

Prince William

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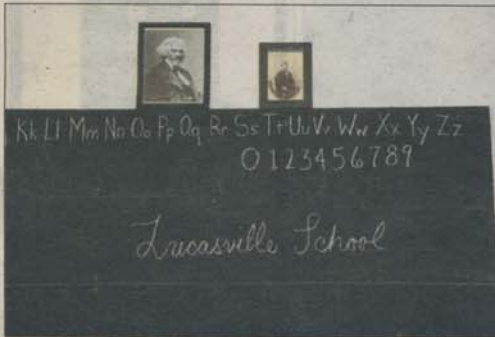
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2008 | PUBLISHED THURSDAY & SUNDAY IN THE WASHINGTON POST



PHOTOS BY GUILIANA NAKASHIMA — THE WASHINGTON POST

History, One Room at a Time

Prince William preservationist Heather A. Hembrey, above, checks the progress outside the one-room Lucasville School, which is now a county museum. The school opened in 1885 for black students. Much of the history of the Lucasville community and its schoolhouse is still largely unknown, Hembrey said. Story, Page 3.



Schools Chief Has Much Work Ahead

Challenges Include Budget, Job in N.Y.

By IAN SHAPIRA
Washington Post Staff Writer

In the past two weeks, weather delays and plans for spring break have taken a back seat to School Superintendent Steven L. Walts as the dominant subject of parent and teacher chatter.

First, he unveiled an \$836.2 million budget that reduces the size of some elementary classes and gives raises to teachers so that they don't fall further behind in the region's teacher salary wars.

Next, parent backlash against the school system's elementary Math Investigations program spawned a heated movement, including a petition and a marathon school board session.

Then it was revealed that some of Walts's battles from his previous

school district in Greece, N.Y., are still progressing — two years after his departure. A New York state comptroller's preliminary audit found that Walts and his administration in Greece used unauthorized funds to pay for a major capital improvement project. And in a separate matter, a senior attorney with the New York State United Teachers Union said that Walts is expected to give a deposition in a federal lawsuit filed by a Greece teacher; Walts and his former subordinates are accused of discriminating against the teacher on the basis of age.

Even as these controversies have percolated since Walts arrived in Prince William in 2005, he has said his concentration is focused on this school system and on managing its

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More Residents Voted Democratic in Primary

By KRISTEN MACK
Washington Post Staff Writer

Twice as many residents voted for Democrats than Republicans in Tuesday's Potomac Primary in Prince William County, which laid claim as the last redoubt for the GOP in Northern Virginia three months ago.

Of Prince William voters, 21 percent cast ballots in the Democratic primary and 9.5 percent in the Republican. Sen. Ba-

rack Obama (Ill.) received 63 percent of Democratic votes in Prince William, mirroring his winning percentage in the state. Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) got 56 percent of Republican votes in the county, slightly higher than his statewide numbers.

There is no recent comparison of voters having to choose between the two parties in a primary. In 2004 there was no Repub-

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5 Community Events
Listings include musical performances, workshops, support groups and hobbyists.

9 Down to the Wire
Potomac's win over Woodbridge forces a playoff to decide the Cardinal District champion.

9 Girls' Basketball
Stonewall Jackson is a top Northwest region seed, and Forest Park has its fifth district title.

15 Home Sales
Keep track of who has been buying and selling real estate, and for how much.

"This fills a hole in the interpretation of our history."

— BRENDON HANAFIN, director, Historic Preservation Division



PHOTOS BY DEJIANA NAKASHIMA — THE WASHINGTON POST

Dating to 1885, the one-room Lucasville School for black children will be used as an interpretive space for programs and tours.



A History Lesson From Pr. William's Segregated Past

Black-Only Lucasville School Is County's Latest Museum

By NICK MIROFF
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Lucasville School opened in 1885, just south of Manassas on a small plot owned by a former slave. It was an austere one-room building with a cast-iron stove and a blackboard and probably had portraits of Frederick Douglass and Presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln on the walls.

For the next 40 years, black students in grades one through six took classes there in subjects such as domestic science, nature study and agriculture. It wasn't fancy, but for children whose parents and grandparents had been forbidden from reading under pre-Civil War Virginia laws, it was a symbol of hard-fought dignity.

Today, the Lucasville School is the last black schoolhouse in Prince William County. It opens to the public this weekend along Godwin Drive outside Manassas, not far from its original location.

"This fills a hole in the interpretation of our history," said Brendon Hanafin, director of the county's Historic Preservation Division. "What a great place to tell the stories of the people who were

here and what their contributions were."

Along with the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre, Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park and Rippon Lodge, the Lucasville School is the fourth site opened by the Historic Preservation Division in the past year.

Hanafin is proud the site was almost entirely paid for with outside grants and funding, requiring only a few hundred dollars from the county to complete. "Getting a museum for less than \$500 is a pretty good deal," he said.

Hanafin said the reconstruction of the half-acre site and the building was done under a proffer agreement with developer Pulte Homes, which is building Mayfield Trace subdivision nearby. Grants from the Prince William County Historical Commission and the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities paid for the furniture and interpretive displays.

The bright white schoolhouse, about the size of a two-car garage, ceased to be used as a classroom in 1926, when the Manassas District School Board moved Lucasville's students into the larger Brown School, which black children attended until desegregation

in 1966.

Once closed, the schoolhouse was painted red and used as a farm shed. By the time preservation work began in 2005, the structure was on the verge of collapse. Crews from Pulte Homes relocated the building and rebuilt it using some of the rafters, beams and other materials salvaged from the original structure.

Although small, the Lucasville School contains a much larger history of the educational dreams of black families during Reconstruction, said Lillian Gaskill, former chairwoman of the Historical Commission.

"It is a symbol of the importance placed on education by the African American community at that time," said Gaskill, who worked closely with Hanafin's office to save the school and establish the museum. "It's a representation of all the schools for colored children in the country."

Because it has no full-time staff, the museum will be open for limited hours on weekends, by appointment and for school groups, Hanafin said. Visitors will learn the story of Alice A. Taylor, a teacher there from 1910 to 1926, and her husband, William C. Tay-



Although not original to Lucasville School, this product is historically accurate for items that could have been used by the teacher and students.

lor, who taught at Lucasville and at Jennie Dean's Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth.

While conducting research for the interpretive displays, county preservationist Heather A. Hembrey was able to trace, through records, the history of educational discrimination. Payroll documents from the 1870s show that black teachers were paid as much as teachers at Manassas's white-only schools and that their budgets were essentially the same. By 1911, however, the Manassas District School Board had created separate budget categories for black schools, paying African

American teachers far less than their white counterparts.

"You can see the discrimination," Hembrey said.

Much of the history of the Lucasville community and its schoolhouse are still largely unknown, she said. School records and county documents can fill in only part of the story, Hembrey said. She hopes visitors will bring their memories and family records to help fill in the rest. Reconstructing the area's history is an ongoing process.

"Any one person could come forward and change the story," Hembrey said.