Governor Orval Faubus:
Taking a Stand for Segregation

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The Civil Rights movement in America was a time for African Americans to take a stand for equality in America. History has not been gracious to the black population in the United States, despite multiple attempts made to integrate and push for equal rights. Examples include the Emancipation Proclamation from Lincoln's time that freed the slaves in 1863, and then two years later, the ratification of the thirteenth amendment following the end of the Civil War (BROWN V. BOARD: Timeline of School Integration in the U.S.). This declared that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction” (13th Amendment to the US Constitution). In addition, the Civil Rights Act of 1875 prohibited racial discrimination at inns, theaters, restaurants, and other places of public accommodation. (Brown v. Board of Education Timeline). It is because of these documents that make one believe that the races had become equal, but this was far from the truth. Simply because African Americans were now legally equal to whites, does not mean that they were socially accepted as equal. Jim Crow laws were the solution to getting around the legal documents set forth that granted the equality that was fought for. They promoted segregation essentially anywhere in public, and were fueled by those willing to enforce them.

One such person was Governor Orval Faubus. Born on January 7th of 1910 near Combs, Arkansas in Madison County, Faubus gained extensive knowledge of politics at a young age due to his father's political involvement. He first ran for office in 1936 for a seat in the state general assembly. After establishing himself later in life, he was elected governor of Arkansas in 1956. What he is known for today, is his defiance towards the
Supreme Court ruling of “Brown Vs Board of Education of Topeka Kansas” (Orval Faubus Biography). It is because of Governor Faubus’ disregard for the Supreme Court, President Eisenhower, and everything that the Civil Rights Movement stood for, that validates he took a stand against racial integration.

The court case of Plessy Vs. Ferguson was a considerably large contributor to the start of the Civil Rights Movement. The decision of “separate but equal” facilities for blacks and whites was made. Plessy Vs. Ferguson, in addition to Jim Crow laws, had become the common, and constitutional basis for segregation. They initiated the “equal” but second class treatment for the future of African American citizens. History shows us that accommodations and facilities were nowhere near equal, especially with schools in the segregated south. However, this was changed in 1954 with the Brown Vs. Board of Education court case. This case overturned Plessy Vs. Ferguson and deemed that schools were now to integrate, “with all deliberate speed” (Brown v. Board of Education Timeline). The vast majority of people opposed this idea. About two thirds of whites claimed to support segregated schools (Lee). Arkansas’ governor was one of them. Little Rock Central High was chosen to be the first school to desegregate, three years after Brown Vs. Board. The group known as “The Little Rock Nine” would be the vehicle of change. The nine were inspired by Rosa Parks and how she refused to give up her seat on a bus in 1955 (Paulson). Acts like hers had sparked a fire in them and pushed them to stand up for what is morally right. They were set to integrate the school on September the 4th of 1957. The governor however, was a segregationist.

How Governor Faubus responded to the desegregation process would make him a national symbol of racial segregation for years to come. On September 2 of 1957, the
governor announced that he would summon the Arkansas National Guard to restrict the African-American students’ entry to Central High (Integration of Central High School). The decision to utilize the National Guard came as a shock to all. One of the nine students, Carlotta LaNier, said, “I never would have believed that I was included in the statement Faubus made in saying “I am calling out the Arkansas Guard to protect the citizens of Little Rock” today…he meant he was mobilizing the Arkansas guard to keep us out” (LaNier). Jefferson Thomas, another colored student of the Little Rock Nine, said, “Well I didn't think he was actually doing that. He said he was ordering them to maintain the peace around the school. And so I thought they would permit us to go in. We went to school and found out we could not get in” (Aleckson). The guard was assembled to keep them out, and Faubus was not ready to compromise.

Orval Faubus’ defiance and disregard led to many problems, especially with President Eisenhower. According to Faubus, the actions he took were a proactive approach to prevent violence to all citizens and property and to “preserve the peace” (Central High). In response to the “proactive” approach of Faubus, President Eisenhower sent a telegram to the Arkansas governor. Included was written, “When I became president, I took an oath to support and defend the constitution of the United States. The only assurance I can give you is that the Federal Constitution will be upheld by me in every legal means in my command” (Eisenhower). On September 14th, Faubus met with the president in Newport, Rhode Island. The meeting went well and they had supposedly reached an understanding by the end of the day. In a statement released after the meeting, Eisenhower explained, “The governor stated his intention to… give his full cooperation
in carrying out his responsibilities in respect of these decisions” (Statements by President Eisenhower and Governor Faubus from Newport, Rhode Island, September 14th, 1957).

Despite the agreement, Faubus enforced having the National Guard present as he vows "blood will run in the streets" if black students tried to enter Central High (Lewis). The governor’s contradictory statements continually led to confusion, and there was no difference in an interview conducted by Mike Wallace. He had stated that he was ready to withdraw the national guard if it could be executed in a peaceful manner, but also stated that regardless, it is the paramount obligation to keep peace and good order of the community, and that it has always been the case (Faubus). Carlotta LaNier stated in her book, “A Mighty Long Way”, that the crisis festered for two weeks before a federal judge finally ordered the troops to be withdrawn (LaNier). Another student, Elizabeth Eckford, believed the guard was put in place to ensure the protection of all the students (Eckford). Faubus wants to keep the guard there to keep the peace, but by doing that he is restricting the integration of the school.

Eisenhower was tired of waiting for Faubus to make a call. On September 24th, Eisenhower sent in 1,200 members of the 101st Airborne division to become in charge of the National Guardsman already in place (Integration of Central High School). By three in the morning, soldiers surrounded the school with bayonets fixed (We Shall Overcome - Little Rock Central High School). The Little Rock Nine would finally be able to attend a full day of classes on September 25th, but few would actually approve of this.

A mob of white protesters lingered for a lengthy amount of time after the integration. Thelma Mothershed, a member of the Little Rock Nine, stated that “The mob did not want to go home because they did not want the integration to be seen”
Carlotta LaNier described it as “less by day, but something each week” (LaNier). After the first year of school, Faubus decided to close the school pending a public vote on integration. The people of Little Rock voted 19,470 to 7,561 against integration, resulting in the schools remaining closed (Integration of Central High School). The actions of the governor continued to be controversial and interestingly enough, contradictory towards himself. On one hand, Faubus publicly expressed on multiple occasions that he does not want the Little Rock Nine in Central High School. In another statement, he approves of the incorporation of African-American Students if it can be done peacefully (Walker). This makes it clear that the governor changed his viewpoints based simply on his audience. Reflecting back to Faubus’ meeting with Eisenhower, they were in agreement as to how desegregation proceedings would take place. He later said, “They had told Eisenhower nothing about the situation”, prompting towards that Faubus thought Eisenhower didn't know what was happening in his state (Faubus). The school remained closed for the duration of that school year.

The governor reopened Little Rock Central High in 1959 and classes continued. Carlotta was one of the three students of the nine who returned to graduate. She stated in an interview, “I needed that diploma. I needed to go back to validate that all the things I had gone through were worth it. Determination and perseverance got me through” (Pride). In another statement, she said, “I was determined to finish that year, I was not going to give up, because that way they would’ve won, and I was not about to let that happen” (LaNier). Among Carlotta who had returned to graduate, was also Ernest Green. Reflecting on the desegregation, he states, “I was a young guy who believed he was
doing the right thing, and that with the support of parents and family succeeded in it” (Green).

The stand that Governor Orval Faubus took was a profound one. Due to a past history of racism, his actions are still carried out to an extent in public schools today. Not on a legal level, but on a social one. Despite this, his misuse of power merely delays the inevitable process of the integration of public schools. The vast majority of people support it. Ninety years ago, over two thirds of Americans supported segregation. Now that number has dropped to one in every thirty people holding the same belief (Lee). Thurgood Marshall, the lawyer who won the Brown Vs. Board court case, was denied admission to college because of his color. In the amount of time he was alive, he went from being denied a college education, to being the first African American Supreme Court Justice. (Thurgood Marshall Biography). Drastically changing times have led to many changes. Now, the discrimination of race, origin, and sex is outlawed (The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission). Governor Faubus was elected six consecutive times and served for twelve years. He maintained his racist, defiant image throughout the time he served. He died of cancer in 1994 (Orval Faubus Biography). Due to the stand that Faubus took at the time he took it, he will forever be known as an insubordinate man. His disregard and disrespect for the Supreme Court, the President, and the Civil Rights Movement show just how Governor Faubus took a stand in opposition of integration. His stance is not a positive one, but it can not be denied that his stance has a role in education and segregation today.
Annotated Bibliography

Primary

Aleckson, Paul. *Classics, a Look Back at the 1950's*. Weston, WI: D.C. Everest Area Schools, 2005. Print. Included in the Oral History Project are interviews with two of the Little Rock Nine. This is unique for my project because only people that read the interview will hear their words exactly how they are put. This pushes my paper farther and makes it more unique with quotes straight from an interview. Governor Faubus is mentioned in both interviews multiple times, which will help.

"Brown v. Board of Education Timeline." *National Archives and Records Administration*. National Archives and Records Administration. Web. 02 Jan. 2017. This timeline of Brown Vs. Board of Education shows each step of the court case that would overturn the Plessy Vs. Ferguson decision of "separate but equal". It was this decision that made the goals of the Little Rock Nine possible. This is of major importance to me because it sets up what is legally acceptable and civil, which Faubus will try and disregard.

"Central High." *Little Rock Nine*. Web. 1 Jan. 2017. This page narrows down a timeline to the specific month of integration. It goes through all of the events from September 2nd up until the Little Rock Nine are finally allowed to enter the school. It also provides a brief backstory with some information regarding the supreme court decision. This will be beneficial because it shows just how long they had to wait in order to be allowed to enter. It also amplifies the idea of legal acceptance without social acceptance.

*National Archives and Records Administration.* National Archives and Records Administration. Web. 02 Jan. 2017. On a more broad subject, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 granted African American citizens equality. No longer could employers discriminate over race or sex. Though the legality was there, the social aspect was lacking, which is why this was only a small step. This is of use to me because it was the first time race had been acknowledged from a legal perspective and was a major accomplishment of the civil rights movement.

Eckford, Elizabeth. "In Her Own Words: Elizabeth Eckford." *Facing History and Ourselves.* Web. 04 Jan. 2017. Elizabeth Eckford gives her summary of what happened at Little Rock Central High. This firsthand account will help go into greater detail about the segregationist mob, and discriminatory acts. My project will need this information to become more unique and accurate.

Eisenhower, Dwight D. "President Eisenhower's Telegram to Governor Faubus."

*Eisenhower.archives.gov.* Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. Web. 2 Jan. 2017. In response to Governor Faubus' attempt to stop the integration progress, President Eisenhower sent this telegram. This states that he will have to integrate the school if he wants to remain compliant to the constitution, and law. I will use this to show that the will to integrate the school was present and would be accepted as constitutional law.

interviewed and questioned regarding his reacting to desegregation. He believes the President Eisenhower was misinformed about the situation. This is of use to my research because it appears as though the governor is trying to justify his actions towards the Little Rock Nine.

Faubus, Orval. "Harry Ransom Center The University of Texas at Austin." Interview by Mike Wallace. Harry Ransom Center RSS. Web. 06 Jan. 2017. This was an interview with Governor Faubus conducted by Mike Wallace. It was held the day after Faubus met with Eisenhower in Newport, Rhode Island. The interview focuses on Faubus' defiance of the court order to integrate which will be helpful for me to use as it shows how he stands against integration.

Green, Ernest. "Special Section--The Little Rock Nine--Ernest Green." Interview. Special Section--The Little Rock Nine--Ernest Green. Web. 2 Jan. 2017. Students from Santa Barbara Middle School interviewed Ernest Green. Included are are his thoughts on various parts of integrating the school. I will use this as well as Carlotta's interview when explaining from a firsthand account what it was like at the time.

LaNier, Carlotta. "Carlotta LaNier on Integration." E-mail interview. 7 Jan. 2017.

Carlotta LaNier accepted an interview and allowed three questions to be asked. I focused much on Governor Faubus in two of the questions which will help get a feel for how he was looked upon, and continues to be known for. This is useful because i can take direct quotes from Carlotta and even one that she gave me from Faubus.
LaNier, Carlotta Walls. "A Mighty Long Way: My Journey To Justice at Little Rock Central High School." New York: One World Ballantine, 2009. Print. This is a book written by Carlotta Walls LaNier, a student who integrated Little Rock Central High. In her book, she writes the story as it happened as a personal account of her experience. This is useful to me because it gives a firsthand perspective of what is happening in her social and academic life, as well as what role Faubus is playing.

LaNier, Carlotta Walls. "Q A: The Youngest of the Little Rock Nine Talks About Her First Day of School." Interview by Leah Binkovitz. Smithsonian. Web. 2 Jan. 2017. In this interview, Carlotta Walls discusses her first day of school, her thoughts, her reactions, and how she compared to the other students in the Little Rock Nine. A focus on her family life is added in addition to this. This will be useful as I tell about what others involved other than the nine students feel about the situation.

Lee, Taeku. "Polling Prejudice." The American Prospect. Web. 2 Jan. 2017. This article shows the shift in Americans view towards integration. Shown also are a variety of point of views that demonstrate why the shift occurred. The information in the text will show what integration has led to and what the Civil Rights Movement as a whole has accomplished.

Lewis, Johanna. "Daisy Bates and the Little Rock Nine." NPR. NPR. Web. 07 Jan. 2017. This article gives a rundown of Daisy Bates and her role in the integration of Central High. It goes over the selection process and how it was set up. Included
are quotes from Governor Faubus regarding integration and what would happen if they made it in the school.

"Orval E. Faubus, "Speech on School Integration" | The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed." *Black Past*. Web. 06 Jan. 2017. This was a speech given by Governor Faubus regarding school integration and how it is a state issue, not a national one. It was the speech that made him a true symbol of racial segregation. This is of use to me because it clearly portrays how he stood up for segregation in education.

Pride, Felicia. "Carlotta Walls LaNier, One of the Little Rock Nine, Discusses Her New Book "A Mighty Long Way""* The Root*. Web. 1 Jan. 2017. Carlotta Walls LaNier discusses her book in this interview. Carlotta was one of the nine students to integrate the Little Rock Central High School. Her words in the interview provide a much more descriptive and accurate representation of what it was like to integrate the school system.

"Statements by President Eisenhower and Governor Faubus from Newport, Rhode Island, September 14th, 1957." *Eisenhower.archives.gov*. Eisenhower Presidential Library. Web. 3 Jan. 2017. Meeting between the president and the governor of Arkansas was held in Newport, Rhode Island. In the meeting was discussed the need to integrate and that it would need full cooperation to take effect. This is of importance to my project because the governor was originally compliant before restricting entry.

"13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Abolition of Slavery." *National Archives and Records Administration*. National Archives and Records Administration. Web. 31
Dec. 2016. This document that was passed in 1865 was the legal amendment to end Slavery. Because of the fact that my event took place in the 1950s, I used this to show that though equality may exist legally, it does not exist socially. Interpreting this in my paper will show what the Little Rock Nine did to advance the social acceptance.

"We Shall Overcome -- Little Rock Central High School." National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior. Web. 06 Jan. 2017. Gives information about the integration of the Central High School and what Faubus did to attempt to stop the entry. It also talks about the closing of the school system for an entire year. This is useful to me because it shows what Faubus is willing to do simply to prevent education for nine students.

Secondary

"BROWN V. BOARD: Timeline of School Integration in the U.S." BROWN V. BOARD: Timeline of School Integration in the U.S. Web. 1 Jan. 2017. This timeline shows the progression of integration of schools. It gives the important dates of court cases such as Plessy Vs. Fergusen and Brown Vs. Board of Education. It also lists what else was going on at the time of an event taking place.

"Integration of Central High School." History.com. A&E Television Networks, 2010. Web. 07 Jan. 2017. This not only focuses on the integration of the school, but also the aftermath of it. Faubus closed the school for an entire year until the public could vote on the issue. This helps because it shows what was done following the integration of the school.
"Orval Faubus Biography." *Orval Faubus Biography*. Web. 06 Jan. 2017. This is a basic biography of Orval Faubus' life. It explains how he was brought up and how is political career was started. Knowing this information will not only set a background for what kind of man he was, but also justify his actions in the Little Rock Crisis.

Paulson, Riley. *Civil Rights Progress*. Digital image. Pinterest. Web. 2 Jan. 2017. This image shows a timeline of 1954-1968 and gives important events such as the supreme court decision, sit-ins, the bus boycotts, and others. This image gives a sense of what has happened and what is yet to happen. It is something that I can compare the Little Rock event to.

"Thurgood Marshall Biography." *Thurgood Marshall Biography*. Web. 07 Jan. 2017. This is a biography on Thurgood Marshall. He is a former supreme court justice on the supreme court, but before that, he won the case Brown Vs. Board. This is relevant because it was because of him that the integration could even occur in the first place. He was a major help to the Little Rock Nine which makes life difficult for Faubus.

Walker, Paul Robert. *Remember Little Rock: The Time, the People, the Stories*. National Geographic Society. Print. The book gives a day-by-day account of the struggle it was to integrate Little Rock Central High School. Highlights the fact that even though the highest court in the land had reached a decision, the people were not ready to accept it. I will use this book to show how the students interacted with both the national guard, and the white segregationists.
Why I chose this topic

A fascinating element of the world around us is one's ability to change the future generations for years to come by conducting one simple act. Individuals taking a stand in the past have shaped the way our world is today. A vast amount of individuals took their own stand during the Civil Rights Movement, one of which being Governor Orval Faubus. This man was a segregationist and was very vocal about his beliefs regarding the integration of the public school system in Little Rock, Arkansas. I chose this topic to see what motivates segregationists to think the way they do and how his actions affect modern day education.

Conducting my research

To conduct my research, I started with finding a few books to go broad on the Civil Rights Movement. I found these by consulting a school librarian and looking at the options. Next I went to the online national archives and found documents related to the integration crisis in Little Rock, two of which being telegrams between Faubus and Eisenhower. Following this I sent out emails to three members of the Little Rock Nine, as they were directly affected by Faubus’ actions. Carlotta LaNier wrote back to me and allowed me to conduct an interview through email. My fourth email was to Mr. Aleckson, social studies coordinator of my district, who helped guide me with some sources to use. They included an interview of Faubus by Mike Wallace, as well as the Oral History Project looking back at the 1950s. I also used Facebook to reach out to the Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History. Aside from all this, the internet was my best resource to find all the necessary sources I needed.
Developing my project

To create my paper, I began by focusing on the court cases that set the scene for Governor Faubus to act. Then I focused on Faubus’ background, how he got into politics, and when he took action. The second area of interest is the event of integration itself. The Little Rock Nine made Faubus who he is remembered as today, so they are a large area of focus. I proceeded to gather information pertaining to how the integration took place, what the immediate reactions of people were, all through Faubus closing the school in 1958. Thirdly, I bought a light on to what Governor Faubus, as well as The Little Rock Nine have brought to us as of today. Information in the section includes any long term effects that the public school integration has had in America.

How my topic relates to the theme

Governor Orval Faubus relates to the theme of this year's National history Day because he took a stand against integration, which so many believed to be wrong. He was a segregationist who took a stand for what himself, as well as the majority of people occupying Little Rock believed in. His stance is not a positive one, but it can not be denied that his stance has a role in education and segregation today. The view I take in my research was meant to view the other side of this situation, rather than just what the Little Rock Nine presented.