. Prior to the interviews, letters were sent to all of the interviewees in order to confirm the interview dates and times. The interviews, which took place November 21-23, 2013 were recorded and transcribed.

The analysis of both the 1961 newspaper articles related to the "Friendship Nine" and data retrieved from conducting oral history interviews with several individuals will bring attention to the under examined moments during the Civil rights Movement that did not make national news every day. More importantly, the analysis of the articles and interviews will shed new light on how some press officials reported activism during the movement. However, before discussing these significant events in more detail, it is essential to examine the existing literature on this topic.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Although this literature review will focus on the role of the media, the intention is also to examine well-known works on the civil rights movement. More specifically, it is significant to place particular emphasis on literature examining various civil rights protests that occurred in South Carolina. In existing literature of the movement, many historians cite the importance of Johnson Publishing Company sharing images of Emmett Till's body in *Jet* magazine as a pivotal moment in the African American freedom struggle. This literature review, building on that argument, makes the case that the role of black and white newspaper editors in the South and North was critical and that they made significant contributions to the movement. Previous scholarship informs readers that time and locale determined what kind of coverage and the amount of coverage that civil rights events received in newspaper sources.

The scholarship produced by historians on the role of the media and the civil rights movement can be organized into three major categories. The first of these consists of literature that establishes the role of the press in covering major events that occurred during the movement. Some of these events, which will later be discussed further in detail, included the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, the Emmet Till trial, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas, Sit-Ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Mississippi Freedom Summer. These events by no means represent the entire civil rights movement; however the events to be discussed significantly intensified the interest of the mainstream press and black press.

A second type of literature brings attention to the resistance that northern journalists met as they traveled to the south to cover "race stories." Although black journalists were already

unwelcomed by whites in the south, much of this literature portrays the ways in which some white journalists were also threatened and unwelcomed by whites in the South, especially the more liberal white journalists. This struggle was intensified and brought to forefront even more when examining the role of segregationist editors.

The third major category explores the difficulty experienced by journalists when trying to remain objective while covering critical events during the movement. This literature review serves to survey the scholarship on media coverage of the civil rights movement in terms of critical events in the south covered by the press, resistance met by northern journalists, and the challenge of remaining and reporting objectively. Literature discussed in this review heavily draws from Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff's *The Race Beat: The Press, The Civil Rights Struggle and The Awakening of a Nation*, in which the authors effectively examine the role of the press during this critical African American freedom movement in the early 20th century.

Civil Rights in South Carolina

In *Civil Rights in South Carolina: From Peaceful Protests to Groundbreaking Rulings*, James Felder provides a narrative history of the organizations and people in South Carolina that contributed to the struggle for African Americans' political, economical and civil rights.¹⁴ Through highlighting the several legal battles fought in the South Carolina civil rights movement, Felder brings attention to the role of the local branches of the NAACP as well as individuals who were often disregarded in discussions of the movement.

Felder recognizes John H. Whiten III, who in 1965 legally fought for his rights to attend law school at the University of South Carolina. As a result of his denial of admittance, a law school was built at South Carolina State College in order to uphold segregation. Similarly, he

¹⁴James Felder, *Civil Rights in South Carolina: From Peaceful Protests to Groundbreaking Rulings* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2012).

told the story of Sarah Mae Fleming of Eastover, South Carolina. Similar to well known civil rights figure Rosa Parks, she “refused to give up *her* seat on a South Carolina Electric & Gas bus in Columbia, and after an altercation with the driver, she sued and won the right to sit at the front of the bus.”¹⁵

Felder also discusses the sit-in movements that occurred in nine towns throughout South Carolina. While discussing the Rock Hill protest, specifically the “Friendship Nine,” Felder emphasizes January 31, 1961, as the day the movement reached new heights. Highlighting the “Jail, no bail” movement, he said, “It started when nine students from Friendship Junior College decided to accept thirty-day sentences of hard labor on the chain gang rather than be released.”¹⁶ Although there is thorough discussion of the “Friendship Nine”, the media’s portrayal and depiction of the success of the “Friendship Nine” and “Jail, no bail” movement is not brought up in the discussion. In his discussion of the “Friendship Nine,” Felder highlights Thomas Gaither as the organizer of the “Jail, no bail” strategy and Ernest Finney Jr. as the defense lawyer for the students. Lastly, he profiles each of the demonstrators and explains to readers where demonstrators travelled and the career paths taken after they were released from jail.

In Clayborne Carson’s *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, Rock Hill is highlighted as a place where SNCC transformed into an organization that supported local movements and took direct action.¹⁷ After learning about the nine demonstrators that were arrested and remained jailed in, SNCC decided to send four volunteers down to Rock Hill to join the demonstrators in jail. SNCC sent Diane Nash, Ruby Doris Smith, Charles Jones, and Charles Sherrod to Rock Hill. SNCC wanted to enlighten others that the nonviolent movement against

¹⁵ Felder, *Civil rights in South Carolina*, 10. Emphasis on *her* provided by author.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 99.

¹⁷ Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

segregation was not solely a local issue, but that it concerned everyone who believed in equality. Furthermore, this act illustrated the supportive nature of the organization and the willingness of SNCC representatives to actively get involved where desegregation efforts occurred. Carson stated that, “Furthermore, the Rock Hill experience contributed to the process of building a sense of group identity among militant students.”¹⁸

Similarly, in *Toward the Meeting of the Waters: Currents in the Civil Rights Movement of South Carolina during the Twentieth Century*, several authors examine the African American Freedom Struggle in the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁹ Highlighting the violence that took place in the South and the resistance by many African American leaders, retrospectives are provided by participants in the civil rights movement. Participants included Harvey Gantt, who enrolled at Clemson University in 1963 and Cleveland Sellers, a participant of the “Orangeburg Massacre.” Gantt was the first African American to attend Clemson University. In the previously mentioned book, Raymond Arsenault’s essay “Five Days in May: Freedom Riding in the Carolinas,” briefly discusses the experience in Rock Hill as Freedom Riders passed through in May 1961.²⁰ Arsenault’s essay accentuates the obstacles and resistance experienced by riders travelling through Rock Hill. He also briefly mentions the historic jail in three months earlier, however there is no discussion of the role of the media and their coverage in regards to the “Friendship Nine” and the “Jail, no bail” movement.

The Freedom Riders’ experience through Rock Hill is an event that is repeatedly discussed in literature on the civil rights movement. Depicted as a hostile experience, Freedom

¹⁸ Ibid, 32.

¹⁹ Winifred B. Moore Jr. and Orville Vernon Burton, edit., *Toward the meeting of the waters: Currents in the Civil Rights Movement of South Carolina during the 20th century* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2008).

²⁰ Raymond Arsenault, “Five Days in May: Freedom Riding in the Carolinas,” in *Toward the meeting of the waters: Currents in the Civil Rights Movement of South Carolina during the 20th century*, ed. Winifred Moore Jr. et al. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 208-211.

Riders were attacked in Rock Hill and would carry that story as a reminder of the discrimination and racism so prevalent throughout the South in the 1960s. The unseemly violent interaction between whites and African Americans during the civil rights movement was a critical point explored in Bruce Dierenfield's *The Civil Rights Movement*.²¹ In addition to several other towns, Rock Hill is mentioned as one of the towns passed through where Freedom Riders experienced violence. Specifically, Dierenfield explained the violent interaction between a couple of the Freedom Riders and a group of white youth at the Greyhound bus station in Rock Hill. As Freedom Rider John Lewis came towards the waiting room, he was violently beat up by a group of white youth.

Through the analysis of stories and speeches from influential African American civil rights leaders, Dierenfield examines the major events during the movement such as the Montgomery bus boycott, Nashville sit-ins, and Mississippi Freedom Summer. Although the successful "Jail, no bail" strategy is discussed in reference to the Nashville sit-ins, the "Friendship Nine" is not mentioned nor given any credit for raising the strategy to new heights when protesters carried out the entire 30 day sentence.

Jack Hildebrand's *Rock Hill: Reflections: An Illustrated History* emphasized the role of the media in bringing Rock Hill into a national spotlight.²² Rock Hill came into existence in 1851 and was incorporated in 1870. Hildebrand provided a detailed description of the landscape in Rock Hill as well as the growth and development of booming industries in the town. Pictures of the Ku Klux Klan burning crosses and Friendship College students picketing segregated businesses on Main Street gave readers insight into the history of problematic race relations evident in Rock Hill in the 1960s and 70s. Racial tension intensified in Rock Hill during the

²¹ Bruce J. Dierenfield, *The Civil Rights Movement* (United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited, 2004).

²² Jack D. Hilderbrand, *Rock Hill: Reflections: An Illustrated History* (Chatsworth, CA: Windsor Publications, 1989).

civil rights movement and particularly during the sit-ins and protests of segregated lunch counters downtown. Hildebrand highlights the “Friendship Nine” as the “nation’s first sit-in protestors to be sent to prison.”²³

Attracting large crowds of people that came to visit and support the prisoners, Hildebrand credits the role of the media by observing that, “Photographs and news stories in the national press and on television strongly influenced public opinion.”²⁴ In 1964, when the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, segregated facilities in Rock Hill slowly started to dissolve. Nevertheless, the struggle for civil rights as seen through the “Friendship Nine” movement and “Jail, no bail” policy can be seen as influential events that shaped the historical role of Rock Hill in the civil rights movement.

Coverage of Critical Events

Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff’s *The Race Beat: The Press, The Civil Rights Struggle and The Awakening of a Nation*, examines the role of the press during this critical African American freedom movement in the early 20th century. The authors explore the significant events that occurred during the civil rights movement, while also bringing attention to the challenges faced by journalists covering the major events. Particular emphasis is placed on coverage of the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, the Emmet Till trial, desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas, and sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Along with placing emphasis on well known events of the civil rights movement, there is some reference to smaller events such as the sit-ins that occurred in Rock Hill in 1960. Drawing on articles written by Claude Sitton, reporter for the *New York Times*, Roberts and Klibanoff wrote that in the local Rock Hill newspaper, sit in demonstrators were often depicted as “orderly,

²³ Ibid, 74.

²⁴ Ibid, 75.

polite, well-dressed and quiet,” while white youth were portrayed as the primary aggressive actors.²⁵ Although Roberts and Klibanoff briefly mention the Rock Hill sit-ins in 1960, they do not elaborate on the lunch counter sit-ins that occurred a year later, which led to the widely adopted “Jail, no bail” policy that spread throughout the civil rights movement.

In 1955, one of the most significant judicial decisions to occur during the movement was made concerning school segregation. The Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v Board of Education* declared segregation in schools unconstitutional. Although this decision affected the entire nation, it was particularly significant in the South. There were several important editors from the south that were constantly discussed throughout the literature pertaining to this specific topic of study. These editors included Ralph McGill of the *Atlanta Constitution*, Virginius Dabney of the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Tom Waring of the *Charleston News and Courier*, Harry Ashmore of the *Arkansas Gazette*, and Hodding Carter Jr. of the *Greenville Delta-Democrat Times*.²⁶

Arkansas Gazette editor Harry Ashmore’s *Civil Right and Wrongs: A Memoir of Race and Politics, 1944-1966* describes into editors’ reactions to the *Brown* decision as well as the interposition declared by Governor Faubus in light of the decision.²⁷ Ashmore also contends that as out of town correspondents traveled to the south, his newsroom became similar to that of a combat command post. Many of these editors were described as segregationist editors, however a majority of the editors were also concerned with the aftermath of the *Brown* decision and they understood that people in the South would form their opinions based on what they read in the newspapers. This is evident through Ashmore’s *Civil Rights and Wrongs*, in which he asserted that editors recognized the importance of the *Brown* decision and aftermath and the ability of

²⁵ Roberts and Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, 224.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 24-42.

²⁷ Harry Ashmore, *Civil Rights and Wrongs: A Memoir of Race and Politics, 1944-1966* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994), 126.

editors to shape public opinion.²⁸ Furthermore, Ashmore explains that although some newspaper editors reacted in a calm, responsible manner and foresaw eventual acceptance of the decision, he also acknowledged editors such as Jack Kilpatrick who called for massive resistance.²⁹ Civil rights activist Julian Bond suggested that there were editors in the southern white press that encouraged temperance on racial issues prevalent in the South.³⁰

Realizing their ability to control and shape public reaction, many editors then felt responsible for helping the public to understand and adjust to the *Brown* decision.³¹ Because of these concerns, before the decision of *Brown* was made, a group of editors in the South made a precautionary effort through the formation of the Southern Education Reporting Service (SERS). The purpose of this organization was to publish a monthly newspaper, in which the statistics would be published state-by-state on how schools in the South were responding to desegregation.³²

David Chappell's *Inside Agitators: White Southerners and the Civil Rights Movement* provides further evidence of how editors attempted to shape public reaction and public opinion.³³ Chappell acknowledged Harry Ashmore as one of the more responsible southern editors, who did not predict violence in the wake of the *Brown* decision. Similarly, a report entitled, *Negro and the schools*, was another example of the way in which editors attempted to shape public opinion.

²⁸ Ashmore, *Civil rights and Wrongs*, 98.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 106, 125.

³⁰ Julian Bond, "The Media and the Movement: Looking Back from the Southern Front," in *Media, Culture, and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle*, ed. Brian Ward (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2001), 17.

³¹ Roberts and Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, 55.

³² *Ibid*, 57.

³³ David L. Chappell, *Inside Agitators: White Southerners and the Civil Rights Movement* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 111.

Editors such as Ashmore recognized their ability of editors to not only shape public opinion, but also the impact these reports had on government decisions and legislation.³⁴ Chappell's *Inside Agitators* highlighted the role of white southerners in influencing decisions made by significant government officials. Chappell also acknowledges the role of Phil Graham, editor of *The Washington Post*, in influencing and helping President Lyndon Johnson push through important legislation such as the Civil rights Act.³⁵ Although the literature emphasizes the role of southern editors, there were several northern editors who were also instrumental during the civil rights movement.

Even though there were conscious efforts made by some editors in the South, there were still ardent segregationist editors who incited calls for resistance to integration in the schools and supported the goals of overtly racist organizations such as the Citizens Council.³⁶ The major goal of this organization was to legally maintain the racial status quo in the South, largely through intimidation and denying African Americans economic mobility.³⁷

Another major event that intensified coverage of the civil rights movement was the trial of Emmett Till in 1955. A significant aspect of this particular event was that the trial brought members of the black press as well as northern white reporters to the segregated South. Scholars such as Roberts and Klibanoff suggest that the coverage of this event had a considerable impact on readers in the North.³⁸ Although there is much literature that attributed the publishing of the photograph of Emmet Till's body in *Jet* magazine as one of the pivotal moments in the civil rights movement that showed the significant role of the media, Roberts and Klibanoff brought

³⁴ Ibid, 106.

³⁵ Chappell, *Inside Agitators*, 111.

³⁶ Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil rights Years, 1954-1965* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), 39.

³⁷ Ibid, 38-39.

³⁸ Roberts and Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, 86.

another point to the surface that is not often discussed. Many southern editors believed that publishing of the photograph was preposterous propaganda.³⁹ Already apprehensive about the number of northern reporters travelling to the South to cover the trial, southern editors were outraged by the coverage in northern newspapers. The *Race Beat: The Press, The Civil Rights Struggle and The Awakening of a Nation* also show that the coverage of this trial was a significant moment in journalism history because of the way in which the trial brought together white and black journalists.

Juan Williams's *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965*, shows the important role of black reporters in protecting the black witnesses during the trial in the case of violent outbreaks taking place in the courtroom during the testimony of the witnesses.⁴⁰ Likewise, Stephanie Greco Larson's *Media and Minorities: The Politics of Race in News and Entertainment* emphasizes the significant role of black journalists, who sought out witnesses and evidence for the trial when the police had failed to do so.⁴¹

Eyes on the Prize suggested that reporters and journalists of the black press experienced hostility and outright racism from city officials and white persons in attendance during the trial.⁴² Similarly, Kathleen Hauke's *Ted Poston: Pioneer American Journalist* provided insight into the life and role of Ted Poston, African American editor at the *New York Post*.⁴³ Poston, as a northerner and an African American, experienced a lot of disrespect when he travelled to the South. While covering the desegregation in Little Rock, Poston and other African American

³⁹ Roberts and Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, 88.

⁴⁰ Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize*, 48.

⁴¹ Stephanie Greco Larson, *Media and Minorities: The Politics of Race in News and Entertainment* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing, 2005), 167.

⁴² *Ibid*, 50.

⁴³ Kathleen A. Hauke, *Ted Poston: Pioneer American Journalist* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1999).

reporters received threats and were sometimes fired upon at while staying at the home of black editors L.C and Daisy Bates of the *Arkansas State Press*.⁴⁴

The last event that will be covered is the desegregation of Central High in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. This event surrounded the integration of nine African American students, who would come to be known as the Little Rock Nine, into Central High.

Similar to the Emmett Till trial, this major event drew a significant number of reporters from the North. One incident in particular that is discussed in the literature revolves around *New York Times* reporter, Benjamin Fine. Fine, who was covering the integration in Little Rock, consoled a young African American girl, Elizabeth Eckford, who was attempting to enter the high school amidst an angry mob.⁴⁵ Steven Kasher's *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954-68* places particular emphasis on this event. In this moment, Fine crossed a traditional boundary in journalism and his act was viewed as provocation. Segregationists in the South were outright livid and appalled at the behavior of Fine.⁴⁶ This display by Fine also resulted in mobs showing dislike and anger towards reporters. Reporters were often harassed by mobs outside of Central High.⁴⁷ In his memoir *Civil Rights and Wrongs*, Ashmore recalls reporters being beaten and manhandled by mobs outside of Central High. He also recalls that there were several arrests at the school site and people were constantly brought into the local precincts for generating disturbances.⁴⁸

Roberts and Klibanoff's *The Race Beat* suggests that black reporters were challenged in covering the race story at Central High even more than white reporters because of the dangerous

⁴⁴ Ibid, 132-148.

⁴⁵ Steven Kasher, *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954-68* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), 54.

⁴⁶ Roberts and Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, 161.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 169.

⁴⁸ Ashmore, *Civil Rights and Wrongs*, 129-131.

and prevalent racial tensions. It is also significant to note that the visiting reporters, both black and white, were welcomed into the newsrooms and homes of influential black and white southern editors. Those homes and newsrooms utilized included black editors L.C and Daisy Bates and Ashmore.

Furthermore, historians have recognized the efforts of some black reporters who inserted themselves into the action when creating a diversion scene as the Little Rock Nine entered Central High.⁴⁹ Julian Bond, in *Media, Culture, and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle* also discusses the role of the press in effectively covering the integration in a way that led to the eventual federalizing of the National Guard and the deployment of paratroopers by President Eisenhower to assist in the protection of the black students.⁵⁰ Although these were only a few events that intensified press coverage of the movement, it is evident that overlapping themes emerged in the literature on press coverage of critical events during the movement.

These themes included the many challenges faced by black journalists when travelling in the South and the danger reporters (both black and white) were constantly faced with when covering certain events or interviewing certain persons. Reporters also recognized their role in shaping public opinion and influencing public reaction towards decisions made by the government concerning segregation.

Resistance towards Northern Journalists and Coverage

As mentioned earlier, there were some southern editors who felt responsible for shaping public reaction and opinion after the *Brown v Board* decision. Although the goal of the Southern Education Reporting Service was to objectively report statistics on southern school's responses to desegregation, literature suggested that there was another goal that was equally important.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 179.

⁵⁰ Julian Bond, "The Media and the Movement", 28.

Although it is not discussed a great deal, there is some literature that suggested that the goal of this organization was also to combat the reports coming from northern reporters and coverage.⁵¹ However, Greco Larson's *Media and Minorities* illustrates that southern newspapers often failed to cover events occurring in their own communities.⁵² Larson emphasizes that southern newspapers also failed to cover blacks, the causes of black problems, and why blacks protested.⁵³ Throughout much of the 1950s and 1960s, there were many critical events that occurred in the South. These events attracted a large number of northern reporters. This notion has been observed and supported by activists such as Julian Bond, who suggested that some of the most influential and significant journalists during this time came from the northern press.⁵⁴

It is significant to note that certain civil rights organizations held a more favorable view of northern reporters and coverage. Vanessa Murphree's *The Selling of the Civil Rights: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Use of Public Relations* explains the strategic way SNCC used media outlets.⁵⁵ Organizations such as SNCC strategically evaded sending press releases to media organizations in the South because they recognized that many of those organizations were owned by whites who believed in segregation and the oppression of blacks, which was reflected in coverage. Murphree further explains that the organization recognized the more favorable and objective coverage given by northern reporters, however it was also evident that on more than one occasion, northern reporters were guilty of misrepresenting the overall views of the movement.⁵⁶ Insights into SNCC's use of public relations provided readers with the organization's overall mixed views on the coverage of media

⁵¹ Roberts and Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, 57-58.

⁵² Stephanie Greco Larson, *Media and Minorities*, 156.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 157.

⁵⁴ Julian Bond, "The Media and the Movement", 25.

⁵⁵ Vanessa Murphree, *The Selling of the Civil Rights: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Use of Public Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 14.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 14.

during the movement. Murphree asserted that nevertheless, SNCC recognized and acknowledged that the coverage by newspapers assisted in their coordination.⁵⁷

Enoch Water's *American Diary: A Personal History of the Black Press* supports the view of the northern press held by SNCC.⁵⁸ Waters, who served as editor of the *Chicago Defender* asserted that the southern press consistently expressed their views on opposition to improving the overall status of blacks. On the other hand, the northern press expressed encouraging views on racial matters, particularly through condemning lynchings in the South. However, Waters also acknowledged that northern views were not consistent and that the northern presses often neglected to discuss local racial issues.

Bond, in his chapter "The Media and the Movement", notes that prominent reporters during the movement such as Claude Sitton of the *New York Times* also had experience and background knowledge of the South.⁵⁹ Many of these reporters were southerners with experience in the South. This was helpful while covering the "race stories" because reporters were knowledgeable of the area, politics, and racial conventions that existed in the South. This description, however, does not represent all of the reporters from the North that travelled south to cover "race stories."

Literature showed that many first-time northern reporters travelling to the South were outraged and shocked at what they saw and experienced. Northern reporters' stories of the racial atmosphere in the South had a profound impact on readers in the North and similarly they were quite shocked about what they read.⁶⁰ Scholars have suggested that these types of reporters can sometimes be referred to as "parachute" journalists. This name refers to the way in which

⁵⁷ Ibid, 41.

⁵⁸ Enoch P. Waters, *American Diary: A Personal History of the Black Press* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1987), 220-231.

⁵⁹ Julian Bond, "The Media and the Movement", 25.

⁶⁰ Roberts and Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, 86.

journalists often come into an area where they are unfamiliar with the atmosphere and background of the event taking place.⁶¹

One could argue that this is exactly what was taking place when the influx of northern journalists travelled to the South to cover critical events during the civil rights movement. In a historical report entitled, *Southern Newsmen and Local Pressure*, by Buford Boone, the author and editor of Alabama's *Tuscaloosa News*, explains this argument by stating that as journalists have come into the South in an effort to compile series on extremely intricate events; several errors have been made in the reporting of events in the South.⁶² Through this report, Boone explains the difficult situation southern editors have been forced into due to decisions affecting their own communities and how coverage in the North somewhat fails to acknowledge the southern point of view, specifically the southern newsmen's point of view.

In the same collection of historical reports, entitled *Race and the News Media*, edited by Paul Fisher and Ralph Lowenstein, Hodding Carter, editor of the *Greenville Delta-Democrat Times*, made a similar observation about northern newspapermen covering events in the South. He suggests that journalists should research information on the area before coming to the South. Carter stated that if this does not happen, "you have a sort of perpetual rediscovery of the South", which would include stereotypical reports from northern reporters about the atmosphere in the South.⁶³

Barbara Clowse's *Ralph McGill: A Biography* and Leonard Teel's *Ralph Emerson McGill: Voices of the Southern Conscience* provides insight into the role of editors such as Ralph McGill of the *Atlanta Constitution*, who was often acknowledged by the North as the "South's

⁶¹ Sherry Ricciardi, "The Limits of Parachute," *American Journalism Review*, (2006): 40-48.

⁶² Buford Boone, "Southern Newsmen and Local Pressure", in *Race and the News Media*, ed. Paul Fisher et al. (New York: Praeger, 1967), 47.

⁶³ Hodding Carter, *Race and News Media*, 57.

conscience”, because of his urgency for slow change regarding equality in the South.⁶⁴ McGill often spoke out against the discrimination occurring in the South as well as opened up the possibility for new discussions on race. McGill was viewed as an icon of moderation by the north and praised because he deviated from southern editors who often disregarded and kept silent about racial news in their own communities.⁶⁵

McGill, although greatly admired, was not the only southern editor who encouraged temperance on racial relations in the South. Maurine Beasley and Richard Harlow’s *Voices of Change: Southern Pulitzer Winners* acknowledged editors such as Buford Boone of the *Tuscaloosa News*, Ira B. Harkey of the *Pascagoula (MI.) Chronicle* and Hazel Brannon Smith of the *Lexington (MI.) Advertiser* for their courageous reporting and editorial regarding racial tensions in the South.⁶⁶ These editors called for reason and restraint and expressed their outrage towards the community’s actions regarding the integration of schools. Because of this, Beasley and Harlow emphasized that editors often became targets of racist organizations such as the White Citizens Council and received threats. Furthermore, more liberal editors also spoke out as a way of combating influence from the North.⁶⁷

Roberts and Klibanoff examines the role and reaction of several segregationists’ editors to northern coverage and reporters. Segregationists’ editors often felt that they were being neglected of national media attention and more importantly that their voices were being silenced by the northern press. In 1956, “The Southern Case Against Desegregation” was published by southern newspaper editor Tom Waring, in which he argued that segregationists’ editors were

⁶⁴ Barbara Barksdale Clowse, *Ralph McGill: A Biography* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 138-191; Leonard Ray Teel, *Ralph Emerson McGill: Voice of Southern Conscience* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2001).

⁶⁵ Teel, *Voices of Southern Conscience*, 288-298.

⁶⁶ Maurine Hoffman Beasley and Richard R. Harlow, *Voices of Change: Southern Pulitzer Winners* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1979).

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 49.

being neglected from national attention.⁶⁸ This publication drew national attention that the segregationists' editors were seeking and more than that the editors became crucially aware of the discrimination that was being experienced in the North.

As a result of this realization, historians argue that southern editors then began to further investigate the discrimination in the North and they questioned why northern reporters were ignoring discrimination closer to their home fronts.⁶⁹ Literature showed that a group of southern segregationists' editors partnered together in an effort to change public opinion of the South by diverting attention from the events occurring only in the South. The goal of these editors was largely to persuade wire services to provide more coverage on racism and discriminatory practices and events occurring in the North. The editors came to the agreement that if there was more coverage of racial tension and events occurring in the North, then it would shift public opinion.

Although ultimately this plan did not succeed, this literature served as an example of the way in which southern segregationists editors attempted to resist northern coverage. Another example of the struggle between southern and northern newspapers can be observed in the 1964 case of *New York Times Co. v Sullivan*. Roberts and Klibanoff examine the role of *Times* reporter, Harrison Salisbury, who could also be considered a "parachute" journalist. Salisbury, who had been travelling through the South, arrived in Birmingham and his resulting depiction of Birmingham portrayed the city in a negative light.⁷⁰ Outraged at this depiction, local Birmingham newspaper editors attacked the *Times* reporter and strongly opposed Salisbury's viewpoints.

⁶⁸ Roberts and Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, 212.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 213.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 233.

This literature served to support the notion that the relationship between northern and southern newspapers was indeed a hostile one. Although northern journalists were very influential in covering the civil rights movement, literature in this category described the challenges they faced and the resistance received from southern editors.

Challenge of Reporting Objectively

The challenge of reporting objectively is not solely limited to reporting that took place during the civil rights movement, but reporting objectively is constantly a challenge for those in the journalistic field. The literature pertaining to this topic of study showed that the challenge of reporting objectively was particularly intensified during the civil rights era. Although previously discussed, the goal of Southern Education Reporting Service in the 1950s sought to objectively report facts on how schools in the South were responding to the *Brown* decision. Literature on SERS (Southern Education Reporting Service) supported the notion that many of the editors taking part in the reporting service were southern segregationists' editors.

The fact that these editors are referred to as segregationists' editors served as evidence of the way in which journalists struggled with reporting objectively. Roberts and Klibanoff give the example of Tom Waring, editor of the *Charleston News and Courier*, who supported racist organizations such as the Citizen's Council in his editorials. Across the south, there were several southern newspaper editors who used their editorials to voice their opinions on desegregation, and in some instances editors urged resistance to forced integration. One could argue that because the editors were voicing their opinions through the editorials, editors were still remaining true to the journalistic standard of objectivity. However, literature refuted this

argument in that there were also cases where editor's voices would carry over into the news sections of the paper.⁷¹

Concurrently, historians also examined the challenges and sometimes failures of reporters during the civil rights movement to accurately cover racial news and stories. In discussing the difficulties of covering racial news, Carolyn Martindale's *The White Press and Black America* places particular emphasis on objectivity.⁷² She argued that there were instances during the movement in which reporters would present facts on certain subjects, but still neglect to present the entire truth. She also uses evidence to support the argument that the selection of which facts were presented was in itself subjective. Martindale also drew from *Chicago Daily News* editor, Lawrence Fanning, and argued that during the civil rights movement, there were also cases where reporters presented factual information in the form of an allegation rather than as facts.⁷³ Again, this notion supported the claim that journalists were not only challenged, but sometimes failed to objectively report racial stories.

The struggle to report objectively during the civil rights movement was especially difficult for southern newspaper editors and journalists. The events and decisions being made affected them personally. As previously stated, several editors had strong ties to local community and government officials, many of whom were extreme segregationists. In examining the role of southern journalist, Gene Patterson, historian Raymond Arsenault discuss the challenge of Patterson to find a balance between his ethical commitment to the standards of journalism and his personal relationship with the region he strongly identified with and knew.⁷⁴ Patterson, who

⁷¹ Ibid,73.

⁷² Carolyn Martindale, *The White Press and Black America* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 40.

⁷³ Ibid, 41.

⁷⁴ Raymond Arsenault, "A Historian's View: Gene Patterson, Southern Liberalism, and the Vise of History," in *The Changing South of Gene Patterson: journalism and civil rights, 1960-1968*, ed. Roy Peter Clark et al. (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002), 38.

was editor of *The Atlanta Constitution* from 1960-1968, was an advocate for civil rights and was remembered for his journalistic integrity and fairness while reporting on controversial issues.⁷⁵

In *The Changing South of Gene Patterson*, Arsenault argues that Patterson felt he was responsible for effectively engaging his readers by presenting them with a new perspective on their past and present circumstances. However, at the same time he did not want to instill fear into the mind of his readers that would leave them with a sense of hopelessness about their influence on the direction of the future of the South.⁷⁶ Journalists in the South were often faced with this dilemma. Another example is evident in Chappell's *Inside Agitators*, in which he discussed the views of Grover Hall Jr., editor of Montgomery's morning newspaper. Through examining editorials and articles written by Hall, Chappell asserts that although Hall did not support the Montgomery Bus Boycott, he was against Montgomery not accepting the demands of the movement.⁷⁷ Similarly, Hugh Graham, points out that in Tennessee, in the wake of the *Brown* decision, there were some instances where newspaper editors endorsed the decision, while at the same time pointing out the small number of blacks residing in nearby counties.⁷⁸ Calvin Logue's *Ralph McGill at Work* gives instances in which McGill completely abandoned objectivity.⁷⁹ McGill believed that education was necessary for progress, that all men should be granted full and equal rights, but also that southern states should ensure the rights and privileges of their own citizens. McGill, who was an editor, speaker, critic, and theorist, informed audiences in speeches that he upheld laws on integration and discussed the need and importance for the south to embrace integration as well.

⁷⁵ Robert D. McFadden, "Eugene C. Patterson, Editor and Civil rights Crusader, Dies at 89," *New York Times*, January 13, 2013, accessed December 30, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/14/us/eugene-c-patterson-editor-and-civil-rights-crusader-dies-at-89.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Chappell, *Inside Agitators*, 65.

⁷⁸ Graham, *Crisis in Print*, 49.

⁷⁹ Calvin McLeod Logue, *Ralph McGill Editor and Publisher*, Vol. I *Ralph McGill at Work* (Durham, NC: Moore Publishing Company, 1969).

As previously discussed, literature in this area has shown that some journalists truly attempted to find a balance between reporting objectively and their own views, while others either ignored or altogether failed to find a balance.

While southern journalists struggled to report objectively on stories during the civil rights movement, members of the black press continued to advocate for their constitutional rights and report on events that reflected the racial tension prevalent in the nation. Thomas Young, in *Race and the News Media*, credits the black press with bringing attention to and helping to nurture the African Americans' need for civil rights.⁸⁰ Although it is not directly related to this topic of study, previous scholarship drew attention to the early goals of the black press that remained present throughout the civil rights movement. The goals of the black press were to advocate for the African American's constitutional rights, put an end to discrimination, and to show African Americans in a positive light that was often neglected in the mainstream press. Water's *American Diary* supports this notion. Waters asserted that the role of the black press was significant in rallying support for the achievement of the goal of equality. Newspaper titles which contained words such as "defender" and "guardian" emphasized the role of the newspapers in protecting the new sought after status of blacks.⁸¹

When examining the role of the black press in the civil rights movement, Henry Lee Moon in *Race and the News Media*, discussed how members of the black press disregarded the notion of objectivity and were openly viewed as "The Fighting Press."⁸² Throughout the movement, the black press maintained a strong relationship with many civil rights organizations, one of which being the NAACP. The black press constantly supported the NAACP and is

⁸⁰ Thomas W. Young, "Voice of Protest, Prophet of Change," in *Race and the News Media*, ed. Paul Fisher et al. (New York: Praeger, 1967), 125.

⁸¹ Waters, *American Diary*, Foreword.

⁸² *Ibid*, 133.

credited with helping develop and maintain the reputable status of the organization. Moon also credited the black press with providing leadership roles through the voice of editors and journalists at various black newspapers.

A significant example found in literature that depicts the advocacy role of the black press was the role of the black press during the sit-ins that took place during the 1960s. Some black newspapers carried instructions to sit-in participants about what they should and should not do. Charles Simmons observes that *The Pittsburgh Courier* included a list of rules “For Southern students, White and Colored, Fighting Segregation.”⁸³ This example was a clear indication of the advocacy role that black press was known for and remained true to throughout the duration of the movement.

Similar to the challenge southern editors experienced when attempting to report objectively while remaining true to their southern values, members of the black press faced a similar difficulty. It is evident that members of the black press were viewed as outstanding journalists; however literature supports the notion that throughout the course of the civil rights movement, journalists remained dedicated to their advocacy role and continued to support the advancement of African Americans.

Although there have been two major dimensions of the challenge to report objectively discussed, journalists Jack Bass and Jack Nelson who covered the civil rights movement, suggested that the news media as a whole failed to report objectively concerning smaller, yet equally significant events that occurred during the civil rights movement. Bass and Nelson’s *The Orangeburg Massacre* highlights an event in which shots were fired by local police officers at a crowd of students from South Carolina State College in Orangeburg, South Carolina, who were

⁸³ Charles Simmons, *The African American Press: With Special Reference to Four Newspapers, 1827-1865* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 1998), 98.

protesting against segregation at a bowling alley near campus.⁸⁴ Throughout the book it is suggested that this event, which occurred in 1968, was largely ignored by media and to a certain extent, forgotten. This incident, heavily discussed in the *Orangeburg Massacre*, supports the notion that through selecting certain events, news media as a whole failed to report objectively.

Throughout the civil rights movement, the media effectively brought attention to race relations in America and subsequently opened up an important discussion on race. In existing literature previously discussed, it is evident that the role of media was extremely significant throughout the civil rights movement. Newspaper editors and journalists were often met with several challenges; however they consistently stepped up to the plate and reported on events and stories that would affect the entire nation.

It is significant to note that although the mainstream media and black press are often discussed completely separate from one another, the literature showed that there were instances where reporters and journalists worked together and formed relationships. Similarly, although there were sometimes disdain and a division between northern and southern journalists, they remained true to the goal of informing their audiences on issues greatly affecting them. Journalists understood their powerful role to shape public reaction to events occurring during the movement. They also understood and largely embraced their influence on government officials and passing of civil rights legislation.

Insights from well-known editors during the civil rights movement such as Ashmore, McGill, and Poston provided the audience with insights into the challenging role of covering the civil rights movement. For many southern newspaper editors and journalists, many of the events occurred in their own communities and so were often intensified for them. Similarly, for many members of the Black press, the events and decisions made throughout the movement ultimately

⁸⁴ Jack Bass and Jack Nelson, *The Orangeburg Massacre* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996).

had a significant impact on their race. Both parties recognized the challenge of trying to report objectively on issues directly affecting them; however journalists and editors continued to remain a vital and indispensable voice throughout the movement. Overall, the role of journalists cannot be overlooked.

Chapter 3 Perspectives and Views/Narratives

Race Relations in Rock Hill

In order to comprehend the rationale and significance behind the sit-ins, demonstrations, and jail-ins that took place in Rock Hill in 1960, it is important to understand the relationship between whites and blacks in the city during this time. Desegregation efforts were not new to Rock Hill. Before the historic 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that ruled segregation in schools unconstitutional, the formerly all-white St. Anne Catholic School admitted black students without incident. Three years later, in 1957, the black community in Rock Hill launched a bus boycott that eventually put a discriminatory bus company out of business. In 1960, the first sit-ins began in Rock Hill at the downtown Woolworth's and McCrory's stores.⁸⁵

In Rock Hill at this time, whites and blacks did not have much of a relationship outside of the work place. Of the relations between the two groups in 1960, Friendship Nine member and liberal arts major at Friendship Junior College, Willie McCleod, said, "They were strained. The blacks stayed in a certain area and the only time they mixed was in a working atmosphere."⁸⁶ Similarly, Friendship Nine member and liberal arts major at Friendship Junior College, David Williamson, explained that, "There was no relationship between us. If there was one, you might have it on your job or something like that but it confined mainly to the job."⁸⁷

Clarence Graham, Friendship Nine member and business major at Friendship Junior College, described Rock Hill as a "very very segregated town."⁸⁸ "There were two Rock Hills

⁸⁵ . Charles Jones. Veterans of the Civil rights Movement. Rock Hill & Charlotte Sit-Ins. <http://www.crmvet.org/info/rockhill.htm> (accessed December 20, 2013).

⁸⁶ Willie McCleod, interviewed by Cari Tindall, Rock Hill, SC, November 21, 2013.

⁸⁷ David Williamson, interviewed by Cari Tindall, Rock Hill, SC, November 21, 2013.

⁸⁸ Clarence Graham, interviewed by Cari Tindall, Rock Hill, SC, November 23, 2013.

really. You had a black Rock Hill and a white Rock Hill,” he said.⁸⁹ Graham recalled that the black high school that he attended never received new textbooks. Emmett Scott High School received the already used textbooks from the white high school, Rock Hill High. Graham stressed that blacks in Rock Hill were second-class citizens. Black students were not the only ones who realized that African Americans were being treated as second-class citizens. Marshall Doswell, associate editor of *The Evening Herald*, said that “there were schools for the black kids, but they weren’t as nice as the schools for the white kids. They had old text books. Half the schools were not as good.”⁹⁰

African Americans in Rock Hill did not engage in violent protests to dismantle Jim Crow in spite of their growing impatience with American inequality. Moreover, white supremacists who wanted to preserve the racial status quo also refrained from the acts of violence prevalent in other southern cities. Aside from the occasional egg thrown at a black demonstrator, violent reprisals were rare. John Gaines, a Friendship Nine member and social studies major at Friendship Junior College, commented that, “Rock Hill wasn’t quite as violent as places like Mississippi and Alabama, but there were still a lot people who were violent. I got knocked out up there so there were still some violent people there, but it wasn’t extreme like Mississippi and Alabama at that time.”⁹¹

White supremacists groups existed in and around Rock Hill despite the absence of white violence. Doswell recalled, “I had my first experience with somebody wearing a Ku Klux Klan outfit, you know wearing the white sheet hood and all that, walking up and down Main Street in downtown Rock Hill on a sunny afternoon, and I really didn’t know what to make of that.” As associate editor of *The Herald*, Doswell said that although not invited, newspaper staff covered

⁸⁹ Graham interview.

⁹⁰ Marshall Doswell, interviewed by Cari Tindall, Rock Hill, SC, November 23, 2013.

⁹¹ John Gaines, interviewed by Cari Tindall, Florence, SC, November 22, 2013.

meetings held by the Ku Klux Klan in the country. Klansmen often burned crosses at the gatherings. Staff members went so far as to write down the license plate numbers of cars parked at the meetings. Because the newspaper staff had a contact with someone at the South Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles, they learned that several of the people attending the Klan meetings were prominent members of the Rock Hill community. In Fort Mill, a small town about five miles north of Rock Hill, Doswell commented that there was another racist group called the Red Shirts.

While the Klan could intimidate local black citizens, the real power lay with elected officials who were also all white. Doswell described Rock Hill as the classic Southern town. “All the people on the police force were white,” he said. “All the people on the city council were white. All the people on the county council were white and all the people on the school board were white.” The black citizens of Rock Hill were not represented well and thus did not have much of a voice in decisions affecting their lives every day.

In addition to working for the *Evening Herald*, Doswell also served as president of the Rock Hill Chamber of Commerce. He often came into contact with many members of the community and would have conversations with them regarding the sit-ins and demonstrations that were taking place. He recalled that often times people did not want to take a stance concerning whether or not they actually supported the movement. People did not want to get involved. “I think what the white community in Rock Hill did was to allow the civil rights movement to take place without their active support but also without having any ugly violent stuff of the kind that you got down in Alabama,” he said. “I don’t think that is any great credit to them but it does say something about the fact that they realized that times were changing.”⁹²

⁹² Doswell interview.

Although a majority of the white citizens in Rock Hill were reluctant to voice their opinion on the desegregation efforts occurring in Rock Hill, there were a few white citizens that actively supported what the students were doing and formed good relationships with them. In particular, all of the students spoke highly of Father David Boone, who was more than a passive witness to the changing times. Boone was the white, Catholic priest at Saint Mary Catholic Church in Rock Hill.⁹³ Black students would often visit St. Mary's and use their recreational facilities. McCleod recalled that St. Mary's was one of the only places black boys and girls could socialize with one another. Father David would host dances for the students and also created a young men's club, in which several Friendship Nine students participated. When commenting on the relationship between St. Mary's staff and the black students in the Rock Hill community, Williamson said, "Well, see the way we looked at them they wasn't white. They was us. Anything we got involved in, they were there and especially Brother David."⁹⁴

White intimidation, underfunded black schools, and rampant segregation led students to demonstrate and picket. Gaines explained, "I didn't like what was going on and I was determined I was going to change it."⁹⁵ Even though protestors were concerned about the discriminatory practices evident in Rock Hill such as the separate signs for bathrooms, water fountains and so on, they mainly targeted the lunch counters and stores downtown. While picketing stores downtown, Arthur Hamm, student leader of the boycotts, passed out slips indicating which stores in Rock Hill should be boycotted because of their discriminatory practices. The points on the slip were represented stores with separate water fountains, separate restrooms, stores refusing Negro employment, stores that didn't permit Negroes to try on clothing before purchasing, stores refusing to acknowledge Negroes with courtesy titles, and those which discriminated in lunch

⁹³ McCleod interview.

⁹⁴ Williamson interview.

⁹⁵ Gaines interview.

counter services.⁹⁶ Many service stations and downtown stores in Rock Hill fell into several of these categories. Along with these facilities, Rock Hill also had a segregated Greyhound bus station and segregated churches.⁹⁷

The majority of patrons at the local stores, Woolworth's and McCrory's, were members of the black community. Although black people could buy anything in the store, they could not sit at the lunch counter and be served, simply because they were black. The discrimination at the lunch counters concerned the Friendship Junior College students greatly. McCleod explained that they felt an effective way of bringing about change would be sit-ins and picketing.⁹⁸

The first sit-ins and picketing began on February 12, 1960, a year before the arrest of the "Friendship Nine" and the subsequent jail-in. Clarence Graham went on to say that, "The older people in the community were supportive to a point, but they were afraid to say. We were afraid, but we had to step out of character and forget about that and just focus on what we were to do."⁹⁹ The sit-ins continued until May, when the demonstrations started to decline. Although the main targets of the sit-ins were the lunch counters at Woolworth's and McCrory's variety stores, students also sat in at lunch counters at Phillips Drug Store, Good Drug Store, Tollison-Neal Drug Store, and at the local Greyhound bus terminal.¹⁰⁰ The terminal also had separate waiting rooms and ticket windows for white and black customers.¹⁰¹

The demonstrators included students, youths and several local ministers.¹⁰² Throughout the duration of the sit-ins and demonstrations, an estimated one hundred to two hundred people

⁹⁶ "Six Negro Students Picket Two RH Stores; Urge Boycott," *Evening Herald* (Rock Hill, SC), April 25, 1960.

⁹⁷ "Visiting Negroes stage weekend demonstrations," *Evening Herald* (Rock Hill, SC), Feb. 13, 1961; "'At Least' 40 Negro Students Arrested," *Evening Herald* (Rock Hill, SC), March 15, 1960.

⁹⁸ McCleod interview.

⁹⁹ Graham interview.

¹⁰⁰ "Estimated 100 Quietly Take Seats," *Evening Herald* (Rock Hill, SC), Feb. 12, 1960.

¹⁰¹ "'At Least' 40 Negro Students Arrested," *Evening Herald* (Rock Hill, SC), March 15, 1960.

¹⁰² "2 Ministers Stage Brief Sit-Down," *Evening Herald* (Rock Hill, SC), July 19, 1960; "Negro youths in brief sit-in," *Evening Herald* (Rock Hill, SC), Aug. 12, 1960.

participated. On specific days of demonstrations, the number of people participating varied from six to one hundred. Along with the sit-ins, there were also demonstrations in front of City Hall and demonstrators picketed several stores downtown with discriminatory practices.¹⁰³

Demonstrators constantly urged the boycotting of several of these stores.¹⁰⁴

The sit-ins and demonstrations picked back up on January 3, 1961 and continued through the beginning of March 1961.¹⁰⁵ While the “Friendship Nine” were in jail serving their sentences, out of town demonstrators came to Rock Hill to stage demonstrations and picket the variety stores and drug stores downtown. The visitors, most of who came from Tennessee A&I College in Nashville, Tennessee, also staged kneel-ins at local segregated churches.¹⁰⁶

The Sit-Ins & “Jail, no Bail” Strategy

As early as the 1940s, sit-ins had been used as a way of protesting racial segregation, however they were isolated events that ultimately had no impact. One of the first sit-ins took place in 1957. Three women and four men from Durham, North Carolina, sat in at the Royal Ice Cream parlor and were arrested. The very next year, sit-ins were also held in Wichita, Kansas, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. While none of these protests garnered any significant national attention, this changed on February 1, 1960, when four black students from North Carolina A&T sat in at the lunch counter at F. W. Woolworth store.

Within weeks, sit-ins were launched in other cities, targeting Woolworth and stores of other national chains. Most of the protesters were college students, particularly students from historically black colleges and universities. This initial infamous sit-in was a premeditated act of defiance. The sit-in, which was planned the previous night, would grow to become a nonviolent

¹⁰³ “‘At Least’ 40 Negro Students Arrested,” *Evening Herald*.

¹⁰⁴ “Six Negro Students Picket Two RH Stores; Urge Boycott,” *Evening Herald* (Rock Hill, SC), April 25, 1960.

¹⁰⁵ “Negro students picket, sit-in at RH stores,” *Evening Herald* (Rock Hill, SC), Jan. 5, 1961.

¹⁰⁶ “Visiting Negroes stage weekend demonstrations,” *Evening Herald* (Rock Hill, SC), Feb. 13, 1961

protest that would spread throughout the South as more college students carried out sit-ins in their respective towns. The goal of the original four students that conducted the sit-in was to drink a cup of coffee sitting down.

Although this was their explicit desire, implicitly the students hoped to challenge the Jim Crow practices prevalent in the South. This first sit-in occurred without incident or much attention, however the second sit-in which occurred the following morning attracted the attention of local reporters. As the sit-ins in Greensboro continued, they were eventually discontinued temporarily, in an effort to give local city leaders time to find a possible solution. Although the sit-ins in Greensboro had stopped temporarily, students at black colleges in nearby towns had followed the media's account of the protest and hastily organized sit-ins. Sit-ins occurred in several cities in North Carolina and would eventually spread to South Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, and Alabama.¹⁰⁷ Out of the sit-ins would grow a student run organization, SNCC, which would play a significant role in the civil rights movement. Several of the leaders of the sit-ins played a crucial role in the formation of SNCC. Carson writes, "Accordingly, in April 1960 these students created SNCC to preserve the spontaneity and the militancy of the sit-ins."¹⁰⁸

Prior to the January 31 sit-in in Rock Hill, members of "Friendship Nine" had been involved in earlier protests and efforts to desegregate the lunch counter. During the earlier protests, the Friendship Nine students were still in high school, which limited their civil rights activity. Williamson stressed that, "when you're in high school, you couldn't get involved in that stuff. See, they could just take you and throw you out of school. That's the kind of power they had." For this reason, several high school students were limited to picketing the stores. Solely picketing and not participating in sit-ins lowered the chance of high school students getting

¹⁰⁷ Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

¹⁰⁸ *In Struggle*, 18.

arrested. All of the students discussed the impact that Friendship Junior College students had on them while they were in high school. Williamson recalled that after seeing that his father was not angry with his older sister, whom has been arrested in a demonstration, his own interest in getting involved piqued.¹⁰⁹

Arthur Hamm and Abe Plummer, two students at Friendship Junior College, are generally recognized as being the leaders of the sit-ins and demonstrations in Rock Hill. Gaines recalled that Plummer and Hamm, who were about to graduate from Friendship, knew some of the members of the “Friendship Nine” because they all played football in the same area. Because Plummer and Hamm knew that the high school students were getting ready to graduate and go to Friendship, they invited some of the students to participate in the demonstrations with them. Plummer and Hamm saw potential in the high school students and wanted them to take over when they graduated. “They kind of groomed us into the sit-in movements. The white people called us all kinds of names, but they kind of groomed us into it so we could deal with it and learn the nonviolent concept,” he said.¹¹⁰ High school students learned from their predecessors the importance of remaining non-violent during the demonstrations.

It is significant to note that initially there were ten students; however one student, Charles Taylor did not stay in jail with the remaining students. Williamson said, “Charles Taylor got out because he had a football scholarship and he thought being in there they might take that away.”¹¹¹ In reference to being deemed the “Friendship Nine,” he went on to say that, “When we first got started we weren’t the “Friendship Nine” we were just students from Friendship and from the Rock Hill area trying to make a difference.”

¹⁰⁹Williamson interview.

¹¹⁰ Gaines interview.

¹¹¹ Williamson interview.

Leading up to the January 31 sit-in, several organizations were already active in Rock Hill and on the campus of Friendship Junior College. Clarence Graham was the local campus president of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Local minister Reverend C.A. Ivory, who was responsible for organizing the bus boycott, was also president of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Along with these two organizations, there was also a local chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). These organizations often met together on the campus of Friendship Junior College to plan demonstrations and discuss issues affecting the black community in Rock Hill.

The “Jail, no bail” strategy had been initiated and organized by Gaither. Gaither, a graduate of Claflin College in Orangeburg, South Carolina was already familiar with the movement in Rock Hill. Because Gaither had been student body president at Claflin, he had already established a South Carolina connection. In a CORE article, Gaither revealed that immediately following the very first sit-in in Greensboro, North Carolina, students at Friendship Junior College in Rock Hill had expressed interest in joining the south-wide protest movement. Furthermore, on March 15th, Friendship College students joined a mass protest demonstration in Orangeburg, in which 350 students were arrested. Chuck McDew, who later becomes SNCC chairman, took part in Orangeburg sit-ins while a student at South Carolina State University. These occurrences indicate that Gaither as well as members of SNCC and CORE were familiar with race relations in South Carolina, so it was not unusual for Gaither to work with Friendship students and it would not have been strange for SNCC workers to support Rock Hill's local movement.¹¹²

¹¹² Thomas Gaither. "Jailed In." *CORE League for Industrial Democracy*, April 1961.

Gaither was field secretary for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Gaither, along with other members of CORE and other civil rights organizations, realized the financial burden being placed on the organizations and people in the community as students were constantly being thrown into jail and then released on bail. Specifically, SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) was very instrumental in introducing the “Jail, no bail” strategy. During SNCC’s founding conference, which was April 16-18, 1960 in Raleigh, the principle of going to jail rather than paying bail was one of the major recommendations of the students.¹¹³ Claude Sitton, a reporter for the *New York Times*, was also in attendance at the founding conference. In his coverage of the conference, in an article titled, “Racial Problems Put to the President: Negro Student Chiefs Urge him to Act – They Plan to Coordinate Protests,” he made reference to the “Jail, no bail” strategy. The article stated, “They endorsed the practice of going to jail rather than posting bond on charges stemming from demonstrations.”¹¹⁴

McCleod stressed that there were two major reasons why they all decided to be jailed in. “The idea was to take it to another level and make people conscious of what was happening you know,” he said. “The second reason was the financial reason. All these people going to jail and the money was getting low.”¹¹⁵

Several of the demonstrators said that going to jail and paying the bail was not sending enough of a message to the citizens of Rock Hill. “The next day we were back on the street,” Graham said. “We didn’t accomplish anything. We were making the treasurer for the city rich, so the idea of jail no bail came up and it was difficult because it required a lot of time a lot of

¹¹³ Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981), 22-24.

¹¹⁴ Claude Sitton, “Racial Problems Put to the President: Negro Student Chiefs Urge him to Act – They Plan to Coordinate Protests,” *New York Times*, April 18, 1960.

¹¹⁵ McCleod interview.

training.”¹¹⁶ Williamson agreed with the need for a change in tactics, primarily because of the lack of financial resources. “See it switched the burden on them. See they had to take care of us, feed and clothe us for thirty days, he said. It cost the state and the county money, but before that they was the ones making the money off of us,” he said.¹¹⁷ McCleod remarked that, “People didn’t take it serious, so we had to take it to another level. From the picketing to the sit-ins and the sit-ins didn’t get too much results because we got arrested and NAACP paid the fines.”¹¹⁸

By the time the demonstrators decided to partake in the “Jail, no bail” strategy, \$17,000 had already been spent in bail money.¹¹⁹ Along with wanting to ease the financial burden being placed on the black community, the protestors ultimately wanted to make a difference and inform the nation of what was going on in Rock Hill and across the country. Gaines explained, “We thought if we went to jail and stayed we would prick the conscience of the nation. They couldn’t just get rid of us right quick. Once they arrest us, they got to explain to the world why they got those young black kids sitting up in jail for trying to eat a lunch sandwich.”¹²⁰

Donnie Wilder, managing editor of *The Evening Herald* at the time, admitted to being naïve and not truly grasping the importance of the sit-ins and the jail-in. “You know, we had been brought up under other circumstances and it was just hard to believe that it was all happening,” he said.¹²¹ The shock expressed by Wilder resonated with several members throughout the Rock Hill community. As expressed by the demonstrators, shock was the intended effect of the sit-ins and jail-in as well as their way of challenging citizens to question the discriminatory practices in Rock Hill.

¹¹⁶ Graham interview.

¹¹⁷ Williamson interview.

¹¹⁸ McCleod interview.

¹¹⁹ Jones, Rock Hill & Charlotte Sit-Ins.

¹²⁰ Gaines interview.

¹²¹ Donnie Wilder, interviewed by Cari Tindall, Clinton, SC, November 22, 2013.

The students' actions shocked the community because during the summer and fall of 1960, the demonstrations, sit-ins, and overall movement in Rock Hill had started to lose numbers and more importantly, impact. Williamson, who felt as though the movement was dead, said, "It was like a cooling off time and that's what everybody was saying. You just leave them [demonstrators] alone, it will cool off. They'll get tired and stuff like that, but when we brought this about, this gave it energy and everything." Williamson also recalled that the jail no bail strategy had been brought before other groups of student demonstrators as a possible strategy, however none of the other groups were willing to partake in the strategy. "The other groups had been discussing it, but nobody was willing to step out [except for] when they brought it to this group," he said.¹²²

Before the demonstrators took part in the January 31 sit-in and jail-in, there was a thorough selection process that took place. Although there were several volunteers willing to be jailed, McCleod described the screening process that volunteers had to go through. There were several factors that were considered during the screening process. One of these concerned the student's academic standing. Students who were behind academically did not need to spend long periods of time in jail. Another concern was the vulnerability of students and their families. During this time, several of the students had parents who worked for white citizens as maids or cooks. McCleod remarked that the "kids [whose parents were employed by whites] were much more vulnerable like if one of they kids went to jail the next thing you know the mother and father would be fired. Then the kid's other siblings would not have means of support, so we had to screen people." Females were also excluded from volunteering for the jail-in because the males did not want to put the females at risk.¹²³

¹²² Williamson interview.

¹²³ McCleod interview.

After the screening process, volunteers attended training and sensitivity classes at Friendship Junior College. The training and classes took place during November and December of 1960. Thomas Gaither and other organizers stressed the importance of the movement remaining nonviolent. Graham remembered, “We actually decided it was mandatory that we stay non-violent. We had to abide by the guidelines and of course first thing was being non-violent. Definitely wasn’t going to accept any violence and we understood that and we didn’t want any violence anyway we were 18/19 year old college kids.”

The classes were significant because they prepared the students for their upcoming demonstration. The sensitivity classes taught the demonstrators how to act, but more importantly how not to physically respond in the face of possible violence from onlookers and gathering crowds. During the training and classes, “we would have to literally curse each other out, use the “N” word whatever. See this, if you could take it from a white person or could you take it? Slap each other you know not to hurt but to do that,” he said.¹²⁴ If volunteers resisted during the training and classes, they would be eliminated. Graham explained that there were many people eliminated because they would fight back. The mock resistance prepared the students for the real white violence that they faced during demonstrations and sit-ins taking place throughout the nation. Protestors would be spat on, called despicable names, and sometimes endured burn marks from cigarettes.

Prior to the demonstration and the jail-in, the majority of the demonstrators admitted to not informing their parents and families of their upcoming task. Gaines recalled that his family didn’t have a problem with him participating in the demonstration, however they didn’t know about the jail-in. “We didn’t tell them about that until they had to read about it in the newspaper,” he said. “Because you know what they would say (laughing) you going to jail boy?!”

¹²⁴ Graham interview.

You got to be crazy.”¹²⁵ Williamson, like Gaines, did not inform his family that he was going to jail. He explained that they would most likely try to talk him out of participating. However, he also understood that his parents and families would most likely suffer because of his participation. Williamson revealed that his father lost his job as a result of his participation in the demonstration and jail-in.¹²⁶

McCleod, however, did tell his father about the demonstration and that they were going to jail. McCleod’s father who worked for the city of Rock Hill did not understand why they were willing to stay in jail. McCleod recalled that although his father’s job was vulnerable because he worked for the city, his family owned a farm and lived about eight miles outside of town. The farm caused his family to be mainly self-sufficient. He remarked that this was one of the reasons he was chosen.¹²⁷

Graham recalled that prior to the demonstration and jail-in, his father, who worked for *The Evening Herald*, was threatened by his employers as well as area racist groups. Referring to his childhood home, he said that “they burned a cross right there and threatened Dad they would fire him if I continued to participate. They would fire him.”¹²⁸

Although Graham understood the danger that he was putting his family in, he also understood that this was something that needed to be done in order to change their circumstances. While in jail, Graham wrote a letter to his parents, explaining the importance of the demonstration and the jail-in. This letter, which became known as a “Dear Mom and Dad” letter, was published in the *Baltimore Afro-American*. In a letter to the editor from Reverend Ivory, the letter was also published in *The Evening Herald*. In Graham’s “Dear Mom and Dad”

¹²⁵ Gaines interview.

¹²⁶ Williamson interview

¹²⁷ McCleod interview.

¹²⁸ Graham interview.

letter, he pleads to his parents not to be angry with him and asks them to understand why he is participating in the demonstrations. He tells them that this is something that he has thought very seriously about. A portion of the letter read:

Try to understand that what I'm doing is right. It isn't like going to jail for a crime like stealing, killing, etc., but we are going for the betterment of all Negroes... So try to see things my way and give us, the younger generation, a chance to prove ourselves, please. And most of all don't worry and pray for us.¹²⁹

While black parents might have been surprised by their children's actions, local law enforcement officials were prepared for the demonstrations. Graham recalled, "We thought that when we get downtown it wouldn't be anybody you know we would kind of surprise everybody."¹³⁰ He went on to explain that instead of being surprised, there were a few hundred law enforcement officers lined up and down the street as the protestors walked downtown to picket and sit-in. Law enforcement officials from the surrounding areas as well as the prominent officials of SLED (South Carolina Law Enforcement Division) were on the scene. Demonstrators admitted to being afraid when they saw the large number of officers and several hecklers waiting as they walked downtown.

Although information about the sit-in had been leaked, the plans to remain in jail were kept quiet by the protestors until they went to court to be charged. "Tom Gaither spoke to Finney [their lawyer] and told him that we've decided that we know we going to be found guilty and we're not going to pay the fine we gonna go to jail and we gonna stay," he said. After being found guilty of trespassing and ordered to pay their fines, the demonstrators announced that they

¹²⁹ Cecil Ivory, "Disclaims credit for jail-in move," *The Evening Herald*, February 11, 1961, 4.

¹³⁰ Graham interview.

were not going to pay their bail money. Graham remembered that the “courtroom got so quiet because we hadn’t told anybody.” As shock filled the courtroom, supporters such as community leader Reverend Ivory asked the students if they understood what they were doing. Although their lawyer explained that the court would give them a few hours to make their final decision, the protestors stood by their strategy of remaining in jail rather than post bond.

Within the hour, the students were taken to the prison camp located in York, South Carolina, about fifteen miles south of Rock Hill. All of the demonstrators remarked that this is when the task became even more difficult. McCleod reminisced that instead of being separated according to the offense, the jails were racially separated. “They didn’t care who they put in there but they wouldn’t put no white man in there,” he said.¹³¹

While in jail, the students worked on the chain gang along with the other inmates. They would work from five in the morning until five in the afternoon. Some of their duties included shoveling snow and dirt. According to Graham, a few of the protestors were also sent out to a private farm in Chester County to pick vegetables at a private farm, although this was illegal.¹³² While in jail, the students supported one another physically and mentally. Williamson recalled that, “When we was in jail I did most of the work because them young fellas didn’t have any hard work in their life.”¹³³

Graham explained that although they were not best friends, he believed that every one of them was placed there for a reason. Furthermore, he added that they had to have unity while in jail in order to survive. “We all drew on each others’ strength,” he said. Graham went on to say that they also helped each other with homework. Whenever college professors and members of the community visited, they would bring along homework and exams for the students to

¹³¹ Graham interview.

¹³² Graham interview.

¹³³ Williamson interview.

complete. Because the black community supported their cause, the students were able to work out their schooling with their professors so that they would not be too far behind while in jail.

Along with outside community support, Graham recalled that there were also several inmates that supported and protected the students because they knew some of their families. He explained that having that support while in jail also made a difference. Graham remarked that they would say, “We got your back. We gonna take care of you while you here. Don’t worry about it. And they did.”¹³⁴ The protestors did not have many problems during their jail-in. When John Gaines, one of the protestors, fell ill, the other students decided to go on a hunger and work strike to draw attention to Gaines’ plight. They were then placed into solitary confinement for a short period of time.

While in jail, the student received visits from supporters around the country. Gaines recalled that, “Thousands of people coming out the jailhouse to see us... and that really shook South Carolina up so bad and it made Rock Hill the focal point of the whole civil rights movement at one time.”¹³⁵ Williamson agreed with Gaines and remembered that while they were in jail, a large crowd of supporters came to Rock Hill to continue the demonstrations and sit-ins. “They told us that some 300 people had come to Rock Hill to go to jail...But like we said we didn’t know these 300 people [came to Rock Hill] because when we was in jail you didn’t get no communication,” he said.¹³⁶

Williamson explained that when they first arrived at the prison farm, they watched television and listened to the radio. They stayed abreast of the local news and the continuing demonstrations. While serving at the prison farm, members of the black community continued to demonstrate against the segregated practices and facilities in Rock Hill. There were also out of

¹³⁴ Graham interview.

¹³⁵ Gaines interview.

¹³⁶ Williamson interview.

town students that came to support and join the local demonstrations.¹³⁷ However, the “Friendship Nine” were not aware of these continuing demonstrations. Williamson said that after a certain amount of time, the television and radio were both taken away and the demonstrators had “no connection to the outside world.”¹³⁸

Because of the large number of supporters coming to visit the protestors in jail, law enforcement officials eliminated the morning visiting hours at the prison farm. *The Evening Herald* reported that the morning visiting hours were eliminated mainly due to security reasons.¹³⁹ After experiencing a large group of visitors, law enforcement officials said that the protection of the prison was their chief concern. Although the morning visiting hours were eliminated, the demonstrators still received visitors for an hour and a half on Sundays.¹⁴⁰

The nine demonstrators were released on March 2, after serving 29 days at the York County Prison Farm. They were released upon completion of their sentences, which were given when the demonstrators were arrested for trespassing in January. Although the demonstrators were sentenced for 30 days, they were released a day earlier in an effort by local law enforcement officials to suppress a planned celebration by the black community. McCleod explained that, “The authorities were being underhanded and wanted to stop the community from having the celebration they planned for the day of our release.”¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, this action by local law enforcement officials did not hinder the feelings of freedom the demonstrators experienced after finally being released from jail. “I felt exhilarated, wonderful, and beautiful because we were free!” he said. Williamson agreed with McCleod and recalled, “It was great! It was like coming out of darkness and seeing light. The whole world opened back up.”

¹³⁷ “Visiting Negroes stage weekend demonstrations,” *Evening Herald* (Rock Hill, SC), Feb. 13, 1961

¹³⁸ Williamson interview.

¹³⁹ “Morning visiting hours at prison farm eliminated,” *The Evening Herald*, February, 18, 1961, 1.

¹⁴⁰ Gaines interview.

¹⁴¹ McCleod Interview.

Views on Media Coverage

In 1961, Rock Hill had one local newspaper, the *Evening Herald*. The general consensus among the demonstrators was that the newspaper did not effectively cover the sit-ins and jail in. The demonstrators said that they didn't recall ever being interviewed by anyone from the local newspaper. Williamson remembered, "We never talked to the media, not the local media. Matter of fact, I don't remember talking to anybody with a mic in front of me or somebody with a piece of paper during that time."¹⁴²

McCleod agreed with Williamson and recalled a picture of the demonstrators while they were in jail being printed by the Baltimore *Afro-American* and then later in the *Evening Herald*. Clarence Graham also agreed that the local newspaper never interviewed any of the demonstrators. "We had no relationship with the local news media," he said.¹⁴³ Along with not being interviewed, the demonstrators expressed that the local newspaper was biased and had an agenda. Of the bias evident in the newspaper, McCleod remarked that, "they were prejudiced. There weren't too many things black they put in there. They'd put black in there if you dead or they might put black in there if you born maybe. If anything bad happen to you then they put that in there but that was it."¹⁴⁴ The paper did not have a history of prominently featuring news related to African Americans. When the paper did run stories concerning news in the black community, it did so in a section called "The Colored News." In this section, a few pages were dedicated to announcements, accomplishments, and area news concerning the black community.

Recalling the sit-ins and jail in, Graham did not remember the *Evening Herald* reporting anything that was going on during that time. He went on to say that it was not until the 50th anniversary of the sit-ins and jail in that they were finally interviewed. "The local press denied a

¹⁴² Williamson interview.

¹⁴³ Graham interview.

¹⁴⁴ McCleod interview.

lot that things happened, but we were history,” he said.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Gaines also remembered being interviewed for the 50th anniversary. “They didn’t interview us at that time. They just reported what happened. We’ve been interviewed quite a few times now since then,” he said.

Although the demonstrators were not interviewed, they acknowledged that the *Evening Herald* interviewed some of the major black leaders during the sit-ins and jail in. Williamson recalled that there was a good relationship between local minister and community leader Reverend Ivory and associate editor Doswell. He expressed that this was the only relationship and connection they had to the local media. “If you talk to Mr. Doswell he’ll tell you they use to get on the phone at night,” he said.

The demonstrators also explained that the *Evening Herald* was very cautious about what they reported in the newspaper as to not upset the local community. Along with being cautious, the demonstrators also felt that the newspaper did not thoroughly explain to the community the significance of the sit-ins and the jail in. Williamson remarked, “we got bits and pieces, but like I said they wasn’t looking at the big picture you didn’t get the reason why we were doing it.”¹⁴⁶

The demonstrators believed that the *Evening Herald* underreported the sit-ins and jail in and did not want to make the citizens of Rock Hill fully aware of what was going on in their small town. McCleod commented that, “I’m not trying to down them or anything, but they didn’t want the people around here to know. They didn’t want people to think they were condoning or anything of that nature so they were trying to hush it up.”¹⁴⁷ Graham said that most of the stories related to the sit-ins and jail in were being reported by their neighboring paper the *Charlotte Observer* and the national newspaper, the *Baltimore Afro-American*. “The *Herald*

¹⁴⁵ Graham interview.

¹⁴⁶ Williamson interview.

¹⁴⁷ McCleod interview.

would not print anything. They didn't want any light shed on the community. They printed nothing," he said.¹⁴⁸

McCleod recalled that although the newspaper reported some of what was going on, the stories lacked context and a comprehensive understanding as to why the students were demonstrating and conducting the sit-ins. "You know I'm not saying they completely ignored it...but they didn't do it justice," he said.¹⁴⁹ Although the protestors agreed that the newspaper could have done a better job reporting the demonstrations, they also expressed an understanding as to why the staff at the newspaper had to be cautious about what they reported. Williamson commented that, "I don't hold that against them for that because you know you had to protect your job at that time."¹⁵⁰

Several of the demonstrators expressed their gratitude towards the *Baltimore Afro American* and other national newspapers for effectively covering the demonstrations and jail in. Besides the *Baltimore Afro-American*, the *New York Times* also covered the sit-ins.¹⁵¹ Without coverage from the *Baltimore Afro-American*, demonstrators felt that they would not have gained the notoriety and spread their message as effectively. The national media outlets attracted a wider audience because of their large readership. Williamson commented that, "well if it wasn't for the national media, especially the *Afro-American* it [the Rock Hill movement] would have been dead."¹⁵²

According to the demonstrators, the national newspapers played an extremely significant role in informing readers around the nation of the protests and the jail in. During a time when

¹⁴⁸ Graham interview.

¹⁴⁹ McCleod interview.

¹⁵⁰ Williamson interview.

¹⁵¹ Claude Sitton, "Negroes' Protest Spreads in South." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), February 13, 1960, accessed December 19, 2013 <http://search.proquest.com/docview/115062910?accountid=13158>; *Baltimore Afro-American*, February 11, 1961.

¹⁵² Williamson interview.

local media often neglected to report on efforts of desegregation in their own towns, McCleod emphasized that the national newspapers helped to shed light on these communities. “When they got the news, they printed it, especially in areas where the local newspaper wouldn’t print it there. They’d print it [the *Baltimore Afro American*], so would New York,” he said.¹⁵³ Similarly, Gaines acknowledged the overall significant role that the media played in garnering support for the civil rights movement. “The white press is nationally what helped inspire the civil rights movement because they really portrayed us all the time. CBS and all the rest of them, they reported the Friendship Nine,” he said. Gaines expressed his appreciation of the national media outlets effectively covering various moments during the movement. Through covering these significant events, the press made people aware of what was happening in communities around the nation. “The press is what really made it big because they reported what was going on,” he said.

Although the majority of the demonstrators said the *Evening Herald* did a poor job covering the protests and jail in, one of the students spoke positively of the local newspaper and provided his thoughts regarding their reporting. Gaines believed that the *Evening Herald* reported the sit-ins in a fair and balanced manner. He expressed that whenever there were demonstrations, the local newspaper was always there. “Every time we went up there, they recorded it in the newspaper,” he said. He also alluded to the lack of coverage on desegregation efforts in Southern towns during this time. In light of this, Gaines said, “It was about as balanced as you going to get back in those days. They just reported the news. They didn’t expound on nothing. They just reported what happened.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ McCleod interview.

¹⁵⁴ Gaines interview.

Doswell, associate editor of the newspaper at the time, expressed similar views on how the newspaper covered the sit-ins. Doswell commended the *Evening Herald* on its coverage of the sit-ins and jail-in. “I’m sort of proud of what we did. I think we covered it pretty well. We wrote stories about it when it happened,” he said. Doswell explained that the newspaper had three major goals while reporting the demonstrations: covering the demonstrations objectively, not sensationalizing the stories, and preventing violence from occurring. When asked about how effective the newspaper was in covering the demonstrations objectively, Donnie Wilder, managing editor, recalled, “We honestly tried to do a good job, a balanced job.”¹⁵⁵ He went on to express that he felt the *Evening Herald* did an average job for a South Carolina newspaper. Perhaps Wilder was alluding to the assumption that newspapers in the South rarely covered desegregation efforts in their respective towns in a fair and balanced manner.

¹⁵⁵ Wilder interview.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Media Coverage

This chapter will provide a detailed account of how the *Evening Herald* the local newspaper in Rock Hill reported the movement in Rock Hill. Because of the news media's ability to shape the community's reactions and opinions, it is significant to examine local coverage of the desegregation efforts in Rock Hill.¹⁵⁶ For the most part, the *Evening Herald* reported the sit-ins and demonstrations accurately. However there were times when the coverage was not as thorough and overlooked the significance of the "Jail, no bail" strategy. While editors reported the sit-ins and demonstrations fairly and chose not to sensationalize the protests, they failed to acknowledge the precedents that the students made with the "Jail, no bail" strategy.

Fair and Balanced Reporting

Although several of the demonstrators expressed the view that the *Evening Herald* did not effectively cover the sit-ins and jail in, an analysis shows us that the demonstrations were nevertheless covered in a fair and balanced manner. Because the demonstrations began prior to the January 31, 1961 sit-in, my analysis examined the time frame of January 1960 through March 1961. During this time frame, the *Evening Herald*, which was published daily, carried approximately 80 stories relating to the demonstrations in Rock Hill.

When the sit-ins first started on February 12, 1960, the newspaper ran a big story on the demonstrations that stretched over four newspaper columns. The placement of articles on the first and second pages of the *Evening Herald* indicates that the newspaper's editors and staff prioritized the demonstrations. The newspaper realized that the sit-in demonstrations at the

¹⁵⁶ McCombs, Maxwell E., and Donald L. Shaw. "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1972): 176.

downtown lunch counters affected all Rock Hill citizens and because of this carried most of the stories on the front page.

In subsequent days, the newspaper consistently carried additional stories relating to the demonstrations. The articles reported what happened during the demonstrations and also reported the community members involved in the demonstrations. Participants included local community leaders, demonstrators, and local law enforcement officials. The articles were concise, accurate descriptions of the demonstrations. The first article about the sit-ins titled, "Estimated 100 Quietly Take Seats," is representative of the fair and balanced manner the newspaper covered all of the demonstrations. Along with reporting what occurred at the lunch counter, the newspaper also printed three photographs of students demonstrating.

The *Evening Herald* reported that some white Rock Hill youth engaged in violent acts during the demonstrations. This contradicted the assumptions of most white adult Rock Hill citizens who attributed the violence to black demonstrators. On the contrary, the singular violent act that occurred during the first demonstration came at the hands of a white youth. The newspaper reported, "The only violence reported by 12:45 p.m. came...where a white youth hurled an ammonia bomb into the store through the front door."¹⁵⁷ This is significant because it supports the notion that the *Evening Herald* fairly reported wrongdoings during the demonstrations, regardless of race. As the demonstrations continued, a thorough analysis of the articles indicated that the local newspaper continued to fairly report violent occurrences and persons involved.

The local newspaper reported what occurred and presented the stories in an objective manner. For example, in a story about the sit-ins resuming in Rock Hill, the *Evening Herald* said this, "The resumption of the lunch counters came on the first day that the two stores reopened

¹⁵⁷ "Estimated 100 Quietly Take Seats," *Evening Herald*, February 12, 1960.

their counters for business.”¹⁵⁸ The story detailed the time of the arrival of the demonstrators, the number of demonstrators at the counters, and the refusal of the managers to serve the demonstrators. Similarly, another example can be found in a story on the arrest of a large amount of demonstrators. The *Evening Herald* said, “Students from Friendship Junior College in Rock Hill began simultaneous demonstrations about 12:45 p.m. today before the Rock Hill City Hall and in the Greyhound and Trailways bus stations and at one drug store.”¹⁵⁹

Analysis of the articles indicated that the *Evening Herald* succeeded in accomplishing all three of their goals, covering the demonstrations objectively, not sensationalizing the stories, and preventing violence from occurring. In terms of objectivity, several of the articles contained quotes from all significant parties. The newspaper printed quotes from demonstrators, local black community leaders, law enforcement officials, and white city officials. For example, in a story on a meeting being held by the black community about the sit-ins, Reverend Cecil Ivory was quoted as saying, “The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the lunch counter demonstrations in our city and to seek community support for the students who are participating in the demonstrations.”¹⁶⁰ Another example can be found in an article discussing the trials of demonstrators that were arrested. The Mayor of Rock Hill was quoted as saying, “In view of present racial unrest in the South, and in the interest of the citizens of our community, we cannot tolerate demonstrations of this type, which jeopardize the general public safety.”¹⁶¹ In order to present a balanced and objective view on the demonstrations, the newspaper recognized the importance of the community hearing all sides of the argument.

¹⁵⁸ “Lunch Counter Sitdown Resumes in Rock Hill,” *Evening Herald*, February 23, 1960.

¹⁵⁹ “‘At Least 40’ Negro Students Arrested,” *Evening Herald*, March 15, 1960.

¹⁶⁰ “Negro Groups Call Meet On ‘Sitdowns,’” the *Evening Herald*, February 26, 1960.

¹⁶¹ “Trials Postponed, 70 Negroes Out on Bonds Totaling \$1, 445,” the *Evening Herald*, March 16, 1960.

Along with presenting statements from everyone involved in the demonstrations, the newspaper also covered the local chapter meetings of York County Citizen's Council and the NAACP. Although these two organizations represented two completely different groups with extremely different goals, the *Evening Herald* nevertheless maintained their objectivity by covering both meetings. The newspaper never showed preference to either of the organizations. The *Evening Herald* carried several stories on both organizations, printed quotes from members and speakers, and often ran the stories on the front page of the newspaper. For example, on February 17 and March 18, 1960, the *Evening Herald* carried the following articles on two differing organizations respectively: "Citizen's Council Leader Urges Law, Not Violence," and "Rock Hill NAACP Proposes Boycott Of Certain Stores."¹⁶²

Throughout the duration of the demonstrations, the newspaper also effectively presented different viewpoints from members of the community. Although the majority of the articles analyzed were printed in the main sections of the newspaper, there were quite a few stories and letters to the editor related to the demonstrations in the opinion section. The perspective printed in the opinion section varied with persons who supported the demonstrations as well as those who were strongly against them. Some of the letters in the opinion section also remained neutral, but suggested that negotiations be made between city officials and the demonstrators. An example is a letter to the editor titled, "Voice of the people: He feels a meeting would be first step." In this letter, the writer stressed that integration was eventually coming to Rock Hill and that he believed integration was the overall goal of the current desegregation efforts. The writer further emphasized the immediate need for a meeting between Negro student leaders and City Council. "I think the first step in the solution of this problem should be a meeting of the city

¹⁶² "Citizen's Council Leader Urges Law, Not Violence," *Evening Herald*, February 17, 1960; "Rock Hill NAACP Proposes Boycott Of Certain Stores," *Evening Herald*, March 18, 1960.

council with the Negro Student Leaders. That would be a civilized way to solve the problem,” he said.¹⁶³

On the same day, February 17, another letter from a Rock Hill resident ran with the title “She is opposed to mixing.”¹⁶⁴ Because the *Evening Herald* printed the differing opinions and views of the local community, this further supports the notion that the local newspaper reported the demonstrations in an objective and balanced manner.

In further support of this view, the *Evening Herald* ran a story with the headline, “Ivory Praises Reporters, Principals in Rock Hill.” The article described a civil rights meeting in which the state president of the NAACP criticized the media’s portrayal of the local demonstrations. Ivory corrected the NAACP president and explained to him that the newspaper in Rock Hill is an exception. Ivory said, “We do feel that here in Rock Hill we’ve had reporters who have printed the news largely as they’ve heard and seen it. We can say here in Rock Hill our editors have given us a fair shake.”¹⁶⁵ Ivory’s comments suggest that at least some black Rock Hill citizens believed that their local newspaper accurately reported local happenings.

Another reason why many black citizens trusted the *Evening Herald* to truthfully cover the demonstrations is because many of them had amicable relationships with newspaper staff. For example, Reverend Ivory who was a prominent figure throughout the local movement in Rock Hill had a very good relationship with the editors at the *Evening Herald*. Doswell described his relationship with Reverend Ivory as a good one. The newspaper editor recalled that the local leader “understood I didn’t have a license, it wasn’t my newspaper. He also understood that I

¹⁶³ “He Feels a Meeting would be First Step,” *Evening Herald*, February 17, 1961.

¹⁶⁴ “She is Opposed to Mixing,” *Evening Herald*, February 17, 1961.

¹⁶⁵ “Ivory Praises Reporters, Principals In Rock Hill,” *Evening Herald*, April 15, 1960.

was very sympathetic to what they were trying to do and we would talk about it. He would call me at home at night sometimes and we'd talk.”¹⁶⁶

Literature on the role of media during the civil rights movement has suggested that there were several instances where local newspapers neglected to cover or covered with bias the desegregation efforts in their own towns. Although it is evident that the *Evening Herald* lacked in some areas, they undoubtedly deserve credit for their efforts to report on the desegregation efforts in an objective and fair manner. While the majority of southern newspapers either ignored or showed prejudice when covering the racial tension and demonstrations occurring in their towns, the *Evening Herald* made a conscience attempt to cover the stories accurately, so that readers formed their own opinions. In terms of objectivity, literature has also suggested that during this time, there were several instances of editors blatantly voicing their opinions on issues concerning integration in their towns. Some of these editors not only voiced their opinions, but some of their editorials urged southern resistance to forced integration. It is apparent that the editors at the *Evening Herald* did not fall into this category.

The dates of publication of the articles analyzed also indicated the consistent nature in which the newspaper covered the demonstrations. From the very first demonstration in February of 1960 until the “Friendship Nine” were released from jail in March 1961, the newspaper continuously covered all events and meetings that had anything to do with the sit-ins. On some occasions the newspaper published more than one article related to the local demonstrations on the same day. Several of the articles in the newspapers also carried long stories that would continue onto the next page. The articles gave readers a detailed report of the events going on and the persons involved.

¹⁶⁶ Doswell interview.

The articles often occupied several columns. During the summer months in 1960, there were not as many stories in the newspaper. This is most likely because during the summer months, momentum surrounding the protests had slowed down, thus there was not as much for the newspaper to report. Similarly, during a specific time frame, August 1960 to January 1961, the newspaper carried small paragraphs on the continuous demonstrations. The small paragraphs on the demonstrations could be interpreted as the newspaper portraying the demonstrations as insignificant. Doswell explained, however, that because the demonstrations were continuing without any results, the newspaper decided not to deem the stories as significant as when the demonstrations first began. “After a while the news will be that they didn’t do it one day,” he said. “When a thing happens over and over and over, after a while its news value diminishes. Nothing new is happening.”¹⁶⁷ Nonetheless, the *Evening Herald* still deserves credit for upholding their journalistic responsibility of continuing to cover significant news i.e. the demonstrations in the Rock Hill community. The stories were short in length, yet the newspaper remained dedicated to reporting exactly what happened. Overall, careful analysis supports the notion that the local newspaper in Rock Hill reported demonstrations and sit-ins in a fair and balanced manner.

Emphasis on Nonviolence in Rock Hill

An analysis also showed that the *Evening Herald* did not sensationalize the desegregation efforts in Rock Hill. The newspaper understood its ability to influence public opinion and reaction to the sit-ins and demonstrations. Sensationalizing the demonstrations could have led the community to overreact and possibly incite violence. With a keen understanding that this was a possibility, the newspaper staff worked to maintain peace in the community. Toward this end, the newspaper placed particular emphasis on the nonviolent aspect of the demonstrations.

¹⁶⁷ Doswell interview.

Analysis of articles in the *Evening Herald* indicated that the newspaper continuously portrayed the demonstrations as calm and nonviolent. On February 12, 1960, the newspaper carried their first article on the demonstrations in Rock Hill. The title of the article was “Estimated 100 Quietly Take Seats.” By including the word quietly in the title, the newspaper assured its readers that the demonstrations took place without incident.

The *Evening Herald* reported the participants involved in the demonstrations from a positive, respectable angle. Evidence can be seen in several of the articles. The previous article, for example, described the black youth demonstrators as orderly, polite, and well dressed. The article went on to report that, “many of them said “excuse me,” or “pardon me” as they moved through crowds of curious white people who collected to see what might happen.”¹⁶⁸ On more than one occasion the demonstrators were described as quietly demonstrating or marching. Describing the demonstrators in this particular manner further assured the local community that the students protesting wanted to keep the demonstrations nonviolent. These descriptions also assured the community that the youth were nonthreatening and peacefully demonstrating. Several articles also stated that white townspeople would often ignore the demonstrators and continue to eat their meals. Again, through reporting that white townspeople would continue to eat their meals in the presence of the demonstrators further ensured the community that violence was not an issue during the sit ins.

The majority of the articles also informed readers that there was always local law enforcement officials present at the demonstrations. The *Evening Herald* carried several statements from local law enforcement and consistently reported any incidents that took place during the demonstrations. For example, in an article on the resumption of sit-ins and an arrest at

¹⁶⁸ “Estimated 100 Quietly Take Seats,” *Evening Herald*, February 12, 1960.

the demonstrations, the *Evening Herald* said, “Police Chief W.S. Rhodes said the man would be charged either with trespassing or with creating breach of the peace.” Articles reported that local police officers increased their patrols and presence as the demonstrations continued. Local law enforcement officials were portrayed as helpful, constantly present at all of the demonstrations, and were not rough or harmful towards demonstrators when arrests were necessary. In the same article, the *Evening Herald* reported that, “Police Sgt. W.D. Thomas asked white persons who congregated on the sidewalk outside of the places to move on.”¹⁶⁹

Law enforcement officials received constant praise during the demonstrations. The mayor of Rock Hill and governor of South Carolina were also repeatedly quoted praising the law enforcement in Rock Hill for dutifully maintaining law and order. It is significant to note that most of the incidents necessitating police action occurred at the hands of white youth in the crowds. White youth would heckle, spit, knock demonstrators off of the stools, and throw things at the demonstrators. In reporting who acted uncivilly, the newspaper debunked the idea that the demonstrators brought trouble to an otherwise calm environment. These small isolated incidents notwithstanding, widespread violence did not occur in the Rock protests. Even the Grand Jury of York County “commended local and state law enforcement agencies for their handling of recent racial demonstrations in York County.”¹⁷⁰

Similarly, on February 8, 1961, the newspaper printed an editorial titled, “Let Law and Order Prevail,” which commended the local law enforcement in doing “an outstanding job in the last year in maintaining strict order during repeated sit in demonstrations.”¹⁷¹ This editorial stood out because it was indicative of the *Evening Herald’s* view on the role of law enforcement during

¹⁶⁹ “Rock Hill Sitdowns Resume; 1 Arrested,” *Evening Herald*, April 1, 1960.

¹⁷⁰ “Grand Jury Praises Police Work.”

¹⁷¹ “Let Law and Order Prevail,” *Evening Herald*, February 8, 1961.

the demonstrations. The editorial further serves as evidence of the emphasis the newspaper placed on remaining nonviolent. The piece also urged fellow citizens of Rock Hill to continue to react to the demonstrations and sit-ins in a peaceful manner as to not tarnish the progressive and liberal reputation Rock Hill has established for itself. The editorial began, "Rock Hill is recognized widely as one of the most progressive and liberal cities in South Carolina. Probably because of this it has been chosen as the key spot for lunch counter sit-in demonstrations in the South." This opening illustrated the favorable view the newspaper held of their beloved community. Furthermore, it was quite implicit that the *Evening Herald* did not want to attract bad publicity or any publicity at all because of the sit-ins.

The editorial went on to express that "the vast majority of Rock Hill citizens also have shown regard for public peace and order."¹⁷² The portrayal of Rock Hill citizens as in favor of maintaining peace during the demonstrations served to ensure readers that citizens in Rock Hill were not retaliating with incidents of violence. Another article published February 17, 1960, also supported the nonviolent aspect prevalent in the *Evening Herald*. The article titled, "Citizen's Council Leader Urges Law, Not Violence," covered a meeting held by the local Citizen's Council.¹⁷³ Although certainly not in favor of integration, the organization nevertheless stressed the importance of obeying South Carolina laws and resulting to violence.

The emphasis on nonviolence contributed to Rock Hill's goal of maintaining its positive image, despite the desegregation efforts occurring in the local community. The significant amount of articles that emphasize the nonviolent aspect of the sit-ins supports this notion that the *Evening Herald* did not want Rock Hill's image and reputation to suffer. It is also evident that the local newspaper wanted to refrain from Rock Hill being placed in the same category of towns

¹⁷² "Let Law and Order Prevail."

¹⁷³ Paul Caldwell, "Citizen's Council Leader Urges Law, Not Violence," *Evening Herald*, February 17, 1960.

such as Little Rock or Birmingham, where the violence had contributed to the tarnishing the images of those towns. Through editorials and news stories, it was apparent that the *Evening Herald* did not want to become synonymous with those kinds of towns. Through these articles, it is evident that the local newspaper recognized and acknowledged the importance of maintaining order as well as the positive image of Rock Hill. It is unclear as to why the newspaper placed emphasis on maintaining the positive image of Rock Hill. Perhaps the *Evening Herald* wanted to control how Rock Hill was discussed and perceived by the media. It is likely that the newspaper wanted to prevent the image of Rock Hill from being distorted by national media outlets that also covered the demonstrations and sit-ins.

It is significant to understand that the emphasis on nonviolence was also an issue for the demonstrators as well. Both the local newspaper and demonstrators wanted the protests to remain nonviolent. Although the emphasis on nonviolence may have been for two completely different reasons, it is still noteworthy that both groups wanted the demonstrations to remain nonviolent. As discussed in the previous chapter, the organizers of the demonstrations stressed the importance of the protests remaining nonviolent. There was an extremely strong emphasis on the demonstrations remaining nonviolent. The interviews revealed a strong sense of commitment to the nonviolent aspect of the demonstrations. Organizers refused to let demonstrators participate if there was any chance that they would retaliate or resist in any form.

Several of the demonstrators expressed the need to keep the demonstrations nonviolent for physical and philosophical reasons. The demonstrators emphasized that they were being guided by SCLC under the direction of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. It was well known that Reverend King was a strong proponent of carrying out tactics based on nonviolent philosophy. King drew inspiration from his Christian faith and the peaceful teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.

Understanding that advocating for freedom did not have to include violence, King “used the power of words and acts of nonviolent resistance, such as protests, grassroots organizing, and civil disobedience to achieve seemingly-impossible goals.”¹⁷⁴ In regards to the physical aspect, the demonstrators explained that they simply did not want to fight and only wanted to make a change. Furthermore, the demonstrators acknowledged that law enforcement officials were more likely to use weapons, which would only make matters worse and possibly lead to injury or death.

Although the *Evening Herald* deserves some credit for placing emphasis on the nonviolent aspect of the demonstrations, this emphasis can also be viewed as one of the reasons why the newspaper overlooked the importance of the jail, no bail strategy. Because the *Evening Herald* focused majority of their attention on emphasizing the nonviolent aspect of the demonstrations, the newspaper neglected to appreciate the importance of the jail in and the role of the “Friendship Nine” in the civil rights movement.

Overlooking Importance of “Friendship Nine,” and “Jail, no bail” Strategy

Although the *Evening Herald* reported the demonstrations in an accurate, balanced, and objective manner, the newspaper overlooked the significance of the jail in. The paper's failure to adequately report on the jail-in was surprising given their earlier record of inclusive and accurate accounts about the demonstrations. The significance of the decision of the “Friendship Nine” to remain in jail is something that cannot be overlooked. The actions of the “Friendship Nine” contributed to Rock Hill becoming a focal point during the civil rights movement. However, as discussed in the previous section, articles indicated that the *Evening Herald* was more concerned with ensuring that the demonstrations did not attract any type of publicity, even good publicity.

¹⁷⁴ The King Center. About Dr. King. <http://www.thekingcenter.org/about-dr-king> (accessed February 15, 2014).

After the “Friendship Nine” went to jail, several other groups of students carried out the same strategy in their respective towns. The actions of the students encouraged members from SNCC to travel to Rock Hill from their respective campuses and demonstrate and then carry out the “Jail, no bail” strategy. The “Friendship Nine” inspired these students and several others to carry out their entire jail sentences and place the financial burden onto the cities.

Because the newspaper covered the sit-ins and demonstrations in a fair and balanced manner, its lack of emphasis and acknowledgement of the “Jail, no bail” strategy was unexpected. The *Evening Herald* missed the opportunity to place emphasis on the decision of the students to remain in jail. On January 31, 1961, the day of the demonstration, the *Evening Herald* carried an article on the arrest titled, “Demonstrators arrested in Rock Hill.”¹⁷⁵ The next day, the newspaper reported that all of the demonstrators were found guilty of trespassing and fined one hundred dollars or a thirty-day prison sentence. The following day, February 2, the newspaper carried another article titled, “Demonstrators are serving sentences at prison farm.”¹⁷⁶ Nowhere in this article or the previous two is it acknowledged that the students were in fact making history with their “Jail, no bail” strategy. It is unclear as to whether or not the newspaper was aware of the historical precedent being set by the students. Perhaps the “Friendship Nine” did not receive adequate coverage because editors thought students would remain in jail only until their bail was posted, which is what usually happened in previous cases when students were arrested. However, as the days dragged on and it became clear that the students intended to serve their full jail terms, the newspaper failed to acknowledge the historical precedent set by the students. Only with time, did it become clear that students intended to remain jailed in and transfer the financial burden onto the city. In the article, it was recognized that the students

¹⁷⁵ “Demonstrators arrested in R.H.,” *Evening Herald*, Jan. 31, 1961.

¹⁷⁶ “Demonstrators are serving sentences at prison farm” *Evening Herald*, Feb.2,1961.

decided to remain in jail; however this was not particularly emphasized in the article. A portion of the article read as follows:

Rock Hill Police Chief W.S. Rhodes said the 10 students convicted yesterday of trespassing at McCrory's Tuesday, were serving on the work crew at the York County Prison Farm today. In lieu of payment of the total \$2,000, the group of students remained in jail.

Aside from these two sentences that alluded to the jail, no bail strategy, the actions of the students were not emphasized and discussed further. Throughout the entire time that the students served on the prison farm, the *Evening Herald* never referred to the group of students as the "Friendship Nine." As learned in the previous chapter, the name, "Friendship Nine," was actually created by African American newspaper, the Baltimore *Afro-American*. Although the local newspaper had complete access and a "front seat" to what was unfolding in Rock Hill, the *Evening Herald* nevertheless minimized this significant moment during the civil rights movement.

The newspaper also missed the opportunity to further explore and question of the discriminatory practices in Rock Hill. Along with failing to examine the segregated facilities in Rock Hill, the *Evening Herald* also missed the opportunity to inform Rock Hill citizens of the larger picture and significance behind the civil rights movement. The sit-ins in Rock Hill were not an isolated event. It was well known that these demonstrations occurred throughout the South at this time. An example of this was seen when a visitor from Charleston came to Rock Hill and

upon seeing the demonstrations, asked two police officers “Do they do this all the time, here, too? They did it all week in Charleston.”¹⁷⁷

One article that explained why students were demonstrating came from Charlotte, North Carolina. The editor’s note explained that the goal of the article was to inform readers of the “objective of the Negro students, who have been seeking service at lunch counters in some southern states.”¹⁷⁸ Although the *Evening Herald* deserved credit for attempting to inform Rock Hill citizens of the reason for the sit-ins, they still neglected to discuss the reason for the sit-ins with the demonstrators in their own town. Understanding what it was that the demonstrators sought could have eased racial tensions in Rock Hill and also led to a solution between city officials and the demonstrators. Furthermore, even if there was no significant progress made, it still would have been helpful for citizens in Rock Hill to fully understand why the demonstrations were taking place.

The newspaper also neglected to further explore why students were willing to remain in jail because of the segregated lunch counters. The *Evening Herald* did not interview the students while they were in jail or the demonstrators who came to Rock Hill to continue the protests while some of the demonstrators were in jail. As will be learned in the next section, the *Baltimore Afro-American* reported on and interviewed demonstrators while they were in jail.

Prior to the January 31 sit-in when the “Friendship Nine” were arrested, several Friendship Junior College students were arrested for demonstrating and picketing.¹⁷⁹ In an article about this early arrests, nowhere was it discussed why the students were demonstrating and willing to go to jail for their cause. There was a detailed description of what the students were doing while they were demonstrating (carrying signs in front of City Hall and singing

¹⁷⁷ “Negro Students Renew Picketing,” *Evening Herald*, April 30, 1960.

¹⁷⁸ “Negro Protests Manifest Unrest of Generation,” *Evening Herald*, February 23, 1960.

¹⁷⁹ “‘At Least 40’ Negro Students Arrested,” *Evening Herald*, March 15, 1960.

patriotic songs), however still no report about why the students were demonstrating in front of City Hall in the first place. The newspaper was on the scene as the demonstrations were taking place, yet they did not acquire quotes from the demonstrators. On the same day, a few students also went to the segregated Greyhound station to buy a bus ticket to attempt to desegregate the lunch counter and the separate waiting rooms and ticket counters at the bus station. In this instance, the *Evening Herald* did, in fact, print a quote from one of the demonstrators. However, the quote, “we came up here to buy a ticket and to get served as the white people do” does not fully describe the overall intentions of the demonstrators.¹⁸⁰

The *Evening Herald* also failed to personalize the “Friendship Nine” and the students from other colleges who also ended up in jail after coming to Rock Hill to demonstrate. The newspaper constantly reports the names, ages, and addresses of the demonstrators, yet never gave readers more information about their backgrounds. The newspaper never interviewed the students and revealed to readers why the students decided to remain in jail. The decision to remain jailed in was a major sacrifice for the students and placed the financial burden on the city rather than on members of the black community, who often paid the bail for jailed demonstrators. Furthermore, the decision to remain jailed in was actually a premeditated strategy. The fact that this was not a spontaneous decision and was actually well planned was never acknowledged nor realized by the *Evening Herald*.

The *Evening Herald* also missed the opportunity to advocate for equal rights on the editorial page specifically for the black community in Rock Hill. Although the norm was for newspapers to remain objective, during this time literature suggested that several editors often encouraged readers to support or resist desegregation efforts. Editors did not always advocate for one or the other, rather some encouraged citizens to remain neutral in the face of change. For

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

example, in wake of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* United States Supreme Court decision, several southern editors felt responsible for shaping public reaction to the decision. Editors either called for resistance, acceptance, or neutrality.

Although the *Evening Herald* did not openly support the demonstrations or the abolishment of discriminatory practices in Rock Hill, the newspaper should be recognized for one specific editorial calling for a solution. On February 14, 1961, the newspaper published a five-part editorial that challenged Rock Hill citizens to make a decision regarding accepting or resisting desegregation. In a particularly commendable and bold manner, the *Evening Herald* presented the community with three choices. The choices were as follows: (1) stores could continue to operate lunch counters for white customers only (2) stores can close their lunch counters, and (3) stores can serve all customers, regardless of their color.¹⁸¹ When listing each choice, the editor explained that any of these choices would have consequences and would affect the community regardless. Below is part of the editorial's conclusion:

Which course should Rock Hill take? Most people know the answer to that question. All that remains to be seen is whether most people feel that the time has come to spell out that answer. Judging by what some people are saying quietly to their friends, it appears that the time is ripe for a decision.¹⁸²

Although the *Evening Herald* did not openly advocate the desegregation of the lunch counters, the newspaper still recognized the need for a solution. In this editorial, the newspaper emphasized that the sit-ins were a year old and that the situation was worse than when it first began. One reason was that people talked about the demonstrations constantly. The editor also

¹⁸¹ "It's time for a solution," *Evening Herald*, February 14, 1961.

¹⁸² "It's time for a solution."

challenged the Rock Hill community to play their part in the decision regarding the lunch counters. He stressed that the decision was not solely that of store managers. “The decision involves the whole community, and it is the community that must make the decision,” he said.

In sum, the newspaper overlooked the significance of the sit-ins and historic jail-in. The newspaper placed particular emphasis on the nonviolent aspect of the demonstrations as well as South Carolina property laws and rights. Specifically, on February 17, 1960, five days after the initial demonstrations began in Rock Hill; the *Evening Herald* carried a story titled “Business Places Can Refuse Service.” The newspaper covered an organizational meeting held by the Citizen’s Council in which legal questions about the rights of store managers were discussed. The newspaper devoted almost two columns to the discussion of the legal questions and answers provided by attorneys present at the meeting.¹⁸³

Communities such as Rock Hill emphasized the right of property owners to refuse service to certain customers. Furthermore, property owners also had the opportunity to have demonstrators arrested on the basis of the anti-trespassing laws. Several articles from 1961 informed readers that after sit-in participants refused to move, they were arrested for trespassing. The “Friendship Nine” was an example of a group of demonstrators that refused to move and were subsequently arrested for trespassing. By placing emphasis on the rights of property owners, the newspaper minimized the significance of the sit-ins and jail in.

Overall, the articles served as evidence to support the notion that the *Evening Herald* overlooked the significance of the historic jail in and missed several opportunities to enlighten readers about the civil rights movements and the significant role of Friendship Junior College students in the movement. Although the newspaper recognized the need for a solution to the demonstrations, it nevertheless placed significantly more emphasis on the nonviolence in Rock

¹⁸³ Business Places Can Refuse Service,” *Evening Herald*, February 17, 1960.

Hill; the need to maintain Rock Hill's positive image; and the rights of property owners in South Carolina. Because the *Evening Herald* was the sole newspaper in Rock Hill, it was significant to primarily analyze these articles. However, the demonstrations and the jail-in received national attention and were covered in major newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Baltimore Afro-American*. While the local newspaper in Rock Hill did not recognize the significant actions of the "Friendship Nine," national newspapers realized and highlighted the importance of the "Jail, no bail" strategy. The next section will explore how coverage differed between these national newspapers and the local Rock Hill newspaper, the *Evening Herald*.

Comparison to National Newspapers

The *Baltimore Afro-American* extensively covered the demonstrators as they began serving their term on the chain gang on the York County prison farm. *Afro-American* staff writer Samuel Hoskins reported the story of the jailed in demonstrators from a completely different angle. Whereas the *Evening Herald* reported the jail in and demonstrations objectively and placed emphasis on nonviolence and maintenance of Rock Hill's image, the *Afro-American* placed particular emphasis on the sacrifice being made by the students. On February 11, 1961, the *Afro-American* carried its first story on the jailed in demonstrators titled, "Chain gang terms for students hit." In this first story, the writer offered a sense of the emotional effect the jail in had on the local black community as well as other prisoners. The article began with an emotional quote from a long-term prisoner, who according to the writer, had tears in his eyes.¹⁸⁴ "It's a sin and a shame for them to send those boys out here. They didn't have to do it," said the prisoner. Although reporting for a national African American newspaper hundreds of miles away, Hoskins provided a connection between the readers and the demonstrators.

¹⁸⁴ Samuel Hoskins, "Chaingang terms for students hit," *Afro-American*, February 11, 1961.

Hoskins reported statements argued by the demonstrators' defense attorney, Ernest Finney. The argument made by the defense counsel was a significant aspect of the trial. Furthermore, the argument made by defense is an important aspect of any trial and is likely to be reported in newspapers in an effort to keep the story balanced and fair. However, this was not the case for the *Evening Herald*. The local newspaper reported the trial accurately, informing readers of the charges and sentencing, yet neglected to provide the argument of the defense counsel. The defense lawyer also provided significant information that was not mentioned in the local newspaper's articles. Hoskins reported that Finney, the defense attorney, told the court the students were arrested within eighteen seconds after being asked to leave by McCrory's store manager. Finney further argued that the "arrests were in violation of the students' constitutional rights and that the state laws upon which arrests were made were discriminatorily applied." The additional details provided by the defense counsel called into question whether the students even had enough time to exit the premises before being arrested. The defense counsels' argument also challenged readers to reexamine state laws regarding trespassing and question whether or not these laws were in fact discriminatorily applied to the demonstrators.

In his first story, Hoskins also gathered quotes from Charles Taylor, one of the original students who also decided to be jailed in. Taylor, an honor student and recipient of a football scholarship, asked to be released after his first night in fear of losing his scholarship. However, upon his release, he stressed that would continue to remain active in the demonstrations. Gathering quotes from demonstrators and parents of the demonstrators was a constant element evident in several of the articles. Quotes from the jailed in students provided insight into the thoughts of the demonstrators and more importantly, offered readers information on the conditions of the jail. Taylor explained that even though the prison officials were polite, the

conditions inside the prison camp were horrible. The students slept on steel with no mattress or bedding and the food was terrible.¹⁸⁵

On February 11, Hoskins reported two other stories related to the jailed in demonstrators. The stories reported that four more students from out of town had come to Rock Hill to demonstrate, were arrested, and subsequently chose to remain jailed in to support the nine students. Hoskins also reported that a caravan with relatives and friends of the demonstrators went to visit the demonstrators at the prison camp. In an article twelve days later, Hoskins gathered quotes from the female jailers about the conditions and food they were being served in jail. The four jailers consisted of four students, two women and two men, Melvin Sherrod, Joseph Jones, Diane Nash, and Ruby Jones. While the men were sent to join the “Friendship Nine” at the York County Prison Camp, the women were taken to the city jail. The female jailers described the food as “reasonably clean and edible.”¹⁸⁶ The article also reported the menus listing each food item for the week for the jailed in demonstrators. The menu was further representative of how Afro staff reporter Hoskins provided detailed descriptions of the demonstrators’ experience while in jail.

The major difference between articles found in the *Evening Herald* and articles found in the Baltimore *Afro-American* concerned that of the content in the articles. While the local newspaper in Rock Hill emphasized the nonviolent aspect of the demonstrations and maintained Rock Hill’s positive image, the *Afro-American* placed a great emphasis on the students and the overall goal of the demonstrations. Along with printing quotes from demonstrators and their parents, the *Afro-American* provided a greater in-depth look at the discrimination and segregation prevalent in Rock Hill. In particular, Hoskins provided readers with a completely

¹⁸⁵ Hoskins, “Chaingang terms for students hit.”

¹⁸⁶ Samuel Hoskins, “Jailed, But Coeds ‘Don’t Feel Confined,’” *Afro-American*, February 25, 1961.

different picture of Rock Hill compared to the portrayal of the town depicted by the Rock Hill Chamber of Commerce. In an article titled, "Editor Fears 'We're In for It,'" Hoskins reports the details surrounding a conversation he had with managing editor, Donnie Wilder.¹⁸⁷

Wilder expressed his concerns and fears of Rock Hill becoming a focal point of the Civil rights Movement and the "battlefield of the sitdown war." Furthermore, Hoskins reported that several of Wilder's comments also alluded to his concern of outsiders possibly destroying the image of Rock Hill by involving the peaceful community in problems nonexistent in Rock Hill. The conversation with Wilder was representative of what the citizens of Rock Hill were truly concerned about, their image. The question of discriminatory practices and segregated facilities in Rock Hill was something that was never addressed or discussed in the local newspaper.

Hoskins further criticized the customs and traditions of Rock Hill and denounced the false image of Rock Hill provided by the Chamber of Commerce. Hoskins presented statistical information to support his claims. This included the limited, almost nonexistent representation of blacks in city government, three black officers on the police force, the segregated churches and schools, and the inequality of resources evident in the black schools and colleges.¹⁸⁸ This article provided readers with a genuine portrayal of the unfair treatment and practices experienced by the black community in Rock Hill.

Claude Sitton of the *New York Times* also reported on the demonstrations and sit-ins that occurred in Rock Hill. Sitton's major article on Rock Hill highlighted the minor outbreaks of violence and mass arrests that took place. South Carolina was also highlighted as one of five states refusing to comply with the 1954 decision made in *Brown v. Board of Education*.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Samuel Hoskins, "Editors Fear 'We're In for It,'" *Afro-American*, February 18, 1961.

¹⁸⁸ Hoskins, "Editors Fear 'We're In for It.'"

¹⁸⁹ Claude Sitton, "Negroes' Protest Spreads in South: Reaches to South Carolina Stores amid Violence-41 arrested in Raleigh," *New York Times*, February 12, 1960.

Sitton's article was significant because it supported Hoskins article that revealed school segregation and unequal allocation of resources evident in black schools in Rock Hill. The depiction of Rock Hill in the *New York Times* further denounced the false, utopian image of Rock Hill depicted by the Rock Hill Chamber of Commerce.

The *Afro-American* carried approximately ten to twelve articles about the demonstrations, sit-ins, and jail in between February 11th and March 11th. The newspaper also published several photographs with the articles. The photographs contained pictures of the demonstrators behind bars, deliberation between lawyers and the four demonstrators from SNCC that were arrested, and pictures of family and friends going to visit the jailed in demonstrators. One of the photographs published conveyed to readers the extent to which the significance of the jail in reached. This particular photograph portrayed supporters, who were members of CORE, protesting the McCrory's store in New York City.¹⁹⁰ The protestors picketed McCrory's, wore prison costumes, and carried sledgehammers as a way of paying homage to the students serving time on the chain gang in Rock Hill.

When asked about the different content in coverage of the jail-in, *Evening Herald* managing editor Donnie Wilder explained that out of town newspapers did not experience the same type of pressure as the local newspaper. Specifically, Wilder emphasized that out of town newspapers such as the *New York Times* covered the stories and returned back to their respective cities. Those newspapers did not have to interact with local citizens on a regular basis. "When we went home we stayed there in Rock Hill. We had to live with whatever the repercussions were going to be, whereas these other people would come in and they would cover it and they would go home," he said.¹⁹¹ Wilder explained that it was easier for out of town newspapers to cover the

¹⁹⁰ Baltimore *Afro-American*, February 18, 1961.

¹⁹¹ Wilder interview.

desegregation efforts in Rock Hill simply because they did not have to endure the harsh treatment from local citizens as a result of covering the demonstrations.

Nevertheless, the *Evening Herald* failed to grasp the significance of the “Jail, no bail” strategy and the contributions made by the students to the civil rights movement. Newspapers such as the *Afro American* and the *New York Times* reported the stories from completely different angles and placed more emphasis on the sacrifice the students made by deciding to remain jailed in. These newspapers also understood and conveyed to readers the significance of the strategy in the larger context of the civil rights movement. Interviews and quotes from the jailed in demonstrators and their parents also contributed to personalizing the students and conveyed to readers a deeper understanding of why the students made the courageous decision to remain in jail. In these instances those newspapers covered the story in Rock Hill much more effectively than the local newspaper.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

“We wanted to prick the conscious of the nation,” said John Gaines, member of the “Friendship Nine.”¹⁹² He was referring to the group of students from Friendship Junior College that remained jailed in after being arrested for trespassing. The students were arrested after they sat in at the lunch counter at McCrory’s Variety Store, located in downtown Rock Hill, South Carolina. Although members of the black community could buy merchandise at the store, they were refused service at the lunch counter solely because of their skin color.

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the local media’s coverage of the “Friendship Nine” protest in Rock Hill, South Carolina and the “Jail, no bail” strategy in Rock Hill, South Carolina. It was also equally significant to inform readers of smaller, lesser known protests that occurred during the civil rights movement. Although often overlooked and somewhat forgotten, desegregation efforts such as those in Rock Hill contributed to larger, well-known protests and the passage of several civil rights legislation.

Narratives gathered from oral history interviews provided readers with an understanding of race relations in Rock Hill. Additionally, during the interviews, the demonstrators explained the reason for sit-ins and demonstrations in Rock Hill. These narratives further provided readers with an understanding of the training, dedication, and sacrifice made the “Friendship Nine” as they carried out the “Jail, no bail” strategy. This historic “Jail, no bail” strategy spread throughout the nation and was adopted by several groups of students.

In 1960-61, the black community in Rock Hill, in particular students at Friendship Junior College, began to stage sit-ins and demonstrations in an effort to draw attention to the

¹⁹² Gaines Interview

discriminatory practices in the city. Although the students and other members of the black community protested against several stores, their main focus was on the lunch counter at downtown variety stores. The sit-ins and demonstrations continued in Rock Hill for a year without any progress or significant changes. Several students were arrested because of the demonstrations and the black community continued to suffer financially as they paid the bail for the release of the demonstrators.

In January 1961, under the leadership of CORE field secretary Thomas Gaither, a group of Friendship Junior College students protested at a downtown lunch counter. However, prior to their arrest, the students had decided ahead of time that they would remain in jail and carry out their entire sentence. The reasons for this jail, no bail strategy were twofold. First, the students wanted to place the financial burden onto the city, which would be responsible for feeding and clothing the demonstrators once jailed. Secondly, the students wanted to draw attention to the desegregation efforts in Rock Hill. They wanted to spread their message and raise awareness about the discriminatory practices evident in the city.

The students recognized the significant role of the media as a tool for achieving social change. Through oral history interviews, it was evident that the students' goal of attracting media attention weighed heavily in their decision to carry out the "Jail, no bail" strategy. The news media played a significant role during the Civil rights Movement in several ways. Media outlets, specifically local newspapers, had the ability to shape the public's opinion and reaction to protests occurring within their towns. Similarly national newspapers had the ability to raise awareness of these local protests to a national and sometimes international level.

In the South some local newspapers practiced self-censorship and did not cover the desegregation efforts that occurred within their communities. Editors of local newspapers often

openly advocated for resistance or acceptance to the desegregation efforts. In contrast to other local southern newspapers, my analysis showed that the local newspaper in Rock Hill did not ignore desegregation efforts occurring in the community or present certain biases.

Although majority of the demonstrators did not remember the coverage by *Evening Herald* favorably, my conclusion is that the newspaper presented a mixed coverage of the local movement in Rock Hill. This thesis found that the sit-ins and demonstrations were fairly covered; however there were still instances where the newspaper overlooked the significance of the demonstrations.

The newspaper regularly carried quotes from demonstrators, city officials, and members of the community. The newspaper recognized the importance for those directly involved, as well as those directly affected, to voice their thoughts on the desegregation efforts occurring in Rock Hill. Overall, it was evident that the newspaper did an outstanding job in presenting opposing viewpoints on the demonstrations and its effects on the local community. In addition to presenting a balanced view of the demonstrations, the newspaper carried approximately 80 articles on the local movement in Rock Hill. The high number of articles is representative of the diligent way that the *Evening Herald* covered the desegregation efforts of the black community in Rock Hill. This high number of articles is also indicative of the newspaper's attitude towards the events that unfolded in Rock Hill.

Although evidence showed that the *Evening Herald* covered the desegregation efforts in a fair and balanced manner, I found that the emphasis on nonviolence in Rock Hill caused the newspaper to overlook the most significant protest that took place. The newspaper placed entirely too much emphasis on the nonviolent aspect of the protests, assumedly in an effort to protect their image of the city. The *Evening Herald* wanted Rock Hill's image to remain

unblemished and unaffected by the demonstrations and sit-ins that occurred daily. It appeared that the newspaper placed greater importance on the maintenance of Rock Hill's image rather than opening up discussion on the segregation and discriminatory practices so prevalent in Rock Hill. Furthermore, even though the newspaper did a good job at covering the demonstrations in such a way as to prevent violence from occurring in Rock Hill, it would have been useful for the newspaper to further explain to readers the significance of the demonstrations and why they were taking place. These claims served to support another conclusion regarding the coverage of the desegregation efforts in Rock Hill.

Prior to the actions of the "Friendship Nine," and the "Jail, no bail" strategy, the newspaper covered the demonstrations and sit-ins in a fair and balanced manner. However the evenhanded coverage did not continue. The newspaper failed to acknowledge the historical precedent the students set with the "Jail, no bail" strategy, which spread throughout the country. Although evidence supported the notion that the *Evening Herald* reported the demonstrations in an accurate, balanced, and objective manner, this thesis found that the newspaper did not initially grasp the historic significance of the jail-in.

While this may be understood, as the paper may have been unaware of the intentions of the students to carry out their sentence on the prison farm, as the days carried on and the students remained in jail, the newspaper should have recognized the actions and sacrifice being made by the students. Because the "Friendship Nine" was the first group of students to serve their entire sentence, their actions should have been thoroughly reported by the *Evening Herald*.

Additionally the newspaper missed several opportunities to recognize and acknowledge the significant actions of the "Friendship Nine," and the "Jail, no bail" strategy. When the nine students were joined in jail by four SNCC supporters from Atlanta, this was a key opportunity

for the newspaper to recognize the importance of the jail, no bail strategy. Furthermore, this strategy was then adopted by several groups of students and carried out around the nation. The newspaper failed to acknowledge the consequences of the “Jail, no bail” strategy and the effect that the jail in had on the city of Rock Hill. Due to these missed opportunities, the *Evening Herald* failed to place the students’ actions in the larger context of the civil rights movement and truly challenge their readers to question the segregation and discriminatory practices evident in Rock Hill.

Although several opportunities were missed by the *Evening Herald*, an editorial during this time deserves credit for attempting to present the community with solutions to the demonstrations and sit-ins. This editorial was a commendable effort by the *Evening Herald* to open the eyes of Rock Hill citizens to the demonstrations and the role of the community. This editorial further supported the conclusion made earlier in that the *Evening Herald* did not practice self-censorship, which was often practiced in local southern towns. Marshall Doswell, the writer of this editorial and associate editor at the time, did not openly advocate for integration or encourage resistance. Instead, he called upon the community to understand their role in the direction of the demonstrations and sit-ins. Aside from this editorial, the newspaper did not make a conscious effort to challenge the community to reflect on their actions and role in upholding the discriminatory practices evident in Rock Hill.

Another conclusion drawn was that the Baltimore *Afro-American* successfully covered the “Friendship Nine,” and the “Jail, no bail” strategy. *Afro* writer Samuel Hoskins did an outstanding job of questioning the liberal, progressive, and positive image the *Evening Herald* tried so adamantly to uphold. A much needed in-depth discussion and closer examination of the discriminatory practices evident in Rock Hill never surfaced on the pages of *The Evening*

Herald. Hoskins provided evidence that supported his claims of Rock Hill being a segregated town. Although the *Evening Herald* examined nearby newspapers' reports on the protests in Rock Hill such as the *Charlotte Observer*, it would have been useful for the newspaper to compare their stories to ones that surfaced in national newspapers such as the *New York Times* or *Baltimore Afro-American*. The *Evening Herald* neglected to interview the students while in jail as well as relatives of the jailed in demonstrators.

Failing to humanize the jailed in demonstrators was another missed opportunity of the newspaper. Whereas the *Baltimore Afro-American* carried photos, the *Evening Herald* never even acknowledged that protests of McCrory's in New York occurred in protest of the jailed demonstrators in Rock Hill. The actions of the "Friendship Nine" and the effects of the jail, no bail strategy reached far beyond Rock Hill. Newspaper articles in the *Baltimore Afro-American* acknowledged this understanding and contributed to spreading the story of the "Friendship Nine."

On the 50th anniversary of the "Friendship Nine," the *Evening Herald* reflected on how it covered the demonstrations and sit-ins in 1960 and 1961. This editorial supported several of the conclusions drawn in this thesis and also presented further evidence to support arguments discussed. In a 2011 article in *The Evening Herald* titled "Preparing for answer to Jim Crowe (sic)," the author emphasized how in 1961, the newspaper was guilty of solely portraying the sit-ins as a challenge to the rights of property owners, which was not the case at all. In the article, the author explained that South Carolina, similar to other southern states, had passed laws authorizing segregated facilities such as schools, restaurants, and drinking fountains. However, he went on to explain that, "because the U.S. Supreme Court increasingly was overturning

segregation regulations, communities in the South relied on anti-trespassing laws and similar statutes to curtail demonstrations.”¹⁹³

Communities such as Rock Hill emphasized the right of property owners to refuse service to certain customers. Furthermore, property owners also had the opportunity to have demonstrators arrested on the basis of the anti-trespassing laws. Several articles from 1961 informed readers that after sit-in participants refused to move, they were arrested for trespassing. The “Friendship Nine” was an example of a group of demonstrators that refused to move and were subsequently arrested for trespassing. By placing emphasis on the rights of property owners, the newspaper minimized the significance of the sit-ins and jail in.

Although some might suggest that such criticism constitutes present-mindedness, which is defined as viewing the past in terms of the present, an in-depth analysis of the newspaper articles during his time and an analysis of the interviews conducted with persons present provide evidence to support an historical understanding of these arguments. In reference to historical understanding, historians “ stress the need to recapture the sense of the spirit of the times surrounding a study, to comprehend the feelings, persuasions, and emotions that once were real, to grasp how things happened in some past age, or to comprehend the nature of the forces that conditioned life in the past.”¹⁹⁴ These arguments have been well researched and thus reveal a thorough historical understanding.

Overall, the *Evening Herald* had a mixed record of covering the desegregation efforts in Rock Hill. The newspaper recognized the importance of the demonstrations and sit-ins and thus provided detailed coverage, printed several quotes from both sides, and placed most of the articles on the front page of the newspaper. Prior to January 31, 1961, the newspaper reported the

¹⁹³ Terry Plumb, “Preparing for answer to Jim Crowe (sic),” *Herald*, January 30, 2011.

¹⁹⁴ *Historical Methods*, 53.

sit-ins and demonstrations in an objective, balanced manner, however, their evenhanded coverage did not continue as the “Friendship Nine” carried out the historic “Jail, no bail” strategy. A major emphasis on nonviolence, Rock Hill’s image, and the rights of property owners caused the newspaper to miss several opportunities to provide a discussion on the discriminatory practices and segregation prevalent in Rock Hill. Similarly, along with failing to acknowledge the historical precedent being set by the “Friendship Nine,” the newspaper also neglected to examine their actions in the larger context of the civil rights movement.

Suggestions for Future Research

In studying this subject further, it would also be useful to examine how other local southern newspapers covered the desegregation efforts in Rock Hill. The actions of the “Friendship Nine” reached beyond the local newspaper in Rock Hill. Stories of the demonstrators also surfaced in local newspapers such as the *Tuscaloosa News* in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. A comparison of coverage between the *Evening Herald* and other local southern newspapers would provide further insight into how the *Evening Herald* differed from other southern newspapers. Because the *Evening Herald* did not practice self-censorship, it would be useful to further research the ways in which other local southern newspapers ignored desegregation efforts that occurred in their towns. A comparative analysis between the local newspaper and other southern local newspapers would further support the notion that the *Evening Herald* was an exception.

In future study of this subject, it would also be useful to interview members of the community that were present during the desegregation efforts in Rock Hill. Specifically, members of the community that were not directly related to the demonstrations and sit-ins, but that were directly affected by them. Members of the community would provide another view of

how the demonstrations, sit-ins, and “Friendship Nine” were covered. Information collected from these interviews would further provide insights into the role of the *Evening Herald* and how coverage affected and/or shaped the community’s reactions and thoughts towards the demonstrations, sit-ins, and “Jail, no bail” strategy. Because of the media’s ability to shape public opinion, interviewing members of the community, who were dedicated readers of the newspaper, would help determine to what extent the coverage by the *Evening Herald* affected the community’s perception of the ongoing desegregation efforts.

Lastly, although beyond the scope of this research, it would also be helpful to research the trends in local newspaper coverage of the desegregation efforts in Rock Hill, beginning with the desegregation of St. Anne Catholic School through the desegregation of Winthrop College in 1964. An in-depth analysis of how the *Evening Herald* covered desegregation efforts prior to and after the “Friendship Nine” and “Jail, no bail” strategy would contribute to understanding the ways in which the press reported activism during the civil rights movement, specifically the local press in Rock Hill.

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