

THE LAB

How does our education shape our world?



I am a high school senior at Dekalb School of the Arts, in Atlanta Georgia. Over the summer I have had the opportunity to learn from Dr. Joyce King with a group of other high school interns about The Jeanes Teachers as well as other significant people, organizations, beliefs, and moments in the black community, particularly focusing on education system. In this profolio I will be dissecting who and what the Jeanes Teachers were, as well as how that connects to our modern day educational system for African Americans.

MY PORTFOLIO

WHAT WE WERE TOLD?



Jeanes Teachers:

To understand what and who the Jeanes Teachers were, you should begin by knowing who this woman was. To the left is a woman named Anna T. Jeanes, a Pennsylvania Quaker that funded the education of African Americans with an endowment left in 1907. The ideal purpose of Jeanes Teachers and Jeanes supervisors was to reform the education system for African Americans. In the classroom students were meant to be taught sewing, weaving, beading, and other domestic arts as well as how to read and write. Jeanes teachers also often worked to improve education on health and tackle food insecurity in communities.

Anna T. Jeanes

Understanding the purpose of the Jeanes Teachers is important, but that means you must understand who is telling you and what they have to gain. First, notice exactly what they were teaching in these schools, reading, writing, health, but also domestic arts. Basket making, cooking, sewing, beading, things that in the long run were meant to be of profit to white people running these programs by having African Americans remain working for them. Also by having Jeanes Supervisors watching the classes it ensured that African Americans “stay in their place” and remained politically, economically, and educationally subordinate.



Virginia Jeanes Teachers program
participants

Present Day



segregated school, in jim crow era



present day school

Are our schools
truly
desegregated
and are our
student treated
equally?

In short the answers to these questions are no and definitely not. Schools are still segregated across the country, with schools that are predominantly black often being overlooked and underfunded compared to schools serving predominantly white students. This systemic divide of students in the long run ultimately causes African American students to have a disadvantage in their learning experience, which is the foundation for success, meaning missed opportunities for these students in predominantly African American communities. While predominantly white schools do not suffer these same poor conditions. Allowing white students to be more successful, while keeping African American students in a system that has been working against them for generations.

MY PROCESS WITH THE ARCHIVES

My process with creating my portfolio began with researching topics before going into the archives. This included conversations with people during our Lab meetings as well as outside of those meetings, reading articles, and watching videos about topics relating to this theme. After I built this foundation I went into multiple archive databases and read through different materials. I landed on some Jeanes Teachers fund reports that caught my attention because they explained what was happening in the classroom through many different perspectives. From there I took notes and began incorporating the knowledge I gained from both the archives and discussion to create my portfolio and theme. Overall I thought the work and information was very interesting and would like to continue to go deeper into this history.