

Hungerford School Historical and Legal Data Visualization Team

Department of History, University of Central Florida

Research Report

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REPORT TO: Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, Inc. and Dr. Scot French, University of Central Florida

SUBJECT: Hungerford School Digitization Project preliminary thoughts and strategies.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY: Orange County Public Schools plans to sell the property of the historic Hungerford Normal and Industrial School in Eatonville, Florida “for the purpose of developing the land as a primarily residential, mixed-use development.”¹ Southern Poverty Law Center and their client, the Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, Inc., requests that OCPS return the land to the community of Eatonville which was originally intended to be perpetually used for educational purposes.

OBJECTIVES: Analyze Hungerford-related records from one institution to conceive a visualization plan to best support public understanding of key issues and themes raised by the Southern Poverty Law Center in their letter dated February 14, 2023, to Orange County Public Schools regarding OCPS’s Civil Rights Obligations under Title VI in Connection with the Sale of the Hungerford Property in Eatonville, FL.

RESTRICTIONS: Limit issues and themes to those contained within SPLC legal narrative and timeline and narrow scope of research to a single institutional collection of Hungerford-related records provided by Dr. Scot French.

SOURCES CONSULTED:

Southern Poverty Law Center
Orange County Regional History Center

OVERVIEW:

The Project as Basic Unit

While there are numerous ways to mine these sources for data with which to create historical visualizations of the obligations of Orange County Public Schools to the Eatonville community, an effective method to explore would be to use geospatial visualizations in the form of ArcGIS mapping to create a Story Map that can be utilized to create a visual narrative of the Hungerford

¹ Kirsten Anderson to Amy Envall, “Letter from SPLC to OCPS,” February 14, 2023, p. 1, accessed March 3, 2023, https://drive.google.com/file/d/15f9opKbEGYc_blUC75uX9L9mfcjgXKfI/view

School's chronology which can simultaneously present hypertextual information and additional visualization tools mined from these sources. The excellent timeline compiled by the SPLC can be the basis for the chronology presented by an ArcGIS Story Map.² The use of this type of visualization is beneficial because it allows for multilinear arguments as well as fluid scale shifting as the project progresses to encompass national themes and events. Additionally, this type of visualization can be accomplished relatively quickly, which is a factor of importance for this project given the speed at which OCPS is attempting to pursue the sale of the property.

Institutions and Pragmatics

By utilizing a graduate research team at the University of Central Florida led by Dr. Scot French, this project can integrate local resources into an interdisciplinary visualization driven by the partnership of local, regional, and national institutions to demonstrate the importance of the Hungerford School site as a place of not just local, but also of regional and even national importance. This work represents the goals of Digital Humanities research in a collaborative, hands-on setting that goes beyond the boundaries of traditional academic scholarship to not merely advance knowledge but also to drive innovation that contributes to the broader community.

Creating Advocacy

Another angle to explore with this visualization is to begin to connect the Hungerford School with notable individuals and emotive narratives that might engender public attention. This may be as simple as linking in big names that are often associated with Eatonville, such as Zora Neale Hurston, or could even take the form of showcasing the all-white, non-resident successor trustee board that was appointed by the Orange County Circuit Court in 1950 who were ultimately responsible for the transfer of the Hungerford deed to OCPS. There are also numerous opportunities available in these sources which may help the audience connect to the narrative on an individual basis, which is often more successful in creating an effective historical project.³ The range of emotions that can be manifested using a visualization project of these topics can range from civic pride and celebration to anger at the injustice experienced by the Eatonville community with the loss of their land. While some of these emotions may be more effective than others, we do need to be mindful of the current political climate that might affect our ability and efficacy in conducting this important work.

² Southern Poverty Law Center, "A Timeline of Events in Eatonville, Florida," (November 18, 2022), accessed March 3, 2023, <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2022/11/18/timeline-events-eatonville-florida>

³ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) pp. 16, 18.

DETAILED FINDINGS:

FINDING A

*Fenske v. Coddington, 57 So.2d 452 (Fla. 1952) Case Files
State Archives of Florida, pp. 26-9*

The testimony of Mr. D.E. Williams, State Director of Negro Education for the State Department of Education regarding the status of the state of Black education in Florida provides interesting data to be used in visualizations of the racial climate of education at the time of the Hungerford School transfer. Below is an abstracted transcription of Mr. Williams' testimony with the data therein presented in table format.⁴

“Probably the greatest authority on negro education in Florida on the elementary and secondary level is D.E. Williams, State Director of Negro Education for the State Department of Education, who has held that position for twenty-four years. Regarding the increase in facilities for negro elementary and secondary education in Florida Mr. Williams testified:”

Year	“Centers for negroes in Florida”	Students	Teachers
1900	630	41,797	645
1910	714	55,255	1,131
1920	733	67,494	1,433
1930	721	91,859	2,306
1940	968	105,460	3,216
1946-47*	808	108,281	3,490
1950	633	120,368	4,055

“*Figures for the year 1946-47 were given because that was the last year before the minimum foundation program was established by the legislature which authorized counties to consolidate smaller centers into larger permanent centers and provided state financial assistance for capital outlay which began to reduce the number of small centers and the establishment of better and larger centers.”

⁴ Fenske v. Coddington, 57 So.2d 452 (Fla. 1952), Case Files, State Archives of Florida, pp. 26-9, accessed March 3, 2023, https://drive.google.com/file/d/16dy494sPmPUHadReAZcddD_e2lPdWhvn/view?usp=sharing

Year	“high school centers for negroes in Florida”	Students	Teachers
1930	22	1,811	124
1940	62	6,849	347
1947	75	10,345	547
1950	91	12,629	708

“Between 1947 and 1950 the enrollment in elementary and secondary schools increased 11%...”

“Twelve counties in the state of Florida do not provide high school opportunities for negroes within their borders. Those twelve counties are Baker, Charlotte, Collier, Dixie, Gilchrist, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Holmes, Lafayette, Liberty and Union counties.”

***ANALYSIS:** The figures presented in the data by Mr. Williams could be turned into visual graphs that could help show patterns of growth in education in Florida. It would be interesting to compare these numbers to similar figures for white Florida schools. Of particular note in this portion of the data are two points; first, the “minimum foundation program” which is defined as being a “law authorized counties to consolidate smaller centers into larger permanent centers and provide state financial assistance for capital outlay, and to begin the reduction of the number of small centers and the establishment of better and larger permanent ones. The plan and purpose of the Minimum Foundation Program is to provide minimum educational opportunities for all children regardless of their racial identity or where they live.”⁵ It is possible that it was this law that created the situation that ultimately allowed OCPS to obtain the Hungerford Property. Second, Mr. Williams' testimony explained that twelve counties did not provide public high schools for Black students. This could be a compelling addition to a statewide map that shows other Black schools and might help explain trends in boarding vs. non-boarding schools in some areas during this time.*

⁵ Fenske v. Coddington, 6.

FINDING B

*Fenske v. Coddington, 57 So.2d 452 (Fla. 1952) Case Files
State Archives of Florida, pp. 84-167*

Appendix B details several short summarized conclusions and concerns that are apparent throughout the entire filing of the Trustees of the Hungerford School and the different conclusions that the court can come to including, the Hungerford School being turned over to Orange County Public Schools to be made into a public school and, a possible affiliation with Bethune-Cookman College. The following statement of the appellee's to the Florida Supreme Court focused on the economic factors regarding the operation of the Hungerford School. This information is critical in understanding the importance of Hungerford as an asset to the community of Eatonville and the arguments made for the selling of the Hungerford School to OCPS as it gives more information of the politics and maneuvering done by the state of Florida and the South to reduce the numbers of privately operated schools for African Americans. (pp.91-93)

ANALYSIS: The arguments refuting the Board of Trustees argument that the student body at Hungerford School, when operated as a boarding school would make for an interesting visualization. In addition, to the numbers describing the records of students throughout the years on page 95, the arguments and details from different gatherings of the Board of Trustees and communications between representatives of OCPS like that on page 105, and the State would add credence to the ideas of conflicting conversations and maneuverings of the Board of Trustees in the process of obtaining permission to sell the Hungerford School assets to Orange County Public Schools.

FINDING C

*Fenske v. Coddington, 57 So.2d 452 (Fla. 1952) Case Files
State Archives of Florida, pp. 169-255*

Section C covers exhibit 3, exhibit 4, and exhibit 5 of the case files as well as a transcript of the testimonies from the court case. Exhibit no.3 is a memo from the Bethune-Cookman College confirming a symbiotic relationship with the Hungerford school. An affiliation between the two would allow the Board of Trustees of the two institutions to work with each other to funnel students to each. Bethune-Cookman would recommend the Hungerford school to all who inquired about secondary education. The Hungerford school would do the same for those seeking a college education.⁶ Exhibit

⁶ Fenske v. Coddington, 169.

no.4 is the will of Richard Wright, a member of the Hungerford School's Board of Trustees. The will states that the income from his properties would be channeled for the use and welfare of the Hungerford School.⁷ If the school should cease to exist, the money would be channeled to further the education of black students. Exhibit 5 is the resolution of the Orange County school board from April 1, 1950 concerning the future of the Hungerford school as a part of the OCPHS network. The Orange County School Board stated that they will pay the Trustees a sum to not exceed \$25,000 for the school and will include the Hungerford School trustees in the future of the management and administration of the school.⁸ The testimonies included in the 1951 case files provide a detailed look into the Hungerford Trustees and other major players in this case. Among the list of witnesses is H.M. Tinklepaugh, Clarence A. Coddington, D.E. Williams, Earl Kipp, Angus Barlo, Arthr Beck, and Frank M. Otey. During the examination, Coddington presented a statement for the Trustees of the Robert Hungerford Industrial School of Eatonville, Florida.⁹ It is worth noting that a prominent Winter Park lawyer, W.E.Winderweedle, was involved in the case.

ANALYSIS: The testimonies offer a look into the operating costs of the school and how the school generated income. It breaks down how much money the Hungerford school made from donation campaigns, tuition costs, and was given by the OCPS. It is of note that the OCPS only paid for the salary of one teacher. It goes into detail on the condition of the buildings at the Hungerford campus. It also highlights the areas and black students served in comparison to other counties. Testimonies include a board member, the current principal of the school, architect, and State Director for Black Education. These testimonies could be compelling supporting information for the SPLC to demonstrate the historic disenfranchisement of the Hungerford property.

FINDING D

*Fenske v. Coddington, 57 So.2d 452 (Fla. 1952) Case Files
State Archives of Florida, pp. 255-335*

Section D covers the remaining documentation of the court case. Within it is the direct examination of Hungerford's principal Frank Monroe Otey, the examination of Constance Hungerford Fenski, and the examination of vice president of Rollins College, Dr. Grover. The testimony of Mr. Otey reveals his efforts at raising money for the school and attempting to gather students for boarding. Although, he did not believe in this philosophy for raising money for Hungerford. Making it a boarding school and

⁷ Fenske v. Coddington, 172.

⁸ Fenske v. Coddington, 175.

⁹ Fenske v. Coddington, 191-198.

subsequently raising tuition rates to him was not the answer. Rather he places the reason for decreased enrollment on the better, more affordable schools available to people in the community.¹⁰ He wants to keep Hungerford as it is and believes it can survive through its usual local outreach. In his cross examination he elaborates on how he would send bulletins to negro ministers of Baptist and Methodist churches and run ads in newspapers to gather more students.¹¹ Furthermore, this section includes Constance Fenski's testimony where she recounts her contributions to the Hungerford school. Hers are mainly monetary and she is pressed to remember the details of how much she has given over the years. Additionally, she discusses her fears of Hungerford becoming a public school and straying from its Christian teachings.¹² Dr. Grover's testimony consists of his reading a letter from Robert B. Taylor who is associated with the Spanish department of Phillips Academy. The letter details Taylor's disagreement with Hungerford becoming a secular school. He instead insists on Hungerford becoming a private boarding school where its Christian foundations can be properly protected. Dr. Grover is then asked for more details about contributions to the school. The section ends with a list of agreed upon stipulations from the hearing as well as a revisiting of previously mentioned exhibits.

***ANALYSIS:** These testimonies largely reveal the reach of the Hungerford school. Principal Otey discusses how they had students from Miami, Chicago, and Georgia. This would lend well to a mapping project of its alumni. Additionally, the issue of how Hungerford in a way recruited students is discussed. Otey personally used ads to reach out of state potential students, but directly appealed to students in local counties like Orange County, Seminole County, or Lake County. This demonstrates the efforts that faculty in Hungerford went towards finding students and subsequently building their professional skills. Another important theme is that of religion. It was heavily referenced in this section when it came to the identity of Hungerford. There was a fear of secular influence pulling students away from these traditional values. This displays how intertwined religion was in black communities at this time. It was both a point of recruitment/advertising for the school via churches and a moral foundation in an abstract sense. Such a relationship could be studied to see which local churches had close connections to the school and how they both influenced each other. It ties into a larger historiography about African Americans' relationship with churches and them serving as social centers. Also provided in this section is a list of the present buildings within Hungerford. This would be ideal for mapping the physical structures of the school and highlighting Hungerford in its original glory. Overall, this section provides insight into*

¹⁰ Fenske v. Coddington, 253.

¹¹ Fenske v. Coddington, 304.

¹² Fenske v. Coddington, 260.

how Hungerford advertised itself and attracted students as well as its core values that they feared could be lost through becoming a public school.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUALIZATION STRATEGIES:

In addition to an ArcGIS Story Map to display the chronological timeline and geographic data already available, the data in the findings above in the *Fenske v. Coddington Case File* can be visualized in the following ways:

- Data related to the number of schools, students, and teachers through the years as presented by Mr. Williams (see FINDING A) can be visualized through the use of graphs and can be used in conjunction with similar data for white students to visualize the disparity in educational institutions.
- The twelve counties listed by Mr. Williams as having no educational facilities for Black high school students (see FINDING A) can be included in geospatial representations of physical sites examined elsewhere in the project. These gaps may help contextualize patterns of boarding vs. non-boarding school facilities.
- The “Minimum Foundation Program” (see FINDING A) is an additional area of interest that further research may provide a means of visualizing. Particularly as it appears to be involved in determining funding, this could be represented with various types of charts and graphs and would also be of interest as a comparative measure against the funding received by white students. This information could be useful to expand arguments relating to “separate but equal” doctrines used in the push against desegregation. Examining sources of public opinion through newspaper articles might be a worthwhile way to add visual emphasis to this area.
- Textual analysis of the communications between groups and individuals regarding the different plans for the school would help visualize the changing plans for the school and the various ways in which the Trust “failed” in its operation of the school, leading Hungerford to be transferred to OCPS (see FINDING B).