

Vanquishing Segregation in the Valley of the Sun:
The Triumph and Tragedy of Carver High

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Historical Paper

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“Half a century of intolerance is enough.”

- Judge Fred C. Struckmeyer, Jr. on the segregation of Phoenix high schools.¹

George Washington Carver High sits solemnly among the steel-walled factories just south of downtown Phoenix, Arizona. Across the street, the whirl and shrill of drills and other industrial machinery pollute the nostalgic aura of the historic school. Two overgrown mesquite trees flank the large metal front gate. Behind these metal bars stands a bronze statue of George Washington Carver. Behind these metal bars lies a school, brimming with the wistful memories of any high school. However, behind *these* metal bars lies a half-century of racial struggle and a monument to both a triumph for equality and a sacrifice of joy.²

Thesis

At mid-century, Arizona had four segregated elementary schools – Booker T. Washington, and three named Paul Lawrence Dunbar.³ However, Arizona had only one segregated high school, George Washington Carver High, which opened in 1926 as the Phoenix Union Colored High School. The school, initially a triumph of racist policy over equality, quickly became a banner under which black Phoenicians marched in their successful quest to integrate the valley’s high schools. Nevertheless, the victory of high school integration in

¹ “Segregation Voided In Phoenix High Schools,” *The Arizona Republic*, February 10, 1953, www.newspapers.com/image/116711987.

² See Appendix A. This appendix contains a photograph of the George Washington Carver High School building, which is now the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center.

³ “Staff Report: Z-72-16-8,” *City of Phoenix*, last modified November 2016, accessed March 2019, www.phoenix.gov/pddsites/Documents/PZ/Z-72-16.pdf, 3. There were three Dunbar Elementary Schools: one in Flagstaff, Tucson, and Phoenix.

Phoenix in 1953 has faded into the realm of neglected history, obscured by the glory of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954.⁴ Despite the year between them, both in Phoenix and across the nation the first black students of integrated high schools suffered the birth pains of integration – racially-driven alienation and abuse. Nonetheless, integration in Phoenix was a necessary victory for racial equality, because activists had successfully integrated one of the least black-populated cities in the United States. They accomplished the objective of *Brown* with a 4.9% black population in Phoenix, compared to twice that percentage in Topeka, Kansas, and over ten times the percentage in Selma, Alabama.⁵

School Segregation in Arizona

Segregation existed in Arizona even before its statehood in 1912. Before any territorial laws, some schools separated students by placing a screen around a black student’s desk.⁶ In 1909, the Arizona Territorial Legislature introduced a bill allowing schools to legally segregate students. The bill permitted schools to segregate “when the number of pupils of the African race

⁴ Brian Duignan, “*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*,” *Encyclopedia Britannica* Online, last modified May 2018, accessed February 2019, www.britannica.com/event/Brown-v-Board-of-Education-of-Topeka. In *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that “racial segregation in public schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which prohibits the states from denying equal protection of the laws to any person within their jurisdictions. The decision declared that separate educational facilities for white and African American students were inherently unequal” (ibid.).

⁵ See Appendix B. This appendix depicts the percent black population in various cities key to Civil Rights compared to Phoenix in 1950.

⁶ Bradford Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix: A Profile of Mexican American, Chinese American, and African American Communities, 1860-1992* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994), 143.

[exceeded] eight in number in any school district.”⁷ The Territorial Governor Joseph H. Kibbey vetoed the bill, but the legislature overrode his veto and passed it.⁸

After his governorship, Kibbey returned in December of 1910 as an attorney for Samuel Bayless to challenge school segregation in court. The 1909 school segregation law required Bayless’ two daughters to cross active train tracks on their way to school.⁹ In the trial decision, Territorial Court Judge Edward Kent agreed that having separate schools posed a physical threat to black students and struck down the 1909 law.¹⁰ However, this early triumph against school segregation was short lived. The Phoenix Elementary District Board appealed the decision in January 1911, and the case fell before the new Arizona State Supreme Court in 1912.¹¹ The Court promptly overturned the ruling, and segregation resumed in elementary schools.¹²

Between 1910 and 1927, numerous segregated schools opened to accommodate the growing African American population. In 1910, the Frederick Douglass Elementary school, renamed Booker T. Washington in 1921, began educating the black population in Phoenix.¹³ The

⁷ Mary E. Gill and John S. Goff, “Joseph H. Kibbey and School Segregation in Arizona,” *The Journal of Arizona History* 21, no. 4 (1980): 411, www.jstor.org/stable/42678310.

⁸ Gill and Goff, “Joseph H. Kibbey,” 412. For a white man of the early 1900’s, Kibbey’s views on segregation were far ahead of his time. Gill and Goff proposed that “his schooling at a Quaker institution” or a “philosophy handed down from his father” may have fostered his egalitarian views (*ibid.*, 412).

⁹ Matthew C. Whitaker, *Race Work: The Rise of Civil Rights in the Urban West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 116; Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix*, 136.

¹⁰ Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix*, 136; Terry Goddard, “The Promise of Brown v. Board of Education: A Monograph,” *Arizona Attorney General*, published March 2005, accessed April 2019, azmemory.azlibrary.gov/digital/api/collection/statepubs/id/21093/download, 1.

¹¹ Keith Crudup, *African Americans in Arizona: A Twentieth Century History*, (Dissertation, Arizona State University, 1998), 257.

¹² Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix*, 137. The distance and dangers were “no substantial ground of complaint” according to the Arizona Supreme Court in 1912 (*ibid.*, 137).

¹³ David R. Dean and Jean A. Reynolds, *African American Historic Property Survey*, City of Phoenix, October 2005, www.phoenix.gov/pdds/HP/pdd_hp_pdf_00082.pdf, 25; Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix*, 136.

Paul Lawrence Dunbar School was opened in 1921.¹⁴ That same year, the Phoenix Union High School Board created a colored school for “26 colored students” who would “receive instruction from teachers of their own race.”¹⁵ The school was established because the predominantly white student body at Phoenix Union High led to “chronic fights . . . between the blacks and whites.”¹⁶ According to Arizona law, once a high school had twenty-five black students, the district could create a separate school.¹⁷ As a result, in 1918, a group of women, “got a segregation statute permitting the building of a black high school in Phoenix.”¹⁸

Before the high school was constructed, Phoenix Union High rented a small building for a temporary colored school. Between two teachers, C. B. Caldwell and M. M. Rodgers, black students learned subjects ranging from general science to business English. Unfortunately, with a lack of education equipment, the “single cellar room” limited the triumphs in curriculum.¹⁹ The Phoenix Union High School District Board did, nonetheless, purchase a landfill for the construction of a two-story, separate facility in 1925.²⁰

¹⁴ Dean and Reynolds, *African American Historic Property Survey*, 25.

¹⁵ Brad Hall, “Classes for Black students at Phoenix Union High School in 1921, before Carver,” *History Adventuring*, published September 2018, accessed March 2019, www.historyadventuring.com/2018/09/classes-for-black-students-at-phoenix.html.

¹⁶ Fred C. Struckmeyer, Jr., interview by Roger C. Mitten, May 21, 1991, transcript, Oral History Project: Arizona Legal History, *Arizona Bar Foundation*, www.legallegacy.org/13-attorneys/75-frederick-c-struckmeyer, 14-15.

¹⁷ W. A. Robinson, “The Progress of Integration in the Phoenix Schools,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 25, no. 4 (1956): 371, www.jstor.org/stable/2293265.

¹⁸ Fred C. Struckmeyer, Jr., interview by Mitten, 15. According to Struckmeyer, the judge who ruled high school segregation unconstitutional in Arizona, his mother was one of these women (ibid.).

¹⁹ “Phoenix’ New \$150,000 Colored School Building Will Be Dedicated Today,” *The Arizona Republican*, September 10, 1926, Ephemera Collection PP-Eph 77, 3, Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ.

²⁰ Crudup, *African Americans in Arizona*, 261.

The School Bell Rings

On a sweltering summer afternoon in Phoenix, the brand-new bells of the Phoenix Union Colored High School rang.²¹ For the first time at three o'clock, September 10, 1926, people shuffled into the high-ceiling auditorium to begin the new school's dedication, relieved to escape from the rampant heat into the cool of the school's "excellent insulation" and "ventilation system which provided an even and healthful temperature at all times."²² Mrs. Caldwell made the introductory speech, "expressing her appreciation of the new educational facilities available to her people."²³ Like her, black parents hoped that the new high school would offer better opportunities for their children. Equipped with a gymnasium, science laboratories, and a power machinery shop, the building was a far cry from the cellar room that previously housed the Phoenix Union High Colored School.²⁴

Nonetheless, these glowing reviews of this "New \$150,000 Colored School Building" only reflected the white perspective.²⁵ Compared to schools like Phoenix Union High, equipment scarcity still plagued the Colored High School. Tommie Williams, who attended the school from 1941 to 1943, "never saw a microscope" during his entire high school education.²⁶ Notwithstanding, Williams still believes that the curriculum at Carver High was "as good as

²¹ See Appendix C. This appendix contains a newspaper headline about the dedication of the new high school.

²² "New Phoenix Colored High School Building Is Dedicated At Sunday Ceremony," *The Arizona Republican*, September 13, 1926, www.newspapers.com/image/117227201/.

²³ "Phoenix' New \$150,000 Colored School."

²⁴ "New Colored High School Dedication to Be Held Sunday," *The Arizona Gazette*, September 10, 1926, Ephemera Collection PP-Eph 77, 3, Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ; "Phoenix' New \$150,000 Colored School."

²⁵ "Phoenix' New \$150,000 Colored School." The cost of the building was \$100,000 but totaled to \$150,000 when including the fields and bleachers (ibid.).

²⁶ Tommie Williams, telephone interview by author, April 30, 2019.

anywhere else.”²⁷ They still had biology and other science courses without the science equipment.²⁸ In 1943, the school was renamed George Washington Carver High School.²⁹ W. A. Robinson, a director from the Rockefeller Foundation, was hired as the principal in 1945.³⁰ Under Robinson’s leadership, Carver High became the “first high school in all the state where all the teachers had Masters [degrees].”³¹

During Robinson’s nine years as principal, Carver’s sports and academics flourished. Robinson demanded better equipment and refused to accept any handed down from other high schools. As a result, the “first high-fire gas kiln in the state” was built at Carver High for Dr. Eugene Grigsby’s ceramics class.³² Carver High also hosted a successful band program, even though, as Vera Randolph remembers, their “uniforms were Levi’s and white t-shirts.”³³ Despite the lack of equipment, the track, basketball, football teams dominated the Class B Division, winning numerous state championships in 1951, ‘52, ‘53 and ‘54.³⁴

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Harris, *The First Hundred Years*, 68. George Washington Carver had died a few months prior.

³⁰ Ibid., 69.

³¹ Dr. Eugene Grigsby Jr., interview by Mary Melcher, February 12, 1990, Oral Histories FMMSS141 7, 2, Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ; Milo Hardt, “The Racist Southwest: Blacks in Phoenix, 1945-1950,” Small Manuscript Collection, MSM 131, Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ.

³² Dr. Eugene Grigsby Jr., interview by Melcher.

³³ Vera Randolph, telephone interview with author, April 23, 2019.

³⁴ Calvin Goode, “The Glory That Was Carver High School,” in *A Bicentennial Commemorative History of the Phoenix Union High School System 1895-1976*, 87 (Phoenix Union High School System, 1976), Small Manuscript Collection, MSM 1388, Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ. “The track team won the State Tournament in 1952 and was runners-up in 1951 and 1953. The basketball team won the State Championship in 1952, was second in 1953 and won both the District and State titles in 1954. In football, the Carver blue and white clad team had a 21 -game winning streak starting in 1951. They were 9-0 in 1951 and 1952 but 7-2 in 1953” (ibid.).

The academics flourished as much as the athletics. In 1951, eight Carver High students placed first in the regional competition for the national Scholastic Art Exhibit.³⁵ *The Carver Monarch* student newspaper received the International First Place Award from Quill and Scroll in both 1952 and 1953, and a journalism award from the University of Arizona for five consecutive years, from 1949 to 1954.³⁶ Students who graduated from Carver High pursued studies ranging from business and physical education to cosmetology and pre-nursing.³⁷ Although the establishment of a separate school for blacks was originally a triumph for segregationists, Robinson's determination paved the path for a quality education in the black community. Carver High's success, however, did not last.

The Battle for Integration

The 1950 state elections ushered in a year of achievement for black Phoenicians. That year, Arizona's first two black state legislators, Hayzel B. Daniels and Carl Simms, were elected. Before the 1950 elections, blacks had no representation or influence in the school system.³⁸ The election of two black legislators created a path for reform and desegregation. In 1951, Daniels introduced a bill making segregation optional for elementary and high school.³⁹ The legislation

³⁵ Gussie B. Wilson, *The Carver Monarch*, Vol. III (Phoenix: Carver High School, 2000), 3.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. V, 1, 11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol V., 2.

³⁸ Jamane Yeager, "Arizona," in *Black America: A State-by-State Historical Encyclopedia, Volume 1*, edited by Alton, Jr. Hornsby, 47, (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011), books.google.com/books?id=TkGMnE6g1qMC.

³⁹ Finn, "Struggle for Civil Rights in Arizona," State Bar of Arizona. Hayzel B. Daniels, interview by Richard E. Harris, October 1983, Transcript, Oral History Project: Arizona Legal History, Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ. The Daniels interview provides a firsthand description of the case that ended segregation in Phoenix' schools.

passed, now stipulating that “trustees may segregate groups of pupils”.⁴⁰ Afterwards, many districts integrated their schools across the state. Still, Phoenix refused to desegregate.⁴¹

Nevertheless, with Daniels’ new law, segregated schools in Phoenix were already doomed. The new amendment to the 1909 segregation law was easier to argue against in court.⁴²

On June 9, 1952, Daniels and three other white attorneys – William Mahoney, Herbert Finn, and Stewart Udall – filed a lawsuit challenging the segregation of the Phoenix Union High School District.⁴³ The plaintiffs were three black students who had applied to Phoenix Union High School but were denied admission.⁴⁴ In the suit, Daniels alleged:

The high schools of Phoenix, Maricopa, Arizona, set apart for white students, particularly Phoenix Union High School, are superior to the schools set apart for pupils of the African race. . . . [The] segregation of African pupils by race has a detrimental effect upon such African pupils, imparting to them a stigma of inferiority, retarding their educational and mental development, and depriving them of some of the benefits they would receive in an integrated school system free from racial discrimination and segregation.⁴⁵

Daniels’ argument epitomized the tragedy that was segregation – segregated education taught colored students to live in perpetual subordination. When the school facilities and equipment were inadequate, the students could only assume that they, too, were inadequate.

⁴⁰ Ellis O. Knox, “Racial Integration in the Public Schools of Arizona, Kansas and New Mexico,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 23, no. 3 (1954): 291, www.jstor.org/stable/2293226.

⁴¹ Hayzel B. Daniels, interview by Harris; Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix*, 162.

⁴² Finn, “Struggle for Civil Rights in Arizona,” State Bar of Arizona. “This act amended the previous laws involved [the 1909 law] by deleting provisions that the trustees shall segregate Negro children from children of the Caucasian race in all schools other than high schools, and that they should provide all accommodations made necessary by such segregation. In place of this provision, the legislature substituted a clause stating, ‘that trustees may segregate groups of pupils’” for both elementary and high schools (Knox, “Racial Integration in Arizona,” 291).

⁴³ *Phillips v. Phoenix Union High Schools (PUHS), No. 72909*, Complaint, 1 (1953), accessed January 2019, superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/llrc/phillips-vs-puhs; Harris, *The First One Hundred Years*, 72; Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix*, 162.

⁴⁴ *Phillips vs. PUHS, No. 72909*, Complaint, 1-3. The plaintiffs were Robert Phillips, Jr., Tolly Williams, and David Clark, Jr. – all black students entering their freshman year (*ibid.*, Complaint, 1).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Complaint, 6.

Maricopa Superior Court Judge Fredric Struckmeyer, Jr. ruled in the black students' favor. In a landmark decision, he decided that the "arbitrary power to segregate pupils of African ancestry from pupils of Caucasian ancestry" defied the constitution.⁴⁶ Giving the Phoenix Union High School Board the legislative power of segregation without "a standard, criterion or guide as to the circumstances under which such power may be exercised" was absolutely unlawful and denied equal protection of law.⁴⁷ Struckmeyer's ruling on February 9, 1953 was the first in the United States to declare high school segregation unconstitutional.⁴⁸ Fearing that the U.S. Supreme Court would ban school segregation nationwide, the Phoenix Union High School Board hesitant to appeal.⁴⁹ When they did appeal, the Arizona Supreme Court dismissed the case as moot.⁵⁰ The decision's limited effect provided less reason to commemorate the Phoenix Civil Rights Movement nationwide. Nonetheless, Daniels and other civil rights activists had claimed their greatest victory by desegregating Arizona's schools and equalizing education in Phoenix one year before *Brown v. Board of Education*.⁵¹

After Judge Struckmeyer's historic ruling in *Phillips v. Phoenix Union High Schools*, Daniels and Herbert Finn filed another similar suit against the Wilson Elementary School District. On May 5, 1954, Maricopa Superior Court Judge Charles Bernstein concurred with the Struckmeyer decision, and segregation was outlawed in elementary schools, too.⁵² "According to

⁴⁶ Ibid., Opinion and Order, 3.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Opinion and Order, 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Opinion and Order, 1; Hayzel B. Daniels, interview by Harris; Mary Melcher, "Blacks and Whites Together: Interracial Leadership in the Phoenix Civil Rights Movement," *The Journal of Arizona History* 32, no. 2 (1991): 201, www.jstor.org/stable/41695873.

⁴⁹ Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix*, 162; Robinson, "The Progress of Integration in the Phoenix Schools," 373.

⁵⁰ Goddard, "The Promise of Brown v. Board of Education: A Monograph," 4.

⁵¹ See Appendix D. This appendix contains a newspaper headline about Struckmeyer's ruling.

⁵² Knox, "Racial Integration in Arizona," 292; Hayzel B. Daniels, interview by Harris.

William Mahoney, Arizona became ‘a footnote in *Brown v. Board of Education*,’ when a clerk from the U.S. Supreme Court requested a copy of Bernstein’s opinion in the Phoenix case.”⁵³ However, the requested copy was all the national acclaim that desegregation in Phoenix received.

A Bittersweet Victory

With a new age of integration dawning in 1954, the Phoenix Union High School Board ordered the closing of Carver High in June and the complete desegregation of its high school district starting September.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, black students faced alienation and racial prejudice in their new schools. The first transferees, four black girls, were greeted by a white teacher announcing, “I see we have a few darkies with us today!”⁵⁵

Students that had formerly found safety and inclusion in Carver High’s beige walls now fought for acceptance every day. For George Greathouse, who attended Carver High from 1952 until its closing in 1954, it was a school he missed.

[Carver High] was a school that I enjoyed going to, and I wanted to continue to go there because that [was] all I knew. And . . . when the schools were integrated, I didn’t want to go to Phoenix Union where all the white folks were. They didn’t want me there and I didn’t want to be there.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, after he began attending Phoenix Union High, Greathouse saw the disparity in education and realized that despite his remorse for losing Carver High, Phoenix Union “was the

⁵³ Melcher, “Blacks and Whites Together,” 201. The Bernstein opinion did not appear in *Brown*’s final opinion as a footnote. Mahoney was only speaking metaphorically.

⁵⁴ Knox, “Racial Integration of Schools,” 291; Harris, *The First Hundred Years*, 72.

⁵⁵ Harris, *The First Hundred Years*, 72.

⁵⁶ George Greathouse, telephone interview by author, May 1, 2019.

place to be.”⁵⁷ The school had more equipment and better resources, which provided black students with better opportunities in the future. But transferring to a predominantly white school meant that students encountered either implicit or explicit racism every day. Greathouse remembers being referred to the Dean’s office because a white girl was “rolling up [his] sleeves” for him.⁵⁸ Thus, in pushing for integration, Phoenician blacks had resigned their children to what Robinson called an “insecure acceptance,” and he demanded that the parents do their part to support their children, in both education and mental stability.⁵⁹

Sadly, not all black children escaped the claws of insecurity. Elizabeth Ragsdale, the daughter of black civil rights activists Lincoln and Eleanor Ragsdale, was one of these children. Her parents had previously challenged racial segregation by purchasing a house in Phoenix’s all-white Encanto district.⁶⁰ Because of their residential location, Elizabeth attended a predominantly white high school. There she suffered through racially-charged insults like “tar-baby” and alienation from school activities.⁶¹ At Carver High Elizabeth would have enjoyed a welcoming community, but at her school, she “was isolated and was never asked to dance at any school function, such as homecoming or prom.”⁶² Like other black students in the 1950s, “Elizabeth Ragsdale ultimately paid the price for racial integration and justice with her emotional stability. . . . She would be diagnosed as manic depressive, placed on lithium, and institutionalized by age twenty-seven.”⁶³ Elizabeth Ragsdale’s tragic story places the triumph of

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Robinson, “The Progress of Integration in Phoenix Schools,” 379.

⁶⁰ Whitaker, “Creative Conflict,” 169.

⁶¹ Whitaker, *Race Work*, 124.

⁶² Ibid., 124.

⁶³ Ibid., 124.

integration in perspective; in vanquishing segregation, Arizona's civil rights activists had also subjected black children to racial torment in predominantly white schools.

Remembering Carver High

The desegregation of Phoenix' high schools was both a crucial triumph and a sacrificial tragedy. Integration brought more equality to secondary education and improved race relations. Like *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* on a national scale, the integration of schools in Phoenix was necessary victory in the path to desegregating the entire city. However, the early black students who attended integrated schools endured alienation and abuses throughout their high school education. Although this harsh treatment eventually subsided, some students, like Elizabeth Ragsdale, continued to bear the price of integration.

Indeed, the struggle of black students in newly integrated schools displayed a static truth – every victory requires sacrifice. Just as Martin Luther King, Jr. devoted his life to achieving racial equality for blacks in America, so too Elizabeth Ragsdale and countless other black students across the nation sacrificed their happiness for the success of integration and the hope of equality. The integration of schools in Phoenix illuminates the true heroes of integration across the country – the black students of newly integrated schools that endured the birth pains of equal education. We must remember Carver High – its beige walls and metal gate and excellent ventilation system – not only because the struggle over the segregation in Arizona's schools culminated there, but also because behind those metal bars lies the happiness that black students, like Elizabeth Ragsdale, forfeited so equality might reign today.

Appendix A

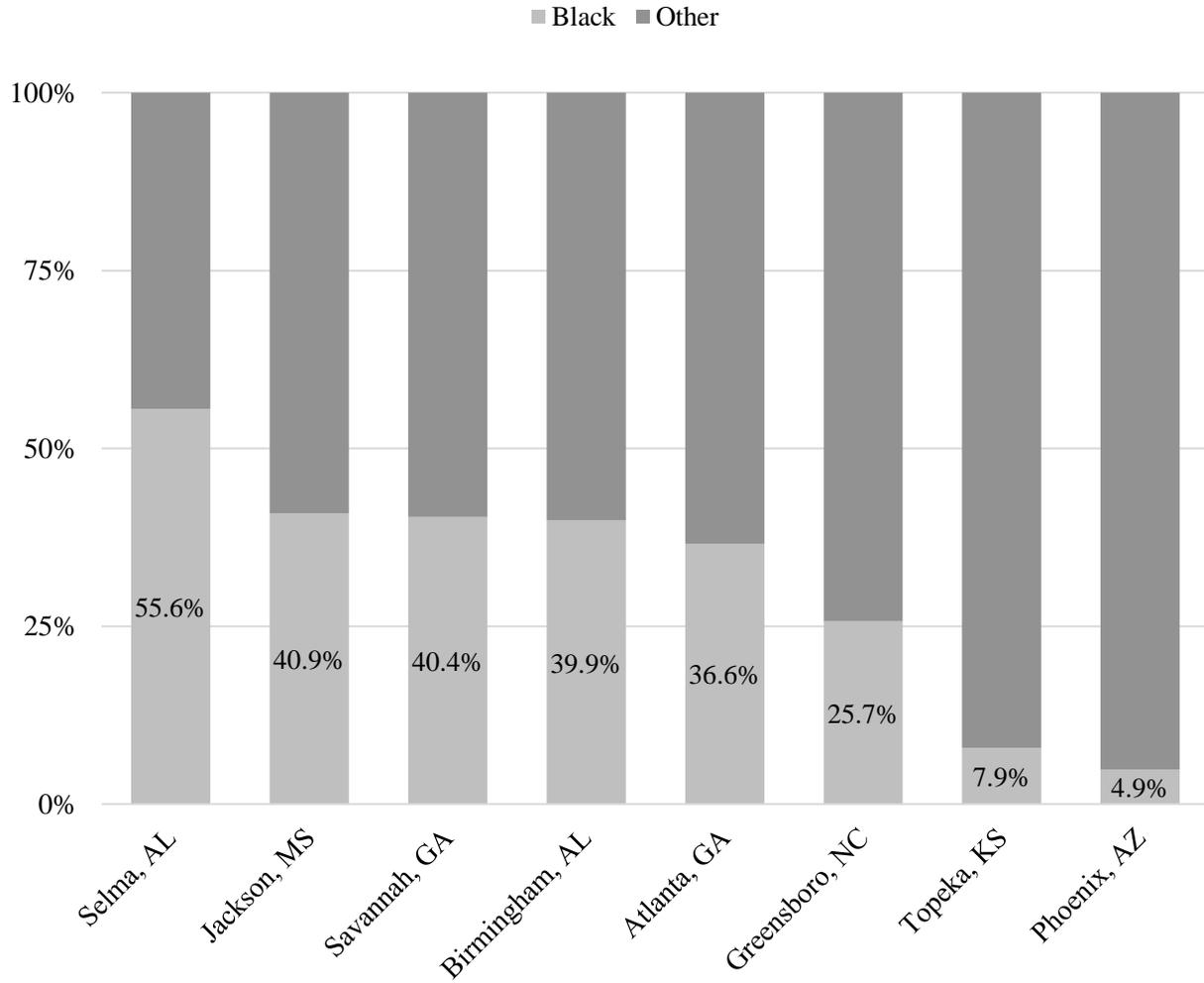


This is the building that previously housed the George Washington Carver High School.

George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, photograph, September 15, 2018, George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, gwcmtcaz.wordpress.com/#jp-carousel-268.

Appendix B

Black Population of Key Cities in the Civil Rights Movement Compared to Phoenix, 1950



Department of Commerce, U.S. Census of Population, 1950, accessed January 2019, www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html.

Appendix C



A newspaper headline on the Monday after the dedication of the Phoenix Union Colored High School, later renamed George Washington Carver High School.

“New Phoenix Colored High School Building Is Dedicated At Sunday Ceremony,” *The Arizona Republican*, September 13, 1926, www.newspapers.com/image/117227201/.

Appendix D

Weather
Frost over Valley this morning.
Steady snow with occasional
showers. (Continued on p. 1.)
Monday's temperature: High 34,
low 11; Tuesday: high 31, low 15.
Article page 7.

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC
THE STATE'S GREATEST NEWSPAPER

REPUBLIC CITY
Today's Chuckle
Oh, a few more years his soul
in a woman, she said. On re-
turning she thanked him. There
he smiled.

69th Year, No. 168 — 30 Pages
Phoenix, Arizona, Tuesday, February 10, 1953
Seven Cents

GUERRILLAS RAID MANCHURIA

Segregation Voided In Phoenix High Schools

Ruling Due For Appeal, Board Hint
By M. S. BARRETT
SEGREGATION of Negro students in Phoenix high schools was declared unconstitutional yesterday by Superior Judge Fred C. Struckmeyer Jr.

**In Warden's Office
Walla Walla Prison Blast Injures Five**
WALLA WALLA (AP)—A light security guard was charged over the Washington State Penitentiary last night after a cell-raft bomb exploded in the warden's office, injuring five officers and three convicts.
A doctor, whose business message was given over a long period of several days after one of the men was blown off in the blast, reported in the hospital. Deputy Warden Al Strickland also was in critical condition.
WARDEN JOHN CRANOR and two prison surgeons were treated for shrapnel wounds. Cranor was back on the job last night after having been temporarily removed to the hospital.

State Calls On Sheriffs To Get Tax
GIVE handed his men-berks of attachment for delinquent state income tax- payors were issued yesterday by the Arizona Tax Commis- sion and sent to sheriffs for serving.



1,500 Fight Red Army 24 Hours
TAIPEI, Formosa (AP)—The Chinese National In- fantry reported yesterday that more than 1,500 guer- rillas swarmed out of their Chiang Mountain hideouts in Manchuria last month and

A newspaper headline two days after Judge Fred C. Struckmeyer, Jr. published his opinion in

Phillips v. Phoenix Union High Schools (emphasis in photograph added).

“Segregation Voided In Phoenix High Schools,” *The Arizona Republic*, February 10, 1953,
www.newspapers.com/image/116711987.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Resources:

“Carver Doomed? Board Voted Yes.” *The Arizona Republic*. March 7, 1954.
www.newspapers.com/image/117151121.

This very short newspaper article reports the Phoenix Union High School Board’s vote on closing Carver High. The article goes on to discuss Carver High’s achievements and ends remorsefully with a “R.I.P” for Carver High. I learned in this article the day that Carver metaphorically died, and some of the remorse surrounding this event.

Daniels, Hayzel B. Interview by Richard E. Harris. October 1983. Transcript. Oral History Project: Arizona Legal History. Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ.

This interview with Hayzel B. Daniels details the legal proceedings leading up to the Struckmeyer decision that outlawed segregation in Maricopa county. Hayzel B. Daniels was the leading prosecuting attorney in the *Phillips v. Phoenix Union High Schools* case and the case that desegregated elementary schools. I learned about the legal process behind desegregating schools in Phoenix through Daniels’ insight and experience.

Department of Commerce. U.S. Census of Population, 1950. Accessed January 2019.
www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html.

This government census data helped me create the graphic in Appendix B. The data was organized by state, and I used the data from Arizona, Alabama, Georgia, Kansas, Mississippi, and North Carolina. I took the sum of the male and female black populations divided by the population under the “urban places” category to calculate the percent black population for each city. The data showed me how little support blacks in Phoenix had in their fight for desegregation, which they achieved, nonetheless.

Finn, Elizabeth. “The Struggle for Civil Rights in Arizona.” State Bar of Arizona. Last modified July 1998. Accessed October 2018. www.myazbar.org/azattorney/archives/july98/7-98a5.htm.

This webpage was written by the daughter of Herbert Finn, one of the prosecuting lawyers in the high school desegregation case. Elizabeth Finn was a child during the 1950s and witnessed much of the legal and educational advances that civil rights activists achieved during this time. However, Finn does not discuss the negative effects of integration, like the loss of Carver High and the racial prejudice that the students later faced. I used this website to understand the broader racial and social conflict around integration.

Goode, Calvin C. “The Glory That Was Carver High School.” In *A Bicentennial Commemorative History of the Phoenix Union High School System 1895-1976*, 83-88. Phoenix Union

High School System, 1976. Small Manuscript Collection, MSM 1388. Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ.

This section of a book chronicling the history of the Phoenix Union High School System displays the wistful remorse that the Carver High attendees and alumni felt after losing their school. Calvin C. Goode, who is an alumnus of Carver High, displays this remorse through his writing. The chapter also lists the many sports victories that Carver High achieved. I learned that Carver was a very successful school, both academically and athletically.

Greathouse, George. Telephone interview by author. May 1, 2019.

I interviewed George Greathouse, who went to Carver High from 1952 to 1954. After the integration in 1954, he transferred from Carver High to Phoenix Union High. In the interview, Mr. Greathouse described the disparity between Carver High and Phoenix Union High. Although he missed the atmosphere at Carver High, Mr. Greathouse believes that integration was necessary and for the better. As an athletic student, he saw the stark contrast in sports equipment between the two schools. Mr. Greathouse also shared an encounter with racism that occurred at Phoenix Union High after integration. This interview enlightened me of the experience that black students endured after integration.

Grigsby, Dr. Eugene, Jr. Interview by Mary Melcher. February 12, 1990. Oral Histories FMMSS141 7, 2. Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ.

This interview with Dr. Eugene Grigsby, a former art teacher at Carver, was helpful in describing the atmosphere in the high school under W. A. Robinson. Grigsby talks about Robinson's determination towards supplying a first-rate education for the black students in Phoenix. Furthermore, I learned of the gas-fire kiln that was installed at Carver High, which reflects the major advances in equipment and quality of education during Robinson's time as principal.

Randolph, Vera. Telephone interview by author. April 23, 2019.

I interviewed Vera Randolph, who attended Carver High from 1948 to 1951. In the interview, she spoke about her experience at Carver High and with segregation in Phoenix. Mrs. Randolph participated in the band program at Carver High. From her, I learned more about life at Carver High from the perspective of someone who went there.

Ragsdale, Lincoln. Interview by Mary Melcher. April 8, 1990. Oral Histories FMMSS141 13, 1. Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ.

This interview with Lincoln Ragsdale provides a clear picture of segregation in Arizona from an activist's perspective. Ragsdale received many death threats simply because he fought for his civil rights. Although he barely mentions school segregation, his

commentary on the black community's synergy and collective effort to end segregation in Phoenix was invaluable.

"New Colored High School Dedication to Be Held Sunday." *The Arizona Gazette*. September 10, 1926. Ephemera Collection PP-Eph 77, 3. Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ.

This newspaper article showed me the atmosphere preceding the dedication of the Colored School. It also reported the equipment and classrooms that the new school would hold. I used the article to gain more understanding of the day the Phoenix Union Colored High School opened and what the public reaction to the school was. While the reaction seemed positive, the article does exaggerate the equipment and the facilities.

"New Phoenix Colored High School Building Is Dedicated At Sunday Ceremony." *The Arizona Republican*. September 13, 1926. www.newspapers.com/image/117227201/.

This newspaper article details the dedication ceremony held at the brand-new Phoenix Union High Colored School. The detail in the article, down to the ceremony's program, astounded me and allowed me to place myself in the historical moment. Overall, the article helped me understand how the school was received by the Phoenix black population in 1926.

Phillips v. Phoenix Union High Schools (PUHS), No. 72909 (1953). Accessed January 2019. superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/llrc/phillips-vs-puhs.

This was the court case that ended high school segregation in Phoenix. The case documents on this webpage were vital to my description and understanding of the arguments that Hayzel B. Daniels and the other prosecuting lawyers made against segregation. The case was central to desegregation because it mandated the integration of Phoenix' high schools and labeled school segregation as a constitutionally incorrect institution.

"Phoenix' New \$150,000 Colored School Building Will Be Dedicated Today." *The Arizona Republican*. September 10, 1926. Ephemera Collection PP-Eph 77, 3. Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ.

This newspaper article describes the quality of the new Phoenix Union Colored School and showed me the lens through which whites viewed the sub-par amenities of the new school. The article praises the new equipment at Colored High School, although the equipment did not meet the same standards as those at Phoenix Union High. The article helped me understand the disparity between whites and blacks during the 1920s.

Robinson, W. A. "The Progress of Integration in the Phoenix Schools." *The Journal of Negro Education* 25, no. 4 (1956): 371-79. www.jstor.org/stable/2293265.

This essay, written by a former principal of Carver High, describes the adversity that the black community, and specifically black children, faced in the wake of integration. Robinson also supplies a brief history of colored education in Phoenix. I learned about the twenty-five-black-students requirement for segregation from this article. As a former principal of a high school set aside for blacks, Robinson's views on the tragedy of integration were extremely important to my understanding of the negative effects of desegregation.

“Segregation Voided In Phoenix High Schools.” *The Arizona Republic*. February 10, 1953. www.newspapers.com/image/116711987.

This newspaper article reports the desegregation of Phoenix High Schools. The article mentions Maricopa Superior Court Judge Fred C. Struckmeyer and quotes his opinion. From this article, I learned of the Phoenix Union High Board's intention to appeal. I also drew my opening epigram from this article.

Struckmeyer, Jr., Frederick C. Interview by Roger C. Mitten, May 21, 1991. Transcript. Oral History Project: Arizona Legal History. *Arizona Bar Foundation*. www.legallegacy.org/13-attorneys/75-frederick-c-struckmeyer.

This interview transcript helped me discover some nuance in the Struckmeyer decision. I used this interview to show that even Struckmeyer's mother was a proponent for the segregation he outlawed. The interview also gave me insight into Struckmeyer's rationale behind his decision, which integrated all Phoenix high schools.

The Trail Blazer: The Spirit of Dr. George Washington Carver. Vol. I. No. II. Carver High School, Phoenix, 1945. Arizona Room, Burton Barr Central Public Library, Phoenix, AZ.

This Carver High yearbook displays the many joyful faces of black students who attended Carver High. Seeing these photos placed me into the jovial and inclusive atmosphere of the segregated school and challenged my former view that integration was a complete triumph. Indeed, many of the joys that Carver High students experienced were lost after integration.

Williams, Tommie. Telephone interview by author. April 30, 2019.

I interviewed Tommie Williams, who attended Carver High from 1941 to 1943. In the interview, Mr. Williams expressed his fondness for Carver High. From him I learned about the segregated Orpheum Theater in downtown Phoenix, where he first saw *The Wizard of Oz*. He also spoke about the two black communities that existed in Phoenix. Those on the East-side went to the Booker T. Washington Elementary School, and those on the West-side went to the Paul Lawrence Dunbar Elementary School. However, at Carver High these two groups mingled and befriended one another. This interview added to my knowledge of the academics at Carver High, too.

Wilson, Gussie B. *The Carver Monarch*. Vol. I-V. Phoenix: Carver High School, 2000.

This book is a collection of the publications of the student newspaper at Carver High, *The Carver Monarch*. The compilation spans five volumes and five years, from 1949 to 1954 when Carver High closed. This book was vital to my understanding of the culture at Carver High. The awards, jokes, farewells, shout outs, and class photos in the newspaper preserve Carver High's vibrant and inclusive atmosphere. The school newspaper was written by students under the instruction of Gussie B. Wilson, who taught business education and journalism at Carver High from 1945 to 1954. Wilson later donated the publications to the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, which is where I viewed them. I used the publications to demonstrate quality of academics at Carver High.

Secondary Resources:

Bruner, Betsy. "Integrating Flagstaff: In education, Flag ahead of the national curve." *Arizona Daily Sun*. Published January 2012. Accessed April 2019.
azdailysun.com/news/local/integrating-flagstaff-in-education-flag-ahead-of-national-curve/article_e50637e8-404e-11e1-a60c-0019bb2963f4.html.

This website introduced me to the Paul Lawrence Dunbar School in Flagstaff. This school was one of three schools named Dunbar in the state. It was integrated in 1954.

Crudup, Keith Jerome. *African Americans in Arizona*, Dissertation (Ph.D.)—Arizona State University, 1998.

This dissertation chronicles the history of African Americans across Arizona. Crudup does not only focus on the metropolitan areas but takes care to describe the experiences African Americans had in small towns throughout the state. I used the section on education the most. The section also introduced to me the existence of another segregated high school in Casa Grande, but this school was voluntarily integrated in 1949 to alleviate the cost. I also learned more about the segregated elementary schools in Phoenix.

Dean, David R., and Jean A. Reynolds. *African American Historic Property Survey*. City of Phoenix, October 2005.
www.phoenix.gov/pddsite/Documents/HP/pdd_hp_pdf_00082.pdf.

This report from the City of Phoenix chronicles the growth of the African American community through the analysis of historic properties. The section on educational buildings was very helpful in distinguishing the different elementary schools in Phoenix. The report also introduced me to many other sources, including *African Americans in Arizona* by Keith J. Crudup.

Duignan, Brian. "*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*." *Encyclopedia Britannica* Online. Last modified May 2018. Accessed February 2019. www.britannica.com/event/Brown-v-Board-of-Education-of-Topeka.

This webpage gave me information about the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. This Supreme Court decision integrated all public schools a year after the desegregation in Phoenix. I used the information on this webpage to contextualize the desegregation in Phoenix.

"The Dunbar School and Education Opportunities." In *The Steps Of Esteban: Tucson's African American Heritage*. Accessed April 2019.
parentseyes.arizona.edu/esteban/educationalopportunities.html.

This website introduced me to the Paul Lawrence Dunbar School in Tucson. This school was one of three named Dunbar in the state. It was voluntarily integrated in 1952.

George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center. Photograph. September 15, 2018. George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center. gwcmmccaz.wordpress.com/#jp-carousel-268.

I used this photograph of Carver High today in Appendix A. The website that I retrieved this photograph from is the official website for the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, which uses the building that previously housed George Washington Carver High. I visited this museum to view some primary sources, like *The Carver Monarch* newspaper publications.

Gill, Mary E., and John S. Goff. "Joseph H. Kibbey and School Segregation in Arizona." *The Journal of Arizona History* 21, no. 4 (1980): 411-22. www.jstor.org/stable/42678310.

This essay about Territorial Governor Joseph H. Kibbey describes the passage of the 1909 school segregation law and the Samuel Bayless desegregation case. The 1909 segregation law established the first school segregation in Arizona. Samuel Bayless challenged this law, but the new Arizona State Supreme Court ruled against him. Learning about this early attempt for integration reveal how important desegregation was to black parents.

Greene, Terre. "Old School Ways: Carver High Alumni Preserve the Valley's African American History". *The New Times*, Phoenix, May 30, 1996. Ephemera Collection PP-Eph 77, 3. Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ.

This newspaper article contains interviews a few Carver high alumni. The newspaper interviewed Tommie Williams, Laura Dungee Harris, and Ethel Stubbs Boyer about their experiences at Carver High. Their responses helped me understand the loss which the Carver students felt when the school was shut down.

Terry Goddard, "The Promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*, A Monograph," *Arizona Attorney General*. Published March 2005, Accessed April 2019, azmemory.azlibrary.gov/digital/api/collection/statepubs/id/21093/download.

This digitally published report describes the legal process behind integration in Arizona and analyzes its effect on the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. I used this document to expand my knowledge of the *Bayless* case and the Struckmeyer decision.

Hall, Brad. "Classes for Black students at Phoenix Union High School in 1921, before Carver." History Adventuring. Published September 2018. Accessed March 2019. www.historyadventuring.com/2018/09/classes-for-black-students-at-phoenix.html.

This website page discusses the creation of the Colored Department at the Phoenix Union High School. I used this article to understand what education for black students was like before the Carver High building was built.

Hardt, Milo. "The Racist Southwest: Blacks in Phoenix, 1945-1950." Small Manuscript Collection, MSM 131. Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ.

This unpublished manuscript chronicles the Phoenix Civil Rights Movement from 1945 to 1950. It was helpful in describing Carver High's rise to excellence in Phoenix academics and sports. Hardt especially describes W. A. Robinson's reforms as principal, which improved the educational excellence at Carver High.

Harris, Richard E. *The First Hundred Years: A History of Arizona Blacks*. Apache Junction: Relmo Publishers, 1991.

This book narrates the history of blacks in Arizona. I drew upon this book heavily when describing the history of the Phoenix Union Colored High School. Harris also provides a brief description of the *Phillips* case and the loss that the black parents and children felt after the school closed. I received this book from Princess Crump of the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center.

Knox, Ellis O. "Racial Integration in the Public Schools of Arizona, Kansas and New Mexico." *The Journal of Negro Education* 23, no. 3 (1954): 290-295.
www.jstor.org/stable/2293226.

This article discusses the process of integration in Arizona. I referred to this article to keep the many events in the desegregation process in chronological order. Beginning with the 1909 school segregation law, it describes the laws and cases that led to desegregation in Phoenix' high schools. The article also detailed the process of integrating elementary schools in Maricopa Superior Court Judge Bernstein's decision.

Luckingham, Bradford. *Minorities in Phoenix: A Profile of Mexican American, Chinese American, and African American Communities, 1860-1992*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994.

This book chronicles the struggle of blacks in Phoenix, as well as Asians and Mexicans. It was vital to my understanding of school segregation in Arizona. Luckingham discusses the growth of the black population Phoenix, as well as the trouble blacks faced in education, the workforce, and society. The book also helped me understand the major triumphs in the desegregation process. I learned that school integration was an important milestone for civil rights activists in Phoenix who sought equality in all aspects of life.

Mawn, Geoffrey. "Blacks in Phoenix 1890-1930." Small Manuscript Collection, MSM-29. Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ.

This unpublished manuscript discusses the black community's endeavors in early Arizonan history. It showed me the condition of the black community in Phoenix before the Phoenix Civil Rights Movement gained momentum. To my surprise, the black community flourished in Phoenix from 1890 to 1930. Mawn details how the small black population formed its own society separate of the predominant racist society of the time.

Melcher, Mary. "Blacks and Whites Together: Interracial Leadership in the Phoenix Civil Rights Movement." *The Journal of Arizona History* 32, no. 2 (1991): 195-216.
www.jstor.org/stable/41695873.

This essay provides a thorough description of the process leading to the desegregation cases. Melcher, who interviewed many of the black civil rights activists in Phoenix herself, has one of the strongest and most credible positions on the subject of black civil rights in Arizona.

Pancrazio, Angela Cara. "When They Were "Colored": Carver High Alumni Spread Their Wings." *The Arizona Republic*, January 16, 2000. Ephemera Collection PP-Eph 77, 3. Arizona Historical Society - Papago Park, Tempe, AZ.

This article includes interviews with five prominent Carver alumni: Tommie Williams, Calvin Goode, Vera Randolph, Arlena Seneca, and Dottie Waters Battiest. Their perspectives helped me further comprehend the remorse that the graduates felt when they lost Carver High. Learning about their remorse was vital in shaping my argument about the tragedy in the school desegregation movement.

Phoenix Union Colored High School. National Register of Historic Places. Published May 1991. Accessed April 2019. npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/7908532e-94ad-498c-8ca2-398555baa9fa.

This webpage contains the registration document for Carver High in the National Register of Historic Places. The recognition of Carver High as a place of history showed me that the school is not entirely neglected. However, the registration does not mention the desegregation case or the curricular success at Carver High.

"School Segregation and Integration." *Library of Congress*. www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays/school-segregation-and-integration/.

This webpage provides a short description of the racial climate leading up to the desegregation of schools. The article recognizes the *Brown* ruling and discusses its significance but neglects the struggle in Arizona. After reading this article, I saw how little recognition the integration in Phoenix got nationally and historically.

Scoville, Alex. "Arizona's Black History: The People and Places That Made History and an Impact." Cronkite News. Last modified February 23, 2016. Accessed September 2018. cronkitenews.azpbs.org/2016/02/16/arizona-black-history-month-timeline/.

This digital timeline was the inspiration for this topic. I did not know about the drive to desegregate Phoenix' schools until reading this timeline. However, the vagueness of the timeline required me to rely more on other sources to form an argument.

“Staff Report: Z-72-16-8.” *City of Phoenix*. Last modified November 2016. Accessed March 2019. www.phoenix.gov/pddsite/Documents/PZ/Z-72-16.pdf.

This report by the City of Phoenix details the history of Carver High. The report established Carver High as a history landmark in Phoenix. I received this report from Princess Crump of the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center. I used this to name the other segregated schools in Arizona.

Taylor, Quintard. “Race & Ethnicity in the Southwest; African-American and Arizona History.” *Arizona Attorney* 34, no. 6 (1998): 17-19. Accessed on LexisNexis at Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.

This article examines the forgotten plight of blacks in the Southwest. It was helpful in contextualizing the Phoenix Civil Rights Movement as a distinct movement from the stereotypical Civil Rights Movement of the southeastern United States. The article also discussed how little the Southwest is mentioned in civil rights history.

Whitaker, Matthew C. “‘Creative Conflict’: Lincoln and Eleanor Ragsdale, Collaboration, and Community Activism in Phoenix, 1953-1965.” *Western Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2003): 165-190. www.jstor.org/stable/4144813.

This essay describes the Phoenix Civil Rights Movement, focusing on Lincoln and Eleanor Ragsdale. Whitaker describes the strategies and events that drove the desegregation movement in Phoenix, and specifically discusses the integration of housing. I learned that the black civil rights movement required cooperation between people, leaders, and organizations to find success. The essay cited many crucial primary sources which I was later able to obtain, including the Lincoln Ragsdale interview at the Arizona Historical Society.

———. *Race Work: The Rise of Civil Rights in the Urban West*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.

This book by Whitaker thoroughly examines the Phoenix Civil Rights Movement. Whitaker chronicles the many triumphs and tragedies of the Phoenix movement with emphasis on the role of Lincoln and Eleanor Ragsdale. The book discusses Elizabeth Ragsdale’s institutionalization and the price of alienation that black students paid for integration. This discussion was vital in showing the tragedy of integration.

———. “The Rise of Black Phoenix: African-American Migration, Settlement and Community Development in Maricopa County, Arizona 1868-1930.” *The Journal of Negro History* 85, no. 3 (2000): 197-209. www.jstor.org/stable/2649077.

This essay explores the struggles of the early black community in Arizona. Whitaker describes successes and failures of early black leaders like William P. Crump. The essay helped me contextualize the integration movement because it displayed the segregation that the black Phoenixians faced in the early 1900s.

Yeager, Jamane. "Arizona." In *Black America: A State-by-State Historical Encyclopedia, Volume 1*, edited by Alton, Jr. Hornsby, 35-55. Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011. books.google.com/books?id=TkGMnE6g1qMC.

This section of an encyclopedia chronicles the history of blacks in Arizona from the colonial times to modern day. It was instrumental in providing me with an overall context of black history in Arizona, biographies of important persons, and many secondary resources that I located later, like Bradford Luckingham's book *Minorities in Phoenix*.