

# Loudoun's Historic Civil Rights Landscape



**A Walking and Driving Circuit Tour  
to Prod the Senses, Mind, & Heart  
For Students, Families, and Citizens**



The Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area was created in 1995, some 1600- square-miles encompassing parts of the Virginia counties of Loudoun, Fauquier, Prince William, Clarke, and Warren. VPHA features heart-catching “lay of the land”, indigenous architecture, handsome farms, distinctive speech, historical villages and small towns, a network of miles of small country roads including many still unpaved, the Shenandoah River and the world-famous gentle Blue Ridge and its misty foothills. From our multi-cultural 18<sup>th</sup> century roots brought by Quaker, German, Scots-Irish, and Tidewater English settlers through the years of serving as a key trunk of the Underground Railroad, from the cavalry battles and guerrilla warfare in our region during the Civil War to the creation of freedmen’s villages and the nation’s hunt country, this historic landscape is a key piece of America’s history. Yet it is not just those stories and the treasured landscape on which they occurred that make the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area special. It is also the years of individuals, non-profit organizations, and local governments working together to leave future generations one of the best-preserved historic landscapes in America—a model for our fellow citizens

The Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area has the mission to promote, support, and educate about the preservation of the historic, cultural, and scenic resources of the VPHA. Our heritage outreach education program, including this booklet, is crucial to this mission.

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# Loudoun's Historic Civil Rights Landscape

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## START HERE OR ANYWHERE CONVENIENT IN THIS LOOP:

**1. The Courthouse, Leesburg**—The courthouse in a Virginia county is where the law meets the people: laws governing slavery, emancipation,



segregations, and ultimately, equality. Here on these courthouse steps slaves were bought and sold by auction before the Civil War. Courthouse auctions were common throughout the South for estate settlements and were advertised in the local papers. [Note: The 1811 court-house of that time was replaced in 1894 with a similar

building in the same location.] In this courthouse yard, the local militia mustered early on the evening of Monday, October 17, 1859 after hearing the terrifying news of “slave insurrection” at nearby Harpers Ferry. Armed with weapons from pistols to old flintlock hunting rifles, they grimly marched off towards Harpers Ferry via Waterford, Hillsboro, and Neersville,, arriving on the morning of October 18. By that time, John Brown had been captured by the U.S. Marines. There fear for weeks afterwards here that more was to follow. Here in 1933, famed African-American attorney Charles Hamilton Houston came from Washington to challenge the idea of an all-white jury to try African-American George Crawford charged with the double murder of a Middleburg socialite and her maid during a burglary. At that time, it was not Virginia policy to allow African-Americans to serve on juries, despite the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Houston won, setting a significant precedent.

*Directions:* Loudoun's Courthouse sits in the middle of Leesburg at King and Market Streets.

**2. Eagle Hotel, Leesburg**—The Eagle Hotel in the 1850s was where the Franklin & Armfield slave buyer (later Price, Birch & Co.) up from Alexandria would stay for several days each month. If you had a slave you would like to sell privately, you went to him here at the hotel.

Slaves were then sold south to the cotton states—most commonly to Louisiana via New Orleans.

*Directions:* The former Eagle Hotel is currently AHT (Armfield, Harrison, & Thomas) Insurance at 20 South King Street, Leesburg VA on the east side of this main street (Business Rt. 15) between Market (Business Rt. 7) and Loudoun Streets.

**3. Mary Mallory's Grave, Leesburg**—Mary Mallory lived to be 108, but spent the first 52 years of her life enslaved. At least a part of that time she was “in service” at the nearby Swann estate, Morven Park. Later she was “rented out.” Mary spent half her life enslaved, and half free, making her an icon of the African-American experience in 19<sup>th</sup> century Loudoun. *Directions:* Take the second left after the courthouse off North King Street onto North Street. Mt. Zion Methodist Church cemetery is almost immediately on the left as North Street swings right and becomes Old Waterford Road. at its



intersection with Liberty St. (look for the chain link fence across the street from the old white Leesburg High School at 102 North Street NW). Mary's stone seems new (she lived until 1921), is good-sized, and is in the middle of the right-hand side, 3/5 of the way back, and is often decorated.



**4. Morven Park's gates, Leesburg**—Morven Park, the Thomas Swann estate, had 60 slaves in 1840, and 24 by 1860. It was one of Loudoun's largest plantations. There once were slave houses of stone and brick on the farm, now gone. John Haley of the 17<sup>th</sup> Maine Volunteer Infantry remembered numbers of irreverent slaves sitting on top of or standing by Morven Park's marble and iron gates in early November 1862 and cheering them on as they marched by. These slaves had self-emancipated, as so many of Loudoun's slaves did in 1862. Thomas Swann, Jr. was Baltimore's mayor from 1856-60 and received these marble gates as a thank you from the people of the city.



*Directions:* Morven Park is at 17263 Southern Planter Lane, Leesburg VA 20176, a half mile further up Old Waterford Road on the right.

5. **Underground Railroad remnant?**—While there is no hard proof, it is likely that slaves running from Leesburg or south of Leesburg to freedom would have used Old Waterford Road (Route 698) to the Quaker Village of Waterford. The lonely portion of this road beyond Historic Morven Park going towards Waterford provides a taste of an 1850s Under-ground Railroad Route. *Directions:* Turn right out of Southern Planter Lane when leaving Morven Park onto Old Waterford Road—it runs past Morven Park over the mountain to the village of Waterford—its mostly dirt, like the original.

6. **Fairfax Meeting, Waterford**—This Quaker meeting house with the simple cemetery behind it was where the Religious Society of Friends found them-selves quietly wrestling with the issue of slavery. Quakers opposed owning slaves as practicing inequality, unacceptable in the eyes of God, but could one rent a slave and treat him well? Lucretia Mott, the famed Quaker abolitionist, spoke here in the 1840s, encouraging her listeners to stand up in their fight against slavery despite being in the awkward position of living in a slave state where such was condemned. “If our principles are right,” she said, “why should we be cowards?” Several became active in the Underground Railroad thereafter at significant personal risk. *Directions:* Now a private home, the old stone Fairfax Meeting sits at the intersection of Old Waterford and Loyalty Roads opposite the modern Waterford Elementary School. It is on the right at the end of Old Waterford Road.



7. **James Lewis House, Waterford**—This yellow house in the “V” was the home of Waterford-area slave Jim Lewis after the Civil War. He had escaped North in 1862-63 and made it to Boston. There, Rev. Leonard Grimes (a free black who had grown up in Leesburg) got him to enlist in one of the first black fighting units, the 55<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, Union. After the war, he bravely returned—became a stone mason, and advertised his trade with his stone wall out front. Lewis had been wounded at the Battle of Honey Hill, South Carolina in November 1864. A number of times he walked the many miles to Frederick, MD to apply for the pension due him as a wounded veteran but found regular racial roadblocks. *Directions:* Turn left from the Old Waterford Road/Loyalty Road



intersection. The road “V”s a short way ahead, Lewis’ house is in the V, at #15525 Butcher’s Row, Waterford.



8. **John Wesley Methodist Church, Waterford**—This simple New England-style church was built by freed slaves after the Civil War by lantern light evenings when they came home from work. James Lewis superintended the stonework. This church became a center of activity for the African-American community, which once was significant in Waterford. They were so proud of this church! Be sure to touch James Lewis’ stonework, dated 1891. It is now maintained by the Waterford Foundation, which works to preserve the village. *Directions:* Bearing right at the “V” at James Lewis house, go ¼ mile to the stop sign. There, a number of roads converge. Bear right again, and near the end of the village, you’ll see the white church on your right. You’ll see a little dirt lane on your right just before the church; turn in there and pull off. Walk up to the church.

9. **Sunnyside, Waterford**—This handsome home with its grand front staircase was the home of the John Duttons before and during the Civil War. Known for their Unionist sentiments during the War, it has long been suspected that the Dutton home was a station on the Underground Railroad—“A knock on their back kitchen window was seldom ignored.” The Dutton daughters Lizzie and Lida were involved with their next door neighbor and girlfriend Sarah Steer in putting together a Unionist newspaper in 1864-65, late in the Civil War—*The Waterford News*. Friend Sarah became the first teacher at the new “Colored School A” when it was built across the street in 1866-67. These were some of the earliest white Loudouners involved with civil rights. *Directions:* Sunnyside sits at 15570 Second Street, Waterford VA 20197, in the village. Reverse direction from the Wesley Church back the way you came, and at the big intersection, turn right onto Second Street. The house is on the left after Patrick Street, white with green shutters. Look for the unique portico.



### 10. **Second Street School, Waterford**—

It was illegal to teach slaves to read or write in Virginia before the Civil War. So this simple one-room school built in 1866-67 by the Freedman's Bureau with help from local Quakers was *hugely* important to the former slaves. There was day school for children, and a crowded night school for adults wanting to learn. Be sure to look inside—it has been restored and is used for student programs. This school was in use for 90 years, closing only in 1957, the year the first satellite "Sputnik" was put in orbit. In its first days with Sarah Steer (friend of the Dutton sisters) as teacher, the local African-American community also used it as a church. *Directions:* The school sits just beyond Sunnyside on the opposite side.



### 11. **Ketocin Church, near Purcellville**—and Gemima Pearson's



**grave**—Ketocin Church nicely shows the agony Christians underwent regarding slavery. Baptists in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century loudly opposed slavery. Baptists in this church (including the Heatons, buried to the left of the church in one of the fenced enclosures) were active in the "colonization" movement to

free their best slaves and send them to Liberia in West Africa. With increasing abolitionist attacks by the 1840s, colonization faded and Baptist opposition to slavery did, too—particularly among *Southern* Baptists. Gemima Pearson, a slave who attended church here with her mistress, Eliza Potts, is buried at the *far* back of the church on the right. Look for her small stone leaning against another—*touch it!* Gemima sat in the balcony, reserved for free blacks and slaves; her mistress sat below. *Directions:* Continue on Second Street to the stop sign at



Clarke's Gap Road. Turn right. Go to the Route 9 stoplight, turn right heading west on 9 about 7 miles. At the third stoplight, the intersection of Routes 690 and 9 at Hillsboro, turn left. Head about 3 miles south to the circle at Rt. 711, Alder School Road. Turn right here. Continue on Alder School Road to Ketocin Church Road

on your left. The old brick church is just up on the right.

### 12. **Train Station, Purcellville.** At the once-segregated railroad station in Purcellville the famous abolitionist, former slave, and African-American leader Frederick Douglass arrived in September 1879, fourteen years after the Civil War. Led by a parade, he was brought several miles south of town, where he addressed an enormous assembled crowd of a thousand freedmen in a field. Hundreds of whites also watched, perhaps both curious and uneasy. Stressing black accomplishments since the Civil War and the need for continued African-American efforts for progress, he truly inspired his huge audience. Today, you can see the white waiting room through the windows, on the end of the station closest to the mill that now serves as Magnolia's Restaurant. The black waiting room—segregated, of course—had no windows, but was just to



the west (right) side of the bulging station master's window on the track side of the station. It was a telling symbol of official segregation, lost during the restoration of the building in the 1990s when a needed kitchen and restrooms were added for public use.

*Directions:* From Ketocin Church, turn left onto Ketocin Church Road, right onto Alder School Road, and at the circle at Rt. 690, turn right onto 690 (Hillsboro Rd.) going towards Purcellville. Follow the speed limit exactly going up the hill into Purcellville several miles up the road. You will see the yellow and white train station at the top of the hill at left.

### 13. **The White Palace Restaurant.** The White Palace Restaurant sits at Main Street and the street to the depot, today's 21<sup>st</sup> Street, in a building built in 1908 by Nick Hampton as a town hall—Hampton's



Hall. The public meeting area was on the second floor, and several commercial spaces on the first floor. The Ku Klux Klan and other local organizations met in Hampton's Hall in the 1920s, so did the Purcellville Town Council. Until 1928, movies were shown here. It was the restaurant on the first floor that holds a key place in

Loudoun's civil rights history. Opened in 1929 by Greek immigrant brothers, the restaurant served whites inside, and African-Americans from a take-out window in an alley still running in from the Main Street side of the restaurant. Here about 8:30 Sunday morning June 4, 1939,

Otto Reid wanted a beer with his early take-out sandwich but was refused. He returned with a knife, got into a fracas with co-owner Thomas Fragakis, and fatally stabbed him. Otto took off across 21<sup>st</sup> Street and tried to hide in the lumber yard, pursued by a number of local citizens who had heard Fragakis' dying screams. He was arrested, tried, convicted of murder, and executed September 29<sup>t</sup>, 1939. This led to a severe frosting of white-black relations in the small town. The White Palace stopped serving blacks altogether; the take-out window was changed to restrooms with a small addition. As late as the 1980s, the incident was remembered, and the white community felt uncomfortable having black and whites together in venues where alcohol was served. In 1966, two years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed desegregating public facilities (including restaurants), a young interracial trio decided to test the act, and went in to the White Palace to be served. Despite an uncomfortable lunch, they succeeded. Later, they repeated the gesture at the town's Tastee Freeze at the west end of Purcellville, now Anthony's. *Directions: Park and walk from the train station up 21<sup>st</sup> Street to the last building on the right—white with interesting “ball” décor that was manufactured locally.*

**14. School Superintendent Oscar O. Emerick's Office—site of the first protest march in Loudoun history.** In 1940, African-Americans in Loudoun were seeking to have a modern brick high school built to replace the 1884 wooden several-room Loudoun Training School. They had sought the legal help of famed African-American attorney Charles Whitney Houston as they had before, and found many roadblocks to get the all-white school board to approve funding, even if they were to provide the land for the school. The black school year was shorter, the books were older, most black schools were wooden one-room schools without electricity, and no bus service was provided to Loudoun's black schools in 1940. Here in these upstairs rooms in March of 1940 was the office of Loudoun's Superintendent of Schools, Oscar Emerick. This town had a pro-school tradition due to its proximity to the Quaker settlements, Emerick conveniently lived just up the street on West Main Street, and the rent was right. [Later in 1942, on the first floor, a Ben Franklin ‘five and dime’ store opened on the first floor, hence the curved first floor windows.] It was in March 1940 that the budding chapter of the Loudoun NAACP (National Association for



the Advancement of Colored People) held a protest march out front. The Superintendent looked out the window, and ultimately invited the leaders of the march to meet with him upstairs in his office. In 1941, money would be approved for the Frederick Douglass High School on East Market Street in Leesburg. Black parents had to raise the money for the furniture and the land was donated by African-Americans. With the aid of a state Literary Loan, the school was built and opened in 1942.

*Directions: Look across the street from the White Palace at the building that stands at the northeast corner of Main Street and 21<sup>st</sup> Street. The Superintendent's office was on the second floor, later a dentist's office.*

**15. The Purcellville Library.** Built in 1935 during the Great Depression with a mixture of local and Works Progress Administration funds, the handsome stone Purcellville Library was a public facility, but like most, *segregated*. This situation led to a very famous local civil rights case in 1956-57. Samuel C. Murray, an African-American home decorator and upholsterer who lived and worked in Purcellville, had received a commission to create some window shades in “an Austrian style” from Mabel Frances Moore-Mamie Eisenhower's sister and a resident of Hillsboro. Wanting to learn more about drape styles, Murray decided to go to the Purcellville Library and check out a book or two *himself* rather than getting a paternalistic white person to do it for him. The answer, of course, was no at that time in late 1956. Murray decided to use this as a court case, since he was a citizen and a taxpayer of Purcellville, and was able to intrigue the famous black attorney Oliver Hill into taking the case. The case caused a significant rift in town—and Murray received a number of threatening phone calls and a parade of teenagers driving their cars by honking their horns—but ultimately both Dr. W.P. Frazier who lived to the right of the library and J.T. Hirst (active both on the school board and Board of Supervisors over the years) who lived just beyond in the long white house) supported Murray in his bid. So did schools superintendent Oscar Emerick, although sticking to his guns on school segregation. Despite bitter opposition by the Loudoun Chapter of the Defenders of State Sovereignty and



Individual Liberty which had many prominent members, Murray won his case in April 1957 and got to take out his book. The Purcellville Library became the first integrated library in Virginia.

*Directions:* From the train station, head out 23<sup>rd</sup> street (the right at the V) to the stoplight at Main Street. Turn left, and the stone Purcellville Library will be on your right at 18<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets, four blocks east. There is parking behind the library. Staff is willing to show the original portion of the library if you ask.

**16. Bush Meeting Tabernacle.** Built in 1904, the Tabernacle was the indoor meeting place that replaced tents for the annual week-long summer meeting of the Prohibition and Evangelical Association of Loudoun—better known locally as “Bush Meeting.” The auditorium hosted a number of prominent speakers over the years, and later became a roller rink and



dance venue run by the local fire company. Today it is owned by the Town of Purcellville. But in November 1925, at the height of the Ku Klux Klan resurgence of the 1920s, a state-wide meeting of the Ku Klux Klan was held here at this auditorium. At the height of their conclave, white-robed and hooded Klansmen marched with torches down the main street of town and back for all to see.

*Directions:* Turn left out of the library onto Main Street, and go one block, turning left again at the large stone Methodist Church. There is a “V” immediately as you turn, and be sure to take the left piece of the “V” on to 20<sup>th</sup> Street. A block south you will see a park-like setting on your right, with a large wooden building set back from the street. Turn into the parking lot.

**17. Carver School.** Built in 1947, Carver School is a fine example of improved schools built for African-Americans through the means of legal challenges to local school boards in the late 1930s into the early 1950s. This school was built to stave off a legal challenge to segregation along the lines of the 1896 Supreme Court decision Plessey V. Ferguson, which permitted “separate” schools provided that they were “equal”. If you noticed the small

funeral parlor on the left side of 20<sup>th</sup> Street as you came south, the



wooden innards of it were once the 1917 one-room school for Purcellville-area African-Americans. When this new school was opened, as one student commented years later, “We were so proud of it! We kept the floor so clean you could eat your lunch off it!” Carver School

was closed when just 20 years old in 1967 due to the opening of integrated Emerick School on the southwest corner of town. For years, the Loudoun County Public Schools simply used the well-built school as a dingy textbook depository. It was restored and converted to a community and senior center due to the efforts of Carver Alumni, and reopened in 2007. You can go inside.

*Directions:* Turn right out of Bush Meeting onto 20<sup>th</sup> Street, and continue several blocks south to Willie Palmer Way on the left. There is a large County of Loudoun sign for the community center at the turning. Take Willie Palmer way to the top of the hill.

**18. The Loudoun County Emancipation Association Grounds.**

A quarter century after the end of the Civil War and consequent full emancipation, African Americans in Loudoun County formed the Loudoun County Emancipation Association

at nearby Hamilton in 1890. Their purpose was to promote African-American achievement and progress through an annual celebration and



inspirational meeting to held on the Sunday closest to Abraham Lincoln’s preliminary announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, which had been on September 22, 1862. In 1910, these grounds were purchased, and a wooden tabernacle erected much like the one up the street known as Bush Meeting. Famed black politicians, professors, musicians, actors, and ministers

spoke and bands played each year into the 1960s. Thousands came by train from all over Northern Virginia to attend this annual event, and a parade from the train station to the Emancipation Hall was



often held, led by Abraham Lincoln or John Brown—African-Americans in “white face.” The organization made it through the centennial of emancipation, but did not meet much thereafter. The property was sold in 1971 and the hall is long gone. This stone entry is

preserved and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources sign has been erected in 2000 so that we would not forget that time of great pride and celebration amidst the many acts of prejudice.

*Directions: Take Willie Palmer Way from Carver School to 20<sup>th</sup> Street. Turn left. A short way on the left in front of the imposing temple-like Blue Ridge Bible Church, you will see the remaining stone entry gates of the Emancipation Association grounds. A silver and black Virginia Department of Historic Resources sign identifies the site and tells about its past..*

### 19. Loudoun Valley High School.

LVHS was the first public school in Loudoun to be integrated, receiving four carefully selected African-American students (chosen by the Virginia Pupil Placement Board) as the school opened in September 1962 as western Loudoun’s regional high school. More (10) came in 1963, and more each year until the school was fully integrated in 1968 Douglass High School, the black high school, was closed. Loudoun Valley High School still prides itself on its tradition of tolerance as Loudoun’s first desegregated school.



*Directions: At A Street just past the Emancipation Association grounds turn left. Go beyond Blue Ridge Middle School to the stop sign at S. Maple Avenue and turn left. Go through the stoplight at E. Main Street, Loudoun Valley High School is 200 yards at right.*

20. **The 1957 Leesburg fire house.** In 1956-57, the Leesburg Volunteer Fire Company built a new fire station on West Loudoun Street. As part of their good-neighbor mission and honoring long



tradition of encouraging healthy habits in the community, they also built a baseball diamond public swimming pool behind their new firehouse. It was instantly all the rave in town. It was also *white only*. In the summer of 1963, in the heart of civil rights protests,

several Leesburg black children tried to go to the pool and were denied. Local black children began to picket the pool with signs, but the fire company would not yield, although by then the local theatre and bowling alley had been desegregated. A swimming pool, after all, was *different*. When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed desegregating public facilities, the pool remained white only. In 1965, another challenge came, and when denied, these African-Americans sued. The legal challenge succeeded in May 1966, but the response of the Leesburg Volunteer Fire Company was that since tempers had become so inflamed over the situation, they just would not open the pool that summer, nor did they in 1967. By 1968, the dry, unused pool had become cracked in the sun. It was filled in, and the property was sold for development in 1977. Ultimately, the ball diamond was also sold. Of all the legacies of the civil rights era in Loudoun, this one was the most bitter, and left a lasting bad taste in the mouths of many.

*Directions: Turn right out of Loudoun Valley High School onto N. Maple Avenue, going one block to Hirst Road. Turn right and go to the stoplight at Rt. 287, the Berlin Turnpike. Turn left at the light, then get into the right-hand lane allowing you to access Rt. 7 east, which you will take. Head east 9 miles, coming down Leesburg Mountain and taking the first Leesburg exit onto West Market Street. After a stoplight, look for the “V” several hundred yards ahead, and bear right on to West Loudoun Street. After the intersection with Dry Mill Road on your right, you will come to the*

fire house shortly beyond, also on the right. It is still an active firehouse, one of two now operating from Leesburg. The pool was in the area now developed behind the firehouse. Of course, both the pool and the baseball diamond are now gone.

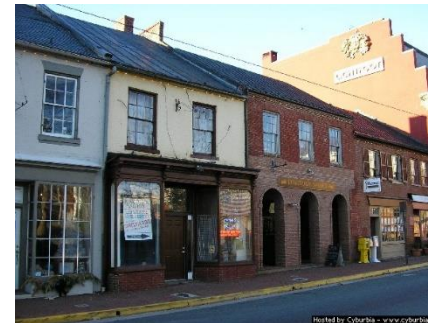
**21. The Tally-Ho Theatre.** At Leesburg, you originally went to the movies in a large brick opera house that once stood on the northeast corner of Loudoun and King Streets downtown. In 1935, this handsome new “hunt country” themed theatre opened at Wirt and West Market streets. As what the habit of the times, it served both whites and blacks of the area, but in an often-repeated pattern. Whites sat downstairs. Blacks sat in the balcony with their own entrance. Many local African-Americans fondly remember



dropping popcorn over the edge of the balcony with abandon on the whites below. When theatres began to desegregate on their own in 1963, the Tally-Ho watched but did nothing. On June 15, 1963, Leesburg high school student Gene

Ashton decided to push the button, and tried to attend a movie he badly wanted to see by entering the white first floor seats. The police were called, Gene was arrested. When charged and released, he got a dozen or so other young African-Americans to picket the theatre with him for about a week. At the same time, on the second day of their protest, Northern Virginia’s largest movie theatre chain, Neighborhood Theatres, chose to desegregate. After some ten days, the protest of Gene Ashton and his friends succeeded, and African-Americans were allowed to seat themselves on the first level, holding on to their popcorn for themselves! *Directions: Two blocks beyond the firehouse, continuing east towards the middle of Leesburg on West Loudoun Street, you will see Wirt Street on the left. Take this, go one block to West Market Street, and turn right. The Tally-Ho Theatre is the second building on the left, between the Leesburg Town Hall and the town parking garage. Because there are two sites here, please use the garage.*

**22. Littlejohn’s Pharmacy.** Purcell & Littlejohn’s Pharmacy was a Leesburg Institution. Although not the only drug store in town, it was loved for its marble lunch counter and soda fountain, and was conveniently right across from the courthouse. Suffice it to say, blacks were not permitted to sit at the lunch counter. Yet in the spring of 1961, Leesburg faced a conundrum as the civil rights movement heated up. John F. Kennedy had just become the 35<sup>th</sup> President, and his wife Jackie loved to ride horses. She wanted to escape some weekends to the Virginia Hunt Country, and soon the couple was renting a weekend home—Glen Ora—just south of Middleburg. There was immediate pressure on Middleburg restaurants to desegregate or face protests and sit-ins whenever the Kennedys came to visit. Because the Kennedys were Roman Catholic and there was no Catholic Church in Middleburg, the President and his wife had to



choose between a service placed at the Middleburg Community Center or come to pretty little St. John’s church at Union and King Streets in Leesburg. He would often choose the latter. If the President was coming to Leesburg, the N.A.A.C.P. and others threatened protests to

desegregate restaurants there. A local priest, Father Pereira, had been helpful in peacefully organizing desegregation of Middleburg restaurants in February. Working with Loudoun’s black and white leaders, he strove to do the same in Leesburg. At a public meeting held at St. James Episcopal Church on West Cornwall Street to decide what to do, a memorable moment showing the pathos of desegregation occurred. Eighty-five-year-old Hobby Littlejohn pled at the public meeting with tears in his eyes, “I can’t do it. I can’t do it. I’m 85 years old. Only one or two more years to go. Don’t spoil my life now, forcing this change on me. . . . I’ve helped every one of you when you or your family were in trouble. I’ve probably provided you medicine without charge . . .”



Leesburg’s restaurants and lunch counters chose to desegregate that spring. Hobby Littlejohn did likewise. He retired two years later. The Kennedy’s later built their own home near Middleburg, but only enjoyed it one weekend before the assassination. Jacqueline Kennedy quietly continued to visit the Middleburg area to ride until her death in 1994. *Directions:* Walk east on West Market Street to the stoplight, where you will cross at the crosswalk to the other side of West Market, and then head north on North King Street such that you are opposite the courthouse. Littlejohn’s Pharmacy is now gone, but was at 7 North King, the light-colored building to the left of the three-arched brick saloon.

**23. The Leesburg Training School vs. the white Leesburg High School—a look at two segregated schools from the same time period.**



You will come to the white Leesburg High School first, a stout brick building built with fully modern facilities for white children (grades 7-12) in 1925, and used until 1954 when Loudoun County High School was built as a “consolidated” high school south of town. It later served as an elementary school, then school board offices, and now as a senior center and library services office. Two blocks later, you will come to the black high school—sitting forlornly in its white wooden clapboarding next to Union Cemetery, dating from 1884 with a small 1920s

addition, and known by most as the Leesburg *Training School*. The inference can’t be lost. It was this school that African-Americans began to protest in 1939, and ultimately go to court to see replaced. Certainly, it was not up to the levels of the white high school, but was nevertheless dubbed by the all-white school board as “separate but *equal*,” thus meeting the Plessey v. Ferguson Supreme Court Standards. It had only recently gained electric power in 1939, and was heated much as Loudoun’s one-room schools still were, by a coal furnace serviced by student paid to do it. This site must be seen in conjunction with sites 14 and 23.

Walk around the building; it mutely tells its own story. Just so you know, the school colors were blue and gold--and the restrooms were outside. *Directions to the two schools by walking:* Continue to walk north on North King Street one block to Cornwall Street. Turn left onto West Cornwall, traversing one of oldest and most handsome streets—the town’s showpiece at the time of the Civil War—then turn right after one block at Wirt Street. One block north on Wirt is the 1925 Leesburg High School at Wirt and North Streets. Continue one long block further on Wirt until you must turn right onto Union Street. You will see the entry gate for the Union (of Churches) Cemetery (with its many Confederate graves), Set back from the road to the right of the cemetery gate is the white clapboard Leesburg Training School. You can walk around it.

**24. Douglass High School (now Douglass Alternative School).** Built as a full-service high school for Loudoun’s black students, it was opened in 1942. The school was only built when African-Americans pressured the Loudoun County School Board in 1939 for violation of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment’s interpretation of the time that allowed “separate but *equal*” schools. The old white wooden “training school” in Stop 23 used at that time was hardly “equal.” Still, parents had to raise the money to actually furnish Douglass. In the 1960s with the Civil Rights movement, some students and their parents began to push for permission to attend the better-furnished white high schools. The first four students made the transition to the new western Loudoun high school, Loudoun Valley, when it opened in September, 1962, with more coming the next year. The following year saw a select number of black students finally attend Loudoun County High School in Leesburg. In 1968, Loudoun Schools were ordered by federal courts to fully integrate for the 1968-69 school year. The last Douglass class was graduated in May, 1968. Douglass was converted to an integrated middle school, and is still used. It is a Virginia Historic Landmark.



*Directions:* Return to your car at the Leesburg Parking Garage. Turn right out of the parking garage onto West Market Street, and continue through the light at the courthouse East Market Street, then through the light at Catocin Circle a half-mile further on. Douglass High School is on the right just after Catocin Circle. It is an alternative school in 2016.