

Jacob Hamman
Mrs. Mealey
Grade 8
Wooster High School

An Education Lost and Found

I am white. As such, I, along with my ancestors, have never experienced racism and oppression like Linda Brown did when she wanted simply to go to school and get an education. White people like myself have not experienced and do not currently experience the racism and oppression that used to be a part of the daily lives of people of different ethnicities in all countries throughout the world. An example of this is how up until recently, black students received worse educations that they needed to strive further for than their white counterparts, so they fought against this social inequality and won, ending decades of unequal and unbalanced educations for black students.

The problems in segregated schools begin before a student can even arrive at school: Linda Brown, a black student in the 1950s, had to cross a treacherous rail yard before she could even get to her school, which was farther away from her house than a local white school. The government did not give nearly as much attention or care to black students, either. In Jim Crow states, local school boards spent nearly three times as much money on white students than black students. The case was even worse in the deep south, where Alabama and Mississippi spent over five times more on each white student than each black student, Georgia spent over four and a half times more on each white student than each black student, and South Carolina spent a whopping ten times more on each white student than each black student. The issues here are clear: the governments of Jim Crow and Southern states simply did not spend nearly as much money on black students than white students, implying that black students received much worse and more limited educations than white students simply because of the

color of the skin they received at birth.

Black families from Topeka, Kansas were rightfully angry with this, so they took it to court in *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483, claiming that segregated public schools are prohibited by the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. This trial was a victory, with the justices of the Supreme Court voting unanimously for Brown. The trial confirmed that the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution does not protect the racial segregation of public school students, so the doctrine of "separate but equal" was reversed. According to the Supreme Court, racial segregation of public schools denies the equal protection of Negroes guaranteed to them by the Fourteenth Amendment, which guarantees the equal protection of all Americans, even though physical and immediately-noticeable factors of Negro schools may be nearly identical.

If I had been a black student during the Jim Crow era, I would have been disgusted. Disgusted at the government for making me walk long and dangerous distances for the sake of an education. Disgusted at the white schools for not letting me enroll in them. Disgusted at the government for spending up to ten times less on me than on a white student. I would feel acrimony toward whomever decided that I should have to experience oppression; that I should have to suffer through an inferior education; that up to ten times less money should be spent on me than a white student; that through thousands of years of humanity, I still cannot be treated at as high a standard as a human being that is white. But through the darkness of these negative emotions, I would see a light. I would see hope. I would be hopeful that I may someday be the recipient of a full education. I would be hopeful that my future would contain equality. I would be hopeful that someday, all humans would prevail together, isolated from hatred and racism.

Before *Brown v. Board of Education*, black students received worse educations than their

white counterparts. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court deemed racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional, ending this unjust policy. Nowadays, most people strive for equality, but if we let ourselves forget the severe problems caused by racial inequality, we could go back into an age of oppression.