

**The African American Struggle
for High School Education in Loudoun County, VA,
1865 to 1941**

Larry Roeder

The Edwin Washington Project

The Fourteenth Amendment is arguably one of the most important amendments to the U.S. Constitution. It addresses citizens' rights and their equal protection under the law. In combination with other amendments, it has also led many in the country to the proposition that all American children—even those in the country without documentation illegally—should have equal educational opportunity despite differences in gender, race, ethnic background, religion, disability, or class. Despite this liberating legislation, African Americans have had to endure much poverty and prejudice to this day. In the following paper, Larry Roeder, principal investigator of the Edwin Washington Project, explores the educational experiences of African Americans in Loudoun County, Virginia, between 1830 and 1941. Roeder's historical narrative is based on the study of thousands of documents and icons that he and his team have collected, organized, and analyzed, records that were lost for several decades and then almost destroyed. The scholarship contributes significantly to the growing body of research on African American citizens determined to realize their right to a high-quality education.

—Eds.

When Douglass High School was erected in 1941 in Leesburg, Virginia as a dedicated institution offering African Americans accredited secondary education,¹ it was rightly considered a monumental political achievement by parents, the County-Wide League,² the National

Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and their friends. It also remains a place of reverence for today's African American community, and it is hoped that the building will stand forever as a vivid counterpoint to racism, a persistent symbol of how to peacefully achieve civil rights, especially the right to education. Prior to Douglass, African Americans could only experience a limited secondary school program on the second floor of the Training Center on Union Street in Leesburg or even more limited programs in one-room schoolhouses across the county. Black students had far less exposure than was afforded to white students. Until now, almost nothing has been written about efforts to provide African Americans in Loudoun with any level of high school instruction before 1941. As a result, we have tried to learn the extent to which African American students had at least minimal exposure to higher branch classes in one-room schools, what barriers they faced, and what led up to Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) agreeing to offer a real high school curriculum.

Sources

Official records and interviews with former students and instructors from the segregated era were used to answer questions raised by over twenty volunteers, including me, involved in the Edwin Washington Project, an organization mandated by LCPS to discover what happened to African Americans in their schools. We began by consulting records held by LCPS, which we now call the Edwin Washington Archives.³ We also drew from records housed in the Balch Library, Oatlands House and Gardens,⁴ the Library of Virginia, Virginia State University, the Circuit Court of Loudoun County, the Founder's Library of Howard University, the Lovettsville Historical Society, and other locations. Also useful were the research by Jeanes Supervisor Gertrude Alexander,⁵ the personal case files of NAACP attorney Charles H. Houston,⁶ and varied sources related to the experiences of administrators, parents, teachers, and students in Loudoun's segregated schools. We also drew heavily from the scholarship of Archie G. Richardson, who retired in 1969 as the Associate Director of Secondary Education in the Virginia Department of Education. At that time he was the state's highest ranking African American in public education.⁷ Historians strive to be as objective as possible and this narrative is based on facts, but it is also influenced by the reflections and feelings of the investigators as we unearthed and analyzed thousands of documents and files that had nearly been burned simply because they were old. Some of those files were personal, hand-written pleadings by African

American parents wanting the best schooling possible for their children.⁸ Taken together, the research has revealed a heroic struggle to overcome enormous political, social, and economic hurdles in order to give children the best education possible, including high school.

NY 1938/39

TEACHER'S TERM REPORT—Page 2 ← TITLE of REPORT

13. Standard Tests Used:

	Exact Title of Test Used	Date Given	Grade to Which Test Was Given
1st	Wis Classification	Jan. 18/39.	7
2nd			
3rd			
4th			

14. Furniture and Equipment:

a. Number of desks in room: Single Double 17

b. Number of chairs in room 3

c. Is there a teacher's desk? Yes.

d. List other furniture: 1 Stationary book shelves, 2 large slate blackboards, 1 coat stove, 1 bottle, 5 window shades, 1 cooler, 2 old desks, 2 shot benches, and 1 piano.

e. List other equipment (maps, globes, etc.): 1 Case of maps (old).

15. Room Library:

a. Do you have a large dictionary? No.

b. Do you have a satisfactory encyclopedia? No. → COMPLAIN

c. Number of volumes in room at beginning of year? 70

d. Number volumes lost or worn out? 0

e. Number of volumes added? 0

f. Number of volumes in room at end of year? 70

g. Amount spent for library during year? \$ 0

h. Total value of library? \$ 20

i. Number books read by pupils during term? 25

16. Parent-Teacher Association (for one-teacher schools only):

a. Do you have an active Parent-Teacher Association? _____

b. How many times has it met during the year? _____

c. Number of members _____

d. Name and address of president for next year. _____

e. Amount of money raised for the school during the year \$ _____

f. Is this amount reported in the Teacher's Cash Record on the Term Report? _____

g. If this money is not reported on the cash record, how much of it has not been expended? \$ _____

h. Give name and address of person holding money reported under "g." above. _____

17. Units Taught by Grade:

JOHN C. WALKER

I certify that this Register of Attendance and the Summary of Monthly Reports in the Register have been kept according to instructions and that data on this report are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

John C. Walker Teacher June 6/39. Date.

Approved: Archie H. Lucas Principal

Figure 1: Teacher's Term Report, 1939. Many such documents are lost, but the extant documents contain much valuable information. Photograph courtesy of the Loudoun County Public Schools.

While the official LCPS records are extensive and more complete than in other locations like neighboring Clarke County, many original documents were lost over time, so we have treated the papers as representative samples. We focused on freedman and Quaker files issued before 1870, then term reports, teacher registers, the superintendent's

annual reports, petitions by citizens, and a scattering of miscellaneous documents created after 1870, when the public school system came into being. We calculated the number of white and African American pupils who benefited from higher branch coursework using teacher registers and the superintendent's annual reports. These documents sometimes also listed textbooks and courses. Term registers and term reports for the one and two-room schoolhouses provided classroom rosters; however, it's not always clear which students benefited from higher branch

lessons or the nature of the work they pursued. We assume that older students took these classes, but a bright younger student could easily have benefited from them as well.

Post-Civil War Education for African Americans

Most African Americans were illiterate at the end of the Civil War, as were many young white pupils in agricultural counties like Loudoun. Indeed, illiteracy was a persistent problem in America well past World War One regardless of race, but African Americans were especially disadvantaged due to pre-emancipation laws prohibiting schooling.⁹ Although there were no public schools in Loudoun before 1870, and certainly no high schools for African Americans, it's important to remember the beginning of Black education in the county because its lessons were the fertile soil that fostered an effective struggle for racial equality. To begin, we were surprised to learn that freedmen's and Quaker-supported schools did provide some higher branch classes. In fact, in a report on instruction at Tate (the Lincoln Colored School) in April 1870, Caroline Thomas said that seven pupils were engaged in higher branch learning.¹⁰ If so, this would have been one of the earliest exposures of African Americans to such education in Loudoun.

I think it is a very good thing to go to school and learn to read and write. It is the first opportunity we ever had, and we ought to make good use of it. I think it will be a great improvement to us. We ought to love our teacher and mind her and respect her; and if we love her she will love us, and we ought to love and respect everybody.

—Edwin Washington

Quoted in Carolyn Thomas, "Friends Among the Freedmen" no. 9 (June 27, 1867).

A preliminary examination of records showed that as of September 30, 1866, nine free schools had been established in Loudoun, of which four were sustained by benevolent societies and one managed by a "intelligent, educated colored man," undoubtedly William Obediah Robey.¹¹ This was the second freedmen's school in Leesburg. The schools were popular, and evidence indicates that African Americans took every chance to educate their children and themselves from the start of the freedmen's schools in Virginia. Robey and other educators would have offered math and reading, seen as tools to enable economic growth and protection from being cheated in contracts. Additionally, reading and writing permitted the sharing of news

and provided African Americans with the ability to write petitions to improve the schools. Reading also exposed the formerly enslaved and their children to their constitutional rights such as the right to petition the government for toilets in schools. They also learned about the right to hire lobbyists like those in the NAACP and the County-Wide League to convince the local government to erect Douglass High School, though only after much debate. Despite African Americans' best efforts, due to the paucity of funds, early places of instruction in Loudoun for African Americans were mostly old churches and inexpensive buildings; e.g., Robey's school was in his home. Whites usually fared better. Unfortunately, we don't have any of Robey's files, which is a great loss, as he was unusual for being an African American teacher before 1870. We do know that he was born in Fairfax County in 1820 and was a free Black and a carpenter by trade. At age twenty-one he moved to Washington, D.C. for an education and, though he had not formally studied for the ministry, he was licensed in 1850 to preach by the Winchester Presbytery.¹² One assumes his teachings combined ethics with the basics of writing and math, but very sadly, his records were burned in the 1960s, a strong argument for digitizing historical documents, a core mission of the Edwin Washington Project.

Robey taught in his home, which was supported by Leesburg's African American community, and initially had approximately twenty students, sixteen of whom were over the age of sixteen. The school grew rapidly and by December 1868 forty students were in attendance. Robey's commitment to teaching continued even after the school closed in 1869, and he began teaching the lower grades in the public schools. We do not know when he was hired but he taught in Leesburg until 1888.¹³ Unfortunately, we have no record of higher branch learning in his school, though he may have offered ethics, religion, or philosophy.

Historian Ronald Butchart has reported that teachers in the southern states were overwhelmed by the formerly enslaved, who desired to no longer be an inferior class.¹⁴ We can see their zeal reflected in the workload of Quaker instructor Caroline Thomas, who found herself teaching children and adults night and day. Thomas is an important figure in our research because she was Edwin Washington's instructor, and Washington was the first African American teenager we have documented negotiating the right to an education. An observer wrote, "The teacher [Caroline Thomas] is earnest and zealous in her work, both in the school room and among the colored people generally."¹⁵ The observer continued, "During the winter she has held school several evenings in the week for adults and assisted in organizing and supporting a literary

association which provided an opportunity for reading and counsel. She believes this form of labor among our people is one of the most important aids in elevation.”¹⁶

We have a general understanding of Quaker teachings as might have been introduced by Thomas. Classwork ranged from the basics of writing and arithmetic to Latin, physiology, and algebra, the latter three being higher branch coursework.¹⁷ In 1867, Thomas remarked,

I have one class in Short Division, one in Multiplication, one in Subtraction and three in Addition. With a very few exceptions, most of these children could not make a figure when they first came to school. I have one class in Definitions; have some very good readers and spellers and think my first class is now prepared to take some other studies – either Grammar or Philosophy, or both.¹⁸

A report on Thomas’s lessons stated,

A number of examples in Arithmetic have also been forwarded by Caroline Thomas, of Leesburg, Va., ... accompanied in some instances with proofs of their results which are really wonderful; some of them involving over forty, and some over fifty figures in their execution.¹⁹

Sewing instruction for the girls was taught in the afternoon every week. Thomas wrote that some of her students did “right well.” Especially impressive was her effort to teach writing as evidenced in a report about her instruction in 1867.²⁰

I send thee a specimen of the kind of composition I receive. This one is written by a boy who wait[s] on table[s] at the hotel. He gets five dollars per month and board, with the privilege of coming to school between times; of course, he does not come very regularly, and Court weeks he cannot come at all. I almost tremble for his future, exposed as he is to temptations. The composition is just as he handed it to me, and if there is any merit in it, he must have all the credit; it is his first attempt.²¹

The Struggle for Secondary Education

In 1875, formal secondary education was approved by the Virginia General Assembly,²² and by the mid-1880s some public schools in Loudoun County, primarily larger ones (those with two to four classrooms), began offering courses above the seventh grade. Called the “higher branches,” these courses were generally Latin, history, geography, higher arithmetic, mathematics, philosophy, grammar, and science (without lab work). Today we would call them high school courses. They were often individual lessons focused on particular books such as William Webster Wells’ *Essentials of Algebra for*

*Secondary Schools*²³ or Steele's *Hygienic Physiology: Fourteen Weeks in Human Physiology*.²⁴ Until the 1920s, for African Americans, the course work was always in one- or two-room schoolhouses and formed only a portion of the day's schooling – if permitted at all.



Figure 2: Hughesville Colored, 1940. Before the 1920s, African American students took elementary or secondary coursework in one- or two-room schools such as Hughesville. Photo courtesy of Loudoun County Public Schools.

In fact, limiting the allowable hours of higher branch courses offered to anyone was normal in Virginia country schools in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The district school board had the authority to offer both elementary and higher branch courses; but it was prohibited by the State Board of Education from offering courses that would “interfere” with the “regular and efficient instruction in the elementary branches.”²⁵ If a school had only one teacher, she or he could devote five hours or more (but not less) to elementary branches.²⁶

The first public high school in Loudoun was for whites, opening in 1910 in Lincoln, but individual white and Black students were also provided opportunities to take higher branch coursework in the county's one-room schools. For example, Latin and algebra were offered in Salem (white) in AY 1906/1907, and algebra was offered to African Americans at the Leesburg school in AY 1920/1921.²⁷

Underfunding the Black schools was a persistent problem, and it is certain to have exacerbated racial inequality. This was in part because the State of Virginia was still recovering from the Civil War. The legislature was servicing a massive debt, so they budgeted no funds at all for high schools. Cities and counties could charge tuition, but not more than \$2.50 a month per pupil. In Loudoun, the monthly tuition was \$1.50 to \$2. This was often more than a typical

Black worker earned in two days, so even if a Black high school had been built alongside Lincoln, few could have afforded the price of admission.²⁸

Also fostering inequality was segregation, the philosophical cornerstone of the Loudoun's public-school system until integration in 1968. Legislators' stated goal was to build a racially separate system that was also equal; however, whites had significantly broader exposure to funds and higher branch courses than did Blacks. Superintendent of Loudoun's schools Oscar Emerick²⁹ wrote in 1926 that "[E]ducation should make it possible for each individual to be an intelligent participant in an everchanging society. Education in the United States should enable...every individual to live creatively to the optimism of his capacity in a representative democracy."³⁰ While Emerick's stated goal was certainly commendable, segregation undermined the potential for success. For example, between AY 1886/1887 and AY 1904/1905, the average annual number of whites taking higher branch courses across the county was 220. For African Americans in the same period, the average was two! Even accounting for the larger white population, that's a significantly disproportionate difference in enrollment, perhaps the result of the rules on higher branch access. School officials would have required African American pupils, indeed all students who wanted to take such classes, to gain permission from the local all-white School Board. This restriction was certain to have put a damper on any Black family wanting a path to higher learning for their child or access to employment requiring secondary schooling. Had more African Americans acquired jobs, whites would have viewed them as competitors, hence the educational ceiling.

Because few school registers have survived, it is impossible to provide a firm number as to how many African Americans took advantage of the limited opportunity to engage in higher branch coursework. However, we do have a full set of annual reports covering AY 1887/1888 to 1925. In 1888, there were eighty-six schools for whites and thirty-one for African Americans. As for the student population, in 1913 (a sample year) 3,170 white pupils were enrolled in school, eighty percent of a possible population of 3,964. That same year 1,015 African Americans were enrolled, sixty percent of a possible population of 1,685. Actual attendance was a bit lower for both races. Fifty percent (1,962 white pupils) attended on average every day, whereas 631 African American pupils, or thirty-seven percent, attended on average every day. No African Americans attended high school that year because no such school existed for them; however, six did acquire higher branch exposure versus 523 white pupils.³¹

After 1910, Lincoln High School became known as Loudoun County's finest public secondary institution, attracting white students from around the region. By 1929, it also had the largest program with seven teachers.³² Contributing to the school's high quality were attendance fees, private contributions by the local Quaker community, and governmental aid. Lincoln teachers were paid more than those in other locations, and equipment and books were of high quality.³³ However, African Americans wanting similar formal secondary schooling had to raise tuition funds and pay for travel to private schools outside Loudoun, schools often associated with churches, such as the Manassas Industrial Institute in Prince William County, or a pair of public high schools in Washington, D.C., Dunbar³⁴ and Armstrong Technical. Interviews of parents uncovered in the Founder's Library of Howard University revealed these costs were often an insurmountable barrier,³⁵ a reminder that access to any right is only meaningful if affordable.

The first building to be informally called a high school for African Americans was on Union Street in Leesburg. Often called the Training Center, it had two floors. From the 1920s to 1930, the first floor was used for primary coursework and the second for a mix of primary and high school coursework, the later initially only for limited hours. In fact, the second floor was at times called Leesburg High School, though the Virginia Commission on Accredited Schools (VCAS) didn't officially recognize it as such until the curriculum was expanded to a two-year program in 1930.³⁶ The building was constructed around 1883 as a two-story frame with five classrooms for primary education. An addition on the western side in 1935 may have been made of wood from the old Sycoline Colored one-room school.³⁷ Research by Eugene Scheel indicates that high school instruction in the building may have been offered as early as 1910, the same year as Lincoln High School;³⁸ however, the earliest evidence we have uncovered is that a few hours of higher branch coursework were first offered at Leesburg in the early 1920s. Indeed, a memo dated 1936 describes "the colored high school at Leesburg" as only in "its beginnings."³⁹ Still, given record gaps, an earlier start date is certainly possible.

We do know that by AY 1923/1924, Training Center pupils were divided, with the younger students studying on the first floor, apparently with no access to higher branches. An older set of students was on the second floor under the supervision of John C. Walker, who provided two hours of higher branch lessons per day and four hours of primary lessons; in other words, a third of the day went to a form of high school education. In addition, he taught math classes during the summer.⁴⁰ Like Walker, the other instructors of the Training Center were determined to

improve their school's offerings, but their effort was made harder because funds gave only limited access to the necessary books, laboratory equipment, and other essentials given to white schools.⁴¹ There was also a significant difference in income between Blacks and whites; therefore Walker's salary was supplemented by parents to teach their children eighth grade subjects before the courses were added to the official curriculum. In addition, the local League of Patrons⁴² raised private funds for books, encyclopedias, etc.⁴³ That was no small financial feat, and must be seen as an important, even heroic component of the larger determination of African American families to stand by their children's education.

In the 1920s, while Leesburg was the center for higher branch offerings for Blacks, other "Colored" one-room schools also provided limited offerings. Edith Blackwell White at Hughesville daily offered a half hour of higher branch studies from AY 1920/21 to AY 1922/23.⁴⁴ In AY 1920/1923 and AY 1924/1926 Alice Scott offered at Purcellville a "small amount of time" for higher branch vocal music.⁴⁵ St. Louis offered 2.5 hours of higher branch coursework in AY 1921/22. Anna Bell Ferrell at Waterford offered a half hour of higher branch coursework in AY 1920/21.⁴⁶ Beatrice Scipio, one of Loudoun's best-known instructors from the era, offered six hours a day at Bluemont of higher branch coursework in AY 1923/1924, and six hours of common courses, a term for elementary school.⁴⁷

A Turning Point

1930 brought in a changing wind. In May, supporters of the Leesburg "colored" school signed a petition asking for a principal with a high school education who had also graduated from a normal school.⁴⁸ What is interesting about this is that Walker, who pioneered high school instruction in the building in the 1920s, had graduated from Virginia Normal in Petersburg. Having already accumulated thirty-three years of teaching experience by AY 1918/1819, he instructed grades 6-8 from that year to AY 1929/1930, grades 6-7 from AY 1930/1931 to 1936, and then grades 5 through 7 until AY 1940/1941. He was also principal from AY 1928/1929 to 1933/1934.⁴⁹ Archie Lucas was principal at least from 1934 to AY 1939/1940⁵⁰ when replaced by G. William Liverpool until AY 1940/1941.⁵¹

Also in 1930, Edyth Harris, age twenty-four, appears in the records.⁵² This very energetic instructor expanded the high school curriculum to two years with the goal of offering a three-year program by the fall of 1931. Unlike those who studied under Walker, her students were

recognized as full-time high school pupils, an historic upgrade, but there were hurdles.⁵³ The memo on a program idea that she sent to Emerick said, “In order to make High School a permanent unit in the educational system... there are some matters which should have immediate consideration.”⁵⁴ Expansion to three years required an assistant and an additional room. In addition, she noted that the increased demand required her to teach night classes.⁵⁵ In this, she was not the only leader in training centers throughout the state to complain. Richardson’s research showed resource disparity was a typical problem in African American country schools.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, we are missing the term reports for AY 1930 to AY 1933, which might have offered insights; but we do have term reports and other documents for AY 1934/1935 to 1941 when operations were moved to Douglass High School. The good news is that Harris succeeded in improving the high school curriculum, with the first group of five students graduating in 1935.⁵⁷



Figure 3: Edith Blackwell White at the Hughesville Colored School offered a half hour of higher branch courses daily in Academic Years 1920/1921 and 1922/1923. This picture exhibits the profound poverty of freed Blacks, many of whom were determined to educate themselves and their children. The photo, courtesy of the Loudoun County Public Schools, was taken in 1940.

Recognizing that Harris’ program was expanding, Emerick remarked in February 1938 that the Leesburg school had “recently started a four-year high school course and therefore more space, more land, and increased teaching staff are needed in order to provide suitable high school courses.”⁵⁸ The observation is very important because local oral tradition usually credits Douglass as the first accredited high school program for Blacks. The Training Center has that

honor, though Douglass certainly was the first high school building. The curriculum Emerick referred to in 1938 seems to have been offered in 1935 by covering grades 8-11.⁵⁹ This was evidence of a very active Harris, who also formed a choir, organized plays, and raised funds to provide textbooks to the indigent. She also covered “high school grades from AY 1930/1931 to AY 1939/1940, and even taught French, a novelty in African American classrooms. Whites had been learning French and Latin for years.”⁶⁰

The Continuing Struggle for Equality

In 1940, members of the Loudoun County School Board (LCSB) tried to justify the maldistribution of resources between white and Black schooling by arguing that African Americans didn’t pay their fair share of taxes, so they did not deserve the same amount of funding received by whites. Countering them, NAACP attorney Charles Houston asserted, “[T]his is an old moss-grown and fallacious argument,” and pointed out that without the patronage of working-class African Americans, white landowners and merchants “would be unable to pay the taxes levied upon them.”⁶¹

Under the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, African American students should have been treated equally, but they were not. Resistance was strong, even after the *Brown* decision (1954) on the part of the local county government and the General Assembly, as well as lobbyists for segregation like The Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, which had a chapter in Loudoun.⁶² Certainly, discrimination was acute and long-standing. In 1929, for example, the average salary for a white public schoolteacher in Loudoun was \$915 versus \$472 for an African American teacher.⁶³ Just three years before, feeling that their salaries of were “insufficient to meet the high cost of present living conditions,”⁶⁴ African American teachers requested an increase. Their plea went unfulfilled; but they pressed on, teaching children for fifty years in some cases. Citizens of today’s Loudoun County rightfully see those teachers as civil rights icons, like John C. Walker, who in AY 1940/1941 had served as a teacher in Loudoun for fifty-five years.⁶⁵

The existence of inequities is not surprising. Consider that by 1918, according to the Inglis study presented to the Virginia General Assembly, there were only three accredited high schools for African Americans across the state: Armstrong (Richmond), Booker T. Washington (Norfolk City) and Mt. Hermon (Norfolk County). Elsewhere was only “slight provision for the high

school education of colored children, but in most of them high school education was almost entirely lacking, or negligible,” Inglis wrote.⁶⁶ In AY 1925/1926, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior, only eighteen localities in Virginia offered a public high school for African Americans.⁶⁷ Another 1928 study “found indifference to Negro education surprisingly characteristic.”⁶⁸ Emerick reported in September 1929, “[High] Schools have been located at almost every point in the county where the residents asked for one and offered to pay a part of the cost of building.”⁶⁹ He failed to mention that for African Americans, there was only an unaccredited partial program in Leesburg, yet at the same time eight high schools for whites were scattered about the county.⁷⁰

To acquire a better education for their children, parents exercised their constitutional rights by petitioning the LCSB in writing.⁷¹ Many joined the County-Wide League to lobby for quality changes⁷² and they hired an NAACP lawyer to argue for an accredited, dedicated high school building, for busing, and for redress of safety issues.⁷³ The government pushed back with many budgetary and legal arguments and, perhaps fearing reprisals, some African Americans even tried to remove the attorney, but those efforts failed due to the desire of the majority of the Black citizenry.⁷⁴ Richardson said on May 4, 1940, that some supporters had been “a bit indiscreet.” Their effort failed because “it was not supported by the majority of Negro people in the county.” Therefore, Richardson recommended that Emerick and the School Board follow the advice of Lucas, Principal of the Training Center, and Gertrude Alexander, local Jeanes Supervisor for Colored schools,⁷⁵ guidance which he felt would resolve matters.⁷⁶ There was also competition due to much enthusiasm across the county for a new building, and this led some African American residents to unsuccessfully petition for the new high school to be built in Purcellville, once a Loudoun cultural center and site of annual Emancipation Day celebrations,⁷⁷ but Leesburg was the preferred site for most.⁷⁸

County documents frequently call the Union Street school “Leesburg Training School,” “Leesburg Industrial School,” or “Training Center,”⁷⁹ instead of “High School.” Agreement on calling such facilities “Training Centers” was a compromise reached by James Hardy Dillard with anti-Black politicians. Dillard devoted his professional career to supporting Black education⁸⁰ and was a liberal southern academic who supported segregation but also the education of African Americans.⁸¹ He was associated with the philanthropic efforts of the John F. Slater Fund, which by AY 1915/1916 had established centers in Alleghany, Caroline,

Nottoway, Roanoke, and York counties. Dillard's goal was "to afford an opportunity to the exceptional Negro boy and girl to further his or her education," a goal he expanded to include all rural children.⁸²

Because we are missing many records, we don't know precisely when the Leesburg Training Center took on that name, perhaps in 1930,⁸³ given the significant improvements Harris brought to bear. Before then, the building was mainly known as Colored School A, though some also called the second floor the Leesburg High School. During this period, such centers expanded to fifty-eight counties, but it's useful to know as well that a standard high school education for African Americans in Virginia didn't exist as late as 1926. The term "training center" has been called demeaning, but Dillard and other progressives of the time felt the compromise was needed to gain support from powerful white leaders who didn't want African Americans to be properly educated at all. Thus, it would be unfair to attack the motivations or zeal of the staff of these centers. Inequity was just another hurdle to overcome on the road to success.

Richardson wrote that a center or training school was unique in that it required teachers to be more prepared than in other kinds of schools. He elaborated by saying that the teachers in such schools needed "experience, common sense, human sympathy, understanding and wisdom."⁸⁴ A center or training school was unique in that despite offering low wages, it required teachers to work harder than in other kinds of schools. The community also expected a great deal from its teachers, Richardson noted, and despite problems, these schools still flourished. In the same document, he explained that the County Training School was attempting to provide "elementary work, four years of regular high school work, agriculture and home economics." He viewed the school as "the most practical secondary school for Virginia's Southern Rural Negroes."⁸⁵

High School Accreditation

By 1929, there were nine accredited high schools for whites in Loudoun.⁸⁶ As was previously stated, an accredited high school building for African Americans did not exist until the 1941 creation of Douglass.⁸⁷ It's therefore correct to call Douglass the first building dedicated to the purpose of providing a high school education for Blacks, but *Report of Progress for Virginia Accredited High Schools, 1940/1941*⁸⁸ indicates that the Training Center (called Loudoun County High School that year) was also accredited.⁸⁹ If so, this could only have happened due to heroic efforts by underpaid staff who worked in a significantly underequipped building.

While the records show a clear path beginning with the offering of limited access to higher branch courses, then a full high school curriculum at the Training Center, the African American community understood the need to do better by lobbying for a dedicated facility. We can see this in the efforts of the County-Wide League, which led to the pleadings of ordinary citizens and the eventual construction of Douglass High School. A good example is William McKinley Jackson of Middleburg. Jackson was a stone mason with a fourth-grade education who was determined to offer his daughter, Eva, a chance for college. He complained that the absence of an accredited high school in Loudoun prevented his daughter from gaining entrance to college, forcing him to send her to the more expensive Manassas Industrial School in the next county.⁹⁰ His letter, which is referenced in a complaint to Emerick by the NAACP and the County-Wide League, noted that Eva entered Manassas in 1939. The same petition also included expenses to demonstrate the financial hardship of sending a child to an accredited school.⁹¹ Another African American student wanted to study home economics, but the course was offered only in the white high schools.⁹²

The practice of accrediting high schools began in AY 1912/1913 with VCAS. A result of their efforts, which continued until AY 1927/1928, was that schools offering less than two years of coursework were not considered high schools by VCAS, even if called such by their patrons. Indeed, by the time Emerick became Loudoun's Superintendent of Public Schools in 1917, there were levels of high schools. Those offering only two years of classes were considered "third-grade." Those offering three years were "second grade." Only a four-year institution was eligible for consideration as a "first-grade high school." The Leesburg facility was never considered a high school of any kind by VCAS before Harris arrived, but as her program expanded, VCAS conceded that Leesburg was a true high school.⁹³ Richardson even wrote a letter in which he called the Training Center "the Colored High School in Leesburg." The same letter advanced support for what would be the future location of Douglass. Interestingly, and probably due to safety concerns with the Training Center, the plan was to place both elementary and high school students in the same newly constructed building; but if that proved impossible, Plan B was to leave the elementary school students in the Training Center building, pending construction of a second building. Plan B was eventually realized.⁹⁴

Loudoun's Quaker community was singularly supportive within the white community of Black education, and despite the broad political support for segregation, its inherent inequality

was understood by many others as well as Emerick. While he supported segregation in speeches during the massive resistance program of U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr., Emerick also from time to time indicated a need for fairness, but the pace of the changes he supported was slower than African Americans needed. As an example, in a memo of April 13, 1936, on construction needs, Emerick wrote that “the [C]olored high school at Leesburg is in its beginnings. It will undoubtedly grow considerably in the next few years.”⁹⁵ However, despite the recognized inevitable need for growth, Emerick’s memo makes it clear that the School Board did not intend to have multiple locations for African American high schools, unlike what was offered the white population. “We can expect to find a rather pressing need for future building enlargement,” Emerick predicted, “as it is the present idea that all high school facilities for colored children will be entered there.” Emerick wasn’t moving quickly, but perhaps reflecting the increased pressure on him by parents, the County-Wide League and the NAACP, he struck a different tone in 1944, saying to the LCSB that if they did not deal with the maldistribution of resources between white and Colored students, the courts would force action within four years!⁹⁶

There are numerous examples of complaints being forwarded to Emerick and the School Board. Because the county didn’t provide much money for heating the Training Center, Walker had to collect supplementary funds from parents and concerned citizens.⁹⁷ Equipment was not provided for biology or chemistry, so parents had to provide it from their kitchens. Parents complained about the lack of in-door toilets.⁹⁸ Fire escapes were not installed until 1938.⁹⁹ Further, as NAACP legend John Houston pointed out in March 1940, the oil-soaked floor and open oil drum under the stairs, along with an inaccessible fire escape, made the school a true death trap.¹⁰⁰



Figure 4: [Leesburg] Training Center, Loudoun County. By AY 1915/1916, learning centers were established in five Virginia counties. This building, photographed in 1940, was called the "Leesburg Industrial School" or "the Training Center." Photo courtesy of the Loudoun County Public Schools.

What About the Students?

One of the mandates of the Edwin Washington Project is to document students who, like Edwin Washington, exemplified the determination to learn. Two examples are interesting in this light. Annie Rivers gained high school training in 1892, perhaps because of her father's espionage exploits and Fannie Parkie, who became a teacher, pushed documentation of high school coursework at the Training Center back to the early 1920s.

Annie Rivers. From an examination of the 1892 register for Lovettsville Colored, we are left with the impression that Annie O. L. (or A. L.) Rivers was an early beneficiary of higher branch coursework, perhaps because she was the oldest at age nineteen or perhaps the local African American community rewarded her because Annie's father, Joseph Rivers, risked his life as a spy for the Union Army. Annie continued at Lovettsville Colored in the November 28 to December 23 session; but the table of statistics in the register doesn't show higher branches being offered to her again. The same is true for the 1893 and 1894 tables of statistics, which show Annie continuing her education but giving no indication of higher branches being offered.

By 1894, Annie was twenty years of age and appears to have dropped out at the end of the March 5 to 30 Session, a cessation likely the result of the rule that anyone twenty-one years of age or older could not attend the public schools without special permission. We know of some white students who gained such permission, but no examples of African Americans.

Other African Americans of about Annie's age attended Lovettsville Colored in AY 1898/1899: John Ben Franklin Curtis (age eighteen) and Jas Lewis Lee (age eighteen), as well as William Streams in 1899. But we don't know if they were instructed in the higher branches because the registers for those years did not include that field of data.

Fannie F. Parkie. According to a report by Oscar Emerick dated August 23, 1929, "Leesburg Colored School has three teachers and offers a part of the first-year high school course."¹⁰¹ Yet we know from Fannie Parkie's records that high school coursework began under Walker as early as 1923, perhaps earlier. Fannie Parkie (also spelled Parkey) of Leesburg taught at the Sycoline Colored School from AY 1924 to 1926.¹⁰² In the AY 1925/1926 term report for Sycoline, the section for biographical information indicates that Parkie attended "Leesburg High School," which had to have been the Training Center.¹⁰³ Parkie was then twenty-three years old and had taught for three years, probably starting in AY 1922/1923. This was half a decade before Harris created a formal high school program. We have access to some of her records at Leesburg Colored Graded School A (the Training Center) where she was a student in primary school and studied under Walker. She took specific high school classes ending in 1923 and we assume she went straight from taking these classes to teaching.

In AY 1921/1922, two hours a day were devoted to higher branch studies at the Training Center. Parkie attended as an eighteen-year-old. She also lived a half mile from the school and attended 133 of the 138-day term. In addition to normal classes, she took physical geography and algebra, the latter with six other students in a class of thirty-six. Algebra was a high school course. In AY 1922/1923, two hours a day were devoted to higher branch coursework at the Training Center. Parkie, now nineteen, again attended, though only for seventy-seven of the 134-day program. She took algebra again, as well as physical geography and general science. We suspect that the general science book would have been Steele's, which was a popular high school choice.¹⁰⁴ The textbook for physical geography was by Maury, perhaps Matthew Fontaine Maury.¹⁰⁵

Based on school and teaching records, Parkie lived in Leesburg at least from AY 1921 to 1926 and taught using a local teacher’s permit.¹⁰⁶ The Training Center also apparently participated in the school fair in 1921, a first for African Americans,¹⁰⁷ so this would have been a great opportunity for the fresh educator to compare notes with teachers in other schools across the county and perhaps even white high school students.

Some Students Chose Not to Start or Complete a High School Program

We know from interviews archived at the Founders Library at Howard University that while there was real zeal by many parents to send their children to high school, others were satisfied working in the service industry.¹⁰⁸ To understand why, it is useful first to contrast African American and white pupil enrollment populations across the state. A study by Richardson (Table 1) shows a sharp disparity between Black and White high school enrollment.

Table 1. African American vs. White Pupils’ Enrollment

	Session 1906-1907		Session 1926-1927		Session 1944-1945	
	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White
Percentage	1.1	8.8	7.1	40.0	34.1	52.5

Source: Archie Richardson, *The Development of Negro Education in Virginia, 1831-1970* (Richmond: Phi Delta Kappa, 1976), 22.

A revealing survey was done of Negro education in AY 1938/1939 in which Richardson theorized that the average child in the one-room school had parents holding less than a sixth-grade education. Loudoun was heavily agricultural, so many students felt a seventh-grade education provided enough livelihood. Although 329 African Americans were eligible for high school coursework, only sixty continued their studies. In other words, 269 graduated from the seventh grade, but they chose to go no further. Keep in mind that most Black children lived in a home bereft of literature and did not usually have experiences that fostered careers beyond a rural environment. They found employment chiefly as domestic servants and were made to believe that they would have “few chances in life.”¹⁰⁹

As was previously noted, another reason some students didn’t attend high school was a lack of access to public transportation. Even if students wanted to attend high school,

some parents felt that they lived too far from the school their children wanted to attend. Since the district did not provide transportation, alternatives were required, such as a private bus or station wagon, but that was unaffordable to many. Other Black students relied on friends with private vehicles, often using donated gasoline. Nonetheless, they repeatedly tried to obtain bus transport, as was seen in a 1930s (not dated precisely) petition from over 130 parents of students at Willisville, St. Louis, Middleburg, Bull Run and Gleedsville one-room schools wanting buses to take the children to the “Loudoun County Training School.”¹¹⁰

A study of the attendance and transportation of African American Training Center students (Table 2) reveals that between AY 1935/1936 and AY 1938/1939, the Center had an enrollment of 412 primary and 223 high school students. Whereas 52 (12 percent) were bused, 173 (27 percent) were forced to walk. Interviews by the NAACP revealed that when buses were not provided, fewer students attended, either due to the inconvenience or the cost of supplementing the bus.

Table 2. Attendance and Transportation Study at the Training Center, AY 1935/1936 to AY 1938/1939¹¹¹

	Primary Pupils	High School Pupils	Bused	Had to Walk
1935/36	100	40	0	40
1936/37	95	60	15	45
1937/38	108	66	15	51
1938/39	109	57	22	37
Totals:	412	223	52	173

Source: EWP Archives: 9.3 AY 1940, Construction and Pop Study.

The confluence of poverty and a lack of public transportation was the theme of a letter to attorney Charles Houston. Henry Young, representing the parents of Willisville, wrote, “[W]e certainly need a bus for our children and above all a High School, for we have too many boys and girls ready for High School to be turned out in the world to go to destruction when they can be in school.”¹¹² Similarly, Elizabeth Warner of Bluemont wrote in March 1940, saying that a lack of a bus prevented her child from going to the

Training Center. “I am poor and have no way of getting [my children] to Leesburg.”¹¹³ According to Mrs. M. K. Jennings, who lived in Hughesville, a feeder village to Willisville, “there are children who have finished from the Willisville School for three years or more and no provision has been made for them to get to high school.”¹¹⁴ But the problem for Jennings was just about inconvenience and costs. The same memo pointed out that passing white bus drivers ran African American children off the road and threw stones at them!

The transportation implications of closing Bluemont Colored in 1934 was recognized as an injustice even by some white neighbors by asking the School Board to provide bus transportation for the children to Rock Hill Colored.¹¹⁵ To put pressure on the government, beginning in 1940, the County-Wide League began asking their members to send reimbursement bills to the School Board. These bills were for the expenses the children had acquired in other counties and for transportation costs African Americans would not have had to incur were they provided buses. Such complaints, which were based on an understanding of the right to equal protection under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution and U.S. Code¹¹⁶ placed political pressure on the school system to resolve these inequities¹¹⁷ and are another vivid example of Black determination for equality.

Unlike the white population, which had numerous formal high school choices, there was just one for African Americans in 1941 Loudoun. It is therefore an irony to read an article in 1939 by Lloyd Womeldorph, principal of Lovettsville High School, who complained that too many pupils were not completing secondary schooling. He additionally remarked that “due to the easy accessibility of high schools to all sections, no child in Loudoun should be denied the privilege and opportunity of securing a high school education. He reiterated, “This is [the child’s] birthright and a great injustice is being done when he is deprived of that right.” Of course, Womeldorph was referring to white students.¹¹⁸ African Americans had only the Training Center in 1939, and as seen in Emerick’s 1936 memo,¹¹⁹ there were no plans for a second or third school for African Americans. The broad access for African Americans didn’t occur until the end of segregation in 1968. When Bushrod Murray was teaching at Mountain, a one-room school, he reported that of the twenty pupils who had graduated from the seventh grade since 1930, only six went on to high school, due to poverty and lack of transportation.¹²⁰ One has to

wonder what would have become of those transportation-deprived African Americans had they been able to attend high school.

If we assume that students nineteen or twenty years of age could have benefited from high school learning, then the 1905 School Census for Jefferson District ¹²¹ may be instructive, as well as the Annual Reports and Special Census Reports 1887 to 1940/1941.¹²² The annual numbers of white students accessing higher branch learning across the county generally exceeded 200, sometimes nearly 400. Access by African Americans was far lower, usually in the single digits, though we know students were gaining access at Leesburg. The average attendance of African Americans at the Leesburg facility alone between AY1934/35 and A/Y1940/41, when it closed, was 46. Of course, age would not have been the sole determining factor for not attending or completing high school. Scholastic ability, personal drive, and logistical support from the family also mattered. When reviewing these numbers, our team realized that they varied sometimes by month. In one period, ten pupils might take higher branches whereas in the next perhaps only three.¹²³ We looked at the highest number of offered classes in a given academic year when comparing white and African American experiences.

Conclusions

Whites had far more exposure to higher branch coursework than African Americans, including access to a fully equipped public high school by 1910, but by the early 1920s, the limited access of Blacks evolved from lectures in the one-room schools to more formal schooling at the Leesburg Training Center in Leesburg, as well as a continuation of educational access in the smaller schools. The limited program was upgraded in 1930 to a one-year high school program that evolved by AY 1940/1941 into an accredited high school in the same building, then transitioned in AY 1941/1942 to a dedicated high school building called Douglass. This evolution could only have come about because of the determination of parents, teachers, and allies like the NAACP.

Limited exposure before 1941 was retarded by prejudice, even though in other areas of education, leaders like Superintendent Emerick were progressive, looking for modern methods of teaching, administration, and fund raising. Unfortunately, prejudice against Blacks was endemic in Virginia politics and meant that salaries for African American instructors were significantly

lower than for their white counterparts. Funds provided for construction, repair, and maintenance of white schools were far larger than for African American facilities. Equipment for African American schools like the Training Center was often inadequate, forcing parents to donate kitchen supplies and their own meager funds. To gain repairs to the one-room schools where limited higher branch learning might take place, the African American community felt they had to offer their own labor and funds, instead of relying entirely on the state. As Richardson noted, this was a problem across the entire state.¹²⁴

No public transportation was provided any African American student before 1941, forcing parents to pay for transport from their own pockets, which was not always possible. Not only did this hinder attendance to one-room schools, especially in bad weather, it reduced attendance at the Training Center and thus also reduced the number of students who could move on to college.

While white students had access to high schools around the county, there was never more than one dedicated high school program for Blacks, first in the upper floor of the Training Center, then in 1941, Douglass. This decision by the white officials was strategic.

There were significant improvements in the education of African Americans of Loudoun County. Between the end of the Civil War and the 1920s, first in freedmen's schools, then in the public one-room schools, a handful of African American pupils managed to benefit from higher branch classwork. Students in these courses had lectures related to high school level textbooks or topics rather than involvement in a full day's curriculum. White pupils had far broader access to subject matter than Blacks.

Despite financial and logistical hardships, the African American community built from scratch a high school program on the second floor of the Leesburg Training Center in the early 1920s. This program laid the foundation for a full program on the second floor by 1940 to include the sciences and French.

The African American community effectively used the power of petitions, lobbyists like the County-Wide League, policy advice from senior African American educators in Richmond, and legal advice from the NAACP to achieve improvements in the primary grade schools and to effectively convince the white government to permit construction of Douglass High School, though only after land was donated to the county by the Black community.

During this research, our team has been impressed by the persistent protest of the African American people against segregation's injustice, which we saw in their fervent demands for

education, and the ways they resisted oppression—through discussion, petitions, and the threat of lawsuits. Perhaps the most vivid records are in the form of hand-written petitions by parents who carried them farm to farm for signatures in order to convince the government to take some specific action, such as to hire a better teacher, to keep a school from falling over in the wind, or to gain toilets. In one case, we came across a formerly enslaved citizen who signed a petition in support of the Training Center.¹²⁵ George Henry Russ was born in 1850 on the Oatlands Plantation in Loudoun,¹²⁶ then in 1889 was a delegate to the African American delegation in the Eighth U.S. Congressional District, arguing against racial prejudice. Hundreds of signatures to petitions are now being examined by our project to unearth the biographies of everyone who signed, people many local citizens have called “heroes of education.” Even some white residents signed petitions in support of African American causes, which was an important revelation.

African American teachers regularly advocated for their students in segregated teacher institutes, which were committees of instructors pushing for better medical care, course work, training for teachers, etc. Transportation was always a problem and in 1932 when the road to the Saint Louis school was found to be impassable, the instructor, Laura Cook, built an alliance of local families who complained directly to the Superintendent. Sadly, in order to gain any support, they felt the need to say, “We are willing to contribute labor towards the work.”¹²⁷

As a final point when considering the inequities embedded in Loudoun’s social order, one would be expected to cite the wisdom of the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, 1954. This decision stabbed a knife into the heart of the theory of segregation: that Blacks and whites should learn separately due to the inferiority of the later race. However, reflecting on this paper’s larger meaning, I am drawn to John Marshall Harlan, Supreme Court Justice from 1877 to 1911. He was the lone dissenter to the odious *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which *Brown* overturned. Like the African American community, which was a distinct minority, he too was a minority, of one against seven, who wrote, “Our Constitution is color-blind and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens.”¹²⁸ That is the wisdom that was also advocated by the Loudoun Chapter of the NAACP, the County-Wide League, and African American parents, children, educators and their friends – a wisdom which resonates today when we see about us prejudice against Muslims, the LGBTQ community, Native Americans, immigrants, and other minorities. It’s a Loudoun County legacy to be honored and not forgotten.



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Notes

¹ In this paper, a synonym for higher branch learning is high school level education.

² The County-Wide League was an association of most of the Black PTAs in Loudoun County.

³ Edwin Washington was the first African American youth whom we can document as having asked for and obtained schooling in Loudoun, though many other anonymous pupils and parents predated him. The Edwin Washington Archives (EWA) is the name given by the Edwin Washington Project (EWP) to boxes of records covering education in Loudoun County between the 1830s and 1968, when integration arrived. The records were lost for decades and then found by the staff of the Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) in the Training Center, then a largely abandoned, non-electrified, unheated “Colored” schoolhouse in Leesburg, Virginia. The archives cover both white and Black schools, as well as topics that transcend race.

⁴ Oatlands was one of the many great plantations of Virginia with an economy that totally depended on slavery. Now part of the National Trust, the managers have reached out to the families of the formerly enslaved to develop their history.

⁵ The Jeanes supervisors were African American teachers paid partly by the Jeanes Foundation to manage southern rural schools and communities serving the African American Community between 1908 and 1968. The foundation was also known as the Negro Rural School Fund. See the papers of this fund in the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University.

⁶ Charles Hamilton Houston was a giant of American jurisprudence, who took on a different attitude than some leaders who argued for a Black nation. Instead, he believed in resolving racial disharmony by relying on the Constitution, which may explain some of his zeal for the community in Loudoun. It is also clear from the preponderance of evidence that Houston and his colleagues had the same point of view. See Charles H. Houston Papers, Collection 163-1 to 163-52, Manuscript Division, the Founders Library, Howard University.

⁷ Archie G. Richardson, *The Development of Negro Education in Virginia, 1831-1970* (Richmond: Phi Delta Kappa, 1976).

⁸ EWP Archives: 2.5A, Colored Petitions.

⁹ An exception to the pre-emancipation ban on educating the enslaved would be the children of the enslaved and freed who shared class space with white children without prejudice at Oakdale School in Lincoln. Operated from 1815 by the Quakers, this is the oldest brick schoolhouse in Loudoun County. Werner L. Janney and Asa Moore Janney, *John Hay Janney's Virginia*, 1978, EPM Publications, McLean, Virginia.

¹⁰ Caroline Thomas, *Teacher's Monthly School Report for Tate Colored School*, April 1870, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, Washington, D.C.

¹¹ Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1869, Roll 45, 489-490, U.S. Archives.

¹² Betty L. Morefield, "William Obediah Robey," in *Essence of a People* (Leesburg, VA: Black History Committee of the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Aug. 1, 2018). See also "Letter from Loudoun County," *Alexandria Gazette*, June 16, 1866, 2.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ronald Butchart, *Freedmen's Education in Virginia, 1861-1870*, retrieved Oct. 8, 2018, from *Encyclopedia Virginia*, <https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org>.

¹⁵ Henry M. Laing and Edith W. Atlee, "Friends Amongst the Freedmen," *Friends' Intelligencer* 24, no. 12 (1868): 186.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ William. T. Alderson, "The Freedmen's Bureau and Negro Education in Virginia," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 29 (1952): 75.

¹⁸ Caroline Thomas, "Friends Among the Freedmen" 7 (April 24, 1867), *Friend's Intelligencer* 24 (1868): 137.

¹⁹ Caroline Thomas, "Friends Among the Freedmen" 6 (March 3, 1867), *Friend's Intelligencer* 24 (1868): 75.

²⁰ Caroline Thomas, "Friends Among the Freedmen" 9 (June 27, 1867), *Friend's Intelligencer* 24 (1868), 332.

²¹ Ibid., 333.

²² Act Approved March 31, 1875, Chapter 354, 439, *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, Passed at the Session of 1874-5* (Richmond, VA: Superintendent of Public Print, 1875).

²³ William Webster Wells, *The Essentials of Algebra for Secondary Schools* (Boston: Leach, Shewell, and Sanborn, 1897).

²⁴ Joel Dorman Steele, *Hygienic Physiology: Fourteen Weeks in Human Physiology* (NY: American Book Company, 1889).

²⁵ Randolph Publishers and Booksellers, *The Virginia Public School Register* (Richmond: J.W. Randolph, 1895), 7.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ AY is the abbreviation for "academic year" which usually lasts for fewer than twelve months.

²⁸ Eugene Scheel, "High Schools Once Flourished Across Area," *The Washington Post*, October 21, 2003.

²⁹ He was superintendent from 1917 to 1957.

³⁰ EWP Archives: 5.1 AY 1926, Oscar Emerick on the Purpose of Education. Subsequent citations from the EWP Archives will indicate the number of the object, the year of its origin, the name of the originator, and the topic addressed. Topics and Reports are capitalized to reflect the organization of the EWP.

³¹ EWP Archives: 3.3 Annual Reports.

³² Oscar Emerick, "Loudoun County Public Schools Among Leading Schools of State," *Loudoun County Magazine* (Sept. 5, 1929), 1.

³³ These figures are from numerous Term Reports.

³⁴ Some early Loudoun teachers attended Dunbar High School. For example, Geneva Brown graduated from Dunbar and instructed at Guinea Colored in Lovettsville during AY 1920/1921. See EWP Archives: 6.3.3. AY 1920/1921, Term Report for Guinea Colored.

³⁵ Charles H. Houston Papers and EWP Archives: 1.1.1 AY 1940 Mar. 16, Houston to Emerick on Inequities, 1-3.

³⁶ Douglass High School Anniversary, 1941-1991; Douglass Alumni Association, Leesburg, VA, 1991. We assume the content of the recollections is based on the events recalled at the 1991 meeting of the Douglass Alumni Association (hereafter DAA recollections) and at the Fiftieth Reunion.

³⁷ EWP Archives: 9.3. AY 1940. "Colored School Chart," in Construction and Pop Study, NP. See also deed books in the Circuit Court Archives of Loudoun County, Book 6T, Folio 498 and Eugene Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered 2* (Leesburg: Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, 2002, 1984/1985); DAA.

³⁸ Eugene Scheel, "High Schools Once Flourished Across Area." Scheel, who is a well-regarded historian and map maker in Waterford Village, used as a source in the 1970s a former student from the Training Center named Emma Jackson.

³⁹ Oscar Emerick, Memo, Building Problems, EWP Archives: 9.3.2 AY 1936 Apr 13, White and Colored School Bldg.

⁴⁰ DAA recollections, 1991.

⁴¹ EWP Archives: 6.3.3 AY 1921/1922 and 1922/1923, Term Reports for Leesburg Colored Graded School A.

⁴² Each schoolhouse tended to have a supportive League of Patrons who provided funds. This was separate from the Parent Teacher Association system.

⁴³ DAA recollections, 1991.

⁴⁴ EWP Archives: 6.3.3, AYs 1920/1923, Term Reports for Hughesville Colored. Edith Blackwell White was a high school graduate who also went to the normal school in Washington, D.C. and instructed grades 1-7 at Hughesville from 1914 to 1923. By 1940, she had acquired two years of college. See 4.5 Colored Teacher Cards.

⁴⁵ EWP Archives: 6.3.3 AYs 1920/1923 and AY 1924/26, Term Reports for Purcellville Colored. Alice M.W. Scott instructed higher branch music. Born about 1870, Scott died in 1930. She started teaching about 1911. She studied at Howard and also at a normal school. See 4.5 Colored Teacher Cards.

⁴⁶ EWP Archives: 6.3.3 AY 1920/1921. Term Report for Waterford Colored. Anna Bell Ferrell instructed higher branch coursework for 1.5 hours a day.

⁴⁷ EWP Archives: 6.3.3 AY 1923/1924, Term Report for Bluemont Colored and 4.5 AY 1923/1924 Colored Teachers list. Beatrice Scipio, one of the best-known instructors from the era, provided six hours a day for higher branch learning as well as six hours a day for common school branches (elementary). It is unlikely that Scipio offered twelve hours of instruction by herself; but the notes she made in her report are specific, and Scipio had an excellent reputation. In fact, current residents remember her as one of the best instructors. Therefore, we believe the numbers were not in error. Instead, she likely offered two levels of instruction in parallel, either by having on a rotating basis one set of students read while others heard instruction or perhaps with the aid of another. However, the official list of African American instructors for that academic year do

not show another at the Bluemont school. See the attached files Scipioimg.001.jog and 4.5 AY 1923/1924 Colored Teachers.pdf.

⁴⁸ EWP Archives: 2.5.A AY 1930, May. Leesburg wants High School and Normal School Graduate. These were not college degree programs, though normal school coursework was often offered at universities. In Virginia, normal schools or institutes began around 1880 under various formats as facilities for instructing prospective or even active teachers during the summer on how to practice their profession. Thus, the courses addressed a frequent complaint by parents and superintendents. We have seen a number of those complaints in Loudoun records. The first major program for African Americans was at the University of Virginia at Lynchburg in 1880; 240 African Americans attended. Buck, *Development of Public Schools*, 85. Loudoun's African-American teachers frequently studied at Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) and Virginia Normal (now Virginia State University), as well as other schools in Washington, D.C. and West Virginia. The original intent of the Training Center program also included teaching techniques, but that goal quickly fell away. The focus shifted instead to traditional courses, including some high school work.

⁴⁹ John C. Walker in EWP Archives: 4.5.A Colored Teacher Cards.

⁵⁰ DAA recollections, 1991. According to alumni, Lucas introduced tennis and track into the curriculum. See also EWP Archives 6.3.2 AY 1939/1940, LC Training Center Colored and EWP Archives 6.3.2 AY 1940/1941, LC Training Center Colored. George Liverpool in EWP Archives: 4.4 AYs 1914 to 1949 Superintendent's Record of Teacher's certificates (1941/1942). John C. Walker in EWP Archives 4.4 AY 1914 to 1945 Superintendent's Record of Teacher's certificates (1940/1941).

⁵¹ George Liverpool in EWP Archives: 4.4 AY 1914 to 1945 Superintendent's Record of Teacher Certificates (AYs 1941/42).

⁵² Harris' first name was Edythe, also spelled Edith.

⁵³ Edith Harris in 4.5 Colored Teacher Cards.

⁵⁴ EWP Archives: 2.5.A AY Feb 7, 1931, Edythe Harris Wants Help for HS Program at Training Center.

⁵⁵ DAA recollections, 1991.

⁵⁶ Richardson, *Negro Education in Virginia*, 34.

⁵⁷ The earliest graduates were Lillian Juanita Coe of Leesburg, Everett Carl Cook of Middleburg, Nancy Mary Cook of Middleburg, Edythe Belle Lee of Purcellville, and James Clifton Winston of Leesburg. DAA recollections, 1991.

⁵⁸ EWP Archives: 9.2.3 1938, Feb. Oscar Emerick. "Additional Physical Needs of Our Schools."

⁵⁹ EWP Archives: 6.3.3 AYs 1934-1941, 5-8.

⁶⁰ Edith Harris in EWP Archives: 4.5.A Colored Teacher Cards.

⁶¹ Staff Writer, "A Time Worn Fallacy," *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 1940, 6.

⁶² EWP Archives: 15.6 Defenders of State Sovereignty. See also Collection SC 0025, The Balch Library, Leesburg, Virginia.

⁶³ Oscar Emerick, "Loudoun County Public Schools Among Leading Schools of State," *Loudoun County Magazine*, Sept. 5, 1929, 1.

⁶⁴ EWP Archives: 2.5.A AY 1926 March 6. Colored PTA Wants Increased Salary.

⁶⁵ EWP Archives: 4.4 AY 1914 to 1945. Superintendent's Record of Teachers Certificates.

⁶⁶ Alexander J. Inglis, *Virginia Public Schools Education Commission's Report to the Assembly of Virginia* (Richmond: Waddey, 1919), 200.

- ⁶⁷ David T. Blose, “Statistics of Education of the Negro Race 1925-1926,” *Bulletin* 19 (1928): 42.
- ⁶⁸ Michael Vincent O’Shea, *Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State* (Richmond: Superintendent of Publishing, 1928): 290.
- ⁶⁹ Emerick, “Loudoun County Public Schools,” 1.
- ⁷⁰ These schools included Aldie, Ashburn, Leesburg, Lincoln, Lovettsville, Lucketts, Round Hill, Unison-Bloomfield and Waterford. Hillsboro offered two years and Middleburg one year.
- ⁷¹ EWP Archives: 2.5A Colored Petitions.
- ⁷² EWP Archives: 15.5 County-Wide League.
- ⁷³ EWP Archives: 15.18 NAACP.
- ⁷⁴ EWP Archives: 15.18 AY 1940 March 21. Houston to Emerick on Local Dissent.
- ⁷⁵ Gertrude Alexander supervised the Black schools and was partly paid by the Jeanes Fund.
- ⁷⁶ EWP Archives: 1.1.1 AY 1940, May 4. Richardson to Emerick.
- ⁷⁷ EWP Archives: 1.1.3, AY 1940, April 8. Purcellville Option.
- ⁷⁸ Purcellville was a reasonable choice in that it had access to highways and railroads and had been the location of the annual Emancipation Day celebrations since 1910, but most Black residents preferred Leesburg.
- ⁷⁹ Scheel, “High Schools Once Flourished Across Area.”
- ⁸⁰ Joe M. Richardson and Maxine. D. Jones, *Education for Liberation* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 2009), 250.
- ⁸¹ Clayton McClure Brooks, *The Uplift Generation: Cooperation Across the Color Line in Early Twentieth Century Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017), 31-33.
- ⁸² Richardson, *The Development of Negro Education in Virginia*, 28, 33.
- ⁸³ DAA recollections, 1991.
- ⁸⁴ Richardson, *Negro Education in Virginia*, 34.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.
- ⁸⁶ Emerick, “Loudoun County Public Schools, 1.
- ⁸⁷ EWP Archives: 2.5.a AYs 1930s. African Americans Request Accredited High School Building. Many petitions are undated, so the process of dating involves an examination of the people who signed to determine when they died as a gauge for approximation.
- ⁸⁸ EWP Archives: 6.3.3 AY 1940. *Report on Progress for Virginia Accredited High Schools*, notes by G. William Liverpool, principal of Loudoun County Training Center, 30-31.
- ⁸⁹ A note was also made in the same report of the effort to purchase a large plat of ground (for Douglass) described as “a new and adequate school plant.”
- ⁹⁰ EWP Archives: 1.1.1 AY 1940 March 18 McKJackson to Emerick.
- ⁹¹ EWP Archives: 1.1.1 AY 1940 March 16 Houston to Emerick.
- ⁹² The Edwin Washington Project is engaged in a detailed study of how the home economics curriculum was used to alleviate hunger, poverty, and problems of sanitation during the Great Depression. See also EWP Archives: 1.1.1 AY 1940 Mar 16 Houston to Emerick.
- ⁹³ EWP Archives: 1.1.3 AY 1939 Dec 15 Richardson Recommendations.
- ⁹⁴ *Ibid.* Richardson made a number of recommendations as to the positioning of the new structure and suggested that Emerick consult with Raymond Long, Supervisor of School Buildings, State Department of Education, Richmond. Long frequently consulted with Emerick on building designs. Richardson also recommended that both elementary and high school students use the new building if possible, thus enabling an evacuation of all children from the Training Center, which he felt should be abandoned as soon as possible. Other memos already cited show the

building was a fire trap. Elementary students continued to use the old building until 1958, when they were moved to Douglass Elementary. Unfortunately, School Board records from that period are missing from the archives; but we do have 3" x 5" cards that showed a continuation of children in the Training Center past 1941. EWP Archives: 6.6 Leesburg, then Douglass Elementary Grades 1-7.

⁹⁵ EWP Archives: 9.3.2, AY 1936 April. White and Colored School Building Needs.

⁹⁶ EWP Archives: 1.1.1 AY 1944 Nov. Emerick to School Board on Resource Equality, 3.

⁹⁷ In 1938/1939, John Walker complained that he didn't have access to a large dictionary or encyclopedia; though he had a case of maps, they were old. See EWP Archives: 6.3.2. Virginia Teacher's Term Report for AY 1938/1939 for "Leesburg Negro." See the relevant page from attached report referenced as an example. Term Reports had various names. This set was titled Virginia Teacher's Term Report. The attachment is titled Walker1938001.jpg.

⁹⁸ Frank Raflo, "Within the Iron Gates," *Loudoun Times-Mirror*, 1988, 347.

⁹⁹ EWP Archives: 9.2.3 AY 1938 Feb. Oscar Emerick, "Additional Physical Needs of Our Schools."

¹⁰⁰ EWP Archives: 1.1.1 AY 1940 Mar 16 Houston memo to Emerick. Covers fire trap and other issues. The danger of fire and thus the safety of the children was cited by Houston in his note as a rationale for moving more quickly than Emerick proposed related to constructing the new high school.

¹⁰¹ Emerick, "Loudoun County Public Schools," 1.

¹⁰² EWP Archives: 6.3.3 Term Reports for AY 1924/1925 and AY 1925/1926 for Sycoline Colored School.

¹⁰³ EWP Archives: 6.3.3 Term Report for 1925/1926 for Sycoline Colored School.

¹⁰⁴ Steele, *Hygienic Physiology*.

¹⁰⁵ Mathew Fontaine Maury, *The Physical Geography of the Sea* (NY: Harper, 1855).

¹⁰⁶ EWP Archives: 4.4 AYs 1914 to 1945, Superintendent's Record of Teachers Certificates.

¹⁰⁷ EWP Archives: 15.21 School Fairs.

¹⁰⁸ Charles H. Houston Papers.

¹⁰⁹ Richardson, *Negro Education in Virginia*, 37.

¹¹⁰ EWP Archives: 2.5. Yr. 1930s. Various Schools Want Transport to L.C. Training Center.

¹¹¹ EWP Archives: 9.3 AY 1940 Construction and Pop Study, 20.

¹¹² Henry Young, letter to Charles Houston, March 12, 1940, retrieved from Charles Houston Papers, Folder no. 5.

¹¹³ Elizabeth Warner, letter to Charles H. Houston, March 1940, retrieved from Charles H. Houston Papers, (Folder no.7).

¹¹⁴ Mrs. M. K. Jennings, 1940, letter to Charles H. Houston on Behalf of Howardsville and Bluemont Parents, retrieved from Charles H. Houston Papers (Folder no. 7).

¹¹⁵ EWP Archives: 2.5. AY 1934, October, petition from Bluemont Parents Requesting Transportation to Rock Hill Colored School.

¹¹⁶ The U.S. Code cited by Houston implements the Fourteenth Amendment: "All persons within the jurisdiction of the United States shall have the same right in every State and Territory to make and enforce contracts, to sue, be parties, give evidence, and to the full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of persons and property as is enjoyed by white citizens, and shall be subject to like punishment, pains, penalties, taxes, licenses, and exactions of every kind and to no other." Contemporary citation is 42 U.S. Code § 1981. Equal Rights Under the Law. "Persons" was the term used in the Civil Rights Act of 1866, and the language has

continued. The lawyers on my teams also referred to “persons” unless the language was intentionally only about citizens or non-citizens. See also *Hodges v. United States*, 203 U.S. 1 (1906).

¹¹⁷ EWP Archives: 1.1.1 AY 1940 Mar. 16 Houston to Emerick. See also EWP Archives: 1.1.1 AY 1940, Mar. 21. Houston to Emerick. Covers complaint by Daisy Allen and Amanda Coe, as well as access to Board of Education minutes and other matters.

¹¹⁸ Lloyd Asbey Womeldorph, “Encourage Pupils To Complete Work Is Parents’ Duty,” *Loudoun Times Mirror*, Sept. 1, Section 2, 1939,1.

¹¹⁹ EWP archives: 9.3.2 AY 1936 Apr.. White and Colored School Building Needs.

¹²⁰ Among these six students, one studied at Hampton, presumably to become a teacher; one at Washington D.C.; two at Leesburg (the Training Center); and one at Manassas, which would have been the Manassas Industrial School run by Black evangelist Jennie Dean. See also Gertrude Alexander, Survey, Washington, D.C.: Law Offices of Charles Houston, 1939, in Charles H. Houston Papers (Folder no. 4).

¹²¹ EWP Archives: 2.4.2 AYs 1882 to 1921 District Accounts and Census and EWP Archives: 2.6 AY 1925 School Census from Defense of High School in EWP Archives: 2.6 Leg Files. The survey measured numbers of children by race, sex, age, ability to read, deaf and blindness, attending private schools. Each child was listed by name and parent or guardian. At the end of the census is a list of “colored” parents, which included addresses.

¹²² EWP Archives: 3.3 AY Reports.

¹²³ The records don’t always indicate the actual number of classes, only that X number of pupils took higher branch courses.

¹²⁴ Richardson, *Negro Education in Virginia*, 10.

¹²⁵ EWP Archives: 2.5.A AY 1930s Community League of Leesburg Wants a Change in Teachers.

¹²⁶ Now called Oatlands House and Gardens

¹²⁷ EWP Archives: 2.5.A AY 1932 Jan. 21, Saint Louis Road Needs Improvement.

¹²⁸ Charles Thompson, “*Plessy v. Ferguson*: Harlan’s Great Dissent,” reprint of 1996 article: <https://louisville.edu/law/library/special-collections/>.