

Brown Quarterly

A Newsletter for Classroom Teachers

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Crisis at Central High School

Theirs were acts of uncommon courage. Nine teenagers faced angry mobs, repeated death threats, and daily verbal and physical assaults from racist students and protestors at Little Rock's all-white Central High School. The adults charged with protecting them ignored or, worse yet, joined the attacks. Every day was spent in fear for their lives. Their story was front page news around the world.

Now, fifty years later, history remembers these studious, well-mannered teenagers as heroes and heroines of the civil rights movement. They will forever be known by the name given them by the media: the Little Rock Nine.

Three years after the Supreme Court outlawed public school segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the Little Rock, Arkansas, school board began implementing a plan of gradual integration beginning with Central High School. The events that followed led to riots and military occupation, pitted Arkansas Governor Orval E. Faubus against President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and brought the eyes of the world down on Little Rock and nine teenagers who simply wanted a better education.

Journey to Little Rock, 1957

Of hundreds of students who volunteered, originally seventeen were selected by the school district to be the first to cross the color barrier into Little Rock Central High School. Intimidation and death threats began immediately, leading eight to withdraw. The remaining nine—bolstered with the support of their families and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)—prepared for the first day at their new school, eager for the opportunity of a better education at one of the nation's most highly regarded high schools.

Governor Faubus, however, had other plans. Defying federal law, he announced in a televised speech that he had ordered the Arkansas National Guard to prohibit the nine students from entering Central High. An incensed President Eisenhower responded to Faubus's pleas for support, stating in a telegram that "the only

assurance I can give you is that the Federal Constitution will be upheld by me by every legal means at my command."

Days before the start of school, Federal Judge Ronald Davies ruled that Faubus had not used the National Guard to preserve

peace and ordered their removal. Undaunted, Faubus replaced the National Guard with Little Rock police officers. His behavior stoked the flames of segregationists who began organizing protests and individual attacks on the black population of Little Rock, particularly the nine students and their families.

When school opened on September 3, local NAACP leader Daisy Bates feared violence and instructed the students to meet near the school and proceed together, accompanied by local ministers. Unfortunately, fifteen-year-old Elizabeth Eckford did not receive

the instruction. She arrived at Central alone, carrying her books and wearing a new dress she had made for the first day. Armed

(Cont. on 3)



Escorted by paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division, five of the Little Rock Nine depart Central High School. Photo courtesy of the National Park Service, Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site.

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A Personal Perspective

Ambition. Personality. Opportunity. Preparation. These four ideals are engraved under statues that grace the front of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas where history was made fifty years ago.

The statues hover over the doors where the first nine black students—who later became known as the Little Rock Nine—gained international attention as they entered Central High under federal troop escort on September 25, 1957. The desegregation crisis was the first important test of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision that outlawed segregation in education.

Central High School was designated a National Historic Site on November 6, 1998. The site was established to preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit, education, and inspiration of present and future generations. I have been working at the historic site visitor center as an interpretive park ranger since 2002. Ironically, my mother, Minnijean Brown Trickey, is one of the Little Rock Nine.

I love my job, and my personal connection to the story only enhances my daily experience. It enables me to talk to children about how recently legal segregation existed in classrooms and elsewhere around the country. I sometimes feel like my message can be a bridge between the past and the present. I'm extremely passionate about conveying the message that this is everyone's history, not just black history. It is American history and world history. All of the park rangers and staff at the historic site radiate the complex and inspiring stories of the crisis to visitors from around the world.

The words ambition, personality, opportunity, and preparation still grace the front of Central High School. These ideals remain just as relevant today as when they were engraved in 1927. Today, Central stands as a concrete testament of the legal elimination of segregation in education. It is the only functioning high school within the boundaries of a National Historic Site. About 2500 students currently call Little Rock Central their high school.

In September 2007, the world will once again watch as the Little Rock Nine return to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the desegregation crisis at Central High School.

The formal dedication of a new visitor center is planned for the morning of Monday, September 24. The dedication is part of a week-long series of events throughout the Little Rock community. Georgia Congressman John Lewis, who fought in the civil rights movement, will join members of the Little Rock Nine as he delivers the keynote address. The theme of the occasion is based from a quote spoken by Lewis as he risked his life on a Freedom Ride, attempting to register blacks to vote in the 60's. He said, "If not us, then who? If not now, then when?"

As we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the desegregation of Central High School, we realize that although the world is a better place in 2007, there is much work to be done in the realm of civil rights and human rights. On this momentous occasion we can ask ourselves as Lewis did many years ago, "If not us, then who? If not now, then when?"



Spirit Trickey has a unique perspective of the Little Rock crisis. She is an interpretive park ranger at the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site and the daughter of one of the Little Rock Nine.



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for Educational Equality,
Excellence
and Research

The Brown Foundation is pleased to publish this newsletter for classroom teachers through which we will share educational resources available from national parks and museums.

Established to maintain the legacy of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, our organization plays an exciting role as a park partner. We were also instrumental in the development of the *Brown v. Board of Education* National Historic Site in Topeka, Kansas. We hope you enjoy the *Brown Quarterly* and we are always interested in comments from our readers.

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For more information about the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, visit www.nps.gov/chsc.

soldiers surrounding the school repeatedly let white students pass, but held bayonettes to block Elizabeth from entering. A sea of angry protestors closed in around her, shouting insults, spitting on her, and threatening to lynch her. They followed her closely as she tried in vain to pass the soldiers. Her terror hidden behind dark sunglasses, she stoically made her way to a bus stop where two white adults stepped out of the crowd and sat beside her on the bench. The male, a *New York Times* education reporter covering the integration, patted her shoulder and quietly instructed her “Don’t let them see you cry.” They saw that she safely boarded the next bus and fled Central High, probably saving her life.

Sixteen-year-old Melba Pattillo and her mother were also attacked and chased away by rope-carrying racists who grabbed at them, threw bricks at their car, and threatened their lives. Meanwhile, Bates and the other students were also turned away by armed soldiers. They spent the day meeting with the district attorney and FBI agents.

An Armed Escort into Central High

Weeks of court battles and an escalating struggle between Faubus and Eisenhower followed. Finally, under pressure from Eisenhower, Faubus removed troops from the school, but offered the nine students no protection.

On September 23, 1957, the Little Rock Nine entered Central High through a side door while the mob gathered in front was distracted by the beating of a Negro reporter. When the crowd realized that the students had made it into the building, rioting ensued. State and local police outside threw down their badges and joined the mob, while officers inside the school frantically planned to remove the nine students for their own safety.

Huddled in the principal’s office with the other eight students, Pattillo overheard the officers’ horrifying conversation:

“We may have to let the mob have one of these kids, so’s we can distract them long enough to get the others out.”

“Let one of those kids hang? How’s that gonna look?”

Two police cars whisked the students out through an underground garage. They were instructed to keep their heads down, but there was no avoiding the crowds who beat on the cars, threw rocks, and shouted hateful words.

Eisenhower called the scene in Little Rock “disgraceful” and placed the Arkan-



The commander of the Arkansas National Guard troops surrounding Central High School informs students that his troops are under orders not to allow integration.

sas National Guard under federal control. In an unprecedented move, he dispatched 1,200 members of the 101st Airborne Division into Little Rock to ensure that integration was carried out.

“The men of the 101st were famous heroes, combat specialists, the newsman said. If we needed such brave soldiers, the President and those powerful men in his cabinet must have agreed that the integration was as dangerous as a hostile enemy in war,” Pattillo wrote in her memoir *Warriors Don’t Cry*.

Two days later, the Little Rock Nine were escorted by armed soldiers into

Teenage Warriors

Despite unwavering support from the NAACP and their families, the nine students faced the horrors of abuse alone. For a few weeks, soldiers from the 101st Airborne escorted them to class, but could only stand guard outside the classroom

doors. Inside classrooms and restrooms, the nine faced verbal abuse, spitting, and being doused with ink, glue, and even urine. They were constantly tripped, kicked, and hit. Paper fireballs and lit sticks of dynamite were thrown at them. Teachers rarely responded, and school administrators refused to give the students protection or to punish their tormentors.

Media attention only served to fuel the flames. The nine quickly learned that violent attacks increased sharply when stories about them appeared in the media. Out of fear for their lives—and the lives of their families—the nine suffered silently, even as

the acts of violence became more cruel. They were pushed down stairs, held in scalding showers, stabbed, and beaten. Acid was thrown in Melba Pattillo’s eyes; her eyesight saved by her bodyguard who quickly flushed her eyes with water.

Pattillo took to heart her bodyguard’s advice: “In order to get through this year you will have to become a soldier. Never let your enemy know what you are feeling. You can’t afford to become bored.”

On October 1, the nine arrived at school to find that, without warning, the 101st paratroopers were replaced with the same Arkansas National Guard troops who

Racists seized the opportunity, meeting the nine at the front door with racial slurs and taunts of “Go home!” and “You ready to die just to be in this school?”

Central High School. They were met by crowds chanting “Two, four, six, eight. We ain’t gonna integrate.” Their nightmare was only beginning.

In her diary, Pattillo wrote “I know very well that the President didn’t send those soldiers just to protect me but to show support for an idea—the idea that a governor can’t ignore federal laws.”

had refused to protect them weeks before. Racists seized on this vulnerability, meeting the nine at the front door with racial slurs and taunts of “Go home!” and “You ready to die just to be in this school?”

By December, sixteen-year-old Minnijean Brown could take no more abuse. Frustrated by tormentors in the lunchroom, she dumped a bowl of chili over a boy’s

head. Her eventual expulsion fanned the flames of hatred, and soon the school was covered with signs and flyers reading “One down, eight to go.” Rewards were offered to anyone who could get a black student to leave Central High, no matter the means.

A City Divided

As the school year went on, the integration crisis galvanized Little Rock. Of the white students who had once dared to smile or speak kindly, many buckled under intimidation by those obsessed with stopping integration. Even most teachers dared not offer support for fear of losing their jobs. Even most friends and neighbors turned against the nine out of fear of violence.

Parents and family members of all nine students faced threats or were fired from their jobs for not forcing their children to return to the all-black high school.

Death threats mounted.

In May, Ernest Green, the only senior among the group, became the first black student to graduate from Central High. Security was tightened amid bomb threats and Ku Klux Klan activity. Despite all they had been through together, the remaining eight were barred from the ceremony—as were nonwhite reporters and photographers—because police could not assure their safety. Despite these conditions, Dr. Martin Luther King joined the Green family for the ceremony.

Pattillo and the others listened on the radio as Green’s name was called. She wrote: “The audience had been applauding those who previously marched, but when Ernie appeared they fell silent. . . . Ernie was escorted from the stadium by police to a waiting taxi in which he, his family, and their guest departed. The newspapers said Ernie’s diploma cost taxpayers half a million dollars. Of course,

we knew it cost all of us much, much more than that. It cost us our innocence and a precious year of our teenage lives.”

The Lost Year

After a tumultuous year, the Little Rock school board sought court approval to delay integration for three years. In granting the delay, Judge Harry Lemley stated that while African American students have a constitutional right to attend white schools, the “time has not come for them to enjoy [that right.]”

In a special session, the Supreme Court overruled Lemley and ordered that Little Rock must continue its integration plan with schools opening on September 15. In an unprecedented step, Faubus closed Little Rock’s public high schools. The city’s approximately 3,700 high school students were left with the alternatives of leaving Little Rock or attending private schools. The 1958-59 school year



Gathered ten years ago at Central High, the Nine are (l-r): Thelma Mothershed Wair, Minnijean Brown Trickey, Jefferson Thomas, Terrence Roberts, Carlotta Walls LaNier, Gloria Ray Karlmark, Ernest Green, Elizabeth Eckford, and Melba Pattillo Beals. Also pictured: Little Rock Mayor Jim Dailey, Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, and President Bill Clinton. Photo courtesy of Isaiah Trickey.

From the moment of their selection to integrate Central High School, the lives of the Little Rock Nine would be forever linked together. For their tremendous courage, they have been granted many awards, including the NAACP’s prestigious Springarn Award and the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation’s highest and most distinguished civilian award.

In September 2007, all nine are expected to return to Little Rock to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the events that shaped their lives.

Thelma Mothershed Wair graduated from Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 1964, and earned her master’s degree in guidance and counseling from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in 1970.

She enjoyed a 28-year career as an educator in the East St. Louis school system. She has since worked at a juvenile detention center in Illinois, and as an instructor of survival skills for women through the American Red Cross.

Wair and her late husband have one son. She now lives in Little Rock.

Minnijean Brown Trickey was sixteen when she began her junior year at Central High School. Although all nine students endured relentless torture during the 1957-58 school year, Brown was expelled for retaliating against an aggressor. She then

moved to New York City and graduated from New Lincoln High School in 1959.

Following graduation from Southern Illinois University, she and her husband moved to Canada and raised six children. She has had a lifetime commitment to peacemaking; environmental issues; developing youth leadership; diversity education and training; cross-cultural communication; gender and social justice advocacy.

She returned to Little Rock, where she continues as a teacher, writer, and lecturer.

Jefferson Thomas graduated from Central High School in 1960 and entered Wayne State University in Detroit. He later moved to Los Angeles and graduated from Los Angeles State College. His bravery was again proven when he served his country

became known as “the lost year.”

Moderates and segregationists continued to wrestle for control of the school board, with moderates ultimately winning by a slim margin.

In June of 1959, a federal court ruled that the school closing was unconstitutional. Little Rock’s public high schools reopened on August 12, 1959. Urged on by Faubus, segregationists marched to Central High. Police dispersed the crowd and arrested 21 protestors.

With death threats increasing, only two of the Little Rock Nine, Jefferson Thomas and Carlotta Walls, returned to Central for their senior year; both graduated the following spring. Thelma Mothershed completed correspondence classes and received her Central High diploma in the mail. Minnijean Trickey, Melba Pattillo, Terrence Roberts, and Gloria Ray all left Little Rock to complete high school elsewhere. Elizabeth Eckford joined the Army and earned her GED.

Full integration would not occur in Little Rock until 1972—fifteen years after the Little Rock Nine so bravely broke through the color barrier.



The Little Rock Nine pictured in NAACP leader Daisy Bates’ living room in 1957. (Standing) Ernest Green, Melba Pattillo, Terrence Roberts, Carlotta Walls, Daisy Bates, Jefferson Thomas; (seated) Thelma Mothershed, Minnijean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, and Gloria Ray. Daisy Bates passed away in 1999.

as an infantry squad leader in Vietnam in 1967.

Thomas retired after 27 years as an accountant with the U.S. Department of Defense and lives in Columbus, Ohio.

Terrence Roberts graduated from California State University in Los Angeles in 1967. He then earned a master’s degree from the University of Southern California, and a Ph.D. in psychology from Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Dr. Roberts chairs the masters in psychology program at Antioch University in Los Angeles and has a private practice in Pasadena. He is also CEO of the management-consulting firm Terrence J. Roberts & Associates. He and his wife have two daughters.

Carlotta Walls LaNier was the youngest of the Little Rock Nine at age fourteen. Following her graduation from Central High in 1960, Walls attended Michigan State University for two years, then graduated from Colorado State College (now the University of Northern Colorado).

She is a professional real estate broker in Colorado.

She and her husband have two grown children.

Gloria Ray Karlmark graduated from Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in 1965. In 1970, she and her husband immigrated to Sweden where she was recruited to join IBM’s Nordic Laboratory. She continued her studies, graduating as a patent attorney in 1977. She co-founded *Computers in Industry*, an international journal of computer applications in industry, and served fifteen years as editor.

She retired in 1994. She has two grown children, and currently resides in Europe.

As the only senior among the nine, **Ernest Green** was the first black student to graduate from Central High School. He then went on to earn bachelors and masters degrees from Michigan State University.

He served as assistant secretary of housing and urban affairs under President Jimmy Carter and was chair of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Capital Financing Advisory Board. President Clinton appointed Green to chair the African Development Foundation.

He is a managing director for Lehman Brothers’ Washington, D.C. office. He and his wife live in Washington, D.C. They have three children.

At age fifteen, **Elizabeth Eckford** walked alone through angry mobs, only to be denied entrance to Little Rock Central High School by armed National Guardsmen.

With the closing of Little Rock public schools, Eckford joined the United States Army and earned her G.E.D. She later attended Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio. Eckford is a probation officer in her hometown.

Melba Pattillo Beals completed high school in Santa Rosa, California. She attended San Francisco State University and earned a graduate degree from Columbia University.

Pattillo Beals worked as a reporter for NBC, and as a communications consultant. Her memoir, *Warriors Don’t Cry*, was an ALA Notable Book for 1995 and won the 1995 Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Book Award. She also penned a sequel, *White is a State of Mind*, and books on public relations and marketing.

She is chair of African American History at Dominican University. She has a daughter and twin sons, and lives near San Francisco.



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Crisis in Little Rock

September 1927

Little Rock Senior (renamed Central in 1953) High School is constructed with costs exceeding \$1.5 million. The American Institute of Architects named Central High School, "The Most Beautiful High School in America."

September 1929

Little Rock's Dunbar High School for African American students, opens. The school district spent approximately \$302,500 for its construction.

May 17, 1954

The United States Supreme Court rules racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. Five days later, the Little Rock school board issues a policy statement saying it will comply with the Supreme Court's decision. In May 1955, the Supreme Court further defines the standard of implementation for integration as being "with all deliberate speed."

August 23, 1954

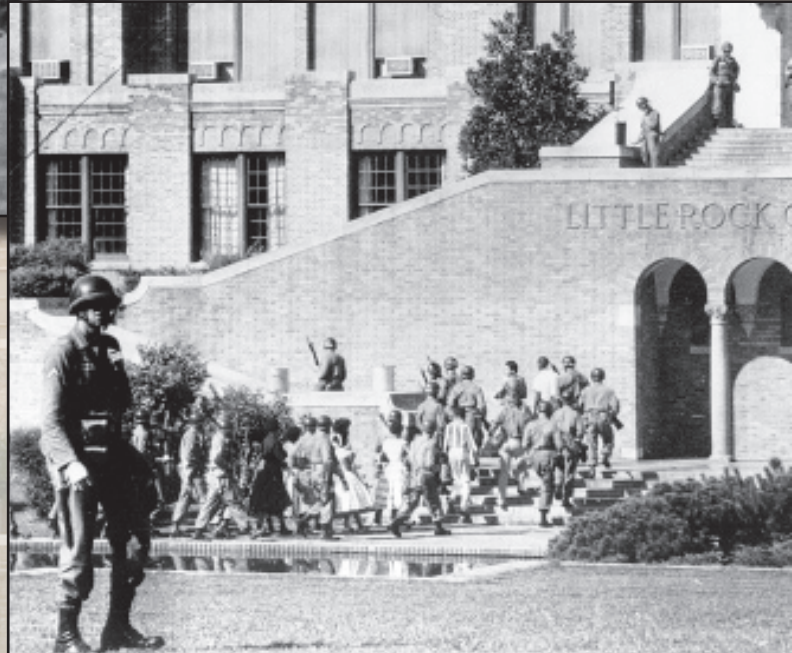
Under the direction of attorney Wiley Branton, chairman of the state's NAACP Legal Redress Committee, the NAACP petitions the Little Rock school board for immediate integration.

May 24, 1955

The Little Rock school board adopts a plan of gradual integration beginning with the high school level (starting in 1957) and the lower grades during the next six years.

February 8, 1956

Federal Judge John E. M. dismisses the NAACP suit (*Aaron v. Cooper*), declaring that the Little Rock School Board has acted in "utmost good faith" in setting up a plan of gradual integration. In April, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals upholds the dismissal. The federal district court retained jurisdiction over the case, however, making the school board's implementation of the Board of Education's desegregation Plan a court-mandated process.



September 25, 1957

Under troop escort, the "Little Rock Nine" are escorted into Central High School for their first full day of classes.

May 25, 1958

Senior Ernest Green becomes the first African American student to graduate from Central High School.

June 3, 1958

Highlighting numerous discipline problems during the school year, the school board asks the court to delay the desegregation plan in *Cooper v. Aaron*.

June 21, 1958

Judge Harry Lemley grants the delay of integration until January 1, 1961, stating that while the African American students have a constitutional right to attend white schools, the "time has not come for them to enjoy [that right]."

September 12, 1958

In a special session, the Supreme Court rules that the Little Rock must continue its desegregation plan. The school board orders the schools to open September 15. Governor Faubus ordered four Little Rock high schools closed pending a public hearing.



August 27, 1957

The segregationist Mothers' League of Central High School holds its first public meeting. They file a motion seeking a temporary injunction against school integration. Two days later, Pulaski Chancellor Murray Reed grants the injunction on the grounds that integration could lead to violence. Federal Judge Ronald Davies nullifies the injunction and orders the school board to proceed with its desegregation plan.

September 2, 1957

Governor Orval Faubus orders the Arkansas National Guard to prohibit African American students from entering Central High School and announces his plans in a televised speech.

September 20, 1957

Federal Judge Ronald Davies rules that Faubus has not used the troops to preserve law and order and orders them removed. Faubus removes the Guardsmen and the Little Rock Police Department moves in.

September 23, 1957

An angry mob of more than 1,000 whites gathers in front of Central High School, while nine African American students are escorted inside. A few hours later, the Little Rock police remove the nine children for their safety. President Eisenhower calls the rioting "disgraceful" and orders federal troops into Little Rock.

September 24, 1957

1,200 members of the 101st Airborne Division roll into Little Rock. The Arkansas National Guard is placed under federal orders.



Timeline information condensed from the Little Rock National Historic Site web site at www.nps.gov/chsc/historyculture/timeline.

Photos provided by C.H.M. Coll./UALR Archives & Spec. Coll.

September 27, 1958

Citizens vote 19,470 to 7,561 against integration, and the schools remain closed.

May 5, 1959

Segregationist school board members vote not to renew the contracts of 44 teachers and administrators they say supported integration.

May 8, 1959

The Women's Emergency Council and local businessmen form Stop This Outrageous Purge (STOP) and solicit voter signatures to recall segregationist board members.

May 25, 1959

STOP wins the recall election in a close victory. Three segregationists are voted off the school board; three moderate members are retained.

August 12, 1959

Little Rock public high schools reopen. Segregationists march to Central High where the police break up the mob and arrest twenty-one people.

Fall 1972

Little Rock public school system is finally fully integrated.

An Unprecedented Clash of Power

Eisenhower asserts control, assures that Constitution will be upheld

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 5, 1957
James C. Hagerty, Press Secretary to the President

THE WHITE HOUSE
U. S. National Archives
Newport, Rhode Island

THE PRESIDENT TODAY SENT THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNOR OF ARKANSAS:

U. S. National Archives
Newport, Rhode Island
Governor Orval E. Faubus
Little Rock, Arkansas

You have received requests for my assurance of understanding and support in the course of action you have taken on school integration. I am sure that you will continue to support the mandate of the United States Supreme Court.

When I became President, I took an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. The only assurance I can give you is that the Federal Constitution will be upheld by me by every means at my command. In your telegram last night, you stated that you were taking into custody those who are interfering with the school. There is no basis of fact in this statement. It has been confirmed that Federal authorities have been contacted and that telephone lines to your Executive Mansion have been tapped by any agency of the Federal Government.

At the request of Judge Davies, the Department of Justice is presently collecting facts as to interference with or failure to comply with the District Court's order. You and other state officials -- as well as the National Guard which, of course, is uniformed, armed and partially sustained by the Government -- will, I am sure, give full cooperation to the United States District Court.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

At the request of Judge Davies, the Department of Justice is presently collecting facts as to interference with or failure to comply with the District Court's order. You and other state officials -- as well as the National Guard which, of course, is uniformed, armed and partially sustained by the Government -- will, I am sure, give full cooperation to the United States District Court.

Dwight D. Eisenhower



The thirty-fourth President of the United States Dwight D. Eisenhower. National Park Service photo. Photo and press release courtesy of the Eisenhower Presidential Library.

The escalating events in Little Rock in the fall of 1957 led to a showdown between Arkansas Governor Orval E. Faubus and President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Not since the Civil War had there been such a battle between state and federal powers.

Despite the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* declaring "separate but equal" schools unconstitutional—and despite an integration plan approved by the Little Rock school board and mayor—Faubus stood firm that Little Rock would remain segregated. Eisenhower was incensed at Faubus's defiance of the Constitution, and made the unprecedented decision to send in federal troops to assure that the students' civil rights were upheld.

What led to this showdown is perhaps more complicated than the issue of desegregation.

Through the lens of history, Faubus's actions are viewed by many as politically motivated. Prior to Little Rock, Faubus was considered progressive. His

administration favored many minority causes and his personal convictions were not viewed as racist; however, the fall of 1957 found him facing considerable public backlash over tax increases. With an election year looming and opponents seizing on the growing unrest in Little Rock to stir white voters, the risk of losing the state's white majority could not be overlooked.

On September 4, 1957, Faubus chose to appease racist groups demanding a stop to school integration. He called in the Arkansas National Guard to surround Central High, claiming their presence was to maintain law and order. He undoubtedly did not anticipate the widespread media attention that focused the eyes of the world squarely on Little Rock. News cameras quickly captured the ugly truth of armed Guardsmen preventing black students from entering Central High School and standing idly by while white mobs physically harassed black students, journalists, and bystanders.

In a telegram the following day,



Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus at an October 2, 1957, press conference. Photo provided by C.H.M. Coll./UALR Archives & Spec. Coll.

Eisenhower clearly drew the line of state versus federal power.

"When I became President, I took an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. The only assurance I can give you is that the Federal Constitution will be upheld by me by every legal means under my command."

Summoned to meet with Eisenhower on September 14, Faubus gave the impression that he had allowed the students to enroll at Central and would use the National Guard only to preserve order. However, upon his return to Little Rock,

Faubus dismissed the Guard troops, leaving the African American students to face angry segregationist mobs unprotected. The world watched as rioting ensued, forcing the removal of the Little Rock Nine for their own safety.

Decrying the situation in Little Rock as “deplorable,” Eisenhower placed the Arkansas National Guard under federal control and dispatched 12,000 paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division to restore order and ensure the protection of the nine students.

With his trust in Faubus shattered, Eisenhower carefully explained his rationale for sending federal troops in a broadcast speech on September 24, 1957. He described his presidential responsibility as “inescapable,” and condemned segregationist actions at Central High.

“Certain misguided persons, many of them imported into Little Rock by agitators, have insisted upon defying the law and have sought to bring it into disrepute. The orders of the court have thus been frustrated.” He further stated that “mob rule cannot be allowed to overrule the decisions of the courts.”

Little Rock may have forced Eisenhower to take a stand for civil rights, but his motivation was also, in part, political. In his diary, Eisenhower later wrote of his September 14 meeting with Faubus: “I further said that I did not believe it was beneficial to anybody to have a trial of strength between the President and a Governor because in any area where the Federal government had assumed jurisdiction and this was upheld by the Supreme Court, there could be only one outcome—that is, the State would lose, and I did not want to see any Governor humiliated.”

In letters sent individually to the parents of the Little Rock Nine, Eisenhower expressed gratitude and empathy.

“I believe that America’s heart goes out to you and your children in your present ordeal. In the course of our country’s progress toward equality of opportunity, you have shown dignity and courage in circumstances which would daunt citizens of lesser faith.”

Faubus lost the battle, but refused to concede the war. The following year, he pushed through legislation that enabled him to close Little Rock’s public high schools for the 1958-59 school year rather than allow continued integration. He easily won re-election, eventually serving six consecutive terms as governor from 1955 to 1967. Despite successes in other areas of his administration, Faubus’s career would always be marred by his handling of the crisis at Little Rock.

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Hoxie, Arkansas Takes a Stand

Two years before the Little Rock crisis, black and white children peacefully entered school together in the northeastern Arkansas community of Hoxie.

Following the 1954 *Brown v. Board* decision outlawing segregation, the Hoxie school board voted to integrate immediately, citing that it was religiously correct, federally mandated, and cheaper for the school district.

Integration started smoothly with the opening of school on July 11, 1955. *Life* magazine and several regional newspapers carried pictures of black and white children playing together. No racial incidents were reported.

However, within days of the media reports, townspeople were bombarded with white supremacy propaganda from as far away as Memphis, St. Louis, Dallas, and Little Rock. On August 3, approximately 350 segregationists convened at city hall to protest integration.

Despite organized segregationist efforts, the Hoxie school board ultimately received a federal court injunction preventing segregationists from boycotting or picketing the schools, trespassing on property, or threatening school administrators and board members.

While Hoxie marked a pivotal shift in school desegregation, it was not the first Arkansas community to successfully integrate. Fayetteville and Charleston integrated the previous year with no resistance.

In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the Little Rock crisis, Congress directed the U.S. Mint to produce the 2007 Little Rock Central High School Commemorative Coin.

According to the U.S. Mint, “these silver dollars recognize and pay tribute to the strength, the determination, and the courage displayed by African American high school students in the fall of 1957.”

The obverse (heads side) of the silver dollar depicts a group of children walking to school, escorted by an American soldier, with nine stars symbolizing the Little Rock Nine. The reverse (tails side) depicts Little Rock Central High School, circa 1957.

Congress authorizes commemorative coins that celebrate and honor American people, places, events and institutions. Although these coins are legal tender, they are not minted for general circulation. Up to 500,000 Little Rock Nine silver dollars will be minted.

Proceeds from the sale of these commemorative coins supports the protection, preservation, and interpretation of resources and stories associated with the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site.

Proof coins are available for \$39 for a limited time at the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site bookstore or online at shop.jnpa.com/Content/105.htm.



Visit Central High Without Leaving Your Classroom



© Ball State University

Take your class on a field trip to Little Rock Central High without leaving your classroom! Students and teachers from across the country are invited to participate in two Electronic Field Trips at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Tuesday, December 4, 2007.

"The Electronic Field Trip is an interactive, live educational experience available from Ball State University, in partnership with many of the country's leading national museums, parks and historic institutions," explains National Park Service Education Specialist Amy Garrett.

The Nine Who Made a Difference is produced in partnership with the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site. Participants will join park rangers and other special guests to examine the issues and compelling stories that have

evolved from the 1957 integration.

Together, these organizations have developed a global digital classroom that enhances learning through dynamic web-site and broadcast programs—presentations that break down geographic barriers and allow students and teachers throughout the world to enjoy a shared experience with classrooms worldwide by virtually travelling to exotic locations and meeting experts who answer their questions live in a special online forum. Access to the Electronic Field Trip (EFT) is made possible through cable outlets, PBS stations, satellite, and improved and enhanced webcasting services.

The EFT is composed of a web site, "webisodes" (short video packages that cover unique aspects of the EFT topic), classroom activities, and a live broadcast.

Free Stuff

These educational kits, and many other on different subjects, are available through the Teaching Tolerance program of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Visit teachingtolerance.org for more information or to receive kits for your classroom.



America's Civil Rights Movement includes the 38-minute Academy Award-winning film, *A Time for Justice*; *Free at Last*, 108 pages of history, profiles and photos; and lesson plans that adhere to state standards for U.S. history, civics, and language arts.



Rhinos & Raspberries: Tolerance Tales for the Early Grades showcases 12 stories from around the world and is designed to promote both character education and literacy in preK-6 classrooms. The kit includes a hard-cover book for teachers that includes 12 fully illustrated stories, along with activity ideas, discussion prompts and 10 lesson plans.

Teaching Tolerance has also announced a special web package on school integration to coincide with the Little Rock Nine anniversary. Called "The Road to School Integration," it includes a timeline spanning 1849 to present; explorations about the promise of *Brown v. Board*; information about the Little Rock Nine, including contents from the out-of-print Spring 2007 issue of *Teaching Tolerance* magazine and an interview with Minnijean Brown Trickey; and an explanation about why schools are resegregating with an essay by NAACP chair Julian Bond. This package will be available at www.teachingtolerance.org/integrate after September 3.



Teachers can register as individuals or as a classroom by visiting www.bsu.edu/eft. This web site also includes information about other exciting EFT programs offered in the upcoming school year.

Approximately one month before the EFT broadcast date, registered teachers will receive access to web-based curriculum materials developed to prepare participants for the EFT experience.

Registration for each EFT is \$75; however, teachers can accept a scholarship from the Best Buy Children's Foundation and access the EFT at no charge. This information is also available on the registration web page.

Education specialists at the Central High School National Historic Site have developed eight detailed curriculum plans to help today's students better understand the events surrounding the integration of Central High School 50 years ago.

Visit the National Park Service web site at www.nps.gov/chsc/forteachers/index.htm to download these valuable plans:

- "All the World is Watching Us": The Crisis at Little Rock Central High School, 1954-1957.
- Daisy Lee Gatson Bates
- "Great things happen in small places..." Government Authority and Civil Rights Activism in Arkansas (1954-1959)
- You're the Justice! A Landmark Case in Supreme Court History
- Teaching Empathy: The Story of Ruby Bridges
- Every Person Has a Story of Courage: The Little Rock Nine
- The Fourteenth Amendment
- Paul Laurence Dunbar High School



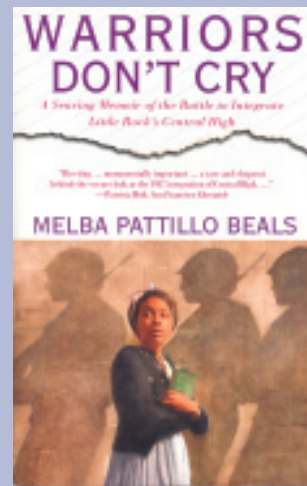
Warriors Don't Cry

By Melba Pattillo Beals

Book, 312 pages, published by Washington Square Press, 1994

Also available in abridged young readers edition.

Warriors Don't Cry, drawn from Melba Beal's personal diaries, is a riveting true account of her junior year at Little Rock Central High—one filled with telephone threats, brigades of attacking mothers, rogue police, fireball and acid-throwing attacks, economic blackmail, and, finally, a price upon Melba's head. With the help of her English-teacher mother; her eight fellow warriors; and her gun-toting, Bible-loving, Shakespeare-quoting grandmother, Melba survived. "Dignity," said Grandmother India, "is a state of mind, just like freedom." And incredibly, from a year that would hold no sweet-sixteen parties or school plays, Melba Beals emerged with indestructible faith, courage, strength, and hope.

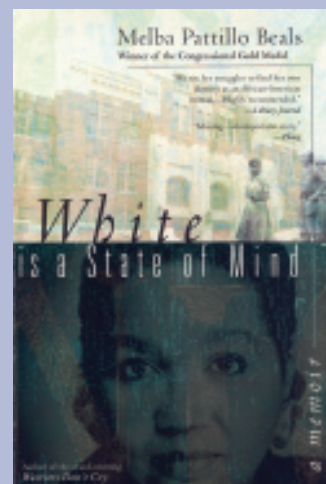


White is a State of Mind

By Melba Pattillo Beals

Book, 338 pages, published by Berkley Books, 1999

After risking her life as one of the "Little Rock Nine," Beals needed a place of refuge, and thought she would find it with a black family up north. Instead, circumstances took her to California—and into the home of a white family. Suddenly Beals was surrounded by white faces, faces across the dinner table and in the halls of her high school that looked hauntingly similar to those of the mobs that had sneered her and threatened her life. And in slowly coming to trust and even love these people, she learned a new definition of family—and of freedom. That family's loving compassion helped turn Beals's animosity and fear into forgiveness, and opened her heart to the man she would marry. Melba Pattillo Beals shares both the heartbreak and healing power of her own journey, offering an uplifting, inspiring, and important memoir—and a compelling tale of moving from powerless to power, with heart and soul intact.



Fall 2007 Events and Exhibits



Architect's rendering of the new visitor center at the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site.
Courtesy of the National Park Service.

In September 2007, the eyes of the world will again be on Little Rock, Arkansas, for the fiftieth anniversary of the integration of Central High School.

On Monday, September 24, 2007, the National Park Service will formally dedicate a new visitor center. Because Little Rock Central High School is still a public high school and visitation is limited, the National Park Service opened a visitor center in 1997 in a restored service station across from the school. The new state-of-the-art visitor center will help accommodate the growing number of visitors who want to learn more about the Little Rock desegregation crisis and its role in the civil rights movement. The dedication is free and open to the public, but tickets are required (limit two per person). For information, please call (501) 374-1957.

The official fiftieth anniversary ceremony takes place at 10 a.m. September 25 on the Central High School front lawn. All living presidents have been invited to join the Little Rock Nine and others to commemorate the anniversary. Tickets for the ceremony sold out in just ten days; however, information about 40 other related activities is available at www.arkansasglobecoming.com.

For more information about visiting the site or taking a virtual tour, go to www.nps.gov/chsc/index.htm.



**For information about upcoming events
and to browse past issues of *Brown Quarterly*,
visit the Brown Foundation web site at
brownvboard.org.**

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