

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

HOWARD HIGH SCHOOL

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Howard High School

Other Name/Site Number: Delaware CRS# N04234

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 13th and Poplar Streets

Not for publication:

City/Town: Wilmington

Vicinity:

State: Delaware County: New Castle

Code: 003

Zip Code: 20019

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: ___

Public-Local: X

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: ___

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

___ buildings

___ sites

___ structures

___ objects

___ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Education

Sub: School

Current: Education

Sub: School

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Classical Revival

MATERIALS: Brick

Foundation: Concrete

Walls: Brick Veneer

Roof: Not visible

Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.¹

The former Howard High School is located at the northeast corner of 13th and Poplar Streets in the Eastside neighborhood of Wilmington. Situated in an urban setting, the school sits back several feet from the streets. Included in this nomination is the school building with its rear annex constructed in 1927. The annex was expanded in 1940 and 1954. An adjacent 1970s building housing the Howard Vocational School, and accessible from Howard High School by a 2nd story walkway, is excluded from this nomination.

Designed by James Oscar Betelle of the firm of Gilbert and Betelle of Newark, New Jersey, the 1927 building is a filled L-shaped structure with Neo-Classical elements. Betelle was a graduate of Wilmington High School, and at the time, he was a professor in the School of Architecture at Columbia University in New York City. His specialty was school architecture and he was nationally recognized as an expert in school design. Betelle authored articles on school design which appeared in *American Architect* and *The American School Board Journal* in 1920.² As the primary architect for the rebuilding program funded by P. S. du Pont, Betelle employed all the latest ideas in contemporary school design and the design of Howard High School reflects that expertise.

Exterior

The symmetrically designed building is of masonry construction with a veneer of red brick, laid in Flemish bond. The front facade faces west and features an entrance of three, three-paneled institutional doors with recessed arch-shaped wood, with tracery panels above the doors. The doorways have Tuscan half-column surrounds and horizontal three-light transoms. The entryway is highlighted by Ionic columns of concrete which support the dentil underline entablature which has rosettes above the columns. The entryway also features a surmounted rectangle inscribed with "Howard High School" in Berling Bold lettering. Above the doors on the second floor are eight-over-twelve windows. A rosette-type scroll is located on both sides of the nameplate.

Banks of windows are on both sides of the main entryway. On the first floor are four sets of recessed six-over-nine windows with a large brick archway above; the second floor has six nine-over-nine light configurations. Both ends of the front facade boast a large projected section with flanking brick pilasters. On the second floor, the center of each section is a large concrete commemorative tablet. The northern tablet shows Abraham Lincoln and the southern tablet shows General Oliver Otis Howard, for whom the school is named. Each tablet is adorned with a decorative swag.

Concrete belt courses punctuate the brickwork between the basement and first floor and between the first and second floors. A concrete plain cornice follows the level of the entablature. The only visible added feature on this elevation is a concrete handicapped accessible ramp. This structure does not adversely impact the original design. Windows throughout the building have been replaced but retain their original design.

The south elevation displays banks of windows that light the classrooms. The sloping site allows windows to light the rear section of the basement as well. The connector to the new building is placed close to the east end of this elevation. Placed above an exterior entrance that displays a decorative surround, it gently attaches to the

¹ Portions of physical description excerpted from Patricia A. Maley, "Howard High School," National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, United States Department of Interior, National Park Service, February 21, 1985.

² Bradley Skelcher, *African American Education Statewide in Delaware: 1770 – 1940* (Dover, DE: Delaware State University, Department of History and Political Science, 1995), 121.

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building with minimal disturbance to the fenestration pattern across the elevation.

The east (rear elevation) of the main building displays a projecting copper bay window from the second level, lighting what was once a botany classroom and used for growing plants. The open arcade connector to the rear shop building attaches to this elevation; fenestration is irregular.

The north elevation faces an alley and there are no classrooms that use this elevation for light access. Always constrained by adjacent construction, this elevation is accessed by an alley and has irregular fenestration. Opaque windows that provide auxiliary light into the auditorium are located along this elevation.

Interior

Extensive photography was done in 1927 when the school was first opened. These historic photographs document the high degree of integrity the interior of the building retains.

The vestibule and the foyer have walls of yellow machine pressed glazed brick in stretcher bond. The bond rises to a single row of headers before meeting the crown molding. This entrance vestibule features three sets of interior double doors, each with ten lights and a brass plaque commemorating Pierre S. du Pont's donation and collaboration with the City of Wilmington in the erection of this school building in 1927. The historic location of the school offices was off the foyer. The office entrances are chamfered to provide a larger gathering space in the foyer. This space retains original decorative features like door surrounds, bulletin boards and trophy cases. Three doors access the auditorium from this space.

The large two-story auditorium (seating 700+) is the heart of the building. The stage area of the auditorium is wide and extremely deep and also served as a gymnasium. There were large wooden doors (removed) that separated the stage from the gymnasium to allow for simultaneous use. The stage floor is hardwood and is surrounded by a simple floriated molding, floor-to-ceiling and also across the top of the stage. Five large nine-over-nine windows contain elliptical fan lights and side light sections that provide sufficient natural lighting. Ornate brass chandeliers hang at regular intervals from the plaster ceiling panels. At the corners of the auditorium the walls have simple fluted plaster pilaster designs which are repeated at intervals throughout the room. This design appears again, executed in brick on wood, at the front entryway and at the first-floor entrance to the auditorium. The auditorium seating appears to be original and is set on a steep slant.

Staircases are original and composed of metal rail and risers, with concrete or tile treads, like those found in other Wilmington schools of similar vintage. Placed in three locations at intersections or ends of corridors, these stairs connect to the basement and second floor.

The hallways are lined with lockers. Radiators are placed in the walls above the lockers. Lights are cut through from the classrooms and battered (widened) out into the hallways to provide additional light. Custodian closets display original doors. Transoms have been retained throughout the building in the classrooms although many of the original doors have been replaced. Classrooms generally retain most of their historic features such as slate chalkboards, wooden built-in cabinets, radiators, and either wood or linoleum floors. The hallways are generally single loaded (classrooms on one side only) along the exterior walls, although there are classrooms on both sides of the corridor toward the rear of the building beyond the auditorium space.

Specialty rooms documented in the 1927 photographs retain their character defining features such as the stage area in the former music room on the second floor west side hallway, and the equipment and cabinetry in the science labs. The most historically detailed spaces were the auditorium and the library. The library, now the

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Pauline Young Memorabilia Room, retains many important original features. Such features include the original Palladian entrance from the hallway with arched transom, sidelights, carved surround and two entrance doors; the built-in book cases that lined the walls (although the shelving is missing); the display space above the book cases; the teacher's office partition and space lined with built-in book cases; cork flooring; and the original librarian's desk. Named for Pauline Young, an important African American historian and librarian at Howard for 30 years, the library is now maintained by the Afro-American Historical Society of Delaware and the Howard Alumni Association to store reference materials and other memorabilia. The Memorabilia Room houses a collection of Pauline Young's personal papers, school yearbooks, photos, trophies and assorted school memorabilia. Prominently displayed among the portraits of individuals associated with the school is a portrait of Edwina Kruse, the first African-American to serve as principal of Howard. The collection also includes correspondence to and from well-known faculty and alumni including a telegram from the poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar to his wife, Alice Dunbar Nelson, a Howard faculty member.

Changes to the original room arrangements are minimal. One classroom on the first floor was cut into offices but the chalkboard and ceiling height have been retained. Some rooms have had the wood flooring replaced with modern wood flooring.

The basement level housed the cafeteria and the rooms used by industrial arts ("shop") and home economics classes. The sloping grade of the site allowed natural light to penetrate most of the east-facing classrooms on this level. Access is possible on this level via a brick arcaded walkway that leads to the school annex that was built at the same time as the main building.

The annex (which was expanded in 1940 and again in 1954) housed a machine training workshop. The composite structure echoes important design elements such as the Flemish bond brick work and the elliptical windows that occur in the main building. The auxiliary relationship with the main building is defined via the previously referenced brick arched walkway that connects the eastern end of the "L" of the main building to the annex.

Near the ground-level entry to the annex, a break at the rear staircase has been made at the second floor level to provide covered access to the new adjacent structure, the Howard Vocational School. Both the elevation of the connector and the use of non-reflective black metal minimized the adverse visual impact.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A X B C X D

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): A B C D E F G

NHL Criteria:

1

NHL Theme(s):

II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
1. Reform movements
IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
1. Parties, protests, and movements

Areas of Significance:

Law
Politics/Government
Social History
Education

Period(s) of Significance: 1951-1954

Significant Dates: May 17, 1954

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: James O. Betelle, of the firm of Guilbert and Betelle; Newark, New Jersey

Historic Contexts: Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.Summary Statement of Significance

Howard High School is associated with the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* that found racially segregated public education unconstitutional. The school figured into the court case *Belton v. Gebhart*, one of the school desegregation cases combined to make up *Brown v. Board of Education* as part of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense Fund's orchestrated campaign to end racially segregated schools. As such, Howard is associated with the landmark decision that struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine governing public policy with regard to race. The school stands as a symbol of the lengthy conflict that ultimately led to the racial desegregation of schools by the states and marked the beginning of the modern civil rights movement.

Howard High School was previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its significance to the history of African-American education in the State of Delaware. In addition, the National Park Service theme study, "Racial Desegregation in Public Education in The United States,"³ identifies Howard as a potential National Historic Landmark for its association with *Brown v. Board of Education*. In the Delaware case, a group of black parents requested that the school board allow their children to attend the all-white Claymont High School that was within walking distance of their homes, rather than busing their children to the all-black Howard High School in Wilmington. The school board denied their application because it was unlawful to integrate the races in public schools. The parent's subsequent legal challenge for the right to equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment would take this case to the highest court in the nation and overturn five decades of legally sanctioned racial segregation that began in 1896.

Racially Segregated Public Education, 1896-1950⁴

Placement of children in school by racial assignment was sanctioned at the highest federal level in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), when the U.S. Supreme Court established that separate facilities for blacks and whites were constitutional as long as they were equal.⁵ The majority opinion stated, "If one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them on the same plane." The lone dissenter, Justice Harlan wrote: "Our constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens."⁶ The decision established the separate but equal doctrine that became widespread throughout the South. It soon influenced or controlled most aspects of race relations, including education and it reinforced segregation laws permitted by state and local authorities since the close of the Reconstruction era.⁷

³ Susan Cianci Salvatore, Waldo E. Martin, Jr., Vicki L. Ruiz, Patricia Sullivan, and Harvard Sitkoff, "Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States." National Historic Landmarks Theme Study (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2000), 121.

⁴ This section excerpted from the NHL nomination for the District of Columbia school desegregation case heard the same day as *Brown* in Susan Cianci Salvatore, "John Philip Sousa Junior High School," National Historic Landmark Nomination (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, August 7, 2001), 6-8, 11.

⁵ 163 U.S. 537. The case involved Homer Plessy, a black man, who attempted to sit in the whites-only section of a train in a planned challenge to the right of states to impose "separate but equal" facilities on blacks. Abolitionist and attorney, Charles Sumner, was the first to attack the concept in 1849 in *Roberts v. City of Boston*, 5 Cushing Reports 198, when the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled in favor of Boston's power to segregate schools.

⁶ 163 U.S. 537 at 544.

⁷ The South consists of the following 17 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. This is "The southeastern region of the United States, distinctive for its climate and long agricultural growing season and plantation system, black

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Between 1899 and 1927 the U.S. Supreme Court heard three legal challenges to separate state operated southern schools. "In all three instances the court bowed to the right of the state to run its own schools, refusing to consider the constitutional question of whether state-required segregation denied black children equal protection of the laws."⁸ Thus, between 1896 and 1930 the separate but equal doctrine became ingrained in case law and appeared to be beyond legal attack.

A new era in the movement to desegregate schools began in the 1930s. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) started a legal attack on the inequalities in public education based on the theory that the financial burden of maintaining two equal systems would destroy segregation. The first attacks were aimed at the professional and graduate school level. Arguing that separate facilities were not in fact equal, the NAACP found at first that this strategy resulted in many states paying to equalize facilities to maintain them separately rather than desegregate. It was not until after World War II when the country's social climate toward the economic and social status of black Americans began to change, that the NAACP would reach a major victory.

This change began in response to the New Deal, and accelerated during World War II under the umbrella of the "Double V" campaign (victory at home and victory abroad) that supported a growing liberal consensus sympathetic to civil rights issues and concerns. Problems in racial discrimination came to the forefront in a new study. Published to wide acclaim in 1944, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy*, Gunnar Myrdal's classic study on racial discrimination in America highlighted the harsh contradiction between the reality of segregation and racial discrimination, and the fundamental values and principles of American democracy.⁹

While Myrdal appealed to the conscience of white America, the pivotal importance of the black vote in major northern states encouraged liberal Democrats to take a bolder stand on civil rights. After Democrats suffered major defeats in key northern districts in 1946 midterm elections, President Harry Truman appointed a Committee on Civil Rights to shore up support among black voters. The Committee's 1947 report, *To Secure These Rights*, called for the "elimination of segregation . . . from American life."¹⁰ This was the first U.S. government body to reject racial segregation and received President Harry Truman's support and would be a focus of black parents in the District in desegregating schools.¹¹ Also rejecting racial segregation in schools was the President's Commission on Higher Education. Finding that segregation should be eliminated, the Commission proclaimed that nowhere in the South or the District of Columbia, where legalized segregation occurred, was the separate but equal principle fully honored. In the field of education, ". . . the consequences of segregation are always the same, and always adverse to the Negro citizen."¹²

Shortly thereafter, in June 1950, the NAACP's legal defense team reached a milestone in its professional and graduate school desegregation cases. The U.S. Supreme Court's opinions in *Sweatt v. Painter* and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma* recognized that intangibles such as prestige, faculty reputation, and intellectual commingling with

agricultural labor, and white-imposed system of segregation" as defined in Jeffrey A. Raffel, *Historical Dictionary of School Segregation and Desegregation: The American Experience* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 242.

⁸ Joan Biskupic and Elder Witt, *Guide to the U.S. Supreme Court* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1997), 630.

⁹ Myrdal was a Swedish economist who by 1938 was a recognized authority on national social problems and was sought by the Carnegie Foundation to prepare an unbiased report. Raffel, *Historical Dictionary*, 174.

¹⁰ Salvatore, "Racial Desegregation in Public Education," 65.

¹¹ Raffel, *Historical Dictionary*, 253.

¹² President's Commission on Higher Education, *Higher Education for American Democracy* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1947), vol. II, 31.

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other students were part of the equality determination.¹³ However, the cases did not invalidate race separation. The signal that the Court was willing to consider intangible and sociological factors of the separate but equal doctrine, led the way in the public school segregation cases combined in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

School Segregation in Delaware

On December 7, 1787, the State of Delaware, earned the distinction of being the first state to ratify the United States Constitution and earned itself the nickname “the First State.” It also has the distinction of being the last state to ratify the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, doing so only in February 1901. Although the state sided with the Union during the Civil War, it was completely unsympathetic to its new citizens. In the case of the 14th Amendment, the legislature asserted its “uncompromising opposition” to all “measures intended or calculated to equalize or amalgamate the Negro race with the white race, politically or socially . . . and to making Negroes eligible . . . to their admission to public schools where white children attend.” In considering the 15th Amendment, the legislature declared that “federal outlawing of prohibitions on the right to vote on the ground of race ‘would have a tendency to destroy the rights of the states . . . [and] would be an attempt to establish an equality not sanctioned by the laws of nature or of God.’”¹⁴

State funds were finally appropriated for Negro schools in 1881 in response to appeals from the Delaware Association for the Moral Improvement and Education of the Colored People (1866). The legislature provided \$2,400 to be distributed among the Negro schools and required that the schools be open for three months a year. In 1883, funding was increased to \$5,000 and by 1887, new legislation provided for complete organization of the Negro schools within the state educational system. One year after the *Plessy* decision, the state officially sanctioned a “separate but equal” system, requiring equal funding for both black and white schools.¹⁵

Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, a separate public school system had been established for African Americans. So important was education that African American parents had worked for the creation of separate schools for their children as they were not given access to white schools. Ironically, this zeal supported the institutionalization of segregation and it would take similar energy in the twentieth century to combat segregated schools.¹⁶

On the surface, the successive acts of the legislature (during the period 1887 to 1917) authorizing increased state appropriations, free textbooks and directing local governments to contribute to the education of Negro children, suggests a welcome concern for Negroes. However, historian Harold Livesay contends that this is far from accurate.

The average length of the Negro school term in 1887 was 4.7 months. . . . At the time of the First World War, Negro education was in nearly as disgraceful a condition as it had been 30 years before . . . The annual salary for Negro teachers was \$315 per year, less than what canneries paid colored laborers. . . . The schools were dilapidated and poorly heated. . . . The students were crowded 50 or 60 to a room, sitting on the floor or on boxes. . . . Sanitary facilities were primitive or nonexistent.¹⁷

¹³ *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Board of Regents, et al.*, 399 U.S. 637 (1950) and *Sweatt v. Painter*, 399 U.S. 629 (1950).

¹⁴ Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 426.

¹⁵ Harold C. Livesay, “Delaware Negroes, 1865-1915,” *Delaware History* 13 (1968-69): 106-107; Rachel Franklin Weekley, *A Strong Pull, A Long Pull, A Pull Altogether: Topeka’s Contribution to the Campaign for School Desegregation*, Historic Resources Study, *Brown v. Board of Education* National Historic Site, Topeka, Kansas, (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Midwestern Region, December 1999), 142.

¹⁶ Skelcher, *African American Education*.

¹⁷ Livesay, “Delaware Negroes, 1865-1915,” 107-108.

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As poor as the Delaware schools were, by the beginning of the First World War Delaware's separate and unequal Negro schools had virtually eliminated illiteracy among Negroes of school age. But the system could only provide primary education while Howard School remained the only school in Delaware that offered a complete high school education to Negroes.¹⁸

Many supporters of school reform hoped that a tax increase would provide new revenues to support construction of new schools, raise teacher salaries and improve attendance. In 1919 four important changes were made in the School Code: the state assumed funding responsibilities, the 1875 tax on Negroes was revised and levied on all residents to support public schools, a school year of 180 days was required for students under 14, and transportation was mandatory for students under the age of six who lived more than two miles from school. For the first time, black and white schools had the same operating procedures.¹⁹

Poorly maintained schools for colored students were openly approved by the state until the early 1920s when states began to take on more fiscal responsibility for the education of both white and black students. Leading the movement for school reform in Delaware was Pierre S. du Pont, chair of General Motors and president of E. I. du Pont and Company. Du Pont recognized that colored school facilities fell far behind Delaware's white schools. He eventually contributed several million dollars to build eighty-six schools for black children in Delaware. These buildings eventually became state property and set the stage for Delaware to confront its attitude and policies toward public education. The U.S. Bureau of Education published a bulletin in 1917 titled "History of Public Education in Delaware." Among the forty-eight states, Delaware ranked thirty-ninth in its support of public education. The ranking was based on "wealth, money in public school property, expense per pupil, expenditure of \$100 invested, teachers' salaries per pupil, yearly salaries, monthly salaries, new buildings, equipment and sites, school attendance, and school populations."²⁰ As a result of the building program and other reforms, Delaware's ranking changed from thirty-ninth in 1917 to eighth by 1938 and the state was considered to have made more rapid progress than any other state in the last twenty years.²¹

But this progress did not apparently extend to all public schools by 1950. A report prepared that year for the Delaware Fellowship Commission begins by stating its purpose to:

. . . reveal the inequities which exist between the colored and white school systems in the State of Delaware. The report will endeavor also to point out the manner in which inequality is a luxury the State can ill afford. . . . At the outset it is believed by the researchers that the only solution to our basic problems lies in the creation of an integrated school system. . . . We cannot prove that two equal but separate systems are an impossibility, although we can concur with all those who thoroughly believe this to be the case. We can, however, clearly demonstrate that equality in a separated system had not been obtained and that it would be very difficult and costly to bring it about.²²

¹⁸ Ibid., 111.

¹⁹ Skelcher, *African American Education*; Weekley, *A Strong Pull*, 142.

²⁰ Skelcher, *African American Education*, 121. A detailed account of du Pont's involvement in school construction is found in Skelcher, along with photographs of the schools.

²¹ M. M. Daughtery and Myra J. Kerslake, "Delaware's Education Ratings Among the States," *Signposts*, supplement, December 1940, 12. Pierre S. Du Pont Papers, Longwood Manuscripts, Group 10, Series A, File 712, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware.

²² "Segregation in Delaware Public Schools," an unpublished report to the Delaware Fellowship Commission, 1950, Wilmington Public Library, Delaware, 1.

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Establishment of Howard High School

The history of Howard High School begins shortly after the Civil War in 1867 with the construction of the Howard School, a simple 5-room frame structure erected on Orange Street between 12th and 13th Streets. The school was formally opened on September 20, 1869. On September 21, *The Daily Commercial* carried a lengthy account of the opening ceremonies:

The new schoolhouse just erected on Orange Street for the education of children without regard for color, was formally opened yesterday. The lower room was densely packed by colored people and a few white citizens The new schoolhouse has been named the Howard School in honor of General Howard, to whose interest and efforts its existence is largely due. It is a good looking two-story brick structure, built on the plan of the three new school houses now building in the First, Fifth and Ninth Wards for white children . . . the cellar is unusually deep and part of it will be fitted up for use as a playroom in wet weather . . .²³

By 1875, Howard High had become part of the city school system, and the school board appointed Edwina Kruse as principal, a black woman who had been born in Puerto Rico and raised in Connecticut. After graduation from Hampton Institute, Edwina Kruse was brought to Delaware by the Delaware Association for the Moral Improvement and Education of the Colored People. She was one of the first black teachers in Middletown and was initially responsible for curriculum development in rural schools until the school board appointed her principal at Howard in 1876. Edwina Kruse was hired to replace Sallie Miller as principal of the fledgling school where she served until her retirement in 1923. During her years at Howard she brought a commitment to high academic standards and “gentility.” She and the highly motivated faculty created a school that became one of the best, possibly the best in the entire city school system.²⁴ If the black community as a whole did not gain recognition as a constituency for education, Edwina Kruse personally commanded the respect of the school board to the extent that the black schools were financed at a level nearly consistent with white schools.²⁵

By 1875, Howard School had come under the control of the city board of education and was known as School 16. At that time there were four teachers. That same year the Delaware General Assembly passed a law that taxed black citizens for their children’s education. These funds provided for one-third of the needed funds. The Delaware Association for the Moral Improvement and Education of the Colored People raised additional funds through contributions from both black and white citizens. Eventually additional rooms were attached and more teachers were hired as Howard School came to serve the needs of Negro children from the elementary grades through high school.²⁶

Howard High School was a beneficiary of du Pont’s largesse. Historian Carol Hoffecker suggests that in all probability the rapport between Edwina Krause and the school board along with her standards and commitment to quality education had much to do with du Pont providing funds for the new school built at 13th and Poplar Streets.²⁷ The new Howard High School was built at a cost of \$960,000. Dedicated on February 12, 1929, the building had accommodations for 1,200 students. At that time the current enrollment was 700. The school was fully equipped for both academic and vocational courses and featured a furnished apartment for home training.

²³ “Opening of the Howard School,” *The Daily Commercial* (Wilmington, DE), September 21, 1869, n.p.

²⁴ Harold B. Hancock, “The Status of the Negro in Delaware After the Civil War, 1865-1875,” *Delaware History* 13 (1968-69); Carol E. Hoffecker, “The Politics of Exclusion: Blacks in Late 19th Century Wilmington Delaware,” *Delaware History* (1974), 69.

²⁵ Hoffecker, “The Politics of Exclusion,” 71.

²⁶ Maley, “Howard High School,” Section 8: 2.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Section 8: 6.

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The newspaper account carried the headline: “New Howard School is Dedicated - Says City Leads for Colored Race.” *The Journal Every Evening*’s February 12, 1929, article described the dedication ceremony:

Wilmington this afternoon dedicated one of the finest and most costly high schools in the country - the new Howard High School . . . the gift of Pierre S. du Pont of this city. . . . The principal address was made by Dr. Albert E. Kinship of Boston who lauded Mr. du Pont for the gift of the school for the education of the colored students Speaking of the development of public education in Delaware Dr. Kinship referred to Wilmington of ten years ago as a little city in a little state and today as ‘educationally a great city in a great state’ . . . there is no city in the country that has had a great influence upon the schools of a state as Wilmington has had on Delaware since 1920 Turning to education of the colored youth and girls, Dr. Kinship stated there was no high school building in the world in 1920 as well equipped for the education of the youth as is this Howard High School for colored youth . . . and there was no teaching of high school youth that fitted them to market their education as well as the students in this school are being equipped for the market. . .²⁸

Ending Segregation in Delaware

In 1949, thirty Negro students attending the Delaware State College described as “little more than a fanciful high school,” in Dover had applied for admission to the all-white University of Delaware in Newark. University officials turned down their request, noting that the state provided for the education of Negroes at Delaware State. In 1950, Louis Redding and Jack Greenberg of the NAACP’s Legal Defense Fund, sued the state in *Parker v. University of Delaware*.²⁹

At the time of the *Parker* case, Louis Redding was the only black lawyer in Delaware. After graduating from Howard High School, Redding attended Brown University, in the Ivy League, where he was one of the speakers at his commencement exercises. He then attended Harvard Law School on scholarship. After law school he spent a short time teaching at Morehouse College in Atlanta. His father, a graduate of Howard University, a postal carrier, and active in the black community, wanted his son to become the first black lawyer in Delaware. At his father’s urging, Louis returned to Delaware and was admitted to the bar in 1929. In the early 1930s, the NAACP began to recruit black lawyers, and in 1933 Walter White (NAACP Secretary) suggested that Louis Redding be added to the organization’s Legal Committee.

His friend and colleague, NAACP attorney Jack Greenberg, recalls that court officials tried to segregate Redding in the courtroom, in keeping with their policy of segregating black plaintiffs, defendants, witnesses and spectators. Louis Redding refused to accept this. He also refused to live in Delaware and commuted from New Jersey and later from Pennsylvania. Greenberg, who was to come to know and love Louis Redding writes that he “loved Lou for many reasons, in part, because I saw in his manner, which admittedly, was more reserved than mine, something resembling my own taciturnity and intolerance of nonsense.”³⁰

Attorney Redding chose to bring this “equity” case before the Chancery Court as he was confident of the sympathies of the Vice-Chancellor, Collins J. Seitz.³¹ Delaware is one of the few states to retain the English

²⁸ *The Journal Every Evening*, February 12, 1929, n.p. Among the other speakers were Dr. Mordecai W. Johnson, President of Howard University, and Dr. Walter Hullahen, President of the University of Delaware.

²⁹ *Parker v. University of Delaware*, 75 A. 2d. 225 (Del. 1950).

³⁰ Jack Greenberg, *Crusaders in the Court* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 87. Thurgood Marshall sent Jack Greenberg, a young Columbia Law graduate who worked for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, to Wilmington for courtroom experience under Redding’s tutelage.

³¹ Peter Irons, *Jim Crow’s Children: The Broken Promise of the Brown Decision* (New York: Viking, 2002), 110.

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system of chancery, in which the judges decide on “equity” cases. Still another distinction of the First State is its retention of the Court of Chancery, modeled after the now extinct High Court of Chancery of Great Britain. In their introduction, Quillen and Hanrahan note that unlike its “English ancestor, the Delaware Court of Chancery has never become so bound by procedural technicalities and restrictive legal doctrines that it has failed the fundamental purpose of an equity court, to provide relief suited to the circumstances when no adequate remedy is available at law. Equity rests on two concepts: equity is a moral sense of fairness based on conscience, and equity is the recognition that the universal rule cannot always be justly applied to the special case. The court has demonstrated its ability to adapt principles of equity to ever-changing economic circumstances and legal relationships.”³²

After hearing the arguments, Vice Chancellor Seitz inspected the two colleges and deemed the colored school to be “grossly inferior.” He decided in favor of the plaintiffs and ordered the University of Delaware to admit the Negro students. This little heralded decision in *Parker* marked the first time that a publicly funded institution had been ordered by a court to desegregate its undergraduate school. Not long after the *Parker* decision in March 1951, the five movie theaters in Wilmington admitted black patrons for the first time; the Delaware National Guard admitted its first black member, and retail establishments in Wilmington hired several black clerks.³³

A second high school for blacks was established at the State College for Negroes in Dover in the 1920s. However, African Americans who lived in the Wilmington suburbs had to attend Howard in order to get a high school education. One such suburb was Claymont, about nine miles north of Wilmington. For Claymont residents attending Howard, the trip into Wilmington could take an hour each way. Parents of students who lived within walking distance of the all-white Claymont High School became dissatisfied with the time that their children spent traveling into Wilmington to attend Howard. They decided to act. In March 1951, a group of parents sought legal advice from Louis Redding, on the question of their children attending Claymont High School. By this time, Redding had spent more than twenty years in a lonely fight, using his superior training and bottomless energy to fight for the civil rights of the black citizens of Delaware.³⁴

Acting upon Redding’s advice, the Claymont parents attempted to have their children enrolled in Claymont High School. The State Board of Education turned down the request. Mrs. Belton and the other parents were not to be deterred. Thus, on behalf of Ethel Belton and seven other parents, Louis Redding sued the State of Delaware to have Claymont High School accept the students. Jack Greenberg was again a member of the legal team. In *Belton v. Gebhart* (filed in August, 1951) Redding and Greenberg requested the court to “enjoin enforcement of provisions in the State Constitution and statutory code which require the segregation of Negroes and whites in public schools.”³⁵

In Greenberg’s memoir of his years as an NAACP lawyer he wrote:

White Claymont School, with 800 students (400 in high school) was on a lovely thirteen-acre campus, with playing fields and a running track. Black Howard High School, with 1,274 students was in a

³² W. Quillen and M. Hanrahan, “A Short History of the Delaware Court of Chancery: 1792–1992,” Widener University School of Law, Wilmington, Delaware 2001, 1.

³³ Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 432.

³⁴ Mark Tushnet, *The NAACP’s Legal Strategy Against Segregated Education, 1925–1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 143; Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 434.

³⁵ *Belton v. Gebhart* (and *Bulah v. Gebhart*), 87 A. 2d. 862 (Del. Ch. 1952). Del. Const. Art. X Sec. 2; Del. Rev. Code Sed. 2631 (1935) as stated in Albert P. Blaustine and Robert L. Zangrando eds., *Civil Rights and the American Negro: From the Earliest Slave Laws to the Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1969), 439.

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congested industrial area, with no play space. Almost 60% of Claymont's teachers had master's degrees; only 37% of Howard's did. An average Claymont teacher taught 149 pupils per week; an average Howard teacher, 179. Claymont had courses in public speaking, Spanish, sociology, economics, trigonometry, and geography, none of which were taught at Howard. Howard had vocational courses not taught at Claymont.³⁶

Meanwhile, a second case began to emerge involving schools in Hockessin, a small rural village located west of Wilmington. In this community, Sarah Bulah, was forced to drive her daughter two miles to the black one-room schoolhouse in the village, even though a school bus went right by her home to take white children to "their pretty little school up on the hill." Unable to obtain transportation for her daughter through the State Board of Education, Mrs. Bulah approached Louis Redding who convinced her to apply for admission to the white school, whereupon the local school board refused the request because it violated the law.³⁷

Unlike the group of parents filing the case in Wilmington, Sarah Bulah lacked support from other black parents in town and was the sole plaintiff in the Hockessin case. Named as defendants in the case were the members of the State Board of Education. Because member Francis B. Gebhart was first in the alphabetical listing of the members, both the cases proceeded as *Belton v. Gebhart* and *Bulah v. Gebhart*, and because the cases involved state law, the hearing was scheduled in the Court of Chancery before Collin Seitz.³⁸

In their argument before Seitz, Redding and Greenberg elicited fourteen expert witnesses on the social and psychological aspects of school segregation. Two such experts included psychologist and sociologist Kenneth Clark, an "expert on the effects of racism and segregation on black self-esteem" who had performed his "doll test" on forty-one black children from Delaware; and psychiatrist Frederic Wertham whom Greenberg sought out to examine both white and black children from Delaware. Clark testified that the majority of the children elicited a sense of inferiority based on their perception that the brown dolls were bad. Wertham asserted that "segregation caused a massive health problem," and concluded that:³⁹

. . . the physical differences in these schools are not at all really material to my opinion. In other words, if I may express it graphically, if the state of Delaware would employ Professor Einstein to teach physics in marble halls to these children, I would still say everything I have said goes: It is the fact of segregation in general and the problems that come out of it that to my mind is anti-educational, by which I mean that education in the larger sense is interfered with. . . . Most of the children we have examined interpret segregation in one way and only one way—and that is they interpret it as punishment.⁴⁰

Following the testimony, Chancellor Seitz visited the schools and observed the run-down conditions of the black schools in comparison to the better-equipped white schools. He was dismayed by the inequities he found. On April 1, 1952, Seitz issued his opinion. Relying on Wertham's testimony, Seitz found that the mental health

³⁶ Greenberg, *Crusaders in the Courts*, 150.

³⁷ Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 435.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 435-436.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 439-440; description of Kenneth Clark in Ralph E. Luker, *Historical Dictionary of the Civil Rights Movement* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1997), 53. In the doll test, Clark and his wife "asked African American children to choose among black and white dolls. When they commonly rejected black dolls as 'bad,' the Clarks held that a racist environment contributed to black self-contempt." Footnote 11 of the U.S. Supreme Court *Brown* opinion referred to this evidence "to justify its decision that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional" in what would become a controversial use of "sociological jurisprudence." Luker, *Historical Dictionary*, 54.

⁴⁰ Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 444.

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problems created by racial segregation attributed to a lack in educational progress, and furthermore that under the separate but equal doctrine the plaintiffs had a right to send their children to the white schools.⁴¹ The Chancery Court of Delaware had determined that black and white schools were not equal in material respects. In his opinion, Chancellor Seitz wrote:

Such a plaintiff is entitled relief immediately, in the only way it is available, namely by admission to the school with superior facilities. To postpone such relief is to deny relief. . . . State imposed segregation in education itself, results in the Negro children, as a class receiving educational opportunities which are substantially inferior.⁴²

Seitz ordered that the plaintiffs gain “immediate admission to schools previously attended only by white children, on the grounds that Negro schools were inferior with respect to teacher training, pupil-teacher ratio, extracurricular activities, physical plant, and time and distance involved in travel.”⁴³ The Chancellor did not address the monumental question of the constitutionality of segregation. He recognized that the doctrine embedded in *Plessy* was the purview of the U.S. Supreme Court to address. The decisions in *Belton* and in *Bulah* mark the first instance in which a white high school and a white elementary school were ordered to admit black children. Thurgood Marshall deemed the opinion as “the first real victory in our campaign to destroy segregation of American pupils in elementary and high schools.”⁴⁴

Redding and Greenberg sincerely hoped that the state would appeal, because *Belton* and *Bulah* would be important cases to take to the United States Supreme Court. Jack Greenberg remembers that the State Attorney General filled an immediate appeal that he and Redding argued before the Delaware Supreme Court. The application to this court describes travel conditions for the students:

These plaintiff children must travel daily, by walking and public bus, nine miles from Claymont to Wilmington to attend all-negro Howard High School and that in making the eighteen-mile roundtrip fifty minutes are consumed each way. Claymont High School is one and one-half miles from plaintiffs’ homes and, by foot and by public bus, travel one way would consume twenty-three minutes. Some of the courses for Howard students are given at Carver, which is part of Howard, in a building nine and one-half blocks from the main Howard location.⁴⁵

The application went on to describe both Claymont and Howard buildings as being “good.” The difference in the facilities lay in the fact that the Howard auditorium also served as a place for class instruction and homeroom. The auditorium was also deemed “inadequate” because some of the physical education classes were held in a “private gymnasium three and a half blocks away.” Another draw back to the Howard facility were the “instruction shops in a near-by annex” that were accessed “by an out-door passageway,” exposed to the weather. The application described the Carver annex (that housed vocational courses) as “very old, without auditorium or gymnasium and with a dingy basement room as a make-shift cafeteria, devoid of tables or chairs. It has a single lavatory for boys with unsanitary cement floors.” An expert surmised that “Claymont offered superior educational opportunity to that offered by Howard.” State opposition supplied no opinions on the expert’s opinion.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Ibid., 447-448.

⁴² Greenberg, *Crusaders in the Courts*, 543, n. 120.

⁴³ Blaustine, *Civil Rights and the American Negro*, for quote on 439.

⁴⁴ Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 448-449.

⁴⁵ Brief of Respondents and Appendix to Brief, U.S. Supreme Court, Records and Briefs, 1954 Term, 1-5 (Part 7), 25.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 29-30, 35.

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The expert testimony on the Hockessin schools in the Bulah case described the white School No. 29 as “extraordinary [*sic*] beautiful” with abundant landscaping. It exceeded the black School No. 107 in acreage and play equipment and contained four classrooms in comparison to the one classroom in No. 107 (a sliding partition created two rooms). A professional educator testified “that there is no evidence of equality in the educational facilities afforded in the two schools,” and that No. 29 affords facilities ‘far superior’ to those afforded by No. 107.”⁴⁷

In addition to the inequality in the institutions, the application to the Delaware Supreme Court elaborated on the psychological effects of racial segregation and discrimination. Dr. Wertham concluded:

- (1) It is absolutely clear cut.
- (2) The State does it.
- (3) It is of continuous duration.
- (4) It is bound up with the whole educational process important for the mental health of the child.
- (5) It hits the child:
 - (a) At the moment he leaves the sheltered family life and makes contact with the social group in general, and (b) during adolescence when children for the first time must find social groups for themselves. By segregating at these times, the State identifies itself with its most bigoted citizens.

White children are injured too by the classification, though to a different extent and in a somewhat different manner.⁴⁸

On August 28, 1952, the Supreme Court of Delaware upheld the decision. In late November, the State Attorney General filed a petition for United States Supreme Court review of the cases. On November 24, 1952, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear the Delaware cases.

U.S. Supreme Court and *Brown v. Board of Education*

On December 9, 1952, the U.S. Supreme Court convened to hear the school desegregation cases that had been pooled from various parts of the country to form the case called *Brown v. Board of Education*. In addition to Delaware, the cases came from Virginia, Kansas, and South Carolina; along with a separate case on the federal question of segregation from the District of Columbia. In the words of Justice Tom Clark, “we consolidated them and made *Brown* the first so that the whole question would not smack of being a purely Southern one.”⁴⁹

In examining the constitutionality of legalized racially segregated or “Jim Crow” education for black school children the Court necessarily considered two central concerns. First, the Court had to consider the harsh reality that separate and unequal—often grossly unequal—was the norm under Jim Crow. As a result, the plaintiffs asked the Court to declare such schools a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment’s guarantee of the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 40.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁹ Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 540.

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individual's right to "equal protection before the law." Otherwise stated, the plaintiffs asked the Court to overturn the legal precedent which protected Jim Crow: *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).⁵⁰

No longer did the NAACP Legal Defense Fund under Thurgood Marshall's vigorous leadership merely seek the parity legally enshrined in *Plessy* but ignored in practice. Instead of focusing on equalization measures like facilities, budgets, and teachers' salaries, Marshall and his team sought the end of Jim Crow schools themselves as inevitably unequal. Desegregation, or integration, replaced equalization as the aim of their legal strategy as they had long intended.⁵¹

Second, the Court chose to consider the impact of segregated schools on white and black children, by extension considering the broader impact of segregation on American society. In essence, the Court found the impact to be negative. This use of expert social scientific argument to make a legal point, or sociological jurisprudence, has proven to be controversial. Nevertheless, this sociological argument speaks volumes about the larger context of the *Brown* decision as well as the decision's ramifications.⁵²

In his history of the *Brown* decision, *Simple Justice*, Richard Kluger observed that "in May of 1951 seventeen states required the segregation of public schools, four other states permitted the practice if local communities wished it, and in the District of Columbia the custom had prevailed for nearly ninety years."⁵³ This was the world *Brown* changed forever.

The cases were argued before the Court on December 9-11, 1952. Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP attorneys argued the four state cases on the basis of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. "The defendants maintained that segregated schools were indeed consistent with custom and law. While the plaintiffs wanted desegregated schools forthwith, the defendants wanted to maintain dual systems but also to reform them. The defendants thus saw the equalization of black and white schools as a viable solution to the dilemma of Jim Crow schools. The plaintiffs saw it as an unacceptable compromise."⁵⁴

Redding and Greenberg's case was the last one heard. They kept the arguments brief and to Delaware's particular issues since the constitutional issues had already been heard in the previous state cases. Two main points made by Redding and Greenberg were that state plans to equalize the schools were not firm and that the integration that had occurred, following the Delaware Supreme Court's ruling, were amicable and therefore there appeared to be no claim to racial disturbances as the state had forecasted.⁵⁵

In its Amicus Curiae (friend of the court) brief submitted for all the school segregation cases in *Brown*, the U.S. Attorney General concluded:

The subordinate position occupied by Negroes in this country as a result of governmental discriminations ("second-class citizenship," as it is sometimes called) presents an unsolved problem for

⁵⁰ See the Appellants' Brief (1952), excerpted in Waldo Martin, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998), 137-141.

⁵¹ Tushnet, *The NAACP Legal Strategy*, chapter 7 discusses the reasons for the delay and timing of an all-out direct attack on segregation.

⁵² Darly Scott, *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880-1996* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1997).

⁵³ Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 327. Description of court considerations in this nomination provided by Waldo Martin, Jr., and excerpted from Salvatore, "Racial Desegregation in Public Education," 71-72.

⁵⁴ Salvatore, "Racial Desegregation in Public Education," 78, as elaborated in Martin, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 137-155.

⁵⁵ Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 581.

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American democracy, an inescapable challenge to the sincerity of our espousal of the democratic faith.

In these days, when the free world must conserve and fortify the moral as well as the material sources of its strength, it is especially important to affirm that the Constitution of the United States places no limitation, express or implied, on the principle of the equality of all men before the law.⁵⁶

Following the arguments, the Court asked the attorneys to determine whether the framers and ratifiers of the Fourteenth Amendment meant to abolish segregation in the schools. Re-argument was heard on December 7-9, 1953. In his answer, U.S. Attorney General J. Lee Rankin stated that the evidence was inconclusive, but on other grounds the U.S. favored an end to segregation.

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court issued its decision. In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Court found racial segregation in the states' public schools was a denial to black children of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In its unanimous decision the Court found "that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" and thus denied the basis for legal segregation of black Americans in segregated schools in twenty-one states.⁵⁷ *Brown* was restored to the docket for re-argument on enforcement of its decision. On May 31, 1955, the Court ruled that the desegregation of the public schools should proceed "with all deliberate speed."

Howard High School is eligible as a National Historic Landmark under Criterion 1. The school stands as a symbol of the struggle made by the NAACP to desegregate public education and the Court's finding that state governments could not maintain racially segregated schools. Striking down the separate but equal doctrine in the states constituted an important step toward the integration of America. Henceforth, segregation forces gave way to civil rights advocates.

Comparison of Properties

According to the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, school desegregation efforts associated with the Delaware cases occurred at the schools, the Delaware Court of Chancery Building, the Delaware Supreme Court Building, the Delaware Home of Chancellor Collins Seitz, the Delaware Office of Louis L. Redding, the home of Ethel Belton near Claymont, and the home of Shirley Bulah near Hockessin. The property type that best represents and illustrates this particular struggle at the national level is the schools themselves that symbolize the educational aspirations that the black parents and community were striving toward.

Four school buildings are associated with the two Delaware cases that were combined as part of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Besides Howard High School and the Carver annex, the buildings include the white Claymont School associated with the *Belton* case, and the black Hockessin School and the white Public School #29 in the *Bulah* case.

Of these schools, only **Howard High School** is known to retain the high integrity required for National Historic Landmark consideration. The Carver annex associated with Howard for vocational classes is non-extant and the segregated YMCA where physical education classes took place (two blocks west of Howard) is also non-extant.

⁵⁶ Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, U.S. Supreme Court, Records and Briefs, 1954 term, 1-5 (Part 3), 31-32.

⁵⁷ 347 U.S. 483 at 495.

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Claymont High School, located on Green Street in Claymont, was built between 1924 and 25. In 1969, high school classes moved to another facility. Middle school classes remained there until 1978. In 1980 the building became the home of the Claymont Community Center in 1980. The combination of large late twentieth century additions, interior re-arrangements, and an extensive fire in the former cafeteria (converted to County Library space) diminish the physical integrity of the building. This property was evaluated by the staff of the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office as being not eligible for listing in 1995.

Hockessin Colored School #107C was declared surplus by the Delaware Department of Education in the late 1960s and thereafter the property became a community center. The interior was expanded in the 1970s with side and rear additions that included the removal of the character-defining bank of pivoting windows across the rear elevation. A double doorway with half sidelights replaced the original single doorway. The slate boards were removed. The cloakrooms were remodeled into modern bathrooms. The boiler room was converted into a kitchen. There is a large open space in the center of the building but it does not represent the historic layout of the building. This property was evaluated by the staff of the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office as being not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.

The Art Deco influenced **Hockessin School #29** is located approximately 1 mile from the Hockessin Colored School. Now a Baptist Church, the building has not been evaluated for listing in the National Register or as part of this nomination. It appears to retain integrity from the exterior. A large addition was built to the rear but the majority of the site retains its open quality and playground. The interior has not been accessible. If future evaluation results in a finding of high integrity, the building should be evaluated for National Historic Landmark designation for its association with the Delaware case in Hockessin (*Bulah v. Gebhart*) on par with Howard High School in the Wilmington/Claymont case (*Belton v. Gebhart*).

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository):
- The Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington, Delaware
- The Pauline A. Young Memorabilia Room, Howard High School, Wilmington, Delaware

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 0.7 acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	18	453600	439560

Verbal Boundary Description:

The building is bounded on the north by a line that is 169 feet south of and parallel to 14th Street. The northeast boundary is the Brandywine River. The eastern boundary is a line 570 feet east of and parallel to the eastern side of Poplar Street. On the south, the boundary is a line 333 feet south of and parallel to the southern side of 14th Street. The western boundary is Poplar Street.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary delineates an area around the building that excludes the adjacent building, Howard Career Center, constructed in 1974.

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DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
April 05, 2005