

“Schools Shouldn’t Be For a Color”

Between 1880 and 1950, 13 African American families from Kansas brought 20 cases of school segregation to court. The families won only 11 of those cases. But beginning with a case in 1908, some of the courts recognized that separate schools were not always equal for black children. Read the article below, then answer the questions.

One example of an unequal school was Walker Elementary in Merriam. It had only two rooms and no indoor plumbing. In 1948 a large, new school—South Park Elementary—was built nearby. But the school broke the law that said schools in small towns must be integrated. South Park enrolled only white students.

Walker parents and teachers were outraged. “We had no modern conveniences, had to go outside to go to the toilet,” Walker teacher Corinthian Nutter recalled. “If they were going to build a new school and the [black] parents were paying taxes like everybody else, why couldn’t their children go? Schools shouldn’t be for a color. They should be for children.”

Walker families protested. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) helped the parents organize a law suit against South Park. In the meantime, parents refused to send their students to Walker. So Miss Nutter taught 39 children at home.

With legal help and money from the NAACP, the Walker families won their case. The court said that the separate schools were “grossly unequal.” South Park had to integrate in the fall of 1949.

WHAT law did South Park Elementary break? a Kansas law [passed in 1879 refer students to page 11 of the magazine for date] which said that small towns had to have integrated schools

WHO was angry about this? Walker teachers [such as Corinthian Nutter] and parents

WHY were they angry? possible answers: Walker had no modern conveniences/it wasn’t as nice as the new school; black parents paid taxes but couldn’t send their children to South Park Elementary; South Park broke the law

HOW did they solve the problem? Walker parents and the NAACP took their case to court; Miss Nutter taught Walker children at home

WHEN was the problem solved? South Park accepted white and black children in the fall of 1949

