Electronic Theses and Dissertations

12-2003

Alienation and Isolation in Interracial Marriages in East Tennessee.

Sheila Dianne Morris
East Tennessee State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://dc.etsu.edu/etd

Recommended Citation

Morris, Sheila Dianne, "Alienation and Isolation in Interracial Marriages in East Tennessee." (2003). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations.* Paper 808. http://dc.etsu.edu/etd/808

Alienation and Isolation in Interracial Marriages in East Tennessee

_____

A thesis presented to

the faculty of the Division of Cross Disciplinary Studies

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

_____

by

Sheila D. Morris

December 2003

_____

Dr. Marie Tedesco, Chair

Dr. Michael R. Pinner

Dr. Elwood D. Watson

Keywords: Alienation, Isolation, Interracial Marriages, East Tennessee

ABSTRACT

Alienation and Isolation in Interracial Marriages in East Tennessee

by

Sheila D. Morris

I conducted this study to determine if African American men and women who marry white men and women in East Tennessee perceive experiences of isolation and alienation from their families and friends as a result of their selection of a mate from a race other than the one into which they were born. I interviewed ten individuals who are or have been interracially married. As a result of my research, I found that my results are similar to those of scholarly studies that discovered alienation and isolation among interracial couples.

I used descriptive research methods to analyze a segment of the Appalachian population, with literature reviews of related material and in-depth interviews conducted with subjects in the East Tennessee area. My study allowed the subjects to discuss their perceptions and feelings of being a part of this growing interracial population in East Tennessee.

DEDICATION

For Mama and Granny

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> My old man's a white old man,
> and my old mother's black.
> If ever I cursed my white old man,
> I take my curses back.
> If ever I cursed my black old mother
> and wished she were in hell,
> I'm sorry for that and now I wish her well.
> My old man died in a big fine house,
> my ma died in a shack.
> I wonder where I'm gonna die,
> being neither white nor black!
>
> Langston Hughes (1925)[1]

Interracial relationships in East Tennessee have become of interest to me because I was born into a family of "mixed" racial heritage. I thought nothing unusual about the varied skin hues of my family members. While growing up in the small, predominantly white town of White Pine, Tennessee, seeing and hearing people in the area speak of their disapproval of the mixing of races, I became interested in learning more about these partners in a growing segment of the East Tennessee population. As I looked at old photographs of my ancestors and recalled family oral history, I wondered if there were any parallels between them and the mixed couples of today.

I undertook the study to determine if African American men and women who marry white men and women in East Tennessee perceive experiences of alienation and isolation from their families and friends as a result of their selection of a mate from a race other than that into

---

[1] Langston Hughes, "Cross," *The Langston Hughes Reader* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1958), 394.

which they were born. Psychologist Hans-Georg Gadamer, in his essay "Isolation as a Symptom of Self-Alienation," defines both isolation and alienation as the sense of loss of the nearness of others to whom one has previously been close.[2] Partners in interracial relationships may perceive unique experiences of emotional and physical alienation and isolation.

I intend to determine if perceptions of alienation and isolation do exist and, if so, how they affected the partners in these relationships. Perceptions of alienation and isolation could lead, in turn, to distrust of both immediate and extended family members, as well as those with whom these individuals come into contact in society as a whole. While I briefly examined interracial relationships in the South and Appalachia, I focused on couples in East Tennessee, specifically the area within a seventy-five mile radius of White Pine, Tennessee.

I used a descriptive narrative for this study. Included is a review of literature on interracial relationships, together with in-depth interviews conducted with individuals who are, or who have been, involved in interracial partnerships. I examined the feelings and perceptions of partners in interracial relationships to determine if these individuals experienced feelings of alienation and isolation from their families and friends as a result of their involvement in such relationships. I also analyzed how they perceive themselves in the South, Appalachia, and East Tennessee. How and why did these individuals become involved in interracial relationships? What were the reactions of their families and friends? Did they experience forms of discrimination in areas such as employment and housing? What are their perceptions of themselves, their partners, and any children they may have?

---

[2] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Isolation as a Symptom of Self-Alienation," *Praise of Theory: Speeches and Essays*, trans. Chris Dawson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 101, 104.

Contrary, perhaps, to "popular" perceptions, I contend that interracial couples do not suffer from alienation and isolation because of their choice of a mate from a different race than their own to the extent that they are willing to abandon the interracial relationships in which they are involved. My evidence reveals that mixed couples do suffer, in varying degrees, from alienation and isolation from friends and family. Nonetheless, most partners persevere in their relationships. Some do so because of love, while some do so because of warped desires to control and dominate a member of the opposite race.

Using my research findings, I intend to develop services that appropriately address inclusion for a growing segment of the population by determining if partners in interracial relationships experience alienation and isolation. I then could benefit in future endeavors in the recruitment of minority students for Walters State Community College by having a better understanding of both interracial couples and biracial children. Special interest courses and student services could be identified and developed to assist in the assimilation of both groups into mainstream society.

CHAPTER 2

RACE, SEX, AND MARRIAGE: APPALACHIA AND THE SOUTH, 1750-2000

My study included a review of scholarly sources on interracial relationships and

marriages in the South. Historical literature contains many studies on interracial sex, especially

during the antebellum period and, to an extent, before 1900, as historian Joshua D. Rothman

noted in his 2001 study.[1] Numerous references to books and articles on interracial laws,

relationships, and marriages are included. But while a few works have examined the lives of

interracial families in Appalachia, there are no qualitative studies that investigate the experiences

of interracial couples in Appalachia. As noted later in this chapter, African American educators

Charles W. Cansler and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. both have written memoirs describing their lives

in Appalachia.[2] My study is unique in that it focuses on African American men who have

married white women and white men who have married African American women in East

Tennessee.

Educator and theologian John C. Campbell provided the classic definition of Appalachia

in his 1921 book, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland.* Campbell isolated a part of the

Appalachian province, which extends from New York to central Alabama, and referred to it as

the Southern Highlands. Included within the boundaries of this territory are the four western

counties and parts of states north of Maryland; the Blue Ridge, Valley, and Allegheny Ridge

counties of Virginia; all of West Virginia; eastern Tennessee; eastern Kentucky; western North

---

[1]Joshua D. Rothman, "'Notorious in the Neighborhood': An Interracial Family in Early National and Antebellum Virginia," *The Journal of Southern History* 67 (February 2001): 74-75.

[2] Charles W. Cansler, *Three Generations: The Story of a Colored Family of Eastern Tennessee* (Kingsport: The Kingsport Press, 1939), 14; Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Colored People: A Memoir* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), ix.

Carolina; the four northwestern counties of South Carolina; northern Georgia; and northeastern Alabama.[3]

In their 1984 book, *Appalachia: A Regional Geography: Land, People, and Development*, geographers Karl B. Raitz and Richard Ulack included within their Appalachia the metropolitan areas of Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Atlanta, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Chattanooga and Knoxville, Tennessee. They described Appalachia as an area with a varied past and cultural diversity.[4] Southern Appalachia, referred to in the nineteenth century as the Southern Mountain Region, is more limited geographically than the region defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). ARC Appalachia extends from northern Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, to Pennsylvania and upstate New York, as indicated on the ARC website, *http://www.arc.gov.*

<u>African Americans in Southern Appalachia, 1750 - 1960</u>

There exists a plethora of sources on the topics of race, slavery, and interracial sex in the South, especially during the antebellum period, and after slavery's end, from 1865 through 1900. Indeed, there is a fascination among scholars on this topic. Scholars Darlene Wilson and Patricia Beaver wrote of peoples of mixed or multiethnic ancestry, whom they called "Free Persons of Color" (FPC), including Melungeons, commonly known as "mountain niggers." Melungeons, many of whom claimed to have Native American blood, often intermarried with whites. In

---

[3] John C. Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1921). Reprint. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1969), 10.

[4] Karl B. Raitz and Richard Ulack, with Thomas R. Leinbach, *Appalachia: A Regional Geography: Land, People, and Geography* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 32.

Virginia, for instance, Melungeons with one-sixteenth or less of Native American blood, with remaining bloodlines of white with no African American intermixture, were permitted to marry whites.[5]

Slavery existed on the western Virginia frontier as early as 1750, with reference made to free blacks, mulattos, and even a free black slave-owner. Historian Marie Tedesco wrote of the unusual case of one African American person who owned his own brother in 1830, a time when the population census counted 297 black slaves and 107 free blacks in Sullivan County, Tennessee.[6]

In his book *Mountain Masters, Slavery, and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina,* history professor John C. Inscoe agrees with Kenneth Stampp that slavery was a "peculiar institution" and notes the misconception of the existence of few slaves in Appalachia.[7] Inscoe also denies the "purity" of Anglo-Saxon Appalachians and notes their "invisible" rarity in his essay "Race and Racism in Nineteenth-Century Southern Appalachia." In 1860 the Southern Mountain Region as a whole had a free and slave population of over 170,000 black persons. Over 274,000 free black men and women were in Appalachia by the end of the century. Blacks migrated to urban areas such as Chattanooga and Knoxville, Tennessee, as well as to Asheville, North Carolina, and Bristol, Virginia, following the Civil War. The coalfields of Kentucky,

---

[5] Darlene Wilson and Patricia D. Beaver, "Transgressions in Race and Place: The Ubiquitous Native American Grandmother in America's Cultural Memory," in *Neither Separate Nor Equal: Women, Race, and Class in the South,* ed. Barbara Ellen Smith (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 34, 38.

[6] Marie Tedesco, "A Free Black Slave Owner in East Tennessee: The Strange Case of Adam Waterford," in *Appalachians and Race: The Mountain South from Slavery to Segregation,* ed. John C. Inscoe (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 133-37.

[7] John C. Inscoe, *Mountain Masters, Slavery, and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 59, 61.

Virginia, Tennessee, and West Virginia increased their black populations from the 1880s onward, as economic advantages caused blacks to leave rural areas for urban ones.[8]

Sociologist Wilma Dunaway has indicated that during the antebellum period (1830-60) about one-third of all Appalachian farm owners had slaves, compared to about one-half of all Southern farm owners. Dunaway further states that Appalachia was neither isolated nor antagonistic regarding interstate slave trade, despite myths suggesting otherwise.[9] Slave markets existed in Jonesborough and Knoxville, Tennessee, as well as in Bristol, Virginia.[10] Carter G. Woodson, known as the father of black history, pointed out in his historic essay, "Freedom and Slavery in Appalachian America," that slaves were more profitable than indentured servants, and that blacks and whites often worked together and attended church together.[11]

Carnegie-Mellon University history professor James C. Klotter wrote of the "closed, peculiar society" that is Appalachia and the quest to keep the white race "pure." Klotter pointed

---

[8] John C. Inscoe, "Race and Racism in Nineteenth-Century Southern Appalachia: Myths, Realities, and Ambiguities," in *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century* ed. Mary Beth Budup, Dwight B. Billings, and Altina L. Waller (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 105-107.

[9] Wilma Dunaway, "Slave History: Diaspora, Death, and Sexual Exploitation-Slave Families at Risk in the Mountain South," *Appalachian Journal* 26 (Winter 1999): 130.

[10] Richard B. Drake, "Slavery and Antislavery in Appalachia," in *Appalachians and Race: The Mountain South from Slavery to Segregation,* ed. John C. Inscoe (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001): 19.

[11] Carter G. Woodson, "Freedom and Slavery in Appalachian America," *The Journal of Negro History* 2 (April 1916): 136, 150.

out that elite whites stereotyped both blacks and poor mountain whites in Appalachia as lazy, wily, immoral, inferior, violent, and savage.[12]

As noted earlier, Charles W. Cansler wrote of his ancestors who left North Carolina in the early 1900s for Knoxville, Tennessee, viewed by African Americans as a good place for blacks and free people of color to live. Cansler described one ancestor, the son of a plantation owner, who was given his free papers by his father. He further describes another one of his ancestors who was the son of a white Irish woman and a black man, both of whom gave their son away to be raised by a white family.[13] But even in "friendly" Knoxville, blacks suffered from racial prejudice.

Mrs. Bertie Lindsey, a white Knoxville resident, was shot in her bedroom in 1919. Her cousin, Miss Ora Smith, named African American Maurice F. Mayes as the shooter. Mayes, very light-skinned and rumored to be the son of Knoxville's Mayor McMillan, was the proprietor of a local dance hall where the races mingled. Purportedly, Mayes had a fondness for white women. His alleged feud with a local police officer was said to have stemmed from a rivalry for the affections of a white woman. After his arrest in the Lindsay case, Mayes was transported from the jail to court for arraignment, whereupon a riot ensued between blacks and whites.[14]

Historian Joshua D. Rothman's article, "'Notorious in the Neighborhood': An Interracial Family in Early National and Antebellum Virginia," describes a familiar relationship between a

---

[12] James C. Klotter, "The Black South and White Appalachia," in *Blacks in Appalachia,* ed. William H. Turner and Edward J. Cabbell (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985), 51, 53, 61.

[13]Cansler, *Three Generations,* 16, 24.

[14] Matthew Lakin, "'A Dark Night:' The Knoxville Race Riot of 1919," *The Journal of East Tennessee History* 72 (2000): 6; Lester C. Lamon, *Black Tennesseeans 1900-1930* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 245-46, 248.

white man of the Jewish faith and a black woman in Charlottesville, Virginia. Although this

relationship did not occur in Appalachia, nonetheless Charlottesville is nearby. The couple had

several children, some of whom used the surname of their father at times, and at least one child

inherited land from the father in Amherst and Albemarle counties.[15]

Lynwood Montell, professor of history and folk studies as well as director of the Center

for Intercultural and Folk Studies at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky,

renders an account of white women who came to live in the black Coe Ridge area of the

Cumberland Mountains in his story "The White Gals." Resident whites described these women

as "low on the social ladder" and nothing unusual to blacks, especially the ones with whom they

became romantically involved. According to Montell, these interracial relationships were

somewhat seen as "payback," on the part of black men, for the earlier nonconsensual

relationships that sometimes existed between black slave women and white masters.[16]

As previously noted, Henry Louis Gates painted a portrait of a "sepia world" in the late

1950s town of Piedmont, West Virginia. Gates saw this town, located between the Allegheny

Mountains and the Potomac River Valley, as a time, place, and world apart. He spoke of a sense

of a loss of the feeling of being a black individual as his "sepia," or segregated, world became

absorbed by the new and different world of integration. Gates recalled his first girlfriend, who

was white, when he was eleven years of age and the lost friendship as they approached dating

years and the impossibility of racial strictures. He went on to state that the girl's parents had

treated him well "as a friend" and his mother encouraged him to find "a nice colored girl" to date.

---

[15] Rothman, "Notorious in the Neighborhood," 73.

[16] Lynwood Montell, "The White Gals," in *Appalachia Inside Out, Vol. 1: Conflict and Change*, ed. Robert J. Higgs, Ambrose N. Manning, and Jim Wayne Miller (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 236-237.

Later, when one white friend became his girlfriend, Gates was surprised at both the outraged, open hostility of the girl's father, and black and white peers being upset over the interracial relationship.[17] The turbulent decade of protest and change, the 1960s, heralded changes to come.

<u>Interracial Marriage: Demographics, Legal Problems, and Sanctions</u>

The number of white male-black female intermarriages outnumbered black male-white female intermarriages prior to the Civil Rights Movement, particularly in the South.[18] Peggy Pascoe noted in David Roediger's book *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past*, that "although such marriages were infrequent throughout most of United States history, an enormous amount of time was spent in trying to prevent them from taking place…the history of interracial marriage provided rich evidence of the formulation of race and gender and of the connection between the two."[19]

Marriages between blacks and whites socially have been resisted and legally forbidden, with both white and black families condemning the unions throughout the history of the United States. Many whites traditionally have tended to believe that God and nature meant for the races to be kept separate to insure that "race purity" be protected and preserved. Interracial mixing of the sexes and interracial marriage are to be prevented and forbidden. Racial discrimination,

---

[17] Gates, Jr., *Colored People*, 107, 194.

[18] Stanley O. Gaines, Jr., Diana I. Rios, Cherlyn S. Granrose, Katrina L. Bledsoe, Karlyn R. Farris, Mary S. Page Youn, and Ben F. Garcia, "Romanticism and Interpersonal Resource Exchange Among African American-Anglo and Other Interracial Couples," (article online), *Journal of Black Psychology* 25 (November 1999): 466.

[19] David R. Roediger, *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 140.

segregation, and persecution all proposed to prevent racial mingling and interracial marriage.[20]

Dating to colonial times, interracial marriage has been considered a social taboo, even though it has existed in the United States since blacks first came to this country in the seventeenth century. Laws barring marriages between blacks and whites existed in forty of the fifty states until 1967, when the United States Supreme Court ruled these laws were unconstitutional in *Loving v. Virginia*. Richard Loving, a white man, married African American Mildred Jeter in Washington, D.C., where interracial marriages were legal. When the couple returned to their hometown of Central Point, Virginia, the local sheriff attempted to drive them out of town. Following nine years of court battles, the Supreme Court ruled in the Lovings' favor.[21]

Even in the Deep South, miscegenation long had existed, as white slave owners had liaisons with, and took advantage of, the black women who were considered their "property." Many of the white men who called for "racial purity" sired children by black women. No doubt such relationships account for the significant number of blacks in the United States being of mixed blood.[22]

The beginning of an increase in the number of black and white marriages came in the wake of the 1967 *Loving v. Virginia* decision, which led to the dissolution of laws against

---

[20] Jeanine Datzman and Carol Brooks Gardner, "'In My Mind, We Are All Humans': Notes on the Public Management of Black-White Interracial Romantic Relationships," *Marriage and Family Review* 30 (Fall 2000): 8.

[21] Paul R. Spickard, *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in 20th Century America* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 279-80.

[22]Gaines, Jr., et al., "Romanticism and Interpersonal Resource Exchange," 462.

interracial marriages.[23] According to Gaines, et al. in 1999 fewer than twenty-five percent of all interracial marriages involved blacks paired with whites, with fewer than forty percent involving white men paired with black women.[24] Black and white intermarriage has increased rapidly in both the North and the South since the late 1960s. Kalmijn, using the National Center for Health Statistics as a statistical base, indicated that the number of black men outside of the South who marry white women rose from 3.9 percent in 1968 to more than 10 percent in 1986. The rate of black men in the South who marry white women rose from .24 percent to 4.2 percent. The number of black women who married white men outside the South changed from 1.2 percent in 1968 to 3.7 percent in 1986, with only 1.7 percent of black women married to white men in the South.[25]

According to sociologist Zhenco Qian, racial endogamy remains strong, despite the increasing number of interracial marriages occurring in the United States. Although marriages between blacks and whites have increased between 1980 and 1990, nonetheless, they rank below marriages between whites and Asian Americans, and whites and Latinos.[26]

The increase of interracial marriages can be attributed to desegregation throughout, and following, the 1970s. Desegregation increased the likelihood of blacks and whites interacting more frequently on jobs, in school, and during leisure activities.[27] Progress in civil rights,

---

[23] Matthijs Kalmijn, "Trends in Black/White Intermarriage," (article online), *Social Forces* 72 (September 1993), 3.

[24] Gaines, Jr., et al., "Romanticism and Interpersonal Resource Exchange," 462.

[25] Kalmijn, "Trends in Black/White Intermarriage," 11-12.

[26] Zhenchao Qian, "Breaking the Racial Barriers: Variations in Interracial Marriage Between 1980 and 1990" (article online), *Demography* 34 (May 1997): 271.

[27] Kalmijn, "Trends in Black/White Intermarriage," 2.

increased opportunities open for blacks, and the expansion of transracial social contacts are other factors in the increase of interracial marriage.[28]

In his study "The Prevalence of Black-White Marriages in the United States 1960 and 1970," sociologist David Heer found that black-white marriages increased twenty-six percent during the 1960s. There was a sixty-six percent increase in the North and West, countered by a thirty-five percent decline in the South. Heer used data from the United States Census and the National Center for Health Statistics as the statistical base for his study. Heer also noted a sixty-two percent rise in marriages between black men and white women, and a nine percent decrease in marriages between white men and black women.[29]

Qian indicates, using both United States Census data and his own earlier research made possible by a grant-in-aid from Arizona State University, that black men marry outside their race at a rate twice as great as that for black women.[30] Black men who marry white women tend to have higher incomes, educational levels, employment rates, and occupational prestige than do black men who marry black women. Black and white marriages are less stable than racially homogeneous marriages, and marriages between white men and black women are less stable than

---

[28] Clayton Majete, "What You May Not Know About Interracial Marriages" (article online), *World & I* 12 (July 1997): 2.

[29] David M. Heer, "The Prevalence of Black-White Marriages in the United States 1960 and 1970" (article online), *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 36 (May 1974): 247.

[30] Qian, "Breaking the Racial Barriers," 263.

those of black men and white women.[31]

<div align="center">Theories About Interracial Marriages</div>

Since the post-Civil Rights era, scholars have addressed interracial marriages in declining numbers in academic books and articles. Twenty-six percent of scholarly articles and books in the 1970s referenced mixed marriages, as compared to eight percent in the 1980s. According to psychologist Stanley Gaines, this decline may suggest the failure of social scientists to acknowledge the weakening of interracial taboos which may, in turn, contribute to the persistence of racial taboos.[32]

Some scholars have suggested that blacks and whites who intermarry may have ulterior motives that are hidden or unconscious in nature. These motives include pathological deviance, an abnormal level of rebellion or resentment against parents, insecurity, self-loathing, and self-degradation. More conscious motives include sexual curiosity, desire for upward social or economic mobility, and exhibitionism.[33]

According to Lewis et al., social scientist Gunnar Mydral theorized in 1944 that the African American women who marry white men do so for social and economic gain, with the assumption that they can benefit from the upward mobility of white men. Mydral also theorized that lower-class white women exchange their "high caste" racial status for the higher socioeconomic status achieved through marrying a black man of a higher socioeconomic class.

---

[31] Ibid.

[32] Gaines, Jr., et al., "Romanticism and Interpersonal Resource Exchange," 485.

[33] Jeannette R. Davidson, "Theories About Black-White Interracial Marriages: A Clinical Perspective" (article online), *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 20 (October 1992): 30.

Lewis claims that Mydral's theory has lost strength as women have overcome societal barriers to career attainment.[34]

Social scientists agree that there are two major forms of mate selection: homogeneous and heterogeneous. Homogeneous mate selection occurs when one chooses a mate with similar social characteristics such as ethnicity, race, religion, educational attainment, age, social class, common personal interests, occupation, and entertainment interests. In heterogeneous mate selection, one goes against the broadly defined social norms by marrying someone with different social characteristics, such as race, social class, and religion.[35]

Recent studies have shown that nonracial factors such as common interests, entertainment interests, and personal attractiveness are decisive in the partner selection process. Interracial couples in general are middle-class, educated, and religious, at least as measured by church attendance. Many of the couples met at work, college, or a social event. Approximately twenty percent of black and white men and women who intermarry were friends or co-workers before they fell in love.[36]

Recent studies of interracial marriage have produced two broad categories of theoretical explanation: the structural theory and the racial motivation theory. The structural theory proposes that mixed marriages are more frequent where community structures sanction such unions. Structuralists suggest that mixed couples marry for the same reasons that racially homogeneous

---

[34]Spickard, *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity*, 267.

[35] Richard Lewis, Jr., George Yancey, and Siri Bletzer, "Racial and Nonracial Factors that Influence Spouse Choice in Black/White Marriages" (article online), *Journal of Black Studies* 29 (September 1997): 1-3.

[36] Ibid, 10.

couples marry: they meet, discover similar interests, and fall in love. During the past several decades, desegregation of schools, jobs, and neighborhoods have provided opportunities for those of different races to come together. The Civil Rights movement has allowed both the educational level and the income of blacks to increase. Structuralists further suggest that blacks who have attained higher socioeconomic status find more suitable white partners in their pool of eligible prospective mates, as a growing number of whites view African Americans more favorably as suitable partners as a result of their rise in socioeconomic status. Yet another structuralism explanation of interracial marriage is that as interracial marriages increase, society becomes desensitized to what previously had been considered socially unacceptable to most of the general population.[37]

The racial motivation theory proposes that many interracial marriages occur because of, rather than in spite of, racial differences, or with indifference to racial differences. Sociologists Kristyan M. Kouri and Marcia Lasswell suggest that those who marry someone of a different race may find him or her more physically appealing and may experience heightened sexual interest because of curiosity. The sociologists further state that the racial motivation theory also implies that one may go against the social norm of racial endogamy as a form of rebellion.[38]

<div align="center">Trends in Interracial Marriages</div>

There are vast differences in marriage trends between blacks and whites who marry within their races, with the gap growing in recent decades. In 1988 the median age at first marriage for African American women was approximately twenty-six, while for white women

---

[37] Kristyan M. Kouri and Marcia Lasswell, "Black-White Marriages: Social Change and Intergenerational Mobility," *The Marriage and Family Review* 19 (March/April 1993): 242-43.

[38] Ibid.

the median age was twenty-four. Marriage rates were quite similar for blacks and whites in the early part of this century but have diverged since the 1950s. Compared to white women, increased numbers of African American women either are choosing not to marry or to marry later in life.[39] In 1993, 43.3 percent of black women aged thirty to thirty-four years of age had never married, as compared to only 15.5 percent of white women in the same age group. Forty-seven percent of black women aged thirty to thirty-four never married compared to ten percent of white women in the same age group, according to the New York-based organization Catalyst, which promotes women in business.[40]

One explanation for black women remaining single could be the shortage of "marriageable" black men overall, low economic status, levels of income and education, rates of unemployment, incarceration, and mortality.[41] Once again, according to Catalyst, twenty-four percent of black women have ascended to the professional-managerial class, compared to seventeen percent of black men in the year 2000.[42] Economist Michael Brien suggests those individuals often expand their field of search in response to the shortage of prospective mates.[43] The growing trend of black women marrying outside their race can be seen as a promise of racial integration to some and a threat of lost racial identity to others.[44]

---

[39] Michael J. Brien, "Racial Differences in Marriage and the Role of Marriage Markets," *The Journal of Human Resources* 32 (Fall 1997): 742.

[40] Ellis Cose, "The Black Gender Gap," *Newsweek* (March 3, 2003), 50.

[41] Brien, "Racial Differences in Marriage," 742.

[42] Cose, "Black Gender Gap," 48.

[43] Brien, "Racial Differences in Marriage," 773.

[44] Cose, "The Black Gender Gap," 51.

Recent decades have been characterized by two separate marriage trends: a marked

decline in the likelihood of marrying for African American women and an increase in rates of

marriage between African American men and white women. Factors such as increasing

economic independence, urbanization, and expansion of higher education have been cited as

contributors to the declining marriage rates among black women.[45] Black men married to white

women tend to have higher incomes, educational levels, occupational prestige, and rates of

employment when compared to black men who are married to black women. Black men are also

more likely than are black women to marry whites.

<div align="center">Discrimination Against Interracial Couples</div>

Interracial marriage traditionally has been an indicator of the status of race relations in

the United States, especially in the 1960s and early 1970s. Sociologists view these marriages as

exogamous, that is, involving individuals from different racial backgrounds. Norms and attitudes

against interracial marriage by both dominant white and subordinate black racial group members

serve as significant social barriers. Acceptance of mixed marriages is a major step in the

assimilation and acculturation process within society. Black men and women, as well as white

men and women, often express fear of discrimination and harassment as a deterrent for

interracial dating and marriage.[46] Forms of harassment include staring, ogling, crude comments,

and exclusionary practices. Crude comments include remarks such as "shameful" and

"repulsive," while exclusionary practices may consist of strongly discouraging interracial couples

---

[45] Kyle D.Crowder and Stewart E. Tolnay, "A New Marriage Squeeze for Black Women: The Role of Racial Intermarriage by Black Men," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62 (August 2000): 793.

[46] Lewis, Jr., et al., "Racial and Nonracial Factors," 1.

from appearing together in public, particularly in restaurants.[47] Couples may counter this

negative behavior by blocking, transforming, or generating strategies designed to ignore or

"block out" the negativity.[48]

Interracial couples must deal with cultural and experiential differences, as well as the

same everyday familial issues faced by same-race couples. The greatest challenge seems to be

created by the prevailing force of racism. Interracial couples must obtain and maintain a sense of

empowerment and cultural dignity. It is when presented to society as a whole, race and ethnicity

become issues, not in everyday life.[49]

Recent increases in interracial marriages may be indicative of a decline in racism. Many

interracial couples perceive themselves as ordinary and middle-class, albeit with the knowledge

that society may view them as an aberration. Difficulties in personal and social adjustment may

occur as a result of prejudices encountered in the workplace, in the search for housing, or in

activities shared with friends and family.[50]

Interracial couples tend to seek out supportive social situations and to avoid unsupportive

ones. Sociologist Sheryline Zebroski contends that by relying on support networks, interracial

---

[47]Datzman and Gardner, "'In My Mind, We Are All Humans,'" 6.

[48] Miriam R. Hill and Volken Thomas, "Strategies for Racial Identity Development: Narratives of Black and White Women in Interracial Partnerships" (article online), *Family Relations* 49 (April 2000): 7.

[49] John McFadden, "Intercultural Marriage and Family: Beyond the Racial Divide" (article online), *Family Journal* 9 (January 2001): 2.

[50] Zhenchao Qian, "Who Intermarries? Education, Nativity, Region, and Interracial Marriage, 1980 and 1990," (article online), *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 30 (Autumn 1999): 2.

couples are able to lead ordinary lives as ordinary people and to reduce the number of negative reactions from bigots in the community.[51]

Black spouses demonstrated a greater awareness of, and sensitivity to, social resistance to interracial couples than did their white spouses, according to psychologist Kyle Killian. Black spouses are sometimes relegated to silence regarding familial and personal history, while white spouses are not. The most frequently mentioned negative reactions towards interracial couples by blacks have been black women objecting to partnerships between black men and white women.[52] Black women tend to view interracial relations between black men and white women as the symbolic rejection of black women and the acceptance of white standards of beauty. Black women contend that they possess their own particular beauty and style.[53]

<div align="center">Attitudinal Studies</div>

Social scientist Gunnar Myrdal's pioneering 1944 study on race in the United States, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, explored attitudes toward intermarriage. Myrdal's work was followed some time later by Ernest Porterfield's 1978 research, *Black and White Mixed Marriages*, a study that focused extensively on interracial couples, according to Sheryline Zebroski. Neither of these studies involved mixed couples in the South, nor have more recent studies. Porterfield interviewed forty black and white couples, seven of whom were African American women and white men and thirty-three African American men

---

[51] Sheryline A. Zebroski, "Black-White Intermarriage: The Racial and Gender Dynamics of Support and Opposition" (article online), *Journal of Black Studies* 30 (September 1999): 2.

[52] Kyle D. Killian, "Reconstituting Racial Histories and Identities: The Narratives of Interracial Couples" (article online), *The Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 27 (January 2001): 1.

[53] Datzman and Gardner, "'In My Mind, We Are All Humans,'" 13.

and white women. The study was comprised of twenty couples in Illinois, eleven in Ohio, seven in Alabama, and two in Mississippi, with no mixed couples in Tennessee noted.[54]

Zebroski's study of mixed couples found that respondents indicated that twenty-eight percent of white men, twenty-seven percent of black women, and twenty-five percent of black men were opposed to interracial relationships. White men and black women were more likely to say black men opposed their relationships, as well as white women. Black men and white women found white men and black women sometimes opposed their relationships. The study took place in various regions of the United States, with ten subjects residing in California and twenty-six in New York.[55]

During in-depth interviews with twenty-nine interracial couples in the Los Angeles, California, area conducted by Kouri and Lasswell in 2000, the majority of subjects stated that their families eventually accepted their marriages. Many black and white families initially disapproved of their children's interracial marriages, but eventually approved when the parents became acquainted with their son- or daughter-in-law, or after the birth of grandchildren. Kouri and Lasswell contend that black families are more likely to accept interracial relationships from the beginning. Yet twenty-three of the twenty-nine couples married despite the initial opposition of family members on both sides, indicating family disapproval did not discourage mate selection for these interracial couples.[56]

---

[54] Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1944), in Zebroski, "Black-White Intermarriage," 2.

[55] Zebroski, "Black-White Intermarriage," 4.

[56] Kouri and Lasswell, "Black-White Marriages," 251-52.

Interracial couples find their notion of race transformed, viewing their relationship as a marriage instead of an interracial marriage.[57]

Sociologist and anthropologist Clayton Majete conducted research with over two hundred interracial couples he solicited from advertisements in magazines and journals geared towards mixed couples. Majete's questionnaire results indicated that nearly three-quarters of the black families of the interracial couples did not have a problem with the marriages, while three out of ten white families, although not hostile, were concerned about societal problems the couple might face. An initial hesitation or rejection, followed by acceptance upon learning the couple was serious about being together, was typical among parents. A small percentage of interracial couples experienced blatant hostility. For example, one black woman reported her white husband's family disowned him because of his involvement with her.[58]

Majete's research found that seventy-five percent of families he studied seemed open to the marriages in general. The majority of the couples were supported by extended family members, while even those who had reported a low degree of acceptance from extended families early in their relationships still maintained some form of contact with their extended family members. Based on respondent's answers to his questions, Majete did not sense any widespread isolation or alienation from other family members.[59]

Newspaper reporter Chandra Harris interviewed seven interracial couples in the Knoxville, Tennessee, area in 2002, four of whom were in black-white relationships. One black

---

[57] Yanick St. Jean, "Let the People Speak for Themselves: Interracial Unions and the General Social Survey" (article online), *Journal of Black Studies* 28 (January 1998): 6.
[58] Majete, "What You May Not Know," 2-4.

[59] Ibid, 3-4.

man indicated his family still has not accepted his white girlfriend; one couple had encountered a housing problem; and the majority of respondents report that they occasionally are still stared at in public. Harris found that while the couples overall maintained that skin color did not matter to them because they were simply two people who happened to fall in love, they realized the existence of racism was a problem with which they had to contend as a possible threat to their relationships.[60]

Psychologists Pamela S. Paset and Ronald D. Taylor had fifty black women and fifty white women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three rate their attitudes toward interracial marriages on a ten-point Likert response scale. White women were slightly more favorable than black women regarding white men and women marrying blacks. White women tended to cluster at the extremely favorable end of the Likert scale regarding interracial marriages. Black women, however, tended to cluster at the unfavorable end of the scale. The results of the Paset and Taylor study suggests that black women perceive interracial marriages as more threatening to their personal and racial welfare than do white women.[61]

Statements recorded by Yanick St. Jean as part of a focus group comprised of interracial couples indicated that black men appeared particularly offended by unions between black women and white men. The black women who participated in the focus group appeared to be curious about, and yearning for, a relationship with a white man, but at the same time they seemed to be

---

[60] Chandra Harris, "Loving Outside the Lines," *The Knoxville News Sentinel* (November 3, 2002): sec. E, 1.

[61] Pamela S. Paset and Ronald D. Taylor, "Black and White Women's Attitudes Toward Interracial Marriage" (article online), *Psychological Reports* 69 (December 1991): 753.

resentful of black males, white females, and other black females involved in interracial relationships.[62]

According to Lewis, sociologist Robert K. Merton's 1941 study *Intermarriage and Social Structure: Fact and Theory,* proposed the exchange perspective as a mate selection process of social bargaining, undertaken in an attempt to gain desirable qualities possessed by the prospective mate. Merton believed that race was equal to class or caste in the United States. His caste theory purported that lower-caste black men can only hope to obtain higher-caste white women by achieving a higher socioeconomic status in comparison to the woman.[63]

<u>Biracial Children</u>

An estimated one million biracial children currently live in the United States, with increased numbers expected over the coming decades. The number of black and white children ranks third, behind Asian and white, and Latino and white. Eighty percent of parents of interracial couples expressed concern over possible children in the relationship and the social difficulties the children would encounter in society.[64] Children of interracial unions are sometimes referred to as biracial and seen as black by society, as a carryover from slavery days.[65] One black ancestor is all that is needed to make a person black for life, even if one is of mixed black and white heritage.[66] Although biracial children historically are perceived as having problems, among them ambiguous racial identity, rejection of one race in favor of the other, and

---

[62] St. Jean, "Let the People Speak," 10.

[63] Lewis, Jr., et al., "Racial and Nonracial Factors," 3.

[64] Majete, "What You May Not Know," 3.

[65] Ibid, 5.

[66] St. Jean, "Let the People Speak," 61.

social marginality, there is no empirical evidence to support these perceptions and no significant differences in adjustment found between biracial and same-race children. Majete's study demonstrated that interracial couples often discussed racial issues with their children, encouraging them to see themselves as individuals. Yet many biracial children still face racial discrimination which makes them feel like outsiders in society.[67]

Relationships between blacks and whites have long existed, despite being forbidden and discouraged, and continue to increase. Studies have addressed interracial relationships, yet little has been written about these relationships in East Tennessee. Blacks have been and continue to be a part of Appalachia, even more so after the decade of change and protest known as the 1960s.

---

[67] Majete, "What You May Not Know," 5.

CHAPTER 3

INTERVIEWS OF INTERRACIAL COUPLES

I conducted eight semi-structured, ethnographic interviews with ten individuals who are, or have been, involved in interracial relationships.[1] I conducted the interviews in a pre-arranged setting, where I asked specific questions of the subjects but allowed them to elaborate on their responses. I changed the names of the interviewees to protect their identities and ensure their privacy. I did so because of the rather personal nature of some of the questions and for the discussion of topics not covered in my questionnaire.

After initially contacting the prospective subjects and providing an explanation of my thesis project, I scheduled specific dates and times for the interviews. I tape-recorded interviews at either the home of the interviewer or the subject, as indicated in my IRB protocol.

I found the subjects through networking in the community, particularly among local church members and work acquaintances. Three coworkers and I attended a district church convention in early August, 2002, as part of our recruitment efforts at Walters State Community College in Morristown, Tennessee. I approached the subject of my thesis during the week long event, learning about members of their churches and communities during various workshops and discussions with members of local churches. I conducted the interviews during mid-October 2002, after obtaining permission from the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University in early October, 2002.

The subjects are natives of East Tennessee, currently residing in Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, and Knox counties. Because interviewee number

---

[1] Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2002), 90-93.

three had to go out of town unexpectedly, she was tape-recorded by her mother, who used my

questions. Interviewee number ten did not wish to be tape-recorded, preferring instead to write

out her responses for me. Interview questions are included as Appendix A. The interviews are

summarized below.

<div align="center">Interview One: Paige[2]</div>

Paige is a forty-one-year-old white divorcee from Cocke County who now resides in

 Jefferson County with her six-year-old daughter, Olivia. Paige was previously married

to a black-white native of Ohio who was living in Cocke County, passing for white. Paige did

not discover the mixed-race background of her first husband until after they became involved.

She has a son, Aiden, from this marriage.

Paige married thirty-five-year-old André, an African American native of Florida, in 1993

and they divorced in 1998. He has since returned to Florida, but even though he is not physically

living with the family, Paige's daughter from the union, Olivia, continues to adore her father. The

couple met when André umpired Aidan's baseball games. Paige was apprehensive about dating a

black man because of the racism she thinks is more prevalent here in "the South" than in other

parts of the country. While she has never felt skin color was a factor when it comes to love,

Paige nonetheless knows that others sometimes consider interracial relationships as morally

wrong. Both of her parents were deceased when she became involved with André, but she thinks

they would have accepted this relationship, as they did her first marriage, even after they learned

of the mixed-race background of her spouse. Paige was hesitant about becoming involved with

André because she knew from growing up in an area of Cocke County where no blacks lived that

---

[2] Paige (pseud.), interview by author, tape recording, Morristown, Tenn., 10 October 2002.

whites in the county in general believed that blacks and whites should not mix sexually. She also remembered how others stared at her when she was in public with Aidan when he was younger.

Initially, Paige felt she had to justify her marriage to a black man to her family and friends. Some family members disowned her, as did some fair-weather friends, one of whom she had known since kindergarten. Paige stated that she has experienced feelings of alienation when people see her biracial daughter, stare, and roll their eyes. She noted, however, that these behaviors do not occur as frequently since her divorce five years ago. It seems as though she encountered more prejudice when she was seen in public with both André and Olivia. Paige says a degree of her feeling of alienation and isolation can be attributed to her and Olivia's living alone. Paige tries not to advertise her past relationship, but a few times coworkers saw her in places like Wal-Mart with Olivia and treated her differently afterwards at work.

Paige felt somewhat defensive while married to André whenever they were in such places as restaurants because she oftentimes suspected that other patrons were staring at them. She usually ignored the stares, but sometimes she became angry and defiant. Paige even told some of her friends about André being black when she first began dating him to "prepare" them, but she later thought she had no reason to do so. Paige felt she would not do so if André were white; therefore, she stopped doing this. Yet, after Paige began introducing André unexpectedly to friends and coworkers, some of these people later told her they wish that she had "warned" them that she was dating a black man.

Paige said that she learned that blacks could be just as prejudiced as whites when it comes to interracial marriages. She claims she did not know that blacks were prejudiced until she married André. She thought he would be more comfortable at a black church than at a white one, but most people at the black church would not even speak to her until nearly a year after the

marriage ended. Paige sensed resentment from members of the black church, as if she did not belong there. Paige was surprised to find more acceptance of her and Olivia at the black Baptist church after the divorce, as if the major reason for the resentment from blacks was the fact that she and André were there as a couple. She and Olivia now attend a white Methodist church. Paige perceived more feelings of resentment from black women and white men than she did from black men and white women during her marriage.

Paige feels others see Olivia as black because of her "dark curly hair, brown skin, and pretty brown eyes." Olivia often tells Paige she is brown, her daddy is black, and her mama is white. Olivia considers herself mixed and does not identify herself more with one race or the other.

Paige hopes Olivia will be accepted by society as a mixed-race child because now there are an increased number of biracial children in East Tennessee. Paige is hopeful for Olivia's future, yet she is realistic about the present. Olivia attends a private school in Hamblen County with a large Latino enrollment because Paige fears Olivia would face more racial harassment if she attended public school in Jefferson County, with its small black population.

Reflecting on her past with André, Paige thinks the main problems they faced were financial difficulties and his infidelities, because he cheated on her with both black and white women. She described André as "overbearing" because he could not dominate or control her because she is very strong-willed. Nonetheless, Paige cannot really regret the relationship she shared with André because it gave her a beloved daughter. She would, however, encourage anyone considering an interracial marriage to think it through very carefully and to make sure that both partners understand that it will be difficult and may continue to cause problems even after the end of a relationship.

Paige continues to live in the home the couple shared and while her next door neighbors are civil to her, others in the neighborhood still treat her shabbily. Some of the neighbors spoke to André during the marriage, but never were and still are not friendly toward her. One of her neighbors, a physical therapy patient of Paige's at Baptist Hospital in Knoxville, acted as if she did not know her at all. Paige believes because her neighbors continue to harbor feelings of resentment towards her because she was once married to a black man, she is left feeling somewhat alienated and isolated from them.

<div align="center">Interview Two: Jessica[3]</div>

Jessica is a forty-four-year-old white native of Jefferson County who is married to Anthony, a thirty-six-year-old African American man from Hamblen County. This is Anthony's first marriage, but Jessica's second. She was previously married to a white man and has a twenty-two-year-old daughter, Melinda, from that union. Jessica and Anthony married on September 2, 1989, and have since resided in Grainger County with Elisabeth, their eleven-year-old daughter.

Jessica said that she and Anthony met through mutual friends. She was not apprehensive about dating him because she previously had dated black men. She and Anthony lived together for six years before their marriage. Jessica rented a home for the couple in Morristown after they had been living together for about three years. When the neighbors saw them both move into the house, they complained to the landlord, who then paid them to move away. The problem of white neighbors not wanting to live near a mixed couple was eliminated when, after their marriage, Jessica and Anthony built their own home near his parents in a predominantly black neighborhood.

---

[3]Jessica (pseud.), interview by author, tape recording, Morristown, Tenn., 10 October 2002.

Jessica is a registered nurse and the couple have a circle of friends who are both well-rounded and well-educated. Jessica believes the more intelligent and educated people are, the more accepting they are of interracial couples.

Jessica says that she has not experienced alienation and isolation as a result of the reactions of her family and friends to her marriage to Anthony. They treat him better than they did her first, white husband because, as they have told Jessica, "he's a better person" than her first husband.

Jessica said that she never felt she had to justify her choice of a husband to anyone because she "answers to no one." Jessica feels one must look at the individual and not accept the racial stereotypes that black men in general are lazy and violent, especially when it comes to sexual relationships. She and Anthony go to basketball games, the homes of family and friends, social clubs, and shopping malls. They find it more common today to see other interracial couples than it was fifteen or twenty years ago, when they perceived that strangers ogled them. Jessica feels there are fewer stares of disapproval because of the increase of interracial couples in East Tennessee. There are limitations to their freedom of movement, however, as the couple still refrains from going to certain places such as "redneck" bars. Jessica believes interracial couples face less hostility and are more accepted now than they did when she and Anthony first became romantically involved. She believes the mixture of black-white, Latino-white, and Latino-black couples in East Tennessee indicates positive race relations.

Jessica thinks Elisabeth is perceived racially as black because she is dark-skinned and resembles Anthony. Elisabeth does not really identify more with one race than with another race, but rather sees herself as a unique "individual." Jessica said she had no preconceptions or thoughts about blacks, as no blacks lived near her during her childhood, and she only knew what

she saw on television or read about African Americans. She was raised to accept people as they are based on their character.

Jessica's daughter, Melinda, also is married to an African American man, Edmund, and has a two-year-old daughter named Taylor. Both Melinda and Edmund, twenty-two-year-old natives of Jefferson County, reside in Grainger County near her mother and stepfather. Jessica believes Melinda's four-year marriage, the first for both her and Edmund, is doing well. Jessica, Melinda, and their families share a close relationship.

<u>Interview Three: Tracy</u>[4]

Tracy is a twenty-six-year-old white woman from Morristown who married Sean, a twenty-eight-year-old African American man from Knoxville, on July 11, 1998. The couple met through a mutual friend, an African American man who was dating a white woman. Tracy was not at all apprehensive about dating a black man because she had done so before. Sean had never dated a white girl before he began to see Tracy. She recalled going to her mother, Claire, at age fifteen and telling her she wanted to date a black boy with whom she attended high school. Tracy remembers Claire telling her it would be difficult, but both she and Tracy's father, Perry, would be supportive of her. Although she knew the relationship would be hard, Tracy did not feel it would be difficult enough to prevent her from pursuing the relationship. She believed if she had the support of her parents, she really did not care who did not approve of the relationship.

The support of her parents has helped Tracy and Sean enjoy a warm and loving relationship since they began dating, despite the fact that her maternal grandparents do not accept

---

[4] Tracy (pseud.), interview by Claire (pseud.), tape recording, Knoxville, Tenn., 11 October 2002.

the marriage. Tracy is happy to report that she and her grandmother recently shared her wedding album. Her aunts, uncles, and cousins, however, still do not accept her marriage to Sean. Tracy insists this lack of acceptance of her marriage by extended family members does not cause her to feel alienated or isolated because she has the support of her parents "who really matter."

Tracy does not think her marriage is an issue at work, although its interracial character can surprise or even shock some people. Most of her white friends accept her relationship with Sean. During their four-year marriage, Sean's twelve-year-old son, Derek, had come to live with the couple following the murder of his natural mother, an African American woman. Tracy and Sean, who now live in Knoxville, do not have any children of their own yet, but are raising Derek as their son.

Tracy and Sean try to pick and choose where they go in order to prevent potential harassment. They have not encountered name-calling, but they have endured stares from both blacks and whites when they visit her parents in Morristown. While they generally try to "laugh it off," the couple was genuinely frightened in a Calhoun, Georgia, restaurant where they were stared at and waited on reluctantly by the white servers. They prefer vacations with her family and their son because Tracy still thinks there is a need for them to be cautious, and she thinks the presence of white family members will protect her, Sean, and Derek.

Tracy thinks the family and friends who matter the most to them are very supportive and thus she does not feel alienated or isolated from them. Tracy has heard both Sean's mother and older sister advising his nieces to marry white men because the women have both had bad experiences with black men cheating on them. White men, the older women contend, are more stable and less likely to philander and cheat than are black men. Tracy was surprised that Sean's

mother and older sister both stereotype most African American men as unfaithful cheaters. Tracy recalled a former black girlfriend, Suzanne, who seemed to prefer dating white men. Tracy said she now finds it unusual that the two of them never discussed their dating preferences.

Tracy never has felt Sean is anything but respectful to her, whether they are alone or in public. She has found that black men seldom react to seeing her with Sean, even though his friend, Pierce, was surprised to see so many interracial couples in the Knoxville area. Pierce told Tracy and Sean that interracial couples remain an unusual sight in his native Mississippi. Pierce, who had grown up knowing his mother would never allow a white person into her home, now is friends with Tracy.

Tracy said that white women in general are supportive and not hostile towards her. Some white women have even commented that they are curious about her crossing the "taboo" color line. But Tracy has experienced hostility from some black women, whom she believes may see her as "a threat" to them because she is with a black man. In high school some black girls accused her of "taking" black men, while some white girls called her names and mildly harassed her.

Some white men have stared at her, especially when the couple lived on the East Side of Knoxville. Tracy remembers seeing some white women she described as "trashy looking," with black men when they lived there, so she is glad they have since moved to a better neighborhood.

Should the couple have children together, Tracy thinks they would be seen as, and considered, black despite being half-black and half-white. Should they adopt, the couple would prefer a black or a biracial child. It is important to them to have a multiracial or biracial child because they realize that adoptive parents do not choose many of these children. Tracy and Sean are close to his large family and moved to a part of town closer to them.

Tracy was raised in the Christian Church faith, but has joined Sean's Baptist church in Knoxville, where one hundred black and two white members have welcomed Tracy. The Christian Church rejected Tracy and Sean, refusing to allow them to have their wedding there. Tracy has been accepted and feels comfortable at Sean's church.

Derek is comfortable with Claire, Perry, and other immediate members of Tracy's family. Tracy and Sean want Derek to feel free to date whomever he chooses, but they are concerned that the child's maternal grandparents do not like white people. Derek now attends a more diverse school and has multiethnic friends.

Tracy thinks many people are intolerant of interracial marriage, but nonetheless she hopes that in the future increased numbers of persons will be more tolerant of interracial couples and biracial children. She is glad that it is becoming more and more common to see multiracial children.

Tracy considers herself more "enlightened" as to what blacks have gone through since she married Sean, even though he is uncomfortable talking to her about racial problems he sometimes encounters. Sean recently described a situation at work where he felt his white supervisor treated him unfairly solely because of the white man's prejudice. Tracy recalls Sean being frustrated, telling her that "she could not understand" bigotry because she is white. She tries to make an effort to step back from such situations and put them in perspective, realizing there are both prejudiced black and white people.

<div align="center">Interview Four: Vanessa[5]</div>

Vanessa, a fifty-three-year-old African American woman from Cocke County, has been married to fifty-four-year-old Mike since November 7, 1991. Mike, a white native of Pittsburgh,

---

[5] Vanessa (pseud.), interview by author, tape recording, Newport, Tenn., 11 October 2002.

Pennsylvania, was previously married to a white woman. His daughter, twenty-seven year old Michelle, was born of that union. Vanessa's daughter, Tiffany, is thirty-four and the product of an earlier relationship Vanessa had with a black man. Vanessa and Mike, who do not have any children together, met when he remodeled her home.

Vanessa was not apprehensive about becoming involved in an interracial relationship, but she was concerned about how her daughter would react to the relationship because Vanessa had been a single mother for many years. Tiffany was nine-years-old when Vanessa and Mike met, and the child was "quite at ease" with her mother's new relationship. Vanessa has always seen herself as a strong black woman, who only experienced the typical problems of living in a small town. She has always thought "he's Mike and I'm Vanessa," two individuals who love one another. Vanessa can recall "nothing specific" occurring when asked if she has experienced discrimination, and that she felt "accepted, pretty much," by whites. However, Vanessa said that on one or two occasions she had to state emphatically to others, "I really don't care if you accept him or me, this is basically how it is," as some blacks and whites have openly expressed resentment about them being together. It is only when a racial slur is directed at them by the blacks or whites they encounter in society that the couple is reminded that Mike is white and Vanessa is black. Some of her black friends have told her they wish they had the nerve to marry interracially.

The main problem Vanessa and Mike faced was the initial tension Michelle felt as she was caught in a "tug-of-war" between her parents. The child was close to her mother, who retained custody in Newport, Tennessee. The child's mother called Vanessa a "nigger" from Monday through Friday, but then expected Vanessa to be a "baby-sitter" for Michelle on the weekends.

Vanessa realizes that there are many children being born of interracial unions who are beautiful and have the "best of both worlds." Yet she wonders what the world will be for them as she finds most people tolerant of, rather than accepting of, interracial couples. She continues to see unfairness and nepotism from whites, particularly at work; therefore, Vanessa is not optimistic about impending racial harmony.

Vanessa sees Mike as a passive, agreeable man who is never controlling in his behavior towards her. He never belittles her and is caring, encouraging, and supportive. For example, Mike encouraged Vanessa to return to school when she lost her job. Vanessa finds Mike to be a blessing to her, and she would likely marry interracially again should Mike die and she became single again. She thus has stereotyped white men as "good" and black men as "bad" to some extent. Vanessa sees the couple as opposites who complement one another. They often "start and finish each other's sentences," think alike, and know each other well.

Vanessa attended college after high school, but dropped out when she became pregnant and had to get a full-time job. After working at a factory for more than twenty years, she lost her job, returned to college, and earned three associate degrees. She now works as a job counselor at the Department of Human Services for the state of Tennessee, in Cocke County.

<center>Interview Five: Isabelle[6]</center>

Isabelle is a thirty-four-year-old white woman who for twelve years was married to Brett, an African American man. Before her marriage, Isabelle had dated four other black men, who did not treat her well. Isabelle and Brett divorced in 1999. Her children are thirteen-year-old Eric, eleven-year-old Ava, and nine-year-old Sera. Both Isabelle and Brett are natives of Hamblen County and attended high school together. They lived in Germany while he was in the

---

[6] Isabelle (pseud.), interview by author, tape recording, Morristown, Tenn., 11 October 2002.

<center>43</center>

military service during the first ten years of their marriage, from 1988 to 1998. All three of the children were born during that time.

Isabelle was a rebellious teenager who felt as if she were doing something "forbidden" and "exciting" when she became involved with Brett. She feels she experienced peer pressure because of her involvement with Brett during high school, and as a result often wondered what others thought of her. She felt alienated and isolated from her peers, sensing they were resentful of her because of her involvement with Brett. Isabelle sometimes felt she was left out of the social circle of her friends when she became involved in an interracial relationship. The couple had to "sneak around," not telling anyone they were dating, which she describes as somewhat "titillating," forbidden, and exciting. They were more accepted in certain peer groups, such as with those who were also involved in interracial relationships, but not other ones.

One of Brett's black friends dated one of Isabelle's white girlfriends, and as a consequence the two interracial couples became close friends. One of her other white girlfriends told Isabelle that people would think she dated black men if she continued to be friends with Isabelle, so she ended the friendship with Isabelle. Isabelle recalls some black girls in high school picking fights with her and her friend who also dated blacks, "giving us a hard time." She also lost a job at a local restaurant the day after Brett came by to talk to her at work. Isabelle experienced alienation as a result of all of the above.

When she began dating Brett, Isabelle did not tell any of her family members about the relationship for fear of their disapproval. After she did tell her parents, Delia and Nicolas, she considered their initial disapproval to be an obstacle to her relationship. When someone painted "nigger lover" in big, bright red letters on her parents garage door, her parents became even more hostile towards Isabelle's relationship with Brett.

During their time in Germany, Isabelle and Brett found racial problems virtually nonexistent, with "about half" of the children on the military base being biracial or ethnically mixed. Isabelle's parents became closer to the couple after the children were born, even visiting the family in Germany throughout the years. By the time they returned to the United States in 1998, the couple found interracial marriages to be more common.

Isabelle did not feel alienated and isolated after she married Brett because her parents, although angry and upset at first, supported her and encouraged the couple to marry when she became pregnant. Delia and Nicolas initially found it difficult to deal with Isabelle's relationship with Brett, partly because she had two younger, impressionable sisters who were fifteen and ten years of age at the time Isabelle became involved with Brett. Following their initial disapproval, Isabelle found Delia and Nicolas to be supportive and they became close to her after her marriage. Yet Isabelle still recalls how upset Delia was when she told her she had something "terrible" to tell her, and Delia stated the worst it could be was that she was "living with a black man and pregnant by him." Ironically, Delia and Nicolas, rather than Isabelle, are now the ones who usually take the children out to movies, ball games, shopping malls, and restaurants.

Isabelle generally perceives white women as more reserved and passive than black women are. She believes that white women are not as "strident" and strong-willed as African American women are because "black women don't take crap." Thus, she feels some black men choose white women in order to control them.

Isabelle's "mixed" children draw stares from both black and white men and women who often look at her when she is with her children, but not in any hostile way. Isabelle sees her children as "mixed," while Delia prefers to think of them as "biracial." Isabelle thinks they are seen as black or perhaps Latino, while the children perceive themselves as being "mixed."

Brett divorced Isabelle because he fell in love with, and wanted to marry, another woman. Isabelle recalled Brett being obsessed with white women during their marriage, even to the point of his keeping a list of his sexual conquests. Brett is currently married to a German woman, and Isabelle has never known him to have a relationship with any woman who is not white.

Following the divorce, Isabelle felt bitter towards Brett, towards black people in general, and to anything related to blacks, including, for example, rap music. She is dealing with that now and tries to encourage her children to know themselves and be themselves.

Isabelle thinks there is more acceptance of interracial couples and biracial children in East Tennessee now and that there will continue to be more acceptance of them because of the increase in the number of interracial marriages. Following her divorce, Isabelle saw another black man, but feels that dating him was a "mistake." She thinks that the black men she knows treat women badly, cheat on them, and are generally "dogs". Isabelle feels treating women shabbily is "the nature of the beast" for some black men who, unlike her, often do not take relationships seriously. She does not date black men anymore because of this, and is trying to rebuild her life following her divorce. Isabelle is currently seeing a white man she has never introduced to her parents because she does not want them to "interfere" with this relationship, as she felt they did to some extent when she was with Brett. Isabelle still harbors some resentment toward her parents because of their "interference," yet she depends on them for emotional and financial support.

Brett kept the house they lived in with their children, while she was only left with child support for her two daughters. Eric chose to live with his father, who is the sole support of the

children. Eric visits his mother once a week, allowing all three of the children to be with Isabelle,

Delia, and Nicolas on Tuesday evenings. The children attend integrated schools, with

both Isabelle and Brett living in white neighborhoods. Isabelle was raised in the Christian

Church denomination, but became a Jehovah's Witness at Brett's request, evidence of his

controlling ways. She has now left that faith, but the children remain active Jehovah's Witnesses.

<center>Interview Six: Andrea[7] and Neal[8]</center>

Andrea is a forty-four year-old white woman who is married to fifty-two-year-old Neal,

an African American man. The February 2, 1980, marriage, which took place at the home of

Neal's sister, was the first for both partners. The twenty-two year union has produced a daughter,

twenty-year-old Natalie, and a son, fifteen-year-old Jonathan. Andrea and Neal met at work and

both have resided in Greeneville their entire lives. Neal recalls that when they first met they

shared a mutual love of horses, with Andrea inviting him over to her farm to ride her family's

horses. He also remembers telling Andrea that he could just hear her father saying, "ain't no

nigger going to ride my horses."

Andrea was apprehensive about dating a black man because of what she thought her

family and friends might say. She had "never been around blacks," and feared she would be

called a "nigger lover." Neal, however, did not feel apprehensive because he believes that most

blacks are mixed, although usually "not by choice." He recalls the countless black women forced

into sexual relationships with white men throughout the ages, resulting in the "mixed race most

blacks are descended from today." His older sister had married a native of Switzerland when

interracial marriages were illegal in East Tennessee, and he has four other brothers and sisters

---

[7] Andrea (pseud.), interview by author, tape recording, Greeneville, Tenn., 12 October 2002.

[8] Neal (pseud.), interview by author, tape recording, Greeneville, Tenn., 12 October 2002.

who have interracially married since that time. Neal views mixed marriages as two people who love each other marrying one another, "regardless of what others think." He realizes the frequent occurrence of mixed marriages in his family is highly unusual, and seems to think interracial marriages are the norm for his family members.

Andrea felt alienated and isolated from her family and friends when she first became involved with Neal. Initially, Andrea tried to hide her relationship from her friends and family because some friends had told her they could not remain close to her anymore after they learned about her involvement with Neal. It seems these friends did not want others to think they were dating blacks because Andrea was doing so. Although her father once offered to buy her a horse if she would never see Neal again, he has since "accepted" the couple. They currently live next door to Andrea's parents on a dead end road with only one other house on it. Andrea recalled her and Neal's going to a horse show in Chestnut Hill, Tennessee, in 1986, while she was pregnant, after which a white man scared her by trying to run her and Neal off the road. There was another incident in Pigeon Forge when an elderly white man glared at the couple, especially upon seeing that Andrea was pregnant. She does not notice the taunts and stares, primarily from whites, as much now after being married twenty-two years, but she knows racist attitudes still exist. Neal has not been attacked physically, but he has experienced alienation. He perceives that behind his back coworkers talk about and disapprove of his mixed marriage. When asked by people at work if his wife is white, Neal replies truthfully. As part of her job as a youth counselor, Andrea once visited the Union County Courthouse, where she overheard some local elected officials commenting on the town of Greeneville. She remembered them discussing there being too many "nigger lovers" living there.

Andrea and Neal, both active in their respective churches when they became involved with each other, wanted to continue to participate in church activities after their marriage. But their individual churches told them not to come back to or to work together in such church activities as Bible study and Sunday school. After searching for a suitable church, they found a white Church of God, which they have attended for the past twelve years. Ironically, the church they now attend is the one in which Andrea grew up. The whole family is accepted and active there.

Shortly after their marriage, Andrea and Neal experienced discrimination when they attempted to buy a home in Greeneville. When they tried to acquire a loan for a new home, they received two different answers to their request after two separate visits to a local bank where they met with the same loan officer. The bank representative Andrea met told her the bank would lend the couple the money, but the loan officer told Neal that the bank could not do so. They finally obtained a loan from another bank in order to build their home in Greeneville.

Natalie has always told her parents she feels she is accepted for who she is, with the exception of two incidents she vividly remembers. A classmate in the seventh grade told Natalie it was a "sin" for her parents to be married, while a car salesman in Greeneville asked her how she felt, "knowing what her parents did." Both indicated that they disapproved of mixed couples. Andrea remembers that Natalie was fifteen years old, when the child told the car salesman that these were her parents and she loved them. Jonathan has told Neal that he does not want to date black girls because they are known to "beat boys up and take their money." Jonathan once told his parents that he used to hear racial slurs such as "oreo," while he now hears the term "wetback" at the predominantly white high school he attends.

Neal was twenty-eight when he married Andrea, believing she was the woman God intended for him to marry. Andrea was younger and refused to listen to others who warned her an interracial marriage would be difficult. Her main concern now is what could be said and done to Natalie and Jonathan. Andrea states that she does not see Neal as dominating or controlling towards her, but she sometimes believes that "he really needed to have married a strong black woman because he is a strong black man." She describes herself as docile and passive. Both of them agree that there is a stereotype that black men are controlling, dominating, and oppressive towards women. Neal stated, however, that he does not control Andrea in any way at all.

Neal thinks most whites have a deep-rooted problem with interracial marriage going back to slavery. While he is proud of his multiracial family, Neal still harbors resentment for the nonconsensual interracial relationships that existed during slavery. He recalls being on a family vacation at Disneyland and noticing whites pointing at the "variety" of people of different races there, as well as "punching" one another to make sure others of a different race were noticed. Although Neal is adamant about his right to be married to the woman of his choice, the experience at Disneyland demonstrates his feelings of alienation and isolation. He also remarked that if every black man in the United States became sexually involved with a white woman, they would still be outnumbered by the white men who had sexual relations with black women during slavery.

Andrea sees Natalie and Jonathan simply as her children, while Neal sees them as part of "Adam's human race, the only race" he considers existing. His only wish is that they will marry Christians. Neal, who sees mixed children "everywhere he goes" in East Tennessee, has reached the conclusion that older white people will have to deal with the fact that "they have blood in the mixed children their children have." Andrea and Neal believe that being the grandparent of a

biracial child will make older whites more accepting of interracial couples and biracial children in the future. Andrea hopes this will hold true for the generations of her children and grandchildren, however slowly it may take place.

Andrea's perception of blacks has changed from the stereotypical view that they were violent and "cared more about fancy cars than food or shelter," to seeing African Americans as unique individuals. Neal says that his perception of whites has not really changed since he was in kindergarten, when his sister traveled outside of Tennessee to marry a Swiss German, because then it was illegal to marry interracially in the state. Because some of Neal's other siblings have married interracially, he contends that he sees only the "human race" rather than blacks and whites.

Neal said that he has found that most of the stereotypes he has heard about southern whites being racists have been proven "untrue" to him. He finds people of the region generally judge a person for himself/herself. If they do not, he really "does not care" or "consider it anyone else's business" who he is married to. Andrea sometimes feels Neal is bothered more about what others think of their being interracially married than he says because he often becomes angry and defiant at some of the remarks or looks addressed towards them. There appears to be credence to Andrea's perceptions, judging by the contradictions expressed by Neal.

Black women have asked Andrea why she married a black man, and they have also told her that she looks clean, not "trashy" and "dirty" like most white women who are involved with black men. Neal says that while no one, black or white, has ever approached him and told him he should not be married to Andrea, one white man did tell him that people should "stay in their race" when marrying, so that they will have children who "look like them."

Andrea believes marriage itself is difficult, and that one has to be strong in order to face the opposition to an interracial marriage. She advises anyone considering it to think long and hard before entering into such a union, being strong enough to face some very difficult problems.

<center>Interview Seven: Ashley[9] and Jack[10]</center>

Ashley and Jack, both thirty-four-years-old, have been married twelve years. Ashley is an African American native of Sevierville, Tennessee, while Jack is a white native of Sneedville, Tennessee. The couple has two daughters, six-year-old Madeline and four-month-old Angelica. Ashley and Jack met while attending college. Ashley related that she never saw Jack as white, but rather, "only as Jack." According to Jack, he fell in love with Ashley at first sight, but it was nearly a year later before he would ask her for a date, because he was afraid of what her reaction might be and that she might "reject" him.

Ashley and Jack both initially experienced alienation and isolation. Ashley's family opposed the relationship because Jack is white, while his family opposed the relationship because Ashley is black. Ashley's family has since changed drastically and now accepts Jack, while the majority of Jack's family members now accept Ashley. Ashley credits the acceptance of her family to both her mother and one of her sisters now being married to white men. Ashley's sister has one child with her current white husband as well as two older children from her previous marriage to an African American.

Ashley insists that the initial rejection from her family members did not really bother her that much, as she has always considered herself a loner. Jack sometimes gets the impression that

---

[9] Ashley (pseud.), interview by author, tape recording, Morristown, Tenn., 13 October 2002.

[10] Jack (pseud.), interview by author, tape recording, Morristown, Tenn., 13, October 2002.

some of his coworkers are more careful now about what they say around him because they know he is married to a black woman. The only serious problem they have encountered was not being served after waiting nearly thirty minutes in a Georgia restaurant. The couple is still careful where they go, trying to avoid situations like the one in Georgia. They are sometimes stared at, but they usually joke about that.

Ashley used to believe that black men were domineering towards the white women they married, just as white men who married black women were, but she has changed her mind. Ashley thinks she may have received this impression from observing acquaintances in mixed marriages. She now realizes that every couple is different. Jack previously thought black men were violent, likely due to statements he had heard about black men in general. She and Jack now realize these were racial stereotypes.

The couple does not believe people who know them pinpoint the race of their two daughters, but rather see them as "cute" and "pretty." Both Ashley and Jack believe their children have the "best of both the black and the white worlds" and intend to tell them that when they are older. Jack thinks it is unfair to have to choose either black or white on a birth certificate. He also recognizes the need to teach their children that one of them may be a different color than the other one. He knows that one of the children could be darker than the other one is, and that they may not look alike when they get older. Jack fears this could result in the children becoming self-conscious.

Ashley believes her children will be accepted socially in the future because there are so many interracial children now. Jack agrees but realizes they still will have problems. Ashley sees both good and evil in every race, so she tries not to dwell on the fact that racism exists. Jack now knows more about blacks and no longer accepts racial stereotypes (i.e. blacks are dirty). Ashley

thinks she knows more about whites as well, although she says that she had no "preconceived notions" about them in general before her marriage to Jack.

Ashley and Jack, active in a black Baptist church in Morristown, where they reside, feel their strong Christian background and how they live has protected their family from both danger and heartache. They feel richly blessed to be together as a family. Ashley and Jack attempt to avoid being angry when they encounter prejudice, for they do not see anger as "reflective of Christ."

Interview Eight: Vivienne[11]

Vivienne is a seventy-nine-year-old black woman originally from Greene County, Tennessee. She was married to an African American man by whom she gave birth to her daughter, Ruby, when she was nineteen years old. Following her divorce from her black husband in 1957, Vivienne moved to Chicago and met Georg at work at the post office. Originally from Germany, Georg married Vivienne after obtaining a divorce from his wife. The couple moved to Morristown in 1980 because Vivienne thought it would be better to leave Chicago, where Georg's "original" family still resided, and move to a "progressive" East Tennessee city like Morristown. They were married ten years before Georg's death in 1988.

Vivienne was initially apprehensive about becoming involved with Georg because she doubted his sincerity because he was a married man with two adult children. Georg's children resented Vivienne throughout the marriage because they felt she came between their parents, causing their divorce. Georg's children never truly accepted Vivienne as their stepmother, resulting in her feeling alienated and isolated from them.

---

[11] Vivienne (pseud.), interview by author, Morristown, Tenn., 13 October 2002.

A number of black acquaintances tended to view Vivienne as a black woman who had moved "up North to a big city," but returned "home" when the couple moved to Tennessee in 1980. White acquaintances, however, seemed jealous and resentful of the couple's relationship. Vivienne loved Georg and "did not really care what others thought" about their relationship. The couple did not let the views of others bother them and were very devoted to one another. Vivienne has wonderful memories of her time with Georg, tending to forget some of the feelings of alienation, isolation, and rejection she initially felt from others as the "other woman" in an interracial relationship. Perhaps she wanted to return to East Tennessee with Georg to avoid her awkward relationship with Georg's family and friends.

Vivienne has the philosophy that she decides what she will do, not having to "justify anything to anyone else." She never saw Georg as dominating, controlling, or oppressive towards her in any way. Vivienne describes him as "much sweeter and considerate" than any of the black men with whom she had previously been involved. Vivienne knew Georg loved her deeply.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of my study on interracial relationships in East Tennessee was to determine if African American men and women who marry white men and women perceive feelings of alienation and isolation from their families and friends as a result of their selection of a mate from a race other than that into which they were born. My findings and conclusions are that African American men and women who marry white men and women in East Tennessee do experience feelings of alienation and isolation from their families and friends because of their relationships. These perceptions or feelings may be conscious or unconscious in nature, yet exist nonetheless.

The subjects I interviewed, however, did not allow their feelings of alienation and isolation to prevent them from continuing with an interracial relationship. Some felt that they had the right to love whomever they pleased, no matter what anyone else thought. Others were initially concerned with how others would react to their interracial relationships but not to the extent that they were willing to abandon the person they loved to please others.

My findings are quite similar to those noted in the studies I examined in my literature review. The misconception of the "invisibility" of blacks and the racial "purity" of whites, especially women, still exists in the South, along with the disapproval of interracial marriages. These unions, however, continue to increase, as they have since the passage of the Civil Rights Act. All of the subjects can certainly say, as Kouri and Lasswell contend in their article, that the Civil Rights movement has affected them with its increased opportunities for

social interaction between blacks and whites in education and in employment.[1]

The interviewees may have married someone of a different race, but they also married someone they met, became friends with, and fell in love with. As noted, for example, in the Lewis, Jr. et al. study, race is not always the determining factor in mate selection.[2] There was no evidence of the deviant or rebellious behavior referenced in Davidson's article.[3] More black men had married white women that black women had married white men among my subjects, just as in studies included in my literature review.

Most of the subjects were initially concerned with living in "the South," with its historical disapproval of sexual race mixing. Others professed little concern with being in Appalachia or the South. Regardless of their fears, in Appalachia and the rest of the South, as in other parts of the United States, interracial marriage is becoming more common.

As interracial marriages increase, couples try to exist as ordinary everyday couples. The subjects of this study experienced the same feelings of alienation and isolation as do interracial couples in any other part of the United States but not to be extent of ending their relationships.

---

[1] Kouri and Lasswell, "Black-White Marriages," 242-43.

[2] Lewis, et al., "Racial and Nonracial Factors," 7.

[3] Davidson, "Theories About Black-White Interracial Marriage," 1-2.

REFERENCES

Anderson, Vivienne (pseud.). Interview by author, 13 October 2002, Morristown, Tennessee. Handwritten response. In author's possession.

Brien, Michael J. "Racial Differences in Marriage and the Role of Marriage Markets." *The Journal of Human Resources* 32 (Fall 1997): 741-79.

Burton, Ashley (pseud.). Interview by author, 13 October 2002, Morristown, Tennessee. Tape recording. In author's possession.

Burton, Jack (pseud.). Interview by author, 13 October 2002, Morristown, Tennessee. Tape recording. In author's possession.

Campbell, John C. *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland*. NewYork: Russell Sage Foundation, 1921. Reprint. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1969.

Cansler, Charles W. *Three Generations: The Story of a Colored Family of Eastern Tennessee.* Kingsport: Kingsport Press, Inc., 1939.

Clark, Andrea (pseud.). Interview by author, 12 October 2002, Greeneville, Tennessee. Tape recording. In author's possession.

Clark, Neal (pseud.). Interview by author, 12 October 2002, Greeneville, Tennessee. Tape recording. In author's possession.

Collins, Paige (pseud.). Interview by author, 10 October 2002, Dandridge, Tennessee. Tape recording. In author's possession.

Cose, Ellis. "The Black Gender Gap." *Newsweek*, 3 March 2003, 48-51.

Crowder, Kyle D. and Stewart E. Tolnay. "A New Marriage Squeeze for Black Women: The Role of Racial Intermarriage by Black Men." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62 (August 2000): 792-807.

Datzman, Jeanine and Carol Brooks Gardner. "'In My Mind, We Are All Humans:' Notes on the Public Management of Black-White Interracial Romantic Relationships." *Marriage and Family Review* 30 (Fall 2000): 5-24.

Davidson, Jeannette R. "Theories About Black-White Interracial Marriages: A Clinical Perspective." [article online]. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 20 (October 1992): 150. Accessed 30 April 2002. Available from EBSCOhost MasterFILE Premier, article no. 9706113827.

Drake, Richard B. "Slavery and Antislavery in Appalachia." In *Appalachians and Race: The Mountain South from Slavery to Segregation*, ed. John C. Inscoe, 16-26. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001.

Dunaway, Wilma A. "Put in Master's Pocket: Cotton Expansion and Interstate Slave Trading in the Mountain South." In *Appalachians and Race: The Mountain South from Slavery to Segregation*, ed. John C. Inscoe, 116-32. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001.

_____"Slave History: Diaspora, Death, and Sexual Exploitation-Slave Families at Risk in the Mountain South." *Appalachian Journal* 26 (Winter 1999): 128-49.

Flick, Uwe. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research.* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Press, 2002.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. "Isolation as a Symptom of Alienation." [article online]. *Praise of Theory: Speeches and Essays*, trans. By Chris Dawson. New Haven: Yale University, 1998. Accessed 14 October 2002: 1-4.

Gaines, Stanley O., Jr., Diana I. Rios, Cherlyn S. Granrose, Katrina L. Bledsoe, Karlyn R. Farris, Mary S. Page Youn, Ben F. Garcia "Romanticism and Interpersonal Resource Exchange Among African American-Anglo and Other Interracial Couples." [article online]. *Journal of Black Psychology* 25 (November 1999): 461-89. Accessed 18 June 2002. Available from InfoTrac OneFile.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *Colored People: A Memoir.* New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Harris, Chandra. "Loving Outside the Lines." *The Knoxville News Sentinel.* 3 November 2002, sec. E, p. 1.

Hart, Jessica (pseud.). Interview by author, 10 October 2002, Morristown, Tennessee. Tape recording. In author's possession.

Heer, David M. "The Prevalence of Black-White Marriage in the United States 1960 and 1970." (article online). *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 36 (May 1974): 246-58. Accessed 24 February 2003. Available from JSTOR.

Hill, Miriam R. and Volken Thomas. "Strategies for Racial Identity Development: Narratives of Black and White Women in Interracial Partner Relationships." [article online]. *Family Relations* 49 (April 2000): 193. Accessed 30 April 2002. Available from EBSCOhost MasterFILE Premier, article no. 2933150.

Hughes, Langston. "Cross." *The Langston Hughes Reader.* New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1958.

Inscoe, John C. *Mountain Masters, Slavery, and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina.* Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1989.

_____"Race and Racism in Nineteenth-Century Southern Appalachia: Myths, Realities, and Ambiguities." In *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Mary Beth Budup, Dwight B. Billings, and Altina L. Waller, 103-31. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Jennings, Tracy (pseud.). Interview by Claire Stevens (pseud.), 11 October 2002, Knoxville, Tennessee. Tape recording. In author's possession.

Kalmijn, Matthijs. "Trends in Black/White Intermarriage." [article online]. S*ocial Forces* (September 1993): 119. Accessed 3 March 2001. Available from InfoTrac OneFile.

Killian, Kyle D. "Reconstituting Racial Histories and Identities: The Narratives of Interracial Couples." [article online]. *The Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 27 (January 2001): 27. Accessed 18 June 2002. Available from InfoTrac OneFile.

Klotter, James C. "The Black South and White Appalachia." In *Blacks in Appalachia*, ed. William H. Turner and Edward J. Cabbell, 51-67. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985.

Kouri, Kristyan M. and Marcia Lasswell. "Black-White Marriages: Social Change and Intergenerational Mobility." *The Marriage and Family Review* 19 (March/April 1993): 244-55.

Lakin, Matthew. "'A Dark Night': The Knoxville Race Riot of 1919." *The Journal of East Tennessee History* 72 (2000): 1-29.

Lamon, Lester C. *Black Tennesseeans 1900-1930.* Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1977.

Lewis, Richard, Jr., George Yancey, and Siri Bletzer. "Racial and Nonracial Factors that Influence Spouse Choice in Black/White Marriages." [article online]. *Journal of Black Studies* 29 (September 1997): 60. Accessed 18 June 2002. Available from InfoTrac OneFile.

McFadden, John. "Intercultural Marriage and Family: Beyond the Racial Divide." [article online]. *Family Journal* 9 (January 2001): 39. Accessed 30 April 2002. Available from EBSCOhost MasterFILE Premier, article no. 4578911.

Majete, Clayton. "What You May Not Know About Interracial Marriages." [article online]. *World & I* 12 (July 1997): 300. Accessed 30 April 2002. Available from EBSCOhost MasterFILE Premier, article no. 9706276373.

Montell, Lynwood. "The White Gals." In *Appalachia Inside Out* Vol. 1*, Conflict and Change*, eds. Robert J. Higgs, Ambrose N. Manning, and Jim Wayne Miller: 236-39. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995.

Mydral, Gunnar. *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row, 1944.

Paset, Pamela S. and Ronald D. Taylor. "Black and White Women's Attitudes Toward Interracial Marriage." [article online]. *Psychological Reports* 69 (December 1991): 753-54. Accessed 18 June 2002. Available from InfoTrac OneFile.

Qian, Zhenchao. "Breaking the Racial Barriers: Variations in Interracial Marriage Between 1980 and 1990." [article online]. *Demography* 34 (May 1997): 263-76. Accessed 18 June 2002. Available from InfoTrac OneFile.

_____ "Who Intermarries? Education, Nativity, Region, and Interracial Marriage, 1980 and 1990." [article online]. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 30 (Autumn 1999): 579. Accessed 3 March 2001. Available from InfoTrac OneFile.

Raitz, Karl B. and Richard Ulack with Thomas R. Leinbach. *Appalachia: A Regional Geography: Land, People, and Development*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1984.

Roediger, David R. *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Rothman, Joshua D. "'Notorious in the Neighborhood': An Interracial Family in Early National and Antebellum Virginia." *The Journal of Southern History* 67 (February 2001): 73-111.

St. Jean, Yanick. "Let People Speak for Themselves: Interracial Unions and the General Social Survey." [online article]. *Journal of Black Studies* 28 (January 1998): 398. Accessed 18 June 2002. Available from InfoTrac OneFile.

Spickard, Paul R. *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in 20th Century America.* Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

Taylor, Isabelle (pseud.). Interview by author, 11 October 2002, Morristown, Tennessee. Tape recording. In author's possession.

Tedesco, Marie. "A Free Black Slave Owner in East Tennessee: The Strange Case of Adam Waterford." In *Appalachians and Race: The Mountain South from Slavery to Segregation*, ed. John C. Inscoe, 133-53. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001.

West, Vanessa (pseud.). Interview by author, 11 October 2002, Newport, Tennessee. Tape
     recording. In author's possession.

Wilson, Darlene and Patricia D. Beaver. "Transgressions in Race and Place: The Ubiquitous
     Native Grandmother in America's Cultural Memory." In *Neither Separate Nor Equal:*
     Women, Race, and Class in the South, ed. Barbara Ellen Smith, 34-56. Philadelphia:
     Temple University Press, 1999.

Woodson, Carter G. "Freedom and Slavery in Appalachian America." *The Journal of Negro*
     History 2 (April 1916): 132-50.

Zebroski, Sheryline A. "Black-White Intermarriage: The Racial and Gender Dynamics of
     Support and Opposition." [article online]. *Journal of Black Studies* 30 (September
     1999): 123. Accessed 30 April 2002. Available from EBSCOhost MasterFILE Premier,
     article no. 2214772.

APPENDICES

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What is your name, your age, and your race?

Is or was this your first marriage?

When did you get married? How long have you been married, or how long were you married?

Do you have children? If so, how many?

How did you meet your partner?

Were you apprehensive about becoming involved in an interracial relationship? If so, explain why. If not, explain why.

What racially-based problems did you encounter early in your relationship?

If you did encounter racially-based problems, have they persisted? Have they evolved or changed?

How do you see yourself, in relationship to your family and friends, after having married outside your race? Do you feel alienated and isolated from your family and friends at work? in school? in society? at home?

Do you feel you had to "justify" marrying a partner of a different race to your family and friends? Do you feel alienated and isolated from your family and friends because of your marriage?

Do black women react differently than white women to a black woman marrying a white man? Do black women feel white men are dominating, controlling, and/or oppressing to the black women they marry?

When white women marry black men, do reactions differ from black men and white women? What of the issues of domination, control, and/or oppression?

When white women marry black men, do reactions differ from white men and black women? What of the issues of domination, control, and/or oppression?

How do you see your children, in a racial category, in this geographic area? How do you think others see them?

Do the children more readily identify with one specific race? Has this been encouraged?

Do you think acceptance of interracial couples and/or their children in East Tennessee will become better, become worse, or stay the same in the future?

Has your perception of the race of your partner changed since your marriage? If so, how?

APPENDIX B

MORRIS FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS, 1900 - 2000

Sarah Elizabeth Brown Great-Great-Great Grandmother

Melviney Brown Taylor and husband Lucius Great-Great Grandparents

Melviney Brown Taylor and youngest daughter Bessie, Great-Great Aunt

Pharr West and youngest daughter Alcoma, Maternal Great-Grandfather and sister of maternal Grandmother

Mary Sue Taylor West and son Paul, Maternal Great-Grandmother and brother of Maternal Grandmother

Cordelia T. Leeper Maternal Great-Grandmother

Edith West Leeper, Maternal Grandmother

Making Molasses – Roy Leeper (Maternal Grandfather), Emma Higgins, Lee Higgins, Myrtle Higgins, Pansy Tomberline Higgins

**Edith and Roy Leeper
Maternal Grandparents**

**Ethel Lind Georgia Morris,
with a niece and nephew
Paternal Grandmother**

**Paul and Helen West,
with Helen West
Grant, Great Niece
and sister of Johnnie**

**Johnnie West,
Great Niece**

**Johnnie West and the
Rev. Ted Richardson**

**Natalie Leeper
Morris, Mother**

**Leonard Morris
Father**

Parents

VITA

SHEILA D. MORRIS

Personal Data:	Date of Birth: February 7, 1958
	Place of Birth: White Pine, Tennessee
	Marital Status: Single
Education:	Public Schools, White Pine, Tennessee
	Walters State Community College, Morristown, Tennessee; Secretarial Science Technology, A.S., 1979
	Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tennessee; Organizational Management, B.S., 1999
	East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee; Liberal Studies, M.A., 2003
Professional Experience:	Secretary, Walters State Community College; Morristown, Tennessee, 1979-2001
	Coordinator, Walters State Community College; Morristown, Tennessee, 2001-Present
Honors and Awards:	Phi Kappa Phi.