

From: [Sarah Kohrs](#)
To: [Tyree, Matthew R, "Matt"](#)
Subject: urgent issue - please help!
Date: Wednesday, April 24, 2024 10:12:01 AM
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Dear VMI Board of Visitors:

[VMI reflects on Professor Jackson](#), during his tenure as professor:

"Unfortunately, Major Jackson, as he was known at VMI, was a mediocre teacher--although highly intelligent, he could not convey the concepts to students. This inability, along with his humorless demeanor, soon branded Jackson as an unpopular faculty member, one who was the target of many student pranks.

Francis H. Smith, VMI's Superintendent during Jackson's era, wrote the following in his *History of the Virginia Military Institute*

"As Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy, Major Jackson was not a success. He had not the qualifications needed for so important a chair. He was no teacher, and he lacked the tact required in getting along with his classes....His genius was in the Science and Art of War. He found a field for the display of this genius when the war opened in 1861."

As a general in the Confederacy, Jackson openly led others in revolt against the United States of America. As such, while he is a historical figure, he is not a good example for our students in public schools today.

And yet, here, in Shenandoah County VA, a new school board will be acting on May 9, 2024 to revert to public schools with names of Confederate leaders, unless fellow US citizens join me in raising awareness of our school system's history of massive resistance and racial injustice and urge the school board to not change names, but affirm the current non-divisive names of Mountain View and Honey Run. And that is what I'm asking you to do.

In order to help you understand the situation, here is a backstory to this situation:

Having watched the horrific murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, local, state, and national leaders - including our own Shenandoah County, VA, Board of Supervisors and SCPS School Board leaders - signed resolutions condemning racism. The one signed by Shenandoah County school board leaders was "modeled after a measure distributed to school

districts throughout the state by the Virginia School Board Association," according to a July 6, 2020 press release. It stated:

"WHEREAS, members of the Shenandoah County School Board, as well as the Shenandoah County Public Schools staff, are saddened and outraged by recent events that demonstrate the prejudice and injustice that persists in our country;

"WHEREAS, racism and hate have no place in our schools or our society, and we must protect the Constitutional rights of every person who lives, works and learns in our community;

"WHEREAS, we cannot be silent. We urgently must act to stop the racial injustice that harms and anguishes Black people, who are our family, friends, neighbors, students, staff members and fellow Americans;

"WHEREAS, we must listen. Those who have endured discrimination and intolerance deserve to be heard as they share the stories and truth about their experiences and feelings, and we must seek with great empathy to understand their challenges and their pain;

"WHEREAS, we must learn. It is time to engage our community in meaningful and honest conversation about racial inequality, to build alliances with those committed to justice for all, and to work together to support our shared conviction that racism must end;

"WHEREAS, we must lead. Each of us, individually and collectively, is responsible for creating and nurturing an anti-racist learning environment where every child is respected and valued for who they are, regardless of their skin color. We must actively acknowledge, address and present racial bias that occurs as a result of division policies, practices and actions; and

"WHEREAS, we must do better. Our school division can be and will be a sanctuary of safety in our community and a beacon of light for the world, as we build and strengthen trust with those we serve, and we model the acceptance of all people.

"THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, members of the Shenandoah County School Board stand steadfast in our commitment to foster an

inclusive educational environment where every student, teacher, support professional, parent and community member is treated with dignity and respect, as well as our commitment to continue fighting for racial justice and human and civil rights for all" ([Resolution condemning racism and affirming the division's commitment to an inclusive school environment for all](#), 25 June 2020).

In June 2020, Virginia Secretary of Education Qarni issued a statement encouraging community leaders to use their positions to address unjust laws and policy that harm African Americans, specifically, but minority groups, implicitly. The first consideration, according to a FaceBook post? "Change school names and mascots that are offensive or that memorialize confederate leaders or sympathizers." Similarly, NPR revealed in late June / early July 2020, Governor Northam wrote a letter to school boards across the state asking localities to change the names of schools and mascots that continue to honor the Confederacy, using the claim: "When our public schools are named after individuals who advanced slavery and systemic racism, and we allow those names to remain on school property, we tacitly endorse their values as our own."

In Shenandoah County, Virginia, the school board voted 5-1 at their July 9, 2020 meeting to change the names and mascots of schools on the southern end of our campus, specifically Ashby-Lee Elementary, Stonewall Jackson High (Generals), and the mascot (Rebels) of North Fork Middle schools. In the fall of that year, the school board voted 6-0 to accept the community chosen names of Honey Run Elementary and Mountain View High, as well as placing the mascot Generals on both Mountain View High and North Fork Middle. While I'm grateful for the bravery of our school board members and used my voice to support this change, I'm also cognizant of the fact that I live in a community, which celebrates the Confederate victory at The Battle of New Market. In 2022, the school board upheld the current school names in a 3-3 vote that was initiated by three new school board members, who ran with the intention of reverting school names. Based on a survey that was conducted in March 2024 by an anonymous group, 5.1% of the population of Shenandoah County has asked the 2024 school board to revert to Confederate school names yet again. At the April 22, 2024 work session, the school board focused the conversation on the process used by the previous board, not the rightness of the decision, nor what was best for the children of Shenandoah County, including the 70 African American and biracial children that attend these two schools and the larger Hispanic population.

[Here is the historical information of how Shenandoah County Public Schools' southern campus schools were named - information that the current school board is](#)

ignoring in focusing on process of just the 2020 school board:

In 1950, Virginia's General Assembly provided funds to localities for school construction, known as The Battle Fund - these were supposed to make schools for the two races equal according to *Plessy v. Ferguson*. In Shenandoah County, according to the January 7, 1955, April 9, 1956, and May 23, 1958 school board minutes, that fund in the amount of \$491,878.75 was used solely to build three high schools, noted as serving only the White race. On January 12, 1959, Gordon Bowman stepped aside as chair of the board in order to make a motion, which was passed unanimously, in effect that the South Area high school be named "Stonewall Jackson High School." That same board member was on the committee that chose the site for, oversaw construction, and helped name, Ashby-Lee Elementary School, which opened in 1975, right next to SJHS in Quicksburg, VA. The high school's foundation was literally built while there was a Confederate flag flying over the grounds – you can see this in the 1960 high school annual.

Meanwhile, throughout all of this the community of African Americans continued to press about better school buildings, discussed or tabled on November 9, 1959, December 18, 1959, February 8, 1960, and throughout 1961 (March 14, April 10, July 7, August 14, December 11, and December 20). African American and Hispanic high schoolers (8th-12th graders) were sent outside the county for an education - having already endured a lifetime of segregated primary schools. On August 13, 1962, "The Board discussed different problems that might arise regarding integration." That's all that is said about desegregation until January 11, 1964, when the board authorized signing of "the Civil Rights pledge for Shenandoah County." The first African American students entered the southern end campus in the 1963-64 school year, a full decade after *Brown v. Board of Education*.

I am writing to ask the VMI Board of Visitors to please make a public statement and to send emails encouraging the SCPS School Board to move on - to affirm the current non-divisive school names, Mountain View and Honey Run, and to focus on issues that cultivate peace within the community.

For our public spaces, especially our public schools, it is time to leave Confederate generals like Jackson, Lee, and Ashby in the history books and in the museums. None of these leaders were born in, died in, or lived in Shenandoah County, VA. Their use highlights the worst and most divisive part of our country's history. Memorializing them in public spaces continues a war cry of defiance among citizens that should learn to live in freedom and justice for all. Please help!

Respectfully,

Sarah Kohrs

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead, anthropologist, 1901-1978

senkohrs.com

Paper 1: Racial Motivation of Public School Names in Board Minutes (1950-1975)

Research by CHANGE THE NAMES SHENCO SCHOOLS STEERING COMMITTEE

AFRICAN AMERICAN students first entered Stonewall Jackson High School in the 1963-64 year, almost a decade after *Brown v. the Board of Education*. This was in the wake of state tradition visibly resisting integration. School board minutes reveal that the school's name was a racially motivated decision.

- In 1950, Virginia's General Assembly gave The Battle Fund to school boards intended for both White and Negro schools, in order to “eliminate inequalities between the races.”¹
- In Shenandoah County that fund in amount of \$491,878.75 was used solely to build three high schools, noted as serving the “White” race².

Place	Elem. Sec.	Pupil Capacity	Cost	Remarks
South Area H. S.	White Sec.	500	600,000	New Building
General Area H.S.	White Sec.	600	650,000	New Building
South Area H. S.	White Sec.	500	600,000	New Building
Section D - Additions				
Winchester, etc.	White Elem.	690	20,000	Repair
Winchester	White Elem.	500	123,770	Additions
Winchester	White Elem.	325	75,350	Additions
Winchester	White Elem.	600	20,000	Repair
Winchester	White Elem.	325	61,150	Additions

Illustration 1: May 23, 1958 School Board Minutes

- On January 12, 1959, Gordon Bowman stepped aside as chairman to move that the South Area high school be named “Stonewall Jackson.” Bowman was also on the committee that oversaw construction of Ashby-Lee Elementary, referred to as Stonewall Jackson Primary until 1975³.
- The 1960 SJHS annual shows the Confederate battle flag flown as the school foundation was laid.
- Meanwhile, the African American community pressed for better school buildings, discussed or tabled for almost 3 years⁴. A committee was finally appointed on April 10, 1961, to find suitable sites for negro schools. Throughout 1961⁵

talk hinged on condemning negro school sites (words never used in the school board minutes for white school sites).



Illustration 2: Confederate flag held over SJHS in 1960 school annual

- On August 13, 1962, “The Board discussed problems that might arise regarding integration;” and voted, “as in former years, buses be provided to transport negro students to high schools in Harrisonburg and Winchester.”
- A year later in 1963, the board began planning a commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the battle of New Market; voting to close schools in honor of the Confederate victory on May 15, 1964, include the high schools' bands to be part of a program, and use New Market School for a ball.
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 strengthened enforcement of school desegregation by allowing for lawsuits and withdrawal of federal funds. On January 11, 1964, the board signed “the Civil Rights pledge for Shenandoah County.”

SIMILAR TO THIS PLEDGE, Shenandoah County school board adopted a Resolution against racism in June 2020. Following an appeal by Gov. Northam for localities to change names of public schools honoring Confederate leaders, they voted in July 2020 to retire the public school names of Ashby-Lee Elementary, Stonewall Jackson High (Generals), and the mascot, Rebels, of North Fork Middle, under board policy §22.1-78: “the Board may rename a school or school facility upon determination that it is appropriate to do so,” and §22.1-79: “final decisions on the naming of school facilities and the dedicating of areas of school facilities or grounds shall rest entirely with the Board.”

December 29, 1961.

1 Dorothy E. Davis, Bertha M. Davis and Inez D. Davis, etc., et al., *Appellants v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Va, et al.* US 191 (1952), p. 20.

2 School board minutes from January 7, 1955; April 9, 1956; May 23, 1958.

3 School board minutes from August 1, 1965; June 9, 1969; July 14, 1969; October 13, 1969; January 8, 1973; February 12, 1973; March 1, 1973; August 6, 1973; August 6, 1973; October 8, 1973; April 10, 1974; September 9, 1974; December 9, 1974; April 14, 1975. The school board minutes show no formal vote on the name of the elementary school.

4 School board minutes from November 9, 1959; December 18, 1959; February 8, 1960; March 14, 1961.

5 School board minutes from July 7, August 14, December 11,

Paper 2: Forced to Integrate, SCPS's Resistance to Equal Education

Research by CLAIM THE NAMES – SHENCO SCHOOLS

VA GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S BATTLE FUND was issued to local school boards as part of a statewide massive resistance against desegregation. Funds were intended to “eliminate inequalities between the races”¹ by giving expenses for both “White” and “Negro” schools, a decision that promoted *Plessy vs. Ferguson* (1896), which stipulated separate, but equal educational facilities for the races. In Shenandoah County, the Battle Fund was only used for schools serving the “White” race². The *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) ruling required integration of public schools by 1955. And yet, in Shenandoah County, not only were educational facilities not equal, but total integration didn't occur until after threat of a lawsuit.

In Shenandoah County, school board minutes show educational opportunities were not equal.

- On Jun 11, 1937, ME Zion church petitioned to tear down old Woodstock colored school building and re-use the lumber to construct a new school.
- In 1938, three primary schools existed for African American children: Strasburg (Sunset Hill), Woodstock (Creekside), and Mt Jackson.
- According to board minutes, Mt Jackson colored school had small enrollment, but continued until 1940 with New Market students transported there. The board elected to pay half the insurance policy covering liability for the children³.
- Beginning Aug 22, 1941, local citizens transported African American students from Mt Jackson and New Market to Creekside; and, African American high school students outside the county. This continued until 1962, when the Board recommended, “as in former years, buses be provided to transport negro students to high schools in Harrisonburg and Winchester”⁴.
- On December 2, 1941, the board requested the superintendent to “express [their] appreciation...to the Regional Board of Control of the Regional High School at Manassas, Va for their invitation to enroll colored pupils on a similar basis as those

from Warren and Rappahannack counties, and state that we are considering the possibility of educating...our negroes in their school next year.”

- On Oct 2, 1944, the board informed parents of three African American students in Strasburg they are no longer willing to pay for them to attend, due to excessive cost. Additional costs were to be defrayed by parents.
- On Nov 3, 1952, in regard to county African American students attending Winchester, the board moved for superintendents “to work out some agreement on the expenses of these children.”
- Nov 9, 1959, four years after *Brown* was in effect, the school board pursued a study of consolidating primary colored schools⁵. These schools were condemned and sold as of 1964.

Superintendent W. W. Robinson reveals the lack of equality in educational facilities in 1962:

“The Strasburg Elementary School has twenty-three classrooms plus the cafeteria, gymnasium, library and other auxiliary features. There are at least three teachers per grade. It is primarily an old building but comfortable and well maintained. The Sunset Hill School is a small frame and cinder block two room school, it is heated by oil stoves, has indoor toilet facilities, but has no facilities for cafeteria purposes. There is a special milk program at this school but no school lunch. The playground is small and the school is difficult to get to by car, however, it is comfortable, clean, and well maintained”⁶.

Also in 1962, NAACP filed a lawsuit for an African American student to attend Central High School, stating:

“Negro children entering school for the first time are initially assigned to a school which none but Negroes attend and upon their graduation from elementary school they are routinely assigned to an all-Negro high school...which is not located in Shenandoah County”⁷.

Although withdrawn, this case led to the total integration of Shenandoah County, just as it had in Grayson in 1960.

The State Pupil Placement Board (1957-1966), assigned students to a school. Total integration of Shenandoah, the second VA county to do so, was the decision of the Placement Board, according to *The Progress Index* of Jul 9, 1964, and not “at the request of the county school board.” Our county was forced to integrate.

1 Dorothy E. Davis, Bertha M. Davis and Inez D. Davis, etc., et al., *Appellants v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Va, et al.* US 191 (1952), p. 20.

2 Board minutes: Jan 7, 1955; Apr 9, 1956; May 23, 1958.

3 Board minutes: Nov 8, 1938; Aug 8, 1939.

4 Board minutes: Aug 13, 1962; also Sep 14, 1937; Aug 8 1939; Aug 22, 1941; Sep 8, 1942; Oct 6, 1942; Oct 6, 1943; Sep 10, 1945; Dec 1, 1947; Dec 5, 1949; Feb 6, 1950; Sep 8, 1958; Nov 9, 1959; Mar 11, 1963.

5 Board minutes: Dec 18, 1959; Feb 8, 1960; Mar 14, 1961; Apr 10, 1961; Jul 7, 1961; Aug 14, 1961; Dec 11, 1961; Dec 20, 1961; May 14, 1962.

6 Letter to Hilton of Pupil Placement Board, Mar 22, 1962.

7 US District Court, Civil Action No. 641, Sep 19, 1962, p.6. The lawsuit was not part of school board minutes.

Paper 3: Massive Resistance, A Tactic for Slowing School Integration

Part I, Laying the Ground-Work

by CLAIM THE NAMES - SHENCO SCHOOLS RESEARCH COMMITTEE

WHILE SHENANDOAH COUNTY WAS the second county in Va to fully integrate, it happened slowly. In an effort to circumvent *Brown vs. Board of Education*, Va politicians incorporated legislative actions to impede integration in a strategy known as massive resistance. At an annual orchard picnic in August 1958, Senator Harry Byrd, Sr. “listed three main reasons for Virginia's massive resistance policy: It seeks to (1) preserve the state's constitutional rights, (2) to preserve 'our racial and social structure,' and (3) preserve 'the greatest number of children white and Negro alike.’” (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 31 August 1958).

1954

- *Brown vs Board of Education* decision rendered, separate is not equal.
- Va Governor Stanley created the Virginia Public Education Commission (known as the "Gray Commission") to study “the school problem”.
- Organized by Delegate V.S. Shaffer, an integration meeting was noted in *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Sep 30th: “Balloting as individuals and not as a group,” members of the Woodstock Parent-Teacher Association, met at Woodstock High School, voting “48 to 32 against integration of the races in public schools in Virginia.”

1955

- *Brown vs Board* decision clarified that integration should move with ‘all deliberate speed’.
- The Gray Commission report, *Public Education: A Report of the Commission to the Governor of Virginia*, “proposes the selective repeal of the compulsory school attendance law in an effort to slow desegregation in Virginia.”
- The organization, Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, formed and published *A Plan for Virginia*¹. It states, “[U]nless something be done now, integration will begin in Virginia, and once begun, it, like every other vile pestilence, will spread to the point where it has covered the whole body politic. Whether it come in our day, our children will see the death of our Anglo-Saxon civilization.”

¹ The full pamphlet can be accessed here: <https://dc.lib.odu.edu/digital/collection/npsdp/id/1149>

1956

- Interposition becomes an argument to oppose *Brown vs Board*. The contention was that the Supreme Court was attempting to amend the constitution [specifically the 14th amendment] without approval of the states. This gave an air of legitimacy to maintaining segregated schools.
- Using interposition as a starting point, Senators Strom Thurmond and Richard Russell wrote the "Southern Manifesto"². All local Va members of Congress, Harry Byrd, Sr, A. Willis Robertson, and Burr Harrison, signed in support of this document.
- On Aug 25th, just before a Va General Assembly Special Session, Senator Byrd, Sr, said at his annual orchard picnic, “[The destroyers of schools are] those who try to force mixed schools upon us —something a large part of Virginia will never take” (*The News Leader (Staunton)*, 26 August 1956).
- This Special Session resulted in “The Stanley Plan” incorporating Gray Commission recommendations and creating a state-level Pupil Placement Board to handle school transfers, among other legislation.

1957

- W.W. Robinson was appointed Shenandoah County superintendent, replacing B.S. Hilton, who became the executive secretary for Pupil Placement Board.
- J. Lindsay Almond was elected governor. Shenandoah County voted: 2,318 for Almond; 2,308 for Dalton; and 11 for a third candidate. Byrd, Sr. campaigned for Almond. The margin is similar to the Woodstock P-TA vote on integration in 1954.
- Gov. Almond said, after the election,³ “I will not yield to that which I know to be wrong and will destroy every semblance of education for thousands of the children of Virginia.”

UNTIL 1963-64, SHENANDOAH COUNTY maintained segregated schools; other counties closed schools rather than integrate; and, the courts had to intervene in order to force desegregation.

² Full text: <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/marshall/manifesto.html>

³ For audio: <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/dbva/files/original/9f12d074db2542c8ef0ffe89d1bae8ca.mp3?fbclid=IwAR3FgZgGD2ayt-jCZRAZlTSgq3J28BTurdImle9Vpwlq79Y-xs6jtUhPJlc>

Paper 4: Massive Resistance, A Tactic for Slowing School Integration

Part II, Implementation

by CLAIM THE NAMES - SHENCO SCHOOLS RESEARCH COMMITTEE

WITH GROUNDWORK LAID for procedures to close schools in order to prevent integration, and other tactics and policies, such as the Pupil Placement Board, in place to either slow integration to a halt or put it off as long as possible, Massive Resistance was ready for action. These events followed the election of Governor J. Lindsay Almond in 1957.

1958

- The Va General Assembly creates the Virginia Civil War Centennial Commission.
- At his annual orchard picnic in August 1958, "Byrd [Sr.] listed three main reasons for Virginia's massive resistance policy: It seeks to (1) preserve the state's constitutional rights, (2) to preserve 'our racial and social structure,' and (3) preserve 'the greatest number of children white and Negro alike.'" (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 31 August 1958)
- Governor Almond orders school closures in Front Royal / Warren County, Charlottesville, and Norfolk to prevent desegregation.

1959

- The Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals and the U.S. District Court overturn the decision of Governor Almond to close schools in Warren, Charlottesville, and Norfolk. These counties decide to integrate. Prince Edward County schools however, decide to close to prevent desegregation.
- Executive Director of the Civil War Commission, James Geary, writes to Shenandoah County's circuit court clerk: "no Civil War Centennial committee has been named in your locality to plan for local observances and to work with this commission as requested by Governor Almond"¹.
- Shenandoah County School Board unanimously names South Area school, "Stonewall Jackson," one of three consolidated White high schools. Black students continue to be bussed outside county jurisdiction for high school. At that time, Shenandoah County was one of only 18 counties in Virginia with no high school for Black pupils.

1960-1963

- Segregated schools persist in Shenandoah County.

- As in other Va counties, a lawsuit is filed in 1962 for a Black student to attend Central. This was integral to starting integration in our county. A few Black students were approved by the Pupil Placement Board to attend Strasburg and Central high schools during the 1962/63 school year.
- Shenandoah County's Civil War Centennial Commission members appear before the School Board to discuss commemoration plans.

1964

- Federal Civil Rights Act is passed; Title IV of the law focuses on desegregation of education. Local representatives vote against this legislation.
- Shenandoah County public schools fully integrate.
- Virginia State Senator Harry Byrd, Jr.² participates in SJHS's graduation ceremony, presenting an award to the valedictorian.



Illustration 1: graduation ceremony featuring Va State Senator Harry F. Byrd Jr. Photo from the Jacksonian Heritage, 1964.

OPENING CONSOLIDATED WHITE-ONLY high schools in Shenandoah County occurred amid a fight over desegregation, and during a period when schools named for Confederate leaders spiked³ significantly. Thus, Massive Resistance impacted even our county.

² Harry Byrd Jr would replace his father, Harry Bryd Sr in the U.S. Senate in 1965.

³ For visualization see

https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/com_whose_heritage_timeline_print.pdf

¹ Letter dated Oct 13, 1959.

Paper 5: Politicians In Charge, Teaching History in Virginia (1957-1970)

by CLAIM THE NAMES SHENANDOAH COUNTY SCHOOLS RESEARCH COMMITTEE

DURING THE 1950 SESSION, Va General Assembly adopted a resolution that created The Virginia History and Government Textbook Commission. The books used to teach Virginia History in 1957 - 1970 were the result of this committee's work. These titles were:

- *Virginia's History* (4th grade level),
- *Virginia: History, Government, Geography* (7th grade level), and
- *Cavalier Commonwealth* (11th grade level).

The committee was made up of close associates to Harry F. Byrd, Sr. One member of the committee was Garland Gray,¹ State Senator representing Southside Virginia Counties. Ardent segregationist and future Governor overseeing massive resistance, J. Lindsay Almond, then Attorney General, was given the opportunity to edit the 7th and 11th grade texts².

BELOW IS AN EXCERPT from a chapter, entitled "The War Between the States Begins," part of the 4th grade text:³

"Northern and Southern people did not think alike about slavery. The Northern people did not need much help to work their small farms. The planters in Virginia and in the South needed many men to work for them. They had slaves to do their work.

"By this time many people knew that slavery was wrong. But the planters did not know how they could free their slaves and keep their plantations going. Some people in the North said that the Southern people had to free their slaves no matter what happened to their plantations. The South said that the North had no right to tell them what to do. They believed that each state had the right to decide how the people were to live in that state. So the North and the South quarreled about the rights that each state had" (p. 256).

WHAT OF THE ENSLAVED POPULATION during the war? The only mention in the 4th grade text is:

"Some of the Negro servants left the plantations because they heard that President Lincoln was going to set them free. But most of the Negroes

stayed on the plantations and went on with their work. Some of them risked their lives to protect the white people they loved" (pp. 268-269).

FROM THE 7TH GRADE TEXT:⁴

"Life among the Negroes of Virginia in slavery times was generally happy. The Negroes went about in a cheerful manner making a living for themselves and for those for whom they worked. They were not as unhappy as some Northerners thought they were, nor were they so happy as some Southerners claimed. The Negroes had their problems and their troubles. But they were not worried by the furious arguments going on between Northerners and Southerners over what should be done with them. In fact, they paid little attention to these arguments" (p. 376).

THE 11TH GRADE TEXT is similar:

"The same Assembly also enacted laws to get back to work those wandering, pillaging Negroes who still misunderstood freedom from slavery to mean freedom from any obligation to earn a living" (p. 347).

THESE EXCERPTS FROM EDUCATIONAL resources used to instruct children in Virginia public schools from 1957 to 1970, demonstrate misleading information. This is the same time period that Shenandoah County built 3 high schools, which were intended to only serve the White race.

Resources

Richmond Times-Dispatch, April 14, 2018
https://richmond.com/discover-richmond/happy-slaves-the-peculiar-story-of-three-virginia-school-textbooks/article_47e79d49-eac8-575d-ac9d-1c6fce52328f.html

Dingledine Jr, Raymond C, Lena Barksdale, Marion Belt Nesbitt. *Virginia's History*. United States, Charles Scribner's Sons. 1956.

Eichelman, F. "The Government as Textbook Writer: A Case History." *The Phi Delta Kappan*, vol. 57, no. 7, 1976, pp. 456-458. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/20298323. Accessed 20 Aug. 2020.

Hemphill, William Edwin, Marvin Wilson Schlegel, Sadie Ethel Engelberg. *Cavalier Commonwealth: history and government of Virginia*. United States, McGraw-Hill. 1957.

Simpkins, Francis Butler, Spotswood H. Jones, Sidman P. Poole. *Virginia: History, Government, Geography*. United States, Charles Scribner's Sons. 1957.

¹ Gray held a Firehouse Meeting in Petersburg right after the *Brown* decision which began the process of slowing integration in Virginia schools.

² Eichelman, 458

³ Hard-copy of the 4th grade book was examined, 7th and 11th grade books found online only. Excerpts presented are those for which a page number could be attributed.

⁴ Quote source, image of text at <https://oldtowncrier.com/2019/09/01/1957-textbook-fake-news/>

Paper 6: What Did Stonewall Jackson Teach Enslaved Americans?

by CLAIM THE NAMES - SHENCO SCHOOLS RESEARCH COMMITTEE

THOMAS JONATHAN “STONEWALL” JACKSON famously formed and led a “Sabbath School” focused on forming Christian faith in enslaved individuals. Established in 1855 and running until just after the start of Civil War hostilities, this school skirted Virginia law by teaching basic literacy to its pupils. However, what was actually taught during these one hour sessions on Sunday afternoons?

In an 1858 letter that Jackson wrote to John Lyle Campbell, he describes the lesson plan for the “Lexington Colored Sabbath School”¹. According to this letter, class progressed with the following liturgy:

- “The school is usually opened by singing part of a hymn ... announced the previous Sabbath.”
- “This is followed by reading one or more verses from the Bible, with explanations and applications of those verses.”
- “This is succeeded by prayer.”
- “...each class is instructed by its teacher from the Bible, catechism, and hymn book.”
- “At the close of the school which is near forty five minutes from the opening, there is public examination on two verses of the child catechism, published by our Board.”
- “After the close of the examination, the school is dismissed, the remaining part of the opening hymn having been sung immediately after examination.”

The work of this school led to the pastor of Lexington Presbyterian Church, William S. White, in 1891 to declare Thomas Jackson, “the black man’s friend”². However, Jackson’s Sabbath School was welded with a proslavery theology that sought to justify and strengthen slavery as an institution using the Bible and mistaken assumptions about the ability of black people to function outside of such a God-ordained social order.

A catechism is a document designed to impart the basic questions of faith to a student. It uses a peculiar method of question and answer as a way of easing memorization. These were developed in Christian denominations across the south^{3,4}.

A widely used Presbyterian catechism was developed for children, families, and “servants,” and published in 1844 by Charles Colcock Jones of South Carolina. It is likely that Jackson used this book, because it was the officially accepted document for southern Presbyterian catechism at the time.

Here are some key sections⁵ that illustrate what Jackson’s enslaved pupils would have been learning during these classes:

“Q: But suppose the Master is hard to please, and threatens and punishes more than he ought, what is the Servant to do? / A: Do his best to please him.”

“Q: When the Servant suffers *wrongfully*, at the hands of his Master, and to please God, takes it patiently, will God reward him for it? / A: Yes 1 Peter 2:18-25

Q: Is it right for the Servant to *run away*, or is it right to *harbour* a runaway? / A: No”

“Q: If servants will faithfully do their duty and serve God in their stations as Servants, will they be respected of men and blessed and honored of God, as well as others? / A: Yes. 1 Cor. 7:17-24; Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25; Titus 2:9-15; 1 Pet. 2:18-25; Gen. 24.”

“Are you a Servant? Care not for it. If you are a Christian, you are the Lord’s Freeman. And if you are faithful in your station, you shall, as well as other men, higher and greater than yourself, obtain the Crown of Life. God places one man in one station and one in another, according to his will. What he requires is, *that every man in his particular station, serve Him, and all will be well for time and Eternity.*”

These excerpts illustrate that Jackson, far from being a liberator of people, was a fully-ensconced believer in the social order of the day. Coupled with his own ownership of other humans and his decision to fight to preserve the southern social order in the midst of a compelling, long-lived, and active abolitionist narrative in the country, it is clear that the only freedom he wished for those enslaved was spiritual. Noble as this intention may have been, it is not sufficient to hold him as an example of excellent moral character⁴ for our students today.

¹ Virginia Military Institute Archives, [MS0102](#), Stonewall Jackson letter to John Lyle Campbell. June 7, 1858.

² American Civil War Museum, [Myths and Misunderstandings](#), October 12, 2017.

³ See also A.W. Chambliss’ [The Catechetical Instructor](#) - Baptist

⁴ See also T.T. Castleman’s [Plain Sermons for Servants](#) -

Episcopal Church

⁵ See Jones, Charles Colcock (~1844), [A Catechism of Scripture Doctrine and Practice for Families and Sabbath Schools Designed also for the Oral Instruction of Colored Persons](#). pp. 127-131 Duties of Master and Servants.

Shenandoah County School Board
Minutes Review
July 2020

DATE	ACTION
11 June 1937	Woodstock colored school petitioned by ME Zion colored church to tear down the old colored school building and use the lumber to construct a new building
23 July 1937	Execute deed to Town of Woodstock for alley way west of Woodstock colored school house
14 September 1937	No action taken on colored children in New Market bused outside of area.
1938	Strasburg colored school teacher, vacant / Woodstock, Alease Witherall / Mt Jackson, Violet Arter
1 March 1938	Cost for Woodstock colored school was \$943.39
16 September 1938	Grants given by U.S. for white school construction projects
8 November 1938	Small enrollment at Mt Jackson colored school tabled.
1939	Strasburg colored school teacher, Polly Mae Hall / Woodstock, Alease Witherall
8 August 1939	Colored school in Mt Jackson is to be continued for coming session and \$66 allowed to teacher to transport children from New Market to Mt Jackson (the board pays ½ of insurance policy covering liability to children).
28 August 1939	Motion that matter of paying tuition of colored children be undecided until we can get in touch with Dr. Hall to see what action can be taken.
1940	Strasburg colored school teacher, Frances Margaret Lyons / Woodstock, Alease Witherall / Mt Jackson, Violet Arter
6 February 1940	Board matches \$20 raised by colored school at Strasburg for dental work.
1941	Strasburg colored school teacher, Selma Nickens / Woodstock, Alease Witherall

- 22 August 1941 Motion to have Rev. John Langford to be employed to transport colored pupils from Mt Jackson and New Market to Woodstock colored school and transport of colored high school students.
- 2 December 1941 Board requests superintendent to “express the appreciation of the Shenandoah County School Board to the Regional Board of Control of the Regional High School at Manassas, Virginia for their invitation to enroll colored pupils on a similar bases as those from Warren and Rappahannack counties, and state that we are considering the possibility of educating from 9 to 12 of our negroes in their school next year.”
- 1942 Strasburg colored school teacher, Selma Nickens / Woodstock, Violet Arter
- 8 September 1942 Turner Mitchell transports colored high students from Strasburg to Winchester / Marion McPherson transports colored children from New Market and Mt. Jackson to Woodstock
- 6 October 1942 Marion McPherson's contract canceled, Theodore Tolliver Jr selected.
- 1 December 1942 Grayhound bus schedule chosen for transportation from New Market and Mt Jackson to Woodstock Colored School / Theodore Tolliver's contract canceled.
- 23 April 1943 Strasburg colored school teacher, Selma Nickens / Woodstock colored school teacher, Violet Arter
- 6 October 1943 Grayhound continued to be used for transportation needs of colored students.
- 2 May 1944 Colored school teacher assignments listed as “vacant”
- 2 October 1944 Board notes they pay \$158/pupil for African American students attending school in Manassas and instructs superintendent to let parents of three colored students in Strasburg know they are no longer willing to pay for them to attend Winchester high school any longer due to the excessive cost. Any additional costs will be defrayed by the parents.
- 7 May 1945 Woodstock colored school teacher, Violet Arter / Strasburg, John P Rier
- 10 September 1945 Six colored pupils in Strasburg are to be sent to Winchester colored

- high school (board pays tuition and transport) / Rev. Clarence Davis transports students at \$40/month.
- 4 November 1946 Tuition for colored children in Manassas be paid by board.
- 1 December 1947 Colored children request to ride school buses is tabled.
- 5 December 1949 Salary of colored bus driver, Robert Spinner, increased from \$40 to \$50/month.
- 6 February 1950 GE Kingan to be paid \$4 per day to drive colored children from New Market to Woodstock.
- 7 January 1952 RD Bauserman (commonwealth attorney) paid \$2.50 for checking old deed to Strasburg colored school and writing deed of correction
- 3 November 1952 Motion regarding the tuition of Shenandoah County colored students enrolled at Winchester City Schools – for superintendents “to work out some agreement on the expenses of these children.”
- 10 May 1954 “Appropriation from the Battle Fund” to use \$1,000,000 for the most urgent needs of high and grade schools / focus = New Market-Mt Jackson-Edinburg area
- The Board of Supervisors was “not willing to meet again and would call off the plan. This ended the 7-man survey committee.” In the August 10, 1954 *Northern Virginia Daily*, the Board of Supervisors by-passes the School Board to create a 12-man study for school consolidation.
- 21 December 1954 “One high school for approximately 1000 pupils between Bowman Crossing and Mt Jackson” was proposed at a joint meeting of the Board of Supervisors and School Board.
- 7 January 1955 Funds available for school building include: Battle Funds in the amount of \$491,878.75; County Capital Outlay Fund, \$39,000.
- 10 January 1955 Durus Hottle and Marvin Bowman again suggest one high school between New Market and Mt Jackson.
- 13 January 1955 Motion carried to build one high school between Toms Brook and Rockingham line (stricken out by February 1, 1955 vote)
- 17 March 1955 One 750-pupil high school (south of Woodstock) discussed.

- 20 April 1955 High school will be constructed on or near the Lee-Ashby magisterial district line south of Mt Jackson and north of New Market on a site meeting site regulations.
- 12 March 1956 Estimated cost of the three new high schools (northern, center, and southern sections) = \$2,300,000.
- 9 April 1956 Battle Fund listed at \$492,000.
- 5 November 1956 Dixon & Norman Architects of Richmond chosen for the high school build project.
- 1 April 1957 Harold Burch paid \$9,000 for 18 acres of land, south of Woodstock. [in Quicksburg area]
- 12 November 1957 Names of people whose property was purchased for the high schools: Miller, Magruder, Burch.
- 23 May 1958 School construction and additions solely benefit children of the White race

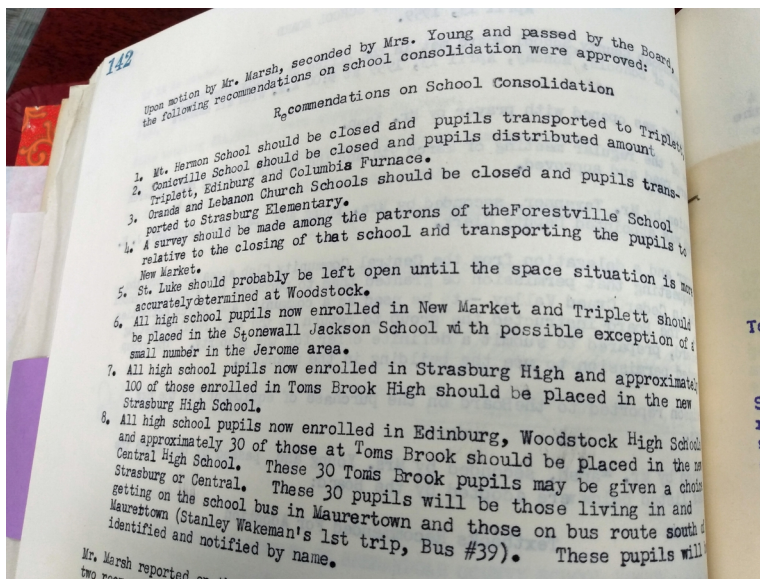
Division Board held on May 23rd, 1956. All members present with the exception of Mr. John O. Marsh, Jr., a member of the State Board of Education to amend the School Construction Plan for Shenandoah County, as outlined on November 6, 1951 and as revised on March 27, 1955, as follows:

Race	Elem. Sec.	Pupil Capacity	Cost	Remarks	
Section A - New Construction					
North Area H. S.	White	Sec.	500	600,000	
Central Area H.S.	White	Sec.	600	650,000	New Building
South Area H. S.	White	Sec.	500	600,000	New Building
Section D - Additions					
Repair, etc.	White	Elem.	690		
	White	Elem.	690	20,000	Repair
Woodstock	White	Elem.	500	123,770	Additions
Woodstock	White	Elem.	325	75,350	Additions
Harrisonburg	White	Elem.	600	20,000	Repair
Mt. Jackson	White	Elem.	325	61,450	Additions
New Market	White	Elem.			

These above amendments will bring this plan into conformity to the building program which has been approved by the State Department of Education and also into conformity with the plan as presented to the people when the school bond issue was voted on in September, 1956.

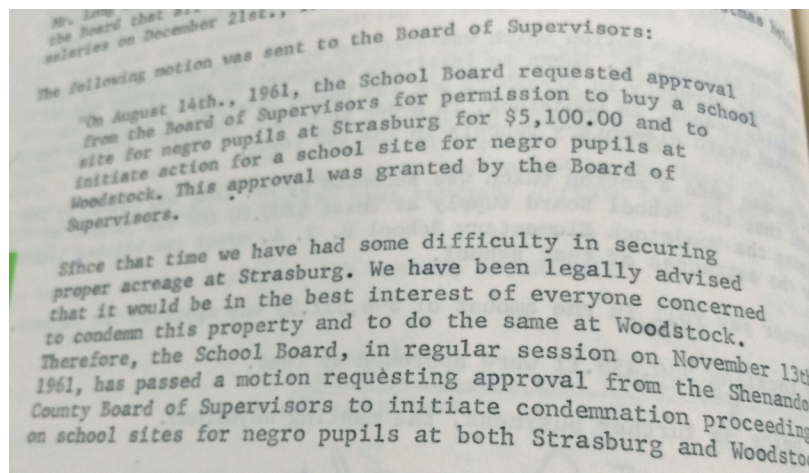
- 11 August 1958 The Via Company paid \$5,125 for site grading of south area school.
- 8 September 1958 Board suggests to Mr. Robinson to write letters to the parents of the colored children who wish to attend school in Harrisonburg.
- 23 September 1958 Brick chosen for schools: "Old Virginia – light speckled – South"

- 10 November 1958 Naming of high schools tabled.
- 12 January 1959 Gordon Bowman (chair) steps down to make the motion in effect that the South Area high school be named "Stonewall Jackson High School."
- 12 April 1959 School consolidation recommendations



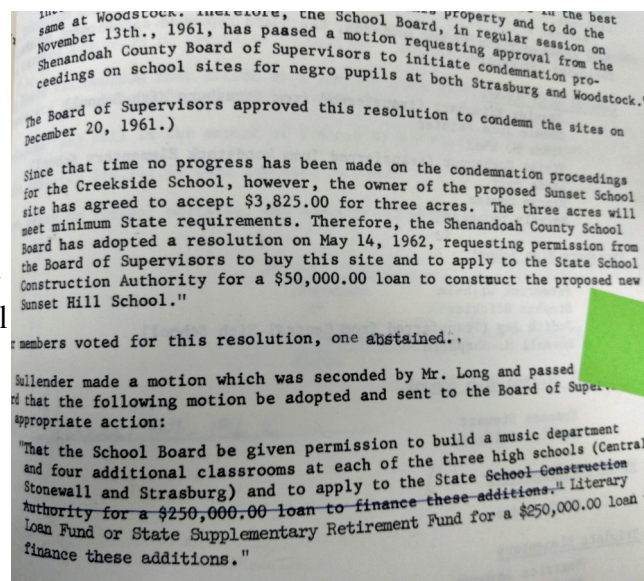
- 9 November 1959 Decided to do a survey to study the colored school situation and assess creating a consolidated colored school. The Board is obtaining a colored teacher for Strasburg colored elementary school and taking New Market colored students to Harrisonburg.
- Dedication of Stonewall Jackson High School set for Sunday, April 24, 1960 at 2 p.m.
- 18 December 1959 Discussed consolidating Sunset and Creekside (colored schools) in Maurertown.
- 8 February 1960 No motion secured for consolidating colored schools, but opted for another study.
- 14 March 1960 Speaker at SJHS dedication chosen: Virgil Carrington Jones
- 18 March 1960 Thomas L. Snyder approved as principal of SJHS. Land for SJHS part of Deed Book 192, p. 251-252.
- 14 March 1961 Rev. James B. McKay (negro minister of Woodstock) appeared to ascertain progress on the new school for colored students.

- 10 April 1961 Committee appointed (Sullender, Miller, Robinson) to find suitable sites for negro schools at Woodstock and Strasburg.
- 7 July 1961 Hannum tract of land suggested in Strasburg for negro elementary school.
- 14 August 1961 Tract of land adjoining Creekside (in Woodstock) suggested for negro elementary school.
- 11 December 1961 Made a motion to condemn school sites for negro pupils at both Strasburg and Woodstock.



- 20 December 1961 Advised Board of Supervisors to approve the condemnation of negro school sites.

- 14 May 1962 Board of Supervisors approved resolution to condemn negro school sites. Resolution requesting to buy the Sunset School site and to apply to State School Construction Authority for a \$50,000 loan.



- 13 August 1962 Board recommends that “as in former years, buses be provided to transport negro students to high schools in Harrisonburg and Winchester.”
- “The Board discussed different problems that might arise regarding integration in Central and Strasburg High Schools.”
- 11 March 1963 Bus #27 picks up 8 negro students at Middletown and Stephens City and transports them to Winchester high school at \$15/student.
- 12 August 1963 “A committee of five appeared before the Board to discuss tentative plans for commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the battle of New Market on May 15, 1964. Upon recommendation of Mr. Robinson, Mr. Hamman made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Young and passed by the Board that the bands of the three high schools participate in the commemoration program and that the New Market School auditorium be used for the Blue and Gray Ball. It was further recommended that schools in the county be closed on May 15th in order that all students may attend.”
- 9 December 1963 Report: “Projection of the Future Financial Needs of Public Schools in Shenandoah County” (not attached to minutes)
- 12 October 1964 Creekside, southeast of Woodstock, motioned to be disposed of at public auction
- {no more minutes until December 7, 1964}
- 7 December 1964 Creekside sold for \$4,000, funds were used to help with vocational school [Triplett]
- 11 January 1964 Kathleen Harris of Skyline Club expressed interest in wanting Sunset School for a community center.
- Board authorized signing of “the Civil Rights pledge for Shenandoah County.” (not attached to minutes)
- 10 May 1965 Sunset School sold for \$3,050.
- 7 June 1965 Sunset School funds allocated to help with initial purchase of land for a Strasburg elementary school.
- 1 August 1965 Discussion surrounds selecting a new site at Mt Jackson and building a new six-room primary school.

18 August 1965	The Board of Supervisors resolved that the school board operate “efficiently and wisely.”
9 June 1969	Motion that Robinson, Long, and (Gordon) Bowman select a suitable site for an elementary school at Mt Jackson and try to obtain an option on the property.
14 July 1969	That committee met at SJHS for said purpose.
13 October 1969	Site committee trying to buy land adjacent to SJHS and hopes to be able to have definite results for the Board at an early date.
16 October 1969	Thomas Lloyd transaction for primary school site.
12 October 1970	Approved “migrant program in the county” and noted there are nine children enrolled in county schools.
23 November 1970	Weekday religious education discussed.
9 February 1971	The type of religious education is deemed illegal (other arrangements have to be made).
11 December 1972	State Conference on Student Activities in Desegregated Schools discussed. Board made this statement: “Shenandoah County has a very good, healthy situation and that all students participate fully in all activities.”
8 January 1973	Tentative drawings for new primary school at southern end of county discussed.
12 February 1973	\$700,000 Literary Loan for primary school adjacent to SJHS.
1 March 1973	“Stonewall Jackson Primary School” discussed: site tests and architect chosen, D'Earcy P Davis, Jr.
6 August 1973	Elementary school referred to as “Stonewall Primary School” Standards of Quality mentioned and recommendations.
8 October 1973	“Stonewall Primary School” plans meeting set for October 15.
7 February 1974	Central Valley Construction Company of New Market selected with primary school bid of \$1,613,960.
10 April 1974	“Clerk of the Works” discussed for Stonewall Primary School.

- 9 September 1974 Construction of Stonewall Primary School “progressing satisfactorily.”
- 9 December 1974 First mention of school name (no motions made before these minutes): “Mr. Danley reported that construction at the Ashby-Lee Elementary School is proceeding on schedule and that the roof is now on.”
- 14 April 1975 “Stonewall Primary School Sanitary Sewage Facilities” discussed
- 11 August 1975 Ashby Lee is about completed.
- 13 October 1975 Open house for Ashby Lee set for November 9, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Notes compiled by SENK
July 6-7, 2020