

Road To Integration

Nelson County, Virginia

Nov. 4 School Board opens bid for the building of a new White high school. Bid goes to Motley Co. of Farmville, VA.

January- Nelson County High School's new building is completed.

NCHS landscape is completed including the football field, courtesy of Massies Mill Ruritan club.

April- School Board begins plans for a new consolidated Black high school to replace **Nelson Training School** in efforts to keep dual system "equal".

Senator Harry F. Byrd Sr.'s "**Southern Manifesto**" calls for VA to practice **Massive Resistance** in response to Brown v. Board refusing to integrate public schools

1953

1954

1955

1956

Brown v. Board of Topeka Kansas Part I: Supreme Court Rules Segregation in public school systems unconstitutional and orders states to integrate schools.

Brown v. Board of Topeka Kansas Part II: Supreme Court orders States to start desegregation process with "**Deliberate Speed**".

School bus System is taken into public/county ownership.

September- **Nelson County High School** opens with 606 students.

School Board buys land on US 29 from Mr. and Mrs. M.B. Gornto for \$4,000 as the site for the new black high school.

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Sept-Little Rock Nine desegregates Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Sen. Byrd's Massive Resistance Laws to prevent integration of public school are passed by VA State Legislature.

9 schools in 4 VA counties shut down school systems.

VA Supreme Court of Appeals strikes down Massive Resistance Laws.

Prince Edward County shuts down public school system.

June- **Citizens for Better Schools** (led by Fletcher Epps) request a new principal be appointed for new black high school.

1957

Charlottesville closes Lane High and Venable Elementary Schools rather than desegregate. Starts advocating private segregated institutions

58

Charlottesville re-opens schools as desegregated with 12 African-American Transfers

59

Nelson adds the 8th grade school system & creates a 12 grade system.

1960



The **United Civic Club (Nelson's local NAACP branch)** led by Cecile & Fletcher Epps request school board to construct new black high school comparative to Nelson County High School.

February- United Civic Club submits a petition of 365 signatures arguing school board plans for new high school was inadequate and excluded citizen input.

Sept-**Nelson County Training School** is closed. Students begin attending **Nelson County Memorial High School**, the new consolidated black secondary school.

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Prince Edward County reopens public schools as integrated

1964 Civil Rights Act passed by the federal government prohibiting anyone receiving federal funds from practicing discrimination pushes for integration of all public schools in nation.

Congress passes the **Elementary and Secondary Schools Act** making federal funds available to local schools.

March- **Project Opportunity**, a talent development program sponsored by Ford & Danforth Corporations became first integrated educational experience for Nelson County 7th & 8th graders

Green v. New Kent County School Board: Supreme Court established "Green Factors" ruled Freedom of Choice as an unacceptable integration plan

Alexander v. Holmes Board of Education: Supreme Court eliminates all segregated dual education systems.

August 19- **Hurricane Camille**

1964

1965

1968

1969

August- Cecile Epps petitions School Board with 83 signatures in request to start integration process in Nelson County



May 5- School Board adopts **Freedom of Choice Plan** to desegregate 1, 2, 7, 8, & 12th grades

Sept-2,959 students, of which were 31 African American, attended desegregated schools via Freedom of Choice

School Board closes Nelson Memorial and fully integrates Nelson County High School. Nelson Memorial transitions into an integrated junior high school.

Sept. 29- All Nelson County schools are fully integrated