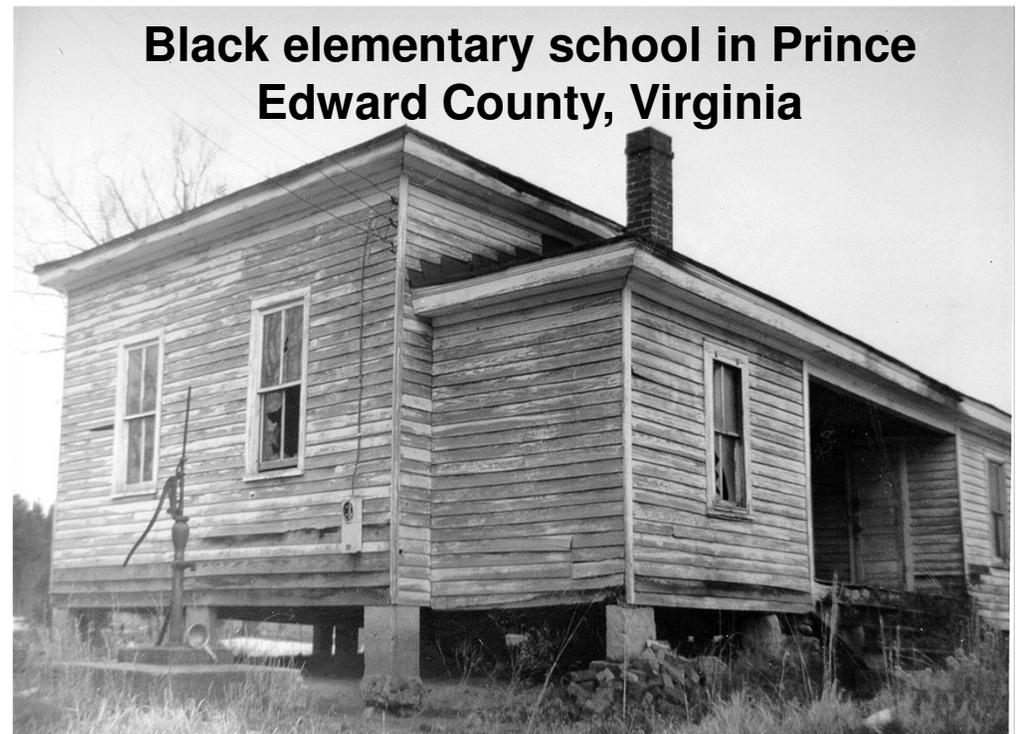


# The Brown Decision (1954)



- 1) Despite the ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson, most segregated school facilities were extraordinarily unequal throughout the South. State and local education funds were often disproportionately divided in favor of the white schools. Black schools were often grossly inadequate, overcrowded, underfunded.

# The Brown Decision (1954)

*The following slides are a series of photographs of black and white schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia. Take notice of the degree of inequality evident in the construction and appearance of these schools.*

# Peaks Elementary School for Blacks



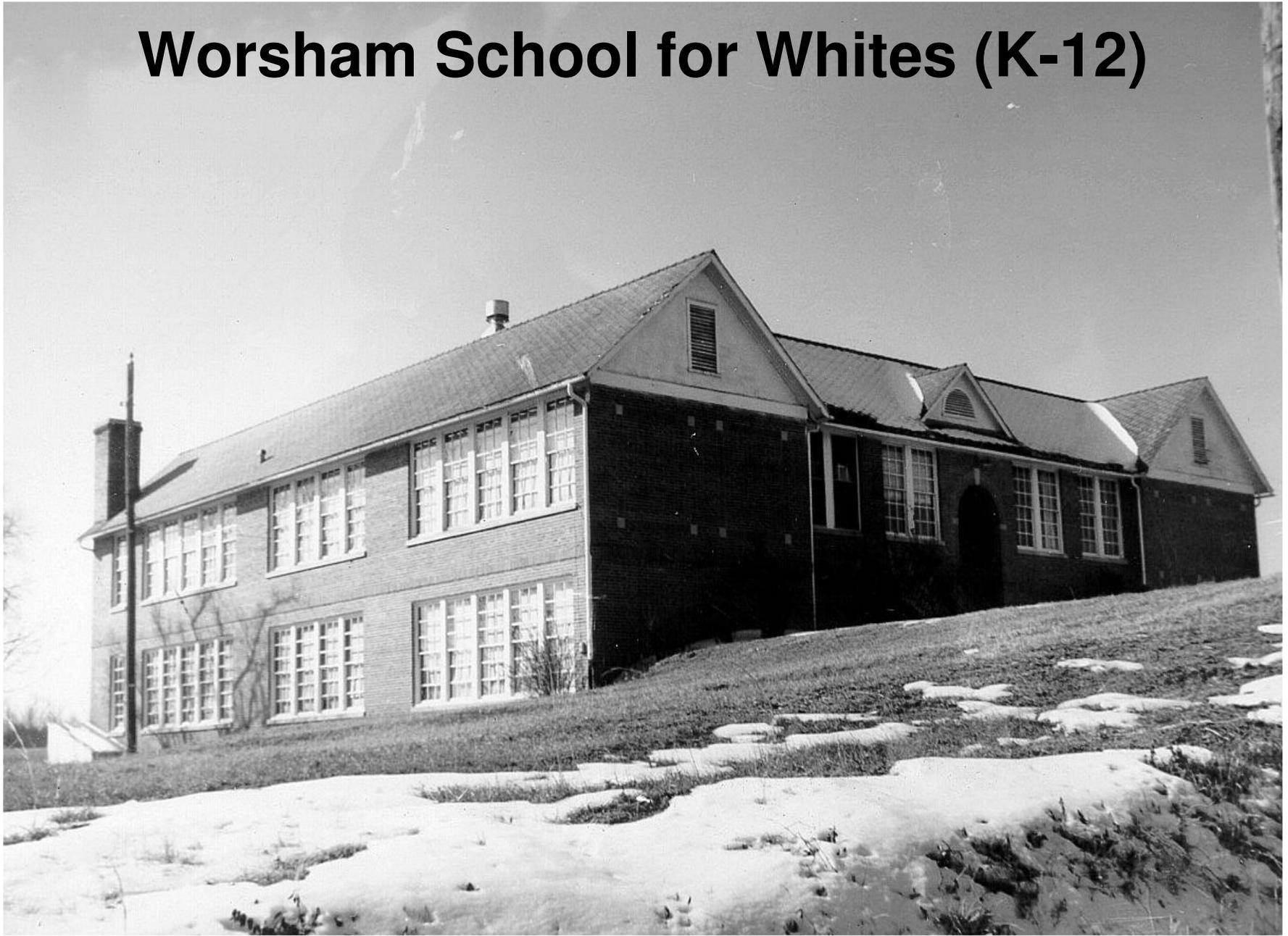
# Rice Elementary School for Whites



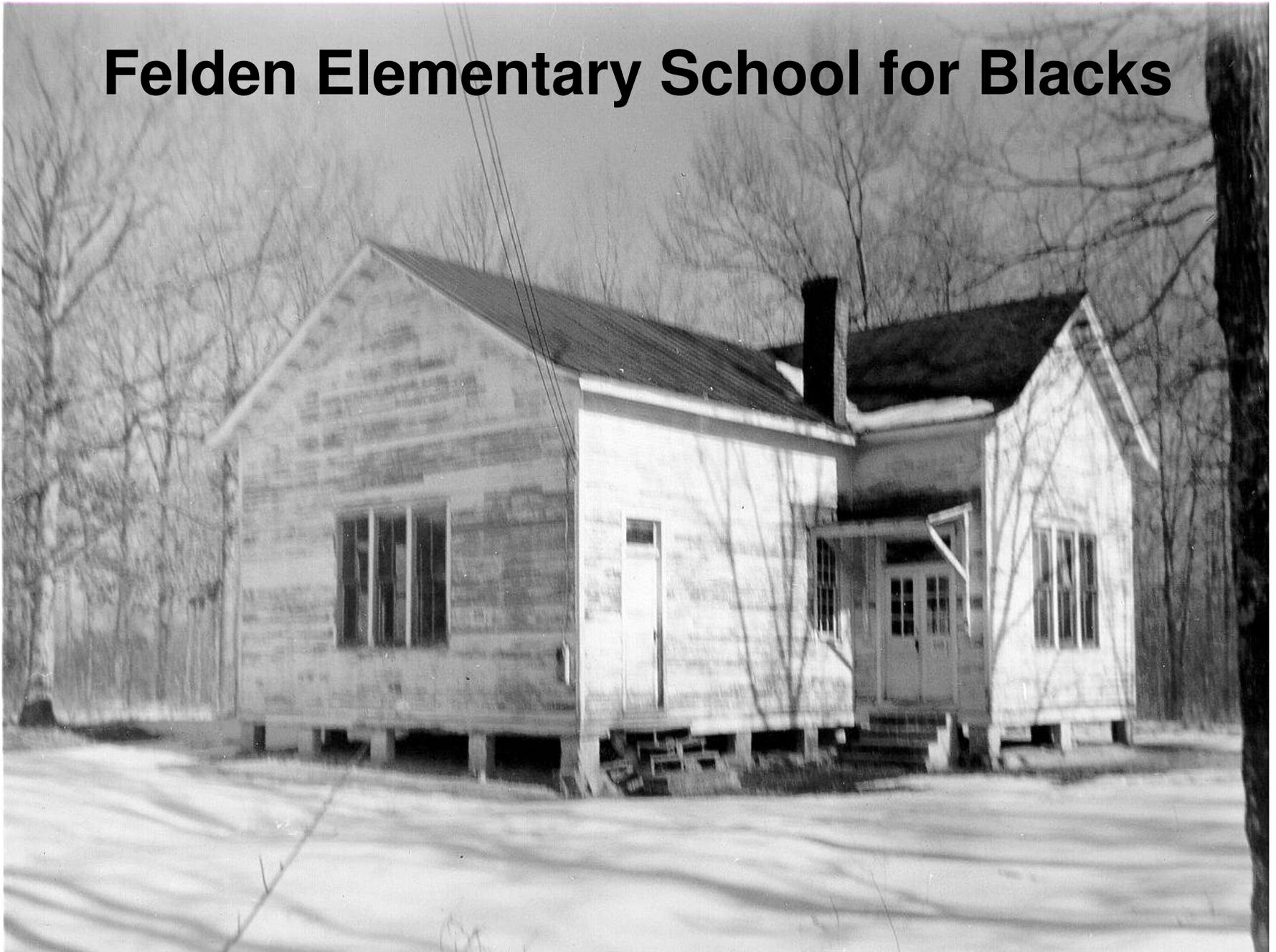
# Epps Elementary School for Blacks



# Worsham School for Whites (K-12)



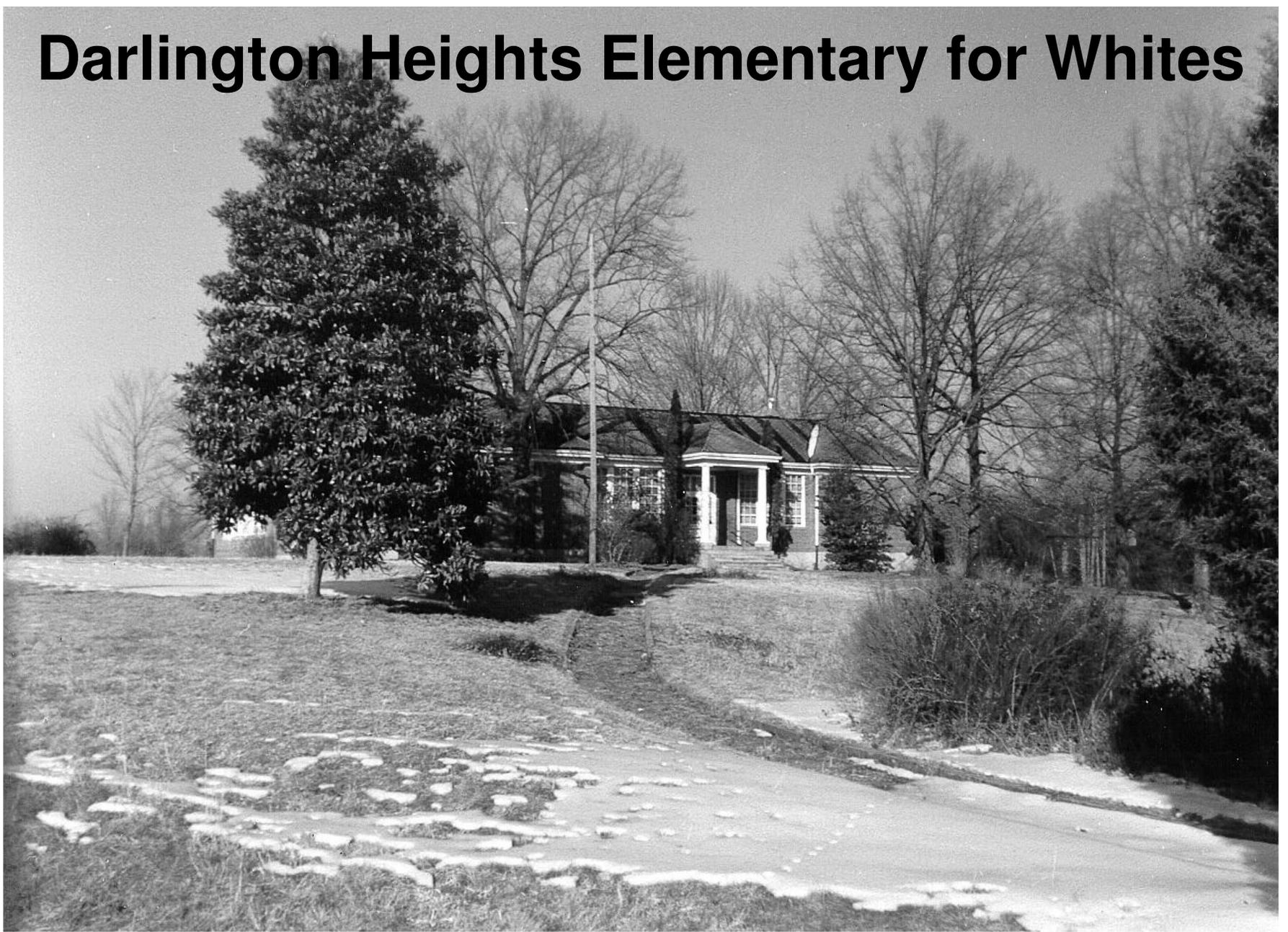
# Felden Elementary School for Blacks



# Felden Elementary School Bathroom



# Darlington Heights Elementary for Whites



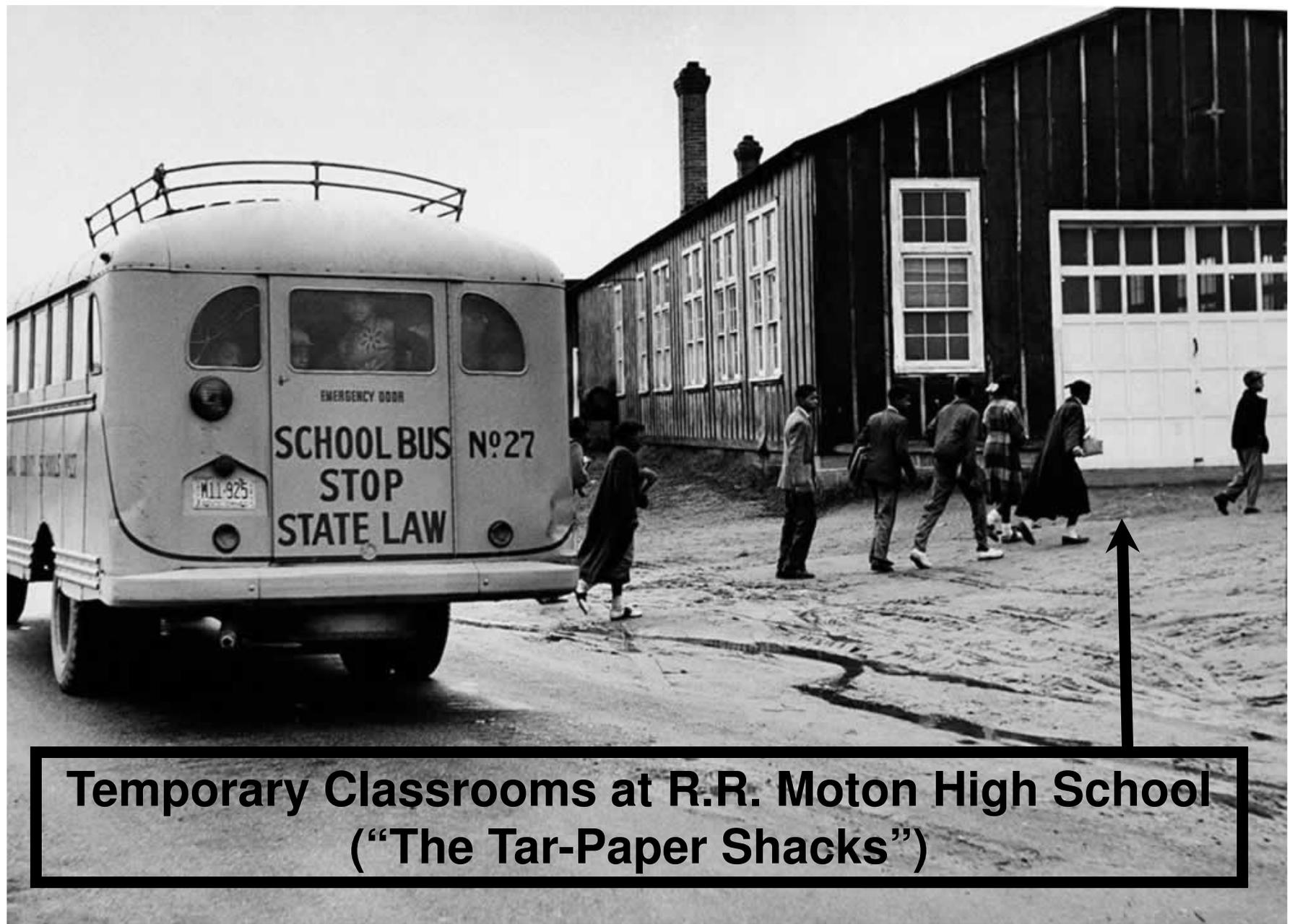
# The Brown Decision (1954)



2) The segregated school system in Prince Edward County, Virginia, was particularly glaring. For example, some black schools were denied basic facilities like indoor plumbing, nurses, cafeterias, and gymnasiums. In 1950, the four hundred and fifty black students at Farmville's R.R. Moton High School were jammed into a building that was designed to hold less than two hundred. The all-white School Board responded by constructing tar-paper structures and providing an immobilized school bus as an overflow classroom.

# R.R. Moton High School for Blacks



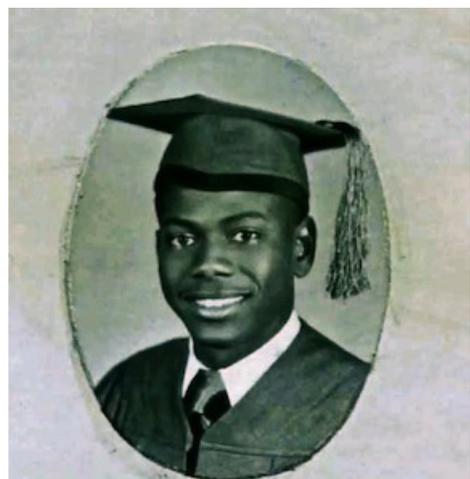


**Temporary Classrooms at R.R. Moton High School  
("The Tar-Paper Shacks")**

# Farmville High School for Whites



# The Brown Decision (1954)



JOHN A. STOKES  
*Pres.*

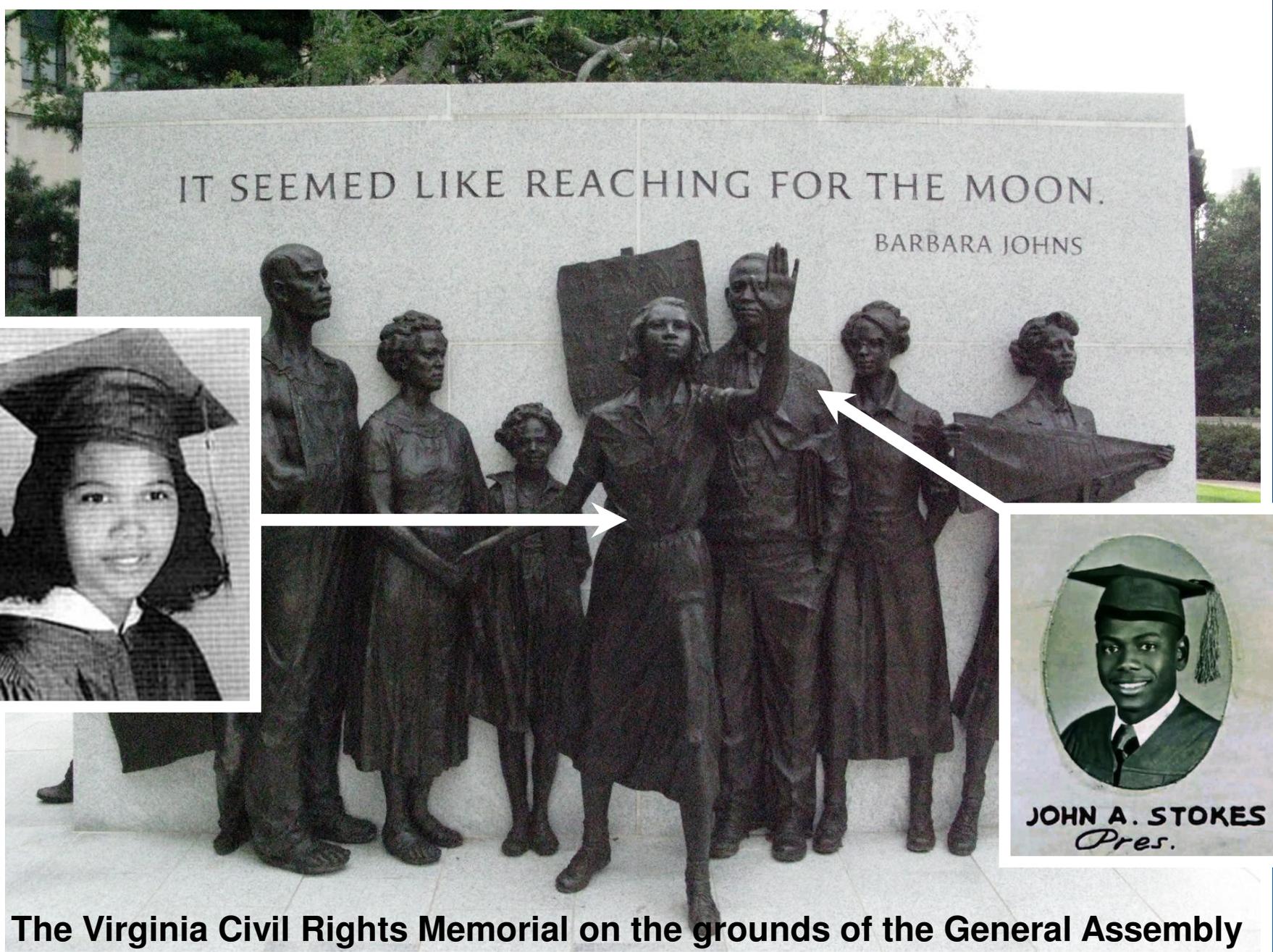
3) Despite yearly petitions for equal facilities, the all-white School Board refused to allocate additional funds for black education. This led Barbara Johns, an R.R. Moton Junior, to secretly organize a student demonstration on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1951 in order to bring greater attention to the situation in Farmville. With the help of classmates like John and Carrie Stokes, Johns secretly forged a series of memos from the school Principal that instructed the teachers to bring their classes to the commons area for a special assembly. When the students arrived, Johns took the stage and called on the students to walk-out in protest of their sub-standard facilities.



**Photograph of Barbara Johns in the late 1960s.**

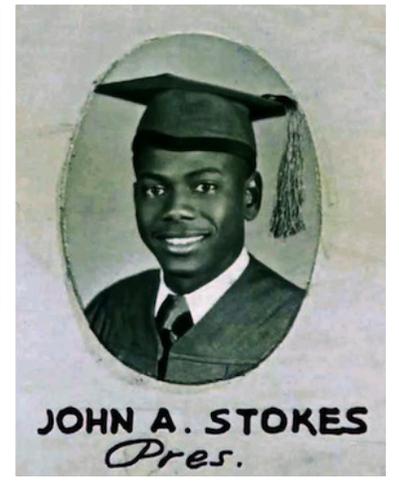
The stage at R.R. Moton High School where Barbara Johns called for the student strike on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1951.





IT SEEMED LIKE REACHING FOR THE MOON.

BARBARA JOHNS



The Virginia Civil Rights Memorial on the grounds of the General Assembly

# The Brown Decision (1954)



4) Three days later, Barbara Johns and John Stokes led a group of students to the county courthouse in order to take their demands to the white school superintendent. After that meeting produced no results, Johns wrote a letter to NAACP lawyers Oliver Hill and Spotswood Robinson. The NAACP agreed to take the students' case on the condition that the students change their demands for equal facilities to the integration of public schools in general.

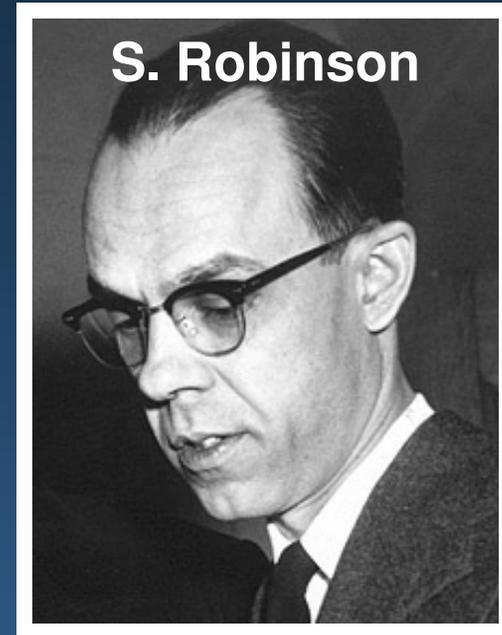
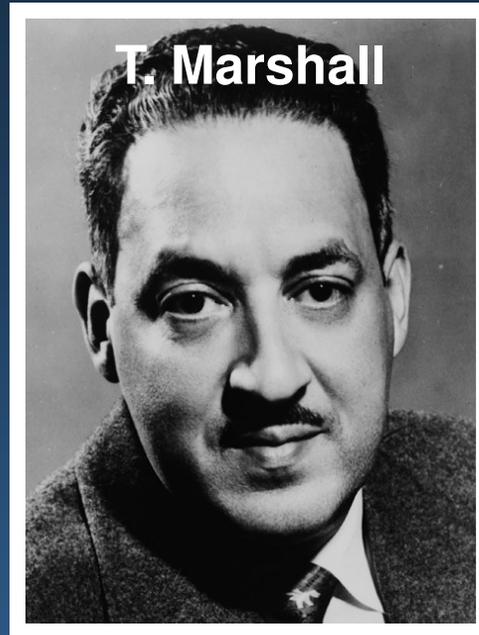
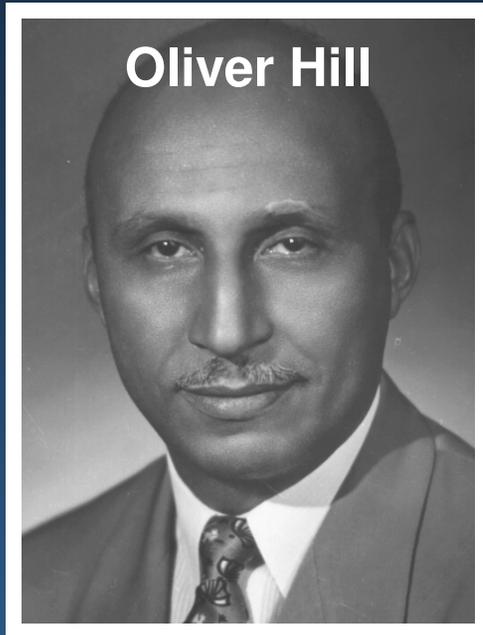
**Main Street Farmville as it looks today. This is the path that R.R. Moton students walked down on their way to the Prince Edward County Courthouse. The First Baptist Church of Reverend Francis L. Griffin (a strong supporter of the student strike) appears on the right.**



**The Prince Edward County Courthouse where R.R. Moton students met with the Superintendent of Public Schools.**

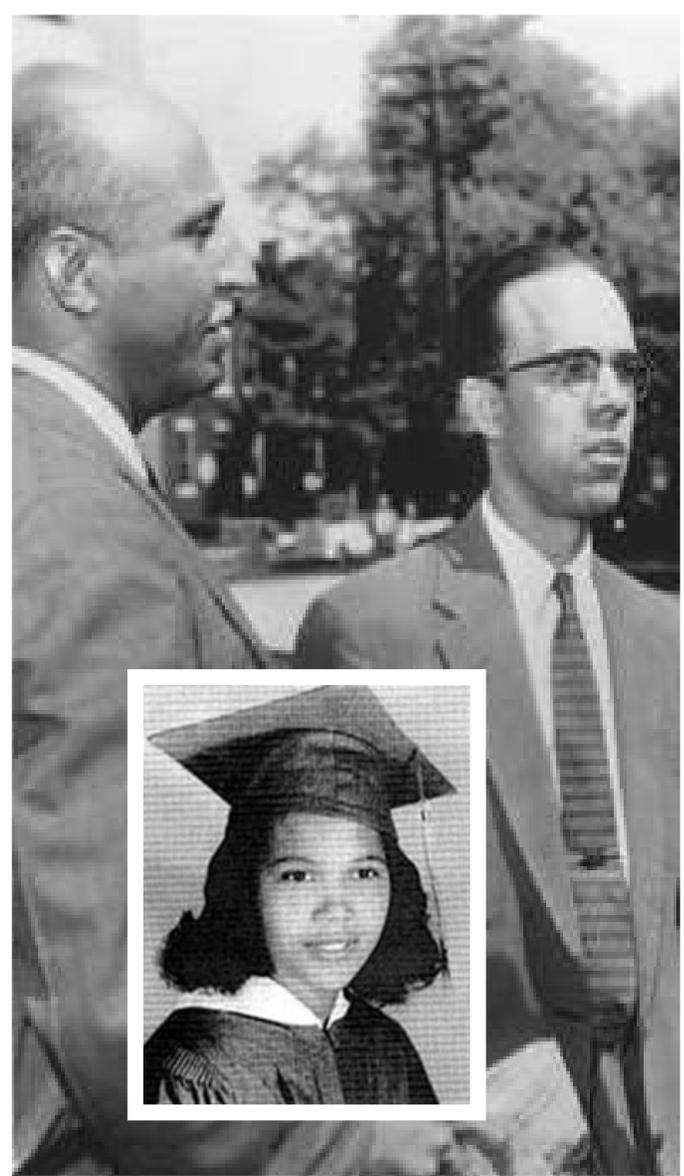


# The Brown Decision (1954)



5) Oliver Hill and Spotswood Robinson were ardent civil rights attorneys that had built careers battling segregation within their native state of Virginia. They both had been classmates and colleagues of Thurgood Marshall at the Howard University Law School in Washington, D.C. In 1940, Hill won his first civil rights case in *Alston v. the School Board of Norfolk, Virginia* by forcing the city to pay black teachers on the same scale as their white counterparts.

# The Brown Decision (1954)



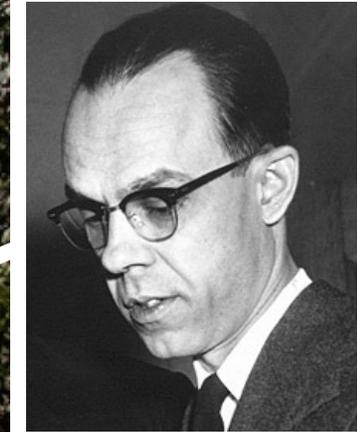
6) Oliver Hill and Spotswood Robinson responded to Barbara Johns' plea, but they intended to meet with the Moton students in order to convince them that Prince Edward County was not an ideal setting for a civil rights case. However, the resolve of the students convinced the NAACP attorneys to take the case. A month after the student strike, Hill and Robinson filed the case of *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*. After defeats in Virginia State Courts and Federal District Court, the case was eventually appealed before the Supreme Court of the United States.



**Hill and Robinson after filing Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County**



**Dorothy Davis and her fellow plaintiffs posing in front of the “Tar-Paper Shacks” on the grounds of R.R. Moton High School**



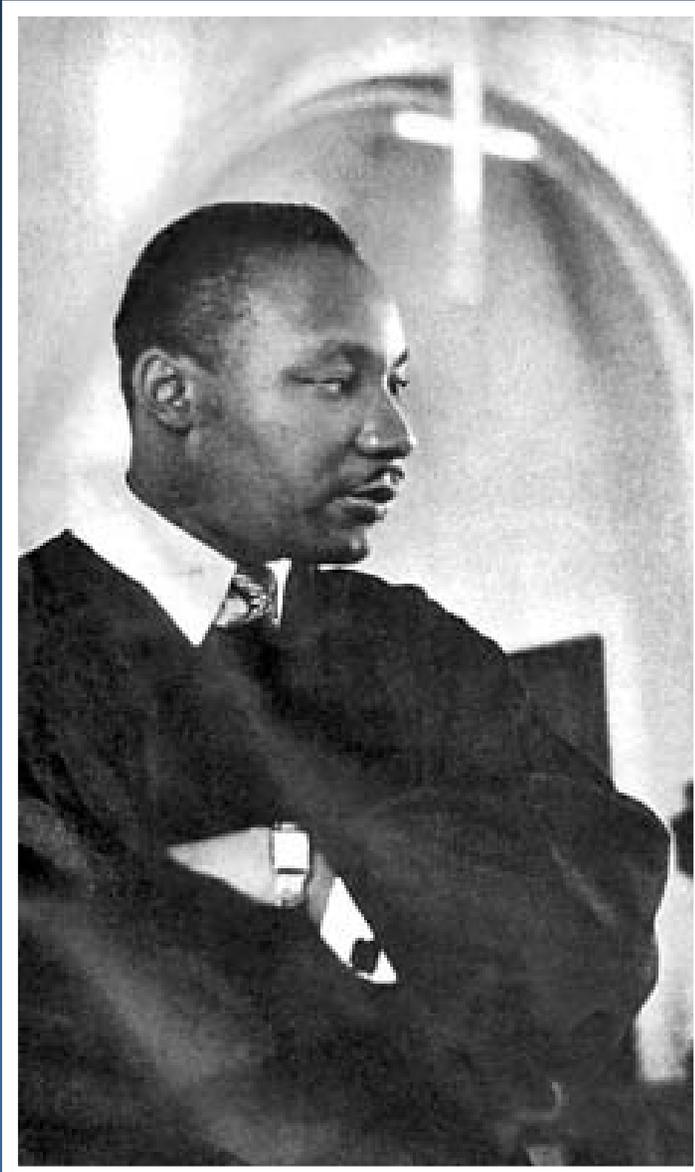
**Oliver Hill and Spotswood Robinson featured on a side panel of the Virginia Civil Rights Memorial on the grounds of the General Assembly**

# The Brown Decision (1954)



7) News of the student walk-out at R.R. Moton High School make the white community of Farmville take notice of young Barbara Johns. Her family received harassing phone calls and a cross was burned on the grounds of R.R. Moton High School. Fearing for their daughter's safety, Barbara's parents sent her to live in Montgomery, Alabama with her well-known uncle, Reverend Vernon Johns.

# The Brown Decision (1954)



8) Vernon Johns was the respected pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. He quickly gained a reputation for speaking out against the evils of segregation. He was so bold that he once publically titled his Easter Sermon, “The Crucifixion: the First Lynching.” Continued controversy forced Johns to retire from the pulpit in 1954. Ironically, the church deacons replaced Rev. Johns with a new, young minister named Martin Luther King, Jr.

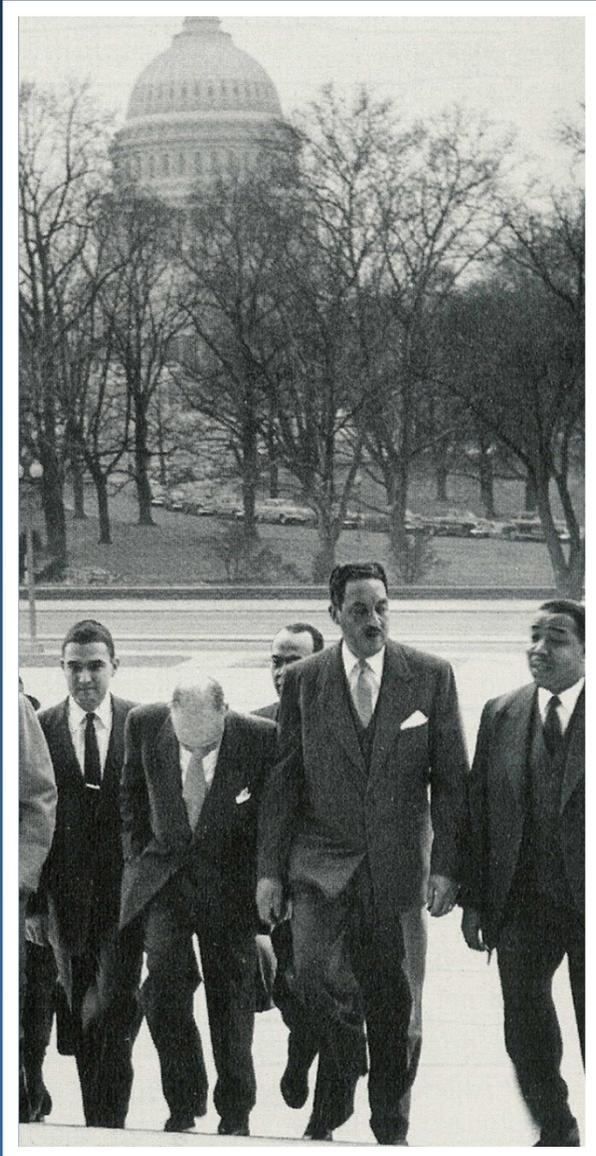
# The Brown Decision (1954)

Linda Brown



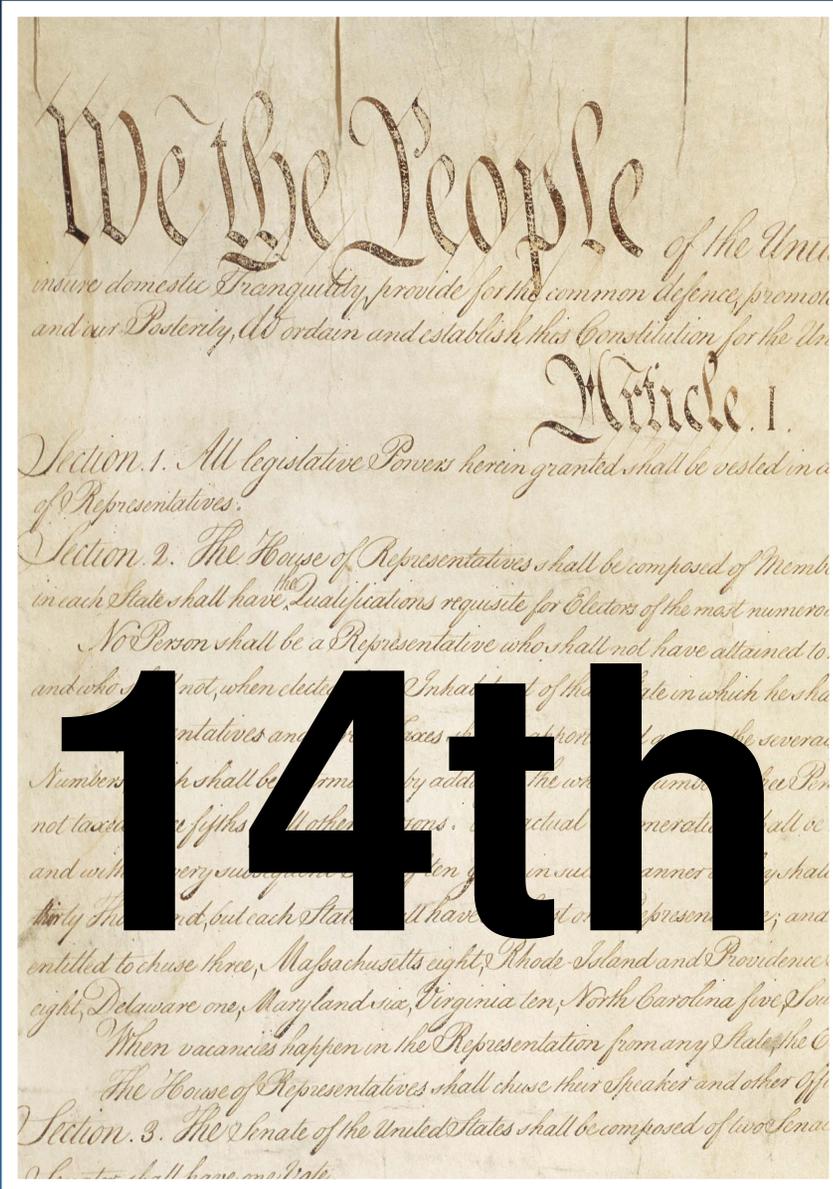
9) By 1954, the Supreme Court agreed to hear five different NAACP cases concerning the constitutionality of segregation in public schools. The case of Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County was now one of five cases that were consolidated into Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas.

# The Brown Decision (1954)



10) Thurgood Marshall had participated in fifteen Supreme Court cases and he had won thirteen of them. Marshall organized an expert team of NAACP lawyers that included Oliver Hill and Spotswood Robinson and they prepared for the long-awaited day in court. Marshall's team even held a mock trial in their old classrooms at the Howard University Law School in Washington, D.C.

# The Brown Decision (1954)



11) The next day, the NAACP team argued that the separate-but-equal doctrine established by *Plessy v. Ferguson* was unconstitutional under the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. They reasoned that segregated schools, no matter how equal the facilities, were “inherently unequal” because they created a sense of inferiority in minority students.

# The Brown Decision (1954)



12) The NAACP also referenced a sociological study conducted by Dr. Kenneth Clark that used black and white dolls to determine the effect that racial segregation had on black children. When presented with the dolls, ten out of sixteen black children said that they liked the white doll better. Eleven of them added that the black doll looked “bad.” Dr. Clark recalled, *“the most disturbing question – and the one that really made me upset – was the final [one]: ‘Now show me the doll that’s most like you.’ Many of the children became emotionally upset when they had to identify with the doll they had rejected. These children saw themselves as inferior, and they accepted the inferiority as part of reality.”*

# The Brown Decision (1954)



13) The Supreme Court was deliberating over the Brown case for months when Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson unexpectedly died. President Eisenhower nominated California Governor Earl Warren to fill the void of the court leadership. Warren took the initiative on the Brown case and worked hard to ensure a unanimous decision. On May 17th, 1954, the Court ruled 9-0 that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. Warren wrote in the majority opinion, *"We conclude, unanimously, that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."*

From left, attorneys George E.C. Hayes, Thurgood Marshall, and James Nabrit Jr. celebrate their victory in the *Brown* case on May 17, 1954.



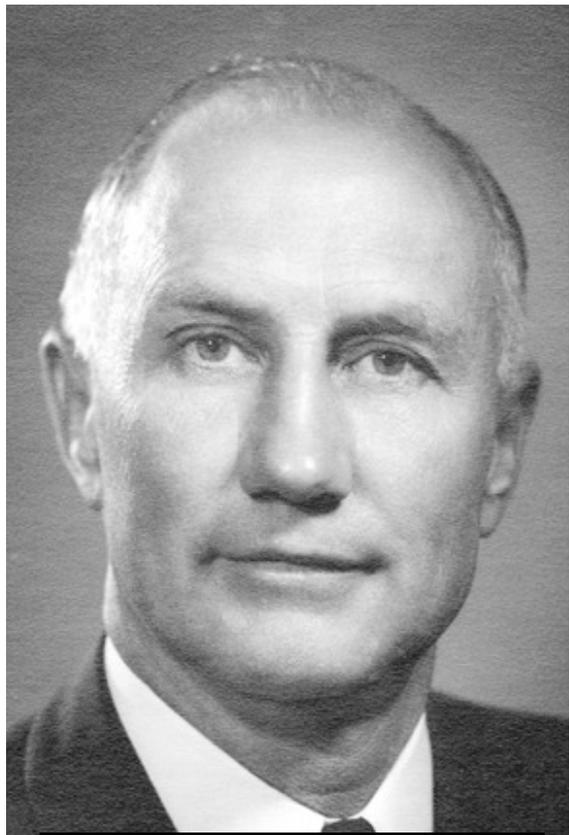


# Massive Resistance



- 1) Despite the landmark ruling by the Supreme Court, segregationist whites vowed to prevent any form of integration in the South. On February 24, 1956, Virginia Senator Harry Flood Byrd declared a policy of “Massive Resistance” and encouraged Virginia’s General Assembly to pass state laws in order to prevent integration.

# Massive Resistance



2) In March 1956, Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina joined Senator Byrd in declaring Congressional opposition to the Brown Decision by issuing the “Southern Manifesto” against racial integration. Over 14 Senators and 81 Congressmen, ranging from Texas to Virginia, signed the manifesto in defiance of the Supreme Court. Many southern politicians revived their commitment to the principle of states’ rights by actually threatening to exercise the powers of “interposition” and “nullification.”

# Massive Resistance



**Ex.- Mississippi  
Senator, Jim Eastland  
declared that, *“the  
people of the South  
are in favor of  
segregation, and  
Supreme Court or no  
Supreme Court, we  
are going to maintain  
segregated schools  
down in Dixie.”***

# Massive Resistance



3) Senator Harry F. Byrd was a former Governor of Virginia and was a longstanding leader of conservative Democrats within the state. His control of Virginia politics was so entrenched and widespread that it was commonly known as the “Byrd Machine.” Byrd’s political power enabled him to firmly establish his policy of “Massive Resistance” to integration in Virginia.

# Massive Resistance



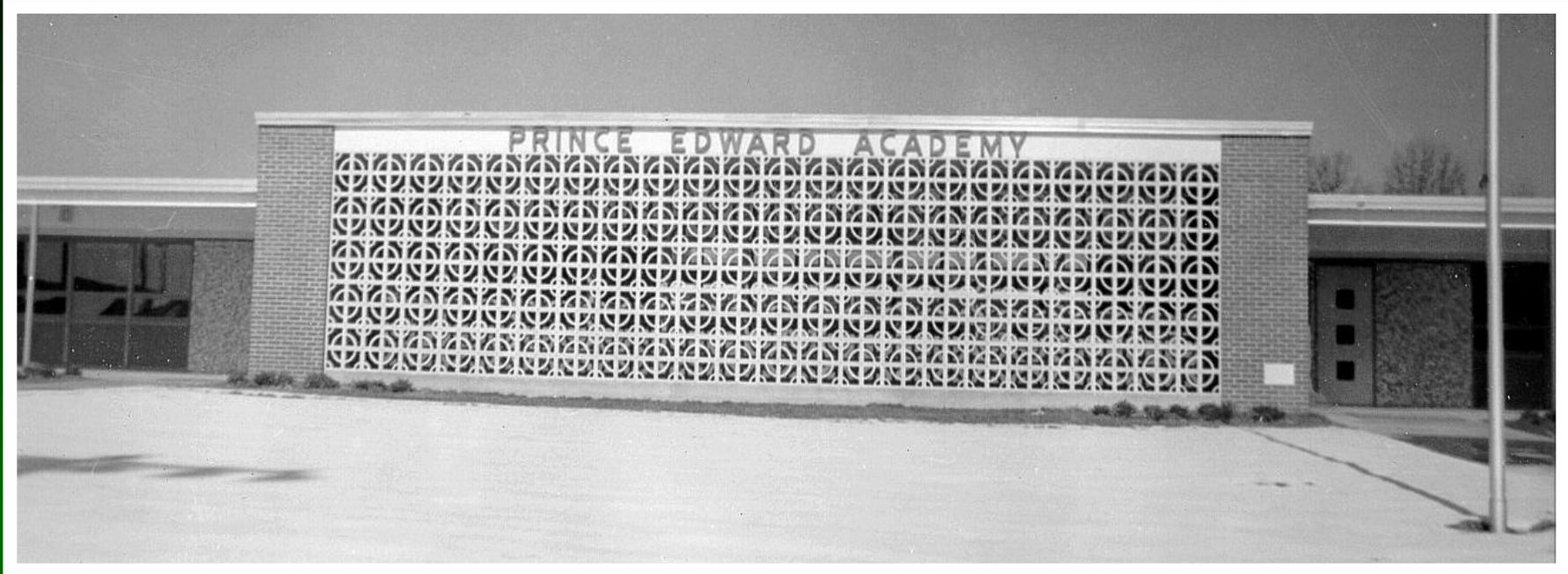
**4) Under Byrd's direction, the Virginia General Assembly (the state legislature) passed a law that cut all state funding to school systems that attempted to integrate. The law also empowered the Governor with the ability to forcibly close Virginia school systems that attempted to integrate.**

# Massive Resistance



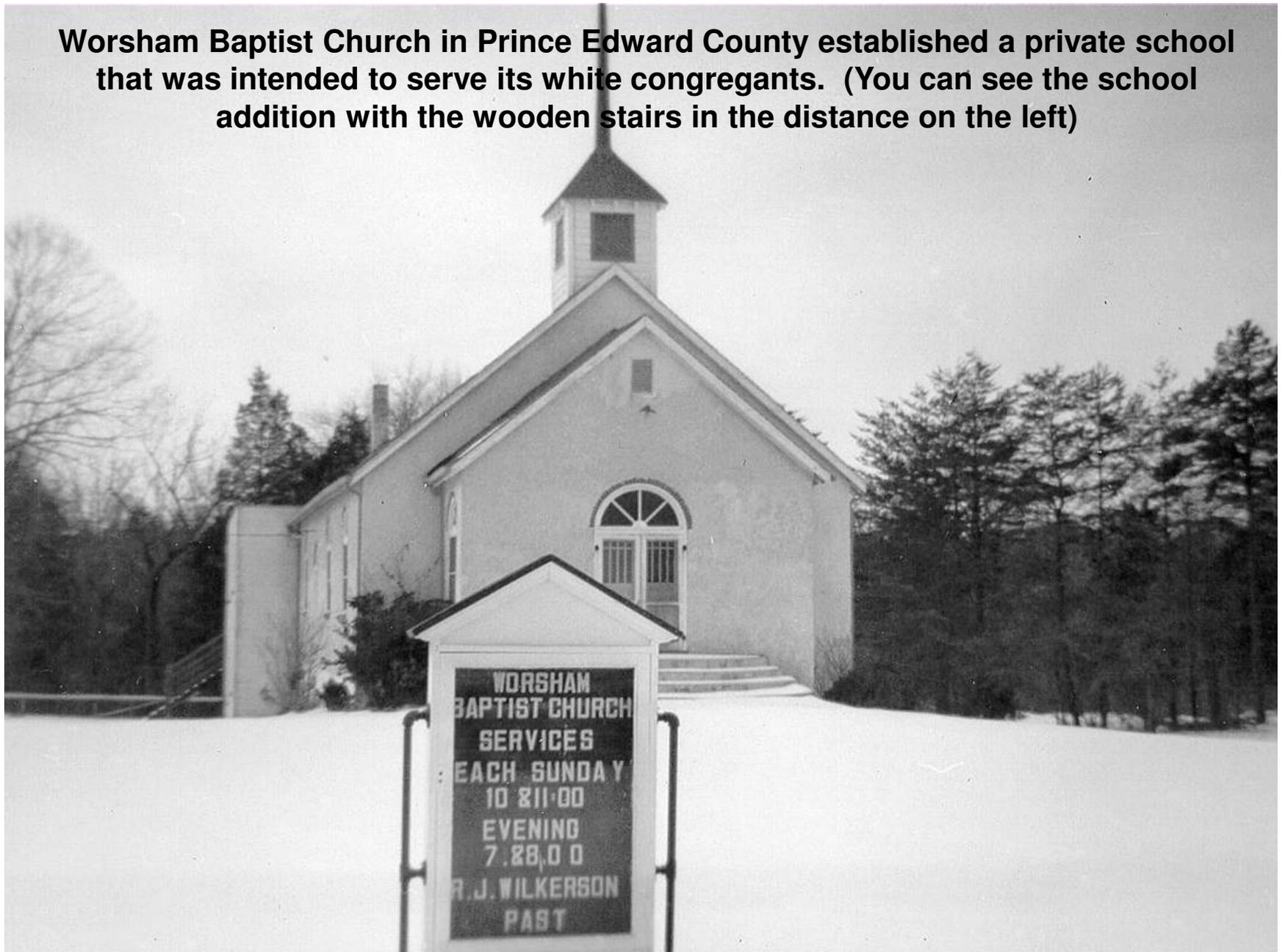
- 5) Many segregationist whites avoided integration by enrolling their children in whites-only private academies that maintained segregation. The private status of these “segregation academies” exempted them from complying with the Brown decision. Sadly, white churches throughout the South helped establish many of these “segregation academies” for their white-only congregations. The threat of racial integration in urban areas also caused segregationists to move to the predominantly white suburbs on the outskirts of black inner cities (a process later termed “white flight”).

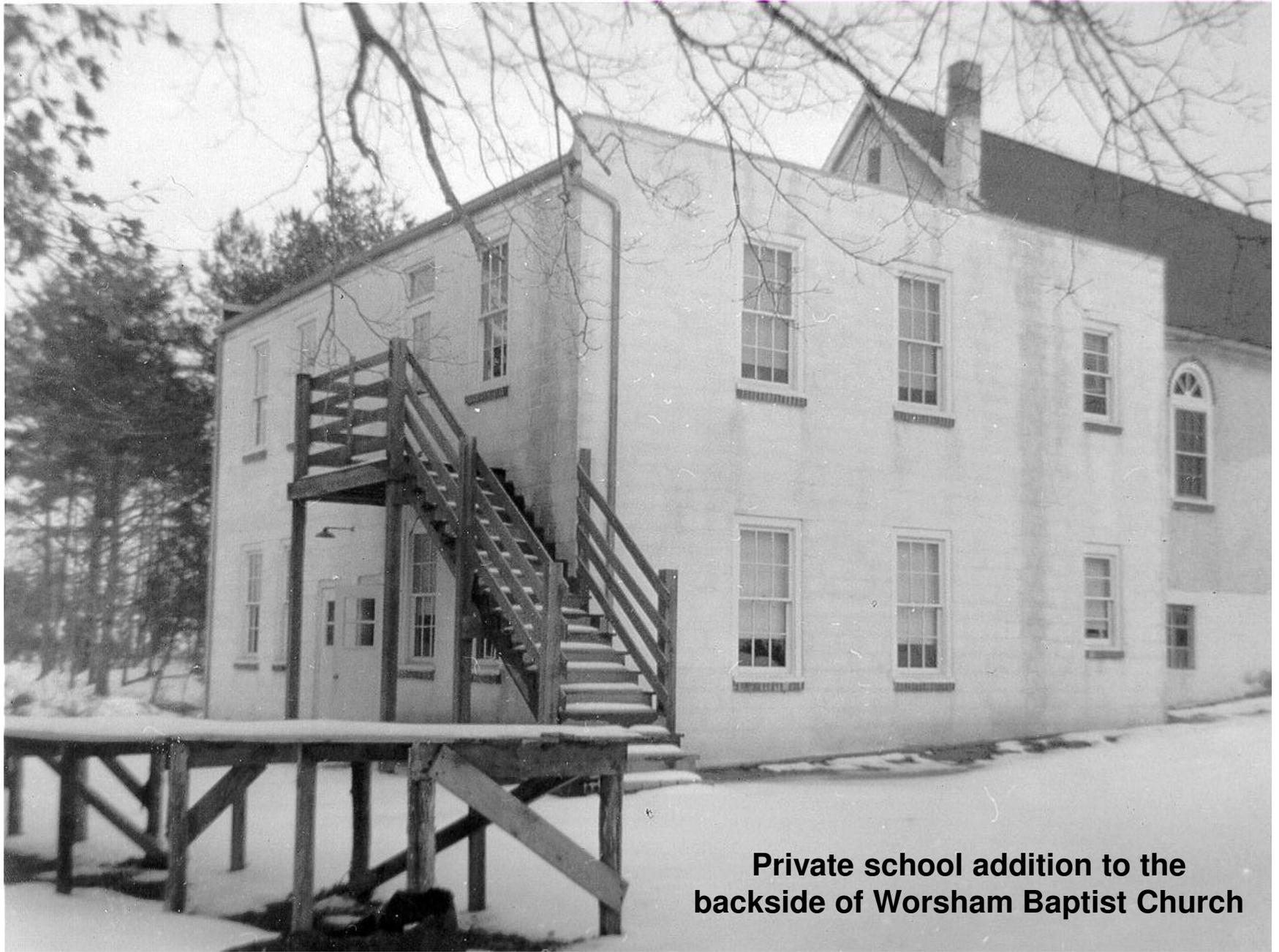
# Massive Resistance



6) Thousands of private academies were established throughout the South and wealthy and middle-class whites paid tuition fees in order to avoid integration. Virginia's Massive Resistance laws initially tried to make segregation academies more affordable to white parents by using tax dollars to provide them with tuition grants (vouchers).

**Worsham Baptist Church in Prince Edward County established a private school that was intended to serve its white congregants. (You can see the school addition with the wooden stairs in the distance on the left)**



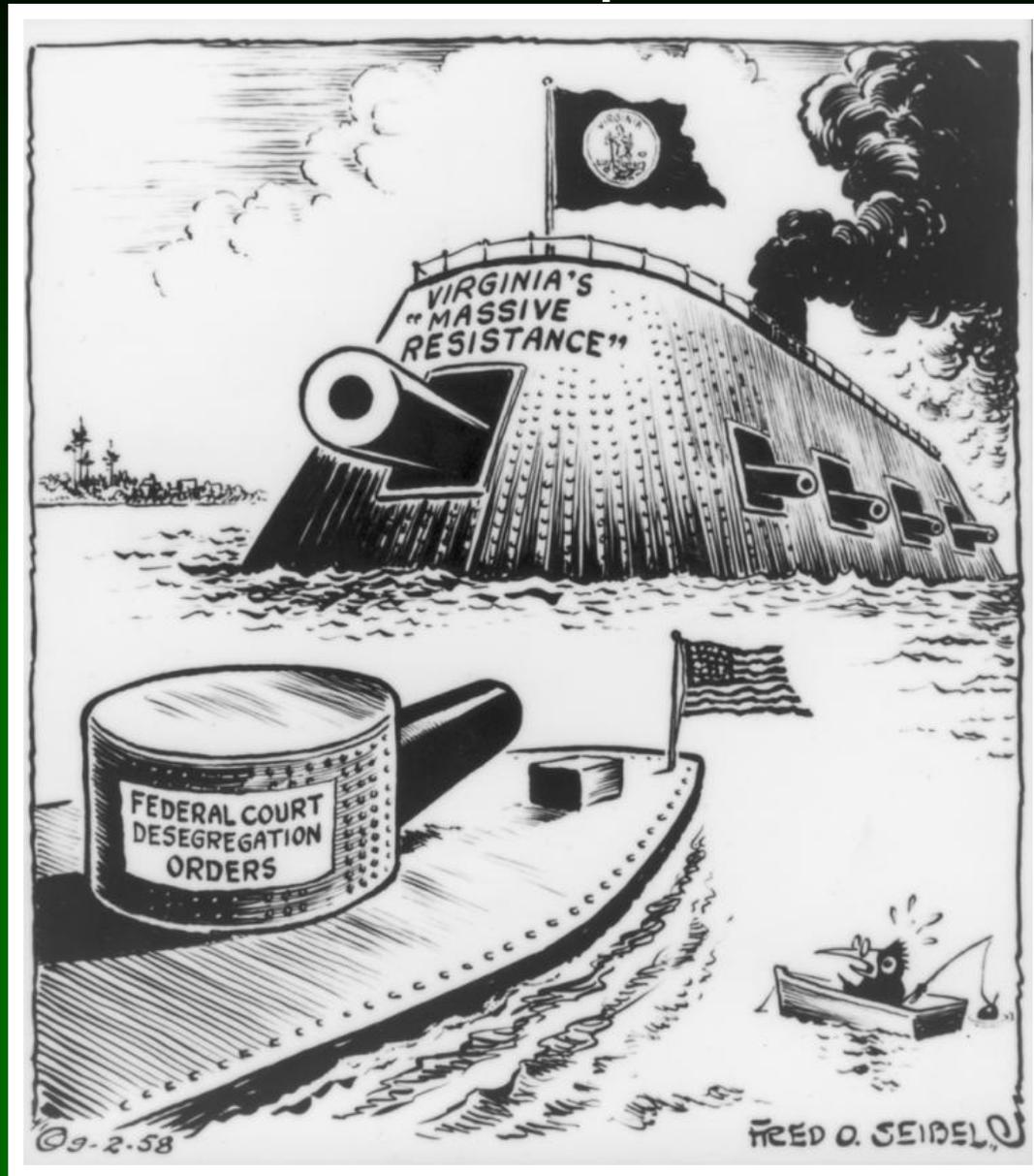


**Private school addition to the  
backside of Worsham Baptist Church**

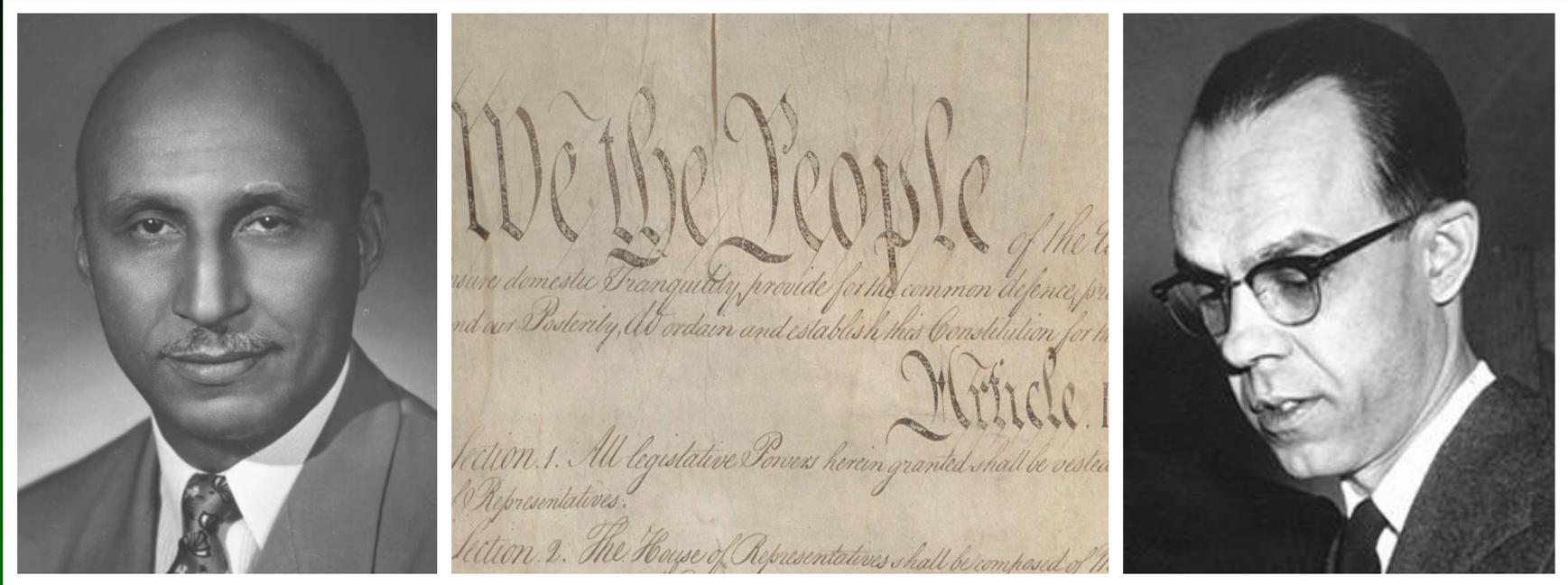
Worsham Baptist Church Classroom



1958 political cartoon by Fred Seibel featured in the Richmond Times-Dispatch



# Massive Resistance



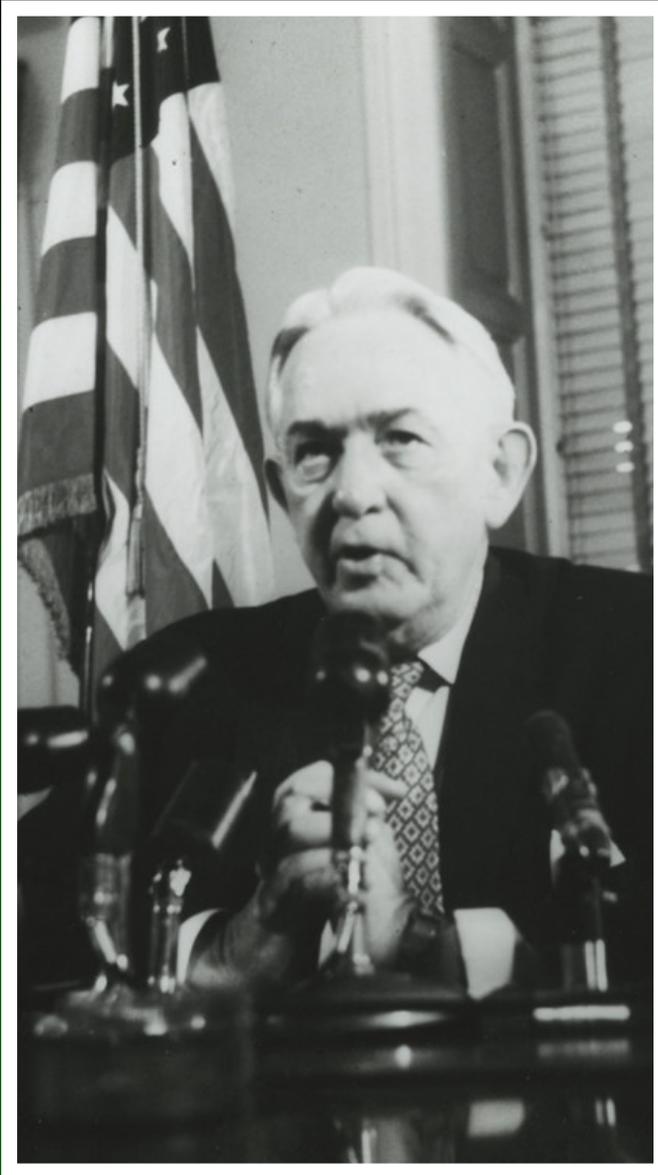
7) The NAACP continually filed cases in federal courts to challenge the constitutionality Virginia's "Massive Resistance" legislation. In 1958, the federal courts upheld the Brown decision and ordered Virginia's public schools to desegregate. It's important to note that during the previous year, President Eisenhower ordered the use of military force to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas when the Governor refused to comply with the Brown decision.



Federal troops in front of  
Little Rock Central High School,  
September 26, 1957.

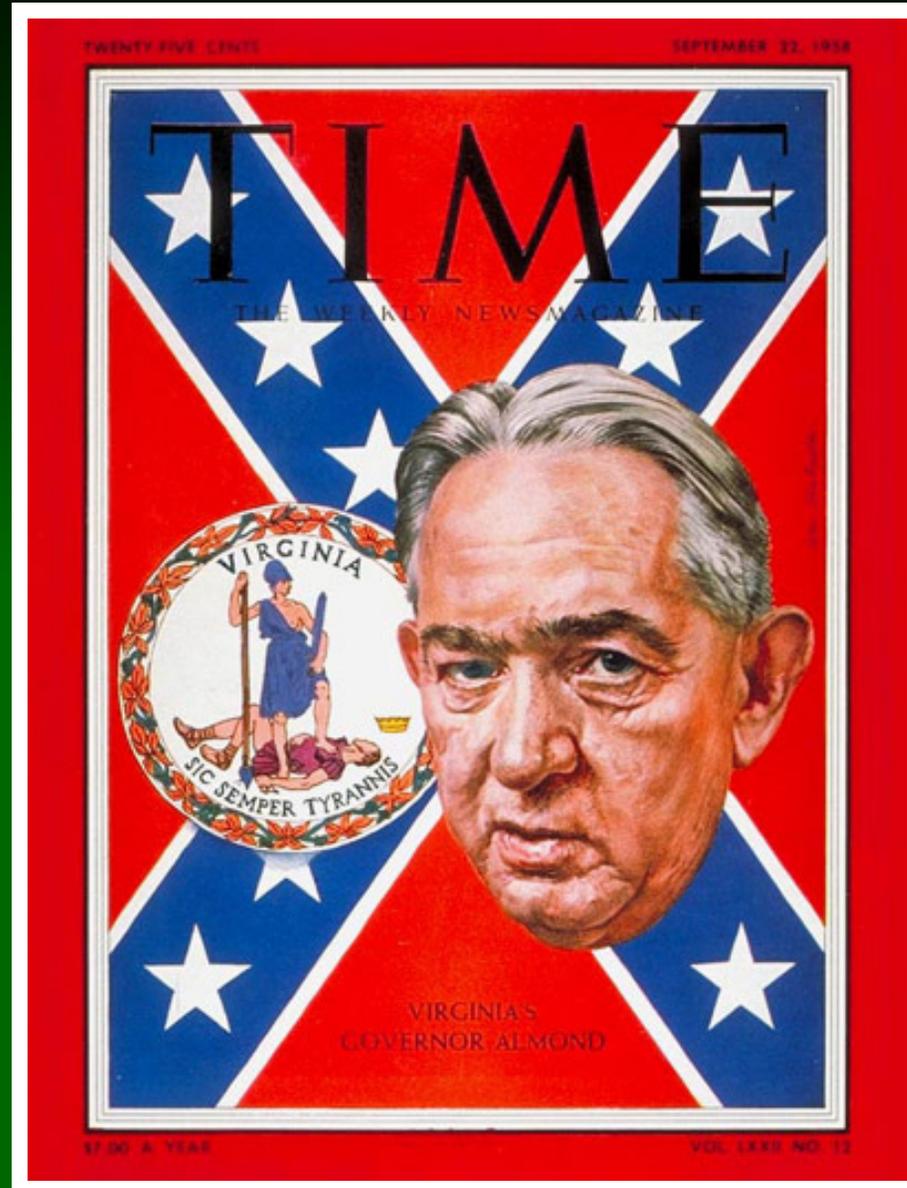


# Massive Resistance



8) Rather than risk a defiance of the federal courts and a possible military order from Washington, Virginia Governor Lindsay Almond actually ordered the closure of public schools that the federal courts had ordered to desegregate. This tactic was implemented in Warren County, Charlottesville, and Norfolk. Governor Almond later reversed his stance after the State Supreme Court declared the Massive Resistance laws to be unconstitutional in January 1959. Most schools reopened the following month and many prepared plans to desegregate over the next five years.

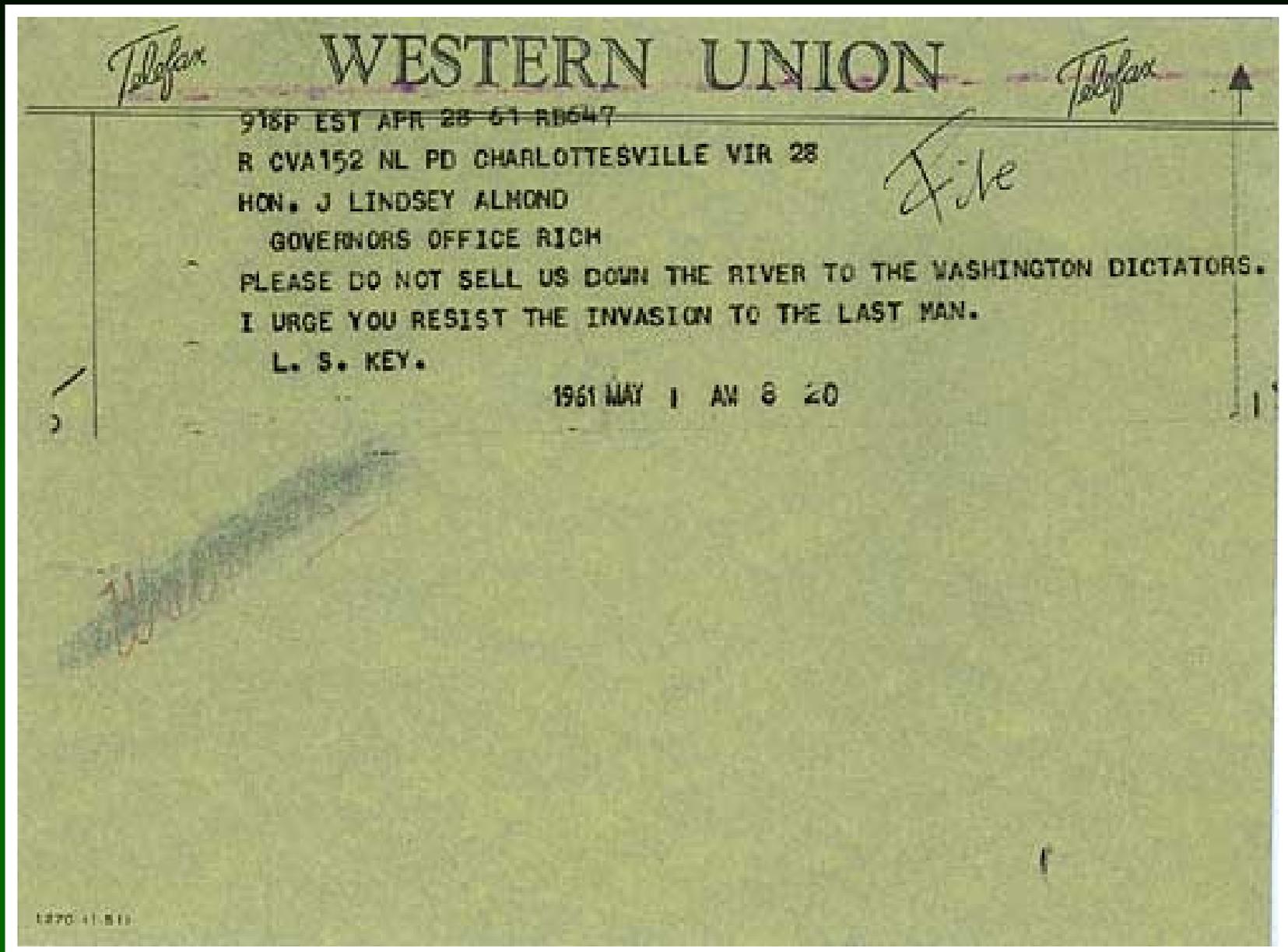
# Governor Almond featured on the cover of Time Magazine during the school closure crisis



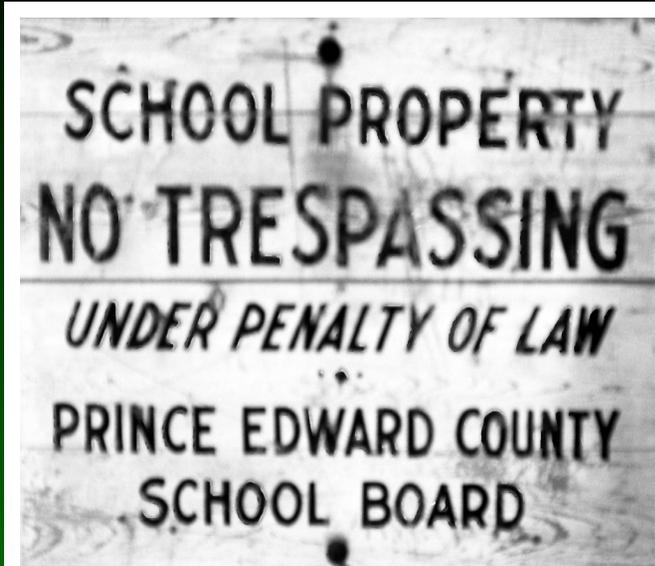
1959 political cartoon by Fred Seibel after the State Supreme Court ruled the Virginia's Massive Resistance laws to be unconstitutional.



# Segregationist telegram sent to Governor Almond in 1961

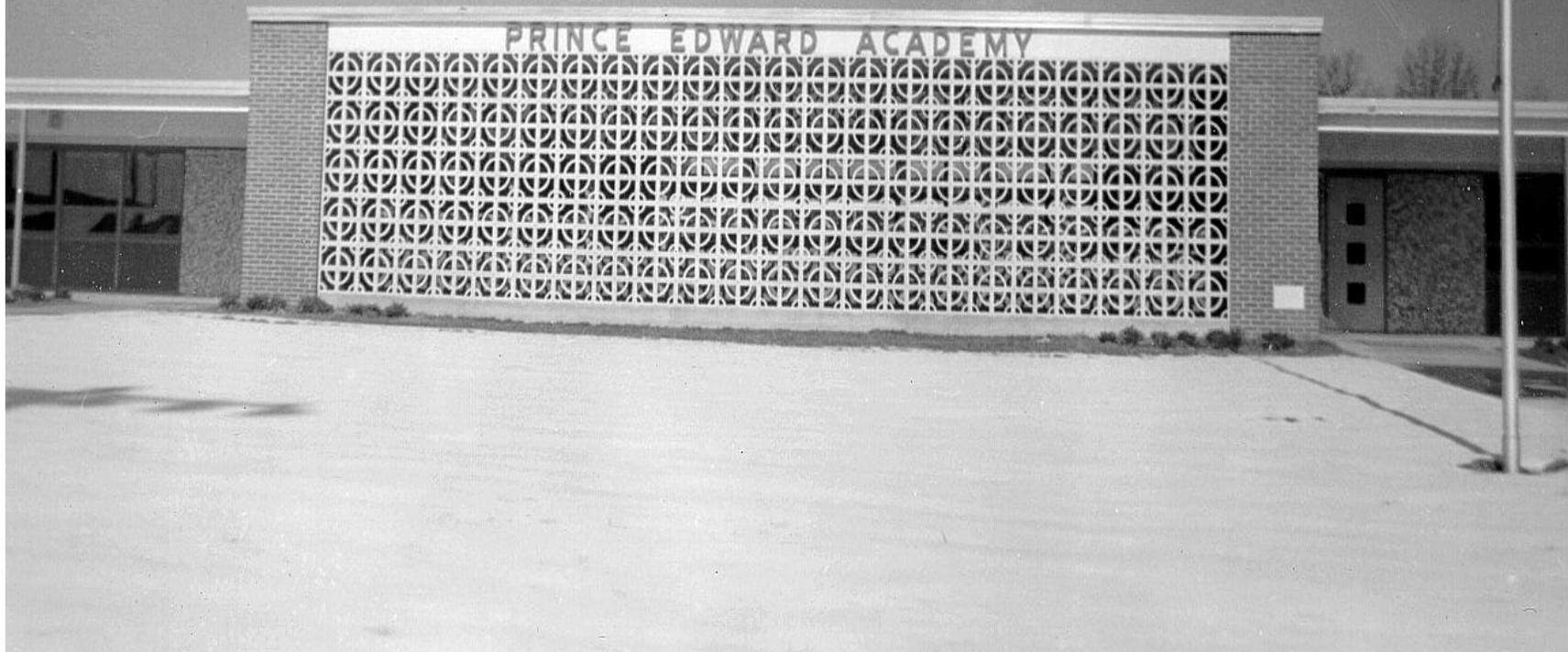


# Massive Resistance



- 9) Despite the compliance of Virginia's state government with the federal courts, the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors still refused to integrate and they closed schools by refusing to allocate funds for their operation. Wealthy segregationists established the Prince Edward Academy for white students in defiance of the President and the Supreme Court. The public schools remained closed from 1959-1964 and the black citizens of Prince Edward County had to seek education in their churches and from family members. No other school system in the United States resorted to such extreme measures in order to avoid integration.

The closure of all public schools in Price Edward County led to the establishment of all-white Prince Edward Academy. It continued as an all-white private school until the late 1980s. The school was purchased by John B. Fuqua in 1992 and the discrimination policy was finally removed.



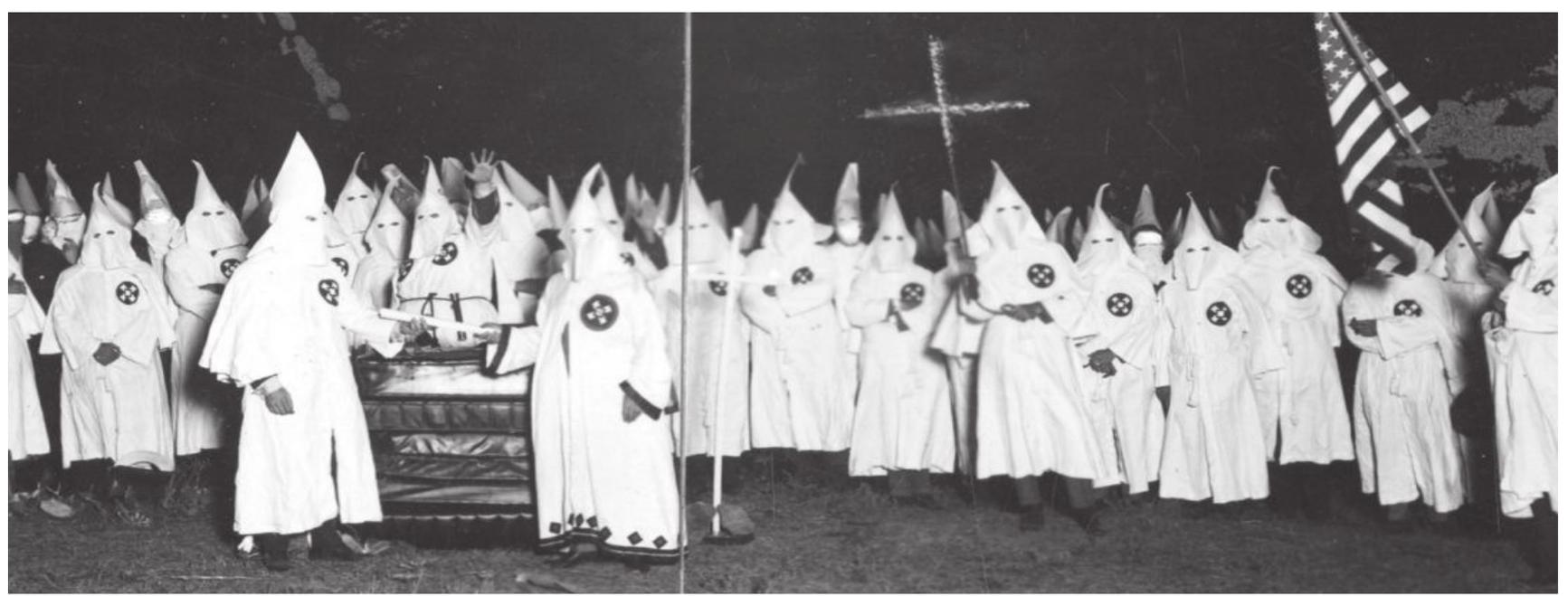
# Excerpt of 2008 Apology Resolution by the Prince Edward Board of Supervisors on the grounds of the County Courthouse



# Light of Reconciliation atop the Prince Edward County Courthouse



# Segregationist Organizations

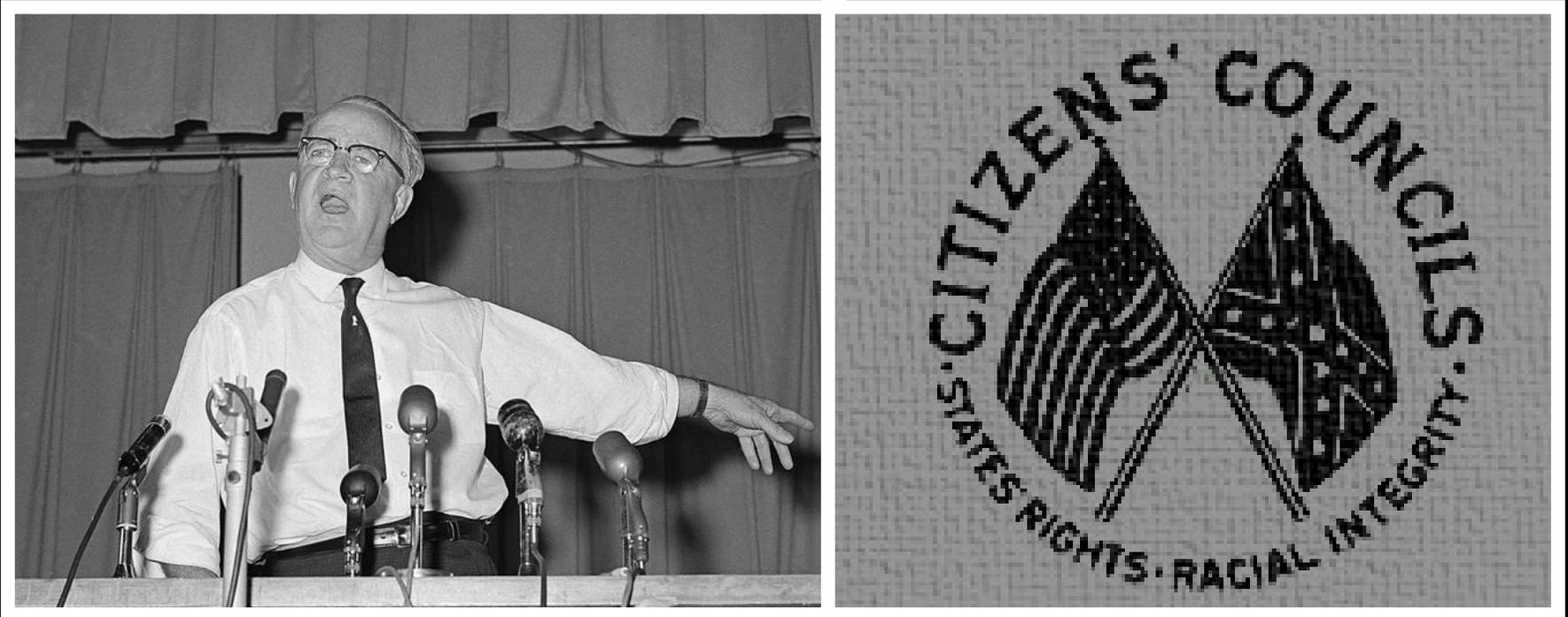


- 1) Membership in the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) peaked during the 1920s, but the Brown decision generated new support for racially inspired terrorism. The Klan was particularly popular in lower-class white communities of the rural South. Upper and middle-class segregationists tended to shy away from violence and they avoided public association with the KKK.

# 1925 Klan March in Washington D.C.



# Segregationist Organizations



- 2) Two months after the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board*, a group of segregationist politicians and white businessmen formed the first chapter of the White Citizens' Council (WCC) in Indianola, Mississippi. Members of the WCC used their political and economic power to prevent integration and black independence in the South.

# Segregationist Organizations

## NOTICE!

TO ALL WHITE CITIZENS  
GREETINGS:

### STOP

Buying FORD CARS and TRUCKS  
and other Ford Products

For years and years a considerable portion of the profits from the sale of Ford cars, trucks and other Ford products have been funneled into tax free foundations. MILLIONS and MILLIONS and MILLIONS of dollars of Ford profits have been distributed to integration and civil rights organizations to fight the white people of the SOUTH, by forcing them to associate with negroes.

It is time to dry up at least one source of the money that is being used to destroy our Southern way of life.

### DON'T BUY A FORD EVER AGAIN

For additional copies of this circular, write  
CITIZENS' COUNCIL OF GREATER NEW ORLEANS, INC.  
509 Delta Building New Orleans Louisiana 70112

3) The WCC soon spread throughout the Deep South and became the primary institution in defense of white supremacy and racial segregation. Because of their dependence on the white power structure, any black citizen that asserted their independence risked eviction from their homes and the loss of their jobs. One WCC member said that they aimed to *“make it difficult, if not impossible, for any Negro who advocates desegregation to find and hold a job, get credit, or renew a mortgage.”*

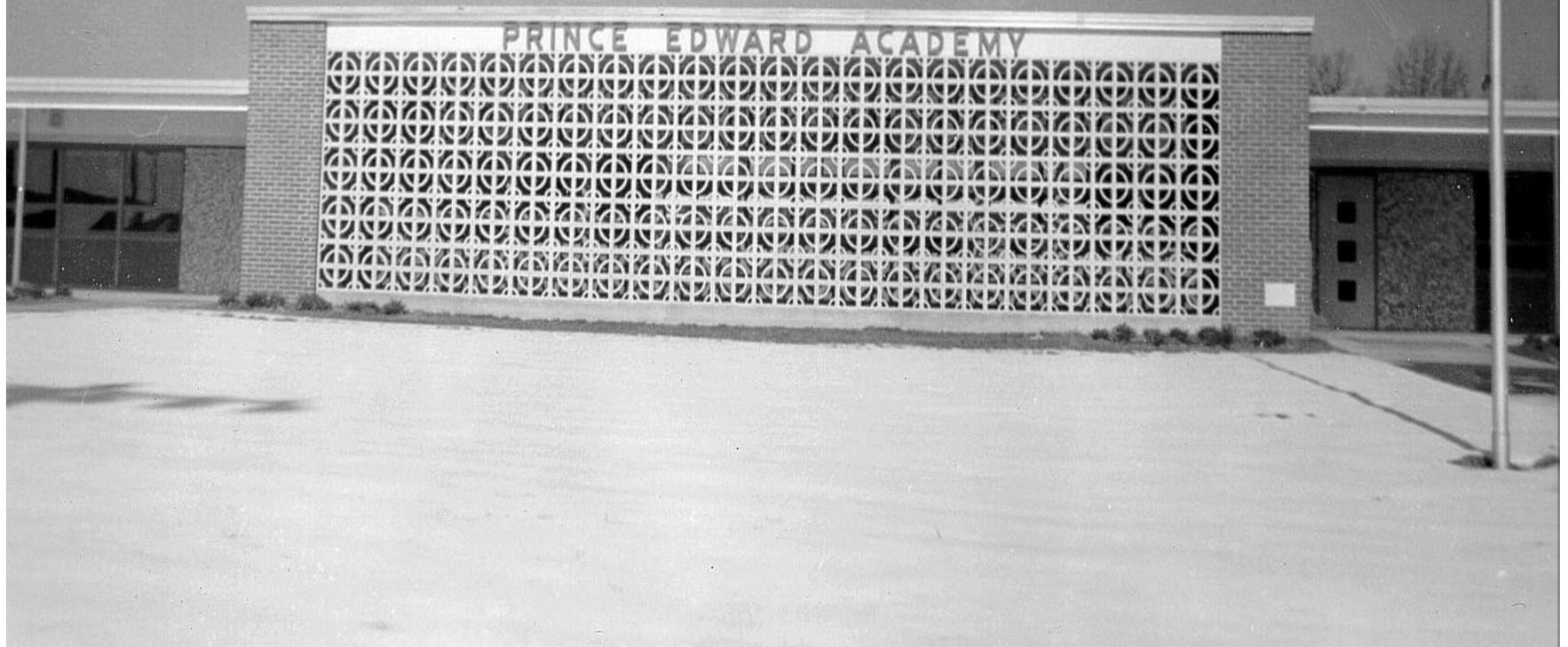
# Segregationist Organizations



*The above Confederate War Memorial in Farmville served as inspiration for the name of the “Defenders.” A passage on the monument refers to the Confederate soldiers as the “Defenders of State Sovereignty.”*

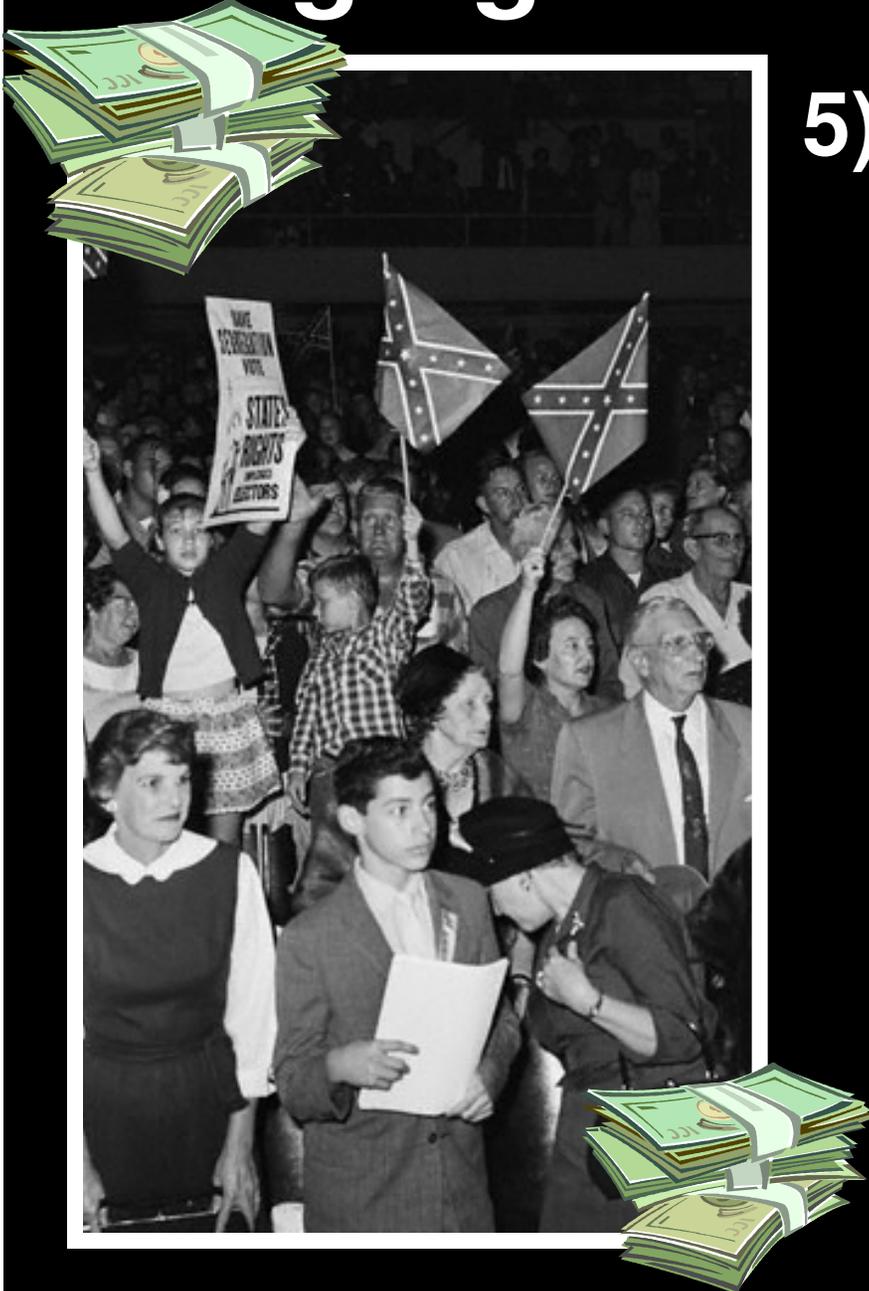
4) A group similar to the WCC was formed in Farmville, Virginia known as the “Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberty.” This group was endorsed by the Byrd Machine and thousands of Defender memberships were filed throughout the state. The organization also played a central role in raising the funds to construct the “whites-only” Prince Edward Academy in Farmville in 1959.

**The “Defenders” helped raise significant funds for the construction and operation of all-white Prince Edward Academy.**

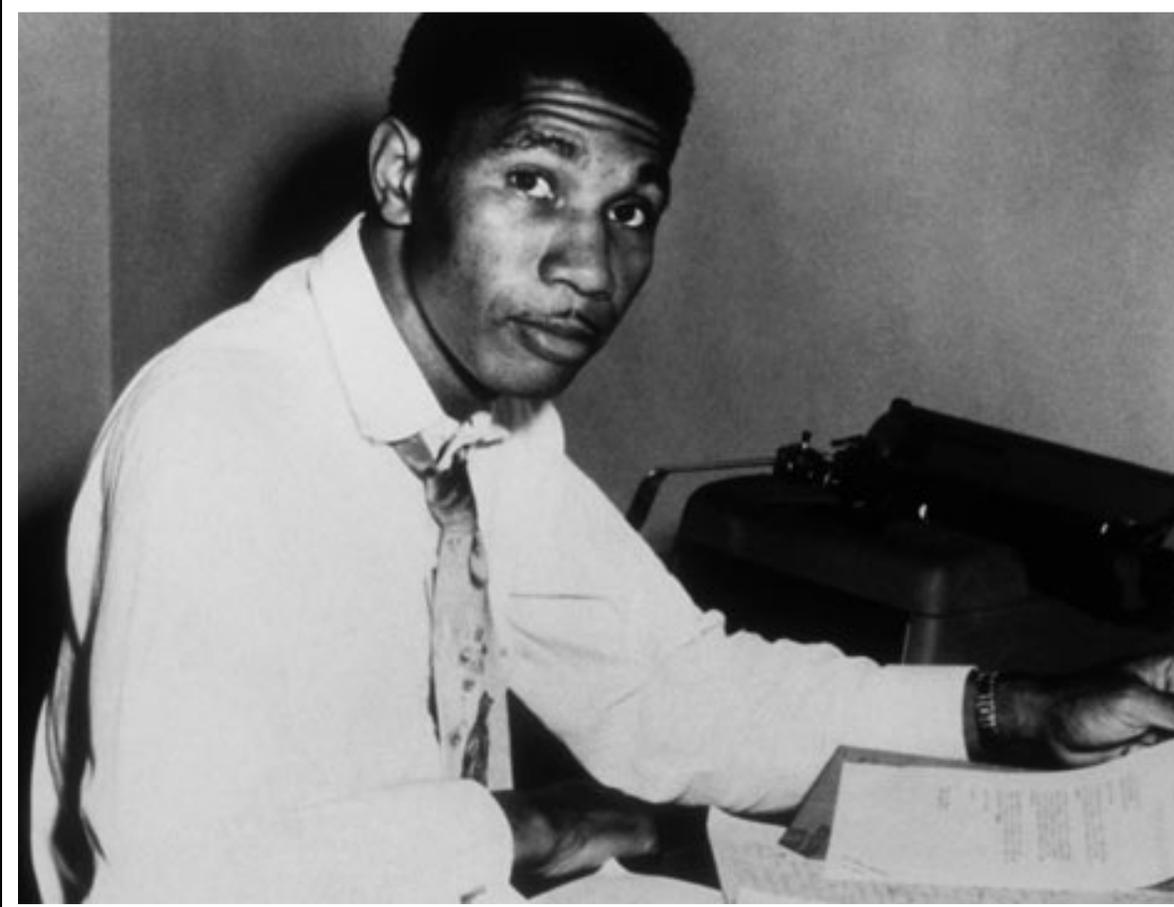


# Segregationist Organizations

5) The economic tactics of the White Citizens' Council earned it a reputation as the "White-Collar Klan" of the South. The WCC publicly disdained violence, but many members of the organization had ties to the Ku Klux Klan.



# Massive Resistance



**Ex. – Medgar Evers, the President of the Mississippi chapter of the NAACP, was assassinated by WCC / KKK member Byron DeLa Beckwith.**