

Civil Rights – Segregation and Integration

By the 1870s, after the Civil War, Stafford had its first two black schools with a total of 99 students; both had white teachers. By 1883, there were eight one room schools for blacks, some of which had black teachers; by 1904, all of Stafford's black schools were taught by blacks.

Some notable black educators were John, E.H. and Lizzie Dishman (1890s), Rev. Alber Ray (1880s), Jason Grant (1890s), F.E. and Robinette Cunningham (1900s), Annie Morton (1920s), Addie and Henry Harrison Poole (1930s-1950s) and Edward Smith (1950s)

H.H. Poole was appointed supervisor of black schools in Stafford and King George counties. A school was named for him in the 1950s and later renamed the Rowser School in honor of Ella Rowser, a distinguished teacher and black school leader. In the 1990s, a Stafford school was again named for Mr. Poole.

The Stafford school system started the integration process in September, 1961, seven years after the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision, when Dorethea and Cynthia Montegue attended the all-white Stafford Elementary School. Total integration of Stafford schools took place in 1964.



Edward Smith's all-black 7th Grade class



On September 5, 1961, Dorethea and Cynthia Montague entered the previously all-white Stafford Elementary School. This marked the first desegregation of schools in the immediate area. They enrolled in the first and third grades. Shown above are Mr. Montague, Cynthia Montague, Mrs. Montague and family friend, William Braxton.