RACE AND PROGRESSIVISM AT THE NEW LINCOLN SCHOOL: TEACHING RACE RELATIONS THROUGH EXPERIENCE

by

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Introduction

The New Lincoln School opened its doors in 1948 in a changing and politically charged New York City. The height of Eastern European immigration and the Great Migration of southern and West Indian blacks had been over for almost a generation, and the "new" New Yorkers from that period had become settled and incorporated into the life of the city. However, New York was facing a new battle for equality. Historian Martha Biondi states that in the decade following World War II, "Black New Yorkers fought for better jobs, an end to police brutality, access to new housing, representation in government, and college education for their children. Their battles against unexpectedly overt and lawful racial barriers pushed New York City and state to pass antidiscrimination laws in employment, housing, public accommodations, and education."[1] The fight over the public schools was, as Biondi notes, one of the major battles in this struggle for civil rights. Despite *de jure* integration in the schools, many residential communities in the city remained segregated, causing their neighborhood schools to remain so, as well. Biondi writes: "As the Black population in the city grew, the Board of Education facilitated the growth of racially segregated and inferior schools for Black children."[2] For the first half of the twentieth century, textbooks contained racist material, black teachers in the schools were a rarity, and the Board of Education remained all-white.[3] Until the 1950s, integration and equality in New York City public schools was not a working reality. It was in this city and

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[1] Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1.
[2] Ibid, 241.

time period, when tension and inequality intersected with optimism and potential, that the New Lincoln School was born.

The political and social climate of the time was not only influential in New Lincoln's founding but in its development as well. New Lincoln prided itself on being a progressive and experimental school, one that would both educate the students within its walls and advance the public school system. But New Lincoln's teachings were not strictly academic. Just as New Lincoln had goals of academic success for students – their own and those in public schools -- it had noticeable social goals for its interior community and the larger society. The school's social goals focused on issues of interracialism and integration. New Lincoln wanted its students to become competent "in relating constructively with a variety of human beings from different economic levels, religions, races, and nationalities" while at the same time improving race relations on a larger scale across the city and country.[4]

I began my study of New Lincoln by talking to several alumni and former teachers, all of whom remarked that one of the most remarkable things about New Lincoln was its racial integration. As I prepared to take a closer look at the school, I expected to hear stories of active black student organizations and heated discussions about race. As I began to question alumni and look at the philosophy of the school, however, I learned that this was far from what the first fifteen years of New Lincoln's version of integration looked like. Even in New Lincoln's later

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[3] Ibid, 243.
[4] F. C. Rosencrance, Walter A. Anderson et al. "Report on the New Lincoln School." 1953. fromn the archives of Milbank Memorial Library, Teachers College, Columbia University, Box no. 890624 MG 94, New Lincoln School, Box 1 of 1, 1.

years, when the anti-integrationist ideas of Black Nationalism began to infiltrate the school and some students began to develop a strong black consciousness, New Lincoln's model of integration remained decidedly positive and calm.

For New Lincoln's founders and administrators, being integrated was both a social duty and a continuation of their prized progressive curriculum. The tenets of the progressive education movement will be discussed in greater detail later but here it is important to note that they include a strong belief in the power of "learning by doing" and on the value of the individual. The progressive pedagogy specific to New Lincoln reflects reliance on the educational theories of John Dewey, the pioneer of progressive education in the United States. Though Dewey was not directly involved in the school, his philosophy influenced much of New Lincoln's thought and practice. William Heard Kilpatrick, a student of Dewey and a major progressive educator in his own right, was also instrumental in guiding New Lincoln's vision. His work with the school as Chairman of New Lincoln's Board of Trustees was essential to New Lincoln's establishment as a progressive private school. The link between progressive pedagogy and active integration is essential to understanding the social goals of New Lincoln.

A comparison of the educational writings of John Dewey and W.E.B. Du Bois shows a connection in thought between progressive educators and those concerned specifically with the issues of racial equality. In discussing the flaws of a traditional education in 1938, Dewey notes: "There was no demand that the teacher should become intimately acquainted with the conditions of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational, etc., in order to utilize

them as educational resources.[5] Du Bois, in remarkably similar language, stated in 1935: "The proper education of any people includes sympathetic touch between teacher and pupil; knowledge on the part of the teacher, not simply of the individual taught, but of his surroundings and background, and the history of his class and group."[6] At New Lincoln, the connection between the teacher, student, and community was crucial to the development of both the academic and social progressive curriculum. New Lincoln students learned to thrive in an integrated world the same way they learned most of their lessons – through experience.

In order to create a community and school where students could have experiences that would teach lessons of life in an egalitarian community, New Lincoln replicated a model of an ideal society. It is therefore possible to look at New Lincoln as a utopian community. Historian Rosabeth Kanter says that utopian communities "represent attempts to establish ideal social orders."[7] New Lincoln certainly worked toward that goal. Unlike the normal society of living, working and schooling in New York City in the 1940s, New Lincoln's founding ideal was a working egalitarian democracy where everyone had equal opportunities in education, both in the classroom and in the social leadership of the school. In this way, New Lincoln resembled, as well, the Beloved Community that Martin Luther King, Jr. hoped for – a society where the "ultimate

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[5] John Dewey, John. *Experience and Education*. New York: Touchstone, 1997 (1938), 40.
[6] W.E.B. Du Bois, "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?" *Journal of Negro Education*, July 1935, 328-35, in Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents*, (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998), 92.
[7] Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. "Commitment and Social Organization: A Study of Commitment Mechanisms in Utopian Communities." *American Sociological Review*, Volume 33, Issue 4 (August, 1968), 502.

goal is integration, which is genuine inter-group and inter-personal living."[8] Within the school, New Lincoln proved that an egalitarian interracial community could exist. The possibility for that world in the larger society, however, seemed less certain. In this discussion of the New Lincoln School, I will look at the institution as both a utopia and as a more realistic microcosm of society.

Kanter's discussion of utopian communities is important to the study of New Lincoln because of the importance she gives to the conflict between a utopia and the world outside. Kanter notes that since utopian communities "exist within a larger society, they, especially, must vie with the outside for members' loyalties. They must insure high member involvement despite external competition without sacrificing their distinctiveness or ideals."[9] New Lincoln faced this challenge. Because students did not board at the school, they returned to their home communities each evening, where, for many of them, race and class *were* issues. Educational scholar Sara Lawrence Lightfoot comments on the competition for students' loyalties between schools and homes on a broader level. She writes: "Families and schools are engaged in a complementary sociocultural task and yet they find themselves in great conflict with each other."[10] Some black students recall living a dual life, a black one at night and a white one during the day. Some white scholarship students have similar memories about the class differences between school and home. Many of the wealthy white students saw blacks in

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[8] "The Beloved Community of Martin Luther King, Jr.." *The King Center: The Beloved Community*; available from http://thekingcenter.com/prog/bc/index.html; accessed on 18 March 2003.
[9] Kanter, 502.

roles of friend and brilliant teacher during the day and returned home to see blacks as domestic servants at night. Additionally, while ideologically, most of the students at New Lincoln shared the beliefs of the school. Some of their parents did not share these ideals. Many alumni describe their parents as being more liberal in theory than in practice, a possible source of family tension and additional competition for New Lincoln's utopian vision. Kanter notes that utopian communities "worked in communal enterprises, spent most of their time together, or in other ways signified their high involvement in the community."[11] New Lincoln, in order to combat this pull from the outside world, also developed a strong sense of communal loyalty.

To understand the New Lincoln world, it is helpful to look at those who chose to be part of this community. In its early years, New Lincoln provided employment for many talented teachers on the government's "black list." Children of government identified communists attended the school and were received with acceptance and compassion from their peers.[12] The majority of students and parents at New Lincoln were liberal Jews from the notably liberal Upper West Side of Manhattan. Benjamin Epstein, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, and Nathan Belth, the publicity director of that organization, both sent their children to New Lincoln. Elinor Gimbel, whose family owned Macy's and Gimbel's department stores, was one of the founders of

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[10] Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, *Worlds Apart: Relationships Between Families and Schools*, (New York, Basic Books, Inc., 1978), 20.
[11] Noreen Cornfield, "The Success of Urban Communes," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 45, no. 1, February 1983, 117.
[12] Carol Maslow Questionnaire.

the school.[13] There was a large population of white liberal artists whose children attended New Lincoln, as well. Poet Muriel Rukeyser, publisher Ralph Ginzburg, pop artist Robert Rauschenberg, write Susan Sontag, and actors Maureen O'Sullivan and Zero Mostel were all New Lincoln parents.[14] In addition, New Lincoln made a conscious effort to draw prominent liberal blacks to the school. Judge Robert Carter, a prominent civil rights lawyer and judge, author and illustrator Faith Ringoldd, and scholar Eileen Jackson Southern, the first black woman to be tenured at Harvard, all sent their children to New Lincoln.[15] The coming together of prominent liberal adults of all races and sexes, I argue, is both a representation of the New Lincoln ideology and a public extension of the experiential social "lessons" New Lincoln students shared with each other each day.

No other scholar has taken the time to look at the New Lincoln School in detail, examining many of the key aspects of the school. This thesis looks at the educational, political, and social forces that created and maintained New Lincoln. My methodological approach to New Lincoln allows for many points of access to the school. The project uses original documents from the school that were published for the school community such as yearbooks, teacher reports, and internal memos. It also uses documents created by New Lincoln but intended for

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[13] Shirlee Taylor Haizlip and Harold C. Haizlip, *In the Garden of Our Dreams: Memoirs of a Marriage*, (New York: Kodansha International, 1998), 126.

[14] Verne Oliver, 2002, Conversation with author, New York, 14 October; Michele Wallace, "To Hell and Back: On the Road with Black Feminism in the 60's and 70's," *Black Cultural Studies Site*; available from http://www.blackculturalstudies.org/wallace/hellandback.html; accessed 15 March 2003.

an outside audience, such as Visitor's Guides and promotional material. I looked at articles from the *New York Times* and other local newspapers to study additional ways New Lincoln presented itself to the larger community and to gain an understanding of the ways that community perceived this presentation. Interviews with and questionnaires completed by former students and teachers, as well as previously published memories of New Lincoln provide the humanistic view essential to the study of the school.

Chapter 1 of this thesis will give the historical overview necessary for understanding New Lincoln's opening. The chapter will outline the basic educational groundings of the progressive education movement with special emphasis on the tenants of the movement and their place in the Lincoln School, New Lincoln's predecessor. Chapter 2 will examine the school between the years of 1948-1962, the period I call "New Lincoln's early years," to determine the way New Lincoln created its integrated learning lab and the way it presented its community and goals. Chapter 3 will look at New Lincoln during the years 1963-1974, the period I call "New Lincoln's later years," the last years that New Lincoln was open on Central Park North. It will examine the outside social forces acting upon the school and the ways in which these forces changed New Lincoln. Although the New Lincoln School remained open until the mid 1980s, this thesis will focus only on the first 25 years of the school, the years before New Lincoln's move to the Upper East Side. Much of the spirit of the school ceased to exist once New Lincoln left its original home in Harlem. This first location -- at

[15] Verne Oliver, 2002, Conversation with author; Marc Aronson, 2002, Conversation with author, Maplewood, NJ, 11 November.

the intersection of Black Harlem, Spanish Harlem and the Upper East Side -- geographically represented New Lincoln's mission of a bringing together different races and ethnic groups. Today, in an ironic commentary on that mission and on education in general, 31 W. 110th St., the building that housed the New Lincoln School for 25 years, is now a minimum security prison.[16]

[16] Clay Risen, "Prison on the Park," *Morning News*, 9 July 2002; available from http://www.themorningnews.org/archives/new_york_new_york/prison_on_the_park.shtl.

Chapter I – New Lincoln in the Progressive Tradition

The New Lincoln School constitutes part of a long tradition of progressive education in New York City – a tradition whose tenets New Lincoln would use to develop and support an interracial community. The progressive education movement began with the mass urban immigration of the 1890s and ended officially in the 1950s. Despite the length of the movement, the height of progressive education in public schools was in the time period following World War I. Turn of the century educators used schools as centers of social reform where they could Americanize new immigrants and teach them English. By 1920, stricter enforcement of laws restricting child labor and requiring all children under the age of fourteen to attend school full time meant that for the first time students of all different economic and ability levels continuously enrolled in the public schools, causing the city's leading educators to see a need for a more diverse and flexible curriculum. [17]

In this new wave of school reform, progressive educators of the 1920s, most notably John Dewey, chose to focus on the specific needs of individual students. The new curriculum became "child-centered" and met the needs of the "whole child," phrases often used by these educators. Within this pedagogy, educators also stressed the importance of "experiential learning," defined as education where work and instruction reflects students' life experiences. For public schools, this new philosophy seemed to be a possible way to "reduce

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[17] Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars: A History of the New York City Public Schools,* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 234.

truancy and educational retardation."[18] In a phrase that is strikingly familiar in current discussions of educational reform, educators in the New York City public school noted that in a working progressive classroom, "no child is ever left behind."[19] The goal for these progressive schools was that student interest would drive the classroom activities and that teachers would function only to assist and guide students in their independent learning. Schools were intended to be a space of individual creation, questioning, and self-discovery.

Within two decades of this child-centered focus, the city found itself unsatisfied with the results of progressive education. The creation of these progressive classrooms in every school in the city proved infeasible. Burdened with overwhelming overcrowding, outside social problems, and teachers who believed in tough discipline, public schools could not transition from a traditional teacher-focused style of education to the new emphasis on unstructured classrooms. As historian Maurice Berube observed, "Self-expression, creativity, and child-centered activities represent a stage of intellectual development that is best taken advantage of by students who have no concern about cramped sleeping quarters or hunger."[20] Additionally, the school system in New York City was newly centralized and the large bureaucracy was unable to create and maintain the small, child-centered learning environments that effective progressive education required. Instead, the system addressed the variety of student needs by creating vocational schools and providing services such as health examinations and

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[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid, 235.

libraries. They also began to track students according to ability level and introduced standardized testing. By the early 1930s, the New York City public school system abandoned child-centered education altogether, ending funding to even its own progressive test school, The Little Red School House. Progressive education would not take hold again in New York's public schools until 1974 with the opening of Central Park East Secondary School.

The formation of progressive private schools like New Lincoln, schools that continued experimental curricula, lessons from the lived experiences of children, and emphasis on creativity and self-expression coincided with the adoption and subsequent rejection of this pedagogy by the public schools. By the 1930s in New York, only these private institutions remained to explore, implement and define progressive pedagogy. New Lincoln was an offspring of the first progressive private schools, a descendant that would grow to encompass social as well as educational goals. Lawrence Cremin, undoubtedly the most widely read historian of progressive education, asserts in The Transformation of the School that there were three waves of progressive education: social reformist, scientific, and child-centered.[21] This essay argues that the New Lincoln School,

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[20] Maurice Berube, *American school reform : progressive, equity, and excellence movements, 1883-1993*, (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1994), 23.

[21] Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education 1876-1957*, (New York: Vintage, 1964), 179-200. In Chapter 6, "Scientists, Sentimentalists, and Radicals," Cremin notes that during the 1920s "social reformism was virtually eclipsed by the rhetoric of child-centered pedagogy." According to Cremin, the social reformist wave of progressive education lasted from 1876 until the mid-1920s and was completely separate from the child-centered wave of progressive education, which took over in the 1920s and lasted until 1957. The dates of the height of child-centrist progressive education coincides roughly with the span of the Progressive Education Association, founded in 1919 and disbanded in 1957. The scientific wave of progressive education also took hold in the 1920s and became particularly important to the progressive education movement after World War II. In the early to middle twentieth century, educators were looking for ways to measure the effects of education. As a result, IQ tests and other evaluative tools were introduced into the classroom. Scientism in progressive education was

active and influential after the wave of progressive education had passed, represents a fourth stage in the movement, a stage that combined two of these earlier waves. New Lincoln used child-centered, experiential practices to achieve social reform with regard to race relations.[22] The school attempted to create a utopian community within the school itself and a larger outside society free from racial tensions.

One of the leaders of the child-centered wave of progressive education, William Heard Kilpatrick, a student of John Dewey's at both the University of Chicago and at Teachers College, was one of the primary educational theorists associated with New Lincoln's founding. He agreed with the educators that came before him that "the aim of education should not be book-learning primarily, but the building of character and personality that can cope with the problems of life and prepare the individual for broader, deeper living."[23] For Kilpatrick and for many of his colleagues, creating successful multicultural educational environments contributed to this deeper living. Kilpatrick was publicly against racial discrimination. He openly opposed the conditions of blacks in the South and advocated for "peaceful race relations to facilitate regional planning, industrial development, rational urbanization, modern social services, and careful

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the combination of these measuring devices with the introduction of stronger science programs in the classroom. Cremin writes: "Science gave classroom teachers the rules and maxims they needed to make mass education work." While there was a science curriculum at New Lincoln, the child-centrist and social reformist waves of progressive education are reflected more strongly in the school.

[22] Michael James discusses progressive education in relation to racial issues in his "Southern Progressivism During the Great Depression: Virginia and African-American Social Reconstruction." This discourse is unrelated to the social goals of New Lincoln, however, because progressive education in this region and time period reinforced the idea of "separate but equal" instead of working toward a model of integration. Michel James, "Southern Progressivism During

capital investment."[24] In addition, he was actively involved in the New York Urban League and the Service Bureau for Intercultural Education, a national group that worked to end racial and ethnic tensions. As editor of two periodicals, he "presented his views on intolerance and intercultural education" and as editor of *The Social Frontier-Frontiers of Democracy*, he "published more materials on race and ethnic related matters than any previous editor."[25] For Kilpatrick, education was the answer to racial tensions and social injustices.

In his 1947 book, Intercultural Attitudes in the Making, Kilpatrick suggests that one of the responsibilities of the modern school is to improve race relations. He proposed using education to end what he saw as "a most serious evil in our modern world" – "the active survival of intergroup tensions, with their accompanying prejudices and hurtful discriminations".[26] Outlining the contemporary race problem in the first chapter of the book, Kilpatrick writes:

> Consider the following words: Negro, Jew, Catholic, Mexican, West Indian, Japanese, "Dago," "Hunky." Taken separately, all except the last two carry to the right-thinking person no implications; they are, we may say, simply everyday words, "neutral" terms, each denoting a more or less identifiable group of people. But put all the words together and consider the prejudice and discrimination the groups which they represent too often meet. Then we see illustrated the regrettable tendency on the part of some of our people to refuse full citizenship to certain groups among us, as if the members of those groups do not fully "belong," are not to be granted full acceptance, are even to be denied certain of the rights that supposedly belong to all legal citizens.[27]

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the Great Depression: Virginia and African-American Social Reconstruction," *Social Reconstruction Through Education*, (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1995).
[23] "New Lincoln School Has 1st Graduation," *New York Times*, 3 June 1950, 13.
[24] Ronald Goodenow, "The Progressive Educator, Race and Ethnicity in the Depression Years: An Overview" *History of Education Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (winter, 1975), 372.
[25] Ibid.
[26] William Heard Kilpatrick, ed., *Intercultural Attitudes in the Making: Parents Youth Leaders, and Teachers at Work*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1947), vi.
[27] Ibid, 1-2.

Kilpatrick believed that "education is crucially concerned in this evil" of prejudice and he believed that schools needed to find their "place in the scheme for social reconstruction which is needed to lift society from its present chaotic state."[28] The most effective way for this societal change to happen in schools, Kilpatrick proposed, was through progressive education techniques. In 1948, the opening of the New Lincoln School gave Kilpatrick an opportunity to test the efficacy of this modern school in an interracial and multicultural environment.

New York University professor Ernest Melby, chairman of the Progressive Education Association's policy committee[29] and the educator primarily responsible for the oversight of the New Lincoln School during its founding, agreed that education should be used to confront problems in human relations in a community.[30] But he was even more specific in his belief of how this change should happen than was Kilpatrick. The majority of Kilpatrick's work on the creation and effectiveness of multicultural school environments and on ending racial tensions through education was theoretical. He acknowledged the need to look at education in relationship to the community, yet he did little to test interracial education or to encourage prolonged and purposeful integration in schools before New Lincoln's opening.[31] Melby, on the other hand, had already put into practice the idea of using education directly for community improvement. The Montana Study, which he headed in 1946, took college students out of

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[28] Kilpatrick, William Heard, ed. *The Educational Frontier*, (New York: The Century Co., 1933), 447.
[29] Patricial Albjerg Graham, *Progressive Education: From Arcady to Academe*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967), 118.
[30] Elinor Gimbel, 1948, Letter to Nelson Rockefeller, 18 May.

classrooms and engaged them in hands-on work in their communities. The goal of the project was to improve the quality of life in Montana's small towns by making education more communal and allowing students to learn from experience while servicing the world from which they were learning. Although this project had little focus on race specifically, it was similar in philosophy to the program New Lincoln established. Those working on the Montana Study identified the problems specific to their communities and then worked to solve them. In New York, a larger and more diverse community, the challenges to be faced with education were more obvious, making the responsibilities of a new school clear. Melby said: "The problems of world peace, of satisfactory industrial relations, of juvenile delinquency, of bad housing, of race relations, and of religious conflicts – all these come to head in the community. In their solution people must be brought together and there must be a mutual acceptance, conversation and collaboration. All of them are difficult to teach by word of mouth. Nearly always we like people better when we really get to know them." In this speech, Melby conveyed the same philosophy that he had at the New Lincoln School. New Lincoln used the tenets of progressive education to create a kind of utopian learning environment after which students could model new communities. By establishing a close-knit community that reflected the ideal attitudes and relationships in society, educators at New Lincoln gave students an opportunity to "learn by doing" in every sense. The philosophy of improving society and alleviating racial tensions both within school and in the larger community was shared by Melby and Kilpatrick, the two most prominent educators directly involved in the formation of the New Lincoln

[31] Goodenow, 376.

School. Melby's model, combined with the basic elements of progressive education –strong community, valued individuals, and experiential learning – gave New Lincoln a process for teaching students about race relations and community improvement.

This is not to say that New Lincoln's utopia was flawless. On a personal level, Kilpatrick's vision for racial change was conservative. He was reluctant to have southern blacks use legal action to improve their position and even more adverse to direct action, fearing violence and communism. Kilpatrick believed that "direct political action on the part of blacks was not only likely to stir up violent white passions, . . . but it could also benefit 'foreign' influenced radicals."[32] As an institution, New Lincoln was a utopia in the isolationist sense of the word. It existed outside of the real world in a community driven by ideals. Also problematic was that the school considered its integration most successful and peaceful in the early years of its existence, yet in those years the percentage of black students was at its lowest, reaching a high of 10% in 1954 and 1962. As the percentage of minority students in the school increased in the mid 1960s, the school became less stable and more vulnerable to the outside world. Over the span of New Lincoln's existence, the school saw significant changes in the student body. The method of teaching race relations at New Lincoln through progressive techniques, however, changed little over the life of the school.

To understand the educational practices and social goals of New Lincoln, it is useful to refer to the "old" Lincoln School. The Lincoln School, known as

the Horace Mann-Lincoln School after the two institutions merged in 1945, was a well-known progressive private school in New York City. Founded in 1917 by two educators, Abraham Flexner and Charles Eliot, President Emeritus of Harvard University, the Lincoln School was influenced by the theory of John Dewey and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation's General Education Board. With Teachers College of Columbia University responsible for its oversight, the Lincoln School "was to experiment with more flexible patterns" than those in use by the public schools.[33] Flexner and Eliot intended for Lincoln to lead the way in public education reform. The school began strictly as an experimental "modern" school, hesitant to be linked to any specific pedagogy. Yet the educational philosophies and practices of Flexner and Eliot strongly reflect those of other progressive educators. Eliot was associated with the Progressive Education Association and became the group's first honorary President in 1919.[34] More importantly, the school's focus on the individual and its belief that education was most effective through experience are in line with Dewey's philosophies. Flexner thought that the biggest difference between Lincoln and other progressive schools was not pedagogy, but instead that other schools did not experiment with and push traditional education as much as they should.[35]

In its three decades of existence, Lincoln, which later joined with and became Horace Mann-Lincoln, successfully experimented with educational progressivism and other academic pedagogy. Although the school was strong,

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[32] Ibid, 372.
[33] Peter Buttenweiser, *The Lincoln School and its times, 1917-1948*, thesis, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1969, 8.
[34] Ibid, 4.

Teachers College decided to terminate its support of and close the joint school in 1948. The result of this dissolution was, at first, little more than a group of angry parents. For Lincoln School families, this was not the first time they thought that they had not been given fair treatment by Teachers College. In 1945, Teachers College, a supporter of the liberal philosophies of Horace Mann, forced the two schools to merge. The Horace Mann School had faced financial difficulties for years and Lincoln was financially comfortable thanks to a $3,000,000 endowment from the Rockefeller Foundation. Only three years after the merger that neither school supported, Teachers College decided that the educational value of this new, combined school was not worth as much as the school's endowment. As a result, it closed Horace Mann-Lincoln's doors and claimed, through legal loopholes, the remains of the endowment for its own use. This closure did not come without a fight from families. As Benjamin Harrow wrote in a 1948 Letter to the Editor: "[The parents] fought hard in the courts, but the documents establishing the Lincoln School endowment had been drawn loosely . . ."[36]

Almost immediately Horace Mann-Lincoln parents began to plan for the opening of a new school that encompassed the ideals they most loved in the old Lincoln School. New Lincoln was not a direct continuation of the old school – most notably, it lacked the endowment and the continuing financial support of the Rockefeller Foundation – but many of the ideals and practices of Horace Mann-Lincoln transferred to this new institution.[37] Despite the differences between the

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[35] Ibid, 22.
[36] "The Passing of the Lincoln School: letter from Benjamin Harrow in 'Letters to the Editors,'" *The Nation*, 10 July, 1948.
[37] See Figure 1

old and new Lincoln schools, the child-centered education, the strong community, the model of experiential learning, and the core curriculum developed at Lincoln and Horace Mann-Lincoln continued at New Lincoln.

To understand the progressive pedagogy that shaped the Lincoln School and its successor, the New Lincoln School, it is important to look at the educational goals of Eliot and Flexner and the practices of Lincoln, especially in conjunction with the educational theories of John Dewey. Dewey was arguably the most well-known progressive educator of this time period and as a Teachers College faculty member he undoubtedly influenced the pedagogy of the Lincoln School. Like Dewey, who believed in the romantic notion of the individual and in "child-centered" teaching, Eliot sought more academic choices for the student and the "end to teaching by rote memorization and drill."[38] Flexner also advocated for individualized instruction in schools, making this practice central to a Lincoln education. Teachers at Lincoln created lessons based on children's interest and adapted these lessons using children's questions as a guide. Thought and reason were highly valued skills and the child-centered, inquiry-based curriculum fostered the development of these skills. This curriculum placed Lincoln directly in line ideologically with other progressive schools, and it continued at the New Lincoln School.

Yet, for progressive educators, including those tied to Lincoln and New Lincoln, being child-centered meant more than just being individualized, it meant teaching students to mature culturally, socially, physically, and morally, as well as

academically. Historian Maurice Berube writes, "Progressive education was an attempt . . . to develop a school experience that would benefit the whole child's intellectual, social, artistic, and moral development . . . For progressive educators, the student – the child – was perceived in romantic terms as an innocent whose whole personality could be shaped by schooling."[39] Buttenweiser summarizes Flexner's position on this issue. He says that schools should work to develop the interests and skills of the students while at the same time teaching them to care about and understand the world in which they live.[40] As a reflection of this belief, lessons at Lincoln taught more than academic skills. Lincoln students were not only expected to learn a unit's academic material, they were encouraged to develop skills and interests – a joy in art, an interest in reading, an aesthetic appreciation and understanding of the social implications of historical events.[41] The New Lincoln School used this practice of teaching students to desire a deeper understanding, specifically helping them to gain an understanding and appreciation of people across racial lines.

Because students learn communally and in all areas of life, not just in schools, Dewey believed that educators should work with the students, parents, and the larger community to shape a student's learning process and all experiences related to it. In discussing the flaws of a traditional education, Dewey noted that teachers were not required to learn the details of a child's life and home community and, thus, could not use them as educational resources. He

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[38] Buttenweiser, 22.
[39] Berube, 14.
[40] Buttenweiser, 19.
[41] Cremin, 285.

writes: "A system of education based upon the necessary connection of education with experience must, on the contrary, if faithful to its principle, take these things constantly into account."[42] Flexner believed that there should be a connection between the child and community, remarking: "The main purpose of education is to confront the student with the many aspects of the world in which he lives."[43] Student-teacher relationships, community involvement in the school, and close interpersonal connections were crucial to a child's learning and individual development in this progressive education. The value placed on the relationship to society was reflected in the practices of the New Lincoln School. Under Melby and Kilpatrick's guidance, a strong communal relationship would continue at New Lincoln and would become essential to the social and educational goals of the school. This sense of community would also be crucial to the success of New Lincoln's utopia.

Just as community experience was important to students' schooling, Dewey believed that there was an "organic connection between education and personal experience."[44] In his Experience and Education, Dewey wrote: "Books, especially textbooks, are the chief representatives of the lore and wisdom of the past."[45] Eliot agreed that "schools need to get away from lectures and recitation" and thought that they should instead use lab work, arts, and hands-on projects to teach students.[46] Instead of using traditional methods, these progressive educators

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[42] Dewey, 40.
[43] Buttenweiser, 19.
[44] Dewey, 25.
[45] Ibid, 18.
[46] Buttenweiser, 7.

strove to make course material personally relevant to their students. In this progressive, experiential learning process, students were encouraged to participate in their education and to ask questions and be curious about the material. Susan Semel observes that Dewey "believed that children should start their inquiries by posing questions about what they want to know" and then exploring them through a teacher-guided, experiential process.[47] In this way, experiential learning was a continuation of the firmly held belief in the importance of child-centered teaching. Eliot supported "sense training" to teach students "to see, hear, taste and smell" their lessons and, most importantly, to improve their observation skills.[48] Flexner also believed that there should be a strong relationship between "academic material and modern life."[49]

Lesson plans from the Lincoln School serve as exemplars of experiential instruction. In The Transformation of the School, Cremin describes the Lincoln School's primary grade unit where boats became the "entrée into history, geography, reading, writing, arithmetic, science, art and literature."[50] Students studied the subjects through hands-on experience on the Hudson River. They made model boats in order to study density, studied the navigation routes of great trading ships in history, visited a Tall Ship at port in the New York harbor, wrote short stories and articles about their field trips, wrote poems about the ocean, and

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[47] Susan Semel, *Schools of Tomorrow," Schools of Today: What Happened to Progressive Education*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 8.
[48] Buttenweiser, 7.
[49] Ibid, 10.
[50] Cremin, 283.

learned a variety of "boat songs."[51] The unit began with a series of essential questions and exploration topics such as, "How do boats go?" "To know more about the people who traveled the seas in early times" and "How do people know how much to put into a boat before it will sink?"[52] The lessons in the unit served as a way for students to discover the answers while developing basic skills in traditional subject areas. Interactive lessons like these were the key to learning in progressive schools, especially at the elementary and middle school levels.

The Lincoln School introduced also the idea of a Core curriculum, an element of the pedagogy that would later become a defining factor of the New Lincoln School. Core was a program that sought to integrate different subject areas, especially English and History, into one course. The principle behind this was that just as studies would be more meaningful if they were based on personal experience, they would be more meaningful if they were interrelated. Starting in seventh grade and continuing throughout high school, Lincoln students studied English and social studies together, as one subject. During the middle school years, the Core also consisted of a math-science program and during the first two years of high school, science continued to be included in the Core. This would also be true of New Lincoln's Core curriculum which began in elementary school and was an integral part of education at every grade level.

In an overview of the 1945-46 academic year, the administration of the Lincoln School explained the Core curriculum in more detail. In the seventh grade Core, in which students studied China and medieval Europe, "all the arts

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[51] Ibid, 283-4.

contribute as they are needed to round out the experience of the children or to increase the scope of their activities."[53] In the Science and Math Core for this grade level, students studied "factors of the environment that are concerned with shelter and clothing."[54] Starting in high school, Core units developed around specific themes such as the protection and development of the individual, and the entire curriculum was based around examining a central idea or question. The questioning of society, through Core and through experiential learning contributed to the child-centered education offered by Lincoln and allowed for elements of social reform to enter the curriculum. The Lincoln School's idea that a Core curriculum could be used to help students ask and answer important questions about their world fits directly in with Kilpatrick and Melby's belief that a progressive school had the ability and responsibility to deal with broad social issues.

The New Lincoln School opened with a direct lineage to the educational pedagogy developed by Eliot and Flexner at Lincoln in an attempt to reform a specific aspect of society. Melby's suggestion that a school should be "a vitalized community which in its everyday life is exemplifying the attitudes we need and giving people the educational opportunities they should have" is proof of the extent to which New Lincoln educators were rooted in a belief that social interactions should be taught based on experience in a model society.[55] Alumnus

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[52] Ibid.
[53] "The Horace-Mann-Lincoln School," 1.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Michael Umphrey, "Following Ernest Melby: Building Education-Centered Communities," *Montana Heritage Project* 1998; available from http://www.edheritage.org/mont/helby.htm; accessed 8 March 2003.

Peter Titleman remembers that New Lincoln "was trying to support an interracial culture in the context of a progressive education program."[56] More than that, New Lincoln was trying to support an interracial culture *using* a progressive education program. By 1962, the use of education to end racial tensions became publicly desirable. In a *New York Times* article about New Lincoln and other progressive private schools in New York, Cremin defined the challenges surrounding current interracial relations that he thought contemporary progressive schools must face and work against. He said: "The most important [challenge] is to find the way or the ways to run a really integrated classroom – to take the question of desegregation beyond the legal limits which have necessarily concerned us in the past decade and to make a living reality of integrated education. Any city school that fails to contend with this problem head on is . . . neither an experimental school nor a progressive school."[57]

Progressive schools had acknowledged the importance of using school for social reform long before New Lincoln.[58] What made the New Lincoln School different was the way that it addressed this responsibility. Ronald Goodenow provides insight as to how Dewey and indeed the Progressive Education Association as an organization addressed issues of racism.[59] Throughout the 1930s, Dewey, a socialist, spoke out against discrimination and racial intolerance.

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[56] Peter Titleman Questionnaire.
[57] Vivian Cadden. "'Pioneer' Schools Today," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 7 October 1962, SM39.
[58] Graham, 63-75. Graham discusses progressive educators' "interest in social reconstruction" surrounding class inequities during the 1920s and 1930s but she does not indicate that racial tensions played any part in the social reforms of this time period. As will be discussed in this paragraph, race became a point of concern and discussion for progressive educators in the late 1930s and the decades that followed.

He publicly condemned South Africa for its exploitation of black workers, "lent his name to attacks on anti-Semitism and racism, and used public forums to issue strong statements on the dangers posed to American values and institutions by prejudice."[60] On a larger scale, the Progressive Education Association became interested in issues surrounding race and diversity in the late 1930s, an interest that came directly from the organization's concern with contemporary social ills. The association's journal, *Progressive Education*, published more articles and materials related to intercultural education than any other source in the United States. In addition, the PEA published an educational handbook edited by Alain Locke that "examined racism in anthropological and international contexts."[61] The association's work was limited in scope, however, because it did not account for the social context of schooling and it did not encourage prolonged interaction between people of different races. In addition, the majority of the work was theoretical, with no test of how effective it was within the schools.

Earlier progressives used more tangible and specific methods of education in their quest for social reform, yet their methods were still vastly different from those used by educators at New Lincoln. Around the turn of the 20th century, New York City, like many other urban areas saw a vast increase in the number of immigrants and a drastic change in the ethnic background of its citizens. Instead of the Northern Europeans who had come to the city in the mid to late 1800s, these new immigrants were from Southern and Eastern Europe. Mostly Jews and Italians, these new Americans gathered in ethnic enclaves around the city,

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[59] Goodenow, 369.
[60] Ibid.

speaking only in their native languages and continuing the traditions of their homelands. To the citizens of New York, this influx of darker complexioned immigrants – almost 1,000,000 per year between 1903 and 1913 – represented a major social problem.[62] According to historian Diane Ravitch: "Not only were the new immigrants charged with being ignorant, poor, dirty, immoral, and overly fecund, but their eagerness to work at any wage caused American workmen to accuse them of stealing jobs, undercutting unionization, and depressing the American standard of living."[63] Despite the uproar and accusations, the poverty and hardships that these new immigrants faced were not dramatically different from those faced by immigrants who arrived in earlier decades. Yet the city's method for alleviating these hardships changed with this group. In the past, communities, settlement houses, community centers and schools shared the responsibility of helping these newcomers assimilate to American culture and advance themselves. By the early 1900s, "the idea took hold that the public school was uniquely responsible for the Americanization and assimilation of the largest foreign immigration in the nation's history."[64]

Social reformist progressives like Jacob Riis, a journalist, photographer, and community activist, and Jane Addams, a leader of settlement houses in urban immigrant communities rose to be leaders in the battle to "uplift society."[65] Riis' book How the Other Half Lives, which described the living conditions of the immigrant poor, gained national attention, including the interest of an American

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[61] Ibid, 375.
[62] Ravitch, 173.
[63] Ibid, 174.
[64] Ibid.

president. Theodore Roosevelt remarked in his autobiography that the book was "'an enlightenment and an inspiration' for which he would remain forever grateful."[66] This national desire to alleviate the suffering of the poor would develop into the early stage of the progressive education movement, a stage that Lawrence Cremin would identify as the social reformist period of progressive education. In his 1961 book, The Transformation of the School, Cremin wrote: "Poverty, squalor, and disease were hardly new in the nineties. They date, after all, from the beginning of history. What was new was the growing number of Riises and Roosevelts who suddenly seemed to care."[67] He continued to say that the decade of the 1890s was a time of social awakening, when people realized that "this incredible suffering was neither the fault nor the inevitable lot of the sufferers . . . and that the road to alleviation was neither charity nor revolution, but . . . education."[68] In the early years of this new wave in public education, when schools were intended to Americanize and assimilate new immigrants, a progressive education meant one where educators worked to teach students of all ages English, American citizenship, health and hygiene, vocational and family skills, and new scientific methods in addition to traditional academic subjects.[69] This new education did not come easily. As Cremin writes: "If everyone was to attend school, the Progressives contended, not only the methods but the very meaning of education would have to change."[70] Alleviating the turn of the

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[65] Ravitch, 233.
[66] Cremin, 58.
[67] Ibid, 59.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid, viii.
[70] Ibid, ix.

century cultural clash through new and varied practices became the founding mission for progressive educators.

At the New Lincoln School, the work of Riis, Addams, and other social reforms came together with the child-centered theory of Dewey and Kilpatrick and the community-based philosophy of Melby. This combination created a school that would not only cause social change on individual levels but would also teach its students to become social reformers themselves. By creating a social learning lab that reflected the ideals of the founders and educators involved in New Lincoln, the school, in theory, gave students a chance to experience and expect a world without racial, religious, or class conflict.

Chapter II – Building a Strong New Lincoln Community

As a prologue to the 1950 New Lincoln School yearbook, the school's director wrote that the graduating seniors "will carry with them something of both Horace-Mann Lincoln and the New Lincoln Schools." This group of seniors, the first graduates of New Lincoln, spent most of their education at the Horace Mann-Lincoln School before it closed in 1948. For them, New Lincoln was a continuation of the school they knew – the library books and catalogues were the same, much of the faculty was the same, and the educational philosophy of the schools were similar. In many ways, New Lincoln emerged in an effort to continue the ideals and practices of the Horace Mann-Lincoln School after the school's unwelcome closure. But in many ways New Lincoln would function completely independently from this earlier institution. Though the schools shared common pedagogy and technique and both were rooted in democratic ideals, New Lincoln's specific goals and practice of integration rose separately from its involvement with Horace Mann-Lincoln. It is along these lines that New Lincoln's efforts to continue the progressive education tradition of social reform can be seen most clearly. New Lincoln stated that it wanted students to be enlightened and expressed a desire to help students relate better to other people, to function well and happily in a group environment, to "be creative, resourceful people," to develop imagination and individuality, and to be sensitive.[71] New Lincoln wanted students to be integrated and able to relate to people of any race – both inside and outside of the school building. While these skills would be

helpful to the individual students, they would also serve as a benefit to the communities that students would enter upon graduation. If a perfect world was one where people of all races, religions, classes and ethnicities knew how to live, work, befriend, love, and play with each other, then New Lincoln students should be able to contribute to the formation of that society. This was New Lincoln's mission for social reform.

New Lincoln's founders worked to give the school a foundation to achieve this social reform. In 1948, Horace Mann-Lincoln parents formed the organization Experimental School, Inc., the purpose of which was to research, organize and begin the "Horace Mann-Lincoln School of the Future."[72] The organization and the new experimental school would be renamed the New Lincoln School within a year of its founding. Composed of Horace Mann - Lincoln parents, students and alumni, the group took it upon itself to find a new home for the school, secure a charter from New York State, hire a new director, and complete the other administrative tasks associated with creating a new school. The search for a physical home for the school ended at the 110th Street Community Center, a building that had been recently renovated and housed the Young Men's-Young Woman's Hebrew Association. The New Lincoln School would remain on 110th Street for 25 years.

The location at Thirty-One West 110th Street had much of what Experimental School, Inc. had desired. The building held ample classrooms for

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[71] Rosencrance, 1.
[72] Experimental School, Inc., "Bi-Laws of Experimental School, Incorporated," December 1948, from the archives of Milbank Memorial Library, Teachers College, Columbia University, Box no. 890624 MG 94, New Lincoln School, Box 1 of 1.

students in elementary grades in addition to a swimming pool, an auditorium, and a gymnasium. The building was also renovated to include high school classrooms, a library, a cafeteria, laboratories, and art rooms. The location on the border of Black Harlem, Spanish Harlem, and the Upper East Side served as a physical mark of the school's progressive and integrationist philosophies. The communities that intersected at New Lincoln's door on Central Park North represented not only varied ethnic and racial groups, but vastly different socio-economic groups. Throughout its existence, New Lincoln tried to replicate this intersection of communities within its own walls. This school building had everything New Lincoln required for its education – high quality academic facilities and an integrated community in which students could learn to develop interracial, cross-class social relations.

Once Experimental School, Inc. had secured a building and a charter for its new school, it began to search for a director. In a letter dated August 27, 1948, Dr. Harrison Elliott, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Experimental School, Inc., announced the conclusion of the search to parents. Dr. John J. Brooks, then head of teacher education at Oglethorpe University in Georgia agreed to take the position beginning in September. Elliott assured the parents that Brooks had "the unanimous and enthusiastic support of all who met him."[73] The choice of a white southerner as director was an interesting one for a Board that boasted of its school's racial liberalism; yet there are many possible explanations for the

[73]Harrison S. Elliott, Letter to Parents of Experimental School, Inc. 27 August 1948, from the archives of Milbank Memorial Library, Teachers College, Columbia University, Box no. 890624 MG 94, New Lincoln School, Box 1 of 1.

decision. Brooks founded the first co-educational summer camps in the South, exemplifying a commitment to making sure that children had equality in experiences. In addition, Brooks, who would prove at New Lincoln to be a liberal supporter of civil rights, could be more successful in creating and maintaining an integrated school in New York than he would be in any southern state and thus, perhaps, be more motivated to do so. Brooks' southern identity remained with him at New Lincoln, according to John Erlich, a white alumnus of the school. Erlich said, "He had a cross to bear being from a southern state. He was very liberal."[74] Brooks' combination of liberalism and experience in education set a progressive tone for the school both academically and politically. Alumnus Joe Zeveloff, a white man, remembers, "When I was interviewed to go into the school, the head of the school, John Books, asked a question that had to do with integration in New York City – did I notice some differences between parts of New York? He pointed out that there isn't so much integration if you look out the window. That kind of indicated to me that he, as head of New Lincoln, was aware of the social situation right in front of us."[75] More importantly, the question indicated that Brooks, as head of New Lincoln, was prepared to discuss and address this "social situation" within the school community and that it was important to him that students entering New Lincoln would know that this was a focus of the school.

During his time at New Lincoln, Brooks focused on improving education within and outside of the school. In this way, he advanced New Lincoln both as a

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[74] John Erlich, 2002, Telephone conversation with author, 26 November.

progressive school and as an experimental institution. In line with the Lincoln School, one part of the experimentation at New Lincoln meant discovering new practices and curricula for use in public schools. Brooks participated in and hosted educational panels and conferences throughout the New York area throughout his tenure as the head of the New Lincoln School, advocating core work, the use of bookmobiles and traveling science laboratories in overcrowded schools, and educational "field houses," tied to area business and industries that would give students the opportunity to learn reading and writing while exploring these fields.[76] In addition, the school held a conference of the "Intergroup Committee on New York's Public Schools" on the state of integration in those schools in 1954. In 1957, Brooks took a sabbatical leave as part of "a gathering-in of new curriculum and educational ideas for New Lincoln."[77] On the level of social progressivism and experimentation, Brooks' work for integration is most obvious in his decision to invite Minnijean Brown, an expelled member of the Little Rock 9, to attend New Lincoln. While Minnijean Brown's arrival at New Lincoln will be discussed in more detail later, it is important to note that the decision to invite her to the school was almost entirely Brooks'. According to *New York Times* reporter Vivian Cadden, this invitation was significant to New Lincoln's efforts to be progressive. Cadden writes, "When in 1958 the New Lincoln School gave a scholarship to a young Negro student from Little Rock, Ark., at the height of the integration battle there, it made a truly significant gesture. It announced, in effect the concern of the school and its intention to get

[75] Joseph Zeveloff, 2002, Telephone conversation with author, 28 October.
[76] Loren B. Pope, "Flexibility Urged for High Schools," *New York Times*, 26 November 1958, 18.

into the center of the educational fray."[78] That Brooks' decision may have been "publicity move," as Erlich asserts, is neither surprising nor deserving of condemnation. Every decision to put race at the forefront of discussion and practice at New Lincoln was political; without decisions like the one Brooks made to bring Brown to the school, New Lincoln could not have furthered its egalitarian and utopian goals. Brooks' choice told those writing about the school that race, integration and progressivism could not be separated and that at New Lincoln, the connection was, in fact, causal and desired.

The school's method of achieving social reform came from the creation of a racially harmonious society within its own walls. The Lincoln School, and later Horace Mann-Lincoln, was established as an experimental school to improve public education and to provide public schools with viable curriculum and ideas. New Lincoln would follow in this philosophy. In a school memorandum, Dr. Harrison S. Elliot wrote that defining New Lincoln as an experimental school "meant that its main purpose will be to devise and develop a school program which is in advance of and an improvement upon the best accepted theory and practice."[79] New Lincoln director, Jack Brooks, also noted that New Lincoln's "origin and its amazing growth are based on its dedication to the betterment of public education."[80] But New Lincoln experimented on a larger level than this. More than just testing new educational theories and practices as the Horace

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[77] The New Lincoln School, *New Lincoln School Yearbook* 1957.
[78] Cadden, SM39.
[79] Harrison S. Eliot, Memorandum, 28 December 1948, from the archives of Milbank Memorial Library, Teachers College, Columbia University, Box no. 890624 MG 94, New Lincoln School, Box 1 of 1.

Mann-Lincoln School had done, New Lincoln, through conscious decisions and efforts by the Board of Trustees and the administration of the school, attempted to establish an ideal society -- a version of an integrated utopia in which students could have the learning experience of living in the kind of community school founders wanted the outside world to be. This became the new goal of New Lincoln. Transforming New Lincoln into utopia seemed like a reasonable way to impact the race relations within the larger society, thus the larger goal was subsumed by this more immediate one.

In many ways, New Lincoln formed not as an outgrowth of the current society but as an alternative to the world in which it existed, true to the definition of a utopia. Brooks said in a reflection on his years at the school that New Lincoln should "continue to urge that education be a guide to rather than a reflection of society."[81] Especially in New Lincoln's early years, 1948-1962, life inside the school rarely reflected the evils of the outside world but instead worked from within to guide students to the creation of a better society. New Lincoln would grow to become a "social and intellectual experience . . . akin to the 'Beloved Community' that John Lewis . . . described as the goal of SNCC in the early 1960s."[82] In the New Lincoln utopia, the acceptance of difference was experted and integration and unity were highly desired. In an article announcing the new Experimental School (New Lincoln School) in 1948, Murray Illson reports, "With a student body of 211 boys and girls representing a cross-section of

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[80] John J. Brooks, "Director's Report to the Board," 6 October 1953, from the archives of Milbank Memorial Library, Teachers College, Columbia University, Box no. 890624 MG 94, New Lincoln School, Box 1 of 1.
[81] The New Lincoln School, *New Lincoln School Yearbook* 1959.

the city's racial and religious groups, the Experimental School is attempting to bring into its classrooms an education program based on the one world philosophy."[83] New Lincoln promotional material boasts that the school was a "microcosm of society."[84] A brochure from the late 1950s notes that someone visiting the school "finds children of every cultural background and economic level living in an emotionally healthy and free climate, for New Lincoln creates a little society within the school."[85] The desire for a student body that included complete representation of all races, religions and ethnicities was repeated constantly both to the outside population as it was in the Illson article and within the school itself through internal memos, promotional material and word of mouth. Having a harmonious interracial society within the school would represent simultaneously the fulfillment of New Lincoln's utopian goals and the means for the school to attain it.

New Lincoln, an institution firmly rooted in experiential education, chose to achieve this goal by privileging an integrated environment. As one member of the school wrote, "Since we 'become what we do' and 'learn what we live,' the school must offer typical life situations with similar variations."[86] This methodology for teaching students to live in an interracial world was unique to New Lincoln because it was directly related to the progressive pedagogy of Melby and Kilpatrick. Talking about racial differences would force students to

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[82] Peter Titleman Questionnaire
[83] Murray Illson, "'One World' Ethic Rules New School: Successor to Mann-Lincoln Is Trying to Instill 'Respect for Human Dignity,'" *New York Times*, 8 November 1948.
[84] N.C. Belth, "An Adventure in Education" np. nd. from the private collection of Bernice Belth.
[85] Ibid.

acknowledge that these differences existed. New Lincoln administrators wanted students to go to school in and possibly eventually create a world without racial distinctions. The administration was constantly conscious of the racial, religious and ethnic make-up of the school in an attempt to create experiences that would render its students color blind. In theory, if students could better understand the physics of a bridge by building a model of one, they would better understand how to live in an integrated world by living, studying, working and socializing in a model of one.

But there were challenges to the creation of utopia. Before students at New Lincoln could subscribe to the utopian community the school was trying to establish, they had to identify themselves as part of the New Lincoln community itself. Students did not live at New Lincoln, as is the case of members of utopian communities. Instead, they returned home to vastly varied communities and family ideologies each night. To combat this and maintain a sense of loyalty to the idealist community it was trying to create, New Lincoln worked to establish a strong sense of internal community and communal bond, just as Kilpatrick, Melby and other earlier progressives had advocated. The school's Board and administrators did this in many ways. New Lincoln created a community where students felt close to each other and to their teachers and where teachers made an effort to learn about students' needs and interests. For example, the impression Jack Brooks, the first director, left on students on a personal level was lasting. Carol Maslow, a white graduate from the New Lincoln Class of 1952, writes,

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[86] Harrison S. Elliott, Memorandum. 13 November 1951, from the archives of Milbank Memorial Library, Teachers College, Columbia University, Box no. 890624 MG 94, New Lincoln School,

"Our original director, Jack Brooks was an extraordinary man who came to mean a great deal to me. He was a gentle, compassionate, fun, interested and learned adult and the first teacher I had ever had who treated me with kindness and respect."[87] White alumna Mary Freeman's first impression of the New Lincoln School was of Brooks. She remembers Brooks "at school in blue jeans and encouraging us to call him by his first name. This was revolutionary in my experience and implied to me that there could be communication between me and the faculty and the adults. I'm sure that was the purpose to make the staff more accessible. It worked."[88] This faculty-student dynamic established at New Lincoln throughout Brooks' career at the school was enduring and important. In practice perhaps even more than in theory, these bonds made child-centered, experiential learning more feasible within the classroom and created a safe, trusting environment for students to learn social lessons both within and outside of academic lessons. In addition, the close relationships between teachers and students furthered the idea of an insulated community that could and should exist independently from the outside community. Many students remember teachers taking extra time to ensure that they understood a concept or making prolific comments on papers to improve students' writing skills. A committee visiting the school observed that there was a "fine rapport between students and teachers" and that "classrooms were informal, friendly and relaxed."[89] Yearbooks show

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Box 1 of 1, H.
[87] Carol Maslow Questionnaire.
[88] Mary Freeman Questionnaire.
[89] Rosencrance, 6.

students hugging teachers and teachers mingling with their classes, and the show examples of teachers' nicknames, as given by the students.

On a peer-to-peer level, New Lincoln administrators worked to create a sense of community in a variety of ways. They used inter-age groupings within classes in an effort to help students of all ages interact and to give students the opportunity to work at a level appropriate for them in class. In the 1953-54 school year, all of the classes between second and eighth grade were combined and identified themselves with letters instead of grade numbers. The motivation and result of this experiment in classroom groupings was twofold. First, on a purely educational level, these combined classrooms allowed students of all ability levels to grow academically and learn together and from each other. Students in the upper grades who were academically or developmentally behind peers in their age group would be on par with younger students and, thus, less isolated from the class. The same would be true with advanced younger students. This grouping gave all students in the class access to the teacher and to peers with equal understanding of the material. Socially, these groupings increased the sense of community within the school. Students did not just work and socialize with the 20-50 other students in their grade, they became familiar and friendly with those in the classes above and below them. Jackie Lynch, a white alumna from New Lincoln's class of 1962, remembers that these groupings, along with volunteer opportunities for older students in the school to work with children in the younger

grades, allowed for many intra-school interactions and the development of a strong sense of community.[90]

Additionally, all-school activities such as sports, arts, and theater functioned as ways to align New Lincoln students with the school and further their feelings that the school was their own unique community. New Lincoln was located directly across from the vast playing fields of Central Park, giving students the opportunity to play sports such as soccer and softball. The indoor gymnasium located within the school building provided a home for the school's competitive and popular basketball team. Every year, each class was responsible for presenting an assembly to the entire school, and there were often additional performances of plays or madrigals by students throughout the year. Arts instruction was a large part of the New Lincoln curriculum and served as a way for students of different age levels with similar talents and interests to come together. Within the school building, administrators established several areas for students to socialize and commune. A student lounge where smoking was permitted was a popular gathering place for the school's older students, and a school snack bar, Dreamland, provided a space for more inter-age gatherings. All students ate together in the cafeteria, as well. Despite the fact that New Lincoln was not a residential school, it had some control over students' social interactions outside of the building. Some alumni remember that in addition to sponsoring weekend activities such as school dances, teachers regulated social functions in students' homes, as well. Lynch recalls that when she was in ninth grade, cliques

[90] Jackie Lynch, 2003, Conversation with author, New York, 24 January.

began to form, and kids started to have parties where some people in the class were excluded. This was a distinct and noticeable departure from the earlier social interactions of the Class of 1962, a class of 50 students. Lynch says that in response to this change, one of the teachers held a meeting for parents and announced that she would not accept this social fragmentation of the class. For the rest of the year, all parties were open houses. Invitations were announced in class and posted on the blackboard during the week before the party.

Also unusual and important to New Lincoln's establishment of its own racially utopian community was the amount of autonomy, voice, freedom, and responsibility the faculty at New Lincoln gave its students. Traditionally in these communities, high involvement would make members more loyal to the mission of the utopia and to its members. For example, at New Lincoln, library regulations were decided entirely by the student body. Every fall, "the length of the borrowing period (one or two weeks), amount of fines, if any, degree of quiet to be maintained – these are all determined by the students."[91] In addition, much of this autonomy came from the structure and importance of the student government at New Lincoln. Students in the lower grades participated regularly in a Student Council. Every high school student participated in Town Meeting on a weekly or bi-weekly basis where there made choices that affected the social and academic environment within New Lincoln. Run by committee, founders modeled Town Meeting after the traditional New England governmental structure.

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[91] Aileen Morford, Mary Logan et al, "Our Handbook – An Explanation," nd. from the archives of Milbank Memorial Library, Teachers College, Columbia University, Box no. 890624 MG 94, New Lincoln School, Box 1 of 1, 3.

Administrators planned one period a week for high school students to participate in these committees. Students who did not wish to be part of a committee, all of which were student run, had the choice to take a study hall during that period instead.

Committees had an active and acknowledged voice in the running of the school. The steering committee ran all meetings with the help of a moderator. Student activities were planned through the assembly committee, display committee, finance committee, curriculum committee, and social committee. There was a newspaper committee responsible for publishing the school organ, the *New Link*. The 1959 yearbook noted that "the Curriculum Committee, perhaps the most original aspect of student government, served as an important discussion group and maker of recommendations concerning the various areas of our academic program. It was founded on the belief that one should have a voice in the planning of his education."[92] New Lincoln strove to create a student community where "young people will gain in competence in relating constructively with a variety of human beings from different economic levels, religions, races, and nationalities; to help children become highly effective in the social skills of dealing with people."[93] This was enabled in part through student government.

The value of a strong and unified community to the New Lincoln School was made clear through the actions of the school in its founding and development. Administrators gave students high levels of autonomy and responsibility within

the school in an attempt to develop New Lincoln pride and loyalty. In addition, sports, arts, and theater worked to enhance the sense of community spirit at the school. Faculty worked to ensure that student social events were inclusive and that there were strong student-faculty bonds fostered at New Lincoln. The amount of interaction between students of all age levels in the school helped to create a sense that New Lincoln was a tight-knit and insular community. The development of these interpersonal bonds and the creation of a strong community were essential to New Lincoln's later attempts at social reform.

[92] *New Lincoln School Yearbook* 1959.
[93] Morford, 1.

Chapter III – The Establishment of Utopia: New Lincoln 1948-1962

Once there was a strong community in place, New Lincoln had to work actively to create their interracial learning lab. New Lincoln worked towards this goal and set itself apart from other integrated schools by actively seeking minority students. Though the percentage of black students in each graduating class was not high in the school's early years – at most 10% between 1950 and 1962 – the school Board was open in its desire to attract minority students who would be the intellectual equals of their peers. Scholarship money was distributed to students every year as part of the school's founding principles and by the early 1960s, if not earlier, "the administration had to go out looking for kids."[94] Verne Oliver, a former New Lincoln teacher and director explains: "We were the only school that looked for kids. Even though the school was not an expensive school, comparatively, for blacks and Hispanics at that point, and for many whites, it was expensive . . . so the Board would set aside a certain amount of money for recruitment." She continues to say that Mabel Smythe, the former head of the high school, "went to the various churches all over Harlem to look and see whether these kids were capable. You had to have kids who had the intellectual capability or they would, of course, fail. And there's nothing worse, and I've seen some schools do this. You had to be very careful which kids you underwrite."[95]

As a result of this, New Lincoln's efforts to create an integrated community were often in opposition to the reality of the city outside of its doors. Rarely did members of Harlem housing projects socialize with the wealthy white

elite of Park Avenue. Yet many alumni remember their school environment as a successful realization of this attempt at integration. As John Lipkowitz, a white graduate, says: "What may have seemed unusual in the street was perfectly natural in NL."[96] Sarajane Epstein Milder, also white, clarifies: "I think that there was what has come to be known as 'diversity' at New Lincoln from the very beginning. And it was just normal. We got along with each other based on personalities: not color or religion."[97] Alan Bernstein, a white New Lincoln graduate from the late 1950s states bluntly: "My class was integrated, and no special issue was made of it."[98] This acceptance of integration is what New Lincoln administrators wanted. In the early years of the school, black students served as captains of sports teams and, in 1962, a black student was elected to be president of the student council. It seems significant in retrospect that a young black man held a position of such power and prestige in a mostly white school in the early 60s, but to students, "it wasn't a big deal at all."[99] Though many alumni now question their naïveté, many remember smooth race relations with few, if any, incidents of racial prejudice.

In line with New Lincoln's racial tolerance and desire for experiences from which students could experience comfortable racial interactions, interracial dating and subsequent interracial marriages were accepted, if not encouraged, by administration, faculty and other students. In addition to dating outside of New

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[94] Elinor Gimbel, 1948, Letter to Nelson Rockefeller 18 May.
[95] Verne Oliver, Conversation with author.
[96] John Lipkowitz Questionnaire.
[97] Sarajane Epstein Milder Questionnaire.
[98] Alan Bernstein Questionnaire.
[99] Lynch, 2003, Conversation with author.

Lincoln, couples of different races were visible at social functions within school, as well. As early as the mid 1950s, students remember the presence of interracial couples. Mary Freeman, a white graduate from 1955, writes: "I fell in love at New Lincoln and that was my first love and carries with it all the weight that first loves hold. The fact that that man was African American certainly shaped all my thinking for the rest of my life."[100] The majority of these relationships involved black men and white women, but this was not always the case. Peter Titleman, a white graduate remembers: "I dated 4 girls over the 4 years at N.L. and two of them were African-American."[101] Explanations for these relationships range from pure attraction to a desire to rebel against parents. Indeed, many of the white women who dated black men noted that parents disapproved of the relationships. However, it is possible that the community created by the New Lincoln School factored dramatically into these romantic pairings. Suzy Mendlowitz Burnette, a white alumna from 1963 notes, "I am married to an African American man so I am attuned to race. New Lincoln is a factor in the life I live. Growing up in an integrated community, race wasn't an issue. That opens you up to the whole world. At least one or two other people in my class have interracial marriages."[102]

Racial identity on an individual level might have been unimportant, but belonging to a school with a strong integrationist identity was a source of pride for many students. Eleanor Foa, a white 1955 graduate of New Lincoln remembers: "I was always proud of the school's location in Harlem, its education

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[100] Mary Freeman Questionnaire.
[101] Peter Titleman Questionnaire.
[102] Susan Mendlowitz Burnette, 2002, Conversation with author, Falmouth, MA, 17 November.

about racial issues, and the students' lack of racial prejudice as a group."[103] Carla Fisher Miner, another white graduate, reinforces the notion that New Lincoln was unusual in a positive way. She writes: "The school was well integrated – not only blacks attended; Hispanics, Asians, Moslems. . . . It was a special place because we all worked closely together without friction."[104] Repeatedly, the idea of pride in New Lincoln's community, mission and actions appears in alumni recollection of the New Lincoln experience. That students "were aware there was something special about [the] school, and . . . exceedingly proud to be part of that"[105] is important to the construction of the utopian community, since it creates a common ideal towards which to work.

Given that this integration was so crucial to the school, there seems to be a fundamental problem in the fact that not every student experienced the idealistic racial harmony that some graduates recall. The world outside of New Lincoln's doors was very different from the utopia that students encountered in school. In the 1950s and 1960s, this competition was obvious for students on a variety of levels. One black graduate, Georgia Randolph remembers: 'I lived a dual role – white world during the day, black life at night. Black world ideas were different, our ways are different, we have a way of knowing who we are without glitter."[106] The flip side of this rival home life was related by a white alumnus, John Lipkowitz, who graduated from New Lincoln around the same time as Randolph. He writes: "I grew up in a rather privileged upper middle class Jewish West Side

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[103] Eleanor Foa Questionnaire.
[104] Carla Fisher Miner Questionnaire.
[105] Janet Mendolsohn Questionnaire.

of Manhattan environment. Black people worked for my family. Other black adults rarely came to our house, and I have no recollection of any black friends my parents had."[107] Though he adds: "I went to school with black kids, became good friends at various times . . . with at least two, and we went to each other's homes (both lived in Harlem)." Alumni like Dale Anderson, a white man, do not recall students' worlds outside of New Lincoln intersecting so easily. He remembers having a black friend come over to play in elementary school. When her father came to pick her up during dinner and saw the black servants in the apartment, he forbid her to play with Anderson again.[108] This kind of competition between the utopian community of New Lincoln and the reality of life at home was problematic and disturbing for many students.

On a broader level, students were faced with the reality of society's racial perceptions beyond family life. Living in the north gave students a false sense of racial tolerance beyond the one they got from New Lincoln. John Brickman, a white graduate, recalls a problem that arose when planning a class trip. One student suggested that the class visit Colonial Williamsburg but was quickly reminded by another that not all members of the class would be admitted to this southern attraction.[109] Even within their home city, subtle events reminded students that they spent their time in an ideal world, not a realistic one. Ellen Leef, a white alumna, remembers a class party when she was in ninth or tenth grade, around 1957. The parents hosting the party notified the doorman of their

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[106] Georgia Randolph Questionnaire.
[107] John Lipkowitz Questionnaire.
[108] Dale Anderson Questionnaire.
[109] John Brickman Questionnaire.

building that there would be a party and gave him permission not to call up to the apartment to announce each guest. Of all of the students who attended the event, the doorman only announced two. Both of these students were black.[110]

Within New Lincoln's walls, its microcosm of interracial harmony faced a basic and fundamental challenge. The number of black students attending New Lincoln in these early years was small. According to Randolph, in 1957 there was a total of only seven black students in the entire student body from kindergarten through twelfth grade. This would change dramatically over the course of a decade. The class of 1968 alone would have 9 black students out of 47 in its graduating class. But many students at New Lincoln in the 1950s were aware that "there were not a whole lot of people of color during my years there."[111] Despite the fact that the student body was not homogeneous during New Lincoln's early decades – the school had an ethnic, racial, and economic mix of students from its founding – the lack of a significant population of minority students complicated administrators' plans of teaching students to live in an integrated world through experience.

New Lincoln's faculty is another important lens into how the school attempted to create a microcosm of its ideal world, but this lens, too, is clouded with disparities between a racially balanced group and the reality. It is difficult to figure out exactly how many black teachers there were at the school at different times because yearbooks are unorganized and memories leave holes and questions. It seems, however, that Mabel Smythe, who worked both on the Urban

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[110] Ellen Leef, 2002, Conversation with author, New York, 11 November.

League and under Thurgood Marshall on the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, was the first black teacher at New Lincoln, beginning in the mid 1950s.[112] Smythe was a Core teacher before becoming head of the high school. In 1957, Verne Oliver became the second black teacher to work at New Lincoln. She taught 10th and later 12th grade Core. Oliver would become director of the school in New Lincoln's later years. She was adored. Alumni from New Lincoln's early years remember her "beauty and warmth and brains and laugh and caring and grit," describing her as "the best and most influential teacher I ever had."[113] Many of the teachers at New Lincoln, Verne Oliver especially, were models of strong, respectable intellectuals working comfortably within an integrated body. White alumnus Reed Orenstein summed up the feelings of many New Lincoln graduates. He wrote "Verne was a god there. For me, that made color unimportant." Again, this color-blind student body is what the administration of New Lincoln wanted. But only a few of the blacks who worked at New Lincoln were teachers. The majority of the black adults who worked at the school were janitors, office workers or elevator operators – service workers. While it is important that the most beloved woman at New Lincoln was a black woman, many more of the black workers at the school perpetuated an image of black people prevalent in the larger society.

While these factors are complex and certainly challenge the effectiveness and feasibility of New Lincoln's utopian community, an integrated student body and faculty were by no means the only way the school worked to create its ideal

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[111] Carol Maslow Questionnaire.
[112] Daniel Lewis Questionnaire.

society. Many classes and academic lessons at New Lincoln in the period between 1948 and 1962 could be considered multi-cultural and racially educative. Most interestingly is the way New Lincoln used prominent members of the outside community to further its goals and reinforce its ideals. Looking at the way the media, especially the *New York Times*, portrayed New Lincoln and at the way the school fashioned its own identity, it seems as though, important as the integrated student body was, the problems within it did not drastically impact the school's reputation as an integrated institution.

New Lincoln taught lessons of integration and non-racial activism within its course material. Many lessons at New Lincoln were politically charged, even those unrelated to the topic of integration. For example, one lesson at New Lincoln embraced a spirit of environmental activism uncommon at the time. In 1954, a fourth grade class conducted a study of animals. In conjunction with this unit, students created a mock council with each student representing the animal they were studying in detail. At the council, the "animals" discussed four humans such as "Mrs. Gotmoney" who were ruining the planet through pollution, hunting and sheer carelessness. According to Jackie Lynch, this curriculum was revolutionary for this time period. Also revolutionary and liberal was the way that New Lincoln students studied American History in high school. Pauline Carpenter , the 11th grade Core teacher used Charles and Mary Beard's *The Rise of American Civilization.* According to white alumna Janet Mendelsohn, this Marxist rendition was the only study of American History New Lincoln students did. She added that there was "no European history, either, except for

[113] Leslie Kreithen Questionnaire; John Lipkowitz Questionnaire.

revolutionary movements."[114] The racially liberal curriculum is clear in a variety of lessons. In addition to reading books by black authors and studying topics such as Nat Turner's 1831 uprising, students studied the development of newly democratized African nations in Oliver's Core class. Every student was assigned a country on or neighboring the African continent and researched its history, politics and people. John Lipkowitz remembers: "It was truly an exciting time to study these countries which seemed to hold so much promise – my own was Iran, slightly off the African continent. So much disappointment in the four decades since."[115]

New Lincoln enhanced its multi-racial world by bringing in speakers, Board members and visitors of different racial and cultural backgrounds to the school. Because New Lincoln was an experimental school, each year 500 to 1000 parents, college and graduate students, "teachers, administrators, and educational missions from every state in the union, from every country in the world"[116] visited the school. In this sense, New Lincoln was far more integrated than student and teacher records could indicate. On a more constant level, the integration of the Board of Trustees exemplified for students successful work relations between adults of different races, genders and backgrounds. The inclusion of well known members of the New York community on the Board only enhanced this and made the effort more public. Kenneth Clark, psychologist and professor was a member

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[114] Janet Mendelsohn Questionnaire.
[115] John Lipkowitz Questionnaire.
[116] The New Lincoln School, "The New Lincoln School," np. nd., from the archives of Milbank Memorial Library, Teachers College, Columbia University, Box no. 890624 MG 94, New Lincoln School, Box 1 of 1.

of New Lincoln's Board of Trustees throughout the 1950s. Clark was one of the most recognizable pro-integrationists in the United States in this decade, making him logically desirable for New Lincoln. In 1954, the results of Clark's experiments on the effects of school segregation on black students became known worldwide through the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. By giving black children a choice between black and white dolls, Kenneth Clark and his wife Mamie monitored the effects segregation had on these children. Overwhelmingly, the children tested preferred the white doll to the black one. Historian Waldo Martin notes that "from this finding, [the Clarks] extrapolated that the damage done to the self-esteem of these children reinforced notions of black inferiority and white superiority. Racial segregation did indeed damage the black psyche."[117] The results of the Clarks' study were the linchpin for the Warren Court's decision to outlaw segregation in public schools across the country.

In addition to Kenneth Clark serving on the Board, the Clarks were involved in the New Lincoln School because the Northside Center for Community Development, their social service organization, which provided counseling, tutoring and other children's services, had its offices on the bottom floors of the school in Harlem. According to historians Markowitz and Rosner, "in the late 1940s and 1950s [Northside] attracted about one-fifth of its clients from the white communities surrounding central Harlem and from the private New Lincoln

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[117] Waldo E. Martin, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents,* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998), 28

School, housed in the same building."[118] The link that brought Clark together with the educational leaders of New Lincoln came from the value that they all placed on educative abilities of experience and integration. Clark worried about the detrimental effects the experience of a segregated school environment had on black children. His argument for integrated schools was that the *experience* of being in a segregated classroom taught black students that they were inferior. Logic follows that Clark believed that teaching black students in an integrated classroom like the ones at New Lincoln would improve self-esteem and create a more positive learning environment.

Clark was not the only addition to New Lincoln's Board in the early years of the school. Ralph Bunche, the Undersecretary of the United Nations, served with Clark and others in the 1950s, thus bringing attention to the school's integrationist policies. A strong "anti-racialist," Bunche attended integrated primary and secondary schools before attending University of California, Southern Branch (later UCLA).[119] Bunche was involved in the Civil Rights struggle from an early age. He argued that there was no scientific basis for racial prejudice and published several books and articles about race in America. In addition, he served as an advisor to President Franklin Roosevelt on racial issues in the 1930s and 1940s and worked with Martin Luther King, Jr. and the NAACP on civil rights projects in the 1950s. Though he did not have as many links to integration and to New Lincoln itself as did Clark, Bunche's belief that

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[118] Ibid 181.
[119] Jonathan Scott Holloway, *Confronting the Veil: Abram Harris JR., E. Franklin Frazier, and Ralph Bunche 1919-1941,* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 158-161.

"segregation and democracy are incompatible" and that "whites must demonstrate that 'democracy is color-blind'" places him within the New Lincoln ideology.[120]

The New Lincoln School relied on famous black Americans to enhance its utopian vision through shorter involvement, as well. Harry Belafonte, a black musician known for liberal politics had two children at the school. In addition to being a regular presence at New Lincoln as a parent, Belafonte gave support to the school through his fame. He gave benefit concerts in both 1959 and 1960 to support the school's scholarship fund, both of which were written up in the New York Times. In addition, Belafonte proved to be a valuable link to celebrities such as former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Roosevelt addressed a national education conference sponsored by New Lincoln in 1958. In line with New Lincoln's racial philosophy, Jack Brooks expressed just as much excitement about the participation of Lena Horne in the publicity of the conference as he did about Roosevelt's speech.[121] Within the school building, other black celebrities became teachers for brief lessons. After the senior class of 1963 read *Invisible Man* in their Core class, they were treated to an in-school lecture by Ralph Ellison. Additionally, in these early years, the high school biology teacher, Mr. Swift, organized a Biology Breakfast once a year.[122] The point of the breakfasts was for students to eat together and to learn why the morning meal was the most important of the day. Alumna Lucy Horton remembers: "He would include a speaker. How he ever got these big celebrities to come up to 110th St. early in the

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[120] "Ralph Bunche – Biography." Nobel e-Museum; available from http://www.nobel.se/peace/laureates/1950/bunche-bio.html; accessed 10 March 2003.
[121] John J. Brooks, 1958, Letter to Harry Belafonte, 25 April.

morning to talk to a bunch of kids about the importance of eating a good breakfast is beyond me." In 1959 and 1960, the speakers were Marian Anderson and Jackie Robinson, both of whom were well known to and respected by students. Alumnus John Erlich remembers, "People in school used to criticize me because I was a Yankees fan and that team was all white. They were Brooklyn Dodgers fans." Having these individuals come into school would not only attract students to an early morning breakfast, it would add a layer to the interracial utopia.

New Lincoln's most nationally recognized student provides another example of the school bringing people in to enhance the integrated community. Minnijean Brown was one of the nine black students to integrate Little Rock Central High School in 1957 but was expelled in the middle of that school year, her junior year of high school. She was suspended originally in December of 1957 for dumping a bowl of chili on two boys who harassed her in the school cafeteria and received her notice of expulsion in February after allegedly calling one white student who harassed her "white trash" and throwing her purse at another.[123] The afternoon following her expulsion, Brown received a letter from Jack Brooks inviting her to come to New Lincoln on a full scholarship of $1050 per year. Brown had no other options for continuing her education – she was expelled from all public schools in Little Rock, including the all black Horace Mann High School, and the city did not have any private schools. One week after her expulsion, Brown was in New York and attending classes at New Lincoln. She stayed at the school for a year and a half, graduating with the class of 1959.

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[122] Lucy Horton, 2003, E-mail to author, 2 March.

The decision to invite Brown to New Lincoln was almost entirely the director's, Jack Brooks, though he acknowledged that the idea was originally suggested to him by Clark, with whom Brown would live in New York. The decision to ask Brown was made quickly, within one day of her expulsion, and there was little discussion about the decision among the faculty. Joan McDonald-Miller, a teacher at the school, remembers: "The faculty was not involved in Minnijean coming . . . until it was fait de complit. This occurred obviously through the school but it wasn't a school decision."[124] Explaining the choice to bring Brown to New Lincoln to the press, Brooks observed that this was a way for New Lincoln to publicly stand up for integration. He argued: "Our kind of school can't sit by and not make some sort of gesture in a situation like this. We are known as an interracial, inter-economic and experimental school. We're trying to do something for equal opportunity and to relieve the inter-racial situation."[125] In another interview about the situation, Brooks reflected even more clearly the ideals and practices of New Lincoln and its strategy of integration. He said: "So much depends on the form of what you do, and not the context. Integration is a symbol. When you put the symbols up, the there comes a hue and cry. A Negro and a White can sit together on the back porch, but not on the front porch."[126] By inviting Brown to New Lincoln, Brooks put the school and the issue of integration in the spotlight, making the school a prominent and national "front-porch."

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[123] Melba Pattillo Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High*, (New York: Pocket Books, 1994), 238-9.
[124] Joan McDonald Miller, 2002, Conversation with author, New York, 2 February.
[125] "Little Rock Pupil Will Study Here," *New York Times*, 19 February 1958.
[126] "New Lincoln School Director Has Both Faith and Courage," *Columbia Spectator*, 27 February 1958, 1.

People from around New York and around the country wrote to Brooks praising him for the decision. A "Citizen of New York" wrote: "Some months ago, I heard you lecture at Columbia. It is good to meet a man who acts what he believes." This national attention also took the form of dozens of newspaper articles written about Brown's expulsion and transfer. Some articles praised Brooks and New Lincoln for the decision, others simply welcomed Brown to New York. The descriptions of New Lincoln in these articles were similar. Most called it either a leader in experimental education or an integrated school or an interracial and inter-economic school. One article was even more specific and described New Lincoln as a school with an "emphasis upon education for citizenship in a democracy."[127] This publicity affirmed New Lincoln as a utopian community in the eyes of those outside the school.

Though New Lincoln was mentioned and discussed briefly in almost every article about Minnijean Brown in the two week period following her expulsion, most reporters were more interested in Brown herself. They bombarded her with interviews from her arrival at LaGuardia Airport through her first few days at school. Yet this interest, while not focused on the school, still had a positive impact on New Lincoln. Newspaper descriptions of Brown's first day of school were decidedly optimistic. Headlines announced Brown's enthusiasm: "'NY Is Wonderful' – Minniejean Brown," "Minnijean Brown Finds New Life," and "'I'ts the 1st Time I Didn't Feel Like an Outcast,'" [*sic*] were typical. The reporters and the public wanted her transfer to this integrated school to be a success. The

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[127] Ibid.

photographs of Brown on her first day at New Lincoln are all very similar. They show her sitting at a table with a group of other students listening to their teacher. At the table are two other black students, Miriam Davis and Yorke Mizelle. Although the readers of the articles would have no way of knowing it, Davis and Mizelle were the only other black students in the class of 1959. In the *New York World Telegram and Sun*, the photograph was cropped to show just Brown and Mizelle, indicating more integration than was true at the school.[128] This reporting could have only helped New Lincoln's purpose and goals. At least two of the articles reported the number of black students in the school to be about 50, more than seven times the number Georgia Randolph recalled for the entire school in 1957.[129] Because yearbooks from these years have individual photographs of seniors but only candid photographs of the rest of the school, it is almost impossible to tell how many black students actually attended New Lincoln in 1958. Some students appear in multiple photographs while others, it can be assumed, are not pictured at all. The number, however, is irrelevant to the image of New Lincoln in the media. New Lincoln appeared to be successfully integrated no matter the numbers. The decision to accept Brown and the subsequent media coverage undoubtedly helped this appearance. The caption on one version of the photograph of Minnijean in school summed up New Lincoln's strategy for social reform in four words. It read: "A Lesson in Tolerance." Brown herself

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[128] "Has 'No Hate' for Little Rock: Minnijean Resumes Schooling Here," *New York World Telegram and Sun.*

[129] "'NY Is Wonderful-Minniejean Brown," *Amsterdam News* ,1. and "School Welcomes Little Rock Girl: Director Greets Expelled Negro Pupil Here – She Hopes for Calm Stay," *New York Times*, 25 February 1958, 29.

proclaimed the school's success in an article about her just prior to her graduation. She said: "Integration works because I've seen it work at this school and this proves it. From what happened in Little Rock, I didn't know what to expect when I came here, because I'd never seen integration work peacefully this way. Here my friends of both races are just friends. We agree sometime and we disagree sometimes, and color is not important."[130] Brown and the *New York Times* proved to the world that New Lincoln could teach even the most skeptical students how to live peacefully and happily in an integrated world.

There were other occasions when local and national newspapers promoted New Lincoln as an integrated institution. A November 23, 1954 *New York Times* pictorial article about New Lincoln shows a lesson where students "dressed in attire of the mid-nineteenth century [and] re-enact[ed] a scene out of history as their classroom [was] transformed into the traditional one-room school house" in order to better understand American history. Though it is an interesting commentary on New Lincoln lessons, what is more important is the composition of the photographs themselves. There are two photographs on the page. The first and largest is a photograph of the entire class. Although none of the students are identified by name and all are standing in a line facing the teacher, one student, a black boy, is standing slightly in front of the line in the center of the photograph causing him to stand out in the picture. Two of the nine students in the photograph are black, a much higher percentage than the integrated reality of the

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[130] Gertrude Samuels, "Student From Little Rock: Minnijean Brown, who transferred to a New York high school, graduates next month," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 24 May 1959, SM25.

school.[131] The second photograph on the page is of David Vando, a Hispanic student, sitting alone.[132] The combination of the photographs and the choice of students in them show New Lincoln as a significantly more integrated school than yearbooks and student memories suggest. As early as 1950, New Lincoln was known in the press as an "inter-cultural institution" that lives the democratic life it professes to support.[133]

In these early years, the outside world was merely an inconvenience to New Lincoln's utopia. By 1963, however, things at New Lincoln began to change. As the outside world became more politically charged and the ideal of integration challenged, New Lincoln's self-perception as the perfect microcosm of integration became more difficult and less desirable to maintain. Alumni remember small things that began to challenge the color-blind world in which they all chose to live. Lynn Caporale, a member of the graduating class of 1963 remembers a parent complaining that the staff gave too much extra attention to the college application of one of the black students in her class. She writes: "This was the first time I was aware of "race" as an issue for the faculty." It New Lincoln's later years, the idea that living and working in a utopia was the best way to teach students would transform and eventually disintegrate.

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[131] See Figure 2.
[132] See Figure 3.
[133] "New Lincoln School Has 1st Graduation," 13.

Chapter IV – From Assimilation to Racial Consciousness: New Lincoln 1963-1974

Throughout its existence, the New Lincoln School prided itself on being an integrated, experimental, and progressive school – a place where these three identities came together and complimented each other. Being an experimental school meant that New Lincoln was constantly striving improve the status quo – academically and in social reform. To stay ahead of society's norms of integration, New Lincoln created and maintained an integrated school and developed a method of teaching students to thrive in an integrated world based on their experiences. This connection between experimentation and experiential learning created two distinct models of integration over New Lincoln's life as a school.

To stay ahead of the status quo in its early years, 1948-1962, it was important that New Lincoln be integrated wholeheartedly in philosophy but not totally in number. Although New Lincoln was integrated, the fact that the vast majority of students in the school came from similar racial and socio-economic backgrounds meant that New Lincoln's community in these years was a place where integration was analogous to assimilation. As a result, students' life experiences during this time period were reasonably similar. This similarity in students' experience made the development of New Lincoln's utopian community possible. However, when the rising civil rights movement made integration society's norm in the school's later years, 1963-1974, New Lincoln's one-world

model of integration was no longer noteworthy.[134] The changing political climate of the outside world required that in order to be considered experimental, New Lincoln had to increase the actual numbers of non-white students and teachers in the school. With this increase in numbers came an increase in distinct racial identities. As the outside political world permeated New Lincoln, the school moved from a unified and colorblind model of integration to a racially conscious one. In its later years, this is the environment in which New Lincoln taught experience-based lessons of integration.

The changing make-up of the student body was a major cause of New Lincoln's shift away from a colorblind community. Tom Jarcho, a Jewish and Hispanic graduate from the class of 1969, remembers that New Lincoln made a "great effort" to have students and faculty from all different racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds in its later years.[135] School administrators support this assertion. In his memoir, Harold Haizlip, the first black director of New Lincoln, writes: "New Lincoln was firmly committed to integration. Over time, the board, faculty, and parents decided to increase the minority presence in the school beyond a token level and set fundraising priorities and targets to make this possible."[136] The actual percentages of black faculty and students reflect this effort. In 1964, 25% of the teachers photographed in the yearbook – four out of

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[134] For the press, the fact that the school was integrated was only noted in articles already about racial issues or in articles about fundraising events at the school. Articles such as "Auction at New Lincoln School To Offer Some Unusual Items" and "2nd Juror Picked in Panther Trial" describe New Lincoln as "a private, integrated, progressive school." In "On Sex Education," an article devoid of racial or class issues, it is just the New Lincoln School, without description.
[135] Tom Jarcho, 2002. E-mail to author, 28 October.
[136] Haizlip, 162. Harold Haizlip was director of New Lincoln from 1968-1971.

sixteen – were black. Photographs of students in early grades in this year show an increase not only in the number of black students but in Asian, Hispanic and other non-white ethnic groups. Although high staff turnover in the late 1960s caused fluctuations in the number of black faculty members, one graduate remembers that by June of 1969 the director, assistant director and the head of the high school were all black.[137] The percentage of black students in each graduating class was on average higher than it had been in the school's early years, reaching 26% by 1974.

On a basic level, New Lincoln was continuing its earlier goal of teaching students to live in an integrated world during this change in population. Administrators in the 1950s and 1960s wanted students to be blind to race and to work together as a community unit, learning, in their unity, that race was unimportant to social and business interactions. In New Lincoln's later years, the school made this goal more specific to black-white relations. For students, faculty, and administrators at New Lincoln in this time period, race was something that could not be ignored. In fact, it was something that had to be acknowledged to teach an accurate life lesson. An example of this shift can be seen in a piece of the school's publicity material. A New Lincoln brochure published in 1970 reports that the New Lincoln School was "a school where children learn in the kind of ethnically, culturally, and economically integrated environment which they meet in their adult life, and a school whose scholarship and education programs are predicated on concern for the kind of adults these

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[137] Michele Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of Superwoman*, (New York: The

children will become." The kind of community students would meet in their adult life, New Lincoln realized in these later years, was not a utopia but a society where race was a personal identifier and a possible source of conflict. The composition of the 1970 brochure reinforces the school's stated mission. Sixteen captioned photographs of students fill the inside of the fold-out material, revealing the lessons New Lincoln students "come to school to learn," lessons like: "we learn to question," "we learn to work alone," and "we learn to listen." The real message and goals of this publication, however, are not printed in the text but are found these photographs. A picture of a black child and a white child sketching a project together represented the goal "we learn to work together." The photograph accompanying the statement "we learn to be friends," shows a group of black and white children in an arm wrestling competition.[138] New Lincoln teachers and administrators in these later years did not want students to learn simply to be friends, they wanted them to learn to be friends with people of other races. Just learning to work together as was not enough. Instead students had to learn to work together across racial lines. Rising racial consciousness and outside political tensions demanded that New Lincoln make the goals of positive interracial interactions more explicit than ever before.

The rising numbers of black students and the changing import of outside politics in these later years required New Lincoln to make important changes to its community structure. In the years before 1963, New Lincoln attempted to create a model society in which students could learn to live in a racially

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Dial Press, 1979), 3.
[138] See Figures 5 and 6

harmonious world. The structure of New Lincoln's academic curriculum and school social life supported the development of a strong and unified community in which race was a non-issue. Progressive theorists like John Dewey and William Heard Kilpatrick firmly believed that education should mirror events in students' lives. In New Lincoln's early years, the school created many of these experiences for their students, ensuring that all students lived and worked in a unified integrated environment. The changes in community structure during the 1960s and 1970s indicate that this school unity was no longer as important to New Lincoln, even if it taught students to come together without regard to race. Instead, the national struggle had greater import in many ways. This was not a move away from integration but instead a reliance on the fact that integration was becoming a national desire. In the mid to late 1960s and 1970s, the import of a unified community had lessened and the value of outside concerns and politics increasingly became more important to New Lincoln's structural framework.

One example of this shift can be seen in the changes in Town Meeting, New Lincoln's student government. Once an important source of community and pride, Town Meeting was not even mentioned as a club or organization in the 1964 or 1965 yearbooks. In the 1966 yearbook there were photographs of student committees but a note that accompanied the photographs indicated that the universal participation the student government had once taken for granted was no longer a given. The note read: "Though there are people who disagree, I think we have more or less succeeded. At any rate the machinery of Student Government has functioned more efficiently this year than it has for a long time." Even though

there was a resurgence of the student government in the late 1960s, by 1970, Town Meeting was no longer a notable organization at New Lincoln. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Town Meeting had been a place where all students came together as a legislative body to discuss and plan the workings of the school. By the 1970s, other smaller clubs such Harvard Model U.N. and the Liaison Committee replaced it as part of New Lincoln's extracurricular offerings. These clubs offered students a chance to gain government-like experience, but they no longer unified the school as Town Meeting once had. Model U.N. represented more accurately the new focus of New Lincoln's student body than Town Meeting could have in these decades because it allowed students to focus on current issues and tensions in the world beyond New Lincoln. Even in student organizations, involvement in outside politics in these years took precedence over active participation in a unified community.

In another example of this shift, alumni from these later years remember that in assemblies and meetings the students sang folk songs and listened to the music of Leadbelly and Pete Seeger. In addition, "assemblies featured Peace Activist folk singers, [and] speakers from SNCC and the Civil Rights Movement."[139] An article from 1969 notes that students taking part in a small anti-war rally outside of the school sang "We Shall Overcome."[140] These actions, however noble, also marked a change in the social structure of New Lincoln. In the early years of the school, assemblies were a time for students to come together

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[139] Wallace, "To Hell and Back."
[140] McCandlish Phillips, "Demonstrators Make Up Patchwork Quilt of the Fabric of the City," *New York Times*, 16 October 1969, 20.

as a community isolated from the outside world. They gave students a place to affirm their New Lincoln identity. But just as the politics of the outside world changed students' self-identities in the late 1960s and 1970s, the addition of these songs and speakers to school meetings changed the group identity, as well. As the outside world was brought into New Lincoln, the once tight-knit and insular community became part of a larger national struggle.

The rise of direct action protest at New Lincoln is another indication of the extent to which the politics of the outside world permeated the New Lincoln community in the l960s and 1970s. In this later period students, teachers, and the school as an institution became more vocal and active in their support of civil rights than they had in earlier years. For example, while Lucy Horton, a white graduate from the class of 1963 writes: "We were horrified by what was happening in the south in the civil rights struggle . . . but we didn't discuss it as something that affected us directly,"[141] the sentiment of students graduating just a year later would be vastly different. Jeremy Robinson, a white alumnus from 1964 remembers: "There was an involvement with the Civil Rights movement – I remember going to protest in Washington and getting on the buses on the weekend which loaded in front of the school."[142] Moreover, Deborah Doss, a white 1966 graduate, remembers that her 10th grade science teacher taught his students how to be responsible activists. He pretended to get fired from his teaching position at New Lincoln for teaching a "banned' lesson. As he expected, students rose up to protest his dismissal without checking up on the facts of the

case. Doss writes: "We had not researched the 'cause' ourselves and just blindly believed. It was a great teaching method for us kids of the 60's – activists."[143] The national Civil Rights movement and direct action protest within that movement gained significant momentum in 1963 with the March on Washington. This momentum fueled activity at New Lincoln and supported the incorporation of national politics to the school. The politics of the outside community in the 1960s enhanced the New Lincoln's integrationist philosophy. In turn, New Lincoln supported these politics.

Another clear indication of the extent to which the community outside of its walls influenced New Lincoln, was the way that school-sponsored discussion of race developed and evolved in the three decades of the school's existence. Jeremy Robinson remembers that race and social issues were talked about and discussed very openly at New Lincoln in these later years. Other graduates affirm that there were class discussions about race – conversations that earlier New Lincoln graduates never had.[144] Peter Rosenthal, a graduate from New Lincoln's early years, wrote: "I don't think we ever discussed race or ethnicity explicitly – I wish we had. I had friends among all the groups, but never had the courage or language to discuss our differences openly."[145] Discussion of race in New Lincoln's early years would have opposed the colorblind world that the school attempted to create. It would have forced students to acknowledge race and to admit differences in experience. While discussions of race in the years before

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[141] Lucy Horton Questionnaire.
[142] Jeremy Robinson Questionnaire.
[143] Deborah Doss Questionnaire.
[144] Wallace, "To Hell and Back."

1963 were rare at most, the changing social dynamic of New Lincoln in its later years made these discussions a normal part of an integrated life.

The most notable way that the outside world came into the school was in the welcoming of the Black Power philosophy into the New Lincoln community. In 1967, Bill Beiser, an eleventh grade Core teacher who was chosen to serve on a jury trying one of the Black Panthers, said in an interview with the *New York Times*: "I'm sure many of my students possess more information about the Black Panther party than I do, maybe all do." He added that a student in his class had tried to sell him the Panther party newspaper several times.[146] Tom Jarcho indicates that there was more than an ideological tie between the Panther party and New Lincoln in these years. He writes: "Black Panthers, who enjoyed widespread support at New Lincoln of course, and other radicals on the run from the FBI, used to show up at the end of the school day if they needed a safe place to crash."[147]

A more constant involvement of black consciousness in New Lincoln life came from individual students' development of separatist racial identities. By the mid 1960s, black consciousness was beginning to take hold with New Lincoln students. One such student was Michele Wallace, later to become a noted black feminist. In her path-breaking book, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, Wallace discusses New Lincoln in the 1950s and early 1960s, writing: "We had no black consciousness. . . . We weren't black – the word was

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[145] Peter Rosenthal Questionnaire
[146] Edith Evans Asbury, "2nd Juror Picked in Panther Trial," *New York Times*, 15 September 1970, 48
[147] Tom Jarcho, 2002. E-mail to author, 28 October.

still an insult – we were just second class white kids." However, she continues, by 1965, "our position had changed. We black kids at New Lincoln began to gain something we had never had: an identity."[148] *Black Macho*, Wallace's first work and a text that white New Lincoln graduate, Marc Aronson calls "essentially New Lincoln-esque" because of its radical and personal nature, is regarded as an important analysis of the role of women in the Black Power movement. That Wallace would choose to begin this seminal work with a discussion of her experience at New Lincoln shows the importance of black consciousness to this time period in New Lincoln's history.

In "To Hell and Back: On the Road with Black Feminism," another publication in which she discusses New Lincoln, Michele Wallace remembers an experience with another well-known black graduate, writer Jill Nelson. She writes: "Schoolmate Jill Nelson and I started a singing group with two other girls at New Lincoln modeled after the Marvelettes and we actually dared to perform at the eighth grade dance" in 1965.[149] While this was not an overt expression of black pride, it is an exemplar of the development of racial consciousness. For Wallace, the Marvelettes were a Black singing group, a group she and her Harlem friends were scheming to meet while her white classmates obsessed over the Beatles. By impersonating this group, Wallace was identifying herself as a black woman, not only by skin color but by cultural markers, as well. The realization and announcement of a strong black self-identity was not unique to Wallace. Beverly Clark Prince, a graduate from 1967, remembers: "I discovered my

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[148] Wallace, *Black Macho,* 4-5.

African Blackness was able to discuss it frankly with staff."[150] Prince's actions, combined with this identity exemplify the new integration at New Lincoln. As a student at New Lincoln, Prince wrote and produced a racially charged play about the experience of slavery. Instead of this being a divisive experience, however, the play was well supported by the entire school community.[151]

Rising separatist black identity within and outside of New Lincoln did not just affect the black students at the school. Nancy Falk, a white senior in 1963, remembers one of the first instances of racial consciousness and the politics of the Black Power movement entering the New Lincoln community. In preparation for a senior paper in their Core class, Falk and classmate, a black student, ventured into Harlem to a Black Muslim coffee shop six blocks from New Lincoln. The reason for the journey was an interview, specially arranged by Kenneth and Mamie Clark, with Malcolm X. Mamie Clark accompanied the girls to the interview and sat with them as they asked questions. Falk recalls that at the time of the interview: "Malcolm X was not talking to white folks." She was able to ask questions as part of the interview process, but Malcolm X would address her classmate or Clark when responding. This was a sharp contrast from interactions within the New Lincoln community. Students were supposed to be colorblind and each individual was supposed to be valued – using race as basis for conversation stood in direct opposition to that philosophy. Yet the validity of a separate self-identity had already permeated Falk, and presumably, other New Lincoln students' thoughts. Falk remembers: "I bought the Black Muslim Movement

[149] Wallace, "To Hell and Back."
[150] Beverly Clark Prince Questionnaire

hook, line, and sinker, so it seemed absolutely correct that I didn't exist or I was the devil and I didn't want to be the devil and I preferred to be not seen. It seemed like a payback for all of the many hundreds of years that black people were not seen."[152] This understanding shows the results of the inclusion of outside politics in the school. That Falk embraced this separatist attitude conflicts with the concept of integration that New Lincoln had long taught. Compassion for the suffering of black people was expected, just as compassion for all struggling people was expected. But using this compassion to rationalize segregation was not a New Lincoln value. In this interview experience, New Lincoln's social philosophy conflicted with the politics of the outside world and the school's lessons emerged on the losing side.

Within New Lincoln's own walls, there were other instances, where the new politics of New Lincoln and the inclusion of black consciousness in the school's model of integration "split the school."[153] Verne Oliver, a former New Lincoln teacher and director, remembers an experience where this influence changed school practice. She described a middle school performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird* where the seventh grade cast a black student in the role of the father, even though the other main characters were played by white students. Upon seeing this choice in casting, the black students in the audience got up and walked out, upset because the student actors "weren't doing it in a realistic way."[154] Outraged by their behavior, Oliver followed the students out of the auditorium

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[151] Marc Aronson, 2002, Conversation with author.
[152] Interview with Nancy Falk May 2002
[153] Marc Aronson, 2002, Conversation with author.
[154] Verne Oliver, 2002, Conversation with author.

and into the neighboring gymnasium where she explained to the students that that kind of attitude was keeping blacks out of theater and keeping them as second-class citizens. In a situation where New Lincoln students would once have possibly looked beyond the race of the students on stage, colorblind to the differences in cast members, developing racial consciousness made this version of integration impossible in the late 1960s and 1970s.

The ending of this period of New Lincoln's history symbolizes the problems that came with the growing black identity and the increasing influence of the outside world on New Lincoln. In 1974, New Lincoln left its long treasured home on 110th Street and fled to the Upper East Side. Central Park North, as it had been renamed in an attempt to revitalize the community, was becoming an unsafe and undesirable location for the school. Michael Jody, a graduate from 1974 remembers: "Harlem was not a very safe place for white kids in [the early 1970s] and many of us (myself included) used to get mugged with some regularity in and around the school (once even during gym in the park)." A *New York Times* article from 1971 describes the street as "dominated on both ends by gasoline stations and in between rubbish dumps" and filled with winos and drug addicts.[155] The change in community seriously affected enrollment in and support of New Lincoln. In New Lincoln's early years, white liberals sent their children to the school without serious hesitation. By these later years, as Jody notes: "The fact that New Lincoln was located in Harlem made a tremendous difference as to which middle and upper-middle class parents were willing to send

their kids there." Fear and a sense of disconnect from the school's neighborhood began to deter families from the school.

A column published in the *New York Times* two days before the description of Central Park North told the story of a woman getting mugged on that street on her way home from a New Lincoln parent-teacher meeting.[156] The night guard at the school had not been on duty and she and a friend had decided to walk the few blocks to the subway alone. After she had been hit in the face and had her purse stolen, presumably by a group of black pre-teens, a police officer informed her that the block in front of New Lincoln "was one of the chief mugging spots in the city" and "was good for five muggings a night, on a good night."[157] More than just establishing New Lincoln as a dangerous place where cautious people would not want to send their children, this article, and its title, "White Side, Black Side, All Around the Town," indicate the extent to which racial consciousness had taken hold at and impacted the structure of the school. The article sets Everhart, the author, and her friend up as innocent white women who had been taken by the ruthless and poor minorities of Harlem. Everhart repeats the fact that she is white several times throughout the article. There is a tension in this article that reflects a sentiment in the school. Even though New Lincoln was integrated, racial identities were not and could not be ignored. Although Everhart eventually forgives and feels sorry for the boys who mugged her because she was "still better off than the young muggers," she assures her

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[155] C. Gerald Fraser, "Central Park North: Typically Harlem," *New York Times,* 30 October 1971, 33.
[156] Jane Everhart, "White Side, Black Side, All Around the Town," *New York Times*, 28 October 1971, 41.

readers that she will "never return to Black City unguarded." For her, and for her readers, "This dichotomy of Black City and White City exists." By the mid 1970s, 110th Street and Lenox Ave was no longer a physical representation of the coming together of interracial groups, it was now a battlefield of racial tensions. New Lincoln's dream of teaching in a racial utopia had been killed in the battle.

As part of its experimental practices, New Lincoln tried to change with and stay ahead of the society around it. In New Lincoln's early years, the peaceful utopian model of integration the school promoted was easy for many parents to trust. There was little chance during these years that going to New Lincoln would be a hostile experience. In this later time period, however, the society that New Lincoln changed with, and thus, the school community itself transformed too much for many families' comfort. New Lincoln's new model of integration, one that incorporated outside politics and racial consciousness into the school structure, created tensions within New Lincoln and decreased the stability of its community. The increasing crime around the school building was a final insult for many liberal New Yorkers who once would have considered sending their children to the school. New Lincoln was in a state of decline – even its change of locations could not save it from final decay.

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[157] Ibid.

Conclusion

New Lincoln began the 1974 school year on the Upper East Side – a location philosophically far from its earlier home. The residents of this Manhattan neighborhood were wealthy, mostly white, and predominantly more conservative than the student and faculty population of New Lincoln. The school's new neighbors were not accustomed to the racially integrated student body that New Lincoln drew to East 77th Street each day, causing problems both for Upper East Side residents and for members of the New Lincoln community. Verne Oliver, a static figure at New Lincoln had become Director of the school in the years after the move and remembers an increase of racial troubles after the move. In one specific memory, Oliver recalls an incident where a black student came to her crying after returning from an errand in the blocks surrounding the school. He said, "I was running through the neighborhood because I went to get the pizza and because I was running and my coat was flapping and I had on a hat, they thought I had stolen something. So the police grabbed me and they threw me up against the wall and, Mrs. Oliver, they actually had the gun to my head."[158] After the move and until New Lincoln's closure in 1988, this new surrounding society and the values that went with it challenged every model of integration that New Lincoln had established.

The changing educational values of the nation in these last years also led to New Lincoln's demise. Progressive education in the 1980s stood in direct

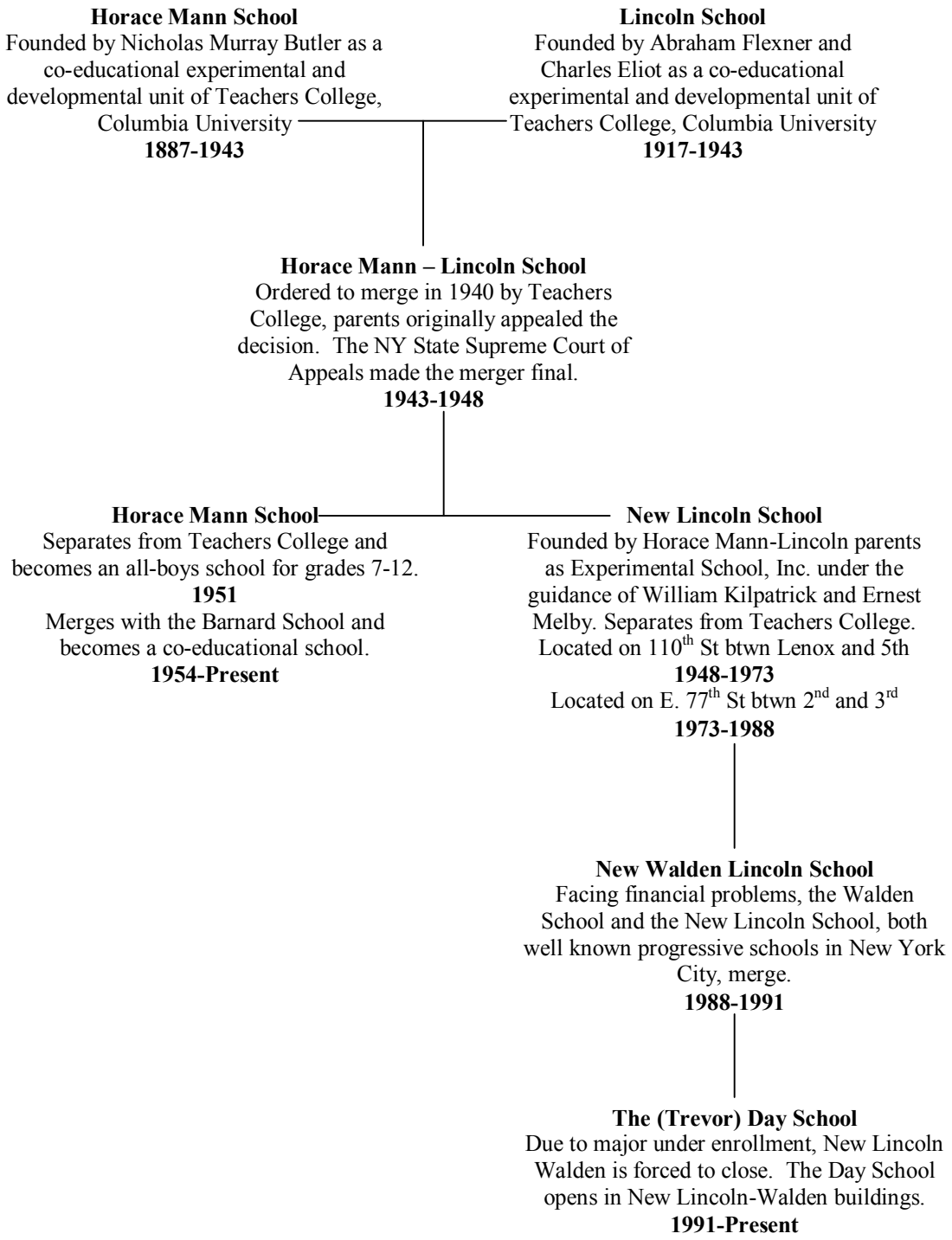
opposition to new Reagan-era educational policies where students were expected to learn basic facts in traditional methods. In an attempt to fit into this new academic mold, New Lincoln moved towards a more conventional college-prep program. But while the curriculum of the school reflected this change, New Lincoln stayed true to its progressive roots by keeping classrooms unstructured. However, this combination of traditional programs and progressive flexibility was not effective and ended up harming New Lincoln's academic reputation. Many alumni considered New Lincoln for their children as they entered elementary and high school. Frequently these parents, raised in the progressive tradition themselves, found New Lincoln's lack of structure unsettling and unappealing. By the mid 1980s, the student body at the school had declined significantly with fewer than 10 students in some grades.[159] New Lincoln's existence ended in 1988 when it merged with the Walden School to improve its financial standing.

The most significant part of the New Lincoln School was the extent to which it was and the ways it became integrated. New Lincoln was founded as part of the progressive education movement and used the practices of that movement – experiential learning, valued individuals, and a strong community – to teach its students how to live in an integrated world. In the early years of the school, 1948-1963, New Lincoln created a utopian community within its walls, giving students the opportunity to live in the kind of world New Lincoln desired for the larger society. As outside politics and racial consciousness infiltrated New

[158] Verne Oliver, 2002, Conversation with author.
[159] Jackie Lynch, 2003, Conversation with author.

Lincoln's community in its later years, the school incorporated that change into its learning lab.

In many ways, New Lincoln was successful in its attempts at integration. But a study of New Lincoln reveals its weaknesses and shortcomings. When New Lincoln failed in its attempts to promote integration it was because their integrationist ideal came into conflict with politics of the outside world. Because of New Lincoln's progressive grounding, the experiences students brought with them to school had to reflect the values New Lincoln wanted to teach in order for these lessons to be successful. The outside world may have limited the extent to which New Lincoln could achieve its ambitious goals, however, the integration model the school did create and the lessons it taught its students still endure. Although New Lincoln closed fifteen years ago, its legacy continues in its graduates who, today, teach their children the lessons they learned at New Lincoln.



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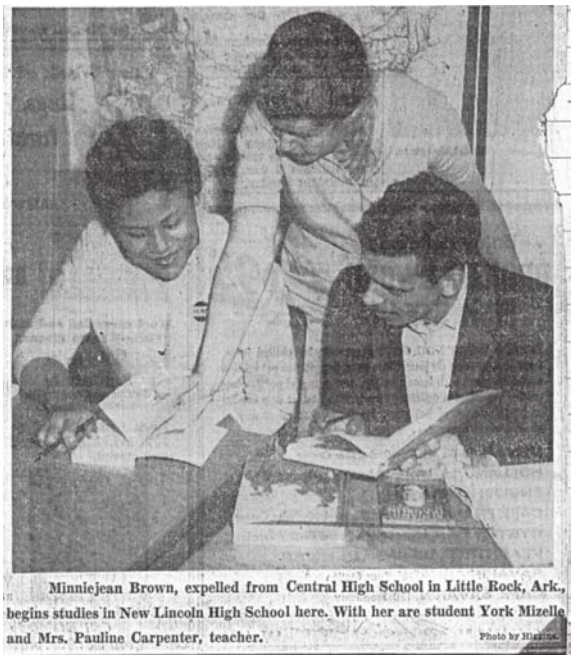
The Day School Alumni Directory 1997

Figure 1 – **THE GENEALOGY OF THE NEW LINCOLN SCHOOL**

Figure 2. Source: "Pupils From an Ultra-Progressive School Relive Days of 1850-75," *New York Times*, 16 November 1954, 31.

Figure 3. Source: "Pupils From an Ultra-Progressive School Relive Days of 1850-75," *New York Times*, 16 November 1954, 31.



Minniejean Brown, expelled from Central High School in Little Rock, Ark., begins studies in New Lincoln High School here. With her are student York Mizelle and Mrs. Pauline Carpenter, teacher.

Figure 4. Source: "Has 'No Hate' for Little Rock: Minnijean Resumes Schooling Here," *New York World Telegram and Sun*, nd. from the archives of Milbank Memorial Library, Teachers College, Columbia University, Box no. 890624 MG 94, New Lincoln School, Box 1 of 1.

Figure 5. Minnijean and her classmates. Miriam Davis is at the far left, Minnijean is second from right, and Yorke Mizelle is at the far right. Source: "A Lesson in Tolerance," from the archives of Milbank Memorial Library, Teachers College, Columbia University, Box no. 890624 MG 94, New Lincoln School, Box 1 of 1.

WE LEARN TO BE FRIENDS

Figure 6. Source: Stern, H. Peter and the New Lincoln Fathers' Committee. "We Come to School to Learn." nd. from the archives of the Trevor Day School, New York City.

WE LEARN TO WORK TOGETHER

Figure 7. Stern, H. Peter and the New Lincoln Fathers' Committee. "We Come to School to Learn." nd. from the archives of the Trevor Day School, New York City.

Name_____

Are you willing to be interviewed? **YES** **NO**

New Lincoln School Questionnaire Version 1

Personal Information:

1. What year did you start attending the New Lincoln School? _____What grades did you attend? _____ How many years did you go to New Lincoln? _____

2. How did you end up going to New Lincoln? (circle one)
   a. Parents wanted me to go
   b. I wanted to go
   c. Other (please explain) _____

3. How much choice did you have in the school selection process? (circle one)
   a. None
   b. Some
   c. Entirely my decision

4. What aspects of the school attracted you and your family to New Lincoln?

5. What other schools did you attend before and after you were a student at New Lincoln?

   Were those schools public or private?

   a. What was the racial and class make up of those schools?
   b.
   c. How did the education you received at those schools compare to your New Lincoln education? (circle one)
      a. Superior to New Lincoln
      b. Inferior to New Lincoln
      c. About the same as New Lincoln

   d. Why did you switch schools?

6. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being *Not Important* and 5 being *Very Important*, please rate the importance of the following aspects of New Lincoln when choosing a school.

Courses offered:
1 2 3 4 5
Special curriculum (art in curriculum, humanities and core classes):
1 2 3 4 5
Size of the school:
1 2 3 4 5
Close knit school community:
1 2 3 4 5
Racial composition of the student body:
1 2 3 4 5
Racial composition of the faculty:
1 2 3 4 5
Racial composition of administration and Board of Directors:
1 2 3 4 5
Quality of education:
1 2 3 4 5
Amount of financial aide received:
1 2 3 4 5
Location:
1 2 3 4 5
Family ties to New Lincoln:
1 2 3 4 5
Facilities and resources New Lincoln offered:
1 2 3 4 5
Reputation of New Lincoln with colleges:
1 2 3 4 5
Reputation of New Lincoln within the community:
1 2 3 4 5
New Lincoln's political beliefs:
1 2 3 4 5
Clubs and extracurricular activities:
1 2 3 4 5
Other _____:
1 2 3 4 5

7. What were your parents' political beliefs?

   a. Were they registered with a specific political party? **YES** **NO**
      Which one?

   b. Were they active in political or community organizations? **YES** **NO**
      Which ones?
   c. Were they active in protest and social movements such as the Civil Rights Movement, Black Power Movement or the anti-war movement? **YES** **NO**

Which ones?

8. Where did you live in relation to New Lincoln? (How did you get there?)

9. What was the racial and class make up of your home neighborhood?

10. What was the racial and financial make up of your household?

11. What is your ethnicity?

12. Did your siblings and neighbors go to New Lincoln? **YES** **NO**
    Where did they go?

13. What was the highest level of education your parents completed?

14. Did you go to college? **YES** **NO**
    Where?

15. What is/was your profession?

School Life:

16. Did you feel close to your teachers? **YES** **NO**
    Were student/teacher relationships important within the school community?
    YES **NO**

17. Were your classes interdisciplinary? (Did the curriculum mix material from multiple subject areas?) **YES** **NO**

18. Did students take the student government seriously? **YES** **NO**
    Did the administration? **YES** **NO**

19. Was there a strong sense of community at New Lincoln? **YES** **NO**
    What did it mean to be part of the New Lincoln School community?

    Were you involved in this community? **YES** **NO**

20. Did the school sponsor activities to bring the community together and make it cohesive?
    YES **NO**
    What are some examples of these activities?

    Was it important to celebrate everyone's birthdays? **YES** **NO**

21. Were extracurricular activities a large part of student life and community life?
YES **NO** What activities did you participate in at school?

What activities did you participate in outside of New Lincoln?

22. How big were your classes?

23. How much of your school day was spent in non-academic classes such as art, music and physical education?

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ON A SCALE OF 1-5

24. In its promotional materials, New Lincoln describes itself as both a progressive school and an experimental school. They say that they experimented with arts in the classroom, with high school student government, with grouping of classes, with field trips and with curriculum content.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

25. On a scale of 0-5, how important to the school was it that teachers knew their individual students' strengths, weaknesses and interests?

Not Important				Very Important
1	2	3	4	5

26. How much did teachers lecture in class?

Never				Always
1	2	3	4	5

27. How much class time was spent doing group work?

None				All
1	2	3	4	5

28. How much class time was devoted to class discussions?

None				All
1	2	3	4	5

29. How often did you do projects that required work in all the disciplines?

Never				Very Frequently

1 2 3 4 5

30. How often did teachers teach using textbooks?

Never				Always
1	2	3	4	5

31. How often did the administration take student suggestions for improving the school?

Never				Always
1	2	3	4	5

32. Were your parents involved in your New Lincoln life? How active were your parents in New Lincoln life in comparison to other parents?

Not Active				Very Active
1	2	3	4	5

33. How often did your parents:

	Never				Very Frequently
Visit the School?					
	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteer in class?					
	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteer for other school activities?					
	1	2	3	4	5
Attend free social events at school?					
	1	2	3	4	5
Attend fundraising events at school?					
	1	2	3	4	5

Diversity at New Lincoln:

34. New Lincoln prided itself on being "interracial, interfaith and inter-economic in student body and staff." Do you agree with this statement?

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

35. In racial make up, was New Lincoln different from other schools in the area?
YES NO

Explain.

36. Were there predominantly Black student organizations on campus?
YES **NO**

37. How active were these groups in student life?

Not Active Very Active
1 2 3 4 5

38. Were these groups well received by non-Black students? **YES** **NO**
Explain.

39. How did New Lincoln promote diversity?
    a. Were there open discussions among students, faculty and administrators about race?
    YES **NO**
    b. Were there open discussions among students, faculty and administrators about class?
    YES **NO**
    c. Were there open discussions between students about race?
    YES **NO**
    d. Were there open discussions between students about class?
    YES **NO**
    e. How racially sensitive and inclusive were lessons?

Not Inclusive Very Inclusive
1 2 3 4 5

    f. On average, how many students were on scholarship every year?

    g. How many Black students were on scholarship?

    h. What percentage of students came from poor neighborhoods?

40. How active was New Lincoln in the Civil Rights Movement?
    a. Were parents active in the Movement?
    YES **NO**
    b. Were there open activist on the staff?
    YES **NO**
    c. Were there students active in protest movements?
    YES **NO**

d. How much effort did the school make to inform students about what was happening within the movement? Answer this question using a scale of 0-5.

No Effort Extreme Effort
1 2 3 4 5

e. How much did the Civil Rights Movement effect curriculum? Answer this question using a scale of 0-5.

No Effect Significant Effect
1 2 3 4 5

f. Were there protest organizations on campus that functioned within the school community? **YES** **NO**

41. Overall, would you say that you had a positive experience at the New Lincoln School?

YES **NO**

New Lincoln School Alumni Questionnaire Version 2

Name:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Age:

Ethnic/Racial background:

Religious Affiliation:

School attended before New Lincoln:

Years attended New Lincoln:

Year of High School graduation:

College attended (if applicable):

Year of college graduation:

Graduate degrees and schools (if applicable):

Personal awards and publications (if applicable). Include dates and titles:

Current and past profession(s):

Political affiliation:

Parents' political affiliation:

1. Describe your experience at the New Lincoln School in a word or a sentence. If you would like to expand on that description, please do so.

2. Describe the differences and similarities between your home community and the community you experienced at New Lincoln.

3. Was New Lincoln a good school academically? Socially?

4. As a student, did you think that New Lincoln was working to achieve large social and academic goals? What do you think now?

5. How did New Lincoln handle integration and racial issues? If you would like to include specific examples, please do so.

6. Did your experiences at New Lincoln shape who you have become? In what ways?

7. Can you remember any specific experience, person or class at New Lincoln that has a lasting impact on you? Please feel free to elaborate.

8. If there is anything that you think I did not address in this questionnaire or anything that you would like to tell me about New Lincoln and your experience at the school, please do so here.

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Questionnaires (Version 1)

Alexandra Bley-Vroman
Susan Mendlowitz Burnette
Lynn Caporale
Nancy Falk
Bunny Harvey
Lucy Horton
Betsy Jablow
Daniel Lewis
Stephen Mazur
Christie McDonald
Andrew Zucker

Questionnaires (Version 2)

Dale Anderson
Alan Bernstein
Glenn Brewster
Lynn Caporale
Eleanor Foa Dienstag
Deborah Patt Doss
Daniel Epstein
Mary Freeman
Lisa Catlin Friedman
Martin Goodkind
Jim Hawley
Alan Herman
Ellen Howe
Michael Jody
Karl Knobler
Leslie Kreithen
Ellen Sontag Kuba
John Lipkowitz
Pat Rosenthal Cantor Mann
Carol Maslow
Janet Mendelsohn
Walter Miale
Sarajane Epstein Milder
Carla Fisher Miner
Adrian Piper
Brenda Gayle Plummer
Beverly Clark Prince
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Peter Rosenthal
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Peter Titleman
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