Literate Practices in Women's Memoirs of the Civil Rights Movement

by

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#### ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the literate practices of women reading and writing in the press during the civil rights movement in the 1950s/60s. Through a textual analysis of literacy events (Heath) in the memoirs of Sarah Patton Boyle (*The Desegregated Heart: A Virginian's Stand in Time of Transition*), Anne Braden (*The Wall Between*), Daisy Bates (*The Long Shadow of Little Rock*) and Melba Pattillo Beals (*Warriors Don't Cry*), this dissertation highlights the participatory roles women played in the movement, including their ability to act publicly in a movement remembered mostly for its male leaders. Contributing to scholarship focused on the literate lives of women, this study focuses on the uses of literacy in the lives of four women with particular emphasis on the women's experiences with the literacy they practice.

Drawing on ideological views of literacy (Gee, Street) and research focused on the social, cultural and economic influences of such practices (Brandt), the women's memoirs served as the site for collecting and analyzing the women's responses and reactions to literacy events with the press. Through an application of Deborah Brandt's notion of sponsor, literacy events between the women and the press were recorded and the data analyzed to understand the relationship the women had with the literacy available and the role the sponsor (the press) played in shaping the practice and the literate identities of the women.

Situated in the racist climate of the Jim Crow South in the 1950s/60s and the secondary role women played in the movement, the women's memoirs and the data analyzed revealed the role the women's perception of the practice, shaped by personal history and lived experiences, played in how the women experienced and used their literacy. This dissertation argues that their responses to literacy events and their perceptions of the power of their reading and writing highlight the significant public role women played in the movement and argues that, although the women remain relatively unremembered participants of the movement, their memoirs act as artifacts of that time and proof of the meaningful public contributions women made to the movement.

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#### CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

"While some of the conversations have been re-created, the story is accurate and conveys my truth of what it was like to live in the midst of a civil firestorm."— Melba Patillo Beals from the Author's Note, *Warriors Don't Cry* 

"This book should shock the conscience of America and bring realization of where we stand in the year 1962 in these United States." –Eleanor Roosevelt from the Foreword to the First Edition of Daisy Bates' *The Long Shadow of Little Rock* 

"My secondary purpose [in this book] is to explain what induced me, although I was raised as a typical white Southerner, to take my stand with Negroes against the white South."—Sarah Patton Boyle from the Author's Note, *The Desegregated Heart: A Virginian's Stand in Time of Transition* 

"At best, there are disadvantages when a story is told by one of its principals. Some degree of bias, no matter how hard one seeks to avoid it, is probably inevitable. But there may also be advantages. Today, when so many 'objective' observers are attempting to analyze the sources of racial conflict, some additional insights may be gained if the story of one of these incidents is told from the inside—by one who was deeply involved and by one who might well have been on either side of the conflict."—Anne Braden from the Preface to the 1958 Edition, *The Wall Between* 

This dissertation is about the literate practice of four women memoirists. In particular, it is about memoirs written by women who were living, breathing, and fighting for the justice of black citizens during the civil rights movement in America. The memoirists and the memoirs under consideration include Sarah Patton Boyle (*The Desegregated Heart: A Virginian's Stand in Time of Transition*), Anne Braden (*The Wall Between*), Daisy Bates (*The Long Shadow of Little Rock*) and Melba Pattillo Beals (*Warriors Don't Cry: The Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High*). These particular women were active in different states in the South during their participation in the movement and experienced it quite differently from each other. Sarah Patton

Boyle was a white woman from a relatively privileged background in Virginia who fought for the integration of a black college student into the University of Virginia. Anne Braden, along with her husband, Carl, sold a house to a black man in an all-white neighborhood in Kentucky for which she and her husband were charged for sedition, and both Daisy Bates and Melba Pattillo Beals were participants in the integration of Central High in Little Rock, Arkansas—one as the organizer (Bates) and the other as one of the Little Rock Nine (Beals). Although the women experienced the movement in different ways, their lives and memoirs offer many similarities, including the women's desires to eradicate racebased injustices, their passion and commitment to the movement and their relationships with the press during that time. Their memoirs make visible the intellectual work of the women participants and the relationship with the press that called forth such work. The literate practice of reading and writing in the press afforded these women power and a public voice during a time in America's history when male dominance was prevalent. Their memoirs also make visible the participatory roles women played in the movement, including their ability to connect to the public and speak out on issues that mattered most to them. Their writing also reveals the complex relationship the women had with the practice of reading and writing in the press and the feelings the women attached to the relationship. This study analyzes the memoirs for what they reveal about how women experienced their literacy and the role the press played in sponsoring that practice.

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Women Memoirists of the Civil Rights Movement

Beals, Bates, Boyle and Braden represent the growing body of civil rights memoirs/autobiographies written by women. The growth of memoirs written by women include a list of other women participants, including Anne Moody (Coming of Age in Mississippi), Jo Ann Robinson (The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It) Septima Clark (Echo in My Soul), Mary King (Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement), and Endesha Ida Mae Holland (From the Mississippi Delta). Allison Berg in "Trauma and Testimony in Black Women's Civil Rights Memoirs" discusses the growth of civil rights memoirs with particular focus on black women's memoirs including, Winson Hudson and Constance Curry, Tananarive Due and Patricia Stephens Due, Dorothy Height and Mamie Till-Bradley. In addition to black women writers, works such as Deep in Our Hearts, a collection of short memoirs written by white women, represents the increase in white women's writing about the movement as well. Other works such as Lynne Olsen's The Unsung Heroines of the Civil Rights Movement from 1830-1970, recapture the work and legacy of women activists. In her work, Olsen says "When the March on Washington took place in August 1963, the women of the civil rights movement were all but forgotten" (13). Historian Kathryn Nasstrom points out that for some time civil rights memoirs were produced from civil rights leadership more than from what she calls "rank and file" participants. Nasstrom reveals that the women have responded to the lack of memoirs written by women by writing their own stories in hopes of recovering their missing presence in history.

The four memoirs used in this dissertation were published originally<sup>1</sup>in 1958 (Braden); 1962 (Bates and Boyle) and 1994 (Beals). However, and despite publication dating back shortly after the movement (all but Beals), these women memoirists, like most of the women participants, are not as well known or as well reviewed as their male counterparts (Berg). Other than Ella Baker, Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer, very few women's stories are recognized in what Nasstrom calls the "grand narrative" of the movement. Like popular memory and culture and the trend in memoir writing itself, most attention in history and scholarly work has been paid to well-known and mostly male figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., James Farmer, Ralph Abernathy, Medgar Evers and James Forman to name a few (Berg; Nasstrom). Focus on male civil rights participants as the public figures of the movement has left little room for understanding the public sphere that was shared with the women participants. However and despite the sexist culture of the civil rights movement in the 1950/60s, each of these women, in her own right and for different reasons, participated in the movement in very public ways.

#### Scholarship on Women's Literacy

In their own research on African American women of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Shirley Wilson Logan and Jacqueline Jones Royster make visible the intellectual work of African American women writers and activists. Logan and Royster focus on the unknown women activists for the purpose of highlighting the work and legacy of women thinkers. The memoirs studied here add to this legacy of women

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Beal's was reprinted in 1995 (abridged edition) and in 2007. Braden's was reprinted 1999 and 2000. Boyle's was reprinted by University Press of Virginia (2001). Bates's was reprinted in 1986.

and show that reading and writing in the press for them created connection to the movement that not only showcased their bravery and resolve, but also highlights what being literate meant to these women and to their ability to participate in the movement in ways beyond typing memos and working behind the scenes. Unfortunately, popular memory and history understand very little about the women participants, about the public nature of their activism and ultimately, very little about the relationships the women had with reading and writing as it related to the movement. When it comes to memoir writing and the civil rights movement, the limited scholarship available focuses primarily on the relationships that exist between the writing of history and memoir writing.

Historian Katherine Nasstrom says that historians, for the purpose of understanding what gets written into history, focus on cultural and social issues that influence what gets written into both history and autobiographies. Nasstrom claims that there is a dialogic relationship between history writing and autobiographical writing, in that, one shapes and influences the other. Nasstrom explains how the content of memoir writing is oftentimes inspired by what is already written/not written into history. She comments that inspiration for memoirs oftentimes comes only when there seems to be a lack in what is written about an historical moment. However, Allison Berg claims that feminist historians have responded to Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's call for studying "modes of writing and speaking that emphasize individual agency, the *sine qua non* of narrative, while also dramatizing the hidden history of policies and institutions" but claims that "critical feminist biographers cannot speak to how less renowned participants

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make sense of their individual experiences, both at the time and retrospectively" (85). The focus for historians is on the social and cultural influences that compel the women to write their memoirs and although feminist historians have sought to recover and make visible the modes of writing used by women, like Berg, this dissertation is interested how women "make sense of their individual experiences" with emphasis on how the women experienced the literacy available that ultimately shaped their reading/writing and their ability to participate in the movement as intellectual beings.

The four memoirs are not used here then to correct historical wrongs only or to see what compels women to write, but are looked at as artifacts that have kept record of the experiences and feelings of women as readers/writers/thinkers. Berg, in her own work that uses memoirs written by women to "illuminate the complex relationship between individual testimony and cultural memory" (85) says "because memoirs are subjective accounts shaped by the exigencies of the present, they call for a language-attentive reading that acknowledges the various signs of their composure as part of their historical value" (86). A "languageattentive" reading of the four memoirs studied here is meant to extract the "signs" of what it meant for these women to be literate during this time in America's history and to expose the influences and uses in the women's lives. Contributing to research interested in how women use and understand their literacy and the non-neutral influences that shape individual practices, this dissertation, within the framework of an ideological model of literacy, looks at

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"literacy practices as they vary from one context to another" and compares literacy moments or "events" in varying contexts of the women's lives (Heath and Street 103-104).

Many scholars including Beth Daniell and Janice Radway, through ethnographical research, studied the lives of women and their literate experiences. They asked questions, observed and sought to understand the literacy as it was practiced and situated in the women's lives. This dissertation is interested in the same life experiences that offer an understanding of the women and the literacy they practiced; however, unlike that of the ethnographer, I study the women and their stories through their memoirs and writing. The focus on writing is in no way meant to suggest that writing trumps all other ways of being literate, but instead is used here for its ability to reveal how reading/writing was used to make and construct meaning for women situated in a particular time and place in history. Scholars who write about women's literacy (Daniell and Mortensen) have worked hard to overcome the lack of understanding about non-school situated literacy; this dissertation seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge about women and the oftentimes misunderstood or underrepresented uses of literacy.

# The Press

Using memoirs as the site for collecting data unveiled, intentionally or otherwise, the unconscious and unprompted details of the women's relationships with reading and writing; in particular, the intimate relationship the women had with the press (print media). The four women all had deep ties with the press in one way or another—some as editors, some as contributors and some in the form of owners and publishers. What stands out in their memoirs is not simply what they describe of the press' coverage of the movement, but instead, is the interpreting, valuing and interacting that seemed to occur between each of these women and the press. The women's desire to share their literate experiences of reading and writing in the press seemed as close to their hearts as the movement itself. For these women, daily encounters with the press meant reading about themselves and speaking for themselves through a public medium. The daily newspaper was a link between their "own individual and private interests and those they share with the rest of society" (Bogart 2).

In *The Race Beat* Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff discuss the role of the press during the civil rights movement and say that "There is little in the civil rights movement that was not changed by the news coverage of it. And there is little in the way the news media operate that was not influenced by their coverage of the movement" (7). This understanding of the press during that time in America's history helps set the backdrop for the tensions, uses and misuses of the press during the 50s and 60s. As noted by Nasstrom, the role the press played in shaping the story of the movement was significant; in that, the activism was possible because of the press and, in turn, the press was the outlet that shaped the movement, "writes" the movement and was ultimately, the non-neutral influence in the women's literacy practice. The press, as Deborah Brandt would claim, carried within it the ability to deny, sustain and shape the women and their reading/writing and their lives as literate beings.

Sponsorship

In studying the literacy events between the women and the press, I draw on Deborah Brandt's idea that the literacy one practices is implicated in and guided by other cultural and social influences, and that these influences present themselves to human beings on a personal level in different and in irregular ways. It is not enough to see that the press alone ultimately helped "write" the movement because it denies the women of their participation and the very human interactions and encounters the women had with the press. Brandt argues "Just as illiteracy is rarely self-chosen and rarely self-created, the literacy that people practice is not the literacy they necessarily wish to practice" (8). She says further "Focusing merely on the uses of literacy as they seem to arise from local goals and interests can obscure these complications" (8). This study, using Brandt's notion of sponsorship, analyzes the relationships the four women had with the press to overcome seeing the print media as becoming popularized as a literacy outlet during and because of the movement or because of the women writers, or as one that was necessary merely because of its availability at the time. Instead, the goal in this dissertation is to focus on the fact that the literacy that people practice have within it a nuanced, complicated and human understanding of that practice. Looking closer at individual literate practices and the human reactions/responses to the practice was a way into understanding the relationships the women had with the literate practices available, a way into understanding how the literate practices available were created and shaped for these individuals and how these practices carry on through time.

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Methodology

To understand the women's relationships with the press, I conducted a qualitative study that employs a textual analysis of the literacy practice of women reading and writing in the press. The data was compiled from memoirs published between 1958-1994, with two published in 1962 written shortly after the events occurred and one written thirty years later (Bates). The moments for analysis were interactions or "literacy events" between the sponsor and sponsored. In this dissertation I use Shirley Brice Heath's definition of "literacy event" that defines a literacy event as "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" (Heath 93). I focused on the women's explicit responses and reactions to literacy events to understand better the way they experienced their practice and then used the information to interpret their overall experiences with the practice. The women's experiences were recorded as convergence (positive experiences), conflict (negative experiences), NA (no reaction given to the encounter) and contextual (reference to press-related reading/writing but no encounter made with the press).

As I collected data from the memoirs, I also made note of the patterns in their practice that recurred across all four memoirs. The patterns include voice for the people, vehicle for crusade, community connection, active silence and concessions for conflict. The purpose of recording patterns was to look at the way the press as sponsor left traces of itself in all four memoirs therefore underscoring and making visible the ways in which the sponsor turns up in the lives of those they sponsor (Brandt). Understanding literacy patterns and tracking them in the

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four memoirs provides groundwork for tracing literacy sponsors as they are carried across time and through time.

Primary questions that informed the research in this dissertation include in what ways do individual responses to the literacy (ies) available provide insight into a sponsor's role in shaping literate practice(s) and identity (ies)? Secondary questions include

- What is gained by using the notion of sponsor to study texts?
- What is learned about a literate practice by looking at the relationship between sponsor and sponsored? Including, what is learned about the literate practice of a particular gender from a particular time period?
- What are the benefits/downfalls of using memoirs as a primary source in a study about literacy?
- What long-term knowledge can be gained by a study such as this?

#### Literacy, Identity and Practice

Studying women's responses to literacy events in their memoirs offers a way of studying literacy that diverges from the ethnographical methodology typically used to study literacy and its uses. The line of questioning and the methodology used in this dissertation opens up and offers new ways of investigating the non-neutral influences on literacy and literate identities. Studying the women's writing allowed me to study the lived experiences of literate beings as they experienced and composed them as Berg says "both at the time and retrospectively." What was learned from the women and their memoirs

was not only how much history has overlooked women and their contributions to the movement, but also how it overlooked their ability to contribute to the movement in ways that were intellectual and public. The women's public voices in the press shifts the idea that the men were the only public figures of the movement. The women's writing verifies their public presence at that time even though they were not as well-known and were denied a lasting presence in history. Looking at the women's individual life stories and their responses to their encounters with the press offer up the varied experiences of the women and the various ways they experienced and understood their relationship with the press and the roles they played in movement. The analysis of the women's encounters with the press revealed the reciprocal relationship between sponsor and sponsored that had uneven results for each woman. This includes the role individual perception, shaped by personal history and life experiences, played in the relationship the women had with the sponsor and the literacy they practiced. I argue that the women's responses to literacy events and their perceptions of the power of their reading and writing highlight the significant public role women played in the movement. I also contend that although the women remain relatively unremembered participants of the movement, their memoirs act as artifacts of that time and proof of the meaningful public contributions women made to the movement.

#### Chapter Outline

Chapter 2, Review of Literature, emphasizes the importance of studying how women use and experience literacy, and, in particular, focuses on the significance of studying the women memoirists for what they offer to the history of the civil rights movement and to literacy studies in general. This chapter defends the use of Brandt's notion of sponsor for what it contributes to analyzing women's literate experiences. Discussion of Brandt's work also explains the importance of studying the women's impressions of their encounters with the press. This chapter also defends using a textual analysis to study women's writing and literacy for what it contributes to scholarship on the movement and women's literacy.

Chapter 3, Methodology, defends the methodological frame used in this dissertation and explains the benefits gained by studying women's literate practices in this way. It includes a defense for the memoirs selected, why they were selected, how I systematically coded/recorded data and explains what this system did not allow. In this chapter I also include samples of charts used to collect and maintain data and define key terms for coding, including the patterns of voice for the people, vehicle for crusade, community connection, active silence and concessions for conflict.

Chapter 4, Analysis, details what was found in the individual memoirs of Beals, Bates, Boyle and Braden as well discusses the overlaps between and amongst the women. The chapter describes the patterns found in each memoir as well as offers analysis of the women's impressions of encounters with the press. Charts for each woman compare the concession and convergence encounters and compare the patterns in each memoir. The end of the chapter offers comparison charts of all four memoirs.

Chapter 5, Conclusions, reviews the data and analyzes the practice and patterns found in each woman's memoir. This chapter highlights the experiences of each woman and looks closely for the patterns that are shared between and amongst the women. This includes discussion of the significance of the patterns in relation to the women's overall lived experiences. Chapter 5 also highlights the distinguishing features of each woman's practice and the role perception played in influencing the literacy she practices and the identity shaped through the experiences. This chapter also discusses the benefits and limitations of the methodology used and what is gained from studying the literate lives of women through a textual analysis of literacy events.

#### CHAPTER 2

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This dissertation is about four women and the literate practice of reading and writing in the press during the civil rights movement. It is about how these four women used and experienced this practice and the non-neutral influence of the press in their literate lives. In their memoirs, Melba Pattillo Beals, Daisy Bates, Sarah Patton Boyle and Anne Braden share their experiences of the civil rights movement. Their memoirs describe their fears, the physical pain they endured, the emotional strains in their lives and the ways in which they participated in seeking desegregation in America's South. Although the women lived in different states in the South and contributed to the movement in their own unique ways, one of the similarities the women shared, and the focus of this dissertation, is their relationship with the press. The women's memoirs each reveal relationships with the press that embody closeness; a closeness that can be likened to what one feels with another trusted human being, like that of a close friend or family member in which the relationship is complex and filled with both joy and angst. At the outset of this study, the goal was to understand how the press was used in the lives of the women activists. After discovering this particular relationship (one of closeness) with the press in each of their memoirs, this study became one that looked closely at the human beings and their relationships with the particular practice of reading and writing in the press.

In the memoirs the women reveal that they read the press for news about the movement and to make daily decisions about their lives, including when it

was safe to leave their homes. In the memoirs they also describe how they wrote in the press to speak out about injustices against black citizens of the South, about their own feelings and thoughts on the social inequalities of the time and to participate in the public outcry against the freedoms denied black Americans living in the South. However, for the women memoirists, reading and writing in the press was not only something used to help spread the word of freedom but was also something that became part of the stories they shared in their memoirs about their participation in the movement. In all four memoirs, the women include reprints from headlines, published letters and articles they had written, published letters and articles others had written, feature stories about the movement and at times, published responses to their editorials/letters. The reprints, like their narratives, reveal much about the lives of the four women and their active roles in the movement. The importance of including reprinted material from the past in their memoirs was emphasized by how unknown these women and their stories were in popular memory and culture today.

My interest was piqued by how publicly vocal these women were during the movement, and yet, how little of this legacy was sustained over time. For me, their memoirs became important artifacts in understanding the women, their writing and their relationship with the press. The social politics of the 1950/60s, and the civil rights movement itself, maintained inequality between men and women. And yet, and in spite of this, the women studied in this dissertation and many others like them, used their being literate as a source of power and public presence. After recognizing the public presence of the women and the power it

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gave them, my question then became in what ways did the press play a role in the literacy they practiced and their identities as literate beings?

In this dissertation I use the women's memoirs as artifacts that maintained the women's stories, their encounters with the press, as the site for reprinting writing from the press and the site for maintaining the women's responses to their encounters with the press. Using their memoirs as a site for collecting data meant moving from ethnography, the more widely used approach to studying literacy practices, and instead doing a textual analysis of the women's responses to encounters with the press. Drawing on ideological models of literacy and Deborah Brandt's notion of literacy sponsors, this dissertation looks at the women's relationship with the press as sponsor as a way of understating how the women experienced their literacy and the influence the press played in their literacy and literate identities.

Primary questions that informed the research in this dissertation include in what ways do individual responses to the literacy (ies) available provide insight into a sponsor's role in shaping literate practice (s) and identity (ies)? Secondary questions include *What is gained by using the notion of sponsor to study texts*? *What is learned about a literate practice by looking at the relationship between sponsor and sponsored? Including, what is learned about the literate practice of a particular gender from a particular time period? What are the benefits/downfalls of using memoirs as a primary source in a study about literacy? What long-term knowledge can be gained by a study such as this?*  The following pages review the literature used to employ a non-traditional approach to studying the literate lives of the women and the literacy they practiced.

# Literacy

Myths about literacy have been believed in and pursued by many, but as Harvey Graff points out, myths unjustly serve and misrepresent literacy to those who seek its fortune and believe in its abilities. Graff says in The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society that "Literacy is profoundly misunderstood. That is true for the past as for the present" (3). This dissertation does not seek to contribute to the contradictions but rather looks deeper into the pieces of the myth that entertain the human subconscious that, as Beverly Jones says of romance, "is the elusive, fake, and never attained reward which, for the benefit and amusement of our masters, keeps us running and thinking in safe circles." In that, the promises of literacy that are made so often, yet, almost never attained, inspire people in the past and today pursuing it as a means to an end. What Graff demonstrates is that the belief in literacy keeps people and has kept people pursuing benefits that do not in fact benefit all, and definitely, when and if achieved, do not benefit all in the same way. Part of the "running and thinking in safe circles" includes the hurdles and evaluations such as standardized testing that are put in place to determine literacy "excellence," and, therefore in the process, devalue human knowledge and experience.

In speaking of the recent past Graff says of the 1960s/70s that "assumptions about the consequences and transformations expected to result from the achievement of literacy still dominate,"; he goes on to refer to Johan Galtang and says "literacy is propagated and utilized to create the illusion of equality" and cites Galtang when he says that " literacy is not functional, it is only a statistical artifact for large groups of the populations—in underdeveloped and overdeveloped countries alike . . ." (380). For the civil rights movement, the myth of literacy was alive and well in creating the illusion of equality.

Volunteers of the movement worked diligently to provide equality through literacy programs and initiatives that were expected to provide such equality. The Freedom Vote in Mississippi (1963), Freedom Summer (1964) and Freedom or Citizenship Schools, as they were known by many, promoted such initiatives. The core belief behind such initiatives was that even though many of the teachers were barely literate themselves, the risk involved and the punishment they faced was always worth it (Olsen)<sup>2</sup>. The promise of literacy was, at the time, the promise of equality. In particular, the kind of literacy pursued was reading and writing to obtain the right to vote. But, as Graff argues, the black population was not homogenous and the literacy expectations and levels were not analogous. The population of black American leaders of the civil rights movement were better educated than most and believed in the promise of literacy as great equalizer. Fighting for the ability of all to read and write was pushed, equality in quality schools was fought for, and ultimately, women and men were reading and writing to spread the word of equality. In addition, the movement relied heavily on the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See Lynne Olsen's *Freedom's Daughters: The Unsung Heroines of the Civil Rights Movement from 1830-1970.* Olsen's work offers a descriptive historical account of the movement, including that of the voting initiatives, with firsthand commentary from participants.

press to become the voice of the people and spread the meanings and messages of the movement. Literate members of the struggle used the press—national, local and the black press—to speak on their behalf, to share their stories with the world and to read and understand the world they lived in during the tumultuous years of the movement.

This dissertation uncovers the literate lives of four women and reveals what James Paul Gee would call the "types of people" created and shaped by being literate women during this time in America's history (2). In the memoirs, we hear not only of the encounters the women had with the press but we also get to see the ways in which the literacy they practiced shaped and created the women they became. Their memoirs offer a picture of women steeped in the ideologies of the movement, the myths of literacy and of the social/cultural politics of the time. However, their shared values, as they are connected to that place in time, are only a small glimpse into the dynamic lives of the women and what their being literate offered them. Gee says, "literacy-of whatever type-has consequences only as it acts together with a large number of other social factors, including political and economic conditions, social structure, and local ideologies" (80). In the memoirs the women wrote their stories, experiences and feelings about the movement and the press and in this, offer pictures of very individual and unique relationships with the press.

The women's lives and relationships with the press not only discredit popular beliefs about who lead and shaped the movement but also offer a diverse understanding about the gains, benefits and losses experienced from being literate. Gee, like Brian Street, who offered the term ideological model to challenge the autonomous model, of which Street (with Heath) says "works from the assumption that literacy in itself, autonomously, will have effects on other social and cognitive practices" both agree that literacy itself does not act alone in shaping literate experiences (103). Like others invested in an ideological model of literacy Shirley Brice Heath studied three communities in the Piedmont Carolinas to look closely at the relationship between literacy acquisition and socialization into communities and the effects of these experiences in the lives of those she studied inside and outside school. Gee, Street and Heath, among others, show how studying literacy as it is practiced and carried out through daily events offers a way to investigate literacy and understand the multiple influences that shape and define what it means to be literate.

## Women's Literacy

I borrow from the ideological model of literacy not only because it offers a way of studying the lives of individuals as they make meaning, but it has been especially important for those who study the literate lives of women<sup>3</sup>, including the work of Beth Daniell and Janice Radway. Beth Daniell in her introduction to her text *A Community of Friendship: Literacy, Spiritual Practice, and Women in Recovery* says "This book, in other words, is about reading and writing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Women and Literacy: Local and Global Inquiries for a New Century edited by Beth Daniell and Peter Mortensen. From this edited collection, I borrow from Katrina M. Powell's "Virginia Mountain Women Writing to Government Officials: Letters of Request as Social Participation," Kim Donehower's "Reconsidering Power, Privilege, and the Public/Private Distinction in the Literacy of Rural Women" and Rhea Estelle Lathan's "Crusader: Ethel Azalea Johnson's Use of the Written Word as a Weapon of Liberation" and Kathryn T. Flannery's work "Diverse in Sentiment and Form: Feminist Poetry as Radical Literate Practice, 1968-1975." This collection edited by Daniell and Mortesen offers insight into the literate lives of women, the uses of such literacy and the meaning literacy holds in their lives.

meaningfully. While this book certainly has to do with taking information from texts or creating texts that include information, it is more precisely, about literacy as social practice" (3). In her ethnographic research, Daniell studied the lives of six women and their spiritual practice as members of Al-Anon. In her book she describes the private and personal uses of literacy of the women of Mountain City. Daniell says of her work, "that is, I look at the literacy of the Mountain City women in both senses of the word practice—as repeated action and as an action that is engaged in order to improve or reach a higher state" (3). And she says finally, "I have learned to think of literacy as event, as action, as ideological, as local, as gendered, as complying with the structures of society, and as resisting those structures" (3). I borrow from Daniell here in many ways. First, I borrow from her in that I am studying the practice of women writers and the way they use reading and writing meaningfully. As the memoirs show, not only was the movement close to their hearts but so were the literacy events (Heath)<sup>4</sup> associated with the movement. I also borrow from her the idea that the word practice can been seen two fold—as *practice* in repeated action and as *practice* in order to improve or reach a higher state, and finally, I borrow from Daniell in seeing literacy as being "event, as action, as ideological, as local, as gendered as complying with the structures of society, and as resisting those structures." For Daniell and others, studying the literate lives of women is important because women's stories have not been told.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> "Literacy events are any event involving print, such as group negotiation of meaning in written texts (e.g. an ad), individuals 'looking things up' in reference books, writing family records in the Bible, and dozens of other types of occasions when books or other written materials are integral to interpretation in an interaction."

Like Daniell, Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy*, and Popular Culture is an ethnographic study of women. Radway studies women who read romance novels and what her work does so brilliantly is that she begins to mark space, without the language used by Daniell and others, for the complexity of the relationship between the event of reading (in her case) and the meaning constructed as a consequence (escaping patriarchal expectations of women). Radway came to conclude that her book became "less an account of the way romances as texts were interpreted than of the way romance reading as a form of behavior operated as a complex intervention in the ongoing social life of actual social subjects, women who saw themselves first as wives and mothers" (7). This dissertation also looks at the moments of reading /writing and the interpretations similar to Radway's study. I see similarities in Radway's interpretations of the women's reading and writing practices and the complex social lives of the four women studied here and what their literate lives meant to them. Like the women in Radway's text, the literate practice of the women memoirists was not only creating meaning in their own lives, but was simultaneously resisting the oppression felt by society at large.

Relevant to Daniell and Radway's work is Jacqueline Jones Royster's work *Traces of a Stream* that uses what she calls an historical ethnographic approach to highlight and study the intellectual work of black women writers/activists from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Royster looks at the literate lives of African American women in a nonlinear methodology and by doing so refuses to put women into categories based on time, place or situation and instead creates

what she calls a kaleidoscope effect of which offers better insight and understanding of the literacy practices of the women she studied. Like Royster, Shirley Wilson Logan, studies 19<sup>th</sup> century women rhetors to highlight the intellectual work of women activists at that time. The goal of Royster and Logan is to create frameworks to study the lives of women who fought both sexist and racist societies by utilizing traditional literate outlets to effect nontraditional outcomes. The lives of the women studied by Royster and Logan situate the longtradition of literate women that Rhea Estelle Lathan uses and contributes to by studying the life and writing of civil rights activist Ethel Azalea Johnson. With Lathan, Logan, Royster, Radway, Daniell and others, this dissertation contributes to the work on the literate lives of women as writers and intellectuals as they made meaning and were practiced in their everyday lives. This dissertation then, although it does not study the lives of women through ethnography or historical ethnography like Royster, Logan, Daniell and Radway, explores "the literate activity" of the women writing and reading in the press to "deepen the well of African American [and Caucasian] women's intellectual enterprise" (Lathan 68). The Press

American sociologist Leo Bogart says of the press in America that it has "the ability to describe patterns in the meaning of events, to connect facts separated in time and place, to make generalizations—all of these capacities for abstraction reflect unique properties of the printed word"(2). He says further "There is a kind of folk awareness that what appears in the newspaper appears before the whole community. The press records the life of the community and is

its traditional voice" and finishes by saying "These are not inconsequential functions" (2). Bogart points here to the printed word's ability to capture life, maintain life and allow others into events who would otherwise be separated by time and place. In considering the civil rights movement, this meant actions recorded and dispersed across the country—this meant others knowing about the lives suffering all across the South. For the civil rights movement, the connections weren't just ideas connected in time and place, but lives connected to overcome struggle and maintain freedom. Being a writer meant participating and becoming someone who made the connections and recorded life. And those who read the press sought it out for similar reasons, including for the connection to life and community. As the women's memoirs reveal, not being able to do so, not being literate, meant not participating in the life and outcomes of the community. Journalism historian Lloyd Chiasson Jr. discussing the press says further, "Throughout American history, the press has performed various functions. (...) Sometimes it has led public opinion, sometimes it has mirrored attitudes, and sometimes it has set its agenda after public opinion has crystallized" (preface). In addition, he says "The press has agitated, advocated, persuaded. It has been duped, it has been unfair, and it has misled" (preface).

During the civil rights movement all of the functions named by Chiasson, such as mirroring attitudes, leading public opinion, setting agendas, agitating, advocating, duping and misleading occurred during the movement. Although Chiasson skips carefully over the crux of the movement in his text (he covers the "Japanese-American Enigma" and moves right to "McCarthy's Journalism"), we know from other voices that the role of the press sat carefully at the center of the movement. Charlotte Grimes in "Civil Rights and the Press" quotes Senator John Lewis, D-GA, civil rights movement leader and chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) when he says "I will say this up front: without the media, the civil rights movement would have been like a bird without wings. The press played a major role in communicating and spreading the news of the civil rights movement. In "The Civil Rights Movement: A Press Perspective," reporter Jack Nelson points out how critical the press was in framing and making the public aware how awful life was for blacks citizens in America. Most importantly, he addresses the relationship between the press and the law in that the press made it possible for laws to be enforced. He attributes most of this success to the work of Martin Luther King Jr. and his knowledge of the press. Nelson says "For the country as a whole, the civil rights movement that Martin Luther King, Jr. came to personify was a transforming force" (4). He focuses the majority of his discussion on the relationship between the law and the press. For example, he says "Without new laws and a transformation of the old system of 'Jim Crow Justice,' the civil rights revolution might have failed. And without the news media's increasingly careful coverage of King's activities—and powerful responses it drew—it seems unlikely that public could have been mobilized to demand change" (4). He says further "Until the mid-1960s, such voices were the exception. It was only after the news media began to cover Martin Luther King's protests extensively, and the broader public began to respond, that real reform began to take place" (6).

Jack Nelson attributes the successes of the movement here to the press' coverage of the stories of the people, in particular, to King's knowledge of the press and the public's response to his actions. Although King sat at the center of the coverage and therefore directed the coverage, this kind of public awareness afforded others, such as the women, a space to come to voice about the injustices in the South in a public way. Nelson, like historian and Pulitzer Prize winner Taylor Branch, sees the framing of America and the movement as centering on the legacy of King.<sup>5</sup> In addition, these discussions of King underscore how key figures and events changed history and our nation's laws and the ways in which the nation was asked to think about segregation in the South. What the aforementioned scholars all agree on is that the stories that the press covered and created about the movement were most notably about King and other key figures and events. Such events include the Brown vs. Board of Education, the death of Emmet Till, Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the integration of Central High in Little Rock Arkansas, the summer freedom rides, King and the writing of the "Letter from Birmingham Jail", the death of Medgar Evers, the march on Washington and King's "I Have a Dream Speech", and four young girls killed at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. These events and the key figures associated with these stories were the ones that were featured on the pages of *Newsweek* and *Time Magazine* and made headlines in local and national newspapers across the nation. These are the stories that now

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, (1954-63)*; Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, (1963-65)*; Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, (1965-1968)*.

frame how the story of the movement gets told, what we remember about the civil rights movement, and what we are taught about that time in America's history. In this way, we can see the critical role the press played in the success and momentum of the movement, its importance for black American citizens and the wellness of the nation as a whole. The role the press played in the movement not only sustained its story but also served the movement and became a voice—one that connected its members from Richmond to Little Rock to Mobile.

However, because the kind of stories remembered are that of key figures and events, they therefore reify the same story created during the era of King's leadership. The press shaped and framed the movement, and although it contributed to its successes, the stories, the heroes and events we remember, only include a small portion of those who contributed to that success and offer very little information about those who supported and maintained the momentum needed. The unknown stories are of those behind the scenes fighting and standing up to the white communities of the South, and, at times, standing up to unyielding neighbors and friends fearing the consequences of integration<sup>6</sup>. The untold stories are of those assisting the key figures to make the movement grow and move. The women studied here are some of the lesser known stories. Because their stories are not the ones that were used to frame the movement and are not the ones ingrained in the public's mind, we therefore understand very little about these women and their relationships with the press.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement* for detailed narrative description of the hardships women faced behind the scenes of the movement.

The women studied here all interacted with the local, national and black press; however, their stories and their lives did not frame the movement in the same way other key figures did. An oversimplified reading of their situation would account only for what feminist scholars have seen as the direct impact of the marginalization of women. However true this may be, taking a closer look reveals more about the writing/reading they did and the influence it had on the movement, the meaning it made in the women's lives and the reasons for the silencing of their voices after the movement's end.

# Sponsorship

For these four women memoirists and the civil rights movement itself, the myth of equality and the kind of literate practices available to the women created a way of knowing the world and types of people living in that world (Gee). For the civil rights movement it was a people who believed in literacy and a people who saw the benefits of that literacy as giving them access to freedom. However, in thinking of literacy as contextual, many factors influence the literacy people practice. As I read the women's memoirs, and as said earlier, what stood out was the ways in which the women experienced their relationship with the press that seemed very connected to their lives and their personal experiences with the press. For Deborah Brandt the institutions that regulate and suppress literacy act as what she calls sponsors. Brandt says of "sponsors, as I have come to think of them, are any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, and model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold, literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way" (19). She goes on to say "Just as the ages of

radio and television accustomed us to having programs brought to us by various commercial sponsors, it is useful to think about who or what underwrites occasions of literacy learning and use" (19).

Sponsorship is a particularly fitting frame for the literate practices of women in that the sponsors as Brandt defines them are typically "richer, more knowledgeable, and more entrenched than the sponsored, sponsors nevertheless enter a reciprocal relationship with those they underwrite" (549). Brandt argues "Just as illiteracy is rarely self-chosen and rarely self-created, the literacy that people practice is not the literacy they necessarily wish to practice. Focusing merely on the uses of literacy as they seem to arise from local goals and interests can obscure these complications" (8). In this case it is necessary to move beyond seeing the print media as becoming popularized as a literacy outlet during and because of the movement and the women writers, or as one that was necessary merely because of its availability at the time, and instead, it seems more important to understand that the literacy that people practice have within it a nuanced, complicated and human understanding with such practice.

Looking closer at individual literate practices and the way the women experienced their literacy was a way to understand the relationship they had with the literacy available to them, and also a way to see how the literacy available created and shaped these individuals. This method not only allowed insight into the practice but allowed insight into why certain practices and mediums lent themselves to particular groups, why particular mediums and practices arrive at certain "locales"—a question Brandt proposes, and also allowed insight into the

uses of such practices during that time in America. By using the notion of sponsorship I also move beyond, although ultimately include, looking at literate practices as they are situated in the social and cultural factors of a moment in time, and gain access to how such factors are integral in the reading and writing in the press, of which not only "write" the experiences of these women's lives, but also leave traces of the sponsors' influences in material form in their writing (in both the press and their memoirs).

# Methodology

In my understanding of literacy as a social practice, the importance of ethnographic study is of critical importance. I say this because I agree that "entering communities to study language and literacy in the daily lives of people" seems the way into the lives of these women writers (Allen and Alvermann in Ethnography: Approaches to Language and Literacy Research ix). However, I understand well that ethnography requires the "participant observation as the key means of collecting data," and although this work is not ethnographic in its use of participant observation, it shares its goals and sees its subjects with a similar lens (Heath and Street 31). In this dissertation, "entering communities to study language and literacy in the everyday lives of people" is the key means for seeing the subjects in action. In other words, through first-hand accounts from the work of the memoirs I, like that of the ethnographer, seek to study "what is happening here in the field sites I have chosen" just without actually going to the sites (Heath and Street 31). Instead, my journey to the sites is through the memoirs written by the women who lived and breathed the sites and describe in detail their

observations of the sites that I have chosen. In studying the literate lives of women, ethnography has been a preferred approach (Brodkey, Daniell, Gere, Radway). And although Brandt's work does not focus primarily on women, Brandt uses ethnography to study literacy across time and place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as it relates to economic changes in the nation. The influential studies mentioned set out to understand the uses of literacy in particular communities in order to unearth the ways literacy is used in the private lives of the individuals studied. Their goals for studying individual communities set by geographical/cultural boundaries are somewhat different from the parameters of this study, but nonetheless offer ways to think about community that help this study set and understand its own parameters for defining the community of writers studied here—that of women writing memoirs about their experiences in the civil rights movement.

In order to understand the literate practices of women during this time in America's history, I use the four memoirs named earlier to conduct a qualitative study that employs a textual analysis of literacy events between the women and the press. In *Women and Literacy* Peter Mortensen and Beth Daniell compile essays on women's literacy that help situate women and literacy use and acquisition both nationally and globally. For the purposes of this dissertation, their work is important in helping me frame the ways women have acquired and used literacy. In 1992, Peter Mortensen and Janet Eldred enter into conversations about the importance to study what is communicated about literacy in texts. In particular, they study literary texts for literacy narratives. One particular definition

they offer of such narratives is *narratives of socialization* of which the author is talking about a social context in which the literacy is an implicit or implied part of the fictionalized story. This description offered by Mortensen and Eldred is important here because as the memoirists developed their stories of the movement in their memoirs so too did their stories about their relationships with the press develop.

In 2007 Donna Strickland follows the model set by Eldred and Mortensen and studies the literacy narrative of Millie, the character in Dorothy West's "The Typewriter" to understand the role of emotion in literacy. The significance of Strickland's work is that she used a textual analysis and Eldred and Mortensen's idea of the literacy narrative to do so. Strickland sees the idea of the literacy narrative as important for studying women's literacy because, and in borrowing from Eldred and Mortensen, "When we read for literacy narratives,' Eldred and Mortensen explain, 'we study how the text constructs a character's ongoing, social process of language acquisition" (512). She says further, "If emotion, as I have suggested makes possible and reinforces this process, then literacy narratives should offer discursive glimpses of characters' literate feelings" (46). In both Eldred and Mortensen and Strickland's works we see texts and literacy narratives being used to study literacy and the lives of those being studied. I borrow here on this idea of literacy narrative to show how texts (in this case, the memoirs) reveal stories of how the women memoirists, although it is not the direct story they are telling, reconstruct narratives about the literate practice of reading and writing in the press, one that reveals the feelings of such practice. Similar to this, and as

mentioned in the introduction, like Allison Berg, I hope to understand how the women make sense of their experiences and see their memoirs as "subjective accounts shaped by the exigencies of the present," that "call for a languageattentive reading that acknowledges the various signs of their composure as part of their historical value" (86).

For this study, the data used for textual analysis was pulled from memoirs published between 1958-1994, with two published in 1962 all written shortly after the events occurred, one written thirty years later, Bates. The analyzed data comes from the dates of the encounters between the sponsor and the sponsored as reported in the memoirs themselves. The moments for analysis are interactions between the sponsor and sponsored where there is talk in the memoir about the sponsor and the memoir writer's feelings about the sponsor and the literacy event. Brandt says, "Although interests of the sponsor and the sponsored do not have to converge (and, in fact, may conflict), sponsors nevertheless set the terms for access to literacy and wield powerful incentives for compliance and loyalty" (19). This study focuses on the negotiations-the moments of convergence and conflict— as told through the women's stories. Each memoir was read and coded individually. I did this by translating Brandt's convergence/conflict into satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Not in, are the women satisfied, as in, do they like reading and writing in the press, but are their expectations met by the interaction. As in, if a woman wanted to communicate thought was the press available for such communication in the way she wanted it? For this study, the moments of convergence/conflict are read in the following way: moments of convergence are

when the woman feels satisfaction with the encounter—meaning she said what she wanted to say and conflict was when she could not. Only explicit comments were recorded. Those without explicit responses were recorded as NA. If a woman did not give a response to an encounter it was labeled NA., The last category used for recording/coding data was contextual. These were descriptions of the press but were not encounters or events. I classified all moments according to my interpretation, which is not to judge these moments in terms of good or bad, but rather a judgment about whether an author's expectations of the literacy event were met or not. The data collected was put into a chart (a sample section of the chart can be found in chapter 3, Table 1: Data Chart) and then used to analyze the practice.

In addition, five patterns were recorded as they were found in the four memoirs. The five patterns were those that showed up in all four memoirs and are patterns that address the needs/benefits/uses of the press. In other words, these patterns were a concrete way to look at how the press presented itself to these four women and helped explain the way the women saw the press in their lives. The five patterns include voice for people, community connection, vehicle for crusade, active silence and concession for conflict. These five patterns were also recorded in the charts and were then used to help interpret/analyze the practices of the four women memoirists.

#### Literate Practice and Identity

The methodology used here to study the literate lives of women memoirists is a way to move beyond the restraints of time and place when studying women's lives and therefore highlights the significant work of literate women who used their reading and writing as forms of activism to both negotiate the social politics of the time while simultaneously creating space for women as intellectual beings. This dissertation highlights the work of these women and brings to life the work and lives of women who although were not the center of the civil rights movement, were using their lives and their literacy to effect social change. Their lives and the analysis of their literacy events show how being literate not only created space for women as public beings during the movement but also shows how personal perception, shaped by personal history and life experiences, created meaning for the kinds of practices available to women and the work they did in movement.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

As mentioned in the introduction, the number of memoirs written by women about the civil rights movement is slowly growing, and as this body of literature grows, there is more to understand about the women participants and, in particular, more to learn about their relationship with reading and writing. In the end, I selected the four women and the memoirs mentioned thus far-Sarah Patton Boyle, Melba Pattillo Beals, Anne Braden and Daisy Bates as the subjects of this study. The women included in the study offered moments that varied from a young woman writing in her diary and in the press about the pain of entering school as part of the Little Rock Nine, to that of a white woman and former reporter from Kentucky who wrote about the reasons behind her and her husband's decision to purchase a home for a black couple in an all-white neighborhood, to a black woman who owned the Arkansas State Press with her husband (and acted as reporter, editor and owner) and finally, to that of a white woman turned advocate who saw writing as a way to impress the Southern public to make change.

The other memoirs considered for the study include the work of Anne Moody (*Coming of Age in Mississippi*), Jo Ann Robinson (*The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*) Septima Clark (*Echo in My Soul*), Mary King (*Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement*), and Endesha Ida Mae Holland (*From the Mississippi Delta*). In addition, the work of Constance Curry, Joan C. Browning, Dorothy Dawson Burlage, Penny Patch, Theresea Del Pozzo, Sue Thrasher, Elaine Delott Baker, Emmie Schrader Adams and Casey Hayden in *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement* was considered when making my decision of which texts to study. The importance of the texts listed above and the necessity that their stories get told, read and brought to the attention of scholars and historians does not go lost on me; however, as my goal is to concentrate on the press as sponsor, Beals, Bates, Boyle and Braden in particular offered a wide variety of events to be considered and were chosen for this reason.

Of the four, two black women (Beals and Bates) and two white women (Boyle and Braden) are included. Although race is included in discussions in the conclusion, the focus on gender and their literate practice are at the forefront of this study. Not focusing on race may seem like an odd decision for a study on the civil rights movement, but my decision to do so comes from my belief that focusing on race will cause a compare/contrast study between the white women and black women and their writing-this was not the goal of the study. The goal is to look at how women similar in their goals to end segregation in the South were exposed to particular literate practices during this time in America's history. In addition to careful consideration of race and its role in the women's literate lives, I am careful, like Janice Radway and Jacqueline Jones Royster, not to essentialize the women's literate practices either. Royster, in her work, instead focuses on the patterns that develop amongst women essay writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In order to do this I, like Royster, instead, face what she calls "the immediate challenge to make visible many features, factors, relationships, people

and practices that heretofore were not visible—to articulate what is there and what seems to be going on" (8). In this she says, and what I think Brandt agrees with, is that we need "a sense of landscape, certainly, but simultaneously we also need close up views from different standpoints on the landscape" (6).

Looking at the "features, factors, relationships and people" that shaped the landscape of the memoirists literate lives required looking at what it meant for the women to be literate, who got to define what it meant to be literate, what kinds of literacies were valued and how their lives impacted such understanding. Describing social and ideological models of literacy, James Paul Gee says

> Texts and the various ways of reading them do not flow full-blown out of the individual soul (or biology); they are the social and historical inventions of various groups of people. One always learns to interpret texts of a certain type in certain ways only through having access to, and ample experiences in, social settings where texts of that type are read in those ways. One is socialized or enculturated into a certain social practice. (48)

Seeing the women as being "socialized or enculturated into a certain social practice" meant foregrounding the relationships the women had with the press and therefore the social factors that influenced the women's access to and individual understanding of the sponsor. Access to the women's literacy practice and its landscape in this dissertation was through literacy events described in the memoirs. Borrowed from Shirley Brice Heath's definition, a literacy event is "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants"

interactions and their interpretive processes" (93). Like Peter Mortensen, Janet Eldred and Donna Strickland, who use narratives (textual) to understand the uses and acquisition of women's literacy, this study uses the women's memoirs to analyze the events between the women and the press to analyze the practice. How I recorded literacy events

To record and code the data, in this case events between the women and the press, I first read the memoirs and marked with a highlighter each literacy event described in each text. I then reread the highlighted moments and recorded my findings using a chart shown in Table 1: Data Chart to record the literacy events marked with a highlighter. Each chapter of each memoir was given its own chart. This included chapters without any literacy events. At the top of each chart was a number assigned to the memoir. In the sample chart provided, you will see that Sarah Patton Boyle's memoir was the third memoir recorded. Located to the right of the memoir's number (Beals 1, Bates 2, Boyle 3 and Braden 4) is the name of the author, the title of the memoir and the chapter under consideration. In the second line of the chart were the specific details of each literacy event found in the chapter. Each event was given an example number (heading to the far left) that corresponded with a highlighted event in the memoir. Each chapter of each memoir started at example one therefore leaving final recordings to look as such Boyle 2.1. To find specific events the recorded data had three numbers assigned to it. For example, 3.2.1 would mark Boyle's memoir, chapter two, first event. The next column recorded the page number of the highlighted literacy event and the following three columns explained the classification/coding of the recorded

event. At the far right is a column marked notes. In this column I typed the event as it was written in the memoir. At the bottom of the column in bold is a description of the literacy pattern (s) associated with the event.

# How I classified and coded events

In order for an event to be recorded there was a description in the memoir of the event and the writer's response to the event. It may seem that what I studied are simply the women's "feelings" about the press. However, and not to diminish the significance of feelings, what was collected here were feelings, expressions and expectations of what it meant to be literate during the 1950s/60s. Because this study focuses on the negotiations and the memoirists' responses to these, I highlight Brandt when she says "Although interests of the sponsor and the sponsored do not have to converge (and, in fact, may conflict), sponsors nevertheless set the terms for access to literacy and wield powerful incentives for compliance and loyalty" (19). Each memoir was read and classified based on Brandt's idea that the "interest of the sponsor and sponsored do not have to converge (and, in fact, may conflict)." The classifications on the chart are: convergence, conflict, NA and contextual. I did this by translating Brandt's convergence/conflict/ into satisfaction /dissatisfaction. As mentioned earlier, moments of convergence are when the sponsored indicated feelings of satisfaction with the encounter. Conflicts were recorded when she claimed otherwise. When no explicit impression was made the encounter was recorded NA. The final category is contextual moments. Contextual moments were recorded when the woman discussed reading and writing in the press but were not encounters with or

events between the women and the press. I classified all moments according to my interpretation of whether an author's expectations were met. The following two examples taken from Sarah Boyle's memoir offer a sampling of the classification as it is used in the study.

The first example, Boyle 2.1 (3.2.1) was classified and coded as a conflict. Boyle says

> The press, however, was not reassuring. Newspaper comment on 'the impeding situation at the University' gave no hint that Swanson's admission might be welcome to any of us or that any Virginians except Negroes might rejoice in the justice of his winning his suit. Unchallenged by public statement, written or spoken, there rose before the mind's eye a picture of a lone American citizen struggling for inalienable rights against unanimous opposition from the institution which Thomas Jefferson founded. (56)

This event was classified and coded as a conflict because, as we can see, in Boyle's own words, the event—that between Boyle and the press—was "not reassuring" and not only was she disappointed that the Newspaper misled the public about Swanson's admission, we can see it was not the sentiment she expected from the press. In this moment, the press was not the voice of the people, it was not used to reassure her or create change as she was hoping it would. This kind of impression made by the memoirist was categorized as dissatisfaction and therefore recorded as conflict.

The second moment was classified and coded as a moment of convergence. In it Boyle says

I felt good. I had said what I wanted to say. Perhaps I should say it publicly. I could send a letter to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, the state's largest newspaper. There it would reassure the maximum number of Virginians. The possibility of resulting in personal attack wasn't very disconcerting to me, because I had been raised to believe that 'the best people make known their convictions on all important issues, and then stand behind them, come what may.' The worst thing that possibly could happen to anyone was personal failure to stand up for what he believed. (57)

In this moment the convergence between the memoirists' writing and the expectations of it being printed in the press, demonstrates her belief in the journalists' ability to reach people in the South. Impressions of satisfaction made by an author, such as this one, were recorded as convergence. Examples of NA include when Boyle describes her reading and writing in the press but does not offer her feelings or thoughts about the encounter. Most contextual moments for Boyle were when she discussed the press in the South, including descriptions of how she believed people in the South thought about and used the press.

How I classified/coded patterns

Classification and coding of patterns were far more difficult than the classification and coding of events. Using five conceptual descriptors, events were considered part of a pattern when actions were taken/not taken, responses,

behaviors or interpretations on behalf of the women occurred explicitly or implicitly in similar ways and enough times amongst the texts. The patterns highlight the cultural influences that informed the women's encounters and understandings of the press. The press in America in the 1950s/60s was a means for the women to understand the world and make meaning in their lives, and because the press was a significant player in the movement itself, the way the press was interpreted, negotiated and used in the women's lives draws attention to the ways the press appeared to them and therefore how the women interpreted the encounters. This meant that the encounters at times were both positive and negative. There was no one pattern that was exclusively negative or positive; instead, the patterns came from the women's experiences were difficult to code because there were multiple patterns at play in any one event.

I focused on the patterns *active silence, concessions for conflict, vehicle for crusade, voice for people* and *community connections*. Each pattern(s) was recorded in bold at the bottom of the notes section of the chart used to record the events. Studying the patterns in the women's memoirs was influenced by Brandt's and Royster's calls for longer and more comprehensive views of literacy as they arrive to users. The first three patterns (voice for the people, vehicle for crusade, community connection) described below are shaped by popular understanding of the press in the 1950s/60s. The other two were patterns were repeated and significant concepts to the women and their relationship to the press (active silence and concessions for conflict).

# **Patterns Descriptions**

• Vehicle for crusade

The belief in the press' ability to create change was perpetuated by the press itself and by the movement. As mentioned earlier, King's ability to utilize the press to shape and define the movement was part of the landscape at that time. Pamela Newkirk in "The Minority Press: Pleading our Own Cause" says of the black press, "these alternative newspapers published by racial minorities denied rights of full citizenship, raised the bar on American democracy by exposing the hypocrisy of a nation founded on principles of liberty and justice, but that somehow rationalized the enslavement of African people, the subjugation of Native Americans, and the fierce discrimination against Asians" (82). Newkirk stresses the role the black press played in influencing change in America and its ability to act on behalf of those in need of a voice and in its ability to act as a means for political ends; these views of the press were shared by the women.

For each woman her use of the press was unique to her and her life experiences but the pattern showed up throughout each memoir. Traces of the pattern in their memoirs include the thought processes behind why the women decided to write, what they wrote about, the themes that emerged in their writing and their impressions of their own writing. Their belief in the press as a vehicle for crusade was the power behind their willingness to interact with the press in spite of personal safety, personal fear and the fear and safety of their families who oftentimes supported their decisions and their willingness to speak publicly for the civil rights movement. • Voice for the people

At first, moments labeled voice for the people seemed quite similar to the pattern vehicle for crusade, but the nuances that distinguished the moments showed a completely different belief and pattern. Events were recorded as voice for the people when the women were looking for or becoming a voice for the people. Brandt says of African American reading and writing "Reading and writing were used ( . . . ) to make the African American world visible to themselves and others. And literacy and language learning took their value in serving the broader goals of critical consciousness and, often, social activism" (144). Pamela Newkirk speaks more specifically about the voice created by critical consciousness in saying

> it has been nearly two centuries since the editors of *Freedom's Journal* affirmed in their inaugural newspaper editorial that [African Americans] wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentations, in things which concern us dearly . . . From the press and the pulpit we have suffered much by being incorrectly represented. Our vices and our degradation are ever arrayed against us, but our virtues are passed by unnoticed. (81)

The press became the voice for the people and it became a way to speak for oneself about the things that concerned men and women in the South. For each woman, the press was used as a space to come to voice about the parts of the South that enraged them and compelled them to seek change. Although the descriptions above speak specifically about conceptions of the black press, the understanding of the press (both local and national) was conceived similarly in its ability to act as a voice for the people as Leo Bogart points out. However, the significance of the black press was its creation of an outlet for black Americans in the South who were otherwise silenced in other news media outlets. Interestingly enough, voice for the people and active silence emerged together at times; in that, being silent or withholding information or creating a kind of façade proved to be as equally important to the women as speaking out in the press. Instances of voice for the people and active silence emerging together included the women being silent (or decidedly not speaking on behalf of the people) in order to protect the movement and those in support of desegregation.

# • Community connection

Community connection separated itself from voice for the people and vehicle for crusade because in moments labeled community connection the women were looking for connection. In these moments the women were looking to the press to bring together a broken people or inform them of the world and the current views, feelings and responses to the movement. In the moments labeled community connection there was a sense that the women saw reading and writing in the press as a place to hold together a people; a place for telling and sharing. *In Press and Public, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition: Who Reads What, When, Where, and Why in American Newspapers* Leo Bogart says

Newspapers represent a unique force for social cohesion. There is no other medium of communication that has the same socially integrative function. By providing a common pool of information, newspapers bind together people who live in a particular geographic area and share interests that come from the same environment, the same problems, and common politics. Thus, newspapers exert a force that tends to reduce the social distance the mutual sense of apartness between different groups –and thus works to eliminate social differences. (102)

The feeling behind community connection was a movement inward; one of "cohesion." This is quite different than the movement outward like voice for the people which was used to announce and speak out. This is also quite different from vehicle for crusade which was used to propel and create change.

• Active Silence

Moments were recorded as active silence when the women decided NOT to speak, not to read the press, and/or not to write in the press. Active silence was a controlled and decisive action for the most part. The women were thoughtful in their decisions to remain silent and sometimes it was painful and hard not to say what was needed, while other times it was a manipulation of the press—to keep silent for their/or the movement's benefit. Their active silence in these situations was deliberate uses of their knowledge of the press based on how they learned to "use" their literacy and being literate. Their feelings and impressions allowed insight into one way the press as sponsor both supported and repressed their literacy.

• Concessions for conflict

Events recorded concessions for conflict were recorded when the women expected or ignored unfavorable behavior from the press. As in, the women would not offer response to literacy events when they were disappointed by the press or when the press did not articulate what needed to be said, and this included moments when the press was not telling the women what they were looking to hear. This pattern revealed a lot about the way women experienced literacy in that it showed that their relationships with the press, similar to a relationship with a person, becomes habitual or expected and that "bad" behavior becomes expected and at times accepted.

Chapter 4 reveals the findings and discusses the significance of the classifications and the coding. This includes individual comparisons of patterns and events as well as discussion about the shared experiences between and amongst the four women.

Chapter five discusses the analysis of the events and the patterns and offers answers to the primary questions of the study that include in what ways do individual responses to the literacy (ies) available provide insight into a sponsor's role in shaping literate practice(s) and identity (ies)?

# Table 1: Data Chart

<b>3</b> Boyle, Sarah Patton. <i>The Desegregated Heart</i> , Chapter 2						
Example	Page	Convergence	Conflict	NA	Contextual	Notes
#1	# 56		X			"The press,
						however,
						was not
						reassuring.
						Newspaper
						comment on
						'the
						impending
						situation at
						the
						University'
						gave no hint
						that
						Swanson's
						admission
						might be
						welcome to
						any of us or
						that any
						Virginians
						except
						Negroes
						might rejoice
						in the justice
						of his
						winning the
						suit. ()"
						(56).
						Vehicle for

				crusade,
				voice for the
				people,
				community
				connection
				connection
				"T f-14 1 T
				"I felt good. I
				had said
				what I
# 2	# 57	X		wanted to
				say. Perhaps
				I should say
				it publicly. I
				could send it
				to the
				Richmond-
				Times
				Dispatch, the
				state's
				largest
				newspaper.
				There it
				would
				reassure the
				maximum
				number of
				Virginians. (
				)" (57).
				Vehicle for
				crusade,
				voice for the
				people,
				community
				connection
				connection

#### **CHAPTER 4**

# ANALYSIS

This chapter details the findings from my analysis of the memoirs of Melba Pattillo Beals, Daisy Bates, Sarah Patton Boyle and Anne Braden. In the discussion that follows, I summarize each memoir and the author's relationship to the press. In addition, in each discussion I list the number of patterns (voice for the people, community connection, vehicle for crusade, active silence, concessions for conflict) and how many convergences, conflicts, NA and contextual moments were found in each memoir. As detailed in the methodology chapter, all literacy events, or "any event involving print" were recorded based on the memoirists impressions of the event (Heath). When the memoirist expressed content the moment was labeled convergence. When the memoirist expressed discord the event was labeled conflict. Moments labeled NA were marked when a literacy event was described but no impression was made and moments were labeled contextual when the women described the press but no literacy event was included. The numbers are not analyzed in their own right, but are instead used to contextualize the patterns and the women's impressions of the literacy events. The order in which I read and coded the memoirs is as follows: Melba Patillo Beals, Daisy Bates, Sarah Patton Boyle and Anne Braden. Each woman's memoir is discussed separately from the others and there are two comparison chart (Figs. 9 and 10) with explanations at the end of the chapter. In chapter 5 I discuss the significance of these findings.

Melba Patillo Beals, Warrirors Don't Cry

In her memoir, Warriors Don't Cry: The Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High, Beals reveals the details of integrating Central High as she experienced it. As a child, Melba grew up in the segregated South and was one of the Little Rock Nine to integrate the all-white school of Central High in 1957. In the memoir she tells her readers she grew up in Arkansas with her mother, Lois, her grandmother, India, her brother, Conrad, and for a short while, her father, Howell. Her mother and father separated when she was seven and she lived out her childhood in a house on 1121 Cross Street with her mother, brother and grandmother. She explains her earlier life as feeling as if "we always had a white foot pressed against the back of our necks" (Beals 7). She explains this feeling as coming from a place where the adults in her household lived in fear and apprehension about stepping out of line. As part of her memoir, Melba gives her account as a young girl torn between the worlds of the segregated South and her fantasy world as a young girl wishing desperately to be liked by a boy, to listen to music with friends and to attend wrestling matches with her grandmother.

In her memoir, Beals juxtaposes reports of the daily news and passages that explain her desire to understand why white people did not like her. She narrates her story with the help of newspaper headlines retold stories from the press and entries from her diary during that time. In addition to this, she describes her intimate feelings and understanding about integration in America in the late 1950s. When she shares her story and experiences, she also offers her interpretations of her relationship with the press, in particular, the *Arkansas Gazette/Democrat*, the state paper that played a major role in reporting the integration of Central High.

In her memoir, Beals mentions the press seventy-three times. Of the seventythree times, there were six expressions I labeled convergence, three labeled conflict, twenty-five labeled NA and thirty-nine labeled contextual moments (see fig. 1). The convergences were moments when she saw pictures of herself in the paper, she was being quoted in the paper, and when she read headlines/stories about herself or one of the Little Rock Nine in the press. Her expressions labeled conflict were responses to the fact that newspaper reporters were given information about her (or she feared the press would reveal information to its readers) and knew that this kind of information, if leaked, would come back to haunt her. In addition, there were moments when she feared she would/could be physically harmed and taunted by local school children. The NA moments were times when Beals listed headlines from the papers without giving a response, when she explained reading the press to keep up on current situations and when she wrote her own stories for the press but did not explain her response. The contextual moments describe her family's relationship to the press and how the press was viewed by Beals at the time of the Little Rock situation.

The patterns found in Beals' memoir were six voice for the people, twentyfive community connection, six vehicle for crusade, two active silence and twelve concessions for conflict (see fig. 2). The greatest overlap in patterns were amongst voice for the people, community connection and vehicle for crusade. There was also overlap between community connection and concessions for conflict.

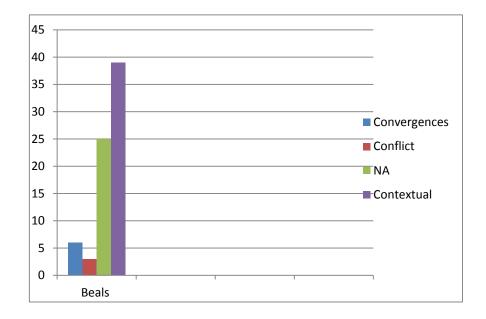
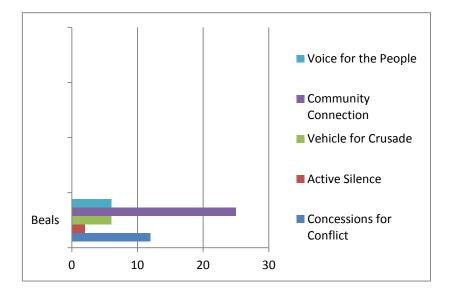


Figure 1 Beals: Convergences, conflicts, NA and contextual moments

Figure 2 Beals: Voice for the People, Community Connection, Vehicle for Crusade, Active Silence and Concessions for Conflict



# Examples

In one of the six moments labeled convergence, Beals responds to seeing an ad with a picture of her friend, one of the Nine, in the paper. The ad read "If you live in Arkansas, study this picture and know shame. When hate is unleashed and bigotry finds a voice, God help us all" (52). In response to this Beals says "I felt a kind of joy and hope in the thought that one white man was willing to use his money to call attention to the injustice we were facing. Maybe the picture would help others realize what they were doing was hurting everybody" (52). In another moment, she is not responding to an ad or picture in an ad, but instead she gives an impression of what it felt like to have her story and words written down by a white reporter. She says "The white reporters wrote my words down and behaved as if what I said was very important. Pride welled up inside me, and for the first time, I knew that working for integration was the right thing for me to be doing" (57).

Another convergence was when she says "It had a full-page picture of my back in it. There I was, ponytail and all, saluting the flag. It wasn't the first time we'd seen ourselves in print or on television, but we giggled at the wonder of it all—Miss Minnijean and Miss Melba could now be seen on the pages of *Life*, *Look, or The New York Times*" (130). And finally, after Melba's mom shares her story about her job loss with a reporter and the story is printed in the paper, her grandma says "Praise the Lord, we got us some power, now" (208). Melba says "It was the first time in days I saw hope in everybody's eyes, hope that we could fight all those high-powered white men who were taking Mama's job away" (208). After reading the article in the paper, Melba's mom uses what was printed in the paper to negotiate keeping her job (210).

There were three conflicts, or moments when Beals encountered the press and her response to the encounter was negative. Prior to a court hearing for Governor Faubus, the Nine met with Thurgood Marshall and Melba explains that Marshall

> Urged us to prepare ourselves to testify in federal court, if need be. Right then and there I began to fret about the truth I couldn't tell. If I testified in court about what really happened to me, it would get printed in the newspapers, and those men would come after us again. But now I knew that, worst of all, it would give the governor yet another excuse to keep us out of school. The very basis of his argument against our integrating was that it would cause so much violence that blood would run in the streets. If I told the judge about the men having chased us, the governor could use my words as weapons against us. (56)

The second

THE NINE WHO DARED, *New York Post*, Thursday, December 5, 1957

Newspapers across the country started carrying a series of articles and profiles on the nine of us. Central High segregationists used the details to taunt us. The articles gave specific information on what our homes were like, our backgrounds, our hobbies, our aspirations—all there was to know about us. Students didn't let up for one minute, chirping on about my folks, my mother's teaching, and things I considered personal and sacred. (142)

The third

# JUDGE LEMLEY TO HEAR SCHOOL BOARD'S PETITION— Arkansas Gazette, Tuesday, April 22, 1958

As I read the article I felt despair creeping over me. Judge Harry Lemley of Hope Arkansas, had been named to hear Little Rock School Board petition asking for postponement of integration for public schools. ( . . .) The article described him as a native of Upperville, Virginia, and a man who 'loved the South as though it were a religion.' It was evident from that description that he wouldn't be likely to violate Southern tradition for my people. (193)

There were twenty-five impressions marked as NA for Beals. Some include her reading the paper without any response such as when she says "the headline told the story: FAUBUS CALLS NATIONAL GUARD TO KEEP SCHOOL SEGREGATED Troops Take Over at Central High; Negroes Told to Wait— *Arkansas Gazette*, Tuesday, September 3, 1957 (30). Following the reprinted headline Beals moves on to describe what happened the following Tuesday. In other NA moments there seemed to be an impression made, but it isn't quite clear, without Beals' confirmation, if the impression is in response to the actual event. The contextual moments for each memoir were marked when the press was mentioned but were not literacy events—that of the women reading/writing in the paper. These were moments when the women simply mention the press. These moments offer glimpses into the role of the press in the lives of the women. For Beals these offered descriptions of the paper in her life as well as that of the community and the Little Rock Nine. For example, she says

In my diary I wrote:

It's important for me to read the newspaper, every single day God sends, even if I have to spend my own nickel to buy it. I have to keep up with what the men on the Supreme Court are doing. That way I can stay home on the day the justices vote decisions that make white men want to rape me. (19)

There are also examples of how/why her family read, wrote, interacted and used the paper. For example, Melba explains

> Going home to be with my grandmother India was something I looked forward to every day. Peering over the book or newspaper she was reading, she would always greet me the same way: And what did you learn today?" She hadn't finished high school, but she had read lots of books, and she studied everything and everybody all the time. Over an after-school snack of warm gingerbread and milk, the two of us would talk and laugh until it was time for me to start my chores and homework. (13)

In a similar instance, she says, "We would play Yahtzee or read pages from some fun novel I would choose. Sometimes we'd read through the newspaper together, but only the good things like the launching of an American satellite into orbit that circled the earth in 116 minutes" (161).

### Daisy Bates, The Long Shadow of Little Rock

In her memoir, Daisy Bates describes how she grew up in Arkansas raised by adoptive parents—friends of her family. In the memoir she tells her readers her mother was killed by three white men and her father left town shortly after. Bates reveals early in the memoir that her adoptive father on his deathbed said to her

> You're filled with hatred. Hate can destroy you, Daisy. Don't hate white people just because they're white. If you hate, make it count for something. Hate the humiliations we are living under in the South. Hate the discrimination that eats away at the soul of every black man and woman. Hate the insults hurled at us by white scum—and then try to do something about it, or your hate won't spell a thing. (29)

He says this to her as her early years were spent tormenting and torturing the white man she believed killed her mother. She says in response to this "I'm listening to every word you say, Daddy, and I'll try to do whatever you say. But rest—you must rest now" (29).

He refuses and goes on to tell her about the day of her birth mother's funeral. He explains how white hoodlums poured red paint on him and he decided against taking actions into his own hands as he knew he would be lynched for such a thing. Instead, he acts calmly and reports it to the sheriff who disregards his story. He says to Daisy, "I should have died that day, for I am not sure anymore what I lived for." He says further, "nothing is going to change all of a sudden, and any Negro speaking out alone will suffer. But more and more will join him, and the blacks, acting together will one day . . ." (29). Daisy then says how the Catholic sister came to sit with him and that she knew he was dying. She closes the chapter with

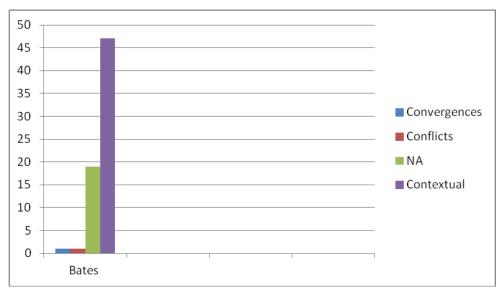
> As I walked along the street taking in the freshness of the early morning air, I knew that as surely as my father was dying, I was undergoing a rebirth. My father had passed on to me a priceless heritage—one that was to sustain me throughout the years to come. (31)

This opening section of the memoir shows the fire within Daisy and the power and reason for her crusade against racism in America. She dedicates an entire chapter to her early childhood and the negative thoughts and feelings she carried in her. After the chapter on her childhood Beals then moves on to talk about how she and her husband started a paper, the *State Press*, explains the work she and her husband engage in prior to, during and after the Little Rock integration events, and explains the role she played during the time of integration.

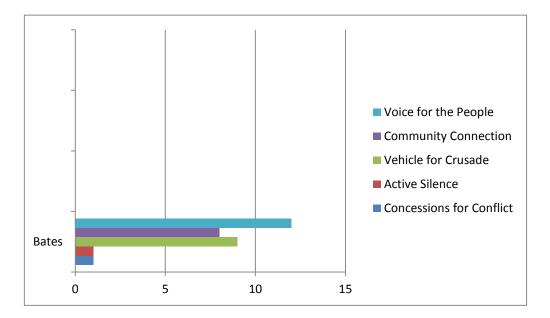
In *The Long Shadow of Little Rock*, Bates mentions the press sixty-eight times. Of the sixty-eight times, there was one impression that was labeled convergence, one that was labeled conflict, nineteen labeled NA and forty-seven

that were labeled contextual moments (see fig. 3). For Bates there were fewer convergences (one) and conflicts (one) compared to how many times she mentions the press overall-sixty-eight times. The convergence for Bates is a description of how the people of Little Rock responded to an article about integration. The conflict was similar in that it too was not her impression but a response of the people of Little Rock. Because there were many more NA and contextual moments, I was able to get a particular view of Daisy's relationship with the press. In these moments, I found descriptions of how her husband understood his life's work and how Daisy saw herself as a reporter, editor and crusader against injustice in the South. There were also descriptions offered of the activities of local and national reporters and further description of how the citizens of Little Rock understood the press. The patterns found include twelve voice for the people, eight community connection, nine vehicle for crusade, one active silence and one concession for conflict (see fig. 4). The overlap in patterns for Daisy were amongst voice for the people, community connection and vehicle for crusade.

Figure 3 Bates: Convergences, conflicts, NA and contextual moments



# Figure 4 Bates: Voice for the People, Community Connection, Vehicle for Crusade, Active Silence and Concessions for Conflict



Examples

In the only moment of convergence Bates makes reference not to her own reading and writing in the press, but she offers the responses of the citizens of Little Rock. Although these moments were not hers, they were her observations of how people interpreted texts at that time. In the moment of convergence Bates says

Whether the troops would return in the fall when school was to reopen was anybody's guess. Officially there was only silence. Those who were fearful about the future of Negro students at Central placed their hopes on newspaper reports that said that United States Marshalls would be on hand to protect students in September. But officially there was only more silence. (151)

As in the category of convergence, Daisy Bates had only one response labeled conflict. In it, she is not speaking of her own reactions or readings to the press but instead of the reactions of the citizens of Little Rock. In the one example Bates says

> Benjamin Fine of *The New York Times* told me that Smith was like a one-man army. But when reporters questioned Smith on how he stood on the issue of integration, he replied, 'That's out of my province. Our function is to do everything we can to protect life

and property and preserve the public peace. And that's what we do every day.' (183)

Bates says "Although Smith's actions drew expressions of appreciation from local businessmen and city officials, from that day on he became a prime target of segregationists. ( . . .) "They hurled such epithets at him as "Gestapo!" "Yellow dog!" "Nigger-loving red!" and "Judas!" (183). Although Bates is observing the public's response to the interview with Smith, it still reveals the negative responses instigated by reading the press. Because Bates included them in her memoir, it revealed a lot about how she observed the public's responses to the press.

For Bates, her NA events (nineteen), or those without responses, were more than the conflicts (one) or convergences (one). For example, Bates reports that on March 29, 1946 she printed a story of which her husband, L.C., created the headline FTA STRIKERS SENTENCED TO PEN BY A HAND-PICKED JURY (41-42). Bates reprints the full story in her memoir. Following the reprint of the article she says the following

> Shortly after my story appeared, two Pulaski County Police Sheriffs came to our home and knocked at the door. 'We have a warrant for your arrests,' one said, as he handed us the summons. We were told to read it. It stated: 'You are commanded to take L.C. Bates and Mrs. L. Christopher Bates, City Editors of the Arkansas *State Press* and them safely keep so that they be and

appear before the first division circuit court of Pulaski County, Arkansas, on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of April, at 9:30 A.M. to answer the people of Arkansas for contempt of court . . .' (41).

Following, Bates goes on to explain what happened once they were taken in, fingerprinted, placed in jail and released on bond and then moves on to say "World War II ended" (43). She offered no response to the literacy event. She moves the narrative forward in time.

For contextual moments, Bates had forty-seven. These moments explained her life as a reporter, her life working alongside her husband in the State Press, and revealed her reading and writing during the Little Rock events as well as her early experiences with the press. Her contextual moments also included the coming and going of local and national press during that time. These included moments such as "My husband, L.C. Bates, and I had moved to Little Rock in 1941 and started a newspaper, the *State Press*. In spite of its crusading spirit, the paper prospered; and L.C., as my husband was always known, looked forward to a life of, if not serenity, at least quiet, progressive, journalistic endeavor" (2-3). Another moment recorded as contextual was, "In March, 1946, L.C. went off on a much-needed vacation. I was temporarily the proud editor-in-chief, responsible for getting the paper out all on my own. A few days after L.C. left, I was the first reporter to arrive on a murder scene to cover the story" (39). A third example of a contextual moment read "The door was closed on the State Press and on eighteen years of our lives. No last good-bys, no final editorials. The break had to be clean

and sharp, for the pain was too deep. At exactly, 5 P.M., the *State Press* had breathed its last word" (178).

### Sarah Patton Boyle, The Desegregated Heart

In her memoir, Sarah Patton Boyle describes her life as a white woman living in the South who was influenced by her Southern roots and her families' rootedness in elite white Southern society. Boyle's memoir takes her readers from her early years in the South of which she explains she admired and loved the "colored help" in her home through the time of her adult life fighting against the cruelty of black Americans in the South. She speaks passionately about her relationship with the colored help and also explains how her mother disapproved of this relationship and pulled Boyle away from it. Boyle then describes her life with her husband and explains how, as a young wife of a professor, she manages their home and daily life. Following this, she reveals her excitement and joy of learning of Gregory Swanson's desire to enroll in law school at the University of Virginia. Swanson was the first black man to seek admission to the law school at the University of Virginia. Boyle's early excitement about this news leads her on a life-changing journey that leaves her without friends, without family and without welcome in the South.

In her introduction, Boyle says "In the years ahead, when Southern editorial pages not infrequently demanded that I leave the South, I was grateful for the indoctrination that my roots were strong and deep" (5). Boyle, in addition to having a passion for the cause, was raised by a religious father who helped influence how she thought about speaking out and making public one's thoughts and beliefs on issues concerning race. In her belief that making one's voice known to the public, Boyle also illustrates her understanding of the press as a place to make her voice public. Much of her memoir is dedicated to explaining how she used the press by writing articles, editorials to help end desegregation in Virginia.

In Boyle's memoir, I found one hundred forty-four mentions of the press. Of the one hundred forty-four times the press was mentioned, thirty-nine were convergences, seventy-six were conflicts, thirteen were NA and sixteen were contextual (see fig. 5). In her memoir, unlike that of the other women, when Boyle encountered the press, she also gave a response to the encounter. However, in her memoir there are more conflicts than all other categories combined. Moments that were labeled conflict included when she was disappointed in the public's non-response to her articles and editorials or when she received no praise for her work; other moments included when she feared what the segregationists were able to communicate to the public. Throughout her memoir Boyle focuses on herself as a writer and many of the moments labeled convergence were moments like this. She often mentions seeing herself as a good writer and therefore doesn't know how or why people misunderstood her. She also explains throughout her memoir that she uses her writing to reach people and to speak her thoughts to the community. There are a number of convergences that reflect this idea. As for her NA and contextual moments, there were far fewer of these moments than for the rest of the women. However, when she gave no response to an encounter, she focused primarily on herself and her process as a writer.

Contextual moments described Boyle as a writer and addressed her process as a writer. Her patterns include thirty-four voice for the people, thirtytwo community connection, twenty-six vehicle for crusade, fourteen active silence and eleven concessions for conflict (see fig. 6). The strongest overlap was amongst voice for the people, community connection and vehicle for crusade. At times concessions for conflict overlapped with these three. In addition, voice for people and active silence overlapped.

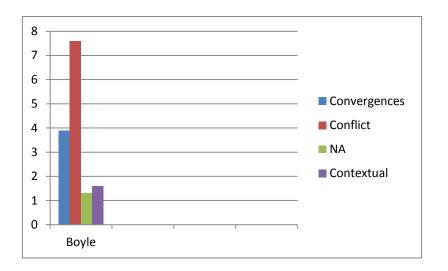
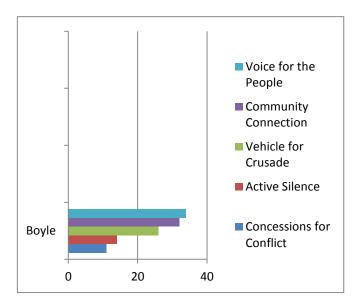


Figure 5 Boyle: Convergences, conflicts, NA and contextual moments

Figure 6 Boyle: Voice for the People, Community Connection, Vehicle for Crusade, Active Silence and Concessions for Conflict



# Examples

Boyle's moments of convergence were mostly in response to her understanding of her writing and her understanding of how others perceived her writing. Moments of convergence also include when she believed she was using her writing to reach the people of the South. For example, this sentiment is expressed in a moment when Boyle reads over a piece she wrote for the press about Swanson's entrance and acceptance into the community at the University of Virginia. She says

Reading the piece over I was pleased. It glowed with fairmindedness and good will, and would go far toward creating the best possible climate of opinion for Swanson at the University and for 'nonsegregation' in general. A member of the University News Service staff who read it heartily agreed, and another staff member assured me, 'this is the kind of thing we would like to see published. (71)

Although the piece was never published, Boyle comments that she liked it so much she thought it had the potential to be published in national magazines. In another moment we see her "raising" her voice to seek retribution or to reach across the lines of segregation. Boyle says

> He [T.J. Sellers, editor of Charlottesville's black newspaper] wrote a kind letter thanking me for the "deep and moving sincerity with which the piece must have been written," and said it would appear in the next issue of *The Tribune*. Then he added that, had time permitted, he would have called on me personally to thank me for it. After dark months of failure, once again I had succeeded in communicating across the segregation line. (98)

Other moments I labeled convergence were when she received support for her writing. For example, in response to her *Post* article in which she wrote about

segregation and also in support of courtesy titles for black citizens, she explains what a few people said of her writing. One writer says

> What I have just read in *The Daily Progress* has made me see red . ... I just want to say that I am so glad you wrote the article .... I am very proud that we live in the same town and everyone here should be. More power to you. If I can ever be of help, please call on me. (218)

As for conflicts, Boyle discusses editorials in response to Swanson's admission to graduate school and says "none even hinted at what I knew to be a fact—that integration would be agreeable to many Southern whites" (76). She says in response to this "I was very sick at heart. Perhaps what troubled me most was the persistent implication that the right way for Southerners to feel was that integration was unthinkable. ( . . .) And I knew that such an implication is the kind of thing which creates opinion. Convince a man that he ought to feel a certain way and pretty soon he believes that he does" (77). In another moment she expresses concern after her article in *The Post* was published and more people came out publicly against her than for her. She says

As public attacks persisted, claiming that the facts I reported were half tommyrot and half lies, and no voice defended their truth or affirmed the principles which they illustrated, even those who privately expressed corroboration became silent. The warm social pond in which I bathed suddenly froze. (220)

There were few moments without impression (NA). One simply talked about writing as source of income. She says

I liked the challenge of making ends meet and contentedly collected such data as that rice was cheaper per serving than potatoes, tea per cup than coffee, and that I could entertain a room full of people for one dollar if only I invited them to tea, not dinner or cocktails. Incidentally, I later worked by accumulated economic wisdom into an article—my first—which I promptly sold to a leading women's magazine for a sum which staggered me and induced me to substitute nonfiction writing for portrait painting as my source of personal income. (43-44)

Boyle described her responses to most all encounters with the press and had fewer contextual moments. However, there were some contextual moments that did reveal her thoughts on the press and her process as a writer. For example, she says

> My practical training as a writer, besides teaching me to seek facts at their source, had taught me to pursue the reason for the rejection of a piece of my writing. I sometimes submitted a manuscript to above a dozen magazines, until at last it either sold, received editorial criticism, or exhausted my list of market possibilities. I followed this pattern with my letters and manuscript 'rejected' by Swanson. (82)

Anne Braden, The Wall Between

From the Foreword of The Wall Between

In 1954, Anne and Carl Braden bought a house in an all-white neighborhood in Louisville, Kentucky, for a black couple, Andrew and Charlotte Wade. *The Wall Between* is Anne Braden's account of what this act of friendship precipitated—mob violence against the Wades, the bombing of the house, and a prison term for sedition for Carl Braden. (ix)

Braden's memoir explains the story of a white woman who was born and raised in an upper-middle class neighborhood in Alabama. Braden explains how growing up this way during the 1950s meant she could avoid the pain and suffering that others were experiencing. She makes clear that it was after attending college, becoming a reporter, experiencing life as a reporter and meeting her husband, Carl, that the way she saw the world changed drastically. She says that not only did she become an activist but she and her husband embarked on a journey that changed their lives for good. She tells how her husband came home one day from work stating he had bought a new house in an all-white neighborhood for a black family, the Wades. Braden explains that she first felt shock then realized what he had done. She then explains the abuse, fear, and attacks they experienced and then details how they were tried and Carl was convicted of sedition.

Braden's interactions with the press, as they are revealed in her memoir, were of two worlds: one a hostile place and the other a world she knew or believed could effect change. She was exposed to the press early as a young reporter and it is this exposure that teaches her the disappointments and benefits of the press. The disappointments include when the press did not do enough in support of integration during the incident with the Wade house. However, she simultaneously found in the press benefits that allowed her space to support integration and offer the public truth about the situation with the Wade home. For Braden there were one hundred twenty-four moments recorded. Out of the one hundred twenty-four moments, seven were convergences, thirty were conflicts, twenty-eight were NA and fifty-nine were contextual (see fig. 7). The five patterns that emerged throughout all texts emerged throughout hers as well. For her patterns she had twenty-five voice for the people, twenty-seven community connection, ten vehicle for crusade, four active silence and eighteen concessions for conflict (see fig. 8). The overlap for Braden was amongst voice for people, community connection and concession for conflict. There was also overlap in voice for the people, community connection and vehicle for crusade.

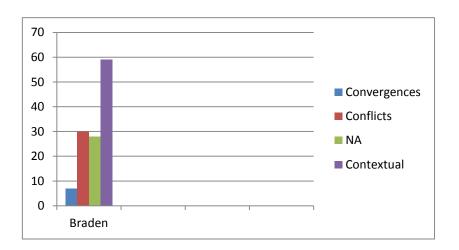
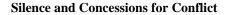
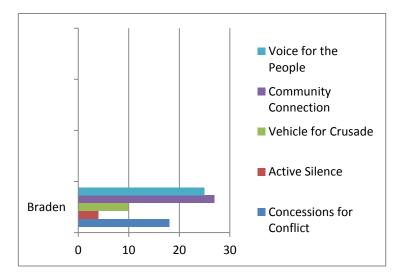


Figure 7 Braden: Convergences, conflicts, NA and contextual moments

Figure 8 Braden: Voice for the People, Community Connection, Vehicle for Crusade, Active





Examples

Braden had several types of convergences with the press. One type was when she knew there was an important news story that needed to be told, such us when the Bradens were being tried for sedition in court. Anne says after a long day in court

> We immediately called the newspapers to tell them what had taken place in the grand jury room. We felt that the best antidote for what was going on was the strong glaring light of publicity. In the next morning's *Courier-Journal*, the story was front-page news, and on the following day the paper ran this editorial headlined 'The Crime was Bombing, Not Beliefs': ... (188)

There were also moments labeled convergence when she was able to say what she needed to say. For example, when she reflects on a statement she and her husband made to the press following the purchase of the home for the Wades she says Since that time, we have been asked the question 'Why' many times by many people; we have spoken and written many words trying to explain. But I have often thought that this first statement, made in the heat of events and under pressure of a deadline although it wasn't as carefully thought out as some of the things we said later—was perhaps the most valid reflection of our unconscious thoughts on the matter. (69)

There are also moments of convergence when the *Courier-Journal* defends the Bradens. She says "It was a courageous editorial. In view of the strong disapproval the *Courier-Journal* editorial board felt toward Carl and me, it also reflected a high degree of devotion to principle" (190).

As for conflicts, Braden felt conflict when the public showed fear of progress. She expresses this when she says

No one dreamed at that time that in the following autumn Hitt's theories would be adopted as official policy by law enforcement agencies in the country. But there can be no doubt that in Shively itself, the constant campaign of the *Newsweek* played a large part in molding public opinion—much of it public opinion that might gradually have been won for the support of the Wades if a different kind of leadership had been forthcoming. This fact was dramatized to me in a telephone conversation I had with a woman in Shively during the summer. (98)

She also expressed conflict when she and her husband were criticized in the press. For example, she says

> Some weeks later I had occasion to discuss the editorial position of the *Courier-Journal* with its publisher, Mark Ethridge. I argued that perhaps they had failed in a vital moment when leadership was needed and could not completely disclaim responsibility for the further violence that followed. (83)

This was also the same when the paper was used against Carl. For example, she says

One of the things the interviewers sought to establish was that Carl and I had actually written the statements that Andrew gave to the press from time to time. The only element of truth in this is that Andrew on occasion brought us some statement he planned to make and asked us, on the basis of our professional experience, to condense it and put it into a form the newspapers would be most likely to use. (261)

The moments of NA were when she explains her early years as a reporter, her life's work after the incident with the Wade house as well as her husband's experiences as a reporter. She says

For example, the year I went to work on the *Times*, a Negro high school teacher filed a suit to enter the graduate school of the

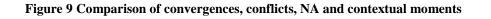
University of Kentucky for summer courses. I interviewed him at the time, and it made a rather important news story because it was something few people had expected to happen in Kentucky for a long time to come. At that time school segregation was so settled in Louisville that many people who did not oppose the man's suit considered it quixotic and futile move. (44)

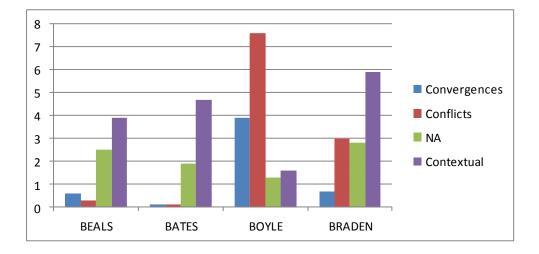
Braden had many contextual moments. They explained Carl's career, her career, the role of the press during the incident with the Wade home, as well as her later reflections on this time in her personal history. For example, she says of Carl

> Carl never went back to school after he left the proseminary at sixteen. But, because of his intellectual interests, it was natural that he gravitated to a semi-intellectual field of endeavor—the newspaper business, instead of the field of manual labor where his father had worked. He became a reporter first on Louisville papers and later on papers in Cincinnati. Finally he became editor of the Kentucky edition of the Cincinnati Enquirer, at the age of twentyfive—after having worked as their labor reporter during the big CIO organizing drive (16).

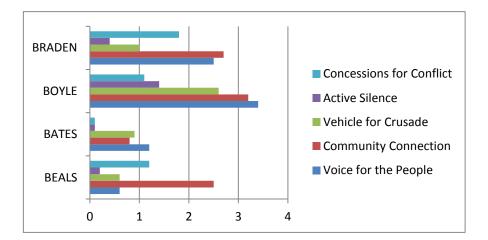
### Comparisons

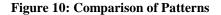
The two charts below offer visual aids in support of the results found in the memoirs. The first chart lists the total convergences, conflicts, NA and contextual moments found in each memoir. The numbers to the left indicate the number of each category found by tens. The second chart offers a comparison of the number of patterns found in each memoir. The findings are also listed by tens.





This chart shows that Boyle has the most conflicts, Braden has the most contextual moments, Boyle has the most convergences and Braden has the most NA moments. It also shows that Bates has the least convergences and conflicts and Boyle has the least NA and contextual moments.





This chart shows Boyle as having the most voice for the people, the most community connection, the most vehicle for crusade and active silence. It also shows Braden has the most concessions for conflict, Bates has the least concession for conflict and active silence and Beals has the least vehicle for crusade and voice for the people.

In the following chapter I discuss the significance of the women's impressions of their encounters with the press, the significance of their memoirs in exposing the influence of the press in their practice and literate lives and the importance of this work for future research.

#### CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

At the heart of this study is the desire to understand how women experience their literacy and the influences that shape their literate identities and practice. Studying the women's encounters and reactions to the press as sponsor allowed analyses of the literate identities and practices of four women reading and writing in the press in America's South in the 1950s/60s. Using their memoirs as the primary source for collecting data allowed access into the women's reactions and responses to their encounters with the press and therefore offered insight into the way they experienced the practice and the role the press played in shaping their experiences. It also provided insight into the role and ideological presence of the press during that time in America's history, including who had access to the press, the press's ability to shape what gets valued in America and in the movement and its role in perpetuating/fighting the racist culture of America at that time. Primary questions that informed the research in this dissertation include in what ways do individual responses to the literacy(ies) available provide insight into a sponsor's role in shaping literate practice(s) and identity (ies)? Secondary questions include

- What is gained by using the notion of sponsor to study texts?
- What is learned about a literate practice by looking at the relationship between sponsor and sponsored? Including, what is learned about the literate practice of a particular gender from a particular time period?
- What are the benefits/downfalls of using memoirs as a primary source in a study about literacy?

• What long-term knowledge can be gained by a study such as this?

The analysis of the data from each of the memoirs showcases the unique experience of each woman and the role individual perception of the press played in the women's encounters with the press. The study revealed the influential role perception, as it was shaped by life experiences and personal history, played in determining the sponsor's influence in both practice and identity. The analysis also revealed the many shared features of the women's practices/identities as they were connected to the narrative of the civil rights movement and the myths of literacy. The shared features include their strong beliefs in the press as a voice for the people and their belief that writing about the injustices in the South would create equality. In their unique features and shared beliefs, each woman's story adds to the long history of intelligent women writers and activists who sought change and yet reveals the ways in which the literacy available denied, suppressed and regulated those experiences (Brandt). This study emphasizes how being literate shaped the women's individual life experiences and outcomes and therefore emphasizes the need to continue to understand and study what it means to be literate.

#### Melba Pattillo Beals

Beals' recorded events were mostly contextual and NA moments; she had very few reactions recorded as conflict or convergence. Beals' memoir reveals the presence of the myths of literacy in that being educated and being literate were important factors to her family. This is made apparent to the reader through Beals' discussion about her mother's education and career as a school teacher, in her

grandmother's interest in keeping the family educated and in the rules of the household which required Melba and her brother to do well in school. The contextual moments showed the role the press played in her family and the importance it held in their lives. This includes examples of her family reading the paper to learn the latest news and the strict household guidelines about the press such as when Melba and her brother were allowed to read the paper. In addition, Beals explains in her memoir the thrills of seeing herself and the Little Rock Nine in the press and shows the excitement she experienced as part of her literate practice. The sum of her contextual moments paint a picture of a young woman whose literate practice of reading and writing in the press was encouraged by her family for purposes related to the movement and not. Beals encounters with the press collectively reveal a perception of the press as having a great importance and significance in her life, especially in its ability to inform. This perception, one that came up in most events, is also shared in later descriptions about her life choices and her ways of seeing the press, such as her decision to become a reporter.

Beals' NA moments consist mostly of newspaper clippings of the Little Rock experience. She included many headlines in her memoir and mentions reading an article or looking up a story, but does not offer how she experienced these moments. However, her memoir reveals the press's ability to allow and deny literate opportunities and these opportunities granted and denied are highlighted in her conflicts and convergences with the press. Her convergences show opportunities granted, such as when she speaks to the press or sees herself in the

press as part of the Little Rock Nine. Her conflicts with the press were provoked by fear of physical retribution of segregationists or by fear of torment in school. Unlike the other three women, her conflicts with the press were not provoked by intellectual debate and engagement. Instead she saw the press as informing others of who she is and where she lived and therefore feared what others could or would do with the information available to them courtesy of the press.

Although most of Beals' talk of the press was contextual, in that she mentioned the press more than she had a response to it, her narrative and the contextual moments reveal a lot about her relationship with the press and the patterns found within. Seeing the press as a way to connect to the community was a predominant pattern in Beals' memoir. She saw the press as something that connected her to the community and the pulse at the time. Beals, like Boyle and Braden, also had a significant number of concessions for conflict. So many times the press was doing something that would appear to be similar to other conflicts in her life but her reactions were not negative. For example, there were instances when the press reported on the lives of the Little Rock Nine that could have resulted in physical punishment and torture from segregationists, but Beals gave no negative response. In addition, the data collected from Beals' memoir showed very little voice for the people or vehicle for crusade. Unlike the other memoirs, Beals' memoir does not paint her as having the same crusader spirit. Beals was young during her experience with Central High and her memoir not only detailed her feelings on Little Rock but equally discussed issues of teenage angst. The other three women wanted their voices heard and knew what they wanted to say

where as Beals was confronted by the press because of her desire to attend Central High. Beals had very few moments labeled active silence. And yet, she was good and trained to be silent by Thurgood Marshall, Daisy Bates and others in the NAACP who were actively supporting and assisting the Little Rock Nine through their experiences.

Many things contribute to Beals' being literate in this way at that time in her life—such as her age, her family's values and feelings about being literate and her previous experiences with the press. From Beals' memoir and the data collected from it, it is learned that her family valued literacy and that unlike the others they were a quiet family trying to make it in the South. We know that being literate allowed Melba and her family the opportunity to stay connected to her community. We know from her story that the press did not create warriors or crusaders but that it did allow warriors and crusaders to become vocal in the public. Her goal, unlike that of the others, was not to speak out on issues to the press, but instead that she wanted to enter Central High and that this action brought her story to the press. We learn instead from Melba that when in contact with particular literate beings, the press created readers/writers who looked to the press for information and connection. Her perception of reading and writing in the press as alluring and exciting was also shared with her perception of the press as the source for keeping her informed and connected to her community and the world. It was also what lead her to pain and suffering in school. It gave her a platform from which to speak and it also was the medium that brought her down. These perceptions and knowledge through engagement and repeated practice,

allowed Beals to use the press in ways that gave her control and agency in her life during that time and gave her space to engage with a public concerned about what she and the Little Rock Nine were doing.

### **Daisy Bates**

In Bates' memoir her contextual moments show her literate practice of reading and writing in the press as one mostly driven by her desire to fight racial discrimination. In the memoir her readers learn that she is introduced into the world of the press by her husband L.C. and not through her own desire to be a reporter. She even confesses her skepticism of entering the world of the press in response to L.C.'s urges to own their own paper. However, after the paper is started, Daisy becomes an integral part of the paper's small successes as a writer, editor and owner. She spends time early in her memoir describing what she wrote in the press and why. She makes very clear that the press was the only vehicle that could reach the public and fight the crusade necessary to effect change. This becomes important in that the data collected showed her encounters with the press were not of conflict or convergence. In analyzing the data, Bates had very few responses/reactions to her encounters with the press. She has one conflict and one convergence. In the moments of conflict and convergence she responds mostly to the public and their responses to news reported in the press. Bates' text was filled predominantly with contextual and NA moments. Bates is careful in how she describes encounters with the press and does very little to explain her own feelings about the encounters. However, her feelings are revealed when she describes how she sees the press as the only tool to fight the crusade against

segregation in the South—a cause dear to her heart. It is revealed in the chapter "Death of the *State Press*" that her emotions and feelings about closing the doors of the Arkansas *State Press* was one of sadness for her husband but for her it seemed the sadness was centered in the silence of the *State Press* as a crusading voice for the civil rights movement.

Bates experienced the press, unlike the others, as reporter, editor and owner. She was a writer but unique to her experience was that she got to print what she wanted because she was owner. Unlike Boyle and Braden who had to engage with the negotiations with editors over printing what they needed and wanted to say, Bates wrote what she wanted to at times without having to be silenced or ignored. She paid consequences however that were similar to the other women including, personal attacks and jail time, but unlike the others, the paper prohibited her less from what she wanted to say, which obviously awarded her different feelings and encounters with the press. The patterns in Bates' memoir show she used the press for the traditional purposes of the black presses. It was a vehicle for crusade, it was what connected the community and it was the voice for the people. She had one concession for conflict and one active silence. Her practice seems rooted in her father's dying words in that she needed to fight the crusade, but not alone. Press as sponsor gave her a public voice that connected her to others to crusade against the injustices in the South.

What was learned about the press as sponsor for Bates, in addition to the influence of her father's dying words, was what L.C. introduced to her. Once L.C. and Daisy became owners of the *State Press*, Bates' experiences of reading and

writing in the press begin as well. In the memoir Bates includes many reprinted moments from the press-including reprints of newspaper headlines, feature articles, advertisements and stories about the Little Rock Nine. She speaks about the stories printed in the papers and the people who work for the paper all as crusaders. Her practice is one that allowed her to say what she needed to say publicly to support the cause and connect to the community. With press as sponsor she became someone who got to fight her crusade and got to do it without being alone in her fight. Her perception of the press is unique to her in that unlike the other women, she saw her voice as one that could influence change and used the press to do this. Because she had the *State Press* at her disposal along with connections to other publications through acquaintances, she was able to use the press to shape and tell the story of the Little Rock Nine. This is much different from the other women who had less access/influence in what got printed. Although Braden had close connections to the press, what stories got told and how the press aligned itself with the stories was not as predictable to Braden as it was for Bates. For Bates, her access and understanding of the press gave her a unique perspective on the press and her encounters with it. This included perceptions of the press as an agent to fix and undo the wrongs in the South, an ideal aligned closely with the movement's beliefs about the press. In her case, the press was a vehicle that could undo the wrongs that sat at the core of her life's history and pain.

Sarah Patton Boyle

In Boyle's memoir the descriptions of her earlier years do not reveal much about her as a child reader/writer. What is learned about her early life is that she was taught to respect her voice and value what she had to say. She was also taught that expressing what one thought to others was an important part of being a good citizen. As her memoir later reveals, these principles were the driving force behind her choices to speak her thoughts in the press. In her memoir, the readers are introduced to Boyle's relationship with the press when she explains how she earns an income by painting and freelance writing articles in weekly magazines. After becoming involved in issues of desegregation, the press becomes the place where she expresses her thoughts. When she becomes involved in issues of desegregation, she also begins her relationship with T.J.Sellers, the editor of *The Tribune*, Charlottesville's black newspaper. Her relationship with Sellers includes a decade of writing and learning about race relations through Seller's guidance. It is during this time that she uses the press to help make her views public.

However, unlike the other women, she had many more frustrations and conflicts with the press. For Boyle, the press as sponsor allowed space to make public her thoughts but conflicts arose when her thoughts were not published/made public and when the community did not connect to what she said. If the press prohibited Boyle or if what she said was misread by others, she expressed disappointment. For Boyle the press was a tool to help her understand and explain herself to others; she saw it as a place to connect to those who she thought were on similar ground or shared similar values as her. However, the data revealed many convergences with the press as well, much more than NA and contextual moments. In the moments of convergence she was responding to affection and approval of others who liked her writing and sometimes liked the message she was relaying in the press, this included when people agreed or supported her opinions and ideas. Boyle's literacy as it was sponsored by the press allowed her to come to voice and allowed her to speak publicly about her position on segregation; it was also the medium that showed Boyle differences in how people thought and felt about issues concerning desegregation. When Boyle encountered the press, she responded to those encounters and this was something unique to her. The other women responded less and were not as vocal about their experiences with the press. This could be read as a habit of Boyle's personality, her religious upbringing, the encouragement she was given to speak her mind, or a combination or pairing of any of these. Based on the data collected and the contextual moments recorded, it was a combination of her personality, religious upbringing and the encouragement of her father that lead to the experiences she had with the press.

For Boyle the patterns were highly concentrated in voice for the people, community connections and vehicle for crusade. Boyle's patterns were similar to the patterns found in Bates' memoir. Boyle had few active silence and concessions; however, she had more than Bates. Her narrative and contextual moments help explain this. Her life was spent learning to be clear about what she had to say and was told to say it as loudly and to as many people as possible, so it makes sense that the patterns that showed up were those of vehicle for crusade, community connection and voice for the people like Bates. Her perception of the press was influenced by the belief that the press could connect the people, act as a voice for the people and act on behalf of the people. This perception is what encouraged her to engage in public discourse and left her with the hope that such engagement would be met with public acceptance and approval. Boyle, like Beals and Braden, had more concessions and more active silent moments than Bates. For Boyle, this could be understood in many ways. She was not the owner of a paper like Bates and therefore had more encounters with the press where she was in conflict because she had to negotiate with the press. In addition, Boyle had a deep understanding of and respect for the press that might contribute to her concessions. She also had her pulse was on what was occurring in the press and learned over time when and where to speak out—this included knowing when to remain silent—her knowing "how to use" the press gave her agency as a public participant in the debate (s) over desegregation.

What is learned from Sarah Patton Boyle's relationship with the press is that she was a woman who had many conflicts and convergences with the press and used the press for purposes traditionally sponsored by the press (vehicle for crusade, community connection and voice for the people), mostly, but also had concessions for conflict and moments of active silence. And although she was not a reporter, an owner, or a feature writer, the press sponsored this Virginia housewife with a knack for writing to engage in local issues on segregation in a public way. It was also learned that the very nature of the press, as Boyle perceived it to be, was one that included public engagement, which caused Boyle many disappointments, heartbreak and grief in her life but also kept her engaged in public discussion about the wrongs in the South.

## Anne Braden

In her memoir, Braden tells her readers that she was raised in a privileged family in the South, attended college and then went on to become a reporter in Alabama. Braden's description of her early years as a reporter is when her narrative about her relationship with the press begins. She explains in her memoir that as a reporter she was exposed to the good and bad that comes with being a reporter. She explains that the nature of being a reporter requires one to see the truly ugly in people and also forces one to see human value in all people one encounters. After revealing these earlier feelings/interactions with the press, she explains her relationship with her husband and his life's work as a writer. She makes it clear in her memoir that she and her husband were raised in different social classes but were united in their fight against injustice—of many kinds. In her memoir Braden focuses solely on a time in her life when she and her husband purchased a house in an all-white neighborhood for a black family. Although she contextualizes her writing experiences before and after those events, her memoir concentrates more specifically on her writing in the press as an ex-reporter (she left writing to raise a family) who knows the world of the press and uses it to share her stories and feelings about the incident with the Wade house.

In Braden's memoir, she mentions the press frequently but most moments were contextual. This included talk about the press in their lives including their relationships with reporters, their readings habits (particularly Carl's), Braden's understanding of the coverage of the Wade incident, but, like Bates, she doesn't offer as many reactions to her experiences. However, in the moments when she did provide a reaction to encounters, there were many more conflicts than convergences. She and her husband were writers/reporters and during the events with the Wade house the press took a neutral position and didn't support them like the Bradens expected. The response of the *Courier-Journal* in particular, because it was Carl's place of employment, didn't meet Anne's expectations, which included seeing the press as a way to express problems with injustice. However, even though Anne expected the press and the people she knew who were editors and reporters at the time to react and act in a particular way, she also had the most concessions for conflict. Her life's experience as a reporter and as the wife of a reporter/writer/editor, came full circle in that she again had experiences with the good and the bad of the press and saw them both as inevitable components of the press.

The data collected from Braden's memoir reveals Braden's relationship with the press as one that allowed her to connect to her local community and act as a voice to explain the causes she and her husband believed in—including, their actions concerning the Wade house. In the encounters with the press it was revealed that Braden perceived the press less as a vehicle and more as a space to speak out and connect to the community. She was rarely silent on issues that mattered to her and she saw the reporting of such issues in the press as acts that had the potential to do good but also as acts that had the potential to do more harm than good. This perception lead to future relationships with the press that

were described quite similarly to the time and encounters surrounding the incident with the Wade house. Braden's literacy as it was sponsored by the press includes seeing the world as split—one that as a writer asked her to see the good and bad in human beings. It also allowed her to connect to a large community and explain and explore issues on segregation in the South that she was not allowed to do as a reporter. Braden explains early that the life of a reporter is what turns and changes people and we see this in Braden's explanations of how her world changed for her as she worked as a reporter. In this memoir, Braden's literacy also appears to have been used for very personal reasons, that to voice their position on the Wade home, but also as a place to effect change in the local and national world. Comparisons

In the data I collected and analyzed, Beals and Bates had the least amount of total moments marked in their texts. There are many factors that may have influenced this, but one is that their texts were shorter than the other two texts. Of course the question arises as to whether they would have had more moments, more conflicts, more convergences, more NA if their texts were longer, but it is hard to say. When I looked at the data it is clear that all women talked about the press in their memoirs a lot, especially as it related to the civil rights movement. In addition, their memoirs revealed that all four women were educated, all four women had access to the press and all were raised in families that valued education and reading and writing. In addition, their memoirs reveal that all four women encountered and interacted with the press. The women did not simply narrate or talk about the press in their lives, they described interactions and the uses of the press in their lives and the significance of their interactions in shaping and propelling the movement. My analysis of the women's encounters with the press confirmed that the women participated in the practice of reading and writing in the press in significant and meaningful ways.

The memoirs of the four women reveal that in a time and place where women's roles in public life and discourse were rather limited, in particular, during the movement, the press was one place where women, at least these four, were granted access and public participation. The similarities in their experiences with the press include their beliefs that the press could effect change, that it could reach the public and that this would not only change/reach public opinion but the problems in the South. The distinctive features amongst the women stem from individual perceptions and expectations of the press.

When it came to the women's perceptions about their practice, the data on patterns was the most revealing. The data showed that even though the women had similar patterns recorded in their memoirs, it was their perception of the patterns that unearthed the nuances in the ways they perceived and experienced the press as sponsor. For example, Braden, Boyle and Beals saw the press for its ability to connect to the community even though this meant different things for each woman. For Beals, it was to understand what the community knew and what she and her family could expect from the press. For Braden and Boyle it was a reaching out into the community to understand what the people knew and thought about current situations. For Bates, it was about acting as a voice for change in the community. In addition, the patterns and the combination of patterns found in

individual memoirs and across the memoirs allowed insight into the way the women experienced the press as sponsor and the role it played in their practice and in their literate identity. For example, Bates and Boyle used the press to connect to the community, used the press to act as its voice and used it as a vehicle to crusade. The combination of patterns show how the press presented itself to the women and allowed insight into the kind of uses it afforded and denied the women; however, what is discussed in the conclusion is how their life histories and experiences in relationship with the press created agency for the women that was unique to each woman.

## Conclusions

Using textual analysis to analyze the data from the memoirs proved meaningful in its ability to scour the memoirs for "signs of life" and the writer's perceptions and feelings about life events (Berg). In addition, using a textual analysis allowed insight into the women's habits of reading and writing in the press and an in-depth look at the sponsor's role in the practice as they were described in their memoirs. My use of Brandt's convergence and conflict to classify the women's reactions to the press also created a unique way of understanding felt responses to the practice. This method allowed me to go beyond a reading of the uses the women had for the practice and gave insight into the lived experiences of their literate lives as they felt and experienced them.

Donna Strickland who studies emotion as a sponsor of women's literacy says literacy narratives "offer discursive glimpses of characters' literate feelings" (46). In her work, Strickland refers to Lynn Worshams's work on the relationship between one's identity, and one's sense of self as it is connected to an emotional world embedded in "patterns of feeling that support the legitimacy of dominant interests, patterns that are especially appropriate to gender, race, and class locations" (223). Strickland says that "feelings of pride and approval that accompany Discourse acquisition—what I will call 'feeling literate'—are part and parcel of Discourses, of literacies" (46). Strickland's work was important in this study because, as she says, historical studies have tended to offer little "access to ways of feeling about literacy" (46) and says further

reading literacy narratives with attention to the ways in which literacy is felt and how feelings both contribute to and complicate the labor process, then, has the potential to contribute to both the production of 'little narratives' of literacy and to more general questions concerning the

production and reproduction of cultural values in a capitalist society. (48)

In the case of the women memoirists, understanding the reactions and responses, although embedded in the cultural milieu of the 1950s/60s, showed that the women did have responses and patterns in their literate behavior that went beyond repeated practice and simple reproduction of dominant discourse and values, but instead demonstrated a shift in power that afforded agency through perceptions of their reading and writing in the press. For the women memoirists, feelings associated and embedded in being literate were not only influenced by the sponsor and the practice of reading and writing in the press, but also through the other lived experiences of the women's lives and encounters. Their lives showed that

the press and their responses to it allowed them to perform in ways not typically remembered or experienced by women in the movement.

This includes their ability to participate publicly in intellectual and important ways. James Paul Gee says the ideological model of literacy is one that sees "literacy—of whatever type" as having "consequences only as it acts together with a large number of other social factors, including political and economic conditions, social structure, and local ideologies" (80). Gee's idea that one always learns to read and access the world in a particular way when she becomes literate, and that this is ultimately shaped by various other influences is exemplified in the women's texts. For the women memoirists, I was able to see how becoming literate not only created "types of people" who practiced a particular literacy at that time, but I was also able to see how becoming those people was influenced by varying factors and ultimately, influenced many of their later actions/decisions in life. The events of literacy afforded the women "with a distinct sense of self' and their memoirs capture what the practice of reading and writing in the press meant to them as individuals and how it shaped them as literate beings (Donehower 102). Their feelings about being literate showed up in their conflicts and convergences with the press and helped explicate in what ways the press played a role in their ways of seeing and interacting with the press. Gee's ideas connect here to Brandt's sponsorship in that the women's literate practice as it was sponsored by this particular sponsor carried within it a way of creating and denying the women experiences. For the women, the press recruited, regulated, suppressed and withheld literacy—and, ultimately, gained advantage

by it in some way (Brandt 19). However, what was learned was that although a sponsor regulates and suppresses our literacy, our individual beings as they become shaped by our being literate, are also shaped by our perceptions of being literate.

Upon review of the comparison charts (Figs. 9 and 10), most remarkable about the data was to see the varying roles the press sponsored for the women and the uneven results it had amongst the women. The uneven results in this sense refers to the fact that the same patterns were brought to the women but the women and their lives, no matter their similarities and differences, experienced the sponsor and their relationship to it very differently. This study revealed that each woman brought her lived experiences to their reading and writing and that their lives, once they encountered the press as sponsor experienced their literacy differently and responded to it differently. The sponsor, although it regulated the women's literacy, simultaneously allowed the women voice and space to engage in public discourse about segregation in the South.

Deborah Brandt claims that studying literacy as if it were inevitable can be problematic in that when this occurs there is a tendency to see literacy as something available at that time and not something that presents itself at a particular time and in a particular way to individuals. In this case, studying the women's literacy through sponsorship showed how and why the press allowed/did not allow the women to do certain things, think certain things, or have certain expectations and/or experiences. The women's fears, hopes and agendas were set by what they believed the practice could do and their reactions to it were based on these expectations. The women's memoirs underscore the idea that peoples' literacy is directed and negotiated by the medium through which we communicate, but they also reveal that the unique experiences that come from our own personal lives and the social factors in our life also influence the outcomes of all experiences with literacy.

What was revealed in the women's memoirs is similar to what Kim Donehower found in literate practices of rural women of the Southern Appalachia's. Donehower says of power and the relational experiences of literacy

The differences that reading and writing practices brought to these women's lives did not always produce changes in privilege or status visible to the outside observer. Instead, the regular performance of certain kinds of reading and writing created other changes in these women's lives. It is tempting to think of these 'private' powers of literacy, to contrast with the more public, or visible sorts of changes literacy can bring. Yet these internal changes often affected women's public voice and ability to affect public matters. The line between public and private literacy in these women's lives became so blurred as to be irrelevant. (94)

The idea of public and private for the women memoirists complicates somewhat what Donehower says here. The women memoirists, although participants in public discourse during that movement were not remembered publicly, however their personal and private feelings as they were expressed publicly in literate moments with the press, allowed for the women to "affect public matters" and like the women of the Southern Appalachia, "the line between public and private in these women's live became so blurred as to be irrelevant."

This speaks directly to the women's gendered experiences, and although I did not compare it to the experiences of men in the movement, the women saw their literacy as a tool for participating in the movement and in public life. This was true for all four women and a determining factor in the way they came to voice seemed connected to access and the women's perceptions of the press in their lives. It was also determined by the fact that all four women were educated and could read and write. In this case the women saw their voices as important and saw the press as a place to communicate as women, no matter their gender or race. This not only contradicts gender and racial politics of the time but also of the movement. For these four women, they were not performing the roles of women in the sexist and patriarchal climate of the movement but were women with ideas and were women who shared these ideas publicly. We see this in Braden's speaking out against the wrongs with the Wade house, Boyle's active voice in wanting acceptance of the first black graduate student at the University of Virginia, in Beals' interviews with the press during the Little Rock controversy and in Bates' public crusade against segregationists in the South.

The long-term knowledge that is gained by a study such as this is the way sponsors in our lives limit, expand and illuminate the varied experiences of our literacy practices. The memoirs as sites for collecting data offer a unique way of seeing reading/writing experiences in that they offer narratives, that when pieced together, offer rich understanding of the ways in which people experience their

literacy. The research also showed the lasting effects of the women's experiences with the press and how they showed up again in their memoirs and later in their lives. Their memoirs became spaces for them to not only share their ideas about the injustices of the South in the 1950s/60s but were also spaces for them to share their remembered feelings about the events and private knowledge about the movement—some of which was not reported in the press or remembered in history. In this way, their memoirs become extensions of the work they were doing in the movement and in the press itself.

The limitations of using textual analysis was that it did not offer the benefits of ethnography. The greatest loss in this sense was that personal response was lost when reading the women's responses to their experiences. The other shortcoming was that this approach did not allow for questions, clarification or follow-up questioning to support or refute my interpretations of the women's experiences. Another factor that shaped the outcomes of the research was that all memoirs were written in the past and were written, other than Beals, very shortly after the women were involved in the civil rights movement. This has both positive and negative consequences. The positive include that their memories of their experiences were still clear and raw when they wrote. Not as positive were the emotional ties to the movement and their desire to present it and their memoires of it in a way that was consistent with ideologies of the movement (Nasstrom).

This particular methodology also did not allow me to understand the varying other practices that most likely influenced the women's practice of

reading and writing in the press. This methodology also did not allow me to make comparisons between the women and men's practices at that time. This would have proved useful in understanding if there were different/similar experiences between the women and the men and the way they responded to their literacy encounters. In addition, I looked at memoirs of women who were all educated and wrote about a particular time in the movement. If I had a wider range of experiences and time frames I may have gotten a better look at the press and its relationship with these women. However, I think this study opened up many new ways of studying women from this time. I also think that the lengths of the texts might be considered when doing future studies. I had two memoirs that were longer than the other two and I am not sure to what degree length altered the results of the study.

Other factors and potential future research include looking more closely at race and its role in the women's literate experiences. This is not only important in understanding the individual experiences of the women studied here but would also offer a deeper understanding of the specific practices as they are brought to the women. This is important in helping those who study literacy move beyond understanding how people use their literacy to understanding that which influences the practice and human perception of the experiences. I also believe that this same methodology could prove fruitful in other literate experiences such as to study school literacy and other memoirs of different times, places and events. The methodology would also benefit research on the civil rights movement as it offers new ways of thinking about the women and the leading role

they played in making public the injustices of the South. Studying their conflicts and convergences with their literacy practice shows the agency the women had in writing their thoughts, lives and opinions to the public. It also shows what denied them their experiences beyond, or in addition to, the culture of America in the 50s/60s.

Finally, the women studied here add to the collected stories of other women writer-activists who carry on the long tradition of using their reading and writing as sources of power and change (Royster and Logan). In addition, this methodology and dissertation assert new ways of thinking about memoir writing that is centered, at least in terms of the civil rights movement, on discussions lead by historians who focus primarily on why and what historical influences foster the women's decision to write their memoirs. This methodology refocuses the discussion about why women write their narratives and offers in its place a way of thinking about the memoir as a rich resource for studying women's literacy in its ability to reveal close-up views of the influences and experiences of literacy.

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