

# **THE PRAIRIE VIEW INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE BAND CONTESTS FROM 1938-1970 WITH AN EMPHASIS ON BLACK BANDS AND BAND DIRECTORS IN TEXAS.**

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to find out important information about the Prairie View Interscholastic League (PVIL) Band Contests. For over 30 years (1938-1970), the PVIL held Concert Band, Marching Band, and Sight-Reading Contests for black high school bands at Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical University in Prairie View, Texas. By the end of the PVIL era, over 150 black high schools participated. The PVIL disbanded after a merger with the white counterpart, the University Interscholastic League (UIL). In this historical and qualitative research study, 27 Texas black band directors were invited to participate, all of whom participated in the PVIL. Both the University Interscholastic League (UIL), and the Texas Black Music Educators (TBME) previously honored these band directors for their achievements. Fifteen (56%) of the 27 black high school band directors (14 males and 1 female) elected to participate in this study, and were interviewed. The semi-structured interview was designed to discover important information about the PVIL Band Contests, such as demographics, education, and their participation in the PVIL. Each interview was recorded and lasted from 30-75 minutes and was conducted by phone or in the participants' home at their convenience. The data from these oral histories were analyzed qualitatively through content analysis. As a result, several themes emerged concerning the structure of the PVIL band contests, repertoire, preparation of the contests, and the importance of the PVIL. Participants were also asked about the effects of segregation and integration on the PVIL and black high school bands in Texas. When discussing segregation, participants focused mainly on the inequities of equipment and facilities while working at segregated schools. During the period of school integration, black schools began to close, especially in the small cities and towns. As a result, 12 of the 15 participants in this study found themselves without a job or with a substantially changed teaching position. For some of these directors, it meant the end of their career as a band director. The PVIL band contests not only inspired future band directors, but it gave the students something to prepare for and look forward to, and helped them develop character, which made the black communities proud.

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