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“Two, Four, Six, Eight, We Don’t Want to Integrate”: White Student Attitudes Toward the University of Georgia’s Desegregation

BY ROBERT COHEN

ON January 13, 1961, two days after a segregationist riot on the campus of the University of Georgia, NBC “Today” show host David Garroway told his national television audience that he was “especially concerned” that college students had embraced racial violence. “If they had been ignorant, untutored,” he stated, “you could probably understand why they deployed this action, but they are not an ignorant group. They’re intelligent, educated, and they took an action that even an ignorant savage could understand any place in the world: brutal mob rule. And they won. In this country. But we speak of democracy, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness.”¹

Even before the incident that sparked Garroway’s comments, the whole world seemed to be watching the University of Georgia, where on January 6, U.S. District Court judge William A. Bootle ordered the admission of Georgia’s first African-American students, Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter. Print, radio, and television journalists besieged the Athens campus to see how students would react to the integration of their university. Optimistic

¹Garroway’s comments were reprinted in the *Athens Banner-Herald*, January 15, 1961.

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observers, such as columnist Ralph McGill of the *Atlanta Constitution*, voiced hope that Georgia students would “save the honor of the South and warm the hearts of good people everywhere” by welcoming their first black classmates. This sentiment was also expressed by one of the more progressive columnists for UGA’s student newspaper, the *Red and Black*, who urged his classmates to treat Holmes and Hunter with “the proper respect they deserve,” and thereby “show the rest of the United States that we in Georgia are the true leaders of the new South.” Even Hamilton Holmes initially voiced some optimism about Georgia students, telling a reporter that “I have faith that they won’t turn to violence.”²

The Georgia student body quickly proved itself unworthy of such hope and optimism. The first student demonstration on the Athens campus came on Friday evening, January 6, only a few hours after Judge Bootle issued his integration order; it showed that at least a vocal minority of the Georgia student body had no interest in building a new South, choosing instead to defend the old South—and its segregationist traditions. That night a crowd of some 150 to 200 students gathered by the historic archway entrance to the campus and hung a blackfaced effigy of Hamilton Holmes. The students “serenaded the effigy with choruses of Dixie,” and sang “There’ll never be a nigger in the _____ [fraternity] house,” whose various names they inserted. They also chanted “Two, four, six, eight, we don’t want to integrate.” Later that night students sought to burn a fifteen foot high cross in front of the home of UGA president O. C. Aderhold, but were prevented from doing so by campus officials.³

These initial segregationist protests paled in comparison to the violent demonstration which erupted outside of Center-Myers, Charlayne Hunter’s dormitory, five nights later on the evening of January 11, less than thirteen hours after Hunter and Holmes attended their first classes on campus. Hoisting a “Nigger Go Home” banner, a “howling, cursing mob,” numbering between 500 and 2,000 “laid siege” on Center-Myers. Rioters set fires in the

²*Atlanta Constitution*, January 11, 1961; University of Georgia *Red and Black*, January 5, 1961; *Columbus Ledger*, January 11, 1961.

³*Atlanta Constitution*, January 7, 1961; *Athens Banner-Herald*, January 10, 1961; *Red and Black*, January 10, 1961.



When Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes set foot on the University of Georgia campus on January 9, 1961 (pictured above), they and other observers across the state were optimistic that they would be treated with civility by their fellow students. "I have faith they won't turn to violence," Holmes told a reporter the day before the riot. *Photograph from World Wide Photos.*

woods near Hunter's dormitory, threw bricks and other missiles at the dorm windows, tossed rocks and firecrackers at reporters, and scuffled with police. It took well over an hour for police and campus officials to restore order. Fire hoses and tear gas were needed to disperse the angry mob—whose fists injured a police officer and Dean of Men William Tate, and whose rocks hurt a student inside Center-Myers and shattered dozens of windows in Hunter's dormitory. Also shattered was UGA's reputation, since the riot was front-page and prime time news. The national media denounced

the student rioters as bullies, racists, and ignoramuses.⁴ The administration on campus compounded the damage to the university's reputation by appearing to capitulate to the mob—suspending Hunter and Holmes, allegedly “for their own safety,” rather than the rioters. The image of Charlayne Hunter's forced and tearful exit from the campus in the wake of the riot and her own suspension, captured in news photos published from coast to coast, was not one that would soon be forgotten or lived down.⁵

This was not the first time that white college students captured the national spotlight through violent resistance to desegregation of higher education in the Deep South. Five years before the crisis in Athens, white students at the University of Alabama had rioted when Autherine Lucy sought to become their campus' first African-American student. Thousands of Alabama students, joined by outsiders, formed a roving racist mob, which threatened Lucy's life and literally drove her off the campus in February 1956.⁶ Student riot leaders at UGA in 1961, such as Thomas Cochran from Butler County, spoke of being inspired by that mob action at the University of Alabama. Cochran told the press that the UGA students' use of mob violence was aimed at achieving “the same sort of situation that prevails in Alabama. ‘They’re integrated . . . le-

⁴*New York Times*, January 12, 1961; “Shame in Georgia,” *Time* (January 20, 1961), 44; *Atlanta Journal*, January 12, 1961; *Red and Black*, January 11, 1961; *Atlanta Constitution*, January 12, 1961; Trillin, *An Education in Georgia: Charlayne Hunter, Hamilton Holmes, and the Integration of the University of Georgia* (New York, 1963), 52. Although the evidence is not definitive, a number of reports indicate that a coalition of segregationist law students and undergraduates, centered in UGA's reactionary debating society, the Demosthenians, was the driving force behind the riot. See *Atlanta Constitution*, January 15, 1961; Trillin, *An Education in Georgia*, 52, 81-82. On the mindset of the Demosthenians' segregationist wing, see Robert C. Owen, “A Collage of Counterrevolution: Debate on the Race Question in the Demosthenian Literary Society, 1950-1964” (unpublished honors thesis, University of Georgia, 1984), *passim*; *Minutes of the Demosthenian Hall*, September 24, 1958, p. 158, January 22, 1956, p. 31, University Archives, University of Georgia Libraries (hereinafter cited as UGA Archives).

⁵By suspending Holmes and Hunter first, UGA administrators did look as if they had caved into the mob by punishing the targets and not the perpetrators of the riot. But in the riot's aftermath, the administration suspended four riot leaders and placed eighteen on disciplinary probation. See J. A. Williams to O.C. Aderhold, January 24, 1961, President O. C. Aderhold Papers, UGA Archives. One of the AP photographs of Charlayne Hunter being escorted off campus can be found in her memoirs, along with the syndicated photo of UGA rioters hoisting their racist banner. See Charlayne Hunter-Gault, *In My Place* (New York, 1992).

⁶E. Culpepper Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door: Segregation's Last Stand at the University of Alabama* (New York, 1993), 71-90.



The university's Dean of Men William Tate arrived on the scene of the riot soon after it began. His personal intervention, which included reprimanding students by name and collecting their ID cards, was instrumental in calming and dispersing the rioters. *Photograph of Tate from the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.*

gally. But there are no niggers going to school there” because of the segregationist riot and expulsion of Lucy.⁷ The year after the UGA riot, white southern students would have a hand in the most violent of all campus anti-integration riots: the bloody battle at the University of Mississippi in September 1962, which left two dead and twenty-eight federal marshals wounded by gunshot during furious protests against the admission of James Meredith to Ole Miss.⁸

Despite the prominent role white students played in these crucial battles against integration, historians have devoted little attention to southern student bodies. Even the best accounts of desegregation on Deep South campuses—most notably Thomas Dyer’s chapter on the University of Georgia, David Sansing’s chapters on the University of Mississippi, and E. Culpepper Clark’s book on the University of Alabama—have tended to be top-down political and legal histories. They focus upon the tactical maneuvering of southern governors, university presidents, regents, and

⁷*Macon Telegraph*, January 13, 1961.

⁸Russell H. Barret, *Integration at Ole Miss* (Chicago, 1965), 163-95.

civil rights attorneys rather than upon the mindset of southern students, even though these students had far more direct and daily impact upon the college lives of the first African Americans to attend desegregating universities.⁹

Consequently, to this day we know almost nothing about the racial ideas that prevailed among white students (or their teachers) at southern campuses during the era of desegregation and massive resistance. We know even less about where those ideas originated, and why universities, supposedly centers of teaching and learning, served as launching pads for racist mob violence. If we are to understand what desegregation meant on the campuses where it occurred, we need to remember that the civil rights conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s were struggles not only about power but also about ideas—and in particular ideas about race, integration, and violence. These ideas shaped the reception that black students received from their white counterparts on southern campuses, and made their college years a very trying time.¹⁰

The best place to start to reconstruct the mindset of white southern students as the university color line fell is with the words of the students themselves. Fortunately, the archives of the University of Georgia include a set of student essays which shed considerable light on that mindset. They were written by thirty-five UGA students on January 17, 1961, during the final stage of the integration crisis. The authors, who were enrolled in a calculus class (Math 254), wrote their essays during a class session in response to a request by their professor, Thomas Brahana, that they explain their views on racial integration. Brahana asked the students to write the essays in place of a scheduled calculus test, which he re-

⁹Thomas Dyer, *The University of Georgia: A Bicentennial History, 1785-1985* (Athens, Ga., 1986), 303-334; David G. Sansing, *Making Haste Slowly: The Troubled History of Higher Education in Mississippi* (Jackson, Miss., 1990), 156-95; Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door*, *passim*.

¹⁰It is curious that most historical narratives portraying the desegregation of universities—institutions which are, at least theoretically, centers of intellectual discourse—say so little about ideas. In these studies we never see the students in classes, or learn much about how the faculty and university curriculum addressed issues relating to segregation, race, and desegregation. A more complete portrait of desegregating universities requires a merging of political and intellectual history, an understanding of the relationship between ideas and actions, and of the connections between the university as a political battleground and the university as a center of teaching and learning.

alized they were—owing to the riot and the integration controversy—too upset to take.¹¹

As sources of student opinion on the desegregation crisis, the Math 254 essays are by far the richest that have survived. While UGA students were quoted in local and national press coverage of that crisis, most of those quotations were very brief. So were the student statements to TV reporters, which usually amounted to little more than soundbites. The Math 254 essays offer far more extensive student commentary—with some running as long as three handwritten pages. Since students wrote these essays in a sedate and pensive classroom setting, they were free of the posturing which sometimes shaded the public statements that UGA students made to the media; as such these writings may be a more accurate reflection of student opinion.¹²

This is not to say, however, that the essays offer a perfect window for viewing the students' reaction to the desegregation crisis. There is a problem with the timing of the essays. They were written in the aftermath of the riot, following the flood of local and national criticism of this mob scene, and the day after the court ordered reinstatement of Hunter and Holmes—which proved that the riot had failed to save the color line, and had done nothing but damage UGA's reputation. The essays' authors obviously had more of an inducement to condemn segregationist violence than they would have had they written the essays a week earlier. Another possible inducement for the essayists to sound more moderate than the overall UGA student body came from the political dynamics of the class itself. At the time the students wrote their papers they thought that, like other class work submitted, these would be read by their professor. And since Brahana, as president of the campus chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), had been a prominent critic of the riot and advocate of the reinstatement of Hunter and Holmes, the students almost certainly knew that he was far more progressive on

¹¹Telephone interview with Thomas Brahana, Athens, Georgia, February 13, 1995.

¹²UGA students demonstrated their willingness to play up to TV cameras and reporters most memorably in an incident involving CBS news. After a CBS TV news team missed a segregationist campus demonstration, the students—apparently at the request of a CBS employee—reenacted the demonstration for the TV cameras, so they could appear on television. See, Hunter-Gault, *In My Place*, 179.

racial issues than they were. Given the power realities which operate within college courses—where professors award and undergraduates worry about grades—students had reason to play up to Brahana by toning down their segregationism. But few, if any, of the students did so. Indeed, their willingness to take the risk of alienating their professor by candidly expressing their views makes the almost uniformly segregationist essays seem all the more credible and heartfelt.¹³

We will never know for certain whether all the views expressed in the Math 254 essays were typical of the entire student body. Nor do we even know whether these math students were similar intellectually to most UGA students. Certainly the fact that they were taking calculus differentiates them from many UGA students who were less advanced in their mathematical training and abilities—and this suggests at least the possibility that academically they were better than average students. But in one very important respect this class closely resembled most UGA students. All but one of the essayists were southerners, and most were Georgians. This was much like the profile of the larger student body. Of 1,745 UGA freshman in 1961, 1,501 (86 percent) were Georgians, and no northern state had more than 16 students in that freshman class.¹⁴ Thus demographically at least, the Math 254 students were eminently qualified to represent the UGA student body.



Many of the Math 254 essays invert what today would be our understanding of just who were the victims and who were the ag-

¹³On the faculty movement which condemned the riot and demanded the reinstatement of Holmes and Hunter—and on Brahana's role in this movement, see the Kenneth Coleman and Horace Montgomery narratives, RG-43, Integration Box, UGA Archives; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, January 23, 1961. Since this was a calculus (and not a social science or humanities) class, possibly student fears of offending their professor or jeopardizing their grade would have been mitigated by their knowledge that ultimately their mathematical skills—as opposed to their political views—would determine their grades. A handful of students did not sign their essays, but the signed rather than unsigned essays were the most ardently segregationist. Brahana never read most of the essays. Instead, he deposited them in the library and labeled them “results of an appropriate peaceful demonstration” of student opinion. Brahana interview; cover envelope of Math 254 essays, UGA Archives.

¹⁴University Guidance Center, *Report on the Freshman Class of 1961* (April 1962), RG-4 SG3, Integration Box, UGA Archives.

gressors in the UGA integration crisis. When the Math 254 students mentioned those victimized by force, most were referring to themselves rather than to Holmes and Hunter. These white students felt that the most egregious use of force in the desegregation crisis came not from the white mob's assault on Charlayne Hunter's dormitory, but from the federal government coercing the state and University of Georgia to integrate. As one student explained:

Many students, parents, and Georgians feel hurt because our federal government . . . has shown us that it (fed. govern.) can force people to do things which we dislike. . . . I feel as many students do at the University of Georgia that we as citizens should have a right to go to segregated schools. It seems to me the federal government has gotten too powerful or perhaps has always been for was it not partly the issue of state's rights that caused the Civil War? Why doesn't Congress question the almighty power of the Supreme Court, after all I thought the U.S. government was set up on a check-and-balance system. Perhaps in another hundred years integration would have come about voluntarily in the South but why must something we resent be crammed down our throats?¹⁵

The logic of white dissent and segregationist resistance was expressed by these students in terms of not only state rights, but also Americanism and God's will. They believed that the court-ordered integration of the university was un-American and violated their own and their state's rights. "I feel as many students here at the University of Georgia that we as citizens should have a right to go to segregated schools . . . because it is our American heritage and God-given right."¹⁶ "I am mad," wrote another student, that an integrationist "federal judge took away state's rights," so that "the governor, the legislature, and school officials have no authority pertaining to the integration problem faced at Georgia. . . . This is

¹⁵TT, Math 254 Essays, UGA Archives. Since the students wrote these essays for an academic course, with an assumption of confidentiality, this seemed reason enough to consider keeping their names out of the narrative. And since their ideas rather than their individual identities are historically significant, I could find no compelling reason to disclose their names. Thus their names are not included in the text, and the notes will refer to them by initials only (or if the essay was unsigned, by the order in which that essay appeared in the archival folder).

¹⁶CCH, *ibid.*

wrong and does not make up a democracy, which is the belief that founded America and the way America is suppose to be today.”¹⁷

Having defined segregation as a God-given right and the option of choosing segregation as a fundamental American freedom, it followed that integrationists who challenged this right—particularly the leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—were un-American. Several Math 254 students equated the NAACP with subversion. Their charges had a McCarthyite tinge, and tapped into powerful emotions in the tense Cold War atmosphere of 1961:

If the NAACP is not Communist infiltrated, and I strongly believe it is, it is a perfect situation for the communists to use. They have a plan worked out where they know almost exactly when they can take over the U.S. . . . They have men specially trained in knowing how to incite riots and cause other types of trouble. What better situation could they ask for than this? If they are not controlling the NAACP, they are certainly using it! Americans must wake up.¹⁸

Another student who saw the NAACP’s integrationist efforts as part of a Communist plot “to break up the United States” concluded that the NAACP’s name “should be changed to the National Association for the Advancement of the Communist Party.”¹⁹

Less extreme foes of integration in the class echoed the “separate but equal” doctrine established in the historic *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision (though none knew enough history to cite the case itself). These students professed to have a benign attitude toward blacks. They argued that blacks should have educational opportunities equal to those of whites, but these should come through separate black schools, since this was traditional in the South—and since forced integration would evoke racial tensions and disrupt southern education for both races. The students refused to see how underfunded Jim Crow Georgia’s black schools were in relation to the white schools, but at least they claimed to aspire toward educational equality.²⁰

¹⁷GB, *ibid.*

¹⁸SL, *ibid.*

¹⁹Essay 12, *ibid.*

²⁰RC, HG, Essay 15, *ibid.*

This contrasted with the most ardent segregationists in the class, who relied less on “separate but equal” clichés than on blatant appeals to racial prejudice. These reactionaries did not even pretend to care about securing equal educational opportunity between the races; they thought blacks inferior and unfit for such opportunity. As one student explained:

The main reason I say I do not want integration is that I believe the Negroid race is inferior to the Caucasian race. . . . The Negro has an average of one eighth more bone thickness on his skull. This leads one to believe that the Negro has not come as far through evolution as the “White” man. It is virtually impossible to remove someone or a race from a most primitive culture and replace him in one that has advanced over fifteen hundred years above his and expect him within two hundred fifty years to adjust himself to the new culture as well as the descendants of the founders of the old culture have. . . . The Negro . . . is shiftless and undependable. Why does the average Negro have almost double the rhythm of a “white” man if he has become equal to the white man in his culture. This leads me to believe it is still the “jungle instinct.”²¹

A sexual subtext frequently accompanied these racist passages. The most vehement critics of both integration and the NAACP among the student essayists were convinced that though civil rights activists had begun their quest for black rights at the schoolhouse door their real destination was white bedrooms: “I do not wish our . . . social affairs integrated. . . . This is the point I feel most strongly about. . . . In college I feel that the women will be protected better if they don’t have to dodge colored boys in the course of a day.”²² A female classmate worried that if school integration proceeded, it would yield so much interracial sex that by “the year 2061 A.D. there will be little left of a distinct Negro or white race; a hybrid race will be well on its way here in America.” God too favored racial homogeneity, according to one student, who wrote: “I am definitely a strong segregationist . . . mixing of the White and Negro races will only result in dissention. . . . Negroes . . . deserve a chance to better themselves. I do not favor this betterment by intermarriage. . . . I cannot understand why God

²¹PC, *ibid.*

²²Essay 2, *ibid.*

would have bother to create varied races if he had not wanted us to remain as such."²³

Stereotypes of black inferiority pervaded the most strongly segregationist essays. "The Negro has a lack of ambition. He does not have the desire to work and better himself but is only concerned with having enough to eat. Ambition and drive are what has made this country strong. Secondly the Negro does not have the morals we have in Meriwether County. This is easily backed by the number of illegal children. The Negro also is not as physically clean as whites."²⁴ Another student noted:

I personally do not desire to associate with persons of low moral character. . . . Southern Negroes have a lower moral standard in general than I care to associate with. This is shown by 1 their brand new Cadillac standing in the yard of their one room tennant home (neither paid for yet), 2 the statistical percentage of taxes paid by Negroes as compared to Whites 3 The frequent number of court cases involving Negroe stabbings, wife beating, driving drunk and disorderly, etc. 4 Lack of trust among themselves 5 General sanitation.²⁵

No one familiar with the extreme segregationist rhetoric circulating in the South in 1961 will be surprised by these statements. But the fact that college students, among the state's best educated youths, expressed with such seriousness absurd ideas about black skull size, jungle rhythm, and shiftlessness should give us pause to consider the sources of these ideas and the nature of Georgian and southern education—or more precisely miseducation—about race.

The most striking feature of this racial education was its informality. Only two out of the thirty-five essays made any mention of a formal educational institution influencing student thought about race. In almost every essay where there is an allusion to learning about race, segregation, or integration the cited source of that learning is not a school, a campus, a text, an author, a teacher, or an academic discipline. Students learned about race

²³Essay 2, TT, and also see DW, *ibid.*

²⁴MHC, *ibid.*

²⁵AS, *ibid.*

from their families, friends, and communities; these were the primary sources of their racial education.²⁶

Georgians did not have to be taught about segregation in school; they learned about segregation and were indoctrinated in white supremacy by merely living on the white side of the color line. Thus as students explained their support of segregation, they frequently invoked their southern and Georgian upbringing and heritage. They believed in segregation because of their roots in and love for the Jim Crow South and the way of life in which they were raised. This strong sense of place and its determinative power appears repeatedly in the essays. Typically, a student explained: "I believe strongly in segregation . . . because I have been reared in a section of the world where there was no form of integration." He then went on to spell out his belief in black inferiority, and proudly justified this belief in terms of his southern lineage: "This belief was inherited from me [sic] by my ancestors who gave their lives [in the Civil War] that the Southern way of life would live." Another student wrote of personal opposition to school integration evolving out of his having been "born and raised in southwest Georgia, where the white man dominates the colored people."²⁷

Growing up as a white Georgian often carried with it an exposure to only the segregationist side of the debate over civil rights. Thus some of the students' essays indicated that they were swayed by segregationist arguments because this was all they had heard in their hometowns: "I was born here in Athens, Georgia in 1940," wrote one. "Since that time I have heard nothing but talk in favor of segregation down to the last minute detail. Therefore, because of this I believe in segregation." "I am," another student wrote, "from a small south Georgia town. . . . All my life I have been told that segregation is right, it has been and always will be in effect." "Ever since I can remember while growing up in south Georgia," a third student recalled, "I have been told it is not right socially to have integration in our schools."²⁸

²⁶For a memoir which illuminates the way small southern towns taught its white youths about race, see Melton A. McLaurin, *Separate Pasts: Growing Up White in the Segregated South* (Athens, Ga., 1987).

²⁷Essay 2, JA, Math 254 Essays.

²⁸JB, HS, Essay 12, *ibid.*

These students neither admitted nor even suspected that growing up under and viewing the Jim Crow system from the white side of the color line limited their vision or understanding of the



This cartoon, which appeared in the *Louisville Courier-Journal* on the very day of the riot, stressed that a segregationist generation and their politicians imposed a heavy burden upon the shoulders of university students. Its caption read: "Tis Education Forms the Common Mind: Just as the Twig is Bent the Tree's Inclined." *Hugh Haynie cartoon from Louisville Courier-Journal, January 11, 1961.*

South's racial problems. Displaying no sense at all of their own provincialism, Brahana's students tended to assume that their background as white southerners gave them special knowledge and insight into black life, culture, and thought. Thus one student wrote: "I have worked with and lived around Negroes all my life. I was raised by a looked after by a Negro woman 10 hours of the day every day for 12 years. I pretty well know what the colored people want and don't want. . . . I know the majority of colored people in Georgia do not want to mix with the white people."²⁹ Another student noted that as a southerner who had "worked with negroes before and talked to many," he knew that the "majority of the negroes do not want to go to school with us, but the naacp . . . talk these negroes into going to white schools. They tell the negro he is being done an injustice and feed them all sorts of balony."³⁰ These young whites felt that their southern roots also gave them an empirical basis for their spurious claims about black inferiority. They seemed to think that they were proving their racist statements when they attached to them such lines as "I am a southerner and have lived among Negroes all my life," "I know and understand the Negroes around my home town," and "anyone who has lived around small southern towns will tell you."³¹

In discussing race, the student essayists invoked family and hometown observations and assumptions so frequently and their formal education so rarely that they leave us wondering what—if any—discussion of race relations occurred in white southern schools. Why did the formal curriculum of school and college leave so little impression upon student thought about race? Although it would take a thorough study of high school and college course content in Georgia and the Jim Crow South to answer this question definitively, the Math 254 essays—along with my interviews with students and faculty who were at UGA in 1961—suggest that most teachers tended to stay away from contemporary racial issues. Even at the college level, discussions of race, and especially the civil rights movement, seem to have been rare. Pete McCommons, a leading moderate student at UGA in 1961, could not re-

²⁹Essay 12, *ibid.*

³⁰Essay 16, *ibid.*

³¹JA, MHC, *ibid.*

member “any [UGA] teacher in a class talking about segregation or integration.”³² Professor Brahana, who as head of UGA’s AAUP chapter in 1961 was in a good position to know about the state of academic freedom at that time, recalled that faculty tended to stay away from controversial issues regarding race and integration out of fear for their jobs: “Back then it wasn’t a subject that was taught. It had been dangerous if you were a professor and talked about it [desegregation] too much.” According to Brahana, memories were long, and the faculty remembered only too well when back in 1941 Governor Eugene Talmadge attacked and fired a dean “for just hinting that one day integration would come to the South. So everybody just stayed off that topic.”³³

Learning about race appears to have been at least as sparse in Georgia’s white primary, middle, and secondary schools as it was at UGA. The Georgia public school curriculum evaded all of the tough questions about race and did nothing to teach students to think critically about relations between whites and blacks in the South. Most UGA students in 1961 would likely have experienced the very same evasions on race in their pre-college schooling as those recalled by Foxfire founder Eliot Wigginton:

When I was in elementary and junior high school in Athens, Georgia . . . I am positive that there was not a single instance—not one—when any of the teachers initiated, even allowed, a discussion about racism. In that nine year period, it was not even mentioned, and that was in a town . . . [with] separate, clearly marked water fountains for whites and blacks, separate bathrooms in the downtown

³²Interview with Pete McCommons, Athens, Georgia, April 4, 1994. Southern academics tended to avoid controversial civil rights issues not only in their teaching, but also in their research. Thus in 1954 no southern university would accept the Fund for the Advancement of Education’s offer to finance a study of the South’s segregated school system. This project would be headed by Arkansas journalist Harry Ashmore rather than by a professor, since—in Ashmore’s words—“the subject was considered too hot for any southern university to handle.” See Numan Bartley, *The New South, 1945-1989* (Baton Rouge, La., 1995), 152.

³³Brahana interview. Brahana was referring to Governor Eugene Talmadge’s firing of UGA College of Education dean Walter D. Cocking. The firing was sparked not, as Brahana implies, by Cocking’s advocacy of integration (that was a bogus charge made by those who wanted him fired), but by his removal of a UGA employee who was a Talmadge supporter, and by Cocking’s authorship of a report that showed Georgia spent less than any southern state except Arkansas on black higher education. See Dyer, *University of Georgia*, 225-40; and James F. Cook, “Politics and Education in the Talmadge Era: The Controversy Over the University System of Georgia, 1941-42” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Georgia, 1972), 46-61.

five-and-dime . . . , separate waiting rooms in the . . . bus station, . . . a separate ticket window and balcony for blacks at the movie theatre, . . . and absolute and total separation of blacks and whites in terms of schools, neighborhoods, and so on. And because it was never talked about, my classmates and I really never asked ourselves why the town was set up that way. That was just the way things were, had always been, and would always be. It would have done just as much good to ask why there was grass or why there were mockingbirds. There just *were*.³⁴

The textbooks used in Georgia public schools seem to have only reinforced its weaknesses on race. For example, in the late 1950s one of the Georgia public schools' most widely used social studies books, *Georgia: Government and History*, written by UGA political science professor Albert B. Saye, was 438 pages long, but never mentioned the words "civil rights movement," the NAACP, or a single black leader. Saye offered a brief, uncritical discussion of segregation, which he praised as "natural in many areas of life."³⁵ Saye's text, which was used in their precollege years by the generation of students who attended UGA during its desegregation crisis, suggests that en route to college these students heard very little in their classes about race or segregation, and what they did hear simply confirmed the dominant prejudices and social arrangements of the region.

Among the most penetrating critics of Georgia educators for failing to teach about race was Bruce M. Galphin of the *Atlanta Constitution*. In February 1961, Galphin took the UGA faculty to task for its failure to challenge the white supremacist notions that their students brought with them to college. Though Galphin praised them for signing their historic petition damning the riot and calling for the reinstatement of Holmes and Hunter, he also thought that if the faculty been more forthright in its teaching about race, the riot might have been averted:

One wonders what they [the students] have been studying at the university. Thus far, their only tutors in political science appear to have been the extremist politicians; they keep spewing up such cli-

³⁴Eliot Wiggington, *Sometimes a Shining Moment: The Foxfire Experiment* (Garden City, N.Y., 1986), 309.

³⁵Albert B. Saye, *Georgia: Government and History* (Evanston, Ill., 1957), 310-14.

ches as “judicial tyranny,” “federalism” or “socialism.” (The prize was the complaint that “the long arm of federal tyranny is crushing us under the heel of its boot.”) Perhaps the faculty, now that theory has turned into reality, and now that more than two-thirds of them have signed a petition supporting acceptance of the Negroes, will find the courage to cure this defect in their students’ education.³⁶

Galphin believed that a more intellectually rigorous and politically courageous faculty could have profoundly altered the way students thought about race and reacted to the desegregation of their university. There are reasons to doubt whether the UGA faculty (or any Deep South faculty)—even if it was so inclined—was free enough and sufficiently influential to reverse, in a few short years of classes, a lifetime of miseducation that their students had received about race in their southern hometowns. Indeed, at first glance, Galphin’s faith in the power and freedom of teachers and formal educational institutions may even seem naive. After all, this was a society organized around segregationist principles, and educational systems historically have more often reinforced than challenged existing social systems and their ideological foundations. But, on the other hand, had they chosen to use it, the UGA faculty could have tapped into a vast array of scholarly sources—the best scholarship in sociology, anthropology, and psychology—to prod students into questioning the racist doctrines upon which they had been raised. Even short-term exposure to the modern social science of Melville J. Herskovits, Gunnar Myrdal, John Dollard, Franz Boas, and Kenneth B. Clark might have at least given students the opportunity to transcend their prejudices.³⁷

³⁶Bruce M. Galphin, “The University Leads the Way: Georgia Rejoins the Union,” *Nation* (February 11, 1961), 118. Whatever its past failures on race, UGA faculty played a pivotal role in promoting peaceful integration in 1961 (most notably *after* the riot). Progressive faculty members privately encouraged moderate students to organize against the state’s threatened closing of UGA. The faculty petition opposing the riot and demanding the reinstatement of Holmes and Hunter helped turned campus opinion and the UGA administration away from further resistance to integration. Brahana interview; McCommons interview; interview with Horace Montgomery, Athens, May 3, 1995.

³⁷For useful summaries of social science scholarship which from the 1930s through the 1950s had refuted white supremacist notions about blacks, see Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America’s Struggle for Equality* (New York, 1975), 309-313; Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal For Blacks: The Depression Decade* (New York, 1978), 190-215.

There is evidence in one of the essays that at least some students at UGA in 1961 were capable of embracing that opportunity. In this case it was exposure to psychological scholarship that led a student to question racial segregation. This undergraduate noted that white supremacist ideas had

been hammered into my head for the entire time of my life and, yet, I cannot seem to reconcile myself to it. During my years in formal schooling I have seen printed evidence, as compiled by psychologists, that the men of the white and black race have equal potential to accomplish intellectually. This knowledge has served to open and broaden my mind somewhat. Therefore after considering this situation called integration I have arrived at the following conclusion: There is a disparity between the black and white races, but this disparity is not inherited, it is learned. The Negro has been downtrodden and debased. . . . In conclusion, and I must admit that this is a statement that is quite hard to write, I believe that the only way the Negro will be able to climb up from the hole that we have thrown him in is by his being permitted to secure an education which is exactly that of the white men.³⁸

Comments such as these suggest that though segregationism predominated, it was not universal among UGA students in 1961. A small dissident minority in the Math 254 class (3 out of the 35 students in that class) wrote essays that condemned Jim Crow. Attesting that not all white southerners thought alike, one of these dissidents pointed out that he “was born and raised in Georgia . . . my father was born in Georgia, and therefore I am no Yankee,” and then went on to complain that it was

hard to understand why integration is being fought against so violently because 9 out of 10 of the southern people have been practically integrated with the Negroes all their lives. . . . Most of us have been brought up by colored women while our mothers worked. When I was small I had a friend that was colored and we did almost everything together, and I bet if a role [roll] was taken almost every person in this room had a colored friend sometimes during his life that he would do almost anything for. What I can't understand is why we don't mind eating with Negroes in the kitchen but we wouldn't want to eat with them in the dining room.³⁹

³⁸Essay 35, Math 254 Essays.

³⁹JA II, *ibid.*

The strongest indictment of segregation in Math 254 came from a student who coupled his antipathy toward southern racism with a sense of southern nationalism, arguing that only when it was free of segregation would the South realize its great potential:

My personal belief is that integration is right. There is no possible way to sanely defend segregation. . . . I, being a south Georgian, have heard the cry. "Do you want your daughter to marry a Nigger?" and "The Supreme Court is trying to kill the white race in the south" and the other usual statements until it makes me sick. The south has the potential to become the most prosperous region in the United States. Indeed, it should already be so. However, the segregation problem is going to hold us back until we straighten it out.⁴⁰

If such indictments of segregation were rare in this math classroom, they were rarer still in the public expressions made by UGA student leaders during the integration crisis. The combination of racism, ideological solidarity, regional tradition, and peer pressure left UGA student leaders unwilling to voice in public the type of integrationist views which the two students above had shared privately with their liberal professor. In January 1961 the biggest conflict within the white student community at UGA was not between integrationists and segregationists (since virtually all students who spoke up said they preferred segregation), but between moderate and extreme segregationists. The moderates wanted UGA to remain segregated but were unwilling to sanction the use of violence or school closing toward that end. These students organized a large meeting in the UGA chapel on January 8, where they put together a petition, ultimately signed by 2,700 students urging that the university stay open—at a time when state law mandated that the legislature cut off funding to UGA should it become integrated. Prior to the riot of January 11, moderate newspaper columnists for the *Red and Black* and other student leaders also made statements in the campus paper urging that students remain calm and avoid violence.⁴¹

⁴⁰DC, *ibid.*

⁴¹*Atlanta Constitution*, January 9, 1961; *Atlanta Journal*, January 9, 1961; *Red and Black*, January 5 and 10, 1961.

These calls for nonviolence failed because of a fundamental weakness in the moderates' position. That position was basically one of resignation, a grudging acceptance of the fact that federal law made inevitable the presence of the two black students—something which had to be accepted not because this was the right or democratic thing to do, but because there was no way to defy the Supreme Court. The moderates' cold logic obviously lacked the emotional punch of extreme segregationists passionately committed to using any means necessary (including violence) to maintain the "southern way of life." The moral fervor that one associates with the civil rights movement itself, which taught people that integration was desirable because it was more humane, liberal, and Christian than segregation, was simply not visible among UGA's white student leaders in January 1961. None of these whites would publicly associate themselves with the compelling integrationist position that an interracial university would be stronger intellectually because it could, for the first time, be truly meritocratic—open to the best students and faculty rather than just to whites—and be better able to perform its service mission, since it would now be more representative of an interracial state and nation. With no students *publicly* challenging the morality of segregation, the overwhelmingly segregationist student body at the start of the desegregation crisis would prove highly susceptible to the appeals of the cross burners and effigy hangers, who, in effect, asked why if a community believes in a segregationist educational system its members should not fight to preserve that system.⁴²

So the extremists had their day—or more precisely, their riotous night—on January 11 during the height of the desegregation crisis. But the riot's implications with regard to majority student opinion on campus have always been murky. Immediately after the riot, prominent Georgians, including newspaper editors, the mayor of Athens, and UGA alumni, who were appalled by the mob

⁴²Despite their differences over tactics, the unity that moderate and extremist students displayed in expressing their preference for segregation at times made it difficult to distinguish between the two groups. Indeed, through the early stages of the integration crisis, moderate and extremist students had no difficulty working together politically. This occurred in the student petition drive requesting that UGA be kept open, and in the segregationist student street demonstration on the night of January 9. See *Macon Telegraph*, January 10, 13, 1961; McCommons interview; *Atlanta Constitution*, January 10, 1961.

scene, defended the student body's reputation by blaming the riot on outside agitators, focusing on the few KKK members present at the riot. Adding to the confusion about how representative the rioters were of the student body were the conflicting reports about the size of the mob. Press estimates of the mob's size varied from 500 to 2,000. If the violent crowd approached the larger figure, this would obviously represent a very significant percentage of UGA's overall student population of 7,000. Finally, the fact that the mob that marched on Hunter's dormitory formed out of a basketball crowd, which had just watched a close overtime loss to hated rival Georgia Tech, was interpreted by some observers to mean that the riot was spontaneous and was as much a result of youthful anger about this athletic defeat as it was an expression of racial animosity.⁴³

The FBI reports on the riot and the work of the best journalists on the scene can clear up some, but not all of this ambiguity. Federal agents had infiltrated the KKK, and their undercover reports do not support the claim that the Klan organized the riot. FBI and police reports attest that the riot was not a spontaneous post-basketball game development, but rather an event planned well in advance by extreme segregationists within the UGA student body.⁴⁴

The crowd size issue will never be fully resolved, since in 1961, when mass student protests were almost unknown, few journalists had the kind of experience needed to make reliable crowd estimates. Given the divergence of such estimates, then, it is impossible to use quantitative measures to determine precisely how representative the mob was of the entire student body. What the Math 254 essays suggest, however, is that the level of racial bias, ig-

⁴³*Athens Banner-Herald*, January 12, 1961; *Savannah Evening Press*, January 14, 1961; James A. Dunlap to Aderhold, January 13, 1961, Aderhold Papers; the *Atlanta Journal* estimated that the Center-Myers mob was 500 strong, the *New York Times*, 600; Calvin Trillin, who covered the riot for *Time*, estimated 1,000 as did UGA's student paper, the *Red and Black*. Highest was the *Atlanta Constitution*, which reported that "nearly two thousand students" rioted. See *Atlanta Journal*, January 12, 1961; *New York Times*, January 12, 1961; *Red and Black*, January 11, 1961; *Atlanta Constitution*, January 12, 1961; Trillin, *An Education in Georgia*, 52.

⁴⁴FBI files, 72-39, interviews with Athens police officers, Athens, Georgia, January 13, 1961, 4, 42 44, 48, 51, 59, 61; FBI files 72-39, SAC Atlanta to FBI Director, January 13, 1961. Copies of these FBI files are in the author's possession, and will be discussed in Robert Cohen, "G-Men in Georgia: The FBI Investigation of the Segregationist Riot at the University of Georgia, January 1961" (forthcoming 1997); Trillin, *An Education in Georgia*, 52-53.



Newspapers around the country ran photographs like this one of Charlayne Hunter's tearful exit from Athens in a police car in the immediate aftermath of the riot in front of her dormitory on January 11, 1961. The incident spurred letters expressing sympathy and admiration to her from around the country, and even some from within the state. *Photograph from World Wide Photos.*

norance, and hatred among the student body was so high that it created an atmosphere that nurtured racial violence. If you believe, as some of Brahana's students did, that the subversive NAACP together with a dictatorial federal government were victimizing white southerners by forcing them to integrate with members of an inferior race, there is a logic to rioting against such oppression. And there was more than logic here. There was anger: anger that two black outsiders imagined to be on the NAACP payroll were disrupting their educations and threatening their way of life. The Math 254 essays suggest that even a week after the riot, this anger toward Holmes and Hunter lingered: "Personally I would like to choke both of them to death" wrote one student, though she quickly indicated that she would "never do such a thing."⁴⁵ Integration, another student warned, "will build up so much friction in the south that there will be an outright war over race. We know that the NAACP will go all the way on getting the

⁴⁵PC, Math 254 Essays.

negro in *all* of the white schools. Then *Hell* will break loose, and the University of Georgia riot will simply be a little party compared to what will happen.”⁴⁶

Although these essays attest that a chilling degree of racial animosity and anger endured among UGA students well after the riot, they also show that the riot and its aftermath had taught students that translating this anger into violence was self-destructive. The riot had demonstrated that the moderates had been right. No matter how strong or violent it was, student opposition to integration—along with its segregationist allies in the state legislature—would fail to stop the federal courts from enforcing the law and desegregating the university. Two days after the riot, Judge Bootle had ordered the reinstatement of Holmes and Hunter, negating both the university’s suspension of them and the mob’s efforts to drive them off. The math students could see, then, that further segregationist agitation and violence would be futile. As one student argued in his essay, despite his opposition to integration, the events of the past week had convinced him that “all these plans for riots and the riot last Wednesday aren’t going to do any good because I doubt if they’ll cause the Supreme Court to change its decision. Just a lot of people get hurt and the university gets a bad name. I just wish everybody would leave us alone so things could calm down and we could do some studying.” And an equally segregationist classmate warned that not only was it impossible to resist the federal court’s integration order, but such resistance might lead to a humiliating Little Rock-style occupation of Athens by federal troops: “If there are more riots or disturbances it will only tighten the federal courts hold over our school.”⁴⁷

The ugliness of the riot itself also had an effect on the student body. Prior to the riot, Professor Brahana recalled, “there were a lot of students who were sort of enjoying” the desegregation crisis.

⁴⁶Essay 12, *ibid.*

⁴⁷CC, Essay 21, *ibid.* This realism about the futility of further segregationist violence also reflected the hard line the students encountered after the January 11 riot, as UGA officials banned segregationist demonstrations, an Athens grand jury drew up indictments against several rioters, the FBI came to Athens to investigate the riot, and the state patrol—which had done nothing to help quell the riot—sent additional officers to Athens to discourage new violence. See Williams to Aderhold, January 24, 1961; Williams to Students, January 14, 1961, Aderhold Papers; *Athens Banner-Herald*, January 13, 1961; *Red and Black*, January 19, 1961.

“They would get dates to watch media coverage of the events.” But the glare of the spotlight came to burn when in the wake of the riot, the national media heaped scorn upon UGA. The front-page coverage of students throwing rocks and rallying behind the crude “Nigger Go Home” banner, the *Life* magazine photo of a grinning UGA student symbolically lynching a black puppet, the NBC “Today” show host’s on-the-air denunciation of the Center-Myers mob, the political cartoons lampooning UGA students (in northern as well as some southern newspapers) as brick-throwing bullies and rednecks, yielded genuine embarrassment.⁴⁸ And for some students this was a matter that went beyond bad publicity. According to Brahana, the violence of January 11 forced students “to decide whether they wanted to live in a world where riots were the way things were decided. And this was not a trivial question.” Reflecting on this question, one of Brahana’s students wrote, “Even if I had strong feelings about integration what is there I could do about it. Play caveman and throw rocks. No!!!” Such sentiments left some of the math students resenting the activists on both sides of the barricades: “I do not hate these two illustrious members of the Negroid race who are now going to school with me. I do hate the ugly violence, the unstrung nerves, the many rules limiting our rights in order to protect theirs that they have so unconcernedly brought about.”⁴⁹

Militant segregationism wilted at UGA as students came to realize that segregation could no longer be maintained without the payment of a very high price. No longer did students and the state have the luxury of viewing segregated education as a cost-free tradition. Much as they valued that tradition, in the wake of Bootle’s

⁴⁸*Atlanta Journal*, January 12, 1961; “Prank, Riot and Shock on Georgia Campus,” *Life* (January 20, 1961), 24; *Macon Telegraph*, January 13, 15, 1961; *Athens Banner-Herald*, January 15, 1961; *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 12, 1961. UGA students were probably influenced as much by the Georgia press criticism of the riot as they were by the blasts from the national media. For examples of this Georgia criticism, see *Marietta Daily Journal*, January 13, 1961; *Columbus Enquirer*, January 13, 14, 1961; *Savannah Morning News*, January 13, 1961; *Savannah Evening Press*, January 12, 1961; *Brunswick News*, January 12, 1961; *Gainesville Daily Times*, January 12, 1961; *Waycross Journal Herald*, January 16, 1961; *Rome News-Tribune*, January 15, 1961; *Thomaston Daily Times*, January 15, 1961; *Thomaston Free Press*, January 17, 1961; *Dalton News*, January 18, 1961; *Moultrie Observer*, January 16, 1961; *Walker County Messenger*, January 18, 1961; *DeKalb New Era*, January 19, 1961; *Fitzgerald Leader and Enterprise*, January 19, 1961; *Emory Wheel*, January 19, 1961; *Thomasville Times-Enterprise*, January 14, 1961.

⁴⁹Brahana interview; Essay 12, TT, Math 254 Essays.



This cartoon from the *Baltimore Sun* was one of many that appeared in newspapers throughout the country in the wake of the riot. This one appeared on January 13, 1961. The title above it read "Higher Education in Georgia," and makes the point that students' racial attitudes could be traced back to their elders—parents and teachers. *Cartoon by Yardley from the Baltimore-Sun, January 13, 1961.*

integration order, they realized it could be maintained only (and fleetingly at best) by closing the university itself—as the proponents of massive resistance had advocated. Students had to ask themselves whether they were willing to sacrifice their educations

and close their university rather than see it integrated. The answer to this question was ultimately self-evident, for educational segregation had existed to privilege whites, and when in 1961 its continuation not only ceased to confer such privilege but instead began to threaten the very existence of public higher education, it quickly became expendable: "I cannot see giving up our public schools which we have worked so hard for just to keep the Negroes from having equal opportunity."⁵⁰ Putting this tradeoff in economic terms, another student wrote:

I believe in segregation. But I come from a family of very modest means. I had to work for a year after graduating high school before I had enough money even to enter college. Now I work afternoons to make money to go to school. Because I live off a limited budget, the University of Georgia is the only place I can afford to attend to further my education. . . . My whole future depends on it. My situation being *thus*, I am for the University staying open integrated or not. . . . My segregationist views and thoughts have given way considerably to the fact that I want a college education more than anything else in the world.⁵¹

The racial arithmetic involved in the crisis at UGA in 1961 made it easier to give up the battle against integration, with the matriculation of only two—obviously gifted—black students in a university with some 7,000 white students. "Like almost all southerners," one student wrote, "I don't want integration. But when it comes to closing the schools I'm willing to accept *token* integration to get an education." "Let me put it this way," a classmate concluded, "If the Negro wants to come here as 1 or 2 in 7,000 let him come. It's not going to bother me."⁵²

The Math 254 essays leave us, then, with a complex story, rife with contradictions. They show us: a student body longing to hold on to segregation, but beginning to realize that Jim Crow's days were numbered; southern students loyal to their region and its state rights and white supremacist creed, but even more loyal to their educational self-interest; a minority whose loathing for integration might have led to further violence, coupled with a larger

⁵⁰JA, *ibid.*

⁵¹JB, *ibid.*

⁵²CC (emphasis added), Essay 12, *ibid.*

group uncomfortable with violence and resentful of the riot organizers for damaging UGA's reputation.

Since no further student violence of any consequence (after the January 11 riot) hit Holmes and Hunter during the two years leading to their graduation from UGA, they were affected less by the various student statements about rioting than by the white students' striking silence on questions of humanity and friendship. It would probably be unrealistic to expect that at such a time—when as Charlayne Hunter-Gault put it, Georgia's "white sons and daughters [were] facing their most apocalyptic moment since Sherman marched to the sea"—they would pause at all to think of how it felt to be on the receiving end of the mobs, effigy hangers, and racial epithets.⁵³ Perhaps one should expect that owing to their youth, these white students would be self-absorbed and see a crisis of this sort exclusively in terms of how it affected them. Thus it comes as no surprise that not one of the thirty-five student essayists spoke with any compassion about the difficult situation Holmes and Hunter would face matriculating in a 99 percent white, overwhelmingly segregationist student body in a post-riot environment, amidst a segregated college town. Nor did a single one of Brahana's students write of offering a hand of friendship to Georgia's first black students. Indeed, the one essay alluding to friendship in connection with Hunter and Holmes did so only to suggest that the withholding of such friendship could be a valuable weapon for breaking down their morale: "We should try to avoid the negroes in hopes that by doing so they might be psychologically affected and will eventually drop out of school."⁵⁴

Expressions such as these suggest that resentful UGA students were holding on to something that the federal courts could not take away from them: the right to be unfriendly, and in so doing make UGA a personally unpleasant place for the two students who had had the effrontery to tear down white Georgia's beloved educational color line. These aloof white students had abandoned unlawful and violent massive resistance for a lawful and yet inhumane form of passive resistance. Of course displays of unfriendliness did not have to occur in such a calculated manner.

⁵³Hunter-Gault, *In My Place*, 172.

⁵⁴JM, Math 254 Essays.

Some students just naturally shunned Hunter and Holmes because they could not stomach interacting with members of a pariah race, especially two accused of being puppets of the subversive NAACP. Others—as journalist Calvin Trillin’s interviews on Fraternity Row suggest—stayed away from Holmes and Hunter because of peer pressure, which would have rendered as outcasts whites who displayed any signs of interracial friendliness.⁵⁵ But whatever the specific rationale for it, the determination to be unfriendly was widespread and it manifested itself under the very roof where Hunter slept. A Dean of Women’s survey taken of the residents (which covered 153 of the 163 students) in Hunter’s dormitory three days after the riot found these “predominant sentiments . . . expressed”:

1. The great desire for no more violence.
2. The desire for conditions conducive to study and sleep.
3. A preverance for segregation, but an acceptance of the fact that desegregation is mandatory.
4. The desire that no publicity be given to their views as expressed in these interviews and that these interviews not be used to make it appear that the dormitory would welcome Charlayne “with open arms.” (The attitude was more that they would tolerate her.)⁵⁶

This ethic of indifference and unfriendliness affected even prominent moderate students, such as Pete McCommons, who had led the petition drive to prevent the segregationist legislature from closing down the university. McCommons recalled that

the last time I saw Hamilton Holmes I was headed up Ag Hill and saw him coming from the opposite direction. I turned of[f] to the

⁵⁵Trillin, *An Education in Georgia*, 74. Charlayne Hunter-Gault notes in her memoir that UGA students denounced Marcia Powell “openly and loudly” as a “nigger lover” because the white student had befriended her. See *In My Place*, 207. Caroline Ridlehuber recalled that her sorority ostracized her in 1961 in retaliation for merely walking Charlayne Hunter across campus (Ridlehuber speech at the “Civil Rights in Small Places” conference, Athens, Georgia, April 15, 1996).

⁵⁶Report on interviews of Center-Myers Hall residents on January 14, 1961, Edith Stallings, Dean of Women Papers, UGA Archives. This unfriendly posture toward Hunter and Holmes on the part of the white student majority at UGA had considerable staying power. Both Hunter and Holmes told Calvin Trillin that they had “underestimated how long the unfriendliness would last.” Indeed, as late as March 1963, Hamilton Holmes gave a speech in Savannah in which he bemoaned “the fact that he had made no friends while attending the University,” and complained that for black students the atmosphere at UGA “is definitely not cordial.” Trillin, *An Education in Georgia*, 121; *Atlanta Journal*, March 20, 1963.

right, down the sidewalk, out of his path. He knew me and saw me, but I didn't meet his eyes. Though I hesitated before turning, I told myself that I had been representing all those students who wanted the University kept open, whether or not they welcomed Hamilton Holmes. I'd better stay neutral towards Hamilton personally. It was easy to think like that in 1961. I was a Student Leader . . . but . . . such hypocrisy hurt Holmes and Hunter like hell.⁵⁷

Looking back upon the desegregation battle at UGA, Professor Brahana concluded that "the university was lucky. . . . We were truly lucky that no one was killed."⁵⁸ Indeed, compared to the charred and bloody battlefield that the University of Mississippi became when it underwent desegregation the year after UGA, the ugly scene at Center-Myers may seem almost tame. But it is also true that once the initial violence ended, Hunter and Holmes at UGA, much like James Meredith at Mississippi, matriculated in an environment characterized by white resentment, coldness, and hostility. Given the white supremacist tradition, values, and thought, articulated so clearly and frequently in the Math 254 essays, it could hardly have been otherwise, as students responded to an unwelcome and unexpected challenge to the southern way of life. The change was accepted, but accepted grudgingly, and in ways which violated the southern student body's own norms of gentility and even civility. This is what Pete McCommons had in mind when in recalling his days at UGA in 1961 he drew a personal conclusion, but one applicable to most of his classmates during that turbulent time: "It was all a tricky business, and even most of those who tried to overcome their segregated upbringing and accept this momentous change didn't carry it off with much class."⁵⁹

⁵⁷*Athens Observer*, January 30, 1992.

⁵⁸Brahana interview.

⁵⁹*Athens Observer*, January 30, 1992. Exceptions to McCommons' depressing conclusion about his classmates included: the few students who welcomed Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter to campus (some of whom were associated with Students for Constructive Action, a small group—based in Westminster House, the campus Presbyterian facility—that advocated applying the golden rule to UGA's first black students); five students who in 1963 wrote in to the *Red and Black* rebutting a nasty column that paper had run attacking Holmes as an "alien"; and, most notably, Walter Stovall, whose friendship with Hunter culminated in their marriage in 1963 (the first interracial union between two UGA students, an event that aroused a storm of denunciations from racists across Georgia). See Hunter-Gault, *In My Place*, 207, 227, 233, 235-37; Trillin, *An Education in Georgia*, 175-78; *Red and Black*, March 21, 28, 1963; SCA Golden Rule flyer (n.d.), Aderhold Papers; *Savannah Morning News*, September 4, 1963; *Atlanta Inquirer*, September 14, 1961.