



Separate but Equal?

http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/schoolphotographs/detail/161051

Overview/Prior Knowledge

Students begin this lesson with a knowledge of Jim Crow laws, which segregated U.S. society (especially in the South) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Students will learn about the implications of this second-class citizenship for African Americans by analyzing primary sources related to schooling.

Objectives

- Students will gather evidence from an image related to segregated schooling.
- Students will draw inferences about schooling from an image related to segregated schooling.
- Students will synthesize information from primary sources related to segregated schooling.

Time Required

50 minute class period

Recommended Grade Range

9th-12th grade

Subject/Sub-Subject

U.S. History

Standards

Social Studies

US.3 Progressive Movement: Evaluate causes, goals and outcomes of the Progressive Movement.

Objective 2. Trace the development of political, social, and cultural movements and subsequent reforms, including: Jim Crow laws, Plessy vs. Ferguson, women's suffrage, temperance movement, Niagara movement, public education, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and Marcus Garvey.

English Language Arts

Library of Congress - Teaching with Primary Sources Skills:

- Use previous knowledge to place primary sources into historical context
- Examine primary sources closely to form conjectures about their meaning and intent
- Corroborate information using additional primary and/or secondary sources to form and test hypotheses
- Draw conclusions about questions and hypotheses

Highlighted Strategies:

- Visual Discovery

Credits

Dr. Paul E. Binford, Mississippi State University

Materials

- Mississippi Department of Archives and History, School Photographs (Series 1513, Photograph 1794); see also this link: http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/schoolphotographs/detail/161051
- Excerpt of Interview of Mr. King Thomas Evans, Sr. conducted by Worth W. Long, March 20, 2000
- Excerpt of Interview of Julia Matilda Burns oral history conducted by John Dittmer in Tchula, Mississippi, March 13, 2013

Procedures

Introduction

As students enter the classroom, they will notice that the desks have been arranged in parliamentary seating with a large aisle—separating the two sections of student desks—leading to the screen. An image of the interior of Perkins School (in Oktibbeha County Mississippi; circa 1950) is projected onto the screen. The teacher will instruct students to take 60 seconds to “look up and down, back and forth” looking for important details in the image.

During

1. The teacher will (TTW) ask students a series of spiraling questions about the image, which will lead to higher level thinking:
 - a. **Gathering Evidence:**
 - i. What do you see in this image? Provide one detail that you see in this image.
 - b. **Interpreting the Evidence:**
 - i. What type of building is this? Provide at least two pieces of evidence.
 - ii. When was this photograph taken? Provide at least two pieces of evidence.
 - c. **Making Hypotheses:**
 - i. Why is this building in disrepair? Provide at least two pieces of evidence.
 - ii. How might the conditions of this building effect students, who attended this school? Provide at least two pieces of evidence.
2. Distribute two informational text handouts (see resource guide), entitled, “Interview of Mr. King Thomas Evans, Sr., to students. In this oral history excerpt Mr. Evans, Sr. describes his recollection of schooling in Mississippi:
 - a. Instruct students to read the excerpts from two oral histories (both primary sources):
 - i. King Thomas Evans, Sr. about schooling in Mississippi.
 - ii. Julia Matilda Burns about school textbooks in Mississippi.
 - b. Instruct students to highlight information and/or note information related to the schooling experience for African Americans in Mississippi during this era of segregation.

Closing

Advise students that they will be stepping into the image (interior of the Perkins School) assuming the role of students, who attended this segregated school. Working with a shoulder partner, students are to write a twelve-line dialogue about their schooling experience. In this dialogue, students are to include a minimum of four historical facts, which they have learned about segregated schooling in Mississippi as culled from the image and the oral histories.

Project the image of the Perkins School on the screen. Ask for student-pair volunteers to act out their twelve-line dialogue in front of the image.

Assessment

Formative (Informal):

- Student responses to the spiraling questions.

Formative (Formal):

- Twelve-line student dialogue.

Differentiation

- Advanced learners may be assigned a longer excerpt of the Julia Matilda Burns oral history interview. In addition, the line length and/or the number of historical facts to be included in their dialogue may be increased.
- Struggling learners, who volunteer, will be called on to answer the “Gathering Evidence” question.
- Struggling learners dialogue assignment may be reduced with regard to line length and/or the number of historical facts.

Supplementary Materials

- TCI’s *Bringing Learning Alive!*

Teaching with Primary Sources Resource Guide

Title: Separate but Equal?

Historical Background:

The Perkins School was a segregated school in Oktibbeha County Mississippi, which served African American students until 1950. This school building is representative of the unequal educational opportunities African Americans received during the Jim Crow Era.

Source 1:



Title: Perkins School (Interior)

Link: http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/schoolphotographs/detail/161051

Purpose: This image is used for visual discovery through spiraling questions.

Source 2

Title: Oral History Interview of King Evans Thomas, Sr. (Excerpt)

Link: https://digitalcollections.usm.edu/uncategorized/digitalFile_f19808c9-d912-4516-8c77-79330b1add6f/

Purpose: This oral history excerpt of King Evans Thomas, Sr. augments student understanding as gained through the analysis of the Perkins School image.

Source 3:

Civil Rights History Project

Interview completed by the Southern Oral History Program

under contract to the

Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History & Culture

and the Library of Congress, 2013

Interviewee: Julia Matilda Burns

Interview Date: March 13, 2013

Location: Tchula, Mississippi

Interviewer: John Dittmer

Videographer: John Bishop

Length: 00:54:32

[Throughout the interview, there is quite a bit of static and sound quality is uneven, almost as though the recording is voice-activated.]

John Bishop: We're rolling.

John Dittmer: Today is Wednesday, March thirteenth, 2013. My name is John Dittmer, and I am here in Tchula, Mississippi, with videographer John Bishop to interview Mrs. Julia Matilda Burns, a leading civil rights activist in the Holmes County Movement. This interview will become part of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Burns, we are delighted to be here today and we thank you for taking the time to talk with us.

Julia Matilda Burns: Oh, well, thank you very much. I hope I can be of some service to you all.
[Laughs]

Title: Civil Rights History Project Interview of Julia Matilda Burns (Excerpt)

Link: https://www.loc.gov/resource/afc2010039.afc2010039_crhp0073_Burns_transcript/?st=slideshow#slide-1

Purpose: This oral history excerpt of Julia Matilda Burns augments student understanding as gained through the analysis of the Perkins School image.

Oral History with Mr. King Thomas Evans, Sr.

This is an *excerpt* of an interview completed by the Center for Oral History & Cultural Heritage at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Interviewee: King Thomas Evans, Sr.

Interview Date: March 20, 2000

Interviewer: Worth W. Long

Long: What was it like growing up around that time?

Evans: . . . [W]hen the school bus turned around right in front of our house, and still we had to walk about a mile and a half to school, we didn't think we were supposed to ride the school bus. We were satisfied to walk . . . And so, I don't know any black person that was asking for integration. Oh, they asked for . . . equal schools for us; therefore, spending \$45.00 to \$50.00 for each white child, and \$5.75 for each black child. And so, that's . . . a great disparity.

Long: That's not "separate and equal."

Evans: No, that's not equal at all . . . I could find nowhere any money was spent on building for blacks . . . And they were having school in [lodge hall and] churches . . . and the least of [the] school[s] was two-room tenant house, that was up on Straight Bayou where they're at. But see, there was a group of people in an area where the superintendent would tell you, he said, "If you can find a building, we'll give you a teacher for those five months." So that's how it was.

Long: Well, why was it five months?

Evans: Five months-in Sharkey County, in this area, it's five months in the county district, but in Rolling Forks, in Anguilla Separate District, for six months.

Long: And then-were any of the, any children of any parents in the state going to school for nine months, at that time?

Evans: Not in the Delta [not in Sharkey County] . . . I know ours was with a six-month school in Nitta Yuma . . . It was four classrooms that we didn't have but three teachers in it. Three teacher in a four-classroom school there, yeah. And then . . . there were some people that



didn't send their children to school until after Christmas. "We're going to start school after Christmas." And see if school started in November, you might say-yeah, school started in November, and he didn't go until after Christmas, and he had stopped school around the first of March. Some of them did to plan cotton or plant corn or whatever it was; they had to go to work.



Civil Rights History Project Interview

This is an *excerpt* of an interview completed by the Southern Oral History Program under contract to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History & Culture and the Library of Congress.

Interviewee: Julia Matilta Burns (JB)

Interview Date: March 13, 2013

Location: Tula, Mississippi

Interviewer: John Dittmer (JD)

JD: Growing up on the farm, did you—did all the kids pitch in? Did you?

JB: Everybody had to pitch in. Unfortunately, my mother passed when I was only 13 years old. Do, I had to shift positions early in life and become the head of the household as a female. And my sisters and brother continued to work on the farm. But I was mostly part-farmer and part-housekeeper, helping all the others get together.

JD: I see. So, you had to grow up in a hurry:

JB: I grew up overnight, really overnight...

JD: Do, what about your schooling? You had moved out of Greenwood before you in the first grade.

JB: Right, moved out of Greenwood by the age of four, if I can remember correctly. But my brother was six, and we moved into the Humphreys County area near a school. And my brother was the kind of person that they would always pick on. So, my mother was a teacher, so to keep her from being in the middle of a children's fight, I went to school, too. So, I was the one who was fighting my brother. He would start the fight, but he couldn't do nothing with them. [Laughs] So, I had to fight the big boys off of him! [Laughs]

JD: Oh, wow!

JB: So, that made me get a start in school early, so I started school when I was really about four and a half years old.

JD: Yeah...

JB: During that time, it was—it wasn't a plantation school, but it was an old—it wasn't an old building either, but it was old-timey, because they had a potbelly stove to heat. Children had to get wood to start the fire and keep warm and everything. At that time, there was two teachers, yeah, two teachers in the whole big room from one through eight...

JD: So, how did that operate during the day?

JB: During that time, it was marvelous! Because the two teachers were—I guess you would call it now a teacher and a principal, because the eighth grade person was the overseer. It went well...

JD: One of the things the state of Mississippi tried to do, anticipating Brown, was to beef up the black schools so that they could say we're separate but we're equal. Did you see any of that, anything coming into your school, like new buildings or materials or anything?

JB: None whatsoever. None whatsoever...

JD: Yeah. What about textbooks?

JB: Textbooks—now, in my ninth grade year at Humphreys County Training School, I saw new textbooks, because they introduced a class that was called "Everyday Science," and there was no "Everyday Science" before then. So, once they introduced that "Everyday Science" in Humphreys County School District, that afforded us to have new books. First time seeing a new book was in my ninth grade year.

JD: Wow. And the rest were passed down from the white schools?

JB: Passed down from the high school, um-hmm.