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Research paper: Mrs. Bruce

Mrs. Bruce is the desk attendant at my residence hall, and I chose to interview her because of my good relationship with her and her warm personality. She is truly my grandmother away from home. She was born in Georgia on November 18th, 1948. Her family had been there for about 50-60 years before she was born. Her grandfather was a farmer and worked in the meatpacking industry. She has 3 brothers and 4 sisters; she was one of the middle children. Before she was born her family mostly stayed in their area of Georgia due to familiarity. In a way they invested in the land and became acclimated to their community and found a sense of stability. Her family had regular traditions like Thanksgiving, but when people passed, they celebrated their day every year like a birthday.

As she got older and went to elementary school, at first it wasn't integrated. It was of course an all black school but as time went on it eventually became integrated to an about half and half ratio. When she was this age, she didn't really think about race at the time. It was just something that doesn't come up. However, as she got older and older, it became more apparent. In her later years of middle school and high school, she started hearing about the movement and Martin Luther King and Malcom X. At this point she leaves her mother to go live with her father in Pittsburgh. They moved because of the steelmaking industry. This then connects to the article because many jobs such as steel making received attention from the government with the institution of the Fair Deal by President Truman. This legislation sought to lessen wage disparities and racial discrimination. So, this job was an economic pull factor for her family that attracted them to this area. However, the majority of her remaining family stayed in Georgia because they had invested in the land and community and had accumulated generational wealth. So this intern provided leverage for a stay factor that most likely came into consideration.

When the conversation switched to cover segregation, she explained how even up to now, you're treated differently. She emphasized the twice as hard mentality where black people have to work twice as hard to be successful and be recognized. She talked about one instance where she left her credit card at a restaurant in Virginia and was asked to show ID even though she was the only one that called about it. Another example she used is when she walks into the gym, as a child she was taught to speak when entering a building, and so when she does this no one of the majority white patrons respond to her. She says they do this out of entitlement and prejudice. However, she emphasized that this is not what everyone did. There were still people that greeted her back. One of her oldest memories is when she would take the bus to a different place, they would make the black people to wait for the white people to board first. When her family would go to a hotel, they would have certain rooms that were designated for Black or white, it would often be floor by floor. I asked if she actively participated in any demonstrations, but she said she didn't, but she knew people who were in them that would travel. They would travel to different places where the problem was. She mostly watched the movement on tv.

In her time in the Steel mill area with her dad, there was a lot of diversity and people got along with each other. In Georgia the black people stuck together and saw this the most effective in achieving their goals. So in a way they preferred their own sphere of comfort over possible new opportunities. Growing up she was in the lower class, though it was better in Pittsburgh, and less in Georgia they still made ends meet. After staying in Pittsburgh for a while she moved to DC. She has been in DC for 40 years and moved for change and more jobs. She has one son and one daughter and two grandchildren. They live in DC and their son that passed lived in Georgia. Overtime her family has grown economically with more members becoming more and more successful.

When it came to voting she loved to vote. She loved to vote because she knew the importance that people had died for this ballot and the power it has behind it. She never faced any negativity when attempting to vote or had to go through any extra measures. She also helped voting polls by donating to help get people there who need help. Initially there were not a lot of black people running for office, just county board stuff. Eventually the candidates became more diverse. As the majority of black people vote,

she voted down the democratic line. I asked her where she was and how she felt when president Obama was elected. She said she was at WTTG in Virginia. She believed that she would see a black president elected during her lifetime, which was often a pressing question for people that age. She also believes that the next black president will be a woman and it will happen very soon. She agreed that there was a step back to Trump but sees hope for the future. That our people always find a way to get through it.