
SEPARATE IS NOT EQUAL

BROWN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION

Teacher Briefing Sheet: Virginia Case *Davis v. the School Board of Prince Edward County*

Your community is: Farmville, Virginia

What kind of a community did this case take place in?

Farmville had a population of about 5,000 inhabitants in 1950. About 45 percent of Prince Edwards County's residents were African Americans, and about 80 percent lived on small farms. Many owned their own land, which provided some independence.

The Name of the Court Case was:

Davis v. School Board of Prince Edward County

a. Who was/were the plaintiff(s)?

Ninth-grader Dorothy Davis and 116 other students and parents of Farmville

b. Who was/were the defendant(s)?

The School Board of Prince Edward County

c. What was the complaint?

Overcrowded, underfunded segregated schools for African American children

d. What lawyers tried the case?

NAACP lawyers Spottswood Robinson, Oliver Hill, and Robert Carter had been searching for a desegregation case in Virginia before they were contacted by the students.

f. What court heard the case? What was the decision?

A federal district court heard the case and ruled against the plaintiffs. The plaintiffs' appeal reached the U.S. Supreme Court.

What local community members and institutions were important to this case? Explain their importance. See what biographical information you can find about each person.

Barbara Johns refused to wait. With a few other classmates, she quietly organized the entire student body. On April 23, 1951, the principal was lured off campus, and all 450 students were called into the auditorium. After the students asked the teachers to leave, Barbara convinced her classmates that they should walk out until a new building was under construction.

Dorothy Davis, a ninth grader, was the first plaintiff listed on the complaint filed on behalf of 117 Moton students.

Rev. L. Francis Griffin volunteered the use of his church and also helped the students contact the Richmond NAACP office.