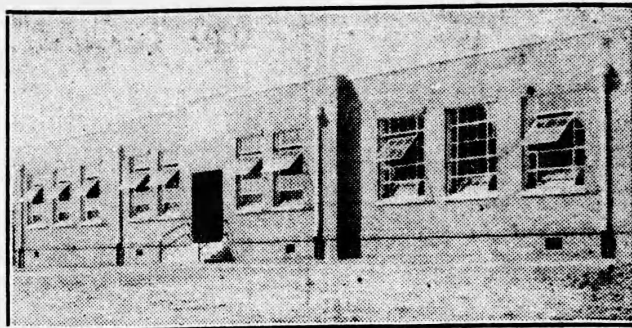


IT'S ABOUT THE HISTORY OF POCAHONTAS, BUT ALSO....

Pocahontas is historically significant to Powhatan as the county's first and only high school for Black students. It opened in 1937, with construction funding through the county but also from Black community members who raised thousands of dollars to contribute to the building fund. Over the next two decades, Pocahontas would add classrooms for younger children, ending the era of one-room schools. Pocahontas School, for all school-aged children of color, was a place of high learning standards, excellent teaching and a strong sense of community. Yet, it never had access to all the resources afforded to the all-white Powhatan School located in the village. This meant hand-me-down textbooks, unfilled teaching positions, and poorer upkeep of facilities. Pocahontas students were secondhand to the county, and when questions of integration later arose, the county often used the excuse that the Pocahontas students were too far behind their same-age

DEDICATE POWHATAN SCHOOL



This modern, \$40,000 six-room school building at Powhatan County, Va., was dedicated last week by the Rev. J. Alvin Russell, principal of St. Paul School. Colored citizens of Powhatan raised \$3,000 as their contribution to the school following a drive staged by Miss Rosa B. Lewis, Jeanner supervisor. The balance came from PWA funds. (Journal and Guide Photo).

Newspaper images from New Journal and Guide, July 17, 1937; Norfolk Ledger-Star, June 18, 1962; Richmond Times-Dispatch, May 19, 1963; and Petersburg Progress-Index, July 1, 1963

When the United States Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that segregated schooling was inherently unequal, schools were ordered to integrate. The Brown v Board of Education case included students from neighboring Prince Edward County among the plaintiffs. Prince Edward officials ultimately closed down their system rather than allow Black and white children to attend classes together. This was part of a decade-long Massive Resistance movement in Virginia. Powhatan was deeply affected, and schools here were in danger of closure, as well. What turned the tide was the case of Bell v Powhatan, which originated with parents and students attending Pocahontas School. Bell v. Powhatan was the start of the end of Massive Resistance statewide.

Negroes Ask Transfers

Powhatan May Close All Public Schools

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Residents of Powhatan County may know this week whether the county will become the second in Virginia to close its public schools rather than accept desegregation.

Prince Edward County abandoned public schools in 1959 after a federal court order to desegregate and since has refused to appropriate money for their operation.

from integrationist groups. He said a member of the council saw Pruitt to the bus, but did not make any promises.

In the middle Georgia city of Macon, a leader of the White Citizens Organization for the Betterment of America said three Negroes were given one-way tickets to New York Saturday.

Ross Lindsey also said his group has numerous applicants on hand and that more riders will be sent off this week. He did not reveal the time of the

Five Judges Will Hear Powhatan School Case

By Allan Jones

All five members of the United States Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals will hear the Powhatan county school segregation case here next month.

The court usually hears litigation in panels of three judges. It sits "en banc" in cases of unusual significance or interest.

The school board has asked the appellate court to overturn orders by Judge Butzner which prohibit it from:

(1) Refusing to admit three Negroes into the Powhatan Elementary School.

(2) Taking any action designed to bring about the closing

The school board admitted its pleadings before the lower court that it has no authority over the enrollment of any child in any school in the county. Tucker and Marsh observed.

Thirty-five of the 62 Negroes whose transfer requests were denied filed their application before the Pupil Placement

Powhatan Told It Can't Close Public Schools

RICHMOND (AP) — A federal appeals court held today that Powhatan County, Va., school officials couldn't close their public schools to avoid a court integration order.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling upheld part of a federal district judge's order in the case.

The appeals court said the ruling by Federal Judge John D. Butzner Jr. of Richmond applied only to the school board and School Supt. J. S. Caldwell. Butzner had made it applicable to the county board of supervisors but the appeals court exempted them.

Powhatan is two counties removed from Prince Edward County, where schools closed in 1959 rather than desegregate. There have been unconfirmed reports Powhatan officials would consider following Prince Edward's example.

In addition to ordering the school officials not to close the public schools, the district court also admitted three Negro children to the county's only white elementary and high school, granted an injunction forbidding racial discrimination in school assignments, ordered the submission of desegregation plan within 90 days.

The Powhatan Board of Supervisors threatened continually that it would shut down the school system if even one Black child were allowed at Powhatan. To maintain control, they would only appropriate money for the schools on a monthly basis. When students wanted to transfer into Powhatan, which was their right, the county claimed it couldn't find the correct forms, among other excuses. Edward Alvin Bell v Powhatan was filed on August 17, 1962. The case included 65 Black students but impacted learning nationwide.

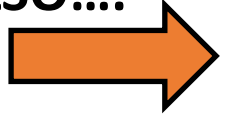
Bell v Powhatan, which originated at Powhatan's Pocahontas School, is what made Prince Edward the ONLY school division in America to close completely during Massive Resistance.

The January 1963 ruling BARRED Powhatan from enacting the threat to close all schools. The judge sent injunctions to EACH school board and Board of Supervisors member and to the superintendent.

Powhatan appealed the ruling; ALL FIVE judges on the Fourth Circuit sat for the case— a rare move. Normally, only three would sit, but this case was significant and consequential for schools beyond Virginia.

The appeal upheld the lower court AND ordered Powhatan to pay the plaintiffs' lawyers— signaling that money would not stop Black families from seeking school equality, delayed for a decade after Brown.

IT'S ABOUT FISCAL AND LEGAL QUESTIONS, BUT ALSO....



How is demolition, especially speedy demolition, the best approach when there has not been public input or study of how much it would cost to repair these buildings?

How is demolition prudent when a recent title search shows one of the original deeds was never recorded?

How will demolition impact the health and safety of those nearby, when they have not even received notice of the planned teardown?

How is demolition a smart use of taxpayer money when the board intends to destroy millions of dollars in taxpayer assets, using a million dollars of borrowed money, and end up with a piece of dirt worth only a few hundred thousand dollars and no plans at all for what to do with it? Is that responsible or is it wasteful and shortsighted plan for buildings that can potentially be saved?

The demolition dollars and cents don't make sense



The county's assessed value of the full complex at Pocahontas is shy of \$11 million. That's inclusive of the new gymnasium, which also houses the Powhatan African American Cultural Arts Museum. The cost to demolish approximately half of the buildings is close to \$1 million, with nothing planned to go in their place. The school board says this will allow them to have the land on hand IN CASE they want to build something for school use in the future. It appears unlikely that would be a school, as student enrollment has been declining for years, and the county is aging.

Estimating the value of the targeted half of this complex, which is admittedly not new and has portions that are in very bad shape, the current plan is to take a loss of about \$1 million on demolition on top of the roughly \$1 million to \$5 million in assessed value of the buildings to be torn down, and what's left is a piece of land assessed at somewhere between \$100K and \$250K.

Using basic math, that's a loss of up to \$6 million dollars in taxpayer assets to get an empty lot. And given the cost of new construction, to make that empty space into anything more than a parking lot would take tens of millions of dollars of taxpayer money, as well. If rehabilitating the buildings would cost less than the tens of millions in loss and new construction, and if rehabilitating the buildings would also preserve valuable history, where is the fiscal logic in tearing them down?

Speak up to your board members before it's too late! Learn more at www.savepocahontas.com

Link to the petition from the website, and share your thoughts at mythoughts@savepocahontas.com

"What disturbs me ... where is the common sense here? Where is fiscal responsibility... and doing what constituents want? We already know there's a petition out there ... Issues like this should have nothing to do with personal feelings about another board or other politicians. ... It shouldn't be a battle between school board and board of supervisors ... we should be collaborating with each other to serve the citizens of Powhatan County. That's what we're all elected to do ... I'm concerned because ... there was never any good public awareness of the situation that we were dealing with. I don't recall anybody having any sort of public hearing or meeting with the public to explain the situation." Vicki Hurt, Powhatan School Board, District 1

I'm the facilities manager for the whole state of Virginia, and I've renovated many buildings older and in worse shape than that one right there—throughout this entire state. And they are great buildings that can be saved, renovated, and used for the people of Powhatan." Steve McClung, Powhatan Board of Supervisors, District 2

**SAVE
OUR
SCHOOL**