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Teaching Local History is a Civics Education that Mobilizes

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Because a small handful of publishers design and distribute most of the educational materials in the U.S., students across the country learn much of the same information, often without regard for locally specific information. Curriculum that is nationally unified can have undesirable educational effects by cutting off students from meaningful engagement both inside and outside their classrooms: Students who learn information that is geographically generalized are less able to apply that knowledge to the nearby people and places they interact with day to day, and students are less able to bring observations and experiences from their daily lives into the classroom. This disconnect contributes to decreased youth civic engagement. This project incorporates (1) the benefits of place-based education and (2) the contributions of history education to civic education, in order to propose one approach to this problem. Place-based education has been shown to increase civic engagement by connecting youth to their community and empowering youth as active participants in their community. History education has been shown to contribute to civic education when it engages students in the study of change and identity-formation in a way that improves students' empathy, sharpens students' critical analysis skills, and inspires students for changemaking. Based on these bodies of literature, this project presents locally specific history teaching materials aimed at inspiring students to better connect with their community's past, equipping students to recognize injustices from that past that linger in their community's present, and ultimately mobilizing students to make changes starting in their hometowns.

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Abstract

Because a small handful of publishers design and distribute most of the educational materials in the U.S., students across the country learn much of the same information, often without regard for locally specific information. Curriculum that is nationally unified can have undesirable educational effects by cutting off students from meaningful engagement both inside and outside their classrooms: Students who learn information that is geographically generalized are less able to apply that knowledge to the nearby people and places they interact with day to day, and students are less able to bring observations and experiences from their daily lives into the classroom. This disconnect contributes to decreased youth civic engagement. This project incorporates (1) the benefits of place-based education and (2) the contributions of history education to civic education, in order to propose one approach to this problem. Place-based education has been shown to increase civic engagement by connecting youth to their community and empowering youth as active participants in their community. History education has been shown to contribute to civic education when it engages students in the study of change and identity-formation in a way that improves students' empathy, sharpens students' critical analysis skills, and inspires students for changemaking. Based on these bodies of literature, this project presents locally specific history teaching materials aimed at inspiring students to better connect with their community's past, equipping students to recognize injustices from that past that linger in their community's present, and ultimately mobilizing students to make change starting in their hometowns.

Key words: place-based education, history education, civic education, youth civic engagement

Teaching Local History is a Civics Education that Mobilizes

Every morning of my adolescent years, my dad first drove me 11 miles to middle school and later drove me 13 miles to high school. Depending on traffic, this trek could take up to 40 minutes each way. Neither school gives obvious signs as to why my parents—among many suburban parents—drove from westward end to eastward end of Gainesville, Florida just to get their kids to school. Both buildings are flat and paint-peeling and littered with equal parts garbage and Spanish moss; both schools are situated in the “bad side of town,” “the black part of town.” But Lincoln Middle and Eastside High boast academically rigorous, extracurricularly rich magnet programs that lure nonblack parents and their children from over a dozen miles away. By convincing nonblack suburban parents, like mine, that the academic rigor and extracurricular opportunities are worth the miles and the time and the road rage, both schools accomplish exactly what they were designed to do: voluntary desegregation.¹

The magnet programs attract enough suburbanites so that both schools appear integrated. But the schools’ profiles on paper do not match the reality within. Both schools internally are thoroughly segregated between the magnet program and the regular program—this internal segregation involves largely separate faculty, facilities, and classroom materials, with higher-quality resources allocated first to the magnet program with the leftovers trickling into the regular program. For example, when I was a student there, Eastside High School lent each magnet program student a MacBook Pro to use as if it were their own during their junior and senior years, but left regular program students to share schoolwide computers in the library. Most, if not all, students and parents and faculty members—at both schools and regardless of

¹ For further reading on the rationale, history, and efficacy of magnet programs as a voluntary desegregation strategy, see Rossell, Christine. “The Desegregation Efficiency of Magnet Schools.” *Urban Affairs Review* 38, no. 5 (May 1, 2003): 697–725. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087403038005004>.

program affiliation—are fully aware of the internal segregation and inequities, but outcry has been and continues to be absent.

Why is it that residents of Gainesville can be so conscious of but still complacent toward ongoing segregation in the city’s schools? Among many possible culprits, a history education that is too neatly packaged can contribute to the complacency. Schools teach school desegregation as an issue of the past, done and dusted. Across the US students learn the history of school desegregation through a uniform set of key figures and events from the 50s and 60s: *Brown v. Board*, Ruby Bridges, the Little Rock Nine.² Though there is no formally nationally standardized history curriculum, a common list of historical figures and events is canonized by textbook publishers, who have “a tremendous influence” because textbooks are the primary tool of instruction and thus “represent the official knowledge considered worth teaching and learning, and often serve as the most significant resource—and the most significant constraint—for teachers.”³ According to the predominant narrative, segregation was a shameful thing put to an end by the aforementioned leaders in the mid-20th century, and it is certainly easier and less uncomfortable for us today to consider it so.

But this is not true—segregation persists today. Increasingly, students across the US are attending racially isolated schools, with black and Latino students, in particular, predominantly attending nonwhite schools.⁴ Ruby Bridges and the Little Rock Nine have been deemed critical

² For examples of commonly used segregation/desegregation history curriculum, see National Education Association. “Civil Rights (Images of Change).” <http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/civil-rights-images-of-change.html>; Nast, Phil. “Black History Month Lessons & Resources.” National Education Association. <http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/black-history-month.htm>; Nast, Phil. “Brown vs. Board of Education and School Desegregation Teaching Resources.” National Education Association. <http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/brown-vs-board-teaching-resources.html>; Nast, Phil. “Classroom Resources for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.” National Education Association. <http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/mlk-day.html>.

³ Larson, J., A.-R. Allen, and D. Osborn. “Curriculum and the Publishing Industry.” In *International Encyclopedia of Education*, 368–73. Elsevier, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-044894-7.00059-2>.

⁴ For further reading on the state of school segregation today, see Orfield, Gary, Erica Frankenberg, Jongyeon Ee, and John Kuscera. “Brown at 60: Great Progress, a Long Retreat and an Uncertain Future.” The Civil Rights Project

in the national understanding of school desegregation, and their contributions to civil rights are undeniably essential. But overemphasizing this handful belittles or altogether ignores the equally vital and numerous contributions of local figures and events that pushed the “deliberate speed” of desegregation along—especially in the South, where local governments managed to stall school desegregation well into the 70s.⁵ The neatly packed national narrative fails to place the local community within the larger context of racial segregation and desegregation, so that students in Gainesville, Florida know how to talk about the ugliness of racism that Ruby Bridges faced in New Orleans and about the bravery of the Little Rock Nine in integrating Arkansas’ schools, but they learn nothing of the local heroes who protested and advocated and endured great opposition in order to desegregate the schools that they attend daily. This disconnect allows space for the complacency and lack of outrage regarding the internal racial segregation that persists at Lincoln Middle School and Eastside High School today. Students and parents simply are not taught to view the present segregated reality as ongoing strife against segregation in Gainesville, because instead they are taught that segregation was terminated in Montgomery, Alabama and Little Rock, Arkansas many decades ago.

Complacent acceptance in Gainesville is not merely an issue of an inadequate history education. On one hand, the complacent acceptance of continued educational segregation in the present points to the more sinister reality that still, there is an uneven distribution of political, financial, and culture power in which some people are motivated to preserve the system because they stand to gain from it. It is a real possibility that nonblack students and parents who buy into the internally segregated systems of Lincoln Middle and Eastside High know there is segregation

at UCLA. <https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/brown-at-60-great-progress-a-long-retreat-and-an-uncertain-future/>.

⁵ White, "The History of Lincoln High"; Marcus, "Desegregation of Public School Districts in Florida."

happening, but do not wish to change it because the segregated system affords their nonblack children many advantages in educational and extracurricular opportunities. On the other hand, the complacent acceptance of persistent segregation highlights a failed civics education.

Nationalized curriculum that excises local perspective disconnects and distances students from their own communities, and as a result students are inadequately equipped to apply the knowledge they learn in school to the life and society that envelop them every day.⁶ The lack of local perspective helps students first to excuse and to distance their local community from the national history they learn about, and second to excuse and to distance themselves and their families from being implicated in continuing to buy into a segregated system today.

I argue that one critical remedy to complacent acceptance of segregation lies in teaching local history. Desegregation history can be taught in locally specific ways to better connect students to their community's past, equip students to recognize injustices from that past that linger in their community's present, and ultimately mobilize students to make change starting in their hometowns. This project is composed of two parts. First, I present teaching materials of my design intended to serve as a sample of what local desegregation history curriculum can look like. The sampling includes two secondary texts, two primary texts, and two project assignments. The second part of my project is this essay which explains the rationale and civic hopes that drive the content and design of the locally specific teaching materials. This essay first examines research on the pedagogical potential of history to improve students' empathy, equip students with critical analysis skills, and inspire and mobilize them for changemaking in the present and future. This essay then outlines the social and political benefits of place-based education from

⁶ Jennings, Swidler, and Koliba, "Place-Based Education in the Standards-Based Reform Era—Conflict or Complement?"; Sobel, "Place-Based Education: Connecting Classroom and Community"; VanSledright, "Narratives of Nation-State, Historical Knowledge, and School History Education."

the individual level to that of the community and larger society, and shows that locally specific curriculum in the long term enhances civic engagement and increases overall social capital. Combining the takeaways from these two bodies of literature, I envision local history education as part of a civics training that inspires imagination for change and equips for mobilization toward change.

In order to understand how history curriculum can contribute to civics education, we must first understand the pedagogical and political potential of history education. History education is important and indispensable—in the words of former Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch, “It should not be necessary to argue the importance of learning history. Anyone who hopes to understand his or her own life, as well as to comprehend events in society and the world, must have a firm grasp of history.”⁷ Ravitch’s bold and far-reaching assertion gives voice to the unavoidable, unbreakable connection between the past and the present: The past shapes the present, which shapes the future. Learning history, then, is a means of understanding and contextualizing the present, and in turn a tool for making decisions that will affect the future. This connection forms the basis of all other functions, applications, and benefits of learning history. This connection also makes possible the potential of history education to be used as a catalyst for change in the future.

History education, at its core, is the study of change: how things change, the factors that cause change, the elements that persist despite change.⁸ Thus history education, through examination and analysis of change in the past, can have great power in informing and influencing future change. Historian Kitson Clark noted that “Every man or woman is confronted

⁷ Ravitch, Diane. “The Controversy over National History Standards.” *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 51, no. 3 (1998): 14–28. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3824089>.

⁸ Partington, Geoffrey. “What History Should We Teach?” *Oxford Review of Education* 6, no. 2 (January 1980): 157–76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305498800060204>.

with a great deal of history every day of their lives. They read history in their daily newspapers; the problems they have to confront have been provided by history.”⁹ Because today’s events and issues are the result of the development of past events and issues, those who know history better understand how we arrived at the complex realities we observe today. History is important, then, for informing individuals, and an informed individual is upheld as the kind of decision-maker and political actor we desire in our democratic society. In this way history education is linked to civics education. History examines past changes that affected people’s lives and the factors that caused those changes, which helps us to understand how current and prospective changes are emerging or may emerge. Additionally, history provides information about the development of national institutions, problems, and values—elements essential to the means and processes by which citizens make decisions. History also teaches about interactions between groups and societies, providing international and comparative perspectives important for responsible citizenship in a globalized world. Historian Peter Stearns noted that therefore, despite its imperfections and limitations, history “offers the only extensive evidential base for the contemplation and analysis of how societies function, and people need to have some sense of how societies function simply to run their own lives.”¹⁰

In recent decades, historians and educators have called attention to the potential for history to be a more nuanced and purposeful study of change—teaching history can be a social-justice-minded civics training. Professor Tracy Penny Light identifies a “logical connection” between the function of history in helping us understand and contextualize the present and social justice: “Considering the ways that society has been oppressive and unjust for certain members

⁹ Partington, “What History Should We Teach?”

¹⁰ Stearns, Peter N. “Why Study History? (1998).” Accessed December 20, 2019. [https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-\(1998\)](https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-(1998))

in the past can help us to make different decisions in our contemporary context and lead us to consider our responsibilities as citizens in decision-making today.”¹¹ As mentioned before, history is the study of change and continuity, for past change and continuity shape the present and have implications for future change and continuity. But Light specifies that the role of history as it relates to the future is not only to inform decision-making for the future, but to influence decision-making in a way that advances social justice.

History education contributes to civics training not only in content, but also in the skills it develops in students. Students practice assessing evidence and conflicting interpretations. Students learning history must learn to distinguish different kinds of evidence and to combine different kinds of evidence to form a coherent argument. This skill translates into an individual’s ability to distinguish, analyze, and evaluate current political rhetoric in their decision-making, as well as their ability to engage in meaningful debate. Students learning history must also learn to identify and evaluate conflicting interpretations, thereby developing a “constructively critical sense” that can similarly be applied to present-day political rhetoric and debate.¹²

On a more abstract level, history education contributes to identity formation. History, as the study of the past, relies on memory on a scale larger than that of the individual because “what we remember is often less a product of direct personal experiences and more of our embedding in social structures [like] family, nation, ethnic groups, etc.” History education provides evidence about how families, groups, institutions, and countries were formed and about how they retained group cohesion as they developed.¹³ The term *collective memory* describes the memory shared

¹¹ Light, Tracy Penny. “Moving Forward, Looking Back: Historical Inquiry for Social Justice.” In *Fostering Social Justice Through Qualitative Inquiry: A Methodological Guide*, edited by Corey W. Johnson and Diana C. Parry, 191–212. Routledge, 2016.

¹² Stearns, “Why Study History?”

¹³ Stearns, “Why Study History?”

by a group or society. Collective memory includes events that both precede and coincide with the lifetime of any given individual in that group, so each individual identity belongs to the larger history of the group.¹⁴ Collective memories are used by groups to describe and define their identity.¹⁵ History often charts in narrative style the interactions *between* groups, which pits collective memories of groups against each other. In doing so, history often creates protagonists and antagonists, allies and foes, in the process, which can exacerbate social divisions. In the tendency of history education to create and narrate the procession of one group in contrast to an “other,” history contributes to the formation of group identity. Historian David Glassberg notes that scholars commonly depict the practices of public history “as instruments in the political struggle for hegemony among various social groups,” for “the question of whose history gets institutionalized and disseminated as the public history is a political one, and that public history not only embodies not only ideas about history—the relation of past, present, and future—but also ideas about the public—the relationship of diverse groups in political society.”¹⁶ So the question of whose history gets institutionalized and disseminated carries weight in determining which identities and which epistemologies are held up as the authoritative norm.

In sum, history, when taught well, can engage students in the study of change and identity-formation in a way that improves students’ empathy, equips students with critical analysis skills, and inspires and mobilizes them for present and future changemaking. History education can be a social-justice–minded civics education when best practices are employed.

¹⁴ Lewicka, Maria. “Place Attachment, Place Identity, and Place Memory: Restoring the Forgotten City Past.” *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 28, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 209–31.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2008.02.001>.

¹⁵ Stearns.

¹⁶ Glassberg, David. “Public History and the Study of Memory.” *The Public Historian* 18, no. 2 (1996): 7–23. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3377910>.

One best practice is to incorporate locally relevant material into history curriculum—a pedagogical tool known as place-based education, or PBE. Place-based education can take on various forms in different places, but broadly PBE can be characterized as the following:

Place-based education is learning that is rooted in what is local—the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a particular place. The community provides the context for learning, student work focuses on community needs and interests, and community members serve as resources and partners in every aspect of teaching and learning.¹⁷

One critique of nationally standardized curriculum is that the isolation of school from students’ lived experiences causes students to be unable to apply knowledge they learned inside the classroom to their daily lives and also unable to incorporate knowledge they gained in their daily lives into the classroom. PBE emerged as one way to combat this separation by “emphasising [sic] ‘place’ as a guiding principle in the choice of curriculum content and teaching practices.”¹⁸

Scholarship on PBE illuminates a multitude of benefits for students, educators, and the larger community. From a pedagogical point of view, PBE “invests young people with a sense of agency, acknowledges them as producers rather than consumers of knowledge, enriches their education through hands-on, community-engaged learning, and provides them with relevant knowledge and experiences to participate actively in democratic processes and devise solutions to social and environmental problems.”¹⁹ By strengthening students’ understanding of the “intradependence” of their lives and their community, place-based education reinforces for students their agency, value, and potential as contributors to the common good in their community.²⁰ In this way, PBE can enhance young people’s civic training. Communities that are

¹⁷ Jennings, Swidler, and Koliba, “Place-Based Education in the Standards-Based Reform Era—Conflict or Complement?”

¹⁸ McInerney, Smyth, and Down, “‘Coming to a Place near You?’”

¹⁹ McInerney, Smyth, and Down.

²⁰ McInerney, Smyth, and Down.

smaller in scale, such as a neighborhood or a city, are a “microcosm of public life” and represent how civil society functions.²¹ Local communities have economic, social, and political issues “every bit as complex as the same issues on the national and international scale,” but at the local level the manifestations of these issues as well as the civic processes put in place to address these issues are more approachable and easier to understand for young people.²² In the familiar local context, young people can exercise rights and take on responsibilities as members of the community, thereby gaining practice as productive citizens and, hopefully, developing motivation to improve the common good.²³

Students are not the only ones to benefit from place-based education. PBE aids a “cycle of resources” social theory, according to which “the social capital of a community can regenerate itself through its positive effects on individuals”—the idea is that if resources are invested by the community into its young people, young people will in turn reinvest those resources into both the local community as well as wider society through civic engagement.²⁴ Though the benefit to wider society is a more distant, larger hope, PBE specifically yields critical benefits to local communities. Targeted focus honed in on a specific geographically defined place allows for in-depth examination and understanding of the nature of social issues in that place, which allows community members then to develop more “comprehensive and holistic approach to change, thereby enhancing the potential for integrating services and strategies to address the multiple needs of residents and increasing the opportunity for synergistic effects.”²⁵ Aside from boosting

²¹ Lenzi, Michela, Alessio Vieno, Massimiliano Pastore, and Massimo Santinello. “Neighborhood Social Connectedness and Adolescent Civic Engagement: An Integrative Model.” *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 34 (June 1, 2013): 45–54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2012.12.003>.

²² Jennings et al.; Lenzi et al.

²³ Lenzi et al., “Neighborhood Social Connectedness and Adolescent Civic Engagement.”

²⁴ Lenzi et al.

²⁵ Nowell, Branda L., Shelby L. Berkowitz, Zermarie Deacon, and Pennie Foster-Fishman. “Revealing the Cues within Community Places: Stories of Identity, History, and Possibility.” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 37, no. 1–2 (March 2006): 29–46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-005-9006-3>.

efficacy of change, place-based initiatives lend themselves to more sustainable change by facilitating mobilization of community residents and local resources. This is because “building the inherent capacity of a community to address future problems is at least as important as any specific programmatic activity or immediate outcome that emerges from such a process.”²⁶

Place-based education is an adaptable tool that can be used to teach any subject, but I argue that PBE can be particularly fruitful in history education. Historian David Glassberg writes: “Historical consciousness and place consciousness are inextricably intertwined; we attach histories to places, and the value we attach to a place comes largely through the memories and historical associations we have with it.”²⁷ Historical consciousness increases place consciousness and place attachment, and stronger place attachment repeatedly has been positively linked to increased civic engagement, both in attitude and behavior.²⁸ History education has important potential in mobilizing students to engage with and participate in the place they are learning about, whatever that place may be. But of critical importance here is the scope of place—when historical consciousness is national in geographic scope, the effect of place attachment is diluted because students learn a history that feels so geographically and temporally distant from the real people and avenues with which they can interact in order to affect change.²⁹ We fail to activate the mobilizing potential of history education when we teach history through national narratives.

An education in local history, then, capitalizes on the benefits of both critical history education and place-based education in order to form a civics training that can fruitfully mobilize students. With this goal, I present sample pieces of a curriculum for teaching school

²⁶ Nowell et al., “Revealing the Cues within Community Places.”

²⁷ Glassberg, “Public History and the Study of Memory.”

²⁸ Stefaniak, Bilewicz, and Lewicka, “The Merits of Teaching Local History”; Jennings et al.; Lewicka, “Localism and Activity as Two Dimensions of People–Place Bonding”; Stefaniak and Bilewicz, “Contact with a Multicultural Past.”

²⁹ McInerney, Smyth, and Down, ““Coming to a Place near You?””

desegregation history at the middle school level in Gainesville, Florida. These pieces are not intended to replace curriculum on national desegregation, but rather to supplement the national narrative with in-depth study of desegregation in Gainesville so that students can access and understand larger historical trends and concepts through more tangible local figures, locations, and events. By featuring local people and places, I hope to help students draw more explicit connections between the national narrative of desegregation and the ways in which that process touched our hometown, the ways faces familiar in our community pushed that process forward. I chose to focus my supplementary curricular material on school desegregation specifically because I believe this topic will be most tangible, relatable, and impactful to students who themselves are currently working their way through the public school system that developed out of this very recent local school desegregation history. Alongside local content, the material I present employs dynamic and involved pedagogical practices to increase student engagement with the content. Oral history projects, field trips, and primary source analyses are some examples of dynamic, hands-on teaching practices that can provide opportunities for students to be active learners rather than passive receivers of knowledge. I strive to capitalize on the best of history education and the best of place-based education—the goals of my supplemental material are (1) to provide locally relevant and pedagogically engaging opportunities for students to engage with and dig deeper into the history of local segregation and desegregation, as a way of better understanding national civil rights history in a more intimate, in-depth way; (2) to reinforce students' agency as learners and community members, as co-creators of knowledge and co-contributors to the common good.

The design and content of my material emerge out of my vision for what history education can and should be: History education can and should be part of a civics education that

empowers and equips young people to engage with and mobilize in their communities. My material offers a civics education through local history, for I believe local history is an overlooked and underestimated part of civics education. I hope that by bringing issues of segregation and desegregation literally closer to home, students will feel greater personal investment and motivation to mobilize and take action in their communities.³⁰ I believe such intervention is especially important and deliverable in communities in the South, which are rich with stories and characters and locations that played a role in local desegregation. Gainesville is one such community, full of potential resources that could be incorporated into a more locally focused teaching of desegregation history. I want every young person growing up in Gainesville today to be able to talk about the heroic individuals, young and old, black and white, wealthy and poor, who played a role in speaking out against the ugliness of racism, in desegregating the schools and shops and streets that shape the landscape and rhythm of our daily lives. I want every young person growing up in Gainesville today to be able to talk about the individuals and institutions and systems that stood staunchly in the way of civil rights progress in our hometown. I want every young person growing up in Gainesville today to be able to see the persistent, lingering vestiges of this history in our present and to recognize and identify it as such—and my hope is that the clarity and candidness to call segregation what it is will embolden a desire and motivation for changemaking.

This project is of great personal significance. I attended both Lincoln and Eastside and would have graduated from the system with no knowledge of these schools' roles in local desegregation had I not accidentally stumbled upon it. In the eighth grade I made small talk with the school librarian as she checked out my books, and she mentioned that Lincoln had improved

³⁰ McInerney, Smyth, and Down, ““Coming to a Place near You?””; Sobel, “Place-Based Education: Connecting Classroom and Community.”

so much since the years she'd attended, though it was different back then because Lincoln was a high school. Too shy as an eighth grader to ask questions but remembering this interaction throughout high school, in the eleventh grade I revisited Lincoln to ask the librarian if she would be my subject for an oral history assignment. Ms. Goldstein had been part of the first class of black students from Lincoln High to integrate then all-white Gainesville High in the tail end of the 60s, when Lincoln High was closed for failure to integrate. Only in interviewing her did I learn for the first time the rich histories of Lincoln High School and Gainesville High, the origin of Eastside High and later Lincoln Middle.³¹ Learning this history impacted me profoundly. It did not open my eyes to the internal segregation, for I had always been conscious of it. Instead, this history helped me to make sense of what I had been seeing for years, to understand with heartache and disgust that segregation was not neatly done and dusted in my beloved hometown, to have a bold hope for change. This project emerges from my desire to see this bold hope realized in future generations of Gainesville's students.

³¹ White, "The History of Lincoln High"; Macdonald, "Lincoln High School"; Bracy, "I Integrated Gainesville High School in 1965"; Tinker, "New Book to Chronicle the Desegregation of Alachua County Schools."

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Gainesville's Groundbreaker: The Union Academy

Following the end of the Civil War in April 1865, Gainesville saw growth in population and economic activity as many migrated here in search of opportunity after the destruction brought by war. Sea Island cotton had been Gainesville's staple cash crop since before the war, but other crops like vegetables, corn, tobacco and peanuts were becoming more important in Gainesville's economy. The Florida Railroad, which had been disrupted during the war, was reestablished and connected Alachua County to markets on both the Gulf and Atlantic coasts, paving the way for faster and greater economic expansion. The growing economy attracted both whites and freed blacks into Gainesville and the black population of Gainesville grew substantially: the 1860 census counted 3,757 whites and 4,465 blacks, but by 1870 there were 4,935 whites and 12,393 blacks.



Alachua County Census: A Century at a Glance

Year	White Population	Percent	Black Population	Percent
1850	1,617	64%	907	36%
1860	3,757	46%	4,465	54%
1870	4,935	28%	12,393	72%
1880	6,446	39%	10,016	61%
1890	9,673	42%	13,260	58%
1900	13,270	41%	18,965	59%
1910	15,112	44%	19,092	56%
1920	17,144	54%	14,473	46%
1930	19,068	55%	15,313	45%
1940	22,723	59%	15,984	41%
1950	40,475	71%	16,586	29%

Source: Gengler, Michael T. *We Can Do It: A Community Takes on the Challenge of School Desegregation*. New York, NY: RosettaBooks, 2018.

Before 1865, Alachua County had no public school system, and Gainesville Academy (which was located on present-day NE 1st Street) was a small private school that served only more affluent white students. Black slaves were legally forbidden to learn to read and write, and poor whites could not afford Gainesville Academy's tuition.

That began to change at the close of the war. A March 1865 act of Congress created the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees and Abandoned Land as a body to deal with various odds and ends after the end of the war—this governmental body dealt with anything from land abandoned in the war to homeless refugees, from orphans to health care and even banking services. Education for freedmen across the South quickly became one of the Bureau's top functions. With federal funding as well as both funding and teachers from

northern churches and organizations, agents from the Bureau who were assigned to Alachua County began work on establishing education for black students here. Bureau agents were tasked with helping the teachers sent by northern organizations to find housing, protecting them from harassment by white community members hostile to desegregation efforts, and publicly supporting their work.

The first two teachers for freedmen in Alachua County were assigned to Florida by the National Freedmen's Relief Association of New York and arrived in Gainesville late in the fall of 1865. Catherine Bent came from Newburyport, Massachusetts, and Harriet Barnes from Norwalk, Connecticut. Both women found that they were not welcome among the white community in Alachua County. They suffered isolation from other white adults and ridicule and pranks at the hands of local white boys, who often threw objects into their classrooms to disrupt class and distract the students within.

Miss Bent and Miss Barnes taught about sixty black children in an "unfinished, dilapidated church building with no door or windows." Despite hostility and disruption from community members, the black pupils of these first two teachers made progress, and Captain Joseph H. Durkee (a Bureau agent assigned to Gainesville) in his report to a superior declared the Gainesville school a success, noting that the students were "orderly and well-disciplined," and showed a "real desire to learn."



Union Academy, circa 1888. Photograph courtesy of the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, Gainesville.

In October 1867, a group of black Gainesville residents formed a board of trustees to purchase property for a permanent building for the freedmen's school, to be named Union Academy. In November, the board purchased a lot measuring 200 square feet on what is now the intersection of NW 1st Street and NW 6th Avenue. The Freedmen's Bureau provided building plans, but the construction was carried out by local black artisans who volunteered their labor. The newly built Union Academy was one story with an open porch running the full length of the building, large windows, and a belfry seventeen feet high. Union Academy was, in size and cost, the second largest school building built by the Bureau for black students in Florida.

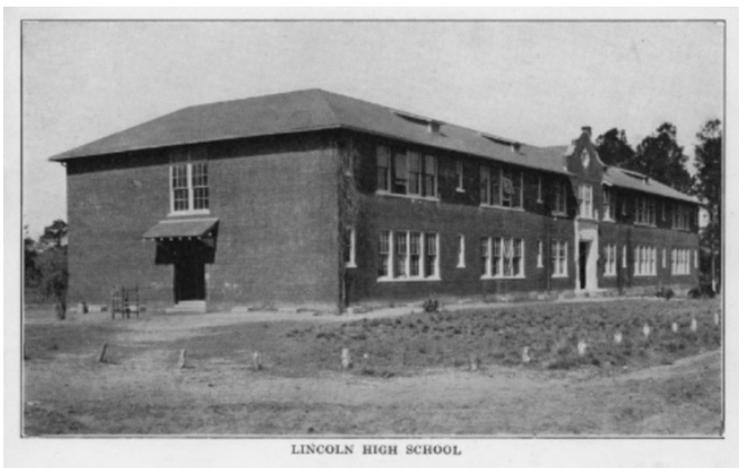
Almost from its beginning, Union Academy was thought of and expected to serve as a grade school, a high school, and a normal school (which is a teacher preparation institution). This overburdening would later become a problem as Union Academy became increasingly underfunded.

By the start of 1870, Miss Bent and Miss Barnes were replaced by Miss Maggie Gardener and Miss Emma B. Eveleth, both sent by the American Missionary Association. By this point, the Gainesville freedmen's school served about 180 students and Union Academy was partially supported by the Alachua County Board of Public Instruction and was tuition-free. Miss Gardener and Miss Eveleth regularly wrote to their supervisors to report both the progress and success of their students, as well as the challenges they faced, such as "inadequate school supplies and books, absenteeism, and overcrowded classrooms." Miss Gardener and Miss Eveleth trained and mentored black students to become teachers, and by 1873 both white teachers had left and Union Academy had an all-black staff. Union Academy graduates also went on to staff smaller schools in more rural areas of Alachua County.

Union Academy became an important and valuable center of the black community in Alachua County. The freedmen's school thrived in its early years. Students made progress in literacy and arithmetic and even more advanced topics like geography, and Union Academy's staff were paid salaries equal to those

of white teachers. Social life of the black community revolved around the churches and Union Academy, and many community events (political, ceremonial, religious, etc.) were held on campus.

By 1874, however, the support and resources of the Freedmen's Bureau and northern organizations had dwindled to a halt. Conservative white southern Democrats regained control of government and public institutions by 1877 and enforced a segregated system. Having seen the success of black students, white parents became increasingly interested in public education for their own children, so available public resources were mainly allotted for the building and support of schools for only white students. Teachers at white schools received salaries higher than those who taught at black schools, and white schools received more public funding than black schools. In 1883 the city of Gainesville declared it could not legally spend money on a property it did not own, so the board of trustees of Union Academy sold the deed to the city, but full city ownership of Union Academy only allowed for more inequitable allocation of public resources.



By the start of the 1920s, after several decades of neglect by the government, Union Academy was overcrowded, underfunded, and worn out, both in the physical condition of the facilities as well as in the quality of teaching materials. Despite the deterioration of the school and its learning community, there was no call nor effort to improve Union Academy because it was being phased out by a new school called Lincoln High School set to open in August 1923.

Lincoln High was built through a 1920 bond issue to build two new public high schools in Gainesville, one for white students and one for black students. Regardless of the segregation, both schools had the same building plans and materials, and A. Quinn Jones noted that it was significant for black students to have a fine brick school building—Lincoln High was one of the first brick school buildings for black students in the state of Florida. A. Quinn Jones was the last principal of Union Academy and the principal of Lincoln High School for many years, and he provided a valuable continuity and strength in leadership that upheld the black community's pride and dignity and dedication in the education of their youth.



"Prof" A. Quinn Jones

Intro:

This is a textbook chapter about the beginnings of education for freed blacks and the beginnings of public education more broadly in Alachua County following the end of the Civil War. Students should read this chapter for homework before coming to class.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. What was your reaction to what you read in this chapter? Did any specific part of this chapter stand out to you for any reason? How much of Lincoln's history did you already know?
2. Why did black students have to rely on teachers sent to Alachua County from the North rather than on adults from their own communities? What do you think were the pros and cons of having teachers come from far away?
3. Union Academy, for many over half a century, was a vital center of community life for the black population of Alachua County. Can you think of a center of community life that is important for you and your family or community? What makes that place a center? What gives that place significance? What are the advantages and the pitfalls of having such a center?
4. We are often taught to believe that the idea that things can be "separate but equal" is inherently bad and wrong and unjust. But deeper study of the years immediately following Emancipation of slaves shows that black and white leaders often genuinely believed that separate could be better or safer for the black population. Based on what you read in this chapter, can you think of some reasons why separate could be better or safer for the black population?

Using the Table: Ask students to engage with the table on page 1 of the text.

1. What are some population trends that you notice based on the information from the table?
 - The black population in Alachua County increased very rapidly in the first few decades after the Civil War, and then leveled off. On the other hand, the white population in Alachua County increased more slowly but steadily, continuing the trend of increasing each decade even a century after the Civil War.
 - The black population was the majority in Alachua County from the 1860s through the 1910s.
 - The black and white populations in Alachua County were nearest to half-and-half from the 1910s through the 1930s.
2. Can you think of any other historical events or movements or changes happening during certain decades that may have contributed to the population changes in Alachua County?
 - The Second Industrial Revolution is usually dated from the 1870s–1910s, and the increase in manufacturing and electrification spurred an increase in employment opportunities and wealth accumulation. This may have contributed to the surge in population growth in Alachua County during those decades.
 - World War I was from 1914–1918 and World War II was from 1939–1945. Could these massive and involved wars have contributed to population trends?

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Lincoln High School: The Heart of a Community

Lincoln High School opened in September 1923, alongside the opening of all-white Gainesville High School. After witnessing the deterioration of the Union Academy, the five black patrons who helped fund the construction of the new school wanted to ensure that black students in Gainesville would get to learn in a facility whose quality equaled that of the white school. The newly built school was held up and celebrated as the best school structure for black students in the state of Florida. It was a handsome two-story brick building housing sixteen classrooms, each of which had four large windows, brand new desks, blackboards, and two hot-water radiators.



Lincoln High School, Gainesville, Florida

A. Quinn Jones, formerly the principal of the all-black Union Academy, served as Lincoln High's first principal. When Lincoln first opened in 1923, it was not an accredited academic institution. Jones was convinced that education extended far beyond the hours of the school day and the space of the classroom, and he was determined to help elevate the status of Lincoln High and its students. He and the team of black educators under his leadership involved themselves deeply in the lives of their students and the development of their school. A few years later, their tireless work was rewarded: Lincoln High School became fully accredited by the State of Florida in 1926, and Lincoln was only the second all-black school in the state to reach such status.



A. Quinn Jones

From the beginning, the Lincoln High School community and the surrounding black community in Gainesville developed a strong tradition of reaching inward for help. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents themselves provided or gathered the resources and labor and efforts they needed for the maintenance and improvement of Lincoln High. When this was not enough, they reached out to members of the black community, and together, the school and the community around it supported and elevated each other. Teachers did all of Lincoln High School's landscaping, Jones himself held a book drive to create a library for Lincoln's students, and the faculty organized sports teams and provided the coaching services themselves. When Lincoln faced bankruptcy and closure early on, faculty and students together organized fundraisers that saved the school.

Graduates of Lincoln High often attributed much of their personal success, as well as their fondness for Lincoln, to the genuine personal interest that administrators and teachers took in students and their lives. Alumni often spoke of feeling a sense of "belonging to a great family." Many graduates, feeling a deep connection and commitment to Lincoln High School, went on to receive their teaching certificates from colleges and universities and then returned to Gainesville to work as teachers or athletic coaches at Lincoln. Lincoln High School and the black community surrounding it thus developed a culture of giving back and self-sustained growth and development.

T.B. McPherson is one of many Lincoln graduates who returned to the beloved school to work as the athletic director and football coach. Playing football as a student at Lincoln had been a transformative and valuable experience in his youth. McPherson took leadership of Lincoln High’s football program in 1933, and the team was undefeated for the first eight years of his leadership. In 1939, Lincoln’s “Fighting Terriers” won a national championship among all-black schools, becoming even more of a crowd-magnet and a source of pride for Lincoln and the black community in Gainesville. Coach McPherson was not only a skilled athletic coach, but he was looked up to as a mentor. His students said he taught them friendship, respect for others, discipline, and belief in oneself. He also helped his student athletes secure athletic scholarships. Coach McPherson retired in 1949, and the T.B. McPherson Recreation Center in southeast Gainesville today carries the legacy of his leadership as well as the legacy of the undefeated football team he led.



Lincoln High School Marching Band Parade, 1950

The only club that rivaled the football team in community popularity was the Lincoln High School marching band. Lincoln was denied funding from Alachua County to start and maintain a band, so Jerry C. Miller organized a fundraiser and a used-instrument drive in the community in order to gather enough resources to establish a band. His efforts raised enough money and collected enough instruments to equip 40 marchers. “The mighty Lincoln band” brought energy to football games, entertained the community in many parades, and became the first black band to march in the Gator Bowl.

Lincoln High School became the center of the black community in Gainesville. Family members and neighbors eagerly looked forward to the school’s various athletic competitions and concerts and other functions. Community members readily and generously donated money and other resources to meet Lincoln’s needs because they were proud to have such a prosperous all-black in their city, despite the discouragement and discrimination from the county and other governing bodies. One Lincoln administrator said, “you could raise \$100 to \$200 in an hour...because everybody knew the government wouldn’t give us money.”



Lincoln High School Class of 1938



Lincoln High School Class of 1943

Of course, despite its many triumphs and successes, Lincoln High School still suffered greatly from racism and segregation. Until 1954, Lincoln's teachers earned 20 to 30 percent less than white teachers with similar qualifications and responsibilities. Jones' salary was \$700 less than the salary of the white principal of Gainesville High School, even though Jones had equal educational qualifications, more years of work experience, and was in charge of a faculty and staff of larger size. Racial discrimination was apparent even in the qualities of the diplomas awarded by Lincoln High and Gainesville High: Lincoln High's diplomas cost the school board 90 cents each, while the school board paid \$1.85 for each of Gainesville High's diplomas.

The harmful effects of racism and segregation were even more obvious in the state of Lincoln's facilities and classroom materials over time. As more and more black students enrolled in pursuit of education, Lincoln's once exemplary and superior building became overcrowded and classroom materials were insufficient, leading Lincoln's teachers to have to scavenge for classroom materials leftover from or tossed out of all-white schools. Maintenance of facilities was a chronic problem, and students often volunteered to do the cleaning and yardwork themselves. Additionally, Lincoln High faced a disproportionately higher dropout rate compared to Gainesville High, and teenage pregnancy, marriage, and family financial difficulties were the most commonly cited reasons that black students dropped out. Often, black students lost the motivation and meaning behind attending and doing well in school because in the racist society of the mid-20th century South, a young black person only qualified for low-wage, menial jobs with or without a high school diploma. Even a man as respected as A. Quinn Jones could not push back hard enough against the racial discrimination and racial disparity in the Alachua County school system, because he was not allowed to participate in the all-white principals' meetings.

Racial discrimination and racial disparity in schools was not a problem unique to Alachua County. This issue gained national attention in 1954, when the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional because separate schools are "inherently unequal." The landmark Supreme Court decision sent school districts across the country into a panic as they faced the fact that gradually they would need to figure out ways to integrate their public schools. School districts in the South, however, took refuge in the ambiguous phrasing of the Supreme Court which stated that integration of public schools must happen "with all deliberate speed." These school boards, controlled entirely by white men, concentrated their efforts in trying to delay the integration of public schools.

Alachua County adopted many of the same tactics employed by many school boards across the South in order to stall integration. Alachua County primarily sought to create a segregated dual system that was so equal in quality that both the white and black populations would be satisfied, because such a perfectly equalized dual system could preserve segregation without necessitating federal interference. Since the 1940s, the school board of Alachua County had contemplated building two new high schools, one for the whites and one for the blacks, but repeatedly the idea had been tabled. On June 2, 1954, just two weeks after the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board* decision, the Alachua County school board approved of a plan to spend \$1,058 on building a new black high school and \$1,179 on building a new white high school. Lincoln High School was to be converted into a junior-senior high school fed by three all-black elementary schools, with the assistance of new funding from the school board.

The momentarily increased support and attention from the school board allowed Lincoln to repair its facilities, acquire more classroom materials, and hire more faculty and staff members. For a few years, while the school board was still concentrating its resources and efforts to equalize the dual system, black public schools in Gainesville seemed to prosper again. But as the panicked pressure to integrate whittled away, so did the support and attention from the school board to boost Lincoln's quality to equal that of Gainesville High School. Within a decade, Lincoln was back to being overcrowded, underfunded, and neglected. As a result of Lincoln's deterioration, "integration fever" caught on in the black community as black parents sought better educational and extracurricular opportunities for their children.

In 1967, the Alachua County school board received a federal order to desegregate the entire county. In another attempt to forestall both federal interference and a top-down imposed desegregation of the entire county, Alachua County drafted a county-wide desegregation plan but implemented a “Freedom of Choice” plan that allowed parents to decide and volunteer to enroll their children in a school not designated for their race. In the 1967–68 school year, 360 Lincoln students chose to enroll in all-white schools. The next school year another 117 left Lincoln, and the following year another 276 Lincoln students registered instead in all-white schools. Zero white students chose to enroll in all-black schools. The “Freedom of Choice” plan relieved some of Lincoln’s overcrowding problems, but ultimately hurt Lincoln’s community by drawing away the school’s most talented students. Lincoln’s most talented students and their parents opted to enroll in all-white schools because they understood that the quality of facilities, classroom materials, instruction, and extracurricular activities were far superior in all-white schools.

The “Freedom of Choice” plan was deemed a failure because zero white students enrolled in all-black schools and only 21 percent of the county’s black students enrolled in all-white schools. Due to this failure, the Alachua County school board was forced to adopt the county-wide desegregation plan it had drafted in 1967 as an initial response to the federal order to desegregate. Under this plan, Lincoln would be closed and converted into a vocational-technical school, and a new high school would be built to be racially integrated from its opening. The new high school to be built for both races would become Eastside High School.

The closing and converting of Lincoln was heartbreaking and devastating to the black community in Gainesville. For over half a century, Lincoln High School had been the heart of the community and a great source of pride and strength and identity. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other community members protested the racially discriminatory rationale behind the decision that the all-black school must be the one to close while the all-white school got to remain open, that the black youth must be the ones to be bused to the opposite side of town just to face threats and hostility from whites for the sake of attending school. One Tuesday in late November of 1969, 1,325 Lincoln students stayed home from school in protest—the first day of sixteen days of boycotts, marches, and speeches. Later, on eight different days, over one thousand students marched, singing and chanting, for several miles from Lincoln to the city courthouse, then to the Plaza of the Americas on the University of Florida campus, and then to the school board office. The marchers made a point of always being nonviolent and orderly, and they made sure to have a parade permit and clean up after themselves. On December 3, 1969, senior class vice president Wayne Mosely delivered a speech that articulated the rationale behind the protests: “Lincoln is predominantly black. Gainesville High School is predominantly white. If they can integrate GHS, they can integrate Lincoln, too. We will stay out until they do.”



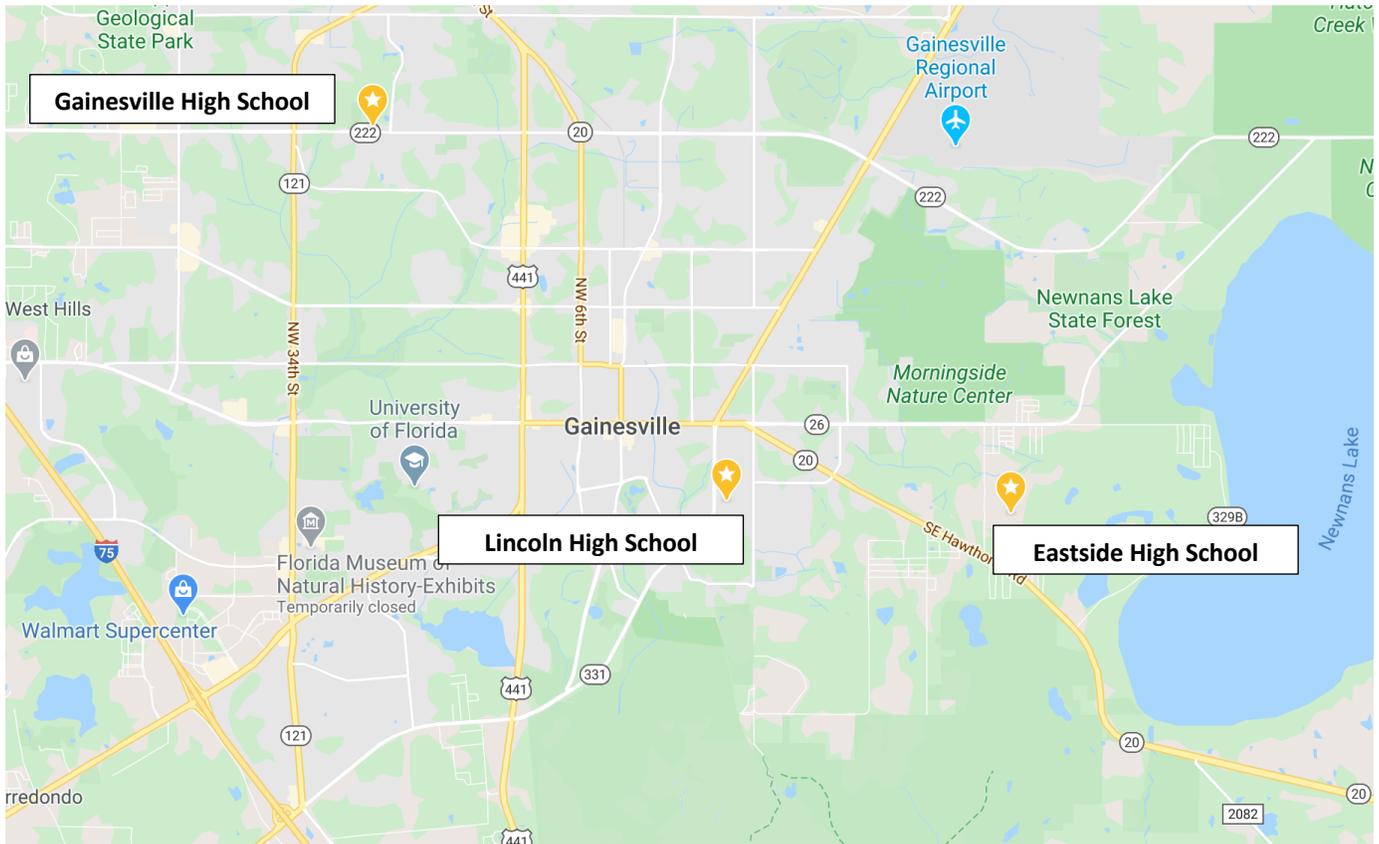
Lincoln High School student protesting, 1969

School board officials, hoping to wait out the trouble without arrests and without having to cede to students’ demands, attempted to talk the students down by explaining why the board’s plan was the most feasible and beneficial to all. But students were relentless in asking why the board insisted on bussing blacks but not whites. Eventually, the students’ persistence forced the school board to call in adult leaders from the black community to negotiate and reach some sort of compromise. Black students were not included in these discussions.

On December 12, black community leaders and the school board reached an agreement that though Lincoln High would indeed be closed, the current black principal of Lincoln be assigned a principalship elsewhere in Gainesville, and a biracial committee of adults and students be established to “express their preference” for hiring faculty and staff for the new, biracial school-to-be, called Eastside High School.

Lincoln students were not happy about this compromise. Many students felt that school board officials and black leaders from their own community had sold them out in the interest of white students and parents. Many voiced the wish that instead of closing Lincoln, “they should have given us a chance to prove we were as good as they.” On January 30, 1970, the last school day before the closing of Lincoln, a “racial disturbance” resulted in 17 arrests, the hospitalization of two teachers, and 91 broken windows in a school that had been, for half a century, the center of exemplary black education.

Map of Gainesville



Sources:

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431 F.2d 1200 (1970)

Lavon WRIGHT et al., **Plaintiffs-Appellants**,
v.
The BOARD OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION OF ALACHUA
COUNTY, FLORIDA, et al., **Defendants-Appellees**.

United States **Court of Appeals**, Fifth Circuit.

August 4, 1970.

Rehearing Denied and Rehearing Denied September 3, 1970.

Earl M. Johnson, Jacksonville, Fla., Jack Greenberg, Norman J. Chachkin, Drew S. Days, III, New York City, for plaintiffs-appellants.

Harry C. Duncan, Gainesville, Fla., for defendants-appellees.

Before BELL, AINSWORTH, and GODBOLD, Circuit Judges.

Rehearing Denied and Rehearing En Banc Denied September 3, 1970.

BELL, Circuit Judge:

...

This system consists of 14,722 white and 7,138 Negro students. When suit was commenced in 1964, there were eleven all Negro schools in the system. Four of these, Duval, Williams, A. Quinn Jones Elementary and Lincoln High Schools are situated within the City of Gainesville. This appeal concerns these four schools. ...

Duval and Williams Elementary schools under the assignment plan in effect as of February 24, 1970 remained virtually all Negro from a student assignment standpoint. Duval had 539 Negro and 18 white students; Williams had 643 Negro and 56 whites. Appellants contend that it is feasible to pair these schools and that this would result in their substantial desegregation. They point to the fact that pairing was recommended to the district court by the Florida School Desegregation Consulting Center which organization prepared, at the request of the district court, recommendations for desegregating the schools of the Alachua County system. These recommendations were that Duval be paired with nearby Metcalf (1.4 miles), and that Williams be paired with Prairie View and Lake Forest Elementaries. These latter schools are somewhat further apart. The following would result from the suggested arrangement:

Terms to define BEFORE distributing the primary text:

- Plaintiff
- Defendant
- Appellant
- Appellee
- Court of Appeals (judicial levels more broadly)

Intro:

This court opinion is a primary source that students can analyze. Because legal language can be dense and dry, this text cuts out (in places marked by ellipses) jargon that is not essential for students' understanding of the case. However, the original heading of the court opinion is reproduced in full so that students can gain exposure to identifying the name of the suit, the parties involved, the judicial level at which the case was heard, and the timeline of the case.

Facts of the case is the phrase used to describe the **who/what/when/where/why** information that establishes the background. What are the facts of the case that students can learn this paragraph? Ask students to answer the following questions:

What are the schools in question and why are they being questioned?

What do the appellants want?

Enrollment:

School	Grades Served	White	Negro
Metcalf	K-3	489	275
Duval	4-6	386	250
Lake Forest	K-4	340	283
Prairie View	K-4	340	284
Williams	5-6	276	264

The record indicates that Duval and Metcalf, as stated, are in close proximity. It is both feasible and reasonable to pair them. ... This will eliminate Duval as an all Negro school.

The problem remains as to Williams. The record indicates that there are three white majority elementary schools contiguous to Williams. These are Kirby-Smith with a student assignment of 259 white and 175 Negro; Prairie View — 471 white and 155 Negro; Lake Forest — 502 white and 106 Negro. Williams can be, and it must be desegregated by either rezoning as amongst it and these other three schools, or by pairing Williams with one or more of these three schools. The district court is directed to give the option in the first instance to the school board as to the method to be selected but the school board must seek the advice of the bi-racial committee which is to be created. **The end result will be that all schools in the system will be desegregated.**

The district court is directed to see that a bi-racial committee of the type described in *Ellis v. Orange County*, supra, is established. **The court is further directed to require that the biracial committee serve in an advisory capacity to the school board in the area of the promulgation and maintenance of zone lines, in pairing problems, and in school site location as well as in such other areas as may appear appropriate from time to time.**

The A. Quinn Jones Elementary school and the Lincoln High school, formerly all Negro, are in the process of being converted into pupil development centers for students in need of **compensatory** or **remedial** training. Lincoln will also afford certain types of **vocational** training. The compensatory program is funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Public Law 89-10, 79 Stat. 27.

Appellants object to this activity on two grounds. First, it is urged that discontinuing Lincoln as a high school was an act of discrimination. The record does not sustain this charge on a facility

Pairing may be an unfamiliar term to students and teachers alike. Based on the above paragraph and the table, what can students **infer** and **describe in their own words** the definition and intended purpose of pairing?

Ask students to **describe in their own words** the court's final decision and instructions. This is especially tricky because of the legal language used.

Why might it be significant that the court requires a bi-racial committee to advise the school board? Ask students to think about the text assigned for homework last night, which notes the importance of black community members having representatives in city and state leadership.

Terms to define:

- Compensatory
- Remedial
- Vocational

Can students describe these terms in their own words? Can students use them in example sentences? These terms are often racially charged. Ask students to think and share about the racial undertones.

basis nor on any other basis. There were ample educational reasons to discontinue Lincoln as a high school and to transfer its students to Gainesville High where the student body, as of February 24, 1970, was 2,263 white and 779 Negro.

The other objection to the change in status of these schools is that they are apt to remain as all Negro schools since the remedial or compensatory program is on a voluntary basis. As proof, it appears that the student body at A. Quinn Jones is presently 249 Negro and 34 white under the program. We cannot approve of this method of assignment.

The district court is directed to require that all assignments to these schools in the remedial sectors thereof be on objective and non-racial standards. Such a program is to be encouraged but the white children in need of such training must be assigned along with the Negro children in need of the training.

We do approve the operation of the vocational and technical training program at Lincoln on a voluntary basis subject to appellant's further objection once the program becomes operative. These needed programs should have the attention of the bi-racial committee before any further litigation ensues over them.

Affirmed in part; reversed in part with directions.

Intro:

Here the court opinion shifts focus to A. Quinn Jones Elementary and Lincoln High, two schools which were converted into vocational/technical training centers instead of being shut down entirely. Ask students what stereotypes or prejudices they have heard about vocational education. Discuss with students the racially charged history and purpose of vocational education.

Ask students to **describe in their own words** the court's final decision and instructions.

What does the court say about Lincoln being converted into a vocational training center? What does the court say about the assignment of students to this vocational training center? Highlight this common nuance of court opinions—often the issue is not **what** is being done, but **how** it's being done.

Wrap-up:

What parts of the court's decision do students agree with? What parts do they disagree or find problem with?

I integrated Gainesville High School in 1965: The scars endure

By LAVON W. BRACY
GUEST COLUMNIST | FEB 15, 2017

LaVon W. Bracy of Orlando is the author of "Beyond Bravery."

I was 6 in 1954, when the Supreme Court ruled in **Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education** that laws establishing separate public schools for black and white students were unconstitutional.

Ten years later — 1964 — I lived in Gainesville. There was Lincoln High, where all the black students attended. There was Gainesville High, where all the whites attended. Gainesville had refused to integrate its public schools.

The Rev. Thomas A. **Wright** — my father and president of the NAACP — filed suit against the Alachua County School Board. The **NAACP** won. The schools must integrate.

Going door to door, my father asked parents to register their children to attend the all-white schools. Everywhere, the answer was "No," a one-word response typically followed by statements like, "I will not give those white kids an opportunity to mistreat my child," or "I will have to kill whitey, if my kid is called a nigger."

By summer's end, Dad had one 10th-grader and one 11th-grader enrolled to attend Gainesville High. Yet no 12th-grader had stepped forward, leaving my father bewildered, forlorn and distraught.

"I can't find three parents to promote the cause," he said.

That night in bed, I could see only my dad's disappointed face. As I tossed and turned, I agonized. I pondered: What would it take for me to be that one student to volunteer?

The next morning, I rushed to Dad: "Here I am. Send me. I'll go to the white school."

He replied, "Are you sure?"

I answered, "Yes, I must promote the cause. I must sacrifice my 12th-grade year for the cause."

My mother's advice: "LaVon, you must kill them with kindness. If they are nasty to you, don't you be nasty to them. It will accomplish nothing."

I asked God for whatever I needed to get me through the year ahead. I would need strength.

On the first day of school, Dad drove me to school. We were followed by a Gainesville police car. When I entered my first classroom, I sat at the first desk on the first row. Immediately, students in the

entire first, second and third rows stood up, moving to the other side of the room. It were as if I was carrying an infectious disease.

When I went to the lunch room and took a seat, all the students at the table stood up to leave. I got the same treatment at the library.

All day, every day, no one spoke. These days of silence became a way of life, but I knew what else to expect: Each day some white boy or girl would spit on me and call me nigger. Every day I found dead roaches, rats and snakes waiting for me at my desk.

I began to hate. The thought of looking at someone with white skin made me sick.

Then one day, after my father dropped me off, a white boy jumped me in the school yard. His friends joined in. They beat me. They kicked me. They stomped me. My mouth and head were bloody. I hurt so much, I was certain that my life was about to end.

When the school bell rang, hundreds of children scurried past me to class. No one offered any assistance as I bled and cried. Not one student wanted to be caught helping the unwanted black student.

When I thought it was safe, I stumbled in the principal's office. I told him that I had been attacked, and that I needed to get to the hospital. The principal replied, "How do I know that you did not come to school bloody from your home? I did not see anyone mistreat you."

I struggled to make my way to the pay phone, calling Dad to pick me up.

We immediately went to the only black doctor in Gainesville. After stitching me up, the doctor instructed me to go home and try to mend. I pleaded with Dad: "They will kill me. I can't go back."

His reply: "I will not make you go back."

For the next five days, I stayed home and pondered. Then I made up my mind: I would refuse to allow them to win. I must promote the cause. I would return.

I still carry scars. Time has not yet healed all of them.

Despite the horror, I became the first black student to graduate from Gainesville High School in 1965. I refused to give up then. I refuse to give up now.

The struggle continues.

Source: Bracy, LaVon W. "I Integrated Gainesville High School in 1965: The Scars Endure." orlandosentinel.com. Accessed October 27, 2019. <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/os-ed-lavon-bracy-story-20170215-story.html>.

Intro:

This op-ed is a primary source that students can read, reflect on, and discuss. This piece was written much more recently and by somebody who is still alive today, which may help students better relate to or contextualize the material.

BEFORE reading the text:

Real talk

- This op-ed the n-word racist slur twice.
- Think and talk about the history of this word, more recent moves by black Americans to reclaim this word.
- Think and talk about the author's identity and positionality as she uses this word. Why might she have chosen to use the slur explicitly? What effect does this slur produce in her op-ed?
- Think and talk about the reader's identity and positionality as they react to the use of this word. What is the reader's reaction to the slur? How might readers' reactions vary along different social positionalities?
- Remind students not to use this word out of respect and care for peers.

Review these terms

- Brown v. Topeka Board of Education
- Wright v. Board of Public Instruction
- NAACP

AFTER reading the text:

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. What is your reaction to this piece? Did any specific part of it stand out to you for any reason?
2. This op-ed tells us that white residents were not the only ones who opposed school integration in Gainesville. What are some reasons black parents would resist integration?
3. "Yes, I must promote the cause. I must sacrifice my 12th-grade year for the cause." What is your reaction to this? What does the narrator seem to suggest about changemaking and changemakers?
 - The 12th grade is the culminating year of high school, just as the 8th grade is for middle school. If your students are 8th graders, ask them to put themselves in the author's shoes, dedicating their final year to a cause. What would they be sacrificing? What would they be missing out on?
4. What is the relationship between this op-ed and the court opinion we read? What does this op-ed contribute to our understanding of the court opinion?
5. This primary source is an opinion piece published in a city newspaper. How does this format/genre contribute differently from the court opinion to our understanding of educational integration in Gainesville? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this format/genre of writing when considering it as a primary historical source?

Project: Guide to Gainesville

Final product: A booklet designed to give travel guidance and tips for a tourist seeking a radical historic tour of Gainesville, Florida. Destinations included in the booklet are sites that are significant in the history of segregation and desegregation in Gainesville.

- Students may work on this project in smaller groups of 5–8 or the entire class may produce one booklet together. If students are divided into smaller groups, each student will be responsible for producing content on two sites. If the entire class is working on one booklet, each student will be responsible for producing content on one site.
- Each destination included in the booklet will constitute a full spread (or two pages), and this full spread will include
 - Name and address of site, other contact information such as a phone number or website if applicable/available
 - Graphic content: pictures of the site or of people/events relevant to the site, map
 - Description of the present-day site and description of what a visitor can do/look for there
 - History blurb narrating the significance of the site in the segregation/desegregation history of Gainesville
 - Sampling of reviews and comments (i.e. out of five stars) left by recent visitors
- Each complete booklet should include a map of Gainesville with all destinations marked
- Schedule time for sharing at the end of the project.
 - If feasible (if either students or the school can shoulder the cost), booklets should be printed out. Printed copies of the travel guides can be placed around the classroom for groups of students to rotate around and observe and interact with other groups' guides. A piece of paper can be placed beside each guide for rotating students to jot down their reactions, questions, and comments.
 - If printing physical booklets is unfeasible, electronic copies of the booklets can be displayed on laptop computers around the room or be projected from the teacher's computer.
 - Invite other community members to observe the students' travel guides. Gainesville's history of segregation and desegregation is not very visible nor salient in present-day daily life, so by inviting other community members to "take a tour of Gainesville" with a focus on this history, students can have an opportunity to share the little-known stories they have learned about places familiar to everyday Gainesvillians.

NOTE: This project can be digitized into a travel guide website or an interactive map with marked locations for which pop-ups provide relevant information.

Sites that are suitable for travel guides include but are not limited to

- Lincoln Middle School
- Gainesville High School
- Eastside High School
- Former location of Union Academy
- A. Quinn Jones Museum
- McPherson Park
- University of Florida Levin College of Law
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida
- NAACP Alachua County Branch
- Alachua County Public Schools Headquarters
- Duval Elementary School
- Williams Elementary School
- Metcalf Elementary School
- Prairie View Elementary School
- Lake Forest Elementary School

Project: Living History

Final product: A video 4-5 minutes long of an interview between students and an interviewee. The interviewee is a resident of Alachua County who attended school before, during, or shortly after the school desegregation efforts which spanned from the late 60s to the early 70s.

NOTE: This project is demanding and very involved, as it depends not only on the work of the students, but also on the participation of community members outside of school. Assign this project with plenty of time built into the assignment timeline for students to get in touch with potential interviewees, make interview requests, and schedule and carry out interviews in a way that is considerate and respectful of the interviewees.

NOTE: This project requires the use of a technological device that can perform video editing, whether that be a computer or tablet. If possible, schedule a workshop session with your school media specialist in order to teach students the basics of video editing through a common software. Also if possible, once all students have completed conducting and recording their interviews, build in time for 1–2 class sessions to take place in the school computer lab so that students can edit and polish their videos with the school media specialist standing by.

- Students should work on this project in pairs, and in some cases where necessary, groups of three.
- Students should select a person they know who resides in Alachua County and attended school before, during, or shortly after the school desegregation efforts which spanned from the late 60s to the early 70s. Students may also select a person who may have attended school during the desegregation period in a different city or state. The individuals who attended school in the 1960s–1970s are likely aged 50s–80s today.
 - Students can start by thinking about grandparents, great aunts and uncles, other family members.
 - Students can also think about members of their religious communities, as well as teachers and coaches and other school staff members they know.
 - Students can also think about other members of the Alachua County community that they may not necessarily have a personal connection to, but perhaps have seen around town enough to be mutually recognizable. For example, their local librarian, shopkeepers/grocers/bakers/butchers in their neighborhood, a local bus driver.
- Once student pairs/groups have selected an interviewee, they must reach out to those individuals plenty of time in advance and in a courteous manner. Help them draft an email or script a phone call requesting an interview.

- Help students think about and generate good interview questions. Avoid questions that are answerable with yes/no or one word. Try to generate open-ended questions that are not pointed. Try to generate questions mostly about the interviewee's personal experience, but feel free to ask questions about the current events of those times for context where needed or helpful. Think of a few generic follow-up questions that can be used whenever student interviewers want to hear more about a particular answer (questions such as, "Why?" and "Can you say more about that?").
- Talk with your students about interview etiquette and general advice about interviews.

- Make eye contact with your interviewee and be an active, responsive listener. Be mindful of your facial expression and body language.
- You can take a few notes, but don't spend the entire interview with your head down, scribbling away at a notepad.
- Do not interrupt your interviewee. If they say something that piques your interest, bring it up after they are finished talking with a follow-up question.
- Don't be afraid to go off-script! You don't know beforehand what your interviewees will talk about, and you don't know beforehand which responses will surprise you or intrigue you or elicit some other emotional response from you. The questions you come up with before the interview are there as a guide and a backup in case of awkward silences, but you do not have to stick to it like glue. Be open-minded going into the interview and follow-up on the points that are interesting. Think of it as a real, natural conversation between two people.

- Students and interviewees must schedule interviews on their own time. Remind students to be safe and in clear communication with their parents/guardians in selecting a time and location to meet their interviewee.
- Students may set up the audio/video recording to be hands-free and take turns asking the interviewee questions, or one student may ask the questions while the other records the audio/video.
- Students should edit the video how they see fit. Show them examples.

TV show-style video. The questions that were asked may be kept as part of the original video, or students may cut those portions out of the video and instead display the questions as text and/or via voiceover.

Documentary-style video. The audio of the interview can be played over frames of photos or transcribed quotations.

- Schedule time for sharing and reflecting at the end of the project. It will likely be difficult to watch all submitted videos as a class because of the number and length of videos. The following are some other ways of sharing and reflecting on the video projects:

Spend a class period in the computer lab where students in groups of 3–4 can view 4–5 of the videos posted by their classmates. After they watch the videos, students can discuss their reactions to it or questions they have within their viewing groups. Gather students for a whole-class conversation and let students ask questions and offer comments to the producers of each video. The producers of each video can have a chance to answer questions and offer their own reactions and thoughts.

For homework, assign each student to watch 4–5 of the videos posted by their classmates. In class, dedicate time to talking about each video project. Ask the students who watched the video (and not the students who produced the video) to introduce the interviewee, share a summary of the conversation, and point out a few parts that elicited reactions or questions from the viewers. Give students a chance to ask questions and offer comments to the producers of each video.

- Encourage students to share their completed video project with their interviewee!