

Complicating Africville: An oral history of gender, race, and power relations in
Africville

By
Patrick Kevin Russell

A Thesis Submitted to
Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Masters of Arts in Criminology.

April, 2013, Halifax, Nova Scotia

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Approved: Dr. Michele Byers
Thesis Supervisor

Approved: Dr. Susan Boyd
Examiner

Approved: Dr. Darryl Leroux
Reader

Date: January 28, 2013

Acknowledgements

There are too many people to thank properly in the allotted amount of space I am given. First, and foremost, I would like to thank Brenda Steed-Ross for everything she has done. I am heavily indebted to Brenda, for this thesis would not exist without her bravery and willingness to keep the memory of Africville alive. Aside from sharing her life experiences with me, for which I am eternally grateful, Brenda has played an instrumental role in creating the Africville Genealogy Society and has worked countless hours in her spare time over the past 30 years to see that reparations were paid by Halifax Regional Municipal Government for the injustices they imposed on Africville residents. The one thing that I hope this thesis does, is to celebrate and honour the work she has done and the role she has played in keeping the Spirit of Africville alive.

I am also heavily indebted to Michele Byers, my thesis supervisor, for providing her expert guidance and exercising great patience while I, at times, struggled through material, concepts, and paradigms that once seemed so foreign to me. It is scary for me to think about how this thesis would have turned out if it were not for Michele. I will forever be bowing to the S.T.O. for all the hard work and patience she provided throughout this process.

I would also like to thank Mythili Rajiva, who, through her class and her personality, first encouraged this research to become grounded in anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and feminist literature. If it were not for Mythili, I would probably still be sitting in front of my computer screen trying to figure out how I'm going to narrow down my research.

I would also like to thank and send my love to my family. My family are without a doubt, the most important people in my life and without them I would never have known how good life can be, especially when you've gone through countless drafts of your thesis. I would like to thank my siblings: Ninny, Sweet Baboo, Theresy, and Smelly Belly for all the laughter and support they have provided me over the years. I would also like to thank my pets, Lucky the Bagel and Sparky aka Sparkle Beans for reminding me that belly rubs are sometimes more important than writing. I would also like to thank my extended family, who, to me, are more like siblings and parents than cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandmothers. I would like to thank: my grandmother Gert; my aunts and uncles, Marie, Peter, Jimmy, Paul, Ellie, Mark, Dawn, Vicky, John, and Corrine; and my cousins, Mark, Anne-Marie, Amy, Joe, Angie, Syl, Johnny, Zack, Pam, Katie, Pete, Mary, Maggie, Kaley, Sean, Justin, Shawn, Abby, Will, Trey, Jimi, Callum, Micah, Hailey, and Sasha for everything they have done for me.

Last, and certainly not least, I would like to thank my mother, to whom this thesis is dedicated. Without her bravery and perseverance over the years, I would never have known what happens when you never give up on your dreams.

Abstract

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This thesis focuses on an oral history interview conducted with Brenda Steed-Ross, a former resident of Africville. In analyzing the interview, I examine how Brenda's stories about gender, race, and power relations simultaneously reinforce and diverge from previous accounts on Africville. This study uses an intersectional framework to do three things: (1) To conceptualize a unique re-telling of Africville's history that spans Brenda's childhood memories of Africville, her experience of being relocated, her role in creating the Africville Genealogy Society [AGS], and her experiences as board member at the time the AGS it was awarded reparations from the Halifax Municipal Government; (2) To create a space for a complex understanding of life as an (former) Africville resident; and (3) To create space for me to document how my understanding of Africville, race, and gender have changed since embarking on this project. Recommendations for future research are discussed.

January 28, 2013

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1. INTRODUCTION

Joan Sangster (2004), in her feminist critique of historiography, states that there is a lack of attention dedicated to the lives of women in historical discourses (p. 87). Likewise, hooks (1984) and Hill Collins (2000) both point out that recordings of historical events pay little attention to members of racialized groups, in particular racialized women (p. 3; p. 4). Weedon (1999) claims that sexist and racist discourses have been used and historical discourse consist of rigid notions of gender, race, gender roles, and race relations (p. 6). Within these racial and sexist discourses women are mistakenly perceived as inferior to men, and members of racialized groups are mistakenly assumed to be inferior to whites (ibid.). hooks (1984) argues that because of this editing process, historical discourses contain inaccurate representations of the lives and experiences of women, leaving the experiences and identities of racialized women to be policed by andro-Anglo Saxon ideologies and meaning systems (p. 3). In other words, the lives of racialized women are constructed in such a way as to support the sexist and racist ideologies that seek to further marginalize them (ibid.) In response to the increasing recognition that women and members of racialized groups are being and have been erased from local, national and international historiographies, critical researchers have engaged in historical research projects in order to collect and tell these neglected stories free from the biases of sexist and racist ideologies (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p. 16-17).

The main goal of my research is in following to tell the story of Africville from the perspectives of women who lived there. This is an important endeavour because the story of Africville is one that has neglected the unique experiences of women. This thesis seeks to answer the question: what are the unique experiences of women from Africville that have been left out of previous publications on Africville? To answer this question I conducted an oral history interview with Brenda, a former resident of Africville. The interview captured events throughout Brenda's entire life, from her time as a small child growing up in Africville, to her experiences of the Halifax Municipal Government's razing of Africville during the 1960s, up to the present day as a board member of the Africville Genealogy Society. After transcribing the interview, I looked for themes within the data and compared them with how these themes have been portrayed in previous publications on Africville. The five publications that I use to compare Brenda's story are: Clairmont and Magill's (1971/1999) *Africville Relocation Report*; Nelson's (2008) *The Razing of Africville: A Geography of Racism*; Williams and Peter's (2009) documentary *Africville: Can't Stop Now*; and Tattrie's (2010) *The Hermit of Africville: The Life of Eddie Carvery*. Capturing these neglected stories provides a new way in which to view and to understand life in Africville, a perspective that has not been previously documented. In fact, the stories that I have collected and present in this thesis provide such a unique account of life in Africville that they have challenged me to re-

conceptualize issues of race and gender not only within the context of Africville but outside it as well.

The proceeding chapters will unfold as follows: the rest of this chapter will present the history of Africville and the injustices for which the Africville residents have been subjected. In the second chapter I will present a review literature from anti-racist feminist, multiculturalism, and political feminist disciplines to provide context on racial and gender inequality in Canada. In chapter three I will introduce the theory and research methods that I used to construct my research project. I also discuss the benefits of using intersectional theory and an oral history research method for my research, as well as the compatibility that exists between intersectional theory and oral histories. The fourth chapter is where I locate myself within the data. I discuss my previous understandings of not only Africville, but also my previous understandings of race, gender, and ethnicity and how they have changed since I embarked on this project. In the fifth chapter I will begin the analysis section, where I discuss how Brenda's stories of gender both reinforce and diverge from gender roles that have been constructed in previous writings on Africville. The sixth chapter discusses how Brenda's stories of the relationships that existed among the Africville community, and other African Nova Scotian communities and the Halifax Municipal Government. In the seventh chapter I discuss Brenda's role in forming the Africville Genealogy Society and its relation to diaspora literature. I will also describe the dynamics of power that existed among the Africville Genealogy

Society, former residents of Africville, and African Nova Scotian groups when the Africville Genealogy Society received reparations on behalf of Africville residents from the Halifax Municipal Government. The eighth and final chapter will conclude the thesis by providing a key overview of findings and their implications.

1.1 AFRICVILLE

Africville was a predominately African Canadian community located in Halifax, Nova Scotia from 1849 to 1969. Despite pay municipal taxes, Africville residents were never given any water or sewage services from the city government. Clairmont & Magill (1999) point out that the two hospitals, and the prison that neighbored Africville, had these basic amenities (p. 61). This meant that Africville residents had to leave their homes in order to collect water from wells that were situated within the community. However, due to the runoff from the neighbouring hospital for people with infectious diseases, the water became unsafe for human consumption and had to be boiled before it could be safely ingested. The lack of a communal plumbing system also meant that residents had to physically dispose of their own human by-products. In addition to this lack of amenities, Africville residents were also not protected by any municipal fire or police departments. The lone school that was intended for use by the children of Africville was underfunded, and when the school was first established it took the city more than twenty years to start funding it. The Municipal Government closed the school in the fifties and when the children of Africville were assimilated into “white” schools, it was

determined that the children from Africville scored sixty percent lower on comprehension and test scores when compared to white students in their classes (Clairmont & Magill, 1999, p. 107). This, as could be expected, left Africville children at a serious disadvantage as it made it considerably harder for them to find employment and gain access to post secondary education.

While the city government failed to provide adequate and integral services to the citizens of Africville, the government also generated harm in the lives of Africville residents in other ways. Throughout the duration of Africville's existence, Halifax city officials dedicated the land surrounding Africville, and the very land of Africville itself, to the interests of industrial and governmental machinations. To rid the city of any unsightly blemishes, Africville was deemed to be an ideal location for any buildings of ill repute. This resulted in Africville being occupied and surrounded by a prison, two hospitals for infectious diseases, an incinerator, a bone factory, two slaughterhouses, a cotton factory, a 'night soil' disposal pit, a foundry, an oil storage facility, a tar factory, a coal handling facility, a garbage dump, as well as a railway which ran right through the middle of the community. Tucked away and hidden from the central (white) city, this help further the discourses of Africville's incivility reported in the local media (Nelson, 2008, p. 70).

In an era when multiculturalism was on the verge of becoming national policy, promising equal rights and nondiscrimination to all of Canada's visibly racial and ethnic citizens, Africville was razed from the shores of the Bedford Basin under

the writ of the Africville urban renewal and relocation plan. In 1962, the city government received the necessary approval to engage in an urban renewal project in Africville. According to city officials the idea of accepting and tolerating racial, ethnic, and cultural differences was the main focus of the Africville relocation urban renewal plan (ibid.). City officials and the local Haligonian media framed the razing of Africville as a humanitarian, liberal-welfare project aimed at promoting racial equality and ending racial segregation in Halifax (Nelson, 2008, p. 102). Experts were called in to study Africville, and to make decisions about whether to carry out the process of relocating residents, and if so, how. Not surprisingly, the experts hired by the city agreed with their employers, and recommended that Africville residents should be assimilated into the rest of the city (despite the fact that they were *already* part of the city). While the intentions of city officials appeared to benefit most Africville residents, the means in which they carried out these intentions generated serious social harms for Africville residents. Families and friends became separated, as Africville residents were placed in housing in Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford, and Hammonds Plains. The residents of Africville became isolated; many were left without any close social networks in which to seek help with personal problems, or just for sheer companionship (Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 260). This isolation was exacerbated by the fact that some residents had trouble integrating into their new communities as they were subject to racism and a variety of exclusionary practices (ibid.)

Africville residents also experienced harm in a more *tangible* way—one that can be quantified and observed by others. During the time that the relocation plans were being formulated, the city made three promises to the Africville residents: The city was to pay a year's rent for each family moved, give each family a thousand dollar allotment to spend on new furniture, and reassess the land value of Africville where any adjustments in value would be remitted to a trust fund set up for former residents (Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 240). All three of these promises were, at minimum, only partially carried out, or never carried out at all. Nelson (2008) shows that of the residents who actually received these benefits, most had only received a portion of the monetary value promised by the city government (p. 96). The city ended up paying only a few months rent, and about half of the thousand dollars allotted for new furniture. Aside from having to suddenly, and unexpectedly pay rent, the failure to pay the furniture allowance in full left many residents with upwards of a thousands dollars worth of new furniture and no way to pay. This saw a sudden and dramatic increase in residents' debt load. Storeowners would not allow the furniture to be returned, so there was very little recourse left for the former residents of Africville to deal with their debt (ibid.). When residents went to city staff to ask for help, they were often sent to the city's welfare offices, which residents found to be "degrading" (Robinson, 1969, p.6).

After the last resident of Africville was (forcibly) moved from their home in 1969, roadways were built, houses and apartments were constructed, the MacKay

Bridge was completed, and a dog park was built on the land that once was home to Africville residents. Yet, there were Africville residents who refused to let the injustices that they faced go unresolved (Williams & Peters, 2009). The Africville Genealogy Society was formed (which will be discussed in detail in chapter 7) in 1983 to retain a sense of community among displaced Africville residents (Africville Genealogy Society, 2010, par. 1). Eventually the Africville Genealogy Society became political and started to work towards getting the Halifax Municipal Government to pay reparations (which they did in the summer of 2011). Other residents engaged in protests that sought to return the land of Africville to former residents and their descendants (see Tattrie, 2010).

Each retelling of the history of Africville, the community formerly located on the shore of the Bedford Basin in the city of Halifax, introduces a new dimension to this narrative (see Tattrie, 2010; Nelson, 2008; Africville Genealogy Society, 1992; and Clairmont & Magill; 1971; 1999). Yet none of the stories told focuses specifically on the experiences of women from Africville (see Tattrie, 2010; Williams & Peters, 2009; Nelson, 2008; Africville Genealogy Society, 1992; and Clairmont & Magill; 1971; 1999). Clairmont and Magill (1971) present a report of the Africville Relocation Plan and the negative impact that it had on the lives of Africville residents. The Africville Genealogy Society (1992), upset with the way that Africville and Africville residents have been portrayed in the media, released a book that attempted to define their identities and their experiences in their own words (p.

xvii). Similarly, Nelson (2008), in her work on Africville, documents and analyzes the racist discourses used to portray Africville and Africville residents in the Nova Scotia news media. Williams' and Peters' (2009) documentary on Africville focuses on acts of resistance three brothers from Africville—Irvine Carvery; Eddie Carvery; and Nelson Carvery—have undertaken in order to seek redress for the harm inflicted upon Africville residents over the years by different municipal governments. Tattrie (2010) expands on the research on resistance in his biography of Eddie Carvery, which chronicles his attempts to seek reparations.

While these varying accounts of Africville are rich in content, the stories, experiences, and lives of women from Africville are noticeably absent. There are times within each text when the experiences of women from Africville are documented, yet these are few and fleeting. Women from Africville are rarely mentioned within these documents, and when they are, they are only mentioned in passing and do not take up more than a few lines within the document. This leaves a void in knowledge about women's experiences in Africville and as Africville residents.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In applying a feminist lens to the study of Africville, I have made connections to the literatures on multiculturalism in Canada, Canadian anti-racist feminism, and the representation of women in Canadian legal policies. I have done this because, as I have already stated, there is a dearth of literature dedicated to women's experiences in Africville. What is more, the same scarcity that constitutes the literature on female experiences in Africville exemplifies the lack of literature on African Nova Scotian communities more generally. Sylvia Hamilton (1993) focuses on how African Nova Scotian Baptist women in 1917, organized and fought for their rights to be recognized in Nova Scotia. Backhouse (1999) focuses on the plights and struggles of Viola Desmond in her attempts for equal rights for African Nova Scotians. Bernard and Fingard (2005) focus on how African Nova Scotian women have been systematically exploited by their employers.

While these pieces of literature are rich in content, I felt I needed to become familiar with other bodies of literature to help provide a more thorough understanding to the issues that women from Africville might have faced. The literature on multiculturalism in Canada provides insight into how issues of race operate in a politically legislated multicultural society. Examining Canadian anti-racist feminist literature allowed me to perceive differences between racialized women and the impact they had in a Canadian context. Finally, focusing on the literature on Canadian women in law has allowed me to identify how Canadian

women are written into, and out of, law in Canada. While these three bodies of literature at times overlap with one another and at other times conflict with one another, they all focus on issues of race and gender and the different and unique social experiences that stem from this intersection of identities.

Fleras (2011) points out that while Canada benefits from the global perception that it is a space of racial diversity and equality, Canada is, in fact, a space where differences in gender, race, class, sexuality and ethnicity are hierarchized (p. 142). Puplampu and Tetty (2005) assert that white, English speaking, and middle-to-upper class Canadian men are placed at the top of Canada's racial hierarchy (p. 77). Therefore, white, English speaking, middle-to-upper class males benefit from legal, economic, and social forms of power and privilege (ibid.) Puplampu and Tetty argue that Aboriginals and African Canadians are at the bottom of the Canadian hierarchy, sharing the least amount of power and privilege in Canadian society (ibid.) Jiwani (2006) argues that in Canada this hierarchical organization "remains invisible yet transparent in the economic and cultural privileging of certain groups" (p. 6). Jiwani (2006) and Bannerji (2005) acknowledge the difficulty of recognizing discrimination and oppression in Canada, where the normalization of oppressive acts makes them difficult to identify (p. 9; p. 56). In addition to focusing on obvious acts of discrimination and prejudices such as lynching and rape, Jiwani (2006) argues that we must look at the constructive processes used to create different

social categories in Canada and how “varying degrees of power and privilege” are attributed to each category (p. 9).

Dionne Brand (2008) provides some evidence of discrimination in Canada and how certain privileges and power are accessible to different groups as she examines the stratification of the Canadian workforce. Brand (2008) argues that African Canadian women have been falsely assumed to be incapable of doing skilled work and, as such, have routinely been excluded from being trained as doctors, lawyers, and secretaries (p. 248). What is more, even after racial barriers had been formally removed from post secondary institutions, the long history of being forced into working menial jobs prevents some women to from financially accessing a university education (ibid.) African Canadian women, therefore, find themselves predominantly in menial, labour intensive jobs reminiscent of the work engaged in by slaves (Brand, 2008, p. 239). Jiwani (2006) points out how particular forms of workplace discrimination and oppression are repetitive, arguing that racialized women continue to be de-skilled over time and across generations (p. 29). These forms of discrimination and oppression occur in plain sight on a daily basis but because they have become normalized and accepted as everyday practices they have been rendered invisible and have been allowed to escape criticism (ibid, p. 6).

Though the situation of women from Africville is relatable to the critical literature on multiculturalism in Canada, that scholarship tends to ignore or neglect the perspectives of racialized women. Eisenberg and Spinner-Havel (2005) point

out that multicultural scholarship tends to take a group-based approach in studying racial and ethnic minorities (typically immigrants, not indigenous populations) in Canada (p. 8). This approach neglects the struggles and experiences of “minorities within minorities” (ibid. p. 4). Eisenberg and Spinner-Havel acknowledge the existence of different identities and social locations within racial and ethnic groups in Canada, including “women, gay men and lesbians, religious dissenters, and linguistic minorities within minorities” (p. 5). Multicultural statutes only recognize single forms of discrimination, namely racial, cultural, or ethnic discrimination (see Lepinard, 2010). Eisenberg and Spinner-Havel (2005) agree that multicultural policies fail to address simultaneously intersecting forms of identity such as gender, sexuality, religion, linguistic capabilities, and other subjugated identities (p. 8). Okin (2005, p. 73) points to how multicultural laws force women to choose between their cultural rights and their individual rights. This separation leaves women prone to gender discrimination under cultural laws, and racial and ethnic discrimination under individual human rights policies (ibid.) Agnew (2005) provides an example of how this occurs. Agnew, borrowing Li’s (2003, p. 26) term “family class immigrants,” points to how individual rights have been circumvented by cultural rights. Family class immigrants are immigrants who have family already living in Canada who sponsor their immigration (Li, 2003, p. 26). This situation can leave sponsored women beholden to their husbands, fathers, or other family members (p. 40). If met with any form of abuse these women often find it difficult to seek redress

as their sponsors can revoke their citizenship status at any time, forcing them to face deportation (ibid.) Bannerji (2000b) warns this disenfranchisement and oppression cannot be attributed entirely to racialized communities; rather it is part of governmental power structures that promote and reinforce patriarchal ideologies (p. 162). Laws created, and enforced in racialized communities assume certain matters can only be handled by the men of these communities, and therefore, award legal and social powers to men, and not to women (ibid.).

Anti-racist feminist research attempts to disassemble broad representations of racialized subjects in Canada by focusing on the differing experiences of racialized women and the differences among racialized women. Spinner-Havel (2001) points out that group identities can be harmful to racialized women as issues specific to different women can be overlooked, neglected, and erased (p. 84). With the aforementioned example that Agnew (2005) provided, family class immigrant laws are designed to allow immigrants to keep their cultural norms and values. As Agnew (2005) shows, this group identity can overlook the problems of individual immigrant women. Fleras (2010) argues that the experience of subjugation of visible minorities in Canada is often intensified for women (p. 142). According to Enakshi Dua (2000), racialized women in Canada become responsible for problems attributed to racialized communities, such as violence and crime (p. 62). Dua (2000) asserts that racialized women are portrayed as the “mothers” of their communities and, therefore the “creators” of delinquency, criminality, and inferiority (ibid.)

Racialized women become, Dua (2007) argues, symbols of degeneration (p. 445-466). Blaming racial and ethnic groups for causing their own problems, according to Bannerji (2000b), not only subjugates women but also simultaneously erases the structural forces that help keep racialized minorities subjugated (p. 555).

While anti-racist feminist scholars have worked towards preventing racialized women from experiencing erasure under a group identity, scholars such as Fleras (2010) caution against “reinforcing the indivisibility of minority women” (p. 142). Dua (1999) reminds us that it is a mistake to perceive all nonwhites (as well as all “whites”) as belonging to the same group (p. 19). There are multiple racialized minority groups within Canada, and different women occupy different social locations within these groups based on the intersections of class, gender, race, sexuality, age, and other axes of identity (ibid.) Assuming that a group identity means that every person within that group shares and experience the same issues in the same way neglects specific issues/needs that are not shared by every member in that group (Ken, 2007, p. 6). This neglect often leads to the neglect of the specific and serious issues that affect racialized women and disharmony among group members if often overlooked. Lepinard (2010), a feminist legal scholar, points to how this assumption of strict group identities negatively affects racialized women in Canada.

Lepinard (2010), drawing on the work of American (intersectional) feminist theorist Kimberle Crenshaw (1989), argues that Canadian multicultural and anti-

discrimination laws are unable to recognize and address acts of discrimination and violence against racialized women. In her research on domestic violence and rape in the United States, Crenshaw (1991) found that feminist groups were typically more concerned with issues of concern to white women while anti-racist groups were more concerned with issues of concern to African American men (p. 1250).

Crenshaw argues that not only do both perspectives marginalize African American women victimized by domestic violence and/or rape; they are also unable to conceptualize racialized women (ibid.). Racialized women occupy both locations of identity simultaneously which places African American women in a location “that resists telling” in a single identity based approach to research (ibid.) Likewise, multicultural and anti-discrimination laws in Canada “target one [social] group at a time, on the basis of one ground of discrimination: gender or religion or ethnicity” (Lepinard 2010, p. 28). This means that when filing a claim of discrimination in Canada, the person in question can only claim to be discriminated against based on a single category, such as gender or race (ibid.). Eisenberg and Spinner-Havel (2005) have noted that this hierarchal organization of social identities has led minority women to become a minority group within a minority group which causes their issues to be forgotten, overlooked, or erased from Canadian multicultural laws and policies.

Jenson (2009) points out how legislation authored by various Canadian polities often fails to recognize intersecting identities of women, rendering them

invisible within federal, provincial, and/or municipal law (p. 25). Dobrowolsky (2008, p. 466; 1998, p. 710) argues that Canadian women are being written out of Canadian law. Canadian women's issues are thus undervalued, unacknowledged, and without any form of political protection. Dobrowolsky with Lister (2006) argues that this sociopolitical exclusion renders women invisible within dominant legal and social discourses (p. 175). Jiwani (2006) argues that this exclusion and invisibility typically remains in place unless women become politically useful (p. 183-84). Jiwani points to how, in the immediate aftermath of September 11th, certain Muslim women became useful in encouraging the invasion of Afghanistan (ibid.). The news media and politicians framed Muslim women as targets of oppression committed by their husbands, fathers, and/or sons (ibid, p. 186). This required Western armed forces to band together and save Muslim women from their oppressors/oppression (ibid.). Canadian Muslim women who shared pro-invasion beliefs and attitudes also became useful in this discourse as they helped provide support for the invasion of Afghanistan (ibid, pp. 197-198). Butler (2004) believes that racialized women become politically useful when they do not impede our sense of self or of national identity (p. 13). Butler argues that when the causes of racialized women's troubles can be traced back to Western society and Western culture, the story is either reframed in the news media in ways that alleviate responsibility from Western society and culture, or it is removed entirely from newscasts and publications (ibid.) The result of this censorship is a neglect of the

issues that racialized women experience, limiting their ability to seek redress (Dua, 2007, p. 445-466).

3. THEORETICAL PARADIGM

In order to identify unique experiences and issues that do not fit into traditional discourses (the neglect of female experiences in the literature on Africville for example), I used intersectional theory to guide my research. Originally formulated by African American feminists to show how American legislation neglected African American women (see Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; and Hill Collins, 2000; 2001), intersectional theory has also been used to understand how Canadian legislation neglects and marginalizes racialized women (see Razack, 1998; Jiwani, 2006). The focus of intersectional theory is twofold: the first focus is on how multiple forms of identity, such as race, gender, and class intersect to create a woman's social identity (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. 4). These multiple identities act in unison, rather than independently from one another, to form a woman's social identity (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 195). The second focus of intersectional theory examines how systems of oppression work in concert to reinforce racist and sexist ideologies to further perpetuate discrimination and inequality (Razack, 1998, p. 13).

Intersectional theorists such as Adib & Guerrier (2003) argue that single identity-based theories that focused only on race, gender, class, or ethnicity identities assume that everyone who shares a single form of identity share the same issues and the same forms of inequality (p.416). This mistakenly assumes that differences do not exist among group members; that groups members all think alike

and share the same opinion; that hierarchies do not exist within groups; and that people who belong to that group do not discriminate, oppress, and/or limit the opportunities of people who share the same form of identity (Ken, 2007, p. 6).

Feminist theorist Chris Weedon (1999, p. 25) reminds us that feminism in academia began by assuming that all women, regardless of race, class, ethnicity, and so forth experienced the same forms of oppression. Writings by feminist academics during the 1960's and 1970's were primarily authored by middle-to-upper class, white, Anglo Saxon women, who wrote about oppression from their own perspectives and experiences (ibid, p. 159). This allowed the issues of women who did not occupy positions of power within feminism, such as racialized, lower class, and, or lesbian women to be ignored, and neglected to examine how they were oppressed and marginalized by other women (ibid.) This neglect motivated women with nonwhite, lower class, and/or lesbian identities to expand feminist literatures by including their own experiences. However, as Dicker and Piepmeier (2003) show, these efforts also unintentionally marginalized the experiences of yet other women, for example transgendered women, who have since then contributed to feminist literature with their own writings (p. 5).

The second focus of intersectional theory is an examination of how interlocking forms of oppression reinforce subjugated forms of identity (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 68). Systems of oppression such as patriarchy, racism, capitalism, and imperialism “need one another” and “exist symbiotically but hierarchically” (Razack,

1998, p. 13). These systems of power and subjugation do not exist independently of one another; rather, they reinforce and support one another (Weber, 2010, p. 23). In Canada, this convergence of oppressions places racialized women near the bottom of the social hierarchy in contrast to white, English-speaking men and women (Lee, 2008, p. 108). This makes racialized women in Canada vulnerable to multiple forms of oppression (Jiwani, 2006 p. 203). For example, Brand (2008) contends that African Canadian women in the workforce are simultaneously oppressed by multiple systems of domination (p. 239). Discourses of patriarchy suggest that men are intellectually superior to women, and discourses of racism suggest that white people are intellectually superior to nonwhite people (ibid.) Li (2008) reminds us, that, “in reality, there is nothing rational about using superficial physical features [ex. skin colour] to sort people in groups [*sic*]” (p. 21). Race, gender, and ethnicity do not predetermine a person’s intelligence, however racist and sexist ideologies still mistakenly contend this to be true (ibid.) Racial and gender hierarchies are generally conceived of as interlocking systems of power that limit and oppress racialized women (ibid, p. 22). These interlocking forms of oppression have created significant obstacles to African Canadian women’s ability to hold high-status jobs in fields such as in law and medicine (Brand, 2008, p. 248). Dionne Brand, who studies African Canadian women in the workforce, argues that African Canadian women are often viewed as only being capable of doing unskilled, menial work, and this leaves African Canadian women able to be employable primarily in positions as

housekeepers, nannies, cooks, and other jobs that are considered to be gender specific and low status (ibid.) Brand argues that this misperception about African Canadian women stems from ideologies that can be traced back to the slave trade era, where African Canadian women were bought for the purposes of performing menial labour (ibid.) This misconception has, and continues, to create barriers to racialized women's acceptance into universities, which makes it difficult for African Canadian women to escape a life of poverty (ibid.) This leaves African Canadian women to experience two simultaneous acting forms of oppression in the labour market because of their dual acting identities as women and as African Canadians (ibid.)

The seemingly endless list of the different social identities that exist and the different ways that these identities can intersect has led some intersectional theorists to argue that no two people experience power inequalities in the same manner (see Yuval-Davis, 2006). Ken (2007) states that no individual can be "all-oppressing or all-oppressed" (p.2). Hulko (2009) clarifies this by stating that "the dynamics of privilege and oppression... can be different in two different places, although the person remains the same" (p.52). Social identity is therefore fluid; the multiplicity of identities one can possess places individuals in different positions of power and privilege within different contexts (ibid.) This means that a person can be privileged in one space and marginalized in another space (ibid., p. 47). Race may take precedent in one location whereby in another location one's sexual identity

may be foregrounded (ibid, p. 47). The following account by Hulko (2009), which describes how her intersecting social identities lead her to experience privilege in some areas while being marginalized in others, provides insight into the fluidity of how social identities can change between contexts:

I [Hulko] hold multiple privileges by virtue of my Whiteness, Anglo-Canadian ethnicity (third generation of Scottish and Scandinavian ancestry), upper-middle-class background, and able bodiedness. My gender, same-sex partnership status, and bisexual orientation render me subject to oppression, despite my having some control over the disclosure of the latter status and thus the ability to access heterosexual privilege at times and being subject to less oppression because of my gender expression as more of a femme queer woman than a butch one. My age (late 30s) and faith (agnostic) do not place me close to either the center or the margin (hooks, 1984/2000), so the amount of privilege and oppression that I hold in relation to these identity constructs depends on the context, with my age rendering me at a disadvantage in my academic workplace and at an advantage in most other places (ibid, pp. 45-46).

Hulko's (2009) account of her own experiences with privilege and marginalization provides an excellent example of the complexity that is involved with tracking power and privilege across different spaces and with intersecting identities. Her racial, ethnic, class, and able bodied identities provide Hulko with multiple privileges, but these privileges can be, and are, foregrounded by her sexual orientation that can be used by others to create barriers for her to access these privileges (ibid.) However, the marginalization that she experiences from being a bisexual woman in a same-sex relationship is buffered because of her appearance as a "femme queer woman," which can make it difficult for people in certain contexts (such as walking down the street by herself versus walking down the street holding

her girlfriend's hand) from being aware of her sexual orientation because she does not fit a stereotypical image of a lesbian (ibid.) This obfuscation can create certain contexts for Hulko to retain some privileges that other lesbians who "look gay" may not be able to enjoy (ibid.) These "femme queer" and bisexual identities break down the identity "homosexuality" into several different and intersecting dimensions, providing a glimpse into the variety and complexity that homosexual identities can offer/take. It also demonstrates how social identities and power relations vary between social locations (p. 49).

3.1 THE UTILITY OF INTERSECTIONAL THEORY TO MY RESERACH

Intersectional theory's conceptualization of power is one of three reasons it has been useful for my thesis. Intersectional theory compliments poststructuralist thinking about how power relations function in society. Poststructuralist theorists, like Foucault (1980), do not see power as originating from a single structural source and operating in a unidirectional manner; rather power is understood to be everywhere and to operate multidirectionally. Structural forms of domination such as patriarchy, capitalism, racism, and imperialism interlock with one another to oppress women in unique ways (Razack, 1998, p. 159). However, oppression does not originate solely from structural inequalities stemming from governmental institutions. Inequalities can be also be generated from cultural representations of individuals that help to normalize socially produced inequalities. Hill Collins (2000) points to the ways imagery is used to represent African American women and how

these “controlling images” make African American women vulnerable to being marginalized (p. 69-70). Portraying African American women as “mammies,” “welfare mothers,” and “jezebels” makes “racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life” (p. 69). Repeated stereotyping of African American women as sexually promiscuous, may, for example, cause them to be more vulnerable to unwanted sexual advances (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 82). Negative stereotypes represent African American women, according to Hill Collins, as wanting, tempting, or causing unwanted sexual advances (ibid.) Hill Collins asserts that these stereotypes leads to African American women having their claims of sexual harassment, abuse, and rape ignored by police in the United States (ibid, see also Crenshaw, 1991). These false symbolisms have influenced legal systems, which results in women having less social-legal power to seek redress, and/or protection from justice departments.

Systems of inequality such as racism, sexism, or classism do not operate separately and independently from another, rather power operates at the intersection of these systems of power. Power can be deployed from many different locations simultaneously, each location of power works with the others to negotiate, support, and reinforce one another (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. 7). Conceptualization of power as stemming from multiple locations is generally lacking or is limited in previous research on Africville. Previous authors tend to look at racism and classism, but overlook the role that sexism and other forms of oppression have

played in affecting the lives of Africville residents. Clairmont and Magill (1971) and Tattrie (2010) both focus upon forms of race and class discrimination originating from the Halifax Municipal Government and the general public. Nelson (2008) focuses primarily on the intersections of racism and classism originating from public discourses as well as from the Halifax municipal government. By not viewing the Africville relocation program as a source of intersecting oppressions, research has neglected to recognize the complex manner in which power relations affected women from Africville during and after relocation.

Intersectional theory's focus on difference is the second reason why it has been useful in my research. Intersectional theory puts a heavy emphasis on differences among people who belong to the same racial, ethnic, or gender group (Davis, 2008, p. 71). This is pertinent to my research. As Clairmont and Magill (1971) have shown, that the community of Africville was both physically and socially organized in a hierarchy based on heritage (p. 272- 273). Hierarchical status historically depended on two interrelated things: where you lived and how long your family had lived in Africville (ibid.) Emphasis on where one lived in Africville referred to whether you owned your own home, were renting, or were squatting (ibid.) Individuals with the longest ancestral ties and who owned their own homes lived in part of the community, renters with some ancestral ties lived in another area, and squatters lived in yet another (ibid.) During the implementation of the Africville Relocation Plan, agents of the Halifax municipal government awarded

larger settlements to individuals who owned their homes than to those who rented or squatted (ibid.) This influenced where individuals were relocated. Squatters and renters ended up primarily in public housing units, homeowners typically ended up owning their new homes, renting their new homes, or were able to move to larger Canadian cities like Toronto and Montreal (Wincott, 2003, p. 41). The ways in which identity may have impacted individual experiences of relocation can further be broken down by incorporating gender and other axes of identity such as age, heritage, and employment status into the analysis. Intersectional theory also provides me with the conceptual tools to analyze women from Africville not only as a group separate from Africville men, but also to analyze the differences that exist *between* women from Africville. The composition of the identities of women from Africville varies from woman to woman. As Nelson (2008) points out, single mothers from Africville did not receive any of the financial compensation promised to the residents of Africville when they left their homes (p. 97). Single Africville mothers did not receive this compensation because the money was promised to “families,” and in the eyes of city officials single mother families did not constitute a family (ibid.) Variances in marriage and motherhood status yielded different material effects for women from Africville (ibid.); ignoring these differences may result in the erasure of certain experiences of women. It also demonstrates how individuals, government bodies, and legal statutes handle different intersections of

identities in unique ways. Intersectional theory allows me to identify these differences by conceptualizing intra-group differences.

The third reason intersectional theory has proven useful to my research is the openness of the theoretical paradigm. As Davis (2008) points out, intersectional theory does not experience a theoretical limitation to its analytical approach (p. 76-77). One of the fundamental tenets of intersectional theory is the premise that single identity based theories often limit the analysis of the research to a single perspective (see Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins, 1990). In her research on domestic violence and rape in the United States, Crenshaw (1991) found that feminist groups were typically more concerned with issues concerning white women while anti-racist groups were more concerned issues concerning African American men (p. 1250). Crenshaw argues that not only do both perspectives marginalize the victimization of African American women; they are also unable to conceptualize racialized women as victims of “domestic violence” (ibid.). Racialized women occupy both social locations simultaneously which places African American women in a location “that resists telling” in a single identity based approach to research (ibid.) Intersectional theory attempts to prevent this form of erasure as there is no set list of identities that has to be analyzed, rather researchers are able to pick and choose what intersections of identity are most relevant to their research (Butler, 1990, p. 143). This openness has proven useful to me because it allowed me to see the different identities that made up Brenda’s social identity and thereby allowing

me to provide an in-depth and complex analysis of her experiences. Additionally, this also allowed me to incorporate any unanticipated forms of identity beyond race, class, and gender that revealed themselves during the interview.

3.2 ISSUES WITH INTERSECTIONAL THEORY

While intersectional theory provides the conceptual tools to analyze complex intersections of power and identity, McCall (2005) acknowledges that from a methodological point of view completing the task can prove difficult (p. 1772). As Butler (1990) points out, the forms of identity that can be attributed to one person are endless (p. 143). Intersectional research projects then are in jeopardy of becoming extremely complex and never ending (ibid.) For example, the number of dimensions of identity one could analyze include: race, class, gender, sexuality, age, able-bodiedness, religious beliefs, level of education, family status, status within the family, heritage, ancestry, physical health, mental health, and so forth. As one can imagine, attempting to analyze all of these dimensions would prove exceedingly difficult and time consuming. As Ludvig (2006) points out, the analysis has to *stop* somewhere but in doing so would ignore, neglect, and, or erase those perspectives that accompany those excluded dimensions (p. 247).

McCall (2005) identifies another potential dilemma for intersectional research and that is choosing a research method that will allow the researcher to indentify the differences *among* research participants. These differences are based upon how different social systems interlock and affect the lives of individuals in a

unique way. A research method for intersectional theory, according to McCall (2005), needs to be capable of capturing these complexities (p. 1772). In order to be able to capture the complexities that intersectional theories present on identity and social systems I have used an oral history method to collect my data. As McCall (2005) states, an oral history research method is best suited for intersectional research because oral histories can satisfy these dilemmas (p. 1781).

3.3 ORAL HISTORY

An oral history is a recorded interview conducted between a research participant and the researcher where the research participant guides the research process by describing their experiences of an event or series of events (Yow, 2005, p. 3). Even though oral histories can also include information from additional sources in order to provide context to specific situations (Springer, 2005, p.7), the life stories are the researcher's data; the personal story and the language being used to tell that story are things "from which meaning can be extracted" (Ritchie, 2003, p. 19). The scope of the oral history is wide; it can be used to analyze a specific time or event in history or the entirety of someone's life (Paschen, 2009, p. 21). What is being looked at in the research ultimately determines what kind of oral history the researcher will use (ibid, p. 22). Autobiographical oral histories cover the entirety of a person's life, where the research participant and researcher meet multiple times during which time the research participant chronicles their life from childhood to the time of the interview (Gluck, 2002, p. 6). In contrast, in biographical and topical oral histories

only “a slice of the interviewee’s life is explored” (Gluck, 2002, p. 5). In a topical oral history, the focus is on the experiences of people during a certain event (ibid.)

Alison Baker’s (1998) research on Moroccan women during the Moroccan Independence Movement, a resistance movement against French colonial rule, takes a topical approach. Baker’s focus is on two specific topics: Moroccan resistant movements and the roles that Moroccan women played within these movements (p. 5). Baker’s research has very clear parameters and her research does not venture outside the period of time after the Second World War when different anti-colonial movements were operating in Morocco.

A biographical oral history looks at a specific event but differs from a topical oral history as the focus is on the experiences one person had during a given event or period of time (Gluck, 2002, p. 7). The focus is not on the event per say, rather the focus is on how an individual, or a group of individuals, experienced that event (ibid.). Wang Zheng’s (1999) research looks at the way women occupying different social locations experienced the Chinese Enlightenment period. Even though Wang’s research is focused on a specific topic, her intent was to capture individual experiences and interpretations of the Enlightenment period in China.

While all three forms of oral history research differ in some respects, they can be used in unison. Gluck (2002) calls this “blurring” (p.5). Autobiography and biographical forms of oral histories do not have to focus on the experiences of one person, rather they can be used in concert with other people’s oral histories to

examine how an era, an event, or a small moment in time are interpreted; in this way they would be similar to a topical oral history (Sommer & Quinlan, 2009, p. 2).

Elaine Latzman Moon's (1994) research on the untold stories of African Americans in Detroit utilizes this form of blurring. While Moon's research examines the lives of African Americans in Detroit, she focused her research on the lives of African American men and women living in Detroit from 1918 to 1967. Moon uses an autobiographical approach by collecting the life history of each research participant, however Moon then utilizes a topical technique by breaking up of her participants' life stories into decades and using them to provide insight into the different ways African men and women experienced life in Detroit in each decade. Designing her research this way allowed Moon to take a person's life story, break it up, in this case into decades; she uses each life story in conjunction with other life stories to show the different experiences her participants had in Detroit between 1918 and 1967.

The intensity of the analysis of a person's, or persons' life story/ies varies from research project to research project (Paschen, 2009, p. 24-25). Oral history can, in its simplest form, be transcribed and then put straight into publication or archived (ibid.) The focus of this kind of oral history method is to capture and preserve the life stories of an individual or individuals; there is generally little analysis of the data (Charlton, Myers, & Sharpless, 2008, p. 2). The idea is to preserve the past, to archive how people talked, their interactions with one another, and to detail how they experienced major and minor events (ibid.) Oral histories can

also be analyzed by researchers to identify inequalities and hidden social forces that have been left out of traditional historical discourses (Sommer & Quinlan, 2009, p. 3). This type of oral history is typically found in critical research. For example, Armitage (2002) describes feminist oral history as a means of collecting the life stories of women that have been left out, neglected, or devalued by non-feminist historiographers (p. 61). Penny Summerfield's (1998) oral history research revealed the important roles women living in Britain played during the Second World War and how their contributions to the war effort helped keep Britain in the war (p. 2). The narratives revealed by Summerfield's (1998) research have not often been included in traditional war narratives where only men are described as playing active roles in the war effort. The in-depth analysis of oral histories can also reveal discrepancies over the memory of events. Borland (1991) analyzes the story of how her grandmother as a young adult went to the dog track with her father to bet on the races (p. 65). Borland applies a feminist lens to her analysis and describes a version of feminist agency when her grandmother refuses to take the "expert" advice of her father by picking a dog she thought would win the race (and did), and not the dog her father told her she should pick (ibid, p. 66). While Borland's grandmother told her story as a trip to the dog track with her father, Borland's analysis told a story of feminist agency in a patriarchal space which her grandmother did not agree with (ibid, p. 70). Boland's grandmother rejected the label of feminist that Boland placed on her in her article (ibid.) This points to how a

single memory can be interpreted in different ways, and how multiple interpretations of a single event can be made by individuals from different backgrounds. Boland, who is coming from a feminist background, views her grandmother as engaging in feminist activities, while her grandmother views it as a story with her father. This disagreement points to how there is not one defined meaning of a story, that people can and will, see different things that others may not. While various, and sometimes conflicting meanings exist, this does not mean that there is a one true meaning to a story, memory, or event; that one interpretation is the legitimate story. Each interpretation is meaningful and can provide insights into how people interpret and understand things. This is closely related to the work I did in my thesis where Brenda's stories provide a break from the stories and experiences of Africville residents that have been presented in other publications. My intent is not to say that Brenda's experiences are the true and legitimate experiences that trump every other story that has been published about Africville residents, rather that Brenda's stories are merely one perspective among many where different aspects of her experiences may or may not be shared by other Africville residents.

3.4 ORAL HISTORY AND INTERSECTIONAL THEORY COMPATABILITY

Oral histories do much more than allow life stories to be archived. In my thesis, an oral history research method will complement intersectional theorizing in four ways. First, oral histories, in particular feminist oral histories, and

intersectional theory both share the same goal: to uncover the subjugated knowledges of women. Amesberger (2009), an oral historian, notes how women have typically been written out of history, which leaves a void in historical records dealing with the way women experienced events (p.64). This leaves the lives of women obscured, devalued, and erased within traditional historical discourses (ibid.) The goal of feminist oral history is, therefore, to reclaim and validate these experiences (Honig, 1997, p. 139). Intersectional theory is built on a similar ideology, which is to, “reveal [the] subjugated knowledges” of marginalized women; women whose experiences could not be told under a single form of identity (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. 5).

In their research on “poor White Appalachian women,” Henderson and Tickamyre (2009) argue that these women experience different social ramifications for being on welfare than welfare recipients who are African American women (p.50-51). African American women have come to be negatively and unfairly symbolized in welfare discourses as lazy and unwilling workers (ibid, p. 65; see also Hill Collins, 2000). Appalachian women only enter into welfare discourses in the United States as a piece of evidence to prove that the American government and economic systems are “colorblind” and therefore do not operate under racial, ethnic, and sexist ideologies (Henderson & Tickamyre, 2009, p. 65). Henderson and Tickamyre (2009) point out that because welfare discourses in the United States focus primarily on African American women, the stories of Appalachian women

living on welfare are overlooked and neglected in welfare policy discussions in the American government and in academia (p. 68).

Bornat and Diamond (2007) reveal another way oral history as method mirrors intersectional theorizing. Bornat and Diamond describe the current state of oral history research as follows: “issues of difference, subjectivity, and identity are now at the heart of oral history analysis” (ibid, p. 34). To Bornat and Diamond, oral histories have become concerned with how multiple forms of identity intersect to yield individualized experiences and the different ways that researchers interpret these experiences. Ludvig (2006) asserts that the method used in intersectional theorizing must be open to accepting multiple forms of identity simultaneously (p. 248). The research method used in conjunction with intersectional theory must be open to and accepting of multiple forms of identity constructs rather than limiting the analysis of identity to a few variables (ibid.) An oral history method fulfills these requirements by allowing the interview subjects to reveal which strands of identity intersect their own lives (Osterud & Jones, 1989, p. 2). It also allows the interview subjects to provide different interpretations to the same event (ibid.)

An oral history research method also helps resolve the issue of where to end the analysis. Butler (1990) points out that, in intersectional research, the number of dimensions of identity that one can analyze is seemingly indefinite; the analysis has to stop somewhere (p. 143). Engaging in an oral history research method allows the research subjects to reveal their own identities in the research. Oral history

methodologies place the interview participants in a place of power in the research, allowing them to identify not only what social identities they claim but also what social interactions or inactions they deem important to share (Zheng, 1999, p. 132).

The benefit of utilizing an oral history research method is that different interpretations of one event can be presented and described in detail by the research participant using their own words (Sommer & Quinlan, 2009, p. 2). This emphasis on difference helps keep the research focused on the participants as individuals rather than lumping them together in a group where everyone is thought to be, think, and feel the same way. This allows for research participants to tell their own stories. The ability of oral history methodology to recognize individual experiences is key to its link to intersectional theorizing. Yuval-Davis (2006) points out that because intersectional theories emphasize unique experiences, they accept that everyone from a social group experiences the same phenomenon in different ways (p. 195). Intersectional theorists generally assume that every female experiences events in her own unique way (Davis, 2008, p. 76). While at times females can experience similar feelings and interpretations of an event in a similar manner, it should not be assumed that every female thinks and feels in this way (ibid.) Therefore, there is no “true” experience of an event, rather an event is a collection of multiple interpretations made by people; interpretations that may coalesce or conflict with how other people interpreted the event in question (Chamberlain, 1995, p. 108).

3.5 METHOD

In order to answer my research question: “What were the experiences of women from Africville?”, my research objectives were to: 1) Find out the unique experiences of my research participants while they lived in Africville; 2) Ask how they were affected by the relocation plan?; 3) Query what life was like for these women after relocation; and 4) Consider how the lives of women from Africville changed after relocation. Utilizing these four research objectives allowed me to see some of the unique experiences that different women from Africville have had over the course of their lives.

When I first began my research I wanted to engage in three oral history interviews with three women who had lived in Africville and who had gone through the relocation process, however I was only able to conduct a single interview. I got very few responses from potential research participants during the recruiting process. This was a little surprising since a friend of mine who volunteered to get me in contact with the Africville Genealogy Society, is related to Irvine Carvery, the President of the Society. Even though I was aware that some Africville residents have shown reluctance to talk about their experiences to outsiders (Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 190), I thought that being friends with someone who knew and had grown up around members of the Africville Genealogy Society—former residents who dedicate their spare time to “captur[ing] the memories of Africville and [to use them to] educate future members of society” to dispel the myths of Africville—

would be less hesitant about sharing their experiences of Africville with me (Africville Genealogy Society, 2010, par. 8). In past research projects conducted by the Africville Genealogy Society (1992), Clairmont and Magill (1971), and Williams and Peters (2009), members of the Africville Genealogy Society have shared their memories with the aforementioned researchers, so I did not expect to encounter any great difficulties in recruiting research participants for my thesis. However, contrary to my expectations, I experienced great difficulty in getting even one interview. I was about to give up and try to find a new way to approach my research when I received a call from Brenda Steed-Ross, the woman whom I interviewed for my thesis. Thankfully, she agreed to take part in my research project. Brenda is one of the founding members of the Africville Genealogy Society and helped run the affairs of AGS with her childhood friends Deborah Dixon-Jones and Linda Mantley (also former Africville residents) until Irvine Carvery was elected President in 1989. Since then, Brenda has remained active within the AGS as a board member by helping to organize, plan, and administer the affairs of the Africville Genealogy Society.

While I cannot be sure as to why I received such a low response rate, I can speculate. I was trying to recruit people during the summer, unbeknownst to me and the general public, that the Africville Genealogy Society was in the midst of negotiating and receiving their reparations from the Halifax Municipal Government. It may have been that I was simply trying to recruit people during the wrong time or

it could have been because I was an outsider, but I will never know. I did not receive any information about why people decided not to participate so I can only speculate. Regardless, the impact of being able to conduct only one interview meant that I had to make some changes in how I approached my analysis.

The oral history method that I employed pulled ideas from autobiographical, biographical, and topical oral histories. While the focus of my research is solely on Brenda's autobiographical account of life Africville all the way up to the current day, I also focus on three temporal periods in her life: the time before the razing of Africville, during the razing of Africville, and after the razing of Africville. While I focus on these three temporal periods, the focus of my analysis is not the events that define the time period, rather the focus of the analysis is how Brenda experienced these events in her own way. As a result, the way that I implement my oral history research method generates some blurring between different oral history research methods (Gluck, 2002, p. 5).

I recorded my oral history interview with Brenda via a digital voice recorder, the interview lasted approximately two hours. Brenda guided the interview by telling me the stories that she wished to share about her time in and out of Africville, this allowed her to tell me what she perceived to be the important moments of her life. Designing my research in this manner helped me avoid the assumption that I as the researcher knew the most important moments of Brenda's life (Potts & Brown, 2008, pp. 50-51). I am not from Africville, and even though I have done research on

it I still cannot assume to know how Brenda felt, experienced, and was impacted by relocation (ibid.) I could not predict her stories; I could only relate what she has told me during our interview. Although I was aware of this, as I will show in the latter part of this section and through the chapters in my analysis section (Chapters 5, 6, and 7), I still harboured some preconceptions about what Brenda's life was like as an Africville resident, preconceptions that Brenda has shown to be misconceptions.

After conducting my interview with Brenda, I transcribed the interview word for word, and kept the language structure and word pronunciation as they were originally spoken in the interview. The purpose of this choice was to secure Brenda's ownership over her life stories by allowing telling her story in the words that she used herself (Etter-Lewis, 1991, p. 44). In order to further secure Brenda's ownership of her life story, after the interview I offered to return the transcript to Brenda to provide her with the opportunity to look over what she said and approve the transcript (Boland, 1991, p. 71). This was done to ensure that what I had written down in the transcript was what Brenda wanted to have written down and that it was written in the way she wanted it written down. If there was something she wanted taken out of the transcript, she would be able to have it removed (ibid.) Brenda only requested that I provide a copy of her transcript, which she wanted for archival purposes. Brenda also requested that her full transcript be made available in the appendix of this thesis, to which I have complied. I also offered to conduct follow up interviews with Brenda if some of the information in the transcript

required clarification. My earlier drafts of my analysis section contained a section that complicated and disrupted the relationships between “white” Nova Scotian groups and Africville residents. Brenda’s transcript indicated that in addition to being discriminated against by members of Nova Scotia’s different “white” communities, relationships existed between “white” Nova Scotians and Africville residents that were based on harmony and respect. However, I required some clarification on this matter from Brenda, but Brenda, who was experiencing some family crisis during the time of my request politely declined my request as she would be too busy handling more pressing matters. In response, I removed a section from my analysis but kept it in the interview transcript.

I originally intended to analyze each of my research participant’s life stories separately, looking for themes within each oral history and then comparing them to the others in order to provide different ways of understanding the lives of women from Africville. I decided to approach my research in this way in order to provide a more in depth understanding of the lives of women from Africville (ibid.) Separating my analysis section into individual chapters for each woman would have tailored each oral history to that woman’s experiences (Zheng, 1999, p. 132). Each woman would have been able to tell her own story (ibid.) However, since I was only able to conduct a single interview I was required to change how I analyzed my data. While Brenda’s story is the central component of my analysis, I no longer have stories with which to compare it. In response, I decided to compare Brenda’s story with the

literature on Africville that has been published elsewhere. My decision to compare Brenda's life story with the stories that have been published in other works was motivated by the differences I noted between Brenda's stories and the stories captured by Clairmont and Magill (1971), Nelson (2008), Tattrie (2010), and Williams and Peters (2009). I noticed the differences almost immediately, as I conducted the interview with Brenda. I remember thinking that the stories that she was telling me were quite different from everything I had read about Africville. I thought I knew what Africville was like, since I had dedicated a significant amount of time to reading and rereading the literature on Africville, yet the memories that Brenda shared with me did not reflect what was being said in much the literature. Since I was only able to conduct one interview, I now had space in my thesis to document and analyze these differences.

I took this change in my analysis a step further by also documenting and analyzing my reactions to these discrepancies. While Brenda's life stories and those documented in the Africville literature are rich in detail, they did not provide enough information for me to meet the requirements of my master's thesis. So in response I decided to talk back to the data, and document and analyze my reactions to the differences that existed between Brenda's stories and of those that are found in other published works on Africville. I was initially hesitant to include my reactions in the analysis, mostly because I am quite shy and I do not particularly enjoy talking about myself in a public forum. What ultimately influenced my decision to include

my reactions to Brenda's stories were two things: the first being Allison's (2002) article, *A Question of Class*, where Allison shares the traumatic experiences she experienced as child. To me, Allison's decision to share these traumatic experiences with her readers was incredibly brave, and motivated me, a person who did not go through nearly as many traumatic events as Allison has gone through, to share my reactions to Brenda's life stories. The other factor that motivated me was that my research project is built upon having Brenda share her life story with me for the purpose of dissecting her life stories for my own end. I felt that it would have been hypocritical of me to hide and/or censor my reactions to her stories while parading her stories in a publicly available forum. So with these two factors weighing on my mind, I included my reactions to Brenda's stories in my analysis.

What follows is a personal account of how I approached the research using an anti-oppressive feminist perspective. I document how my understanding of race and gender has changed over the years. In the analysis section, I offer an analysis of Brenda's experiences in and out of Africville and how it compares to the stories that have been published by highlighting the differences and similarities that exist between the different stories. I also spend time on events that Brenda shared that have not been presented in other Africville-based publications such as the forming of the Africville Genealogy Society. Finally, I show how Brenda broke down my expectations of what I thought her life was like and the lives of other Africville residents (misconceptions that were largely based on what I have read in Africville

literature) and how this challenged me to broaden my perspectives of not only Africville but race and gender as well.

4. LOCATING MYSELF IN THE RESEARCH

The way that Brenda framed her stories forced me to re-think how I had previously conceptualized gender and inter-group dynamics in Africville. She challenged me to think outside of my narrowly framed perceptions of Africville, perceptions that framed Africville residents as being an indivisible group and assumed that the relationships between Africville residents and non-Africville residents were based solely on derision. Brenda's account of her life in and after Africville challenged me to create a broader understanding of Africville, an understanding that included relationships between Africville residents and non-Africville residents which were not defined by discrimination.

The same thing could be said for how I conceptualized gender roles in Africville. Brenda's stories encouraged me to deviate from my previously held beliefs about women from Africville, ones that reinforced gendered stereotypes and/or ignored the important roles women played in the community, in favour of a more nuanced perception of gender in Africville. Through her stories Brenda has challenged me to think of gender roles and intergroup relationships outside of the traditional concepts of gender and intergroup relations that are found in previous writings on Africville. Previous literature on Africville presents roles of domestication and docility as being played only by women (Clairmont & Magill, 1971; Tattrie, 2010, p. 14).

What Brenda has shown me is that understanding Africville through a reductive lens, that is, where gender roles are absolute and intergroup relationships could only be defined based on tension, provides only a limited view of how some Africville residents lived. Brenda has shown me there were women and girls who defied, yet simultaneously reinforced, the gendered stereotypes that have been presented in previous writings on Africville where women were overwhelmingly portrayed as housewives and mothers (Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 64; Tattrie, 2010, p. 14). She also showed me that although tensions existed among Africville residents and other African Nova Scotian communities and the employees of the Halifax Municipal Government, that not all these relationships were tension-based. While I cannot say with absolute certainty why other writers of Africville's history have neglected to analyze gender relations in Africville and intergroup relationships in the complex ways that Brenda has described them, I can at least provide a few informed guesses as to why this has occurred. Magill and Clairmont (1971), Nelson (2008), and Tattrie (2010) all engage in deconstructive efforts to dispel the myths that have been used to construct Africville residents and their community. As Nelson (2008) has shown in her work, these myths assumed that Africville was a community without a culture, one whose residents were so helpless and infantile that they created the slum-like conditions that existed in their community (p. 12). Clairmont and Magill (1971, p. 74) and Nelson (2008, p. 54) have documented events that dispel these myths by showing the strong social cohesion that existed

among Africville residents as they supported each other by taking care of each other's children, went to their church together, played games, and so on, to show that, in fact, Africville residents did have a culture. This seems to be one of the reasons why Clairmont and Magill (1971) and Nelson (2008) adopted a group-based perspective when portraying Africville residents. Showing Africville as a community that had a strong sense of solidarity and cohesion, one which created and sustained an identifiable and independent/self-sustaining culture, helps dispels the myths about Africville and its residents.

In addition to their deconstructive efforts, the authors also had to document the various forms of discrimination that Africville residents incurred by the actions and inactions of various employees of the Halifax Municipal government.

Documenting these discriminatory actions and inactions helped the authors dispel the discourse that Africville residents were responsible for creating the problems that existed in their community, such as the pollution and rats that came from the City Dump and which spread various diseases throughout Africville (Tattrie, 2010, p. 21). Documenting these instances of discrimination, and of the collective community cohesion that existed between Africville residents from a group-based perspective were necessary for Clairmont and Magill (1971) and Nelson (2008) in order to present a history of Africville from an anti-racist perspective, and a perspective that also dispel the myths that have been traditionally used to define Africville. However, in their attempts to demonstrate Africville's strong sense of

community cohesion and the discriminatory actions and inactions that members of the community were subject to, these authors utilized a reductive lens when documenting gender relations in Africville and intergroup relationships between Africville residents and non-Africville residents. Interactions between Africville residents and non-Africville residents became defined by, and based on, acts of discrimination. While it is important and necessary to document these acts of discrimination, the result of this concentrated focus, as I discuss in Chapter 6, is that these acts became representative of every relationship that Africville residents are thought to have had with non-Africville residents, something that Brenda disputes in her stories.

Adopting a group-based identity focus to define Africville residents also allowed the authors to neglect perspectives that were unique to women from Africville, as I show in Chapter 5. The group-based identity that had been used to construct the shared identity of Africville residents was based on the perspectives of a small and select group of male residents (Nelson, 2008, p. 136; Tattrie, 2010). The absence of female experiences in Africville's history leaves us with gender roles represented as being strictly defined and controlled by men. This leaves women from Africville without the ability to define their own lives and experiences within Africville literature. When I listened to Brenda's stories, it drastically changed the way that I perceived Africville because her unique perspective allowed me to see things that I had not been able to before. Truthfully, the reason why Brenda's stories

had the impact on me that they did is because she forced me to think in a way that I have not been used to throughout most of my life; before engaging in this research I did not have the conceptual tools to do so.

I grew up in a small rural town in Nova Scotia, about a thirty-minute drive from where Africville once stood. Throughout most of my childhood I was rarely, if ever, challenged to think of issues of race and gender in broad, complex ways. The population of my hometown throughout my youth was made up almost entirely of people who were “white”; I use the term “white” here to reflect my ignorance of race and ethnicity as a youth, as I assumed everyone in my community was the same because they were “white” or appeared to be “white.” I was unaware that not only is “whiteness” a racial group, but that also there are many different intersections of “whiteness” based on ethnicity, religion, ancestry, class, and other forms of identity (McDermott & Samson, 2005, p. 247). To me, as a youth, one “white” person was just like any other “white” person; “whiteness” was not a race, “white” people did not have a race, instead I thought “whiteness” was a shared, monolithic experience (Ibid.)

Of the approximately four thousand residents of my hometown, the overwhelmingly majority were “white,” there was only one African Nova Scotian family that I knew of. There were other racialized minority families who lived in my hometown; however, I can only think of two or three. Growing up, I rarely thought about race; race was something that I had very little exposure to. My only real

experiences with race were through the characters in the television shows and movies that I watched, which was rare as most of the television shows did not have characters who were visibly racial¹; sports icons like Michael Jordan; as well as the stereotypes that I occasionally heard my friends and family members use. This led to my knowledge about race and race relations being built from informal secondary sources that relied heavily on stereotypes, misrepresentations, and hierarchies to construct race and race relations. It was a very undeveloped blueprint to the various complexities that accompany race and race relations in everyday life.

I experienced similarly informal approaches to learning about gender, informal approaches that often reinvested in sexist ideologies that mistakenly assumed that men are more intelligent, powerful, and capable than women. Women within these sexist discourses are often portrayed as mothers, caregivers, and responsible for the domestic sphere (Kite, Deaux, & Haines, 2008, pp. 206-211). Unlike race, I had direct exposure to a gender different than my own, especially within my own extended family as most of my twenty or so cousins are female, and I got to see first hand the different ways that male and female genders roles played out. Women were mothers and were primarily responsible for cooking, cleaning, and raising children. Men were fathers who were primarily responsible for going to work and earning an income, and coming home and avoiding household

¹ Some of the television shows that I watched as a child were: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles; Speed Racer; Transformers; Darkwing Duck; TaleSpin; Doug; Batman; Spiderman; ReBoot; Gargoyles; Pinky and the Brain; Family Matters; Alvin and the Chipmunks; Sesame Street; Boy Meets World; X-Men; and the Simpsons.

responsibilities. Girls played with Barbies and played house, while boys played with toys guns and enacted war. The television shows and movies that I watched reinforced these gender roles, roles that saw females participate in passive activities and males in active activities (Butler, 1990, p. 12). Needless to say, I grew up thinking that it was the different biological configurations between females and males that determined which activities females and males engaged in (Fausto-Sterling, 1992, p. 4).

These mistaken and misinformed understandings that I had about race and gender went largely unabated throughout my time in the public education system. Race, as well as gender, was something that teachers rarely taught about openly, and they never challenged me about in the different schools that I attended. In fact, very little of my curriculum as an elementary and junior high student was dedicated to issues of race and gender; I cannot even remember if my school and my teachers did anything for Black History Month aside from putting up an occasional poster or sign. I did not learn of civil rights heroes, especially not *Canadian* civil rights heroes like Viola Desmond (see Backhouse, 1999). Instead, the majority of the teaching material that was administered to me contained subject matter that appeared genderless, and lacked any examination of matters related to race. Most of the textbooks, work sheets, and other school activities that I was obligated to participate in assumed a privilege white, male perspective and lacked specific attention to issues related to gender and race (Blumberg, 2008, p. 352).

When learning about Canada, I can remember pictures of “white” male RCMP officers and pictures of white children who looked like me decorating the pages of my textbooks. Any problem-solving activities were administered through questions that started off with the preface “a boy has.” There were times when problem-solving questions started off with “a girl has,” but this was rare. There was nothing in the curriculum that I can remember that taught me about women’s rights, intersectional thinking, or anti-racist ideology. I did learn that it was wrong to hit girls and that girls had the same rights as boys, and that everyone no matter the colour of their skin was equal under the law, but I never knew the history of why that was important. These “truths” were never really played out in any real way in my everyday life, it was just something that “was,” something that I was taught and expected to understand despite not knowing why or seeing the reasons played out in my everyday life. I was not taught that the history of Canada was built on acts of colonialism, misogyny, racism, imperialism and oppression that caused the genocide of various Aboriginal peoples, that actively participated in the slave trade of Africans, and that left Canadian women legally powerless to be protected from marital rape, domestic violence, and other forms abuse (see Drew, 2008; Regan, 2010; Lazar, 2010). Moreover, I was never challenged to think of women, as well as racial minorities, as being different from one another. What I mean is that my understanding of women was that they were all the same, that they liked the same things, and they wanted the same things, like to be married to a man and to have

kids. Likewise, my limited perspective of racial minorities, who I pretty much defined as being black, was similar; I used to think they were all naturally gifted athletes. I was unaware of the vast differences that made each person in these groups unique, and that more than one identity existed for every person. Needless to say, I grew up largely in segregation, not only in terms of physical spaces but spaces of knowledge as well.

This problem continued as I entered high school. I was still not challenged to think of race and gender in broad and complex ways. My schoolwork, even though it had advanced in difficulty when compared to the work that I did in elementary and junior high school, still largely ignored issues of race and gender. The textbooks and novels that we were given either reinforced stereotypes of women, and/or were largely absent of women and women's issues. William Shakespeare using the "demonic and hysterical" woman trope in *Macbeth*, Bernard Shaw reinforcing the false belief that only men are capable of possessing knowledge in *Pygmalion*, or the simple lack of female characters in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* are all examples of the great literary works that I read in high school that reinforced negative stereotypes about women or which simply ignored women altogether (Levin, 2002, p. 38; and Lihua, 2006, p. 43). Much like the curriculum in my elementary and junior high schools, I was not presented with a single piece of literature that focused on non-white races in high school. In all honesty, I cannot even remember if I was obligated to read a piece of literature that had a single "non-

white” character. This segregation of knowledge mirrored the physical segregation that I experienced in my school. My high school contained students from two neighbouring communities as well as from my own; communities that shared the same racial homogeneity in their members as mine did. In my graduating class of over four hundred students, there were only three students who were African Nova Scotian; that is, who were visibly African Nova Scotian. The idea that someone could *look* white yet *be* black was not something that I had even thought about at that time. It was like at a subconscious level I assumed that people only dated people within their race, even though I knew that it was legal to date and marry people outside of your race (see Byers & Haines 2005, p. 182). Needless to say, by the time I entered university I was ill prepared to think of race in a complex manner, as I had been living in segregation.

Despite the complete lack of training I received in feminism and anti-racism, I believed that I understood the different injustices that women and racialized minorities faced in Canadian society. I grew up in a single mother family, my father was a verbally, emotionally, and sometimes physically abusive alcoholic when I was younger and my mother divorced him when I was midway through the ninth grade. After their divorce, my mother raised my four siblings and myself, worked full-time, and went to school at night to earn her M.B.A. During this time I saw some of the different ways that people treated my mother, as well as the ways that certain social systems were structured “against” her. There was no system in place to track my

father down and make him pay the child support payments that he has never given to my mother, despite the fact that that money would have helped my Mom pay her mortgage. Instead, we had to sell our house and move in with my grandmother because my mother did not have enough income to pay the mortgage on her own. Of course, if my mother's employer had decided to pay her wages equal to her male colleagues we might have been able to keep our house. Yet, the reality is that my mother's employers paid her less than her male colleagues for the same amount of work. In fact, one of my mother's favourite jokes was that the only reason her employer paid her less was because she had a uterus. It was one her favourite jokes not only because it was true, but it also made my brothers squirm every time my mother acknowledged that she had a uterus. All joking aside however, my mother not being paid a full salary and the inability to get my father to pay child support caused us to experience serious financial problems, problems that at times were so dire that they caused my mother to break down and cry. I did the best that I could to help my mother out; I helped clean, looked after my four siblings until my mother got home from school or work, helped my brothers and sisters with their homework, and did some cooking occasionally. I often declined to go out with my friends to the movies, hockey games, or anywhere else that required paid admission because I did not want to take away from the little money that we had; other times I would decline because there would be no one at home to look after my brothers and sisters.

Despite witnessing what my mother did and experienced, I still conceived of gender as being a rigid, generalized, and near absolute experience, meaning that there was no difference between women; that all women thought and felt the same way about certain things. It did not occur to me that race, ethnicity, class and other social identities could intersect with gender and create differing experiences for different women. I was never challenged to do so, or at the very least, I never recognized that I was being challenged to think in that manner. I thought that I understood all of the injustices that women faced because I had a front row seat to these injustices; I could see them plain as day, they were a part of my everyday life. I would try to stand up to these injustices in the best ways that I knew how, which were to act with the upmost respect towards women by being polite and respectful, making sure the toilet seat was completely absent of any and all liquids before I left the bathroom, opening doors for women, and other similar acts of intended kindness. Yet, despite of all my attempts to be respectful, I still did things like laugh at the sexist jokes and comments that my uncles would tell . These were often said in an obvious sense of jest so I did not perceive the jokes as being improper, even though there were times when I remember that they annoyed my Mom, Aunts, and my Grandmother. I was unaware of how these jokes differed from other jokes, to me, jokes were jokes; you told a joke to make someone laugh or to tease them. The fact that a joke could have wide and profound social consequences was beyond me, and I still engaged in other similar acts that reinforced sexist ideologies and

gendered hierarchies. My assumed knowledge about gender inequality was vastly underdeveloped as I was completely unaware of the range and depth of the diverse ways that gender inequality operated in everyday life (McIntosh, 2010, p. 148). In my attempts to be anti-oppressive, I often acted in ways that oppressed women, I still had a lot to learn about being anti-oppressive.

Like my assumptions about my knowledge of women's rights, I thought of myself as being quite knowledgeable about racial inequalities. In university I started reading Alex Haley's (1973) *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Clayborne Carson's (1998) *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, and Mohandas K. Gandhi's (1993) *Gandhi an Autobiography: The stories of my experiments with truth* during my free time. Gandhi, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr. were my heroes; I had posters of them and copies of their more famous speeches hanging on the walls of my apartment. I do not know what suddenly spurred my interest in race and racial inequality when I reached university, but I have always found reading critical histories incredibly fascinating. Perhaps that is why I started becoming interested in race, or maybe it was because it was something that I had never learned before. I often find things that I do not understand particularly interesting, so maybe that played a part in it too. I am not sure of the reasons, but whatever they were the fact remained that I was still going through my academic life without being challenged to think of race and gender in broad, complex ways. Throughout my B.A. in Criminology, criminals were presented as criminals, and they often lacked any other

identifiable characteristics other than the fact they had offended or that they were at-risk to offend. The theories that I was taught to help understand why criminal activity occurred were written by “white” males, and most of those theories were not specifically designed to understand criminal activity through a feminist or anti-racist lens. I was being taught grand theories, theories that determined a person’s behaviour solely in terms of criminal activity: they either engaged in criminal activity or they did not. Issues of race and gender were seemingly irrelevant in the literature I was being taught, criminals were assumed to be identical to one another. Criminals were criminals, and regardless of their race and gender, the reasons they engaged in criminal behaviour were the same. In addition, crimes that primarily focus on females, such as marital rape, and wife battery were only brought up in one class, in one course that I took throughout my entire undergraduate program. Likewise, instances that related to race such as lynching, racial discrimination, and racial profiling were also rarely covered in my courses. What I was left with when I completed my undergraduate degree was the impression that people did not commit crimes against women and/or racialized minorities as a way to control, terrorize, and subjugate them (Agnew, 2005, p. 44). Instead, crimes were merely acts committed because of poverty, convenience, or poor family upbringing.

I remember sitting in my anti-racist theory class in the first year of my M.A. program and being mad that I had gone through elementary, junior high, and high school, as well as my entire undergraduate degree without being presented with a

theory or a piece of writing that focused on race or gender, and that I had also never been presented a theory or a piece of writing that was written by a person who was not a white male. In fact, when I started reading feminist literature I unconsciously referred to the female authors as men in my notes, like, for example, I would write “He says” or “He argues.” I was shocked, and then embarrassed, that this happened. It was an act that I did without even thinking, I did it as automatically as I do breathing, it was something so normalized that I did not know what I was doing until after I did it. I remember feeling that I had not fully developed as person— that I was incomplete.

Perhaps the first time that I started to become aware that my knowledge of race and gender was not as complete as I had thought it was, was when I listened to my friends complain that racism and sexism existed in Halifax, the city that I now live in. At that point in my life I could identify obvious signs of racism and sexism: certain terminology such as the word “bitch” and the n-word; and certain acts such as denying service or opportunities because on a person’s race or gender. However, I could not understand what my friends meant when they said they were being discriminated against based on their race and/or gender. I remember one winter night when I was with a group of my friends heading to a pub to grab our usual after-work drink, one of my friends commented that Halifax was a racist city and that he was tired of it. I remember thinking right after my friend’s comment, when we stopped outside the pub so a few of my friends could finish their cigarettes, that I

had no idea what he was talking about. What racism? How could racism be so prevalent in Halifax when race was rarely the basis of government policies and in the local news reports that were published about Halifax? It seemed to me that race was not even an issue here since politicians, teachers, and news reporters hardly ever addressed it. I had to wait until I was in graduate school, where I started to conduct this research and take feminist and anti-racism-based courses, to begin to learn and *understand* some of the things my friends were talking about.

An example of this revelation occurred when I read Chris Weedon's "Challenging Patriarchy Decentering Heterosexuality: Radical and Revolutionary Feminism," a chapter in her book *Feminism, theory, and the politics of difference* (1999, p. 26-50). I suddenly, and finally, *understood* the arguments that feminists had been making about a woman's rights to access abortion services. While I had always supported the right for a woman to choose to have an abortion, I mainly supported this right because I thought it was the right thing to do, because it is what women's right activists said was a woman's right. Even though I supported a female's right to have an abortion, I did not understand the politics behind this right. I was trying to avoid the label of being a sexist and misogynist, so I blindly supported the right for women to have abortions without any understanding of why women had to stage protests in order to secure this right. I was unaware of the political issue that a woman should have the right to control her own body and to choose what happens to her body (*ibid.*) It was a shock when I came to this realization, a

realization that came when I was twenty-seven years old. I had gone through twenty seven years of my life without being challenged to think of matters of race and gender outside of mass generalizations, and to be in complete ignorance about the forms of discrimination that were so apparent to my friends, yet hidden from me. I could only perceive these things through a very limited point of view; a point of view that, although was well intentioned (as I thought of myself as being anti-racist and anti-sexist), still needed to be broadened.

As I ventured through my classes on anti-racism and feminism, I started feeling that I was becoming better able to conceptualize issues of race and gender, and I started to see some of the inequalities that were hidden right in front of me. I started to understand that there are differences within groups of people; that a person's identity is made up of more than one kind of identity and that people can, and do, react differently to different intersections of identity; that a female is more than just a female, and that not all females are mothers or want to be mothers. I also began to understand the importance of space and how it impacts identity. The spaces that a person acts in, whether this is a space of employment, family, peers, and so on, often determines which forms of identity are at the forefront. Different systems of oppression are more prominent in different spaces than others, and therefore how they come together to interlock with one another to impact the lives of individual women. Sexual violence differs in terms of space, like, a workplace environment and a woman's home. The physical acts may be similar, but the

difference lies in the consequences of these acts, the legislation enacted to prevent these acts, the availability for women to seek legal recourse, and so on (see Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1274).

I could better understand what my friends were talking about when they complained about acts of discrimination being hidden in normalized, everyday activities as I read articles by Vijay Agnew and Himani Bannerji. The works of Agnew (2005) and Bannerji (2000) provided me with first hand accounts of some of the injustices that racialized immigrant women have had to face when they immigrated into Canada, injustices that I was unaware existed in Canada. Agnew (2005) speaks to this more directly as she focuses on how racialized immigrant women whose immigration applications are sponsored by their husband or members of their husband's family (p. 26). This often leaves these women powerless to stop any form of abuse and exploitation that they experience from their husbands or their husband's family, because as the woman's immigration sponsor they can threaten to withdraw their support, which would lead to the female being deported (ibid.) Stories, like the ones that Agnew (2005) tells, are stories that rarely make it into traditional multicultural discourse in Canada, where we are led to believe that Canadian society is free of discrimination, exploitation, and oppression (Bannerji, 2000, p. 114). These false discourses are constructed from a privileged white, Anglo, male perspective that often ignores, neglects, and overlooks the

different forms of gender and race based oppressions that are prominent throughout society (ibid.)

Seeing this intersection of identities presented me with the opportunity to more fully understand the unique forms of oppression and discrimination that I not had been previously been aware of. I also started reading about the people, stories, and events that have been ignored, neglected, and forgotten from the pages of traditional historical accounts of Canadian history, such as the Indian Residential Schools that operated for over 150 years, the Japanese-Canadian internment camps that existed during the Second World War after the attack on Pearl Harbour, and of slavery in Canada (Nakano, 1980; Cooper, 2008). I also traversed my way through anti-oppressive methodology classes to ensure that I was knowledgeable about some of the pitfalls of engaging in feminist and anti-racist research such as: avoiding the assumption that I, as the researcher, was the only knowledge holder in the research process (Brown & Strega, 2005, p. 4), and to empower rather than disempower my research participants by allowing them to recount their own experiences, feelings, and perceptions about a period of time in their lives (Sharpless, 2007, p. 29). When I started my research on Africville I thought I had shed myself of the blindness and ignorance that I had once held on issues of race and gender, however, it turns out that I had a lot more to learn.

When I started to read the literature on Africville, I learned about the different ways that the residents of Africville were met with oppression, injustice,

and inequality from the Halifax Municipal Government and from communities and cultures located in-and-around Halifax. In fact, the literature on Africville focuses so much on these interactions that I thought all of the relationships that Africville residents had with individuals from outside their community were based on derision and discrimination. I viewed Africville as being socially isolated, that non-Africville residents rarely interacted with Africville residents, and, when they did, that Africville residents were always exploited in some way. I thought of Africville residents as living a very oppressed life, one that was full of sorrow, heartbreak, and tragedy. It was during my interview with Brenda that I realized how narrow my perception of Africville was. Brenda shared stories that simultaneously reinforced and deconstructed my perceptions of life in Africville. What this ultimately did was provide me with a unique, and previously undocumented perspective through which to view gender and race dynamics in Africville. Traditional gender roles no longer strictly defined women from Africville, and allowed women from Africville to be more than just the domestics and mothers that had been shown in the previous literature. Likewise, Africville residents were no longer relegated to separate and generalized categories of identity where they were assumed to think, feel, and act in the same way. Instead, Brenda has shown how some Africville residents acted outside of these supposed group mentalities to create a more complicated conception of power. In doing so, Brenda presented me with a broad understanding

of life before, during, and after the razing of Africville; stories that are based on difference, and which allow difference to be acknowledged.

The memories that Brenda shared with me in the context of this research have provided me, as I said, with a more complex understanding of the race, gender, and cultural dynamics that existed in Africville that, in all honesty, I had not conceived of before conducting the interview. Previous writings on Africville by Clairmont & Magill (1971; 1999), Nelson (2008), and Tattrie (2010) present identities as being group-based, that is, identities based on shared racial, gender, or cultural characteristics. The most common example of this from the literature on Africville is the way that its residents are portrayed as belonging to one single, indivisible, fully assimilated group of people who all thought, felt, and experienced events in the same manner. There was no way to distinguish individual experiences within the writings. Implementing a group-based perspective assumes rigid notions of identity that do not allow for multiple forms of identity to intersect and interact in simultaneous fashion. For example, Clairmont and Magill (1971) describe how the Africville Relocation Plan led Africville residents to suffer from a loss of a sense of community, how family members became separated from one another because of high rental costs, the increased debt load residents were forced to take on, and the sudden dependence of Africville residents on welfare (p. 223). The way that Clairmont and Magill, as well as Nelson (2008), have described the effects of relocation is problematic because they assume that every resident of Africville,

regardless of gender, was impacted by the Africville Relocation Plan in exactly the same way and with the same intensity. They rarely take into consideration the differences among genders, and when they do, women and men from Africville are placed into strict gender roles that see females and males engaging in work defined by gender. They also imply that differences do not exist among women in Africville; that all women from Africville were basically identical to each other. What Brenda has allowed me to do in my research is to provide insight into the different ways that women from Africville experienced life in Africville, and how men and women from Africville reinvested in, but also divested themselves of traditional gender roles.

5. RENOGIATING GENDER ROLES IN AFRICVILLE

Brenda shared stories that provided me with a broader understanding of gender roles in Africville than what has been shown in previously published writings. Previous writings on Africville represented women as being responsible for childcare, and men responsible for earning wages. Tattrie (2010) states that mothers in Africville were disproportionately responsible for raising their children and fathers in Africville were largely absolved from the responsibilities of childcare (p.14). Yet, this strict division of labour between genders is not how Brenda describes her experiences growing up as child in Africville. Now, I am not trying to say that women from Africville did not carry out the majority of childcare duties (as I will show later on in my analysis), rather I am trying to show a broader understanding of the gender roles that operated within Africville. Everyone's actions were more nuanced rather than operating in strict binaries.

Brenda tells a story of spending time with her grandfather who acted as babysitter not only to her, but also to other children in the community:

I used to go over there and just sit around my Grandfather's house. There was no TV back then or nothing, it was just to be in the house with Grandfather. He'd have a little candy for me or something, and we'd sit there and we'd sit there and talk about what I did for the day and stuff like... At five years old, he was like my babysitter right?

Aside from looking after Brenda so that her mother could complete her daily chores, Brenda's grandfather also performed other childcare roles, such as cooking food for Brenda to eat:

He used to peel the potato, and slice them in rounds, and put them on the stove and burn them on each side. I mean, I used to eat them half raw but they taste so good (laughing). Used to taste so good.

Brenda's grandfather also took on the responsibility of feeding other children in Africville:

We had a couple of little boys that lived down the hill. Grandfather used to like to take the pan of gravy after he's finished eating, he used to have some gravy left in the pan, and he used to go out in the yard and sit by the door with pan of gravy and some bread. The little boys, they were no more than six years old, they used to come up, and it was Wayne and Georgie, I'll never forget it. And they'd come up, and here they are, they're coming around the pan, and they're waiting for Grandfather to give them the bread. So, Wayne would get his bread and Grandfather would dip it in the gravy, and he'd give it to Wayne, and then Georgie come, and he'd do his, he'd do the same thing. And then they started getting into arguments because one was trying to get in front of the other fellow, right? (laughs).

In Brenda's story there appears to be a shift in her grandfather's responsibilities; a shift in responsibilities that has not been documented in the previous literature on Africville. Before coming into his senior years, Brenda's grandfather worked in the city for a living; he later moved into a more domestic role where he provided childcare for some of the youth in Africville. This change in roles might have also been influenced by the fact that Brenda's grandmother passed away

years earlier but I cannot be certain because Brenda does not have any memories of her since she passed away before Brenda was born. In addition to providing supervision, Brenda's grandfather also took on the responsibility of feeding children. The period of time in Brenda's grandfather's life when he assumed the responsibilities that have been and still are traditionally defined as being feminine is interesting. It is only after retiring from work (it was never stated what he did for a living) that Brenda's grandfather as well as most grandfathers in Africville became more involved in raising children. Brenda's stories about her grandfather point to countless pieces of feminist-based research that examines the clear demarcation of responsibilities that are attributed to individuals because of their gender (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Butler, 1990; Weedon, 1999). Weedon (1999) summarizes these myriad of studies by stating that according to traditional sexist ideologies, it was natural for females to participate domestic responsibilities and for males to engage in working for a living and other labour intensive activities (p. 5). These processes have been described as a means to regulate and maintain strict gender roles by raising boys to become "men" and girls to become "women" (ibid., p. 24), where girls are raised in part by helping their mothers by doing laundry, cooking dinner, and looking after younger siblings and boys are raised to hunt, find gainful employment, and other labour-based activities (even though as I will discuss later on in my thesis, females have a long and ignored history of engaging in labour-intensive work, and these experiences are largely ignored so that they do not disrupt traditional

definitions of gender.) Yet, according to Brenda's story when her grandfather and other grandfathers in Africville retire it becomes expected of them to engage in more childrearing activities.

Like I said, he wasn't the only Grandfather in Africville, but that's basically how they were... The older people they were a good guidance for us. We were raised that the Elders of the community were to be greatly respected because they watched over us; that's one thing about our community, the older ones would watch over the younger ones when they're out-and-about, playing around in the community of Africville.

While this does not mean that the grandmothers in Africville were excused from performing the majority child-centric duties or that dynamics that existed between grandmothers and grandfathers were absent from sexist-based ideologies, it does show a more social acceptance of men partaking in activities that have been traditionally defined as female. In Brenda's other stories that talked about gender roles, there did not appear to be any examples where it was socially acceptable for males, either as boys or as adults, to take part in activities that have been traditionally associated with females. Those stories generally operate in a binary where males did labour intensive work, and females did not. Yet in this context, it seems to be more acceptable, and expected, for men in their senior years to cross these socially constructed boundaries in Africville. While this speaks to the close-knit sense of community that has been readily documented in previous writings on Africville, it also speaks to the need of the community's elders to assist their adult children with looking after their grandchildren, especially if their sons and/or

daughters had to work for a living. Dodson and Dickert (2004) refer to this phenomenon as a “survival strategy” for lower income families (p. 318). With the underemployment of lower income families who usually are not a paid a high enough wage to support a family, these families tend to rely on grandparents and community members for assistance in looking after their children (ibid.). As Clairmont and Magill (1971) have noted about Africville residents, especially if they were women, were among the lowest paid groups of people in Nova Scotia (p. 66). In order to fill the absence of a missing parent or parents, Africville’s Elders took on an active role in supervising and feeding children that may or may not have been directly related to them, and it became expected of grandfathers to engage in tasks that may not have been expected of them previously. While this may not seem to be important or interesting to some, I found Brenda’s story about her grandfather interesting because his role as a childcare provider not only disrupted my preconception of gender roles in Africville, that it was also something that I did not experience growing up as a child.

As I stated earlier, in previous writings on Africville women were attributed as the sole childcare providers in the community (see Tattrie, 2010, p. 14). Brenda even acknowledged this fact during our interview, by stating, “most of the women [from Africville] were housewives, domestics.” Yet, perhaps why Brenda’s story about her grandfather piqued my interest was not necessarily because this was not something that was captured in previous writings of Africville, but because of the

fact that he was a grandfather. I have never heard of someone's grandfather being responsible for a child's well being, in my experience it was usually the grandmother who assumed those responsibilities. Of course, my perspective may be skewed as both of my grandfathers passed away when I was younger, one in fact before I was even born, so I spent every little time around grandfathers. I spent the majority of my time with my grandmother, my mother's mother, in my youth. She took my family in at different points in my life when our finances were tight, and when we were doing alright financially, she often babysat us while my mother worked throughout the day and went to school at night. So, I am not sure if it is just my experience of not having a grandfather in my life that shaped my view of grandfathers, but I had never conceived of grandfathers as being responsible for childcare. To me, being a grandfather is an identity that is far removed from the responsibility of childcare.

Women, in my life anyway, have been overwhelmingly responsible for taking care of children, whether it was my mother, my grandmother, or babysitters, whenever a child needed looking after it was almost always a woman who filled/played that role. This is an experience that was also shared by my cousins, as well as my friends, since whenever they or their siblings required some sort of supervision, that role was overwhelmingly filled/played by a woman. At times, a male would fill this role but males only seemed to be an option when there were no females to look after the children; males in other words, were the last resort which

may also be the reason why Brenda's grandfather looked after her. To me, males being the last resort in childcare also formed a hierarchy within the gender that was structured according to a person's age. When my siblings and I needed to be looked after, we either went to my Grandmother's or we went to my Aunt and Uncle's houses where my Aunts became responsible for both their children and my family. Once a man becomes "elderly," I often assumed that he becomes removed from childcare responsibilities. I cannot remember any examples from my own personal experiences, or the experiences that I would hear from my cousins and friends where they were looked after by their grandfathers. Whenever they were looked after by their grandparents, it was their grandmothers who assumed that responsibility. To me, grandfathers did other things like drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes at the dinner table and talk about hockey to your father and uncles like my grandfather did when my family went to visit him, they certainly did not cook for children like Brenda's grandfather did.

While my personal account of male responsibilities for childcare is limited and narrow, it is intended to show how I grew up to understand gender and gender roles. While other people may have experienced their fathers and grandfathers being more active within child rearing, this was not my experience. Growing up with strict gender roles concerning childcare led me to be surprised by the way Brenda's grandfather took care of her. He operated in a space in between two roles, which, to me, were roles that I thought of as being clearly separated from one

another. He operated within a space that forced me to stop and think of a way to (re)conceptualize and to(re)define him. Brenda's grandfather had no space within my own preconceptions of gender to "exist." Similar to my own limited concepts of gender roles, there is no space in the literature that has been written on Africville for Brenda's grandfather to be viewed as a childcare provider.

5.1 REINVESTING IN TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES

Despite portraying her grandfather as a caregiver, Brenda does not suggest that there were equally shared childcare responsibilities in Africville. She points out that mothers and daughters were primarily responsible for looking after children. In fact, Brenda's grandfather, who was eighty in her story, had a woman from Africville named Hazel who volunteered to go into his home and clean up for him. Brenda explains that her grandfather needed someone to go into his house and clean for him because he was unable to do the work himself. Even though Brenda's grandfather engaged in activities that disrupted traditionally defined gender roles that are prevalent in the Africville literature, he also engaged in activities that reinforced gendered stereotypes, as did other residents. Most of the women who had families in Africville, as Brenda puts it, "were housewives, domestics." This means that women were in charge of the cooking, cleaning, looking after their children (if they had any), and shopping. In contrast, Brenda said that the men from Africville generally went into the city to work. If women from Africville did not have any children they also generally sought employment.

Brenda's stories at times reinvested in traditional gender roles that have been presented in Africville literature. Clairmont and Magill (1971), Nelson (2008), and Tattrie (2010), on the rare occasions that they mentioned women in their work, frame women as being employed exclusively in domestic positions in "white households and government institutions" (Nelson, 2008, p. 12). Brenda provides some insight into the duties that women in Africville typically undertook:

There were some who went out to different parts in Halifax that did house cleaning, and some worked in the hospitals. I had a cousin who worked on Citadel Hill, like the little house there up on Citadel Hill, she used to clean around there and, up and around in the museum part. You know, some of them went out and did that, that's mainly what most of the women did, they went out into other parts of Halifax where they had day work and clean for people and stuff like that.

While other authors acknowledge the fact that some women from Africville were relegated to "low paying service jobs," Brenda pointed out in the interview that the experiences of work differed for each woman. Brenda points out that for women from Africville who worked and who were married and/or had children, "when they got home they'd be in charge of running the family." Of the mothers and/or wives of Africville who worked outside of the home often walked to work, or to the nearest transit station in order to get to work, where they were expected to engage in domestic work for people whom they were not directly related. When they returned home after working long and labour intensive shifts, they were expected to perform the same tasks for their own families. The experience of working a "double day"—the expectation for working women to assume all, or the majority of household

responsibilities when they got home from work—is in no way exclusive to Africville (Arai, 2000). Women who work “double days” have been noted across a variety of settings, before and after the time that Africville rested on the shore of the Bedford Basin (Park & Liao, 2000, p. 572). Working a double day is representative of a larger system of power based on gender inequality that cuts across different races and ethnicities (Bannerji, 2000, p. 117), although how this double day is experienced differs from person to person.

Brenda provides an account of how working mothers from Africville, as well as how mothers who did not work paid positions often delegated household duties and chores to their children in order to help keep the household functioning.

You see, whoever was the oldest was uh, like if you had the older children, especially the girls, they had chores – well, all the children did when they were old enough had chores to do, like getting water, and kindling wood, and doing dishes. If our mothers were in town to go shopping or, my mother was a domestic, she stayed home, she didn't go to work. But when she went into town for shopping or things like, I had to keep the clean on. I had to make sure that the house was tidy, peel vegetables, and get things in line for supper by the time she come home, everything was in place. And as I got older, I would cook the supper before she got home, to have it all ready.

While Brenda focuses more on the responsibilities that she was expected to assume as a teenager when her mother, who did not work paid positions, when she went into town to shop for groceries and do other errands, she hints at the generalized experiences of other Africville children and teenagers who assumed responsibility to help their mothers with their household duties. Brenda's passage demonstrates two ways that differences permeate similar experiences that mothers from Africville

faced in maintaining their household. The first is the age difference is their children's age. The experience of mothers who had children versus those mothers who had teenagers and/or young children differed from one another. Young children appeared to be responsible for less complex tasks like gathering water and kindling to be used by their mothers' or teenaged sisters to engage in household chores like cooking dinner and cleaning the house. As children became teenagers, their responsibilities expanded and became more complex and important. Brenda describes that when she was a teenager and her mother left to go shopping that she was required to clean the house and to prepare and cook dinner for the household. The differences in age of their children often yields different experiences for mothers in Africville, especially working mothers, as the older their children, the more they can be relied on to perform important tasks that would help ease a mother's responsibilities at home.

The second difference that relates to children is how Brenda's story shows responsibilities that are allocated to children by their parents are also differentiated between gender, as Brenda suggests that girls, especially teenagers in Africville, were expected to handle a disproportionate amount of household chores. While male teenagers were not completely excused from participating in household activities, they were as Tattrie (2010) points out, more focused on finding paid work to help out their families (p. 62). Tattrie describes several attempts by Eddie and his brother Victor to find work on fishing boats that were docked on the piers of Halifax

so that they could give the money they earned to their mother to help her with the family's expenses (ibid.) There appears to be a clear difference between what was expected of teenage males and females living in Africville, which helps generate different experiences for not only mothers who had teenaged daughters and sons, but also for the daughters and sons as well. These differences in chores could also be seen as preparation for what was expected of them later in life, and thereby reinforcing the sexist belief that women are to engage in chores at home while men were expected to work and earn a livable wage for their family. As Brenda, and Tattie show, mothers from Africville tended to depend on their sons to help provide financial assistance whereas they depended on their daughters to provide assistance with the daily household chores.

This dependence on female children and teenagers to help cook, clean, and/or look after children was not relegated solely to the physical confines of their household, rather as Brenda describes from her experiences and of her friends' experiences, they were often required to engage in similar chores and responsibilities outside of their homes:

We'd [Brenda, Linda, and Deborah] go help Uncle George on Saturday night and help clean and decorate the church for Harvest. We used to do the same thing for Baptisms when people got baptized in the church... And we would go out and tidy up, and clean up the church and stuff.

[At] Halloween time we [Brenda, Linda, and Deborah] used to come in [into Halifax] and go to the Hydrostone area up there. We'd have our cousins with us, and I'd have my little brothers and sisters with me and they'd have their Halloween outfits on [*sic*].

It is not just Brenda's family (Uncle George is not Brenda's actual Uncle, he is Linda's father whose nickname was Uncle George) who is encouraging her and relying on her to perform childrearing and cleaning duties outside of the physical parameters of her home, these responsibilities are also expected from other members of the community as well. These expectations by other people in her community, which are grounded in traditional ideologies of gender roles, reinforce the belief that females are solely responsible for children and to perform housekeeping duties. While this social pattern is not exclusive to Africville, as it has been demonstrated in past and current writings on gender roles and expectations in a variety of different contexts and cultures (see Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Butler, 1990; Weedon, 1999), these examples provide a glimpse into two ways that Brenda and her friends were expected to perform traditional female gender roles in Africville (Butler, 1990). The roles that Brenda is expected to fill when her church performs Baptisms and during Halloween are extensions of the responsibilities that she shares at home. Brenda's family, her church, and her friend's parents come together in an interlocking fashion to promote and reinforce similar expectations of duties for girls in Africville. This is not to say that Brenda's family and members of her community were purposively seeking out the suppression of Brenda and her friends due to their gender, rather as it is with many other communities, it is a belief that is shared within the community that is passed down to children. What results is the

normalization of traditional gender roles where Brenda is expected to engage in child-rearing and housekeeping duties alone or with assistance from other girls.

Documenting the many ways that difference operates within Brenda's stories not only provides insights into life in Africville that have yet to be documented in the literature, it also challenged me to think, perceive, and write in ways that were more complex than what I had previously been accustomed. Focusing on differences among groups and individuals breaks from the conventional thinking that I was used to engaging in before beginning this research. Most of my formal and informal training on race and gender prior to taking classes in anti-racism and feminism was largely dependent on mass generalizations, where it was difficult to notice and conceptualize individual differences within a group of people. As I have noted previously, the teaching aides that I encountered throughout my schooling, as well as the various forms of media I viewed relied on generalized identities and stereotypes to construct people of different races and genders. Utilizing mass generalizations saw me construct people's identities based solely on gendered and racial stereotypes, and led me to ignore the unique and specific characteristics that construct each person's identity. Taking anti-racist and feminist classes helped me identify and conceptualize difference and has completely changed the way that I now see and approach racial and gendered matters.

This intersectional approach to identity has also impacted the way that I now write. Writing about the experiences that mothers in Africville encountered in their

lives forced me to keep breaking down the identity “female” and to understand how the different ways that the identity could be understood. The identity “female” that I started off with became intersected with other forms of identity such as adult, teenager, child, single mother, married without children, working mother, stay-at-home mother, mother with young children, mother with teenaged children, and mother with both young children and teenagers. Thinking in this way allowed me to identify, construct, and analyze the different ways these identities intersected with one another. For instance, when I looked at the experiences of mothers in Africville, the identity of mother was been broken down into different intersections, intersections such as: working mothers with children; working mothers with teenagers; working mothers with both children and teenagers; stay-at-homes mothers with young children; stay-at-home mothers with teenaged children; stay-at-home mothers with both young children and teenagers; and so on. This led me to break down the identity of mother into multiple different forms, and thereby presenting me with the tools to describe the experience of mothers from Africville in broader terms.

Although the identity of “female” provided the basis of my analysis, the way Brenda identified the differences between different female’s experiences throughout the interview, viewed through the intersectional approach I took to my analysis, forced me to acknowledge and document these differences. While it may sound easy, breaking down identities in this way proved to be difficult process; at times it

felt like I was writing in circles by creating an endless list of addendums. For example, when writing about the experiences of mothers from Africville in terms of their responsibilities at home, it felt like I would make one statement about their experiences but then immediately add in an exception to what I had just said by stating that these would vary if the mother engaged in paid work outside of their community. This statement was then proceeded by additional exceptions to that first exception, as differences also existed depending upon whether a mother had children, the age of the children, and the ages and gender of their children (e.g. were their teenagers females?).

The more I wrote the less clear things became. Conceptualizing the term “mother” and trying to describe the experiences of mothers was difficult as I could no longer just assume a single identity based perspective that was prevalent in the other Africville literature, where the identities of women were rarely expanded beyond traditional ideologies of gender. Thinking and writing about women as being constructed through different and multiple intersections of identity was difficult because it never allowed me to rest on a given set of experiences—I had to keep changing my perspectives from person-to-person. This may sound easy to some readers, but to someone who has gone throughout their entire life without being challenged to think outside of mass generalizations, my initial attempts at writing outside of them, were, at best, awkward. Yet, working through the awkwardness started to feel rewarding in the sense that I started broadening my

skills, allowing me to perceive the different and complex experiences that intersecting social identities can produce between group members. I also started feeling comfortable with the fact that race and gender are not the clear and simple concepts that some scholars, filmmakers, television producers, news reporters, and other members of the media make them out to be (Valverde, 2006, p. 72). The consistency with which these racial and gendered stereotypes and tropes are reinforced through multiple mediums had lead me to assume that there are “absolute truths” in being a member of a certain race or gender; that all members of a particular social group think, experience, and react to things in the same manner, which can all be explained and understood from a single vantage point. While I do find it embarrassing to think back on this and to realize my errors, it speaks to the fact of how I learned to conceptualize race and gender before taking classes on feminism and anti-racism. Moving from a crystal clear, single vantage point to thinking in a fog took some getting used to, because just like being in an actual fog, the reduced visibility prevented me from seeing too far ahead and forced me to slow down, take my time, and think things through. Instead of just speeding down one street on a day without fog, being in a fog forced me to slow my analysis down and take one step at a time and to go down the different avenues that branch off the main road and take you in different directions and lead you to see different experiences. While I am not saying that my analysis is a completed analysis of the different intersecting identities of females in Africville, as my data is too limited to

even suggest that, my analysis does presents a unique way of considering women in Africville that contributes to previous Africville literature.

Brenda's stories show that female's social identities can be broken down into different intersecting identities that produce different and unique experiences. In doing so, Brenda allows us to see more deeply into the traditional categories of female identities that had been used in previous Africville literature, during the rare occasions that female identities are focused on. While Brenda has splintered the forms of identity used to construct traditional female gender roles in Africville, she also, as I show in the next section, provides examples that demonstrate how women from Africville deviated from traditional gender roles and identities as childcare providers, maids, and cooks.

5.2 DISRUPTING TRADITIONAL FEMALE GENDER ROLES

While Brenda did not spend a lot of time in the interview focusing on how women from Africville disrupted traditional gender roles, she still provides a glimpse into ways that women in Africville did more than perform duties relating to childrearing, and cleaning and caring for their households. Brenda provides two examples of instances where women from Africville broke away from more domestic identities and focused on the physical strengths of their bodies. This focus on the physical strengths of female's bodies is something that is not only ignored within Africville literature. Parkins (2000) argues that stories found in academic articles, films, television shows, traditional accounts of history, and other mediums

construct stories on gender that ignore the physical strengths and capabilities of female's bodies. Instead these constructed stories as Parkins (2000) argues, are framed in such a way to construct females as being physically weak and therefore, inherently inferior to males, regardless of age, gender, and ethnicity.

Framing females as being inherently weak however, ignores the centuries of physical labour that females have engaged in. Sojourner Truth provides examples of the type of physical labour in which she engaged as a slave in the United States,

Well, children, where there is so much racket, there must be something out of kilter, I think between the Negroes of the South and the women of the North - all talking about rights--the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this talking about? That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody helps me any best place. And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm. I have plowed (sic), I have planted and I have gathered into barns. And no man could head me. And ain't I a woman? I could work as much, and eat as much as any man--when I could get it--and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne children and seen most of them sold into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me. And ain't I a woman? (qtd, in hooks, 1981, p. 160).

Personal accounts like the ones told Sojourner Truth help disrupt sexist constructs of women being inherently weak. Brenda's passages also help to deconstruct the myth that the female body lacks strength by sharing memories from her life in Africville. Unlike the example that Sojourner Truth provides, as well as similar examples that scholars like Dionne Brand (2008) have documented, Brenda provides stories where women are not demonstrating their physical abilities as slaves or domestic

labourers, rather she provides examples from instances of women demonstrating physical strength in recreational activities.

Brenda describes that in the winter there were girls from Africville who would play hockey alongside the boys until, as Brenda puts it, “they [the girls] got too many bumps.” While her story may make it seem that these girls were not as tough as the boys from Africville, this cannot really be determined as Brenda does not really go into great detail describing how these games took place and if the girls received a disproportionate amount physical contact during these games. Brenda also does not mention if adults who happened to pass by and watch these games would stop the game once they saw the girls being bumped and would ignore or encourage the boys when they were being bumped. However, what her story demonstrates is that there were girls in Africville who would play hockey in a physical manner, which is something that surprised me.

Brenda points out that the girls who played hockey would not give up after one body check, slash, elbow, or having the frozen puck deflect off various parts of their bodies, rather it took multiple “bumps” to get these some of these girls to stop playing. The physicality that Brenda describes in her story is typically ignored in contemporary reporting on women in hockey (Theberge, 1997, p. 70). Women’s hockey leagues, both at the national level in Canada and internationally have been noted for the fact that the rules of women’s hockey league proscribe the act of body checking unlike in men’s leagues (ibid.) The difference between the rules suggests a

difference in terms of the assumed physical capabilities of men and women hockey players; women's leagues cannot have body checking in it because women are not as tough as men (ibid.) This of course is ridiculous. Growing up playing hockey myself, and watching my cousins play hockey, there were always girls on our teams or on other teams who would play a physical style of hockey in the ways we did. Yet, these examples are often ignored and women hockey players are constructed as being weaker, and not as physically capable as their male counterparts (Anderson, 2008, p. 260). Brenda's story not only help deconstructs the myth that the female body lacks physical strength, it also helps deconstruct the discourse in Africville literature that females from Africville only participated in childrearing and other domestic activities.

In addition to Brenda's memories about girls playing hockey in Africville, Brenda also shared a memory from her youth about how a girl from Africville would go out fishing with her father and brothers. However, instead of a pastime, this activity seemed to be one that was a means of survival for her family:

And some of them [people from Africville] used to go out into the basin during the day and they would fish, that was another way of surviving out there too, they used to go and get fish. Right out in the Bedford Basin... But yeah... we had Clarence Brown's father, we used to call him Boozah Brown, they used to go fishing, all his kids. His daughter did the same thing right? They all used to go out and get fish.

While it is unclear if Boozah Brown's daughter was, or was not required to partake in domestic activities after she was done fishing, this memory surprised me.

It surprised me because I have never heard of a female fishing before and I had always assumed that the killing of animals for sport or food was an activity undertaken by males. I have memories of going out with my cousins were not invited. It could be that they never expressed interest to my uncles about going fishing, although I never did either as I found fishing to be boring and uninteresting, my uncles would routinely invite me and I was expected to go. It could be that the girl in Brenda's story only fished because she was young and unmarried, but the fact that she actually fished is interesting in itself. I had always assumed that in Africville, as well as in other cultures and countries, that women either shied away or were prevented from some way from hunting and fishing-related activities.

The examples that Brenda provided do not suggest that instances of gender inequality were not present, nor are they a means to excuse the forms of gender inequality that took place. Rather, these examples provide a broader lens through which to view gender roles in Africville. The stories that Brenda shared break down traditional, generalized ways of thinking about and conceptualizing females in Africville, where female, a term used to include elderly, middle-aged, teenaged, and adolescent females, only did domestic work either in their own homes or as part of their jobs. In its place, Brenda has shown that while at times women in Africville experienced life in similar ways, it is a mistake to assume that differences did not exist among them. Brenda's account of gender roles in the Africville community both reaffirms and disrupts what has previously been documented in the literature,

and provides insight into the different ways that gender roles and gender relations played out in Africville. I cannot be sure if previous authors who wrote about Africville were ever aware of the stories of how females in Africville would go fishing, play ice hockey, or similar stories and chose to neglect them. What is apparent is that there exists a gap in the current literature that overlooks the different ways females from Africville operated outside of traditional gender roles.

6. RENOGIATING INTER-GROUP RELATIONS

When it comes to writing about how Africville residents interacted with non-Africville residents, the literature largely focuses on instances of division, derision, and discrimination. In the previous writings on Africville, from which I will provide specific examples later on in this chapter, Africville residents have been portrayed as being oppressed by “white” Nova Scotians (see Clairmont & Magill, 1971; 1999; and Tattrie, 2010), members of other African Nova Scotian communities (see Clairmont & Magill, 1971; 1999), and by the Halifax Municipal Government (see Clairmont & Magill, 1971; 1999; Nelson, 2008; and Tattrie, 2010). There are rarely, if any, inter-group interactions among Africville residents and other Halifax-based groups that are presented as operating without discrimination. Moreover, when the authors’ talk about relations between residents and non-residents of Africville, each group is portrayed by their group’s identity. That is, the authors describe people as members of a group who are homogenous with members of their own group and different from members of other groups. For non-residents, group identity is generally presented as based on one shared form of identity, such as their “whiteness,” being a member of another African Nova Scotian community, or as an employee of the Halifax Municipal Government. For example, when Clairmont and Magill (1971) talk about the political climate that existed in Halifax in the time leading up to the Nova Scotia Supreme Court’s decision to approve the Africville Relocation Plan, they state that there was: “a lack of regard shown to Africville residents by the larger Black

community and the Whites of Halifax” and that “Africville was perceived as a stigma by Blacks, as well as Whites, was attested in numerous interviews” that they conducted (pp. 87; 269). Presenting the argument this way is problematic because the aforementioned citation portrays group members as being monolithic, that is everyone within that particular social group is assumed to think, act, and hold the same set of beliefs. This can lead readers, as it did me, to assume that *everyone* within those groups thought, felt, and acted one way, and it offers a narrow lens through which to view the people taking part in those events. What Brenda has shown to me with her stories is that inter-group interactions can be more broadly and complexly understood.

Before I begin my analysis I should first clarify a few issues. I am not arguing that discriminatory, oppressive, and/or other similar events should not be examined, or that it is not important to examine them, which is something I will do later on in this chapter. It is very important to identify, document, and analyze instances of oppression because these acts are often ignored, and/or erased, which leads to historical accounts being written that do not show how discrimination has historically affected disenfranchised groups (see Brand, 2008; Hamilton, 1994; and Summerfield, 1998). This is especially important in Canada, as discourses on Canada multiculturalism have helped build the myth that Canada is “free” of discrimination, a nation without racism and sexism (Mackey, 2005, p. 14). The point I am trying to make is that Brenda’s memories build upon the previous literature on

Africville by providing a broader understanding of inter-group interactions between Africville residents and the different social groups that were/are present in Halifax at that time. This broader understating disrupts, yet also reinforces, previous accounts of intergroup dynamics between Africville residents and non-Africville residents.

6.1 AFRICVILLE AND OTHER AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN GROUPS

Clairmont and Magill (1971), in their work on the Africville Relocation Plan, like Nelson (2008) and Tattrie (2010), document the variety of discriminatory acts that Africville residents experienced from a variety of sources, including “white” Nova Scotians, the Halifax Municipal Government, and print journalists. Clairmont and Magill (1971) deviate from Nelson (2008) and Tattrie (2010) in that they also include instances of discrimination that originated from other African Nova Scotian communities. Clairmont and Magill (1971) state that:

Numerous Blacks living elsewhere in Halifax and in surrounding communities believed that Africville was a slum of the worst sort; its reputation as a deviance service centre exaggerated by bad publicity, had led many Blacks to believe that Africville's continuing existence was unwarranted and made them receptive to the liberal, welfare rhetoric that accompanied the relocation announcement (p. 269).

Based on the interviews that they conducted with African Nova Scotians who were not from Africville, Clairmont and Magill in their research go on to conclude, “that Africville was perceived as a stigma by Blacks” (ibid.) The authors provide justification for their statement by quoting excerpts from the interviews they

conducted:

Several Black Haligonians recalled that, when younger, they were warned by their parents against ever going to Africville. Others were quick to point out that they were born and raised in *Halifax proper*, pointedly dissociating themselves from Africville. In the neighbouring Black communities, people often echoed the views of a Hammonds Plains lady who reported that "a lot of horrible things were going on down there." A Black leader from Preston referred to Africville as "a cancer in the sight of Halifax" (emphasis in the original, p. 270).

Brenda's stories however, show that members of African Nova Scotian communities did not universally discriminate against the residents of Africville, and provide a more nuanced perspective on the dynamics among Africville residents and other African Nova Scotian communities.

One such example Brenda shares is from her childhood. In the autumn, all the churches that belonged to the African Baptist Association would perform their annual Harvest services. Each church would hold its own Harvest service and members from all of the other churches would come to attend the service and join in the festivities. Brenda describes how the Harvest service festivities took place in Africville:

Probably the third Sunday of October, we would have our big Harvest service. We would have our Minister there, so we would go in the day before on Saturday and Uncle George would get the maple leaves off of the branches and put them around the pole pit and over the windows and stuff like that, to decorate the church. And he'd be there all day 'cause people would be bringing in their thanksgiving gifts, like they would bring in, we would have squash and potatoes, all that stuff like that right? There would be pumpkins there, and grapes, and all kinds of fruit and vegetables. And that used to be a big service because we used to have every Black

community had a Harvest service, other communities had it too, as far as the ABA [the African Baptist Association] which our church belonged to, like Cherrybrook, and North Preston, and East Preston, and Guysborough, and them places like that, everybody had their own service on a different Sunday. Ours was usually the third Sunday of October, and these people knew it was our Harvest, these people used to come from those places and come to our Harvest service. We'd have to have had chairs in the aisles, the rectory would be open and we had all kinds of chairs out there, and the church was packed. The day after the Harvest service, that Monday, they'd just auction off the fruit and vegetables to the community. They just come by and buy the stuff.

While I do not present this quote as evidence that African Nova Scotians never discriminated against Africville residents, as Clairmont and Magill (1971 pp. 269-70) argue, what this story does show is that there were instances where interactions between Africville residents and African Nova Scotians were not remembered as being based solely on dislike, derision, and discrimination.

To further this notion with something that may not translate easily onto the page, when Brenda was telling this story she was smiling and laughing. I remember thinking that it was odd that she was telling pleasant stories, stories that did not focus on tensions that existed between Africville residents and other African Nova Scotians. It was odd because I had not read stories like this one in any of the previous literature. As I had mentioned previously, my preconception of “the Africville experience” was that it was Africville residents versus the world—that Africville residents were universally and uniformly discriminated against by anyone who was not from Africville.

Later in the interview, Brenda would provide a story from her life where she and some other Africville residents were in dispute with members of an African Nova Scotian group, which is a type of story I expected to hear. What I did not expect to hear were stories that were, at least to me, absent of tension between Africville residents and African Nova Scotians. When I gave Brenda a copy of the interview transcript, I related my feelings of surprise about how she had included stories that saw Africville residents and African Nova Scotians, as well as other non-Africville residents getting along with one another. Brenda's reply, which I am paraphrasing as I had to take notes in order to document her response, was that you have to include the positive with the negative, nothing is ever one thing or the other. The nuanced perspective that Brenda holds also translated into how she told stories about the relationships that existed between Africville residents and members of the Halifax Municipal Government. These stories also made me to think differently about the relationships that existed between Africville residents and employees of the Halifax Municipal Government as previous writings on Africville defined these relationships as being based on acts of discrimination, racism, and exploitation. While these inter-group relations have been, and rightly so, defined by tension and discrimination, this overlooks the individual stories and relationships that people may, or may not have been absent of tension. While accounts of tensionless relationships between Africville residents and the Halifax Municipal Government does not suggest that discrimination, racism, and exploitation were not, and are still

not, prevalent between different these two groups of people it is still important to acknowledge and to celebrate these acts of cooperation as they advance our knowledge about race relations by presenting complex, individual accounts that reinforce and diverge from one another.

6.2 AFRICVILLE RESIDENTS AND CITY OFFICIALS

What is most apparent in the literature on Africville are the tensions that existed between Africville residents and employees of the Halifax Municipal Government; most of the literature dedicates the majority of space to documenting and analyzing the interactions between the two groups. To be more specific, focuses on how the members of the Halifax Municipal Government discriminates and/or exploits Africville residents, and then shows the consequences of these actions. This led me to assume that everyone who worked for the Municipal Government tried to exploit, discriminate, and/or hurt the residents of Africville in unique and diverse ways.

Clairmont and Magill (1971) focus on the interactions between Africville residents and City Officials from a policy perspective, while Nelson looks at the interactions between the two groups in discourses circulating in the local news media. In addition, Tattrie (2010) focuses on the interactions between Africville residents and frontline workers such as police officers and other service workers. In each body of work, the authors identify, describe, and analyze the wide variety of discrimination-based practices that the residents of Africville incurred at the hands

or through the inactions of City Officials.

Clairmont and Magill (1971) dedicate a significant portion of their work to looking at the interactions between the two groups before, during, and immediately after the implementation of the Africville Relocation Plan. Their main focus is the failure of the Halifax Municipal Government to keep the three promises they made to Africville residents when they sold their property and were forcibly removed from Africville. These three promises were:

A year's free rent upon relocation into city housing or other type of accommodation; all families were to receive \$1,000 towards new furniture, and the city was to review the value of the Africville land purchased and place any adjustment money into a trust fund for the former residents. (Robinson qtd. in Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 240)

Clairmont and Magill (1971) go on to state that the City's failure to keep these three promises actually decreased the living conditions of Africville residents in comparison to their living conditions in Africville because many former Africville residents were forced to become heavily indebted and in some cases dependent on welfare (p. 260-61). Clairmont and Magill provide two experts from interviews they conducted with former Africville residents to support their claim, one resident was able to own a home after relocation, while the other resident ended up renting a place from the city.

When we lived in Africville, we didn't have a fancy home, but at least we had some money left over at the end of the week. Now, with my husband making \$75 a week, \$37 goes on mortgage, then we have to pay light bills, water bills, phone bills, food and clothes. We just don't have enough money! I wonder if we can get money

from welfare. I went down before and they wouldn't give me any because my husband is working, but they would give it to some other person who doesn't need it as much as I do. It doesn't seem fair (Africville Relocatee qtd. in Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 251).

Relocatee: "I feel they [fellow Africville residents] were stupid to move because the people weren't given anything to establish themselves. The people of Africville struggle all their lives to make a go of it. The City came in and treated the people like you would treat a dog, give him something and take it back!"

Interviewer: "How did they take it back?"

Relocatee: "Through rent, through old bills they dug up when people moved. I'm paying for a place that you can't even put a nail in the wall. If you don't pay your rent right on the dot, you get a phone call right away, telling you to pay up or get out. You're scared half the time that you'll slip up; they're always checking up. No security." (Africville Relocatee qtd. in Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 256).

Financial situations became so dire for some former Africville residents that they had to sell their homes (Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 250).

Nelson (2008) provides some clarity as to how these three failed promises led some Africville residents to incur large debts. Nelson states that city officials told Africville residents that they were to go to furniture stores in Halifax and select the pieces they wished to have, and that the stores would bill the city directly as long as the total value of the purchases did not exceed one thousand dollars (p. 93). Nelson points out that the City Government's failure to pay these promised furniture expenses left some former residents with up to \$1000 in bills that they had to pay as the furniture stores would not allow residents to return any of the furniture they had bought (ibid. p. 96).

Clairmont and Magill (1971) point out that the reason why the leaders of the

Municipal Government made these three promises to Africville residents was to help ease the transition process related to moving from homes where there was no rent and low living costs, to houses that had higher rent and related upkeep costs (p. 66).

A report conducted in 1962 that focused on African Nova Scotians, stated that:

No matter what one uses as an index of a poor employment situation (low average income, large number of weeks unemployed, fewness of people in the more skilled occupations), Africville Negroes rank worse than Halifax as a whole and in general worse even than the mid-city Negroes [*sic*] (Institute of Public Affairs, 1962, p. 13).

The Municipal Government did offer Africville residents free education and technical training after relocation to help them find, and be better qualified for higher paying work positions (Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 254). However, Clairmont and Magill point out that these programs were rarely advertised to Africville residents as only 14 out of 400 residents were aware of their existence (ibid.) This left many residents working multiple jobs that provided low wages and inconsistent work hours, as they tried to pay off the debts they incurred while they were relocated (ibid.) If residents were unable to find work, then their only option was to apply for welfare.

Nelson (2008), like Clairmont and Magill (1971), is primarily focused on the relocation process, however she largely focuses her attention on the discourses that Halifax Municipal Government employees and local print journalists employed to portray residents of Africville in the local news media. While Nelson does not describe any face-to-face interactions between Municipal Officials and local news

reporters and Africville residents, she focused on how both groups were constructed within the local print media. As Nelson points out, the perspectives of Africville residents were largely left out of the news reports about the Africville relocation process; instead news reporters focused overwhelmingly on the perspectives of Halifax City Officials to define both groups of people, as well as to define what the Africville relocation plan meant to Africville residents.

Nelson, by analyzing every news report that was available on the Africville relocation plan, has shown that City Officials and local newspaper reporters constructed the residents of Africville as being so “helpless and infantile” that they required assistance of City Officials to help them live outside of squalor and decay (p. 100). As an example of this kind of thinking, Nelson cites two articles among many that were published in local Halifax newspapers during the time of relocation,

Unless there is a trebling of speed, shackdom will prevail until close to the end of the century, perhaps beyond it [*sic*] (Doyle qtd. in the Halifax Mail Star, 1965, p.3).

It has become quite obvious to us that complete redevelopment was the only way around these problems [Africville-related problems]. There were, and are, some families who can do nothing themselves to help their problems – R.B. Grant (qtd. in the Halifax Mail Star, April 11, 1964, p. 3).

These statements, as Nelson argues, construct the residents of Africville as a group of people who were inherently inferior; Africville residents are falsely constructed as not possessing the intelligence and maturity to live in a community without squalor and decay (Nelson, 2008, p.100). These statements also simultaneously

remove the blame from the different Halifax Municipal Governments that governed during Africville's existence for not providing water and sewage services, routinely disapproving building permits submitted by Africville residents to improve their homes amongst other actions/inactions. Instead, the blame is placed on the Africville residents for creating their own problems (ibid, p. 114). Nelson points out that constructing the narrative this way serves the interests of the residents of Halifax proper while at the same time neglects the rights of Africville residents to seek redress for the harms that had been inflicted upon them by the very same governing bodies (ibid.)

Finally, Tattrie (2010) focuses on the interactions between Africville residents and front line employees of the Halifax Municipal Government. Tattrie (2010) describes events based on the memories of Eddie Carvery, a former Africville resident whose biography Tattrie has written. Tattrie recalls two vivid memories of Eddie's that involve city employees, police officers and service workers when they visited Africville to conduct business. One of the more striking stories that Tattrie tells from Eddie's life is the night when City workers came into Africville with a truck full of "five-gallon steel containers" to dispose of in the city dump that bordered the Africville community (ibid, p. 17). These containers according to one of the City Workers contained alcohol, and he told Africville residents to "Mix it with your home brew and you'll get good and drunk out of it" (ibid.) Eddie, as Tattrie explains, was a

child at the time and remembers what happened the morning after the city workers passed out the alcohol:

Panic spread throughout the village as people ran from house to house, finding greater and greater horror. The scale of the catastrophe slowly became apparent. Dozens of men had gone blind overnight. Others crawled in the streets in agony and were rushed to hospital. There were bodies dead where they fell at the kitchen table. Bodies in the street, people who didn't make it home. At least three died.

Somebody took a closer look at the sealed containers that the City men were disposing of, before they decided to hand them out. They contained alcohol, alright. Wood alcohol. Paint thinner. Poison. (ibid, p. 18).

Tattrie reports that Africville residents who were harmed from this incident did not receive any compensation for their injuries and for the deaths of their loved ones. City Officials in fact, blamed the residents of Africville for the harms that were committed against them (p. 19). The workers' supervisor told the Africville residents who confronted him about the problem: "You had no business being at the dump...It's not our fault" (ibid.) The police never investigated the matter and so the city workers were never held accountable for their actions and the Municipal Government ignored the incident (ibid.)

The failure of police officers to investigate the three deaths of Africville residents that resulted from being poisoned by the wood alcohol disposed of by City Officials is one of many examples that may help to explain why Africville residents, as Tattrie describes, were distrustful of the police and why tensions existed between the two groups. Tattrie indicates that distrusting the police was a value passed

down from parents to the children of Africville; Tattrie describes Eddie standing on the perimeter of his community one afternoon to “keep an eye out for police or other strangers because his mom had warned him against the police” (ibid, p. 26).

Tattrie provides another example of the tensions that existed between police officers and Africville residents, an incident where Curley Vemb, a man from Africville, pointed his gun at a police officer who came into Africville to shoot dogs that belonged to residents:

The cop cocked his gun and pointed it at the head of Curley’s dog, who was chained up on the front porch and growling at the intruder. The cop was about to pull the trigger when he heard a tapping on the window.

The cop looked up.

Great big Curley Vemb was standing in his house, pointing a shotgun at the cop’s head.

“You pull your trigger, and I’m gonna pull mine,” Curley said.

The cop lowered his gun and slowly backed away. (ibid, p. 15).

There was no indication in the book whether Curley Vemb was punished, whether formally or informally, by members of the Halifax Police force. What it does reveal are the tensions that existed between members of Africville and Halifax Police Officers, and how some of these interactions unfolded.

After I read the stories where Tattrie describes the tensions that existed between Africville residents and Halifax police officers, I started to assume that all interactions between the two groups were based on distrust, derision, and discrimination. There was no counter evidence to suggest otherwise. What made this assumption even easier for me to believe is the fact that there are narratives

from common, non-academic sources (movies, television, conversations with friends) that exist that detail acts of brutality, theft, murder, and neglect committed by police officers against members of African Canadian, and African American communities across a wide variety of factual and fictional based sources that feed common knowledge of race relations (Brown, 2003, p. 39). These stories had become so entrenched in my understanding of how relationships between police officers and *anyone who adopted or who were assumed to have an African identity by a police officer* that I assumed that tensions always existed in this dynamic (ibid.)

Police officers throughout the United States have become infamous for using police dogs to attack civil rights protestors, beating civil rights protestors with their night sticks, and other related acts of police brutality when the movements led by Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X were active (Fairclough, 2008). I have had friends from Toronto tell me about how African Canadian youth living in the neighbourhood of Jane and Finch have experienced abusive treatment from police officers that are similar to those abusive acts depicted in the television series *The Wire* (2002-2008). For example, police officers beating hand-cuffed suspects and robbing them of their money. From my experience working with at-risk youth in Halifax, I have heard stories from African Nova Scotian youth about how local police officers engaged with them in an unlawful manner, although due to confidentiality agreements I am unable to divulge their experiences.

All of these examples portrayed to me through books, news reports, movies, documentaries, and interviews, made it easy for me to assume, while I was reading about the discrimination-based practices that Halifax police officers engaged in when they dealt with Africville residents (e.g. Tattrie 2010), that all police officers in Halifax acted with total disregard and/or neglect of the residents of Africville. However, one of Brenda's childhood memories from Africville disrupts the monolithic discourse that Clairmont and Magill (1971), Nelson (2008), and Tattrie (2010) create in their own work about the relationships between Africville residents and municipal employees such as police officers.

Brenda provides memories where racism and discrimination between Africville residents and municipal employees were apparently absent:

Sometimes when the trains would come though, the boys would hop on and throw some coal off before the police got there, and they would take the coal home. I would remember after awhile, the police would start coming out and they would wait for the train. We would always knew when the train was coming because the police would come out and they would be on each side of the track to make sure that nobody was around or endanger themselves, that's basically why they were there, for safety's sake. So when we see the police coming out here, we knew the train was coming, so we knew to stay away from it.

While this memory is not intended to imply that police officers in Halifax were never belligerent or neglectful of Africville residents [as Tattrie (2010, p. 14) shows]; it does expand the way relationships between Africville residents and Halifax police officers have been conceptualized by Africville residents. Brenda provided me with another way to reconceptualize the relationships between Africville residents and

Halifax City Officials when she provided her memories of Peter MacDonald, the social worker employed by the municipal government to help transition Africville residents when they were relocated. MacDonald, as Clairmont and Magill (1971) note, was the person who informed Africville residents of the three promises that the municipal government made to help ease the relocation, and received more than a few comments and criticisms from residents who thought he had made up the promises to expedite the relocation process (pp. 191-92). Brenda, however, remembers him as someone who tried to help her parents with matters relating to the move and to help ease the transition. In her memories about the social worker, as well as the police officers that I previously mentioned, there is an absence of discrimination. Brenda was not distressed when she told these stories and I did not detect any signs of anger or ill feelings. Her voice and body language was cool, calm, and collected, and at times, as she did throughout most of the interview, she told the story with a smile on her face. I was a little surprised by this because what I read prior to talking to Brenda about social workers and police officers in Africville focused on discrimination.

When Brenda finished telling her story about the social worker, I had to ask if had she encountered any forms discrimination with anyone based on her Africville identity because reading literature on Africville I *expected* that she would have encountered many times throughout her life. Brenda responded:

You know, discrimination is always there but it is very low key. And sometimes it can hide its face with a mask, you don't know it's

there, and you may not see it. But I must say, I can't say that I had any confrontation really. But I mean, there are others that have run into it at different times, but to actually prove is hard, it's hard to prove.

It can be hard to prove the real intention behind the actions of other people, as well as our own actions, this becomes more complicated as people can be affected by things in ways that we cannot expect (see Kovach, 2005). I spent a significant portion of my analysis chapters analyzing instances that Brenda remembers as being absent of various forms of discrimination. In the last chapter, I analyze unequal power relations within Africville and examine how this unequal access to power has led to tensions among residents. While I do make it explicitly clear that discrimination based on race, gender, and culture were, and still are prevalent within the experiences of Africville residents, I still worry that some readers will use my thesis as proof that Africville residents did not experience and were not impeded by multiple acts of discrimination. It is a troubling notion to ponder. Even when I have made it explicitly clear that discrimination was, and still is, prominent within the experiences of Africville residents, albeit in different forms and in different intensities that does not mean that readers will agree with me or that they will not selectively use my data to fit their ideological beliefs. In spite of this, thinking in these terms makes writing, identifying, and talking about discrimination-based acts incredibly difficult as I cannot ascertain people's motivations, I can only interpret and then react to those interpretations.

When Brenda said that she rarely encountered acts of discrimination, that does not mean that she did not experience blatant acts of discrimination, in fact she talked about two of them in our interview. The first one is a description of how she heard people talk about Africville after it was razed:

A lot of people looked at Africville back in those days, and to me, the way you hear someone talk, "They [Africville residents] never had nothing, they never had a culture" you know what I mean? But that wasn't true.

The discourse circulating in-and-around Halifax that the residents of Africville "never had a culture" is grounded in racist ideology. This statement also initiated a slight change in Brenda's demeanor during the interview, as she shifted slightly in her seat and her voice indicated (to me) that she was upset and offended by the fact that people said, and believed, that people from Africville "never had a culture."

In addition to this discourse, she also explains that moving Africville residents against their will impacted their physical health:

I think I was eighteen when we relocated and um, back at that time, as a young person it didn't really have the impact that it did for your parents and your grandparents. Like, my grandparents weren't living but other people's grandparents were there, they were the ones who were born there, who grew up there, made their homes, raised their families, and their lives were disrupted. And they tried, in their way, to fight and save Africville but they didn't have too many resources available to them. It was a losing battle. And I guess you get to a point where you're tired of fighting and you just resign yourself to the fact that they don't see no light at the end of the tunnel so they just accepted whatever in terms of what the city gave them, and they moved. But you could imagine, growing up in a place like that, you're in a comfort zone more or less, and then all that is tore away from you. You're strange to these other places that you are going to. The Elders, they didn't really live that long after

the move. I know one was my Uncle Jimmy, he was my Grandmother's brother, and Uncle Jimmy, I don't think he... he might have lived a year after. And within a span of five to ten years, all of our elders were gone. It was more of an impact on them, the older people, who built their homes and raised their families, where they thought they were going to live out the rest of their lives. And then, all of a sudden they were torn away from that. So they were more or less, trying to adapt. I'm not saying that's the only reason, but I'm saying that's part. Their hearts were broken, and if they had any ailments, that just helped it along as far as I'm concerned.

For the Elders of Africville, the effect of being moved against their will was dire.

As Brenda points out, that negative health experienced by Africville's Elders were not exclusive to events that took place after Africville's destruction. Brenda describes how relocation affected her mother's health.

Mom and Dad fought so hard with others to save the community, it began to play on Mom's physical health. She got sick. The doctor suggested that she leave the group, and that she should leave the situation. So that resigned Mom and Dad to the fact that well, okay, we'll just have to close it, we'll have to close it down, we're just going to have to move.

With the impact that relocation had on the physical and mental health of Africville residents, this had implications for the ongoing fight for rights for Africville residents. In 1972, Brenda's parents along with the remaining Elders organized a meeting among Africville residents that was sought around fighting for their rights and to keep a sense of community among Africville residents. As Brenda describes it,

My Mom and Dad, along with some of the other people in the community, like George Mantley, who is Linda's [Brenda's friend and a founder member of the Africville Genealogy Society] father, and um, Deacon Jones, the Deacons of the church, they all tried their best, I think it was in 1971, '72, they held a big camp meeting, it was out in Africville. Yeah, I believe it was 1972, they had the big camp

meeting out there [...] So the Minister at that time, was um, Reverend Jay C. Mack, and along with the other Deacons and Officials from our church in Africville, that were still living had formed a big camp meeting on the property where they had a church service. Then there was nothing done anymore because, my Mom, she died in 1975, she was 75 years old, she died in '75. And then it was after that, the only thing that happened was the Africville Genealogy Society [The Africville Genealogy Society was founded in 1983].

With the toll that relocation had on the physical and mental health of Africville's Elders, they experienced difficulties in getting a base of people to work towards fighting for their rights and keeping a sense of community among Africville residents. It took eleven years for a group of Africville residents to come together and create an organization that focused on fighting for their rights and to keep a sense of community among Africville residents (This will be discussed in greater detail in the proceeding chapter). If it were not for the efforts of Brenda and her friends in founding the Africville Genealogy Society there may have never been a platform for Africville residents to fight for their rights and to remain a community in the current day. Thanks to the detriments in health suffered by Africville's Elders due to relocation, there was no organization to hand down to their children to continue the fight for the rights of Africville residents. Instead, Brenda and her friends had to start from scratch nearly 13 years after Africville was razed from the shores of the Bedford Basin.

Instead of listening to the requests, pleas, and/or demands of their constituents to let them stay in their community, various City Officials instead

dragged the residents of Africville through a fifteen year long relocation process that caused some residents to incur serious consequences to their health according to Brenda. It is for this reason, and because the whole relocation process was handled incredibly poorly by the Municipal Government that Brenda said: "I think that apology was in order, when the City made the apology to us [in 2010] because they can't undo what was done but they can recognize what was done." When she said this, Brenda was, again, a little upset. She did not yell or slam her fist on the table or anything like that, but she was offended by the way city officials conducted the relocation process, and that it took 40-50 years to be acknowledged by and to receive an official apology from the Municipal Government.

With statements like these, Brenda demonstrates that although she has had experiences with some city officials that were absent of discrimination and harm, she also experienced discriminated and exploited by systemic actions or inactions of city employees. The experience of listening to Brenda's stories has broadened my understanding of the relations between Africville residents and the members of the Municipal Government, relationships that vary from person-to-person; different people interacting with one another has yielded a diverse range of experiences, feelings, and memories. My intention with this chapter is to show that you cannot conceptualize Africville resident's relations with others based either solely on acts on racism and discriminations or as completely absent of racism and discrimination. Rather, one must conceptualize both in a simultaneous fashion which can make

understanding Africville more complex as it adds a complexity to our understanding of Africville as a space and of the lives of people who lived there. Thinking of Africville being defined both by acts of racism and discrimination and by acts that are absent of racism and discrimination makes it difficult to hold a stable image of what Africville was like, or at least, I found it to be difficult, because I was often taught that racism either was absent or present in a given space and time. While racism and discrimination is, and will always be systemic, I had not considered that it may not define the entirety of their social relations. What I mean by that is that, I had assumed that a person always experienced racism or that they did not, and where Africville has long been defined by the racism that created barriers for its residents, I had assumed that Africville residents consistently endured through racist acts committed by “white” Nova Scotians. In other words, I had always thought that racism defined the lives of Africville residents and these acts of racism prevented non-racist acts from occurring until one event occurred, like multiculturalism becoming enacted into law in Canada, where racism would cease to exist after that event. So understanding a person’s experiences as being both filled with racism and discrimination and by an absence of racism and discrimination seemed like a contradiction.

6.3 MULTICULTURALISM IN AFRICVILLE?

While Brenda has shared memories from her life that demonstrate positive engagements among racially diverse groups in Halifax, these interactions were

exclusive to groups of people living in separate areas, fuelling the idea that people lived in totally segregated communities in the mid-1950s in Halifax. While it is true that Halifax was, and still is today, a racially segregated city in terms of housing, Brenda points out that this was not a universal truth. Brenda, when talking about race in one of her stories, pointed out that, “there were white people who lived in Africville too you know, there were white families out there, and we all played and grew up together.” Brenda goes on to say that in Africville “everyone was welcome as long as they were decent and respectful, we didn’t care what colour you were.” Tattrie (2010) expands upon this by pointing out that in addition to “white families” living in Africville, there were people with different racial and ethnic backgrounds living in Africville too (p. 15). Tattrie points out that in addition to African and White Nova Scotian families that there were also people from Mi’kmaq communities in Nova Scotia, and immigrants from Denmark and the West Indies who married into different Africville families (ibid, p. 10). Years before multiculturalism was introduced as official policy in Canada and in a time that has become in part defined by racial discrimination, Africville operated as a multicultural community, a space where people from different races, ethnicities, and/or cultures came to live together, and on occasion they even married into each other’s families (see Tattrie, 2010, p.10).

I remember thinking, after my interview with Brenda, that it was ironic that one of the justifications the Municipal Government gave for razing Africville was that

they wanted to end the racial segregation that existed in the city (Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 169). Yet in order to eradicate racial segregation the Halifax Municipal Government razed a multicultural community that was home to people of different racial, ethnic, and/or cultural heritages. I remember wondering if City Officials were aware of the integration in Africville or if they were ignorant of it. If City Officials were aware of the community's diversity, was one of the reasons that the community was razed because it successfully achieved, as Brenda describes, an integrated space that was seemingly absent of discrimination? Africville, as Clairmont and Magill (1971) describe it, was a community that was pre-dominantly populated by African Nova Scotians and was governed, albeit in an informal fashion, by some of the African Nova Scotians who lived there (p. 62). Did it embarrass City Officials that they were unable to achieve the same success in Halifax where they governed? Was this embarrassment one of the reasons Africville was razed? Of course, these questions are unanswerable as the City Officials responsible for relocating Africville have all passed away, but it is something interesting to think about.

Reading Brenda's oral history prevented me from immediately understanding, or rather thinking that I understood what her life was like and how being from Africville determined her experiences. I read every piece of literature about Africville that I could find, and I read articles and books about race, and the literature seemed to be focused on racial exclusion, so I thought I knew what to

expect going into my interview with Brenda. Yet Brenda did not focus solely on the racial exclusion that she experienced, rather she shared stories that constructed her memories of Africville as being both racially inclusive and exclusive. Reading over Brenda's memories of events and relationships that were absent of discrimination forced me to stop, slow down, and carefully navigate my way through her transcript. I could not make snap judgments while reading the transcript, rather I had to take in everything that she said and use it to come to a new understanding that at times reinforced but also at other times completely deviated from what has already been documented on Africville. What I was left with was a transcript that, like the first feminist and anti-racist articles that I read in preparation for this thesis, challenged me to think in a way that I had never thought before and allowed me to come to some unique conclusions.

Without Brenda's transcript and without those feminist and anti-racist articles my understanding and awareness of race, gender, class, and ethnicity would have remained limited. Coming to a new way of conceptualizing Africville allowed me to understand the complex power relations that have existed throughout the effort of Africville residents to receive reparations, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

7. THE AFRICVILLE GENEALOGY SOCIETY, DIASPORA, AND POWER RELATIONS

The advent of the Africville Relocation Plan led to some Africville residents being displaced into different communities throughout Nova Scotia; some residents chose to move away from Nova Scotia altogether to Montreal, Toronto, and in cities in the United States (Walcott, 2003, p. 41). With the dispersal of Africville residents, the existence of Africville as a community of people was threatened. Recently relocated residents now had to adapt to the idiosyncrasies of their new communities and these social adaptations brought with them the potential for Africville to be fully razed. Where bulldozers destroyed the physical community of Africville, the existence of Africville in a more abstract sense, as a series of close and interconnected relationships between people, was being threatened by the dispersal of residents. Africville residents started to grow apart from one another and no longer had that same sense of community, that sense of closeness, kinship, and support that they once had in Africville. As one former resident describes their experiences of life in their new community,

I live in a community of average middle-class people, and the neighbours don't give a damn about each other. But in Africville . . . everyone was for [one another] and everybody looked out and took care of each other (qtd. in Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 135).

To use the term that Africville Genealogy Society uses to describe this close-knit, supportive sense of community that existed in Africville, the “Spirit of Africville” was in jeopardy of lingering into non-existence (Africville Genealogy Society, 1992, p. xvii). After living in their new communities for a few years, some Africville residents

expressed their desire to return to Africville and live as they once did (Tattrie, 2010, p. 105). This longing for home, the desire for Africville residents to reconnect and retain their sense of community was responded to by Brenda and her two childhood friends from Africville, Linda Mantley and Deborah Dixon-Jones. Together they formed the Africville Genealogy Society, which was an organization focused on reclaiming the “Sprit of Africville.” (Africville Genealogy Society, 1992, p. xvii).

What I intend to do in the following sections of this chapter is to show how Brenda, Deborah, and Linda came together to form and run the AGS in order to reclaim the “Sprit of Africville” (ibid.) I define diaspora in this chapter as a group of people, in this case Africville residents, being forced to move from their homes to live in other communities. While most literature on diaspora focuses on ethnoracial groups moving their country to live in another (see Sheffer, 2003; Dufoix, 2008), I focus mainly on the forced movement of residents between communities in the same municipality and how they seek to address their longing for home. In doing so, I will show, first, how the AGS was used as a way for some displaced residents to settle feelings around assimilation and their longing for home. Viewing the displacement of Africville residents with literature on diaspora, provides an unique insight into how residents dealt with assimilating into new communities and still remained connected to Africville. In the previous writings on Africville, Clairmont and Magill (1971, p. 228), Nelson (2008, p. 133), and Tattrie (2010, p. 105) all describe the desires of displaced residents to return home to Africville, but the authors never

identify practical ways that members of Africville could reclaim their sense of community. Tattrie (2010) does show how Eddie Carvery deals with his own experience of displacement by living in a camper without heat or electricity on the land that once was Africville, but this option is not a viable one for most former residents as Eddie has been shot at, nearly frozen to death, and has encountered other near death experiences while living in his camper (Tattrie, 2010, pp. 175-176). Creating the AGS as I argue, provides a more suitable option for Africville residents experiencing a longing for home. The second thing that I look at in this chapter is the complex way that power and resistance has played out during the existence of the Africville Genealogy Society. The way that I categorize resistance breaks away from how resistance has been conceptualized by previous authors writing about Africville. Whereas they presented resistance existing between different racial groups, Brenda has shown that resistance can be met from not only people from one's own racial group but also from other Africville residents as well, a community of people that have often been conceptualized as being uniform in their beliefs and desires. In doing so, I hope to provide a complicated picture of power relations that the AGS has been a part of since it was formed.

7.1 FORMING THE AFRICVILLE GENEALOGY SOCIETY

Since 1983, the AGS has been in charge, as Brenda puts it, of “the past, present, and future affairs of Africville.” Recently, through their efforts and the efforts of the AGS board members, the Africville Genealogy Society received \$4.5

million in reparations from the City of Halifax, which they used to build a replica of their church, and are using to construct an Interpretive Centre, which will act like a museum by collecting and displaying materials related to Africville. The story of the origins of the Africville Genealogy Society is one that has been neglected in nearly every piece of writing on Africville, the only place the story has been documented is on the AGS's own website and very briefly in Tattrie's (2010) book on Eddie Carvery (p. 126). Brenda's story about the origins of the AGS provides a firsthand, detailed account of the motivation behind the creation of the AGS; the work they had to do in order to establish the AGS; the barriers they experienced while forming the AGS; and how they overcome these barriers.

Brenda begins her story by describing the motivations for forming the AGS back in 1982. This was done in response to having residents of their community (Africville) dispersed to different communities in Canada and the United States. Brenda describes that she and her friends Linda Mantley and Deborah Dixon-Jones were experiencing a sense of diaspora, and desired to maintain their sense of community, culture, and home.

When Africville was gone, a lot of the people were everywhere, they all didn't come into Halifax, some, when they got their money that they were given, most of these people had good jobs as it was, those were the ones who put down payments on houses out in Sackville and the North End of Halifax, and other places. Others, they moved away to Montreal, out West, and gradually out into the States. And that was one of reasons why we formed the Genealogy Society because after everyone was gone, everyone was dispersed all over the place and we were saying that we wouldn't know anybody. You know, we would see people's kids on the street and we won't know

they're their kids because we don't see anyone right? So that was our original reason for forming the Society, to keep the people, and to bring them back together again, at least for once a year. So we can meet everybody and see whose children are who, and what everybody was doing.

My analysis of this section borrows concepts and themes from literature on diaspora and focuses on Brenda and her friends' attempts to reclaim and maintain their sense of community with other Africville residents. I focus on how Brenda's and other resident's longing for home influenced their lives even though the majority of Africville residents moved down the street (from Africville) to the public housing projects in the city of Halifax that were built primarily to house Africville relocatees (Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 198). In this sense, my analysis of Brenda's longing for home is more of a micro perspective rather than a global perspective, yet it is my intention to show that a longing for home can exist for people who move to locations within the same city.

With the physical community razed from the land that once held it, Brenda and her friends were longing for the sense of home and community that Africville once provided them (Martin & Mohanty, 2005). However, reclaiming this sense of community with the community razed and its residents dispersed would prove to be challenging. As Brenda points out, there were former Africville residents who were now living in other provinces and countries. The challenge that Deborah, Brenda, and Linda faced was to come up with a solution that reconstructed Africville as a community in a way that adapted to the reality that former Africville residents were

now living in other communities, cities, provinces, and countries. What they came up with was the AGS, a society focused on organizing annual reunions so that former residents could “meet everybody and see whose children are who, and what everybody was doing.” Brenda, Deborah, and Linda could not recreate Africville in a physical sense—too much time had passed, people had moved away, Africville’s land had been altered to suit the industrial needs of Halifax, and the lives of residents were becoming entwined in their new communities—what they could do was to create an organization that kept former residents attached to each other in some way by organizing an annual reunion.

Brenda describes the challenges that Deborah, Linda, and herself went through in order to get the Society up and running, how their personal lives limited their involvement, and how they negotiated their way through these limitations,

Well, first thing, we went to, her and Linda did a lot of the leg work, going out to different people telling them about what we wanted to do and stuff like that...But, it was like that, they did a lot of that, they went around to different people and talk, and I would go with them sometimes if I could get out to do things. My job was mainly, I did a lot of the paperwork for them while they were out doing stuff. They did the footwork, and I was at home, I had small kids and stuff so I had a little more time to put things together in book form, like pamphlets and other things they wanted to send out to the people of the Africville community about the ideas and the things that we wanted to do... Deborah also had a lot of papers from other organizations, like their ten commandments for members so I helped with that. She would also get the papers from Joint Stocks of what we needed and stuff like, and I would fill those out. And then we would get together and see if we got everything in order.

As the Africville Genealogy Society started to come together, Brenda describes the challenges that she and her friends faced when events in Linda and Deborah's personal lives forced them to live outside of Halifax:

Once we were older it was kind of like, do your own thing. Linda was away for a while and for a while there was never the three of us in one place after we did get the Africville Genealogy Society formed. After a year or two, Deborah moved away to the States and me and Linda were here, and we used to keep in contact with her. We used to tell her what was going on and she'd give us feedback, and we had our board and stuff, and that's the way it went. And then she got sick. She died of cancer. But as you get older you take different interests and stuff like that. You still got that one goal in mind but you got other lives that you're living so you're all over the place. Deborah would call us to see how things were going. And then she would send little things like membership tags for the Society; she would mail those things home. We kept her well informed about what was going on. And she made her visits back-and-forth for a while until she got too sick to do that. Deborah died back in '89 I think it was. When she passed away, we just kept going on with Presidents and the Board, and stuff like that. But we never let her die though, we always keep her, don't care what we do, every year we make sure her name comes up and give her the credit because all that's going on now, if she hadn't to come with us with the dream and we backed her, and we did it together, but if she hadn't, we wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for her is how we basically look at it.

With employment and family obligations pulling them farther away from each other in a physical sense, Brenda, Deborah, and Linda continued to work on trying to construct the modern day version of Africville as a community of people; a community that is designed to remember and keep alive the spirit that existed in Africville in a way that remained accessible to people with the complexities and limitations that their lives now presented.

More than forty years since the last resident of Africville moved from their home and the physical community of Africville was razed, a sense of community still exists among former residents and their descendants as the AGS provides an opportunity for residents and their families to come together and maintain their connections with one another. This is primarily done through the Annual Africville Reunion, an AGS event which is a weekend long event that takes place every summer in Africville.² The Annual Africville Reunion allows Africville residents and their families to come and camp overnight in Africville, play games, attend a picnic and barbeque, and to attend various religious and musical events (Africville Genealogy Society, 2010). Organizing Africville residents as a community in this way allows to them to not only maintain their ties with other community members but it also allows Africville residents to be a community on the land where it was first formed. In this sense, the Africville Reunion presents a unique solution to the dilemmas associated with diaspora. Traditionally, the focus of diaspora in academic literature has been people who have left their homeland either voluntarily or involuntarily. People experiencing diaspora, and who do not have the means to travel back home, have been documented in the literature as satisfying their search for home by listening to music, organizing festivals, wearing clothing, cooking food, and/or retaining the norms and values of their culture (Spencer, 2010; Bhargava et al,

² The land that once was Africville had its name changed to Seaview Park by the Halifax Municipal Government. In July 2011, the Halifax Municipal Government changed the name back to Africville (CBC News, 2011).

2008). In contrast, the majority of Africville residents live in communities within the Halifax Regional Municipality, meaning that they can either walk or drive to the land that was once Africville in under an hour.

Despite these similarities, some Africville residents still experienced a longing for home, to remain connected to Africville. Gone were the close ties with neighbours, in their place were now seemingly apathetic neighbours who, “don’t give a damn about each other” (Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 135). As a result, Africville residents were presented with unique challenges that have been traditionally associated with immigrants who are experiencing diaspora (Martin & Mohanty, 2005). Most former residents were living in communities that were similar yet divergent from their own, even though they were only a couple of kilometers from their childhood homes. In responding to the desire of Africville residents to return to Africville, the Africville Reunion allows former residents to go back to the physical location of their childhood homes and to reconnect with other residents by finding out what is new in their lives; attending church services together; and sleeping on the land that they once owned. In this respect, the Africville Reunion presents an unique option for former residents to address their longing for home, where the majority of the community—the AGS estimated that over 1,000 people attended the last reunion (Africville Genealogy Society, 2012)—returns to their homeland to physically become a community no matter how temporary that time may be.

7.2 RENEGOIATING RESISTANCE IN AFRICVILLE

Resistance is a concept that has been used selectively in the Africville literature (Thomas & Davies, 2005, p. 712). When authors have chosen to write about Africville-based resistance, they have focused overwhelmingly on the actions of two people's responses to the injustices imposed upon Africville residents by the Halifax Municipal Government (see Nelson, 2008, pp. 132-140; Tattrie, 2010; Williams & Peters, 2009). In the work on Africville that I just cited, all three sources focus on the same two brothers: Irvine and Eddie Carvery. Each publication describes the different ways that these brothers have protested the injustices that have been committed against the residents of Africville by the Halifax Municipal Governments over the years. Irvine Carvery, the President of the Africville Genealogy Society, has engaged the city through political and legal means to reclaim the land that was once Africville, and to get the Municipal Government to pay reparations for the harm that has been inflicted on, and which continues to be a legacy for, Africville residents (Williams & Peters, 2009; Tattrie, 2010, pp. 161-62). Eddie Carvery has protested the razing of Africville by refusing to leave Africville; Eddie has been living in a camper right on the land that once was Africville ever since the community was razed in 1970 (Tattrie, 2010, p. 106). Narrowly focusing on these two individuals' acts of resistance has framed resistance as only taking place among members from different racial groups. It does not take into account

that Africville residents disagreed with one another on how reparations should be allocated and often debated with one another on this fact. It also does not take into consideration how AGS differed from other African Nova Scotian groups on how to handle reparations. Neglecting to include acts of resistance that originate from “in group” members helps create a perspective, one that I held myself, that people who share an identity (such as being from Africville or being African Nova Scotian) held the same beliefs and opinions as everyone within that group.

It is important to document the instances of resistance that Irvine and Eddie Carvery engaged in, as it helps demonstrate that Africville residents were and are not “helpless” (Nelson, 2008, p. 54). My issue is that the authors who have discussed these examples overlooked how members of the same social group, Africville residents in particular, disagree with one another. While Clairmont and Magill (1971) have documented other African Nova Scotians discriminating against Africville residents, their research remains focused on the time just after relocation; there is nothing in the contemporary literature that focuses on resistance after relocation. What I intend to do in this section is to present a more nuanced understanding of resistance by providing examples of how some Africville residents and African Nova Scotians have rejected and reacted negatively to the actions of the Africville Genealogy Society during its tenure, and in doing so how this creates a complicated network of power relations.

In the stories of resistance that Brenda has shared with me, she has complicated the discourse of resistance that have been found in previous Africville literature by revealing that Deborah, Linda, and herself experienced resistance from some former residents of Africville during and after they founded the Africville Genealogy Society. In previous accounts, the authors focused on the interactions that occurred among Africville residents and the Halifax Municipal Government, the local media, and/or members of the general public. In her work, Nelson (2008) describes the efforts that the Municipal Government took in 1995 to remove Eddie Carvery from his camper on Seaview Park, once again called Africville (p. 136). Nelson describes that Halifax was hosting the G7 Summit meetings that year, the annual meeting of leaders from the world's seven richest countries, and the city did not want to experience any "embarrassment over its racial problem before an international audience" (ibid.) As Nelson describes, Halifax City Council introduced a new city ordinance, the *Protection of Property Act*, which barred people from camping overnight in public parks and used it to evict Eddie from his campsite (ibid.) However, as Nelson points out, Eddie moved his protest to a space adjacent to Seaview Park, one that did not fall under municipal jurisdiction and which also provided a location that was visible from the main roadways near the park making his protest more visible to the general public (p. 138). In spite of this loophole Eddie was still subjected to harassment from police officers who tried to intimidate Eddie into forsaking his protest (ibid.) In addition to the actions carried out by the

Municipal Government, Nelson reveals that local news reporters framed news stories of the event with “subtle and not-so-subtle biases” against Eddie’s protest (ibid, p. 137). Nelson describes that local news reporters claimed that Eddie, who had been joined by his brother Victor, was neglecting to take care of their dogs, that their campsite was littered with garbage, and that they had left “fish guts... lying about [their campsite]” (ibid.) Nelson points out that both Eddie and Victor have denied the allegations made about their campsite, and Nelson suggests that the news reporters framed their story so as to portray the Carverys’ as a “deviant, unconstrained group [of people]” who are a threat to the public’s safety in order to garner more support for their eviction (ibid.)

In addition to the actions that have been carried by the Halifax Municipal Government and Halifax-based news reporters, Tattrie (2010) has provided examples of how some members of the general public in Halifax reacted to Eddie Carvery’s protest:

“N-----! Get out of here, B-----!” screamed late at night from the road [above Eddie’s campsite]. The new bridge was operating, its ramps running over Pa Carvery’s land, and cars whizzed passed around the clock. Sometimes they stopped and the drivers shouted abuse down at Eddie. “Go back to Africa!”

Sometimes they’d come down to his tent in groups of six or eight, throwing rocks, firing pellet guns and taunting him with death threats (p. 108).

Tattrie goes on later to described that in one case, Eddie woke up in the middle of night to gunshots; the perpetrator yelled “get out of here” before firing another shot and running away (ibid.) While these instances that Nelson (2008) and Tattrie

(2010) have documented are important to record, analyze, and theorize, they overlook instances where Africville residents met resistance from other Africville residents in their attempts to seek resolution to their eviction from Africville. This neglect assimilates Africville residents into one generalized group whose experiences, values, and beliefs are uniform.

In comparison to the examples of resistance that Nelson (2008) and Tattrie (2010) have documented, Brenda talks about meeting resistance of varying intensities from different sources and in different ways. In the stories that Brenda has shared about meeting resistance are incidents that involved either Africville residents or other African Nova Scotian groups and shows that resistance is not an act that is solely dependent on differences of race. Brenda expands our perception of resistance by demonstrating that resistance can also come from individuals who were previously thought to share alliances.

Brenda's first story of resistance occurs when Deborah, Linda, and herself were still in the process of developing the AGS:

Of course you're going to get some resistance. Some people said: "Oh, well the community is gone" and stuff but a lot of those people now, attend all of the functions and stuff like that...Some people just didn't want to be bothered. And you know, I think that's common too with a lot of groups, there's people that don't want to do the work but they'll join the party, that sort of thing. That was the hardest part... There was a little resistance from the people on our part, but when we went to different ones for help, we always got the help. But back in our minds, in Deborah's mind really, she was going to do it anyway, and we were going to do it with her. We were going to do it regardless if everyone said "no." We were going to do it anyway.

While Brenda's story about meeting resistance from former Africville members during the development of the AGS proves to be a less intense form of resistance than what Nelson (2008) and Tattrie (2010) have documented, I found it important for two reasons. The first related to how Brenda and her friends responded to the resistance directed at them with resistance of their own. With the prospect of not receiving any help from (other) former residents to develop and found the AGS, Brenda describes the thought process that she, Deborah, and Linda shared during that time: "Regardless if everyone said no. We were going to do it anyway." To me this is important because it completely disrupts the helpless, infantile discourse that Nelson (2008) has documented as being attributed to Africville residents (p. 54). It also portrays these women in way that has rarely been documented in previous writings, both academic and non-academic, on Africville. It shows Brenda, Deborah, and Linda possessing personal agency (Crocco, Munro, & Weiler, 1999, p. 5). In other words, it shows these three women standing up for what they believe in, and possessing the desire to continue on with their endeavour despite the possibility of not receiving any assistance from other former residents (ibid.) When this quote is combined with Brenda's story that I cited in the previous section about the process that Brenda and her friends went through to form the AGS, it shows that they also possessed the intelligence and competency to carry out their task, and that their success was not dependent on men or the benevolence of those outside the community.

The other reason why I found this story so interesting is because of the way that it disrupts the conception of Africville residents as a unified group of people rather than a group of individuals. While I have already shown in my chapter on group dynamics/relations that the literature on Africville generally conceptualizes Africville residents as being one, homogenous group where every Africville resident thought, felt, and believed in the same things, Brenda further disrupts this conception of Africville residents by showing that disagreements arose among residents when Brenda, Deborah, and Linda were attempting to start the Africville Genealogy Society. I found the fact that some community members were not inclined to help get the AGS running interesting because it seems so counter intuitive to me. What I mean is the way Africville residents have been described as a “close-knit community,” led me to assume a complete solidarity between Africville residents about settling the injustices related to Africville (Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 70). However, after Brenda shared this story with me and I had time to sit and think about it, I did not realize how conceptualizing residents of Africville in this manner removed each resident’s individuality (Fleras, 2010, p. 142). Each resident has their own desires and goals, and their own way of understanding and negotiating the world and their experiences in it (ibid.) The goals may be the same but how those goals translate into practical terms varies from resident to resident. To further demonstrate the difference among perceptions of how goals are to be

achieved, one can look at the recent decision of Halifax City Council to pay \$4.5 million in reparations to the Africville Genealogy Society.

7.3 POWER RELATIONS AND RESISTANCE AMONG AFRICVILLE RESIDENTS AFTER REPARATIONS

Recently, Halifax City Council agreed to pay \$4.5 million in reparations to the AGS, which was used to build a replica of the Africville church and which will also be used to build an Interpretive Centre. The Interpretive Centre will act as a museum, by collecting and displaying memorabilia from Africville. Part of the reparation money will be used to fund the Africville Heritage Trust (AHT), the entity that is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of both the Church and Interpretive Centre. The board members of the AGS provide input and advice to the AHT, but according to Brenda, the AHT has the power to make its own decisions. However, it should be pointed out that the AGS hires the people for positions within the Africville Heritage Trust. The decision of the AGS to accept reparations from the Halifax City Council has been met with disapproval from some former residents and descendants of those who lived in Africville (Kimber, 2010).

A group led by former resident Denise Allen critiqued the decision, and has argued that the reparations should go to the people of Africville rather than the Africville Genealogy Society (ibid, par. 16). Allen goes on to explain her argument: “We were taxpayers and we didn’t get services for our taxes. I think we should all get back what we paid to the city in today’s dollars with interest” (ibid.) Amanda

Carvery, a distant cousin of Irvine who has allied herself with Denise Allen, builds on Allen's critique by pointing out that the AGS Board is "basically Irvine and his friends," and argues that the AGS is not representative of the thoughts, opinions, and beliefs of former residents as a whole (ibid, par. 8). The perspectives of Denise Allen and Amanda Carvery demonstrate differences that exist within the contemporary Africville community by showing residents of Africville can, and do, disagree with one another. This disagreement about reparations shows that conceptualizing Africville residents as a single, unified whole, that is, as a uniform body of people, is problematic because it ignores the hierarchies of power that exist within the former Africville community and that existed within it when the community still existed. Amanda Carvery points out that at the meeting where former residents voted on whether or not to accept reparations, about half of the residents were uninformed about the meeting and were unable to vote because they did not know a meeting was called (ibid, par. 10). This led the residents group led by Denise Allen to file an injunction, which was later withdrawn, to try and prevent the AGS from receiving the reparations. I remember being surprised when I read this story in the newspaper, not because of the attempts Allen's group to prevent the reparations from being paid to the AGS, but rather because of the dissension that existed among former residents. This was the first time that I had heard about former residents opposing the Africville Genealogy Society. While the AGS has never claimed to represent every resident, I believed that it had/did, maybe because Africville

residents have always been portrayed as a unified group, one from which only Irvine and Eddie Carvery have been given the privilege to speak in a public forum.

Whatever the reason, it had not occurred to me that the AGS was not representative of the thoughts and beliefs of *every* community member. I had simply assumed that the AGS spoke for the community rather, as Amanda Carvery has suggested, than for a select group of community members. Coming to recognize divisions of power and privilege within the Africville community was surprising as these divisions are absent within the literature on Africville. Africville has always been portrayed as a close-knit community without dissension, disagreement, or personal differences.

I do not mean to critique the AGS's decision to seek reparations in the way that they did. In fact, after reading Irvine Carvery's explanation for doing so, I believe that it was the only viable/practical option available to the Africville Genealogy Society.

Irvine and Genealogy [the AGS] worked out a request. At first, they sought individual compensation...But the City [Halifax Municipal Government] promised to fight that all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. Irvine was up for the fight, but lacking the millions of dollars it would take to carry out the battle (Tattrie, 2010, p. 161).

In addition to the lack of resources available to Irvine and the AGS, there were two other factors to consider, the first being that the statute of limitations had past, that is, the period of time in which individual reparations could be sought in court had passed (ibid.) Additionally, an African Nova Scotian judge had told Irvine that, "The system is just too stacked against us. Given the history of this province in terms of

race relations, you'll never win in court" (ibid, p. 162). With the limited recourses available to the AGS in the Nova Scotia court system and the continuing realities of a system entrenched in racist systems of inequality, the AGS elected to seek a "political solution" by negotiating communal reparations directly with the Halifax City Council (ibid.) Yet the lack of legal recourses available to the AGS, led the Genealogy Society to advocate for a solution desired by only a portion of the Africville community, and excluded the beliefs of other community members. This demonstrates that a hierarchy exists within the Africville community in the current day, as it did when the community existed on the shores of the Bedford Basin. This perspective also mirrors the research that I have done on Africville, as all of my research is largely based on the memories and perspectives of members of the Africville Genealogy Society (Nelson, 2008; Williams & Peters, 2009; and Tattrie, 2010). This leaves the construction of Africville, and the experiences of Africville residents, to be based on the memories of a select, few individuals. Unfortunately, there has been no research dedicated to capturing the memories and perspectives of Africville residents who do not have direct ties to the Africville Genealogy Society. Perhaps in the future research endeavours will be able to capture multitude of experiences that have been left out of Africville's written history.

7.4 POWER RELATIONS AND RESISTANCE BETWEEN THE AFRICVILLE GENEALOGY SOCIETY AND AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN GROUPS AFTER REPARATIONS

Brenda further demonstrates that resistance can come from multiple and unexpected sources by talking about the recent controversy over the hiring and firing of Carol Nixon, the Executive Director of the Africville Heritage Trust (AHT). Nixon, a “white” woman from Ontario, was fired from her position as the result of protests led by a few local African Nova Scotian groups who, as Brenda describes, “felt that it should have been a Black person who had this job.” As I have stated earlier, the AHT is a separate entity from the AGS, whose primary role is to manage the affairs of the church and the Interpretative Centre. In order to further their beliefs, Brenda describes that some of the local African Nova Scotian groups went to the local news media to put pressure on the AGS to fire Nixon and to hire an African Nova Scotian candidate. Brenda explains that the story eventually became national, as national media conglomerates picked up and redistributed the story. According to Brenda, after it became a national story the AGS received information about Nixon from some people who she used to work with, vital information that was not revealed during her interview or by her references. Brenda said she would not disclose the information, but stated that it presented the AGS with “sufficient reason to let her go” because it could have jeopardized the success of the project.

The main reason I found the story of resistance that the AGS met with from local African Nova Scotian groups interesting was because it once again demonstrated a problem with my blindly assuming group solidarity among members of a racial group (Hooker, 2009, p. 4). I assumed that the AGS would hire

someone who was African Nova Scotian for the Executive Director position and not a white woman from Ontario. In my failing to acknowledge the individuality of racial and ethnic minorities, that each person can and do hold opinions and beliefs that differ from other racial and ethnic minorities makes my assumption about racial groups being in solidarity “dependent on [my] imagination” (ibid, p. 6). Even though I am using intersectional theory to delve into the history of Africville and understand the unique experiences of residents and how they differed from other residents, I still assumed that the AGS would hire an African Nova Scotian to fill a \$60,000-\$70,000 salaried position (Africville Genealogy Society, 2010). I assumed that the AGS would adopt an affirmative action policy and hire someone who was African Nova Scotian. I remember when I attended the Annual Africville Reunion in the summer of 2011 where Nixon was introduced as the Executive Director of AHT, that I was surprised that Nixon was white. It surprised me because I had assumed that the person would be someone who was *visibly* African Nova Scotian, someone whose skin was black. While I find it embarrassing to admit this, it is interesting as well as comforting to know that I was not the only person who was surprised by the hiring. My imagined assumption of racial solidarity, that the AGS would hire an African Nova Scotian for the Executive Director position was shared by members of African Nova Scotian based groups. This assumption that I shared with the African Nova Scotian groups who protested the hiring of Carol Nixon demonstrates that even members of a racial group can be surprised when members of a racial group act in

such a way as to disrupt our imagined notions of racial solidarity. What I mean by racial solidarity is where someone of one “race” would always privilege members of their own race over others especially in contentious nature of the community and the race relations in Nova Scotia. In others words, if the job went to someone from outside of Africville but who was Black, I probably would not have thought twice about it.

In response to our discussion of the protests, Brenda described the decision-making process the AGS went through when they hired Cindy Nixon to be the Executive Director of the Africville Heritage Trust:

They [the AGS] had a selection of fifteen applicants, and it came down to three people, and one was qualified completely because they had everything we needed, all the skills that was asked for. And it came down to two people, one was Black, he was from Africville. And the other lady, she was White and she was from Ontario, and she was the best qualified one. This who we were looking for.

Brenda goes on to describe the AGS’s motivations behind picking Cindy Nixon over the Africville candidate:

You know, you want a job done right, I mean, you put a Black person in there, if they’re qualified, good; if you’re just picking them because they are Black and doesn’t meet all the qualifications, and the project falls through, this is what we wanted to avoid. There have been other Black groups that have been formed and they fell through, for reasons that I don’t have to name, but they weren’t qualified enough because they were Black and they were overlooking everything else. And then they’d come up with problems and then it fell through. This is what we wanted to avoid, we didn’t want to put anyone in there that wasn’t qualified. And she had the proper qualifications.

Saying that the AGS had to “take the best qualified” applicant for its vacant Executive Director position does not mean that Brenda is opposed to affirmative action and equal employment policies, in fact it is quite the opposite. When she first started telling me this story about the tension over the hiring of Nixon, Brenda prefaced her story by saying, “we would have liked to have had a Black person to do it, to help develop our Black people” but there was no African Nova Scotian candidate who met all of the job requirements. With this in mind, Brenda goes on to explain that the AGS will not change their approach to choosing another Executive Director despite the fact that the AHT may have to go through the same issues again, should they hire another “white” person.

[As] far as these groups think that we let her go because of them complaining and going on, no. It wasn't that at all... now, the AHT have to go back to the drawing board. They're not going to take the other person [the person from Africville] because they weren't properly qualified because we can't do that. We've got to make sure we go out there with who is the best qualified, be whoever it is. It doesn't matter who.

The continued tensions that exist between AHT and other African Nova Scotian groups, as well as former Africville residents and the AGS, demonstrates the diversity of thought, beliefs, and opinions of individuals who are traditionally thought to be in solidarity with one another (Hooker, 2009, p. 4). The power relations that exist among the members of the AGS, former residents like Denise Allen who are not affiliated with the AGS, members of the AHT, and the members of the African Nova Scotian groups who protested the hiring of Cindy Nixon are laid out

in a complex and dynamic manner. Power does not originate from a single source and does not operate in a unidirectional manner, nor is it something possessed exclusively by a single person, group, or entity (Foucault, 1980) Instead, power is articulated and can be imposed upon and reacted to by any person, group, or entity (ibid.) Although, as Hill Collins (2001) reminds us, everyone does not have the same access to power, that people in privileged positions in society can more easily and readily influence mechanisms of social order (p. 14), the stories of resistance in this chapter demonstrate this complex conception of power relations.

Each group described in this chapter engaged in acts of resistance that demonstrate not only how each group employed power but also the different and unequal ways that this power was employed. In their attempts to get the Halifax Municipal Government to pay reparations the AGS chose not to file a civil suit and sue for reparations for Africville residents because the Municipal Government informed them that they would fight the civil suit all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, which meant a long and therefore costly legal battle that the AGS could not afford to engage in (Tattrie, 2010, p. 161). In addition, filing a civil suit against the Halifax Municipal Government meant that the case would be heard in a court system that has been noted for being racially prejudiced, which would limit the possibility of the AGS successfully winning their case (ibid.) While the AGS was successful in getting reparations from the Halifax Municipal Government, it was done in a way that was influenced by existing legal and financial imbalances that

reduced the number of viable options available to the AGS. Former residents of Africville like Denise Allen, who disagreed with the way that the Africville reparations were to be paid, refused to have their voices go unheard or to have people assume that the AGS represented their beliefs and sought avenues to have their opinions heard (see Kimber, 2010). However, they were only able to get their voices published in *The Coast*, a local Halifax independent weekly newspaper.

Denise Allen did not have her story picked up by the *Chronicle Herald*, Nova Scotia's only provincially circulated newspaper, or the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), a national based news organization. While *The Coast* is available online, having her story published by the CBC would have made it a lot easier for people outside of Nova Scotia to read her story. That Denise Allen's group was ignored by provincial and national news outlets meant that the views of members of the AGS, in particular Irvine Carvery's, were the only former Africville residents who were interviewed and quoted in news stories about reparations, which constructed the story from the AGS's perspective, not that of Denise Allen's group.

Likewise, the African Nova Scotian groups who disagreed with the hiring of Cindy Nixon as the AGS's Executive Director employed similar tactics. Unlike Denise Allen's group they were able to garner national media attention because it was seen as being more newsworthy. Accessing national media outlets allowed the African Nova Scotian groups who were unhappy with Nixon's hiring to collect damaging information about her from her former colleagues, which was then used as grounds

for her dismissal. This access allowed the African Nova Scotian groups to disrupt the actions of the AGS that they disagreed with more successfully than Denise Allen's group had been able to.

The power dynamics that former Africville residents are entwined in are, in part, absent in the previous writings on Africville as Nelson (2008), and Tattrie (2010) both overwhelmingly focus on the power relations between Africville residents and members of the Halifax Municipal Government. This may suggest to readers that there is an absence of power relations between members of the same racial group in Nova Scotia, and therefore, everyone within that racial group is in complete solidarity with one another (Hooker, 2009, p. 5). However, as Brenda has shown, not only do tensions exist within racial groups in Halifax, but also the way those power relations play out is a complex phenomenon that sees members of the Halifax Municipal Government, the AGS, Denise Allen's group, and other African Nova Scotian based groups access different sources of power to work with and against each other. In doing so, Brenda presents a complex understanding of how power relations were utilized during the AGS' pursuit for reparations.

8. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to examine the individual and unique experiences of women from Africville that have been excluded in previous writings on Africville. Conducting an oral history interview with Brenda and analyzing her life stories with an intersectional theoretical framework has led to a glimpse into previously unheard accounts about the experiences of females from Africville. The research also provided a more complex construction of the social relations, gender roles, and power than what has been presented in the previous literature on Africville.

Brenda's stories demonstrate that female residents Africville did, and did not engage in activities that reflect traditional gender roles that have been described in works by Clairmont and Magill (1971), Nelson (2008), and Tattrie (2011). Females in Africville, according to Brenda, fished and played hockey in addition to taking part in childrearing duties, cooking, and cleaning. In addition, Brenda's accounts of life in and out of Africville also challenged how intra- and intergroup relationships existed among residents of Africville and other African Nova Scotian communities; Africville residents and members of the Halifax Municipal Government; and between Africville residents. In previous accounts of Africville's history, tensions were used to define the relationships between Africville residents and African Nova Scotian communities (Clairmont & Magill, 1971, pp. 86, 269), and Africville residents and members of the Halifax Municipal Government (Clairmont & Magill, 1971, p. 256; Nelson, 2008, p.

96; Tattrie, 2011, p. 17). These authors also constructed Africville residents with a monolithic identity, an identity overlooked the tensions that existed between residents. Brenda showed that while tensions did exist between Africville residents and members from other African Nova Scotian groups, and Africville residents and members from the Halifax Regional Municipality, these tensions were not representative of every relationship shared by members of these groups. Brenda remembers having pleasant and friendly relationships with members of other African Nova Scotian groups who would attend the Harvest service at Africville's church. Brenda also shared memories that showed Brenda interacting with members of Halifax's police force and the social worker in charge of assisting Africville residents with relocation that were not defined by tension or discrimination. In addition, Brenda provides a glimpse into the hierarchy that exists within the Africville community and how this hierarchy leads Africville residents to have different access to power and to disagree with one another. Brenda's stories about the Africville Genealogy Society provide a glimpse into the hierarchy that existed between Africville residents and how this hierarchy led some residents to have different access to power and the ability to construct public discourses of Africville. Brenda's stories about the AGS also provided insight about the power dynamics in Nova Scotia concerning the visibility of one's race and their right to perform certain roles. After the AGS received reparations money from the Halifax Regional Municipal Government in 2010, they awarded the stewardship of these

funds to Cindy Nixon, a white woman from Ontario, a decision that was met with criticism from some members from African Nova Scotian groups. This resulted in a struggle between members of the AGS and the members of other African Nova Scotian groups about what the race of the person looking after reparations should be. While Nixon was eventually let go, this speaks to the importance that the visibility of one's race, rather than their abilities have in determining access to certain positions of power.

Brenda's stories provide this thesis with new and complex ways to understand Africville that simultaneously mirror and deviate away from previous understandings of Africville that are present in other publications on Africville. Brenda's stories also present future researchers with new ways in which to research Africville, this includes collecting and analyzing the life stories of residents who do not identify with the Africville Genealogy Society and/or the life stories of Africville residents who do identify as African Nova Scotian. It would be interesting to see how these perspectives construct gender, race, social, and power dynamics with other Africville residents, members of the general public, and the Halifax Municipal Government because these stories have yet to be the focus of Africville-based research.

Since I have created a dialogue between Brenda's stories and myself, where I discuss my reactions to her stories, I feel that I should provide a space in the concluding chapter of my thesis for me to discuss how listening, analyzing, and

writing Brenda's life stories have affected me. In one of her stories about the after-effects of the razing of Africville, Brenda implies that what happened to Africville can be used as a learning opportunity for other African Nova Scotian communities to avoid what happened to Africville, She said:

We're a good example for other communities, North Preston, East Preston, Cherrybook, Guysborough, all the little places like that, we're a good example for them. You might as well say we're their corner stone because whatever happened to Africville, the do's and don'ts, that'll help them understand what to do and to don't. It's in history, it's history.

As Magill and Clairmont (1971) point out, community leaders of different African Nova Scotian communities learned from the razing of Africville and started to encourage their community members into community organization, planning, and resistance to prevent their communities being exploited in the way Africville had been (p. 282). While the razing of Africville has provided an effective learning opportunity for African Nova Scotian communities to resist exploitation from the Halifax Municipal Government, this is not the only lesson that the history of Africville can teach us. For me, the two years that I have spent researching, analyzing, and writing about Brenda's life history has taught me more about race, gender, intersectionality, difference, social relations, and resistance than I had learned in the entire twenty-six years that I had lived before embarking on this journey. The way that I now see race issues, gender issues, and group dynamics has changed dramatically from the time when I started this project. The normalized everyday gender and racial inequalities and stereotypes that are primarily

broadcasted in new reports, television shows, movies, books, academic writings, and other mediums have now become more apparent to me. The lens in which I view my daily social life has been expanded, and has allowed me to grapple and to be able to better understand the more complex issues and consequences that these generally unabated inequalities have on the individuals that they subjugate. To say the least, Brenda and her life stories have had a profound impact on me, an impact that has made me become a more knowledgeable person.

While I do not mean that this the only use for Brenda's contributions to my thesis, that her life history can only be seen as a learning opportunity to assist a "white" man in his own attempt to become knowledgeable about feminist and anti-racism paradigms, rather it also acknowledges and celebrates her life, and the work she has done to keep her memory of Africville alive. Brenda represents a unique and previously unheard perspective of life in, and after, Africville. While Brenda is not representative of everyone from Africville who have yet to have their experiences documented, Brenda does provide a break from previous accounts of Africville by having the story from a woman's perspective. While, again, Brenda's story is not representative of every woman's experience in Africville, it represents a starting off point for the perspectives that have largely been overlooked, neglected, or forgotten in the Africville literature. Hopefully, future research into Africville's history can bring to light other perspectives that my research, and the other research that has been done on Africville, were unable to document.

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APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPT OF BRENDA'S INTERVIEW

Well, okay, my earliest memories, well I was born in Africville. It was a midwife that brought me into the world, and she happened to be my Mother's sister. She was one of the midwives of Africville and her name was Emma Steed. And you know, I grew up in Africville as a happy child. I remember at the age of five, I can remember a little bit younger than that I think, when my Grandfather.. He was very dear to me, I was very sorry that he didn't live long enough as I was growing up because he died when I was at the age of five years old. But I have good memories of him, you know, he lived right in the Homestead where my Mom and Dad lived too. And you know, I spent many happy hours there with my grandfather just like most of the children of Africville, they spent time with their grandparents, you know what I mean? They spent a lot of happy times with their grandparents. If Mom was upset with me and was going to punish me, I would run over to Grandfather's house. It'd be like running from here up to the sidewalk [about 20 meters], we were that close because it was all on the same property right? The Homestead was there, Mom's house was there, and another house beside it. Our Homestead was three houses in a group. One belonged to one daughter, and the other daughter had a house on there too, and then it was the Homestead. The main house was where Grandfather's children were born and raised up in that house. And I'd run over to Grandfather and he'd say: "What's wrong now?" And his name for me was Ginty, he used to call me Ginty, "What's wrong now Ginty?" And I'd say: "Momma's mad at me." Right? That was a normal thing for people in Africville, to have nicknames. Like, he called me Ginty, my oldest brother called me B., and then, my oldest brother used to call someone else in our family, he used to call him Bo-Jack (laughing). There were all kinds of different names, and still today, we still have a lot of nicknames. There are many nicknames in my own family. My oldest granddaughter we call her Ooty, right? And one of my grandsons, like my kids, they call him Gabby right? There are all kinds of different names (laughing). I think everyone has got a nickname in this house (laughing). I got a daughter and they call her Saki. I got another daughter and they call her Ninny, her name is Brenda like mine, and they call her Ninny. And the nicknames all came from the kids in the family who couldn't say their name, and what they come out with, that's the name right? That's how it was like in Africville too, everyone had these little nicknames. And Mom would come in the door and say: "You're not going to run to your grandfather every time you get in trouble" (laughing). And he'd say: "No, leave her alone, she's alright. Leave her here with me." So she'd leave me there and he used to have a housekeeper who used to tidy up for him because he was up in his eighties right? And this housekeeper used to come in and she used to clean up and stuff like that, and we had one of those iron stoves at the time, and when you're cleaning off the stove and stuff you had to take an old cloth with a little bit of grease on it and you would um, grease the top of the stove and make it all nice and shiny. So I whispered in Grandfather's ear: "Grandfather,

can I burn potatoes on the stove?" And she would hear me. "No, not today" she would say, "You're not burning no potatoes" (laughing). And he would say: "Go get a potato". And then he turned to Hazel, "It's okay, will let her do it just this once." And it was always me and her, we were always getting into it about the potatoes on the stove (laughs). And he used to peel the potato and slice them in rounds, and put them on the stove and burn them on each side. I mean, I used to eat them half raw but they taste so good (laughing). Used to taste so good. And you know, I used to go over there and just sit around my Grandfather's house. There was no TV back then or nothing, it was just to be in the house with Grandfather. He'd have a little candy for me or something, and we'd sit there and we'd about what I did for the day and stuff like that. See, I'm only five years old see? If I had gotten a little older I would have asked him some questions about things and gotten a little more information out of him. At five years old, he was like my babysitter right? Yeah, and then we had a couple of little boys that lived down the hill. Grandfather used to like to take the pan of gravy after he's finished eating, he used to have some gravy left in the pan, he used to go out in the yard and sit by the door with pan of gravy and some bread, and the little boys, they were no more than six years old, they used to come up, and it was Wayne and Georgie, I'll never forget it. And they'd come up, and here they are, they're coming around the pan, and they're waiting for Grandfather to give them the bread. So, Wayne would get his bread and Grandfather would dip it in the gravy, and he'd give it to Wayne, and then Georgie come, and he'd do his, he'd do the same thing. And then they started getting into arguments because one was trying to get in front of the other fellow, right? (laughs) But, you know, they used to come for little ol' treats from Grandfather and stuff like that. Like I said, he wasn't the only Grandfather in Africville, but that's basically how they were with the older people in Africville. They used to come around to Grandfather's and see him and stuff like that, and they'd go see their Grandparents or whatever; we'd hang around the older people a lot. The older people they were a good guidance for us. We were raised that the Elders of the community were to be greatly respected because they watched over us; that's one thing about our community, the older ones would watch over the younger ones when they're out-and-about, playing around in the community of Africville, and it brings us to our church. Our church was our cornerstone for our community, and um, we grew up and we went to Sunday School, we were God-fearing people. We went to Sunday School, we went to Church, and a lot of our activities were built around in our little school house that we had too. I had the privilege of going to school in Africville for one year before they tore it down. In that school house was two rooms and it was like so many grades in each room, right up to grade eight or nine, right? Primary to five on one side, and it would be like, six to nine, or five to nine on the other side. And I remember my teacher's name was Verna David, she was a teacher out there when I went to school and um, the other teacher that was out there was Gordon Jemmit. After they tore the school down, we had to go to school in the City of Halifax, to Bloomfield, Mulgrave Park, Richmond

School, QE, different schools. Everybody was dispersed; we were dispersed out into different schools. I remember standing on the school grounds with this big green apple in my hand, and we were going to school. And I was excited about going to school. And I remember sitting in the classroom, we would be doing activities at our desk, the teacher would be up at the board, and things like that. That was a normal school days was for a primary student, but children are so adaptable, they adapt to things really easily. Because after that year, well then had to go to other schools. I went to Bloomfield, and I was in Bloomfield for grade one and two, and then we were transferred, I was transferred up to Mulgrave Park School, and from Mulgrave Park it was Richmond School, and then from there we went to Queen Elizabeth High School. But back in them days, it wasn't... thinking back, I didn't have any problem going from one school to the other. No, I was scared to death of the principal in Mulgrave Park, I never like none of the principals. I never did. I don't know, maybe because you're such a little person and they're so big right? And I remember them being very stern, and not pleasant people. They wouldn't smile at you, and I suppose that's what made it.. they were straight-faced and... they were very pleasant people for a child to confront. But I never really had a problem transferring schools, not myself, and I never heard none of my friends say. The girl that formed the Africville Genealogy Society, it was three of us, me, Deborah, and Linda, and we all went to school together. We have a good friendship and stuff in school, and that makes it all the easier, the transition all the easier because you're not really alone. So I got along well with the teachers basically.

But um, growing up in Africville as a child, were happy times for us comparing to now, children think that running water and things like that, that's their happy time. Our happy time was that we had to go to the well to get our water, or chop kindling wood. Our brothers and fathers would chop up kindling wood at night because we had wood stoves, and we used to bring that in for night to make sure we had enough in the morning. Those are things we had to do and it was natural for us to do them so it wasn't an inconvenience or anything like that, you know, we were happy doing those things. And we used go to the Southwestern, that's what we used to call it, we had horseshoe games there, baseball games, and in the winter time when the water would freeze over, it would be our skating rink. The boys would have hockey and sometimes the girls would get in on the hockey game until they got too many bumps and then they were gone (laughing). But you know, those were happy times, and then we had the Hill, it was beside my Grandfather's house and they used to call him, his name was Alfred Carvery, and we used to call him Affie, but when the children would say it, they would say it, "We're going sliding on Uncle Laughy's hill" because we called him Uncle Affie right? And that's how they said it. And we used to take the sleighs, or if we didn't have sleighs, we get tops off tin cans and stuff like, or pieces of cardboard, and slide straight down the hill right to the Southwestern where we'd make a turn because the tracks were there. And although we had tracks in Africville,

none of us ever got hurt or anything. There might have been one or two instances in the whole entire time that Africville existed, you know, times were some one got injured. But that was adaptability, we knew they were there, we knew what we had to do, we knew had to stay away from them and be careful, you know? It didn't bother us at all that the train tracks were there because, like I said, when we coast straight down the hill, and if trains weren't coming, we coast straight down the hill over tracks, and right down to Barrington Street (laughing) in front of a post office. Some times when the trains would come though, the boys would hop on and throw some coal off before the police got there, and they would take the coal home. I would remember after awhile, the police would start coming out and they would wait for the train. We would always know when the train was coming because the police would come out and they would be on each side of the track to make sure that nobody was around or endanger themselves, that's basically why they were there, for safety's sake. So when we see the police coming out here, we knew the train was coming, so we knew to stay away from it. Like, we had the track there, it's called the Lower Track, but there was an upper track too, up further on the hill, and that's gone now. The Upper Track would be about the area where you see people drive through on Barrington Street, and that's where the Upper Track was. The train would use to go out that way, and as little children we used to wait in the yard for the train to come through, and we always used to wave to the Conductors on the train. And one man, the Engineer of the train, he would have a red handkerchief and he would wave his handkerchief back and forth at us, and we'd be there waving back to him. And years later, I found out, I was living next door to a lady, and I found out that it was her father, because he used to go home and talk about how the children would come out and wave to him, and he used to get the red handkerchief out, and we've been best friends since. Like I said, we had a lot of things that we used to look forward to, things that made us happy. Out there, we used to look forward to the train coming through so we could wave to them. They would all wave, but we knew that one Engineer, we knew we was going to wave his red handkerchief at us.

We had a post office, and we had two variety stores, corner stores, two, three, oh my dear, over the time there was about four out there at one time. And then a couple got closed down, and then the other ones were still open, and it was Bunny Sparks, we used to call him Uncle Bunny, and uh Albus Sparks, his store, and then over the years, a little ways you go over and there was Mrs. Newman's store, we used to get everything there, all our provisions that we needed, they used to have potatoes, everything that we needed. Although, our parents still went in town and did their big grocery orders at uh, it used to be called the IBC Store, used to be on Gottingen Street here. At that time, it was natural before they had telephones at home, they would come out and do their shopping. But when the telephones came in, we could call in to the ICB Store, Mum would make her order out, and they would deal with other people too, and then a big truck would come and deliver our groceries and

stuff like that. So, you know, we had every convenience that we really needed out there, and surprising enough, I don't know of any family that was on Social Assistance. People worked and they made their living. Some people would go out to the city dump over there, and they get the copper wire and stuff like that and burn it all off, and they go take it to the junkyard and sell it, and make money that way. They always had a way of making money. Down on Pier Nine there was the coal company, my Dad used to work there for years down at the coal company on Pier Nine. And then the Salt Boat used to come in, they used to call it the Salt Boat, and Smith's was the one that I think that used to run that, and the boys used to go down and sign up, and they used to work on the Salt Boat. This would be season, like maybe, two or three times a year it may come in right? So I mean, there was always a way to get work, some of the men down there like my older brother, he worked as a porter for CNR, it wasn't VIA Rail then, it was CNR. Quite a few of the men from Africville were. So you know, they were employed, everybody was making their living and stuff like that. Everybody took care of themselves, it was like a self-contained, we were like, like a said, we had our stores, the stores would even have, um, when Key Max and things came into play, where people have oil for oil stoves or stuff like that, our stores used to buy the oil and then we'd buy them. We used to pay twenty-five cents a gallon for oil (laughs). Go down there with twenty-five cents and get a gallon of oil, see? Those were the days (laughing). And another thing, I may be jumping a bit, but it's just coming in my mind. In the summertime we used to go down to, it's called Kildere's Field, and our parents used to take us down there sometimes, we couldn't wait to get down there to go swimming, down in Kildere's Field, that's the Bedford Basin right? That was our swimming pool, we used to go in there. And then, also, we used to have at night, coming on the evening, the kids would make these bonfires and if the tide would go out far enough, then we would get the mussels and pennywinkles. We used to call them pennywinkles, they're called perrywinkles, but we always said pennywinkles, and uh, they'd collect those, and then they would have this big pot and put it on the fire and cook them. And some of them used to go out into the basin during the day and they would fish, that was another way of surviving out there too, they used to go and get fish. Right out in the Bedford Basin. They would bring them in and you know, maybe you can't do this know but if you saw a lobster, you'd get the lobster too (laughing). But yeah, my Uncle John, he used to, uh John Carvery, he used to go out in the boat all the time with my cousin Jack Carvery, a lot of them were, the Browns, we had Clarence Brown's father, we used to call him Boozah Brown, they used to go fishing, all his kids. His daughter did the same thing right? They all used to go out and get fish. There were a lot of fishermen out of Africville. And yeah, we used to have, there was people that came in from the country who had vegetables to sell, they grew them in the country, and they used to bring the trucks from out home and sell the vegetables out there, and then we used to have our fish trucks that would go out there too and sell fish and stuff so, we were quite content. We're quite content, we were happy.

Most of the women were housewives, domestics you know? They did a lot of domestic work, but there were some who went out to different parts in Halifax that did house cleaning, and some worked in the hospitals. I had a cousin who worked on Citadel Hill, like the little house there up on Citadel Hill, she used to clean around there and, up and around in the museum part. You know, some of them went out and did that, that's mainly what most of the women did, they went out into other parts of Halifax where they had day work and clean for people and stuff like that. When they got home they'd be in charge of running the family. You see, whoever was the oldest was uh, like if you had the older children, especially the girls, they had chores – well, all the children did when they were old enough had chores to do, like getting water, and kindling wood, and doing dishes. If our mothers were in town to go shopping or, my mother was a domestic, she stayed home, she didn't go to work. But when she went into town for shopping or things like, I had to keep the clean on, I had to make sure that the house was tidy, peel vegetables, and get things in line for supper by the time she come home, everything was in place. And as I got older, I would cook the supper before she got home, to have it all ready.

Like I said, we had a good church, a lot of people look at Africville back in those days, to me, the way you hear someone talk, "They never had nothing, they never had a culture" you know what I mean? But that wasn't true, like, our church, we had a Minister, we had groups in our church, we had Sunday School for kids, we had CGI for the young women, BYF for teenagers, and we would have Sunday School picnics for the kids, we'd have church picnics for the community, you know, the women of the church would get together and have a big picnic for the community. I remember one year, it was a big picnic, and I think we had it right down on the field, all the tents were up in Kildere's Field and a big wind came, it was like a hurricane wind, and everything was blowing away, all our tents were all blowing away all over the place and we couldn't get things back together (laughs). So we took the stuff up, put it in the church hall and we just finished off in there in the church hall. Like I said, our church was the corner stone. We had Sunday Schools, we had Vocational Bible Schools, we were also affiliated with the South End Baptist Church and the First Baptist Church down around the West End and the South End. They would come out there and hold programs in our Sunday School with the children. Mom was a big organizer in a lot of the contact for a lot of those things too. At Christmas time, they would come take us for Christmas Breakfast and then we'd go into their church and do arts and crafts. They really kept in touch with us. Our church, that's where all of our community meetings were held too; the church was more or less our centre because we did have a recreational hall out in Africville years and years ago, I was barely even born I guess when it burnt down. After that everything has held in the church. But you know, I say it to my children now, I see kids around now, they don't have happy times. It was natural things that we did, you know, sports, there's no

video games where you have to sit down, you get up and you exercised. With whatever activity you were doing you were moving and getting exercise. But yeah, it was a time that if anybody passed away in Africville, the whole community was in mourning. Everybody came around to the family and they would try to comfort them, they would cook for them, and be there for them for days after the funeral and stuff like that, somebody was always around to try to comfort the person, or to do whatever they could to help them. That's why when I hear about things that go on today, I'd say: "You know? We never done those things back in the day." I even notice now that some churches, the different things that they do now, they're serving the same God, but you know, things have changed a lot in the churches compared to what we were used to out in Africville. It hasn't been the same. Hasn't been the same.

I think I was eighteen when we relocated and um, back at that time, as a young person it didn't really have the impact that it did for your parents and your grandparents. Like, my grandparents weren't living but other people's grandparents were there, they were the ones who were born there, who grew up there, made their homes, raised their families, and their lives were disrupted. And they tried, in their way, to fight and save Africville but they didn't have too many resources available to them. It was a losing battle. And I guess you get to a point where you're tired of fighting and you just resign yourself to the fact that they don't see no light at the end of the tunnel so they just accepted whatever in terms of what the city gave them, and they moved. But you could imagine, growing up in a place like that, you're in a comfort zone more or less, and then all that is tore away from you. You're strange to these other places that you are going to. The Elders, they didn't really live that long after the move. I know one was my Uncle Jimmy, he was my Grandmother's brother, and Uncle Jimmy, I don't he.. he might have lived a year after. And within a span of five to ten years, all of our elders were gone. It was more of an impact on them, the older people, who built their homes and raised their families, where they thought they were going to live out the rest of their lives. And then, all of a sudden they were torn away from that. So they were more or less, trying to adapt. I'm not saying that's the only reason, but I'm saying that's part. Their hearts were broken, and if they had any ailments, that just helped it along as far as I'm concerned. When we left Africville, of course they had a liaison between the City and Africville, when they were getting ready to move Africville, that person would come out there, Peter MacDonald was his name, the social worker right? And he came out, he was there to try to help the people to move, find where they were going, and help them with the transition. When we left, Mom and Dad fought so hard with others back to save the community, it began to play on Mom's physical health, she got sick. The doctor suggested that she leave the group, and that she should leave the situation. So that resigned Mom and Dad to the fact that well, okay, we'll just have to close it, we'll have to close it down, we're just going to have to move. So they did find a house out

on Gottingen Street, right up before you get to Gottingen and Charles, going towards North Street. There's a big apartment building up on Charles and Gottingen, right? The far side of that, our house was right around there. And we moved into that house, and it was um, because people did fight a-house-for-a-house if they were going to take Africville, we couldn't win that fight so we ended up paying the City rent. It was minimal but we ended up paying them rent, they wouldn't give us a house you know what I mean? So, I think that apology was in order, when the City made the apology to us because they can't undo what was done but they can recognize what was done. But yeah, that's where we moved, we moved in there. And I've been around this area you might as well say ever since. After that I moved I worked. I took business courses, I worked in the administrative part of a day care centre, and you know, I've done different jobs. I went to work at the Victoria General Hospital, at the Campy Hospital as a Dietarian and things like that. Then I ended up, in the Holiday Inn on Robie Street, it's the Atlantica now, I worked there for about five, six years as a supervisor in the laundry department. And I went from there down to the Citadel Inn, I was a supervisor there, and then I ended up at the Prince George Hotel for twenty years as supervisor and then I retired from there in 2008. And now I'm just active with the Society and things like that. I didn't get any reaction from people when I told them I was from Africville. You know, discrimination is always there but it is very low key. And sometimes it can hide its face as mask, you don't know it's there, and you may not see it. But I must say, I can't say that I had any confrontation really. But I mean, there are others that have run into it at different times, but to actually to prove is hard, it's hard to prove.

My Mom and Dad, along with some of the other people in the community, like George Mantley, who is Linda's father, and um, Deacon Jones, the Deacons of the church, they all tried their best, I think it was in 1971, '72, they held a big camp meeting, it was out in Africville. Yeah, I believe it was 1972, they had the big camp meeting out there, see, when our church was taken from us, it was torn down, we came into Cornwallis Street Baptist Church 'cause that's the Mother Church of the African Baptist Association, so that's where they went to church. So the Minister at that time, was um, Reverend Jay C. Mack, and along with the other Deacons and Officials from our church in Africville, that were still living had formed a big camp meeting on the property where they had a church service. Then there was nothing done anymore because, my Mom, she died in 1975, she was 75 years old, she died in '75. And then it was after that, the only thing that happened was the Africville Genealogy Society. And that's when we began to talk, you know, we talked over the years.. it took use a little while to talk about it, about what we wanted to do and stuff, and finally we did it. And the main person was Deborah Dixon-Jones, she was the one who said that we gotta do this, and she kept after me and Linda, and we got together and that's how the Africville Genealogy Society was formed. And we've been going strong ever since, and now it's bigger than life. Now we've birthed a

baby, we got the AHT [Africville Heritage Trust], that comes from us, that come out of us, that handles the affairs of the church and new interpretive centre that is being built out there. Whereas the Africville Genealogy Society still looks after, our objectives, is the past, present, and future affairs of Africville in genealogy. But when Africville was gone, a lot of the people were everywhere, they all didn't come into Halifax, some, when they got their money that they were given, most of these people had good jobs as it was, those were the ones who put down payments on houses out in Sackville and the North End of Halifax, and other places. Others, they moved away to Montreal, out West, and gradually out into the States. And that was one of reasons why we formed the Genealogy Society because after everyone was gone, everyone was dispersed all over the place and we were saying that we wouldn't know anybody. You know, we would see people's kids on the street and we won't know they're their kids because we don't see anyone right? So that was our original reason for forming the Society, to keep the people, and to bring them back together again, at least for once a year. So we can meet everybody and see whose children are who, and what everybody I doing. And through that, there's been people who have been away for twenty, thirty years that weren't back home until we started the Society. They started coming back for that weekend, and every five years we have a real reunion for about seven to ten days, and people plan for that, they come home for that, from the States and everywhere. One thing you can say about all that is that it was a close-knit community. Because it proves it because we're bringing them back. We all come back together. I mean, the Society, we've come along way. Back, years ago, about ten, fifteen years ago, I mean, we've been existing for awhile now, we're going for thirty years in 2013, it's going to be thirty years. And through that time, we've had a representative from Johannesburg, um their community, one of their small communities were being dispersed and they came here to find out our story and what happened, and there's the lesson right there, Africville is the lesson learned. We're a good example for other communities, North Preston, East Preston, Cherrybook, Guysborough, all the little places like that, we're a good example for them. You might as well say we're their corner stone because whatever happened to Africville, the do's and don'ts, that'll help them understand what to do and to don't. It's in history, it's history.

We started it in 1982, we started together by doing research and stuff, and getting our papers in order with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stock Companies, you know because of bylaws and such, and by 1983 we were ready to go. I remember because my Dad died in January 1983 and my Grandson was born in December 1983. Things were pretty even keel. We had a lot of late nights sometimes, our first reunion that we had, that was a lot of late nights. The night before the reunion we stayed up all night, we didn't get home until one o'clock the next day. And then we

had to go lay down, have two, three hours of sleep and go do this reunion. How we started the Society though was, we were sitting around talking and then Deborah brought this up. She said: "Wouldn't it be nice if we could do this?" And we would say: "Yeah, it would be." And we got talking back and forth, and before you know it, we started getting it together. You know, like I said, we were sitting around talking, and she brought it up and starting talking about it and she said: "It's something we should do" and we said: "Yeah, it is something we should do." And that's how it went.

Me, Linda, and Deborah were all really good friends since we were small children. I have memories, especially of me and Linda, and Deborah would come along sometimes. We have like, Uncle George, I'd call him Uncle George, he was Linda's father and he was also one of the Deacons in the church. He was like the caretaker of the church so it was Harvest service, like around this time of year now, coming onto probably the third Sunday of October, we would have our big Harvest service. We would have our Minister there, so we would go in the day before on Saturday and Uncle George would get the maple leaves off of the branches and put them around the pole pit and over the windows and stuff like that, to decorate the church. And he'd be there all day 'cause people would be bringing in their thanksgiving gifts, like they would bring in, we would have squash and potatoes, all that stuff like that right? There would be pumpkins there, and grapes, and all kinds of fruit and vegetables. And that used to be a big service because we used to have every Black community have a Harvest service, other communities had it too, as far as the ABA [the African Baptist Association] which our church belonged to, like Cherrybrook, and North Preston, and East Preston, and Guysborough, and them places like that, everybody had their own service on a different Sunday. Ours was usually the third Sunday of October, and these people knew it was our Harvest, these people used to come from those places and come to our Harvest service. We'd have to have had chairs in the aisles, the rectory would be open and we had all kinds of chairs out there, and the church was packed. The day after the Harvest service, that Monday, they just auction off the fruit and vegetables to the community, they just come by and buy the stuff. Nowadays, a lot of them make a bug turkey dinner or something, you get a lot of that in different churches where they make a big turkey dinner coming up to Harvest Sunday. They would make a big turkey dinner and sell tickets on it. They don't bring food to church like they used too, right? They give gifts of money and stuff like that, and then they put on a dinner or something like that. But that's how we did it, we used to bring all our fruits and vegetables, I can still see it. We used to have so much stuff. We had bags of potatoes and everything else. So I remember that, that was really special. We'd go help Uncle George in Saturday night and help clean and decorate the church for Harvest. We used to do the same thing for Baptisms when people got baptized in the church. We used to baptize right out in the Bedford Basin. And we would go out and tidy up, and clean up the church and stuff. We had choirs too, we had adult choirs, children's choirs, and we'd go for

practice, that was fun. That was fun. You know, you go do little giggity things and you act the fool. The choir director would be like: "Come on now, you gotta stop acting the fool here" and the rest of us trying not to laugh. And you know, when you're trying not to laugh, you get laughing (laughing). Those were fun times. We used to go to school dances and things like that together. Like at Richmond School, we used to come in town here to dances. They used to on Gary Street, and Gary Street used to run right down to Barrington Street. There was a hall there call Gary Street Hall and we used to come down and go to dances down there. St. Mark's up in the North End used to have a hall and we used to go to dances and stuff like that. I know one time (laughs) when was it? The only thing I can remember, I wasn't there that night but Deborah was telling me about how she went out and she had this nice long sweater coat that her mother had bought her. And poor Deborah, Deborah had to go to the bathroom and back in those days they were outhouses right? She went to bathroom and laid her sweater on the side and when she got up to leave the sweater had fell in the hole. So she grabbed it and rolled it all up and took it home and hid it. And by the time she got it out of the house to get it to a dry cleaner they couldn't do nothing with it so she had to explain that story to her mother of what happened to her coat right? But you know, Halloween time we used to come in and go to the Hydrostone area up there. We'd have our cousins with us, and I'd have my little brothers and sisters with me and they'd have their Halloween outfit on. One we were running and one of them trips and falls, and there's Halloween candy all over the place and he or she is going somersaulting (laughing). And things like that, those are memories that I have. When we got older, Deborah moved away for a while so we didn't see each other too much until we were getting ready to do the Genealogy Society. And I was married at the time, and so some of the things her and Linda did on their own, and they'd come back and tell me what they were doing, and then we'd put things in place and stuff like that. But once we were older it was kind of like, do your own thing. Linda was away for a while, and for a while there was never the three of us in one place and after we did get the Africville Genealogy Society formed. After a year or two, Deborah moved away to the States and me and Linda were here, and we used to keep in contact with her. We used to tell her what was going on and she'd give us feedback, and we had our board and stuff, and that's the way it went. And then she got sick. She died of cancer. But as you get older you take different interests and stuff like that. You still got that one goal in mind but you got other lives that you're living so you're all over the place. Deborah would call us to see how things were going. And then she would send little things like membership tags for the Society; she would mail those things home. We kept her well informed about what was going on. And she made her visits back-and-forth for a while until she got too sick to do that. Deborah died back in '89 I think it was. When she passed away, we just kept going on with Presidents and the Board, and stuff like that. But we never let her die though, we always keep her, don't care what we do; every year we make sure her name comes up and give her the credit because all that's going on

now, if she hadn't to come with us with the dream and we backed her, and we did it together, but if she hadn't, we wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for her is how we basically look at it. She used to go out and do a lot of it herself and then she'd come back to us and say: "This is what I got here, what do I do with it?" And then we would tear it apart and say what we were going to do with it. Well, first thing, we went to, her and Linda did a lot of the leg work, going out to different people telling them about what we wanted to do and stuff like that, and of course you're going to get some resistance. Some people said: "Oh, well the community is gone" and stuff but a lot of those people now, attend all of the functions and stuff like that. But, it was like that, they did a lot of that, they went around to different people and talk, and I would go with them sometimes if I could get out to do things. My job was mainly; I did a lot of the paperwork for them while they were out doing stuff. They did the footwork, and I was at home, I had small kids and stuff so I had a little more time to put things together in book form, like pamphlets and other things they wanted to send out to the people of the Africville community about the ideas and the things that we wanted to do. And then the North End Library would let us have our little meetings there and stuff. Back in that time, the lady was Miss Mooney, she was the one that was in charge there. For our annual day, we would go out to food vendors, and we went to Nova Trophy up on Almon Street, way up on Almon Street and we went there and got little plaques and stuff like that to say thank you to the people who helped us, but you know, that's how we started out doing things. Deborah also had a lot of papers from other organizations, like their ten commandments for members so I helped with that. She would also get the papers from Joint Stocks of what we needed and stuff like, and I would fill those out. And then we would get together and see if we got everything in order. And um, but they went around and see what ideas they could get from people, and see what their feelings were, and to see what they thought. Some people just didn't want to be bothered. And you know, I think that's common too with a lot of groups, there's people that don't want to do the work but they'll join the party, that sort of thing. That was the hardest part. We were good for doing meetings and stuff, because when we weren't meeting at the library we used to go to Linda's mother's house and we would meet there. There was a little resistance from the people on our part, but when we went to different ones for help, we always got the help. But back in our minds, in Deborah's mind really, she was going to do it anyway, and we were going to do it with her. We were going to do it regardless if everyone said no, we were going to do it anyway. We had to do, like I said, more a like a feasibility study, just get ideas and see what people thought. And then we went to Joint Stocks to find out what we needed, and that's how we started.

We've had some bumps in the road with whole AHT but we have legal representation, and that's what we do, we go and consult with the legal firm that we have and we get our direction on what we're to do. The AHT Trust does the hiring because they're the ones handling the project. They come back to us and give us

feedback from things that they are doing. We don't interfere with what they're doing, we give suggestions and if they feel that they can use them, fine. If we see something that they should be looking at or something, we have a lot of input into it, but that's what they were put in place for, to handle that. I know you've heard about hiring and firing of AHT Trust Director, that I want to get straight. It was a number of things that happened that snowballed into that, some of the Black organizations Ujamaa, Black Educators, and others, they felt that it should have been a Black person who had this job. It's okay to say that, we would have liked to have had a Black person to do it, to help develop our Black people, but you got to go with the qualifications also, you got to think about the qualifications. If you want a good job done you got to take your best qualified that's what we thought at that time, that's what we were after. And they were all upset because the lady wasn't Black, and as they were saying, there's a white person in this job. But that wasn't even a thing, because there were White people who lived in Africville too you know, there were White families out there, and we all played and grew up together. Children don't see any colour, and I must say, out in Africville, everyone was welcome as long as they were decent and respectful, we didn't care what colour you were. Getting back to that, these groups, like I said, they had a problem with her being White. But our point was that, she was the best qualified one. They had a selection of fifteen applicants, and it came down to three people, and one was qualified completely because they had everything we needed, all the skills that was asked for. And then it came down to two people, one was Black, he was from Africville, and the other lady, she was White and she was from Ontario, and she was the best qualified one, this who we were looking for. You know, you want a job down right, I mean, you put a Black person in there, if they're qualified, good; if you're just picking them because they are Black and doesn't meet all the qualifications, and the project falls through, this is what we wanted to avoid. There have been other Black groups that have been formed and they fell through, for reasons that I don't have to name, they weren't qualified enough because they were Black and they were overlooking everything else. And then they'd come up with problems and then it fell through. This is what we wanted to avoid, we didn't want to put anyone in there that wasn't qualified. And she had the proper qualifications. But when these groups started, and started going to the media and stuff like that, and it got known nation-wide, everybody knew about it. People in Ontario were hearing what was going on, and it happened that some of the people who found out about it worked with this lady. And things came up that we didn't know about and the AHT had to part ways with her. That's the only reason why she was let go, things came up that would have been detrimental to the project. And far as these groups think that we let her go because of them complaining and going on, no. It wasn't that at all. We got sufficient reason to let her go, and that's the only reason why she was let go. If these things hadn't have come up in her past references, there were things that weren't mentioned in the interview and stuff, and it came out. It took that foolishness that they were going

through for other people to hear about this, and then we got all this information. You know, personnel things that you can't divulge but there were things that weren't good for the project. So now, the AHT have to go back to the drawing board. They're not going to take the other person because they weren't properly qualified because we can't do that. We've got to make sure we go out there who is the best qualified, be whoever it is. It doesn't matter who.