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Tense Indifference: An Examination of Integration in Two Cities in Marengo County, Alabama

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Tense Indifference: An Examination of Integration in Two Cities in Marengo County, Alabama

by

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ABSTRACT

For decades, the city of Demopolis, Alabama, in Marengo County has been viewed by West Alabama administrators as a "beacon of hope" in terms of race relations because it successfully integrated its public schools and managed to keep private segregation academies at bay. In the neighboring city of Linden, however, integration was far less successful, with a a segregated private school siphoning off the white students and eroding white support for public education. dominating and destroying the educational structure of the city. In this paper, I delve into how the dichotomy between these two nearby cities was created by the attitudes of the people who lived in them. Where Demopolis reacted to integration with a tense indifference that allowed integration to prosper with lingering side effects, Linden reacted with hostility, a reaction that would negatively affect the city for decades to come.

Keywords: Demopolis, integration, Linden, Marengo County, segregation

DEDICATION

To the only person capable of keeping my head on my shoulders.

AJD.

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Of course, I have to start by thanking my parents, Dr. Arthur Ogden and Elizabeth Ogden. I often talk about how I was raised with the expectation of being great, the expectation of being smart, and without them, I doubt I would be anywhere near where I am today. I also want to thank my siblings (here we go): Savannah, Nathan, Zarah, and India. These are the four I grew up with, who helped me form myself as a human being. I got to witness Nathan and Savannah grow into amazing talents firsthand, and they have served a great inspiration to me. I would also like to thank my other four siblings: John, Josh, Jenny, and Chris, who serve as excellent weapons against my father in verbal combat. Because I do not want to fill this section up too much, I also would like to give a quick thanks to my grandparents (Grandmother, Paw Paw Colin, and Nana Libby), aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews - I love all my family unconditionally.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHSFHS	Alabama High School Football Historical Society
DCS	Demopolis City Schools
LAA	Linden Athletic Association
MA	Marengo Academy
MFI	Marengo Female Institute
SFIO	Spring Formal Invitational Only
WAPS	West Alabama Preparatory School

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

At 3:30 a.m. on July 16th, 2016, a police officer in Demopolis, Alabama fell asleep in his car. As he fell asleep, his car hit Demopolis' downtown Confederate Memorial, knocking over the Confederate soldier that stood on the top of the statue. The monument on Main Street was a feature of downtown Demopolis, the largest city in Marengo County, and had been standing for 106 years.[1]

The toppling of this statue was tricky for the city, not just because of the obvious connotations that come with hosting Confederate monuments in a city, but because of the racial makeup of the city. As of the 2022 Census Estimates, Demopolis' population was 49.7% white, and 45.9% black.[2] The town itself is somewhat a form of *de facto* segregation; the majority of the white population lives on the west side of town, which features relatively extravagant housing and architecture, and the majority of the black population lives on the east side, which features much less ideal housing as well as the Housing Authority for the city.[3] High school graduations are typically segregated through coincidental seating arrangements[4] and even during the early 2000s the homecoming dance and homecoming courts were segregated by race.[5]

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[1]David Montgomery, "A Car Crash Topples a Confederate Statue and Forces a Southern Town to Confront Its Past," *The Washington Post*, 2017.

[2] "U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts: Demopolis City, Alabama." *United States Census Bureau*. July 1, 2022. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/demopoliscityalabama.

[3] Montgomery, "Car Crash," *The Washington Post,* 2017.

[4] Montgomery, "Car Crash," *The Washington Post,* 2017.

[5] Joshua Adams, "Social Capital, School Desegregation and Education in West Alabama's Black Belt." Master's thesis, 2005.

With the backdrop of the blooming Black Lives Matter movement, this accidental demolition of the Confederate Memorial presented a nightmare for the leadership of Demopolis. According to then mayor Mike Grayson, he didn't want the town to become "a battle ground between the Sons… and daughters of the Confederacy and the Black Lives [Matter] Movement." The potential for unrest between the two racial groups of the city was high.[6] After an election which saw Mayor Grayson lose his spot and months of not much being done on the front of the statue, a city council meeting was called in January of 2017, where the people of Demopolis could voice their concerns on what would happen to the statue.

The white population of Demopolis was in favor of the restoration of the monument. Philip and Debby Spence, who were interviewed by The Washington Post's David Montgomery, were a part of the "Save our Soldier" movement, which sought to restore the soldier to his former place. Philip Spence argued that a removal of the statue would be the same as "going into a cemetery and knocking over a headstone," and discussed how the Spences had eleven ancestors who had fought for the Confederacy.[7]

Meanwhile, the black population of the town overwhelmingly wanted the statue gone, and some even quietly celebrated when they heard the news of the statue's demise. Barrown Lankster, an attorney and former District Attorney for Demopolis, opined that walking out of his office downtown and seeing the statue was "not a pretty sight" and that he was "delighted when it was knocked down" as he knew "the roots from which it [stemmed]." Former civil rights activist Annye Braxton, a citizen of Demopolis, stated

[6] Montgomery, "Car Crash," *The Washington Post,* 2017
[7] Montgomery, "Car Crash," *The Washington Post,* 2017.

that the statue represented "bigotry" and that if Demopolis was a "city of the people" (the town's direct translation from Greek) a restoration of the statue would be an "exclusion of my people." Her barber, Reginald Gracie, noted that restoring the statue would be restoring "the one thing that kept us divided."[8]

These sentiments were reflected at the January city council meeting, which was generally respectful in nature. One person on the side of the restoration stated that the Civil War was an "unsavory time" but asked that "if you erase history, what are the chances of the next generation remembering?"[9] Patricia Godwin, the president of the Selma Chapter 53 of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the group that had originally paid for the statue's erection in 1910 before its disbanding in the 1970s, argued that the monument was erected as "a gift in the spirit that after [Confederate soldiers] were gone, the monument would remain," and added to "remember your history." Meanwhile, once again harkening back to Demopolis being a "city of the people", one woman stated that "we are a city of the people… not just one people."[10]

After the meeting, Mayor John Laney, who had defeated Mike Grayson in the mayoral election a few months before, voiced his concerns with the city. "We've got a city of 7,800 people," Laney said, "but it's essentially two cities of 3,900." The council ended the meeting by pushing back any potential decision on the matter for a few months.[11] A few months passed, and in April, a meeting was held to determine the fate of the statue. In the meeting, the council voted on one resolution: there would be no

[8] Montgomery, "Car Crash," *The Washington Post,* 2017.
[9] Montgomery, "Car Crash," *The Washington Post,* 2017.
[10] Montgomery, "Car Crash," *The Washington Post,* 2017.
[11] Montgomery, "Car Crash," *The Washington Post,* 2017.

Confederate Statue, and instead the soldier would be replaced by an obelisk that represented the dead from *all* wars. In a bit of compromise, the pedestal on which the soldier once stood, which read "*Our Confederate Dead*," would remain.[12] Mayor John Laney abstained from voting. The two black members of the council, Charles Jones Jr. and Nathan Hardy, voted yes to the resolution. Two white members of the council, Bill Meador and Cleveland Cole, voted no to the resolution. The one swing voter, Harris Nelson, voted yes, and by a vote of 3-2, the Confederate Monument was replaced.[13]

The fallout from this event opened fissures in the community that had not been fully realized yet. Philip Spence, who was one of the 40 in attendance for the meeting, stated that he felt "almost like being in shock," and told the city council that "tonight, y'all broke my heart." On the opposite side, Barrown Lankster felt "overjoyed" but noted that "no one was in tears," and that "no one celebrated." To the people of Demopolis, this move was something that had to be done given the circumstances. Many people noted that the statue was seemingly a non-issue up until that crash in July. David McCants, a former city council candidate noted that "there was never a problem until someone ran over it." Reginald Gracie stated that because the statue had been there for so long, it was overlooked, and as such, "It wasn't…an issue."[14] To outsiders looking in, however, this decision and compromise was one that was noteworthy; somehow, a town in the Deep South that was split 50/50 between blacks and whites had reached a decision to get rid of

[12] Montgomery, "Car Crash," *The Washington Post,* 2017

[13] Stewart Gwin, "Demopolis Council: Confederate Soldier Will Not Return to Monument," *West Alabama Watchman*, 2017. https://www.westalabamawatchman.com/1demopolis-council-confederate-soldier-will-not-return-to-monument/

[14] Montgomery, "Car Crash," *The Washington Post,* 2017.

a Confederate monument without angering one side of the population to an extreme extent.

Returning to the words of former Mayor Mike Grayson in talking about Demopolis, Grayson stated that Demopolis had "worked too hard for too long" for the town to become a racial battleground. In Reginald Gracie's statement on the removal of the statue, he pointed out that "all these years, you say this should be a model city as far as race relations should go."[15] It seems as though Demopolis carries a reputation - which it does.

In the south, integration was a challenge because of a pattern of white resistance to federal pressure. The pattern started with a city's failure to integrate at all, followed by an increased federal presence, and ending with the white populace of the city simply opening a new private academy in the city to separate the black and white populations, a practice commonly known today as "white flight." An example of this pattern can be seen in the failed integration process in Noxubee County, Mississippi, on the border of Mississippi and Alabama. In 1966, a judge ordered that the school districts in Noxubee County had to abolish their separated schools and threatened to transfer 400 black students to the white schools if the county did not comply. In response to these efforts, various segregation academies began to open across Noxubee County alongside already existing ones, which was aided by the state government through the help of school vouchers, which allowed tax money to be used to open new private academies. One

[15] Montgomery, "Car Crash," *The Washington Post,* 2017.

example was Central Academy in Macon, which had its tax-exempt status revoked by the IRS "due to racism" in 1982.[16]

However, for decades, Demopolis has been seen as a beacon of hope in the Black Belt; despite the demographics and the potential for racial turmoil and conflict, Demopolis has seemingly avoided any signs of strife. This reputation is not a new one either; in a 1989 article for *The Nation,* a University of Alabama staff member called the Demopolis City Schools System the "only viable public school system in West Alabama."[17] In the same article, author Ann Waldron asked how "Demopolis [had] succeeded so well at public school integration while Linden… [had] failed?"[18]

The article, titled "The Demopolis Story - A Star Shines From Alabama" is entirely a discussion on how Demopolis succeeded in integration while the Marengo County seat, Linden, had gone through a series of racial episodes to resolve the issue. However, it is a discussion of a question that is hardly answered. To the question posited earlier, Waldron answered that "no one is quite sure" and lists off potential factors that *might* have had something to do with Demopolis' perceived segregation success, such as the school system's relatively small size and even racial distribution.[19]

This is where the reputation becomes murky; even though Demopolis has this reputation, it seems that no one can thoroughly explain why this reputation was formed or

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[16] Donna Ladd, "Why School Integration Never Happened in Noxubee County, Miss.," *Mississippi Free Press*, November 2, 2021, https://www.mississippifreepress.org/16642/white-flight-in-noxubee-county-why-school-integration-never-happened.
[17] Waldron. "THE DEMOPOLIS STORY-A STAR SHINES FROM ALABAMA." *The Nation*. 248, no. 19 (1989).
[18] Waldron. "Demopolis Story," *The Nation,* 1989.
[19] Waldron. "Demopolis Story," *The Nation,* 1989.

why integration in Demopolis was more successful than in Linden, the neighboring county seat.

This paper serves as an analysis, history, and comparison of integration in Demopolis and Linden. This study specifically focuses on these two cities and these two cities alone. The difference between Demopolis and Linden and how they integrated is seen in how they reacted to the changes of the Civil Rights Era. In Demopolis, the people reacted with a tense indifference, where the city integrated but still felt the vast consequences that centuries of discrimination had on its people. In Linden, however, all negotiations regarding integration were only tense, with the white people of Linden fighting integration well into the 21st century and leaving a negative impact on the city for decades afterwards.

CHAPTER II: A HISTORY OF INTEGRATION IN DEMOPOLIS AND LINDEN

This chapter gives brief histories of the cities of Demopolis and Linden and a more in-depth history of integration in the two cities, alongside an analysis of how they differed. In Demopolis, integration was met with a tense indifference. Demopolis integrated without much resistance, but the potential for conflict in the city was always high. In Linden, however, it was *only* tense, with resistance to integration being seen well through the 1980s.

One trip to Demopolis can give you quite an insight to how the city was founded. Historical markers scattered around town tell the story of Demopolis. Founded in the 1810s by Bonapartists, the town grew into an antebellum hub city. One sign, located on the side of U.S. Highway 80, states: "Exiled Bonapartists granted four Townships of land in this area by Act of Congress March 3, 1817. Colonists founded Demopolis in 1817… Attempt [sic] to cultivate grapes and olives failed. After a few years the settlements were practically abandoned by the French refugees."[20] That specific plaque gives a rather accurate and concise history of the founding of Demopolis. French historian Eric Saugera described in an interview with the Demopolis Times in 2004 that the first citizens of Demopolis were French exiles from the Battle of Waterloo who settled in Marengo County in 1817.[21] As the plaque states, the Frenchmen left Demopolis after many failed attempts to create an economy based on grapes and olives. Nowadays, the only French

[20] "Vine and Olive Colony Historical Marker." *Historical Marker*, August 30, 2020. https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=38185.
[21] "History of Demopolis Explored by Frenchman," *The Demopolis Times*, August 11, 2004, https://www.demopolistimes.com/2004/08/11/history-of-demopolis-explored-by-frenchman/.

influence on the city of Demopolis are those plaques which state that the city was founded by them. Seated at the junction of the Tombigbee and Black Warrior Rivers, Demopolis soon drew planters, their enslaved workers, and merchants looking to profit from the cotton trade.[22] By all means, Demopolis was the economic capital of Marengo, which is true even today. However, the distinction of the county seat went to Linden in 1818, as a historical marker in the city of Linden describes.[23]

Other historical markers tell a similar story of Linden. In 1824, land was sold to a group of French immigrants who named the city "Hohenlinden" to honor Napoleon's 1800 victory in Bavaria.[24] The choice to make Linden the county seat is dubious in nature. There seems to be no sources explaining why Demopolis was passed over for the county seat of Marengo.

Schooling in Demopolis existed as far back as the 1860s, with "Tharin's Marengo County Dictionary for 1860-61" noting that there were multiple "female and male schools" in Demopolis, one of which being run by "a Phillips, an old man with a beard," who would "kiss the girls good morning each morning on their arrival." The first known school to be opened in Demopolis was opened in 1874 and was simply known as "a school on South Strawberry Street," which was housed in what was called "the Sharpe Place," with all instruction being handled by a woman named Emma Sharpe. The school located on Strawberry Street would be followed by a series of one-housed schools, with one located on "the corner where the Traeger house stands," and one located on "the

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[22] "ISJL - Alabama Demopolis Encyclopedia," *Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life*, accessed April 7, 2024, https://www.isjl.org/alabama-demopolis-encyclopedia.html.
[23] "History of Linden, Alabama Historical Marker at Linden, Al," *RuralSWAlabama*, September 19, 2015, https://www.ruralswalabama.org/attraction/linden-alabama-historical-marker/.
[24] "History of Linden," 2015.

corner of Walnut and Monroe streets," with those classes being taught by a woman named Sally Pegram.[25]

Soon, private schools came into existence in Demopolis. There was one named the "Marengo Female Institute," which was opened in 1901 and was described as having "lots of rooms and a dining room and living room for the girls' comfort." It closed some time before 1902. A year after MFI opened, the Marengo Military Academy was opened, which as of 1967 stood where "the old Demopolis Elementary School stands." These private schools were very valuable to Demopolis at the time, as public schooling only lasted five months. In order for their children to reach a full nine-month schooling schedule, Demopolis parents would send their children to private schools for four months.[26]

In reaction to this discrepancy, the Demopolis City Schools System was founded in 1902, with its first superintendent being a man named J.B. McLeod. The first school in the system was aptly named "the Demopolis City School" and was open for nine months a year. The school burned down in 1912 and was relocated to the grounds of the Female Institute, which had closed before DCS came into existence. By the 1960s, Demopolis City Schools had evolved into a multiple school system, with a new high school and elementary school being built around 1967.[27] Much like the rest of the south, Demopolis had a segregated school system, with the white students attending school at Demopolis High and Westside Elementary on the west side of town, while black students attended

[25] "Times Have Changed In Demopolis Schools," *The Tuscaloosa News,* August 27th, 1967, Emma Hinton Collection, Marengo County History and Archives Museum, Demopolis, Alabama.
[26] "Times Have Changed," 1967.
[27] "Times Have Changed," 1967.

U.S. Jones High School, which was a K-12 school.[28] In Linden, the history of the schools is almost only present in the years leading up to integration; in those years, the predominantly white school was Linden High School[29], and the black school being George P. Austin.[30]

Demopolis and Linden were not atypical from other southern cities in their treatment of black people; most of West Alabama was the same. Take for example, in 1912, when a black man in Demopolis named Richard Verge shot and killed a prominent planter named Vernon Tutt after Tutt physically assaulted Verge. The next day, Verge's brother Sam was lynched.[31]

As the populations of Demopolis and Linden were almost evenly split as they are now, the two cities served as grounds for multiple Civil Rights demonstrations. Ralph Abernathy, a Civil Rights leader and close friend of Martin Luther King Jr, was a Linden native and used that friendship to bring the Civil Rights movement to Marengo. In 1965, Martin Luther King Jr. spoke to a "crowd of more than 1,000" at Morning Star Baptist Church in Demopolis.[32] Annye Braxton, who was previously mentioned in Chapter One, later stated in 2009 that King visited Demopolis "several times." Thomas Moore, who was present at the rally as a child, noted that it was "the first time they had ever put

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[28] Waldron. "Demopolis Story" *The Nation,* 1989

[29] "WELCOME LHS ALUMNI", Untitled Newspaper, 1969, Emma Hinton Collection, Marengo County History and Archives Museum, Demopolis, Alabama.

[30] Alex Scarborough, "Linden, a Town Divided by Race," *The Tuscaloosa News*, September 25, 2011, https://www.tuscaloosanews.com/story/news/2011/09/25/linden-town-divided-by-race/5924077007/.

[31] "Mob of Whites Kill Negro Murderer at Demopolis," *The Dothan Eagle*, 1912, https://alabamamemory.as.ua.edu/source/mob-of-whites-kill-negro-murderer-at-demopolis/.

[32] Rex Thomas, "King Speaks at Rallies Around Country" Untitled Newspaper*,* 1965, Emma Hinton Collection, Marengo County History and Archives Museum, Demopolis, Alabama.

speakers outside the church."[33] Throughout 1965, Demopolis would see multiple Civil Rights demonstrations, continuing off the momentum of Dr. King's visit.[34]

Federal officers began enforcing desegregation in Marengo sometime before 1965, with Demopolis enforcing a "freedom of choice plan" in which any student was allowed to attend any school in the city; a man named Charles Foreman Jr. was the first black man to graduate from the all-white Demopolis High School in 1969. A few black students began to attend Westside Elementary at this time and the faculties of the white schools also began to integrate.[35] The first black teacher hired to teach at one of the all-white schools was a woman named Burnquetta Johnson, who was transferred over from U.S. Jones to Westside in 1967.[36]

In 1970, the US Circuit ruled that the school system had to form one all-inclusive high school for grades 7-12.[37] Demopolis complied with this order quickly, integrating U.S. Jones High School with Demopolis High soon after. This is where the seeds of Demopolis being a "success story" were planted.

The reaction to this quick and sudden integration was a tense indifference. Booker Barlow, a teacher during the time of Demopolis' integration, noted that it was "more of the parents than it was the students" who were worried about the effects of the quick

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[33] "A Colorful History: King Visits Demopolis," *The Demopolis Times*, February 4, 2009, https://www.demopolistimes.com/2009/02/04/a-colorful-history-king-visits-demopolis/.
[34] Rish. "Civil rights marchers on a residential street in Demopolis, Alabama." 1965. April 9, 2024. http://digital.archives.alabama.gov/cdm/ref/collection/amg/id/45122.
[35] Waldron. "Demopolis Story" *The Nation,* 1989.
[36] John Archibald, "Trailblazing Black Belt Teacher Learned as She Taught," *al.com*, July 17, 2015, https://www.al.com/news/2015/07/trailblazing_black_belt_teache.html.
[37] "A Colorful History: Desegregation," *The Demopolis Times*, February 11, 2009, https://www.demopolistimes.com/2009/02/10/a-colorful-history-desegregation/#:~:text=On%20June%2019%2C%201970%2C%20Demopolis,%E2%80%9Cthe%20Old%20School%E2%80%9D

change in status quo. Ann Jackson, a white student at the time, stated that the students "just kind of smiled at each other," noting that the black students "stayed in their groups," while the white students "stayed in [theirs]."[38] As will be discussed later, this tense indifference is a part of a long trend in how Demopolis reacted to integration.

In Linden, the reaction to the court orders and new legislation was tense, but not indifferent. As newspaper articles collected by a Linden writer named Emma Hinton indicate, the reaction to integration and the increasing Civil Rights legislature was primarily met with derision. One of the biggest examples of this hostility is seen in an article titled "August 6th, 1965 May Be Recorded As 'Day Of Infamy' For Bill." As the title states, the author of this piece, David Lawrence, likens August 6th, 1965, the day of the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, to Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Day of Infamy" speech after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Lawrence loosely makes the argument that the purpose of the bill is "a good one" but mostly argues that the bill would fail because "the Constitution gives only the states the right… to register a voter."[39]

In fact, a good bit of rhetoric from the Emma Hinton collection features the idea of conceding racial equality but also paradoxically denying it; they acknowledge that it is just for African Americans to vote and protest but argue that the means of obtaining their freedoms are not correct. Another article notes that the "pro side" of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would "make all races and all religions equal," an ideal that the author states would be an "emotional pull" for "fairness and equal treatment for all." However, the

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[38] "Colorful History: Desegregation" *The Demopolis Times*.

[39] David Lawrence, "August 6th, 1965 May Be Recorded As 'Day Of Infamy' For Bill." Untitled Newspaper, 1965, Emma Hinton Collection, Marengo County History and Archives Museum, Demopolis, Alabama.

author immediately poses the question "what price" equality holds, and if they "really want equality." This question stems from the fact that the bill supposedly allowed federal agents to "haul [a violator of the bill] before a judge" and have the person jailed.[40]

An article republished from the Santa Monica Evening Outlook is probably the most revealing out of all of them, simply entitled "Wrong Way For The Negro," in which the author argues that the true blame for the riots in Birmingham was not on the police, but on "those who have deliberately instigated them," specifically the "Negro youngsters who were told by the Rev. Martin Luther King that they would go to jail 'for a good cause.'" The author then attacks those who "denounce the South" in their reluctance to accept integration, noting that "even in slavery the Negro learned much from their white masters." The author notes that "the South paid a terrible penalty for slavery," and that the relationship between blacks and whites in the South was "paternal." Finally, the author argues that equal rights could not be achieved through "destructive hatred," but through the "fatherhood of God."[41] Other articles argue that the Civil Rights Movement was engineered through "hours of manipulated triumph,"[42] or that the passing of Civil Rights legislation would be a "potential danger to the minds of… children."[43] The newspaper articles in the Emma Hinton collection reflect the general characterization of

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[40] John C. Satterfield, "Rights Bill Would Allow Attorney General To Jail Offender Without Jury Trial", Untitled Newspaper, Undated, Emma Hinton Collection, Marengo County History and Archives Museum, Demopolis, Alabama.
[41] "Wrong Way For The Negro," *The Santa Monica Evening Outlook,* Undated, Emma Hinton Collection, Marengo County History and Archives Museum, Demopolis, Alabama.
[42] "Exploitation," *The Troy Messenger,* Undated, Emma Hinton Collection, Marengo County History and Archives Museum, Demopolis, Alabama.
[43] John C. Satterfield, "Desegregation Only The Beginning Of Controls Under Rights Bill", Untitled Newspaper, Undated, Emma Hinton Collection, Marengo County History and Archives Museum, Demopolis, Alabama.

Linden during the Civil Rights Movement: the town opposed any right of African Americans to protest, vehemently rejected Civil Rights legislation, and did everything in their power to make sure that integration in Linden schools did not happen.

These attitudes are seen in how the Linden City Schools higher-ups operated. In June of 1967, Linden City Schools was one of five school systems called to Montgomery to testify in federal court as to why they did not comply with a court order issued in March. Specifically, they were called to answer why "each teacher currently employed cannot be [assigned]" to traditionally white or traditionally black schools, as well as to why "the capacity of each school… [could] not be… fixed" to fit the populations of both blacks and whites in the city.[44] The leaders of the school system simply refused to follow these federal court orders, furthering the troubles of the school system.

Operating under the premise of a tense indifference, Demopolis quickly integrated and avoided most federal pressure, with their main motivator being a fear of a possible conflict. In Linden, however, the leaders of the board of education fought the federal orders and local journalists routinely published pieces attacking the Civil Rights movement in their newspapers. Despite the differences between the two, both Demopolis and Linden saw private segregation academies open in response. The next two chapters will discuss those segregation academies and their effect on their respective cities.

[44] "Linden, Marengo schools in federal court case Friday," Untitled Newspaper, June 7, 1967, Emma Hinton Collection, Marengo County History and Archives Museum, Demopolis, Alabama.

CHAPTER III: DEMOPOLIS ACADEMY

There were two main segregation academies in Marengo County that will serve as the focus: Demopolis Academy and Marengo Academy, two segregation academies that similarly feature mysterious histories, poorly documented openings and closings, and a litany of racial and educational controversies that also had vastly different effects on their respective cities. This chapter will focus on Demopolis Academy, the segregation academy opened after federal agents enforced integration in Demopolis. Demopolis Academy was not around for a very long time and left very little impact on the city, demonstrating the successes of the Demopolis City Schools System.

The most curious case in the fight against integration in Demopolis is the existence of Demopolis Academy. I call this case curious because on a surface level, very little evidence besides the physical remains of the school exists, with the school's former grounds now being used as a drive-in movie theater. In fact, the only reason I discovered Demopolis Academy in my research was because of the Alabama High School Football Historical Society (AHSFHS), whose website shows that the school started playing football in 1972.[45]

The earliest Demopolis Academy could have opened was in 1970, shortly after federal agents began enforcing integration; an article from the Selma Times-Journal published in January of 1970 announced that "a new private school in Demopolis" would open beginning "next fall." E.O. Eddins Sr., the chairman of the organizers behind the

[45] "Demopolis Academy Generals." *AHSFHS.* https://www.ahsfhs.org/teams2/teampage.asp?Team=Demopolis%20Academy

school, stated that "if you want a private school… Demopolis can do it."[46] The next month, the Times-Journal reported that the school "began registering students at its office in the Demopolis Inn this morning."[47]

In May of 1970, the school hired its first headmaster, Louis E. McBride, who according to the Times-Journal, was a teacher in the area who had graduated from Livingston University (now the University of West Alabama) and had taught in nearby Eutaw. At that point, the school had filled up their quota for 4th and 5th grades. The Times-Journal also reported that the school was accepting students until there were "25 in each class."[48] In June, the Times-Journal reported that the school had received "15 applications for teacher employment," of which McBride stated that hires would be announced after interviews were completed. In the same article, it was reported that there were "201 students registered in the 12 grades for the coming year."[49]

In July, it was reported that the final touches were being put on the school, which would be located in the former Masonic Lodge building and feature "indoor-outdoor carpet…throughout the building" as well as a "75 by 150-foot playground." The school was expected to be finished on August 15th and opened for classes on August 31st. McBride noted that "all but four teachers" had been hired.[50] In October of 1970, the Selma Times-Journal published a photograph of the school's newly-elected student officers, confirming that the school was open for the 1970 fall semester.[51]

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[46] "Private School for Demopolis" *Selma Times-Journal,* January 18, 1970.
[47] "Students Register." *Selma Times-Journal*, February 3, 1970.
[48] "McBride Will Head Demopolis Academy." *Selma Times-Journal*, May 24, 1970.
[49] "Demopolis Academy Hiring Teachers" *Selma Times-Journal*, June 28, 1970.
[50] "Demopolis Academy Ready By August 15" *Selma-Times Journal*, July 26, 1970.
[51] "Demopolis Academy Leaders" *Selma-Times Journal*, October 18, 1970.

However, after 1970, Demopolis Academy mostly exists in the world of high school sports; as mentioned earlier, they started a football program in 1972. Most every mention of their name in newspapers is the reporting of the final scores of their football, baseball, and basketball games. The school does receive a mention in the AL.com article about Burnquetta Johnson, with John Archibald noting that "white students left the school" after Johnson was moved to Westside and that "students began to sign up at places like Demopolis Academy." The second and final mention of Demopolis Academy once again praises Demopolis, stating that "[the school system] did so well Demopolis Academy had to shut its doors."[52]

Going back to the AHSFHS, Demopolis Academy's final season fielding a football team was in 2002, finishing at a winless 0-10.[53] There are no official statements from newspapers or the school itself that indicate why Demopolis Academy closed; the only source that explains the closure of Demopolis Academy has an explanation that raises more questions than answers. In "Social Capital, School Desegregation and Education in West Alabama's Black Belt," Joshua Phillip Adams briefly mentions that the Demopolis Academy did in fact close in 2002, which he describes as being caused by the "building of the new high school" in 1992. However, the school was reopened under a different name, West Alabama Preparatory School (WAPS), by a group of investors who had a "sentimental" attachment to Demopolis Academy and "bailed the school out of debt." At the time of writing in 2005, WAPS had approximately "100 students enrolled" K-12, and Adams described it as being a "a business or a hobby for some

[52] Archibald, "This teacher changed her whole town."
[53] "Demopolis Academy Generals" *AHSFHS.*

young Demopolis residents who have a private-school orientation for education."[54] However, that's about all Adams says about WAPS.

There are three articles about WAPS from when it was still around; a Demopolis Times article from 2003 ignored the debt incurred on Demopolis Academy and simply describes the ordeal as a "name change."[55] A 2004 article reported that a traveling play producer was directing a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[56] A 2005 puff piece for the school describes the school as being a "fully accredited" school that offers a "Christian based curriculum," while also offering preschool classes and an after-school program.[57]

WAPS' closing is like Demopolis Academy's in the sense that information surrounding its closing is hard to find; however, this closing is different because there is no information whatsoever on the closing of WAPS, not even a secondary source. A Google search will tell you that the school closed in 2006, but the results are mostly websites about private schools. The only source that corroborates the 2006 closing is, once again, the AHSFHS, which states that West Alabama Prep played their final season in 2006, finishing with a 2-7 record.[58] Demopolis Academy's relatively unknown status in the current state of city affairs is a testament to how well Demopolis City Schools

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[54] Adams. "Social Capital", 112.

[55] "DA changes name to West Alabama Prep; hires Duckworth as principal" *The Demopolis Times*, May 28, 2003. https://www.demopolistimes.com/2003/05/28/da-changes-name-to-west-alabama-prep-hires-duckworth-as-principal/

[56] "To be… That is the program: Partin brings Shakespeare passion to town." *The Demopolis Times*, April 19, 2004. https://www.demopolistimes.com/2004/04/19/to-be-that-is-the-program-partin-brings-shakespeare-passion-to-town/

[57] "West Alabama Prep offers excellence in a family environment" *The Demopolis Times,* August 4, 2005. https://www.demopolistimes.com/2005/08/04/west-alabama-prep-offers-excellence-in-a-family-environment/

[58] "West Alabama Prep Titans." *AHSFHS.* https://www.ahsfhs.org/Teams2/teampage.asp?Team=West%20Alabama%20Prep

integrated and how that success furloughed into completely eradicating private schooling in the city. Cecil Williamson, a former mayor of Demopolis, noted that Burnquetta Johnson's teaching was a part of that success, agreeing that "her ability and grace and her sheer force of will helped to hold the school system together."[59]

Another contributing factor was the infrastructure of Demopolis. As mentioned earlier, the building of the new high school in Demopolis in 1992 attracted many more students to the public school. As the school's enrollment rose, it snowballed into catching more students from Linden. Additionally, In 2006, the new expansion of the Sportsplex in Demopolis made the city far more alluring in the parks and recreation department. For Linden residents searching for viable schooling, Demopolis City Schools was the most viable, essentially running any private school "out of business."[60]

The most interesting aspect of West Alabama Prep outside of being the continuation of Demopolis Academy is in fact the football team. It was not anything the team did on the field though. They finished a rather unremarkable 10-29 all time as the Titans. Rather, it is who they hired as a football coach once the school came back in 2003. After returning, the Demopolis Times reported that they had hired Webb Tutt on a volunteer basis.[61] This hire is important, because Tutt and his family are key figures in the landscape of the segregation academies of Marengo County and West Alabama, specifically at Marengo Academy.

Once a somewhat prominent segregation academy, Demopolis Academy slowly became a blip on the radar in terms of Demopolis' history. This slow transition highlights

[59] Archibald, "This teacher changed her whole town."
[60] Adams, "Social Capital," 111-113.
[61] "DA changes name." *The Demopolis Times*.

the power that the public school system had on the city of Demopolis, essentially ending any possibility of private schooling in the city. Through the effective teaching of Burnquetta Johnson and the increasing economic development of Demopolis, the only attempt to open a private school in Demopolis ended with the school quickly and quietly disappearing without much fanfare.

CHAPTER IV: MARENGO ACADEMY

This chapter will discuss the second segregation academy of focus, Marengo Academy in Linden. Founded in 1970 and closed in 2019, the school was the more dominant of the two academies in Marengo County. Much like Demopolis Academy, Marengo Academy slowly faded from existence over the span of a few decades, but the impact of Marengo Academy is far more overstated and present in Linden. Its existence, brought upon by the messy integration process in Linden, completely swapped the demographics of the Linden City School system, and if anything, prolonged segregation and educational strife in Linden for nearly half a century.

Founded in 1970 and opening that fall, Marengo Academy was a swift response to the integration that was being attempted in Linden. Given the 1967 court order, a campus was either built and incorporated within two years, or a building was repurposed in order for the campus to be housed. In July of 1969, David Barr Tutt, a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, was named the first headmaster of Marengo Academy, known then as the "Marengo Private School." Tutt described taking on the job as a "challenge," but Carroll D. Owensby, the chairman of the Marengo Private School Corporation, stated that the school "had enough for three teachers and two grades," and that there were "applications for over 100 students for the 1969-70 school year." Tuition to the school was $55 a month.[62]

The school did not have a strong infrastructure. It was a one-building school that was constructed out of sheet metal, and it stayed that way throughout the entirety of its

[62] "Marengo Private School Names Tutt Headmaster," Untitled Newspaper, July 23, 1969, Emma Hinton Collection, Marengo County History and Archive Museum, Demopolis, Alabama.

existence, a sharp contrast from the "pink brick buildings" of Linden High School.[63] On top of that, base pay for teachers was "considerably lower" than in Linden City Schools, and the campus lacked the funds to accommodate for newly added state courses.[64]

The opening of the school had the effect of essentially instituting *de facto* segregation in Linden. In 1978, a court order forced all-white Linden High and all-black George P. Austin to integrate.[65] After this order, most white students in Linden chose to attend Marengo Academy instead, while the black students stayed enrolled at Linden High School. Jennifer Belcher-Glass, a graduate of Marengo Academy, described the "lack of diversity" at Marengo Academy as being a "fact of life," noting that, even though no one called Marengo Academy an all-white school due to federal pressure to integrate, calling the school that would be akin to "calling grass green."[66]

Similar to Demopolis Academy, the Demopolis City School System proved to be far too powerful in maintaining its existence. At its peak, Marengo Academy had an enrollment of around 750 white students. By 1988, this number had been lowered to around 400, and the expenses increased to "nearly $3,000 in yearly tuition and fees." The attitudes of the parents that sent their children to Marengo Academy mirrored the sentiments published in the nearby newspapers. The white parents of Linden were described as being "hostile and pessimistic" towards the now black public schools, very

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[63] Adams, "Social Capital," 113.

[64] William Montague, "'Patience and Time': Allies for Change on King Cotton's Land," *Education Week*, February 25, 2019, https://www.edweek.org/education/patience-and-time-allies-for-change-on-king-cottons-land/1988/02.

[65] Scarborough, "Linden, a Town Divided by Race."

[66] Sydney Melson, "'segregation Academies' Looking to Overcome Divided Past," *Alabama Public Radio*, July 28, 2020, https://www.apr.org/news/2020-07-28/segregation-academies-looking-to-overcome-divided-past.

willing to pay the $3,000 a year to keep their students away from them.[67] This *de facto* segregation apparently had its benefits, according to some. A retired politician from Linden described the virtually segregated Linden schools as being "strange bedfellows," insinuating that it was far easier for the school systems to remain segregated so that they could continue a pattern of "homogeneous" and "nepotistic" hiring practices.[68]

However, the negative consequences of this segregation far outweighed the benefits of unfair hiring practices. Because the wealthy white parents of Linden gave their money to Marengo Academy, the Linden City School System was left behind in terms of funding; in a 1988 interview, then-superintendent of Linden City Schools Paul Whitcom stated that "our kids are eager to learn," but added that "the resources at home aren't there." Because of this, Linden City Schools also had to raise fees for their students, with Whitcom stating that the lack of white students in the public school system caused a loss of public support such as "band boosters, your library committee, the people that can help you add to your basic program."[69] In essence, Marengo Academy had created a lose-lose situation for the entire city.

"By 2006, both Linden and Marengo Academy were hard on their heels. The headmaster of the academy at the time declared the fundraising was "tough." "I've been here years," he continued, "and each year seems more difficult." Enrollment had dropped to around 300 students. This increased the total tuition for Marengo Academy to $275 a month, or $3,300 a year, a move which public school advocates in Linden argued caused

[67] Montague, "'Patience and Time.'"
[68] Adams, "Social Capital," 112.
[69] Montague, "'Patience and Time.'"

even more economic distress due to Marengo Academy parents not having disposable income to spend in the city.[70]

One might ask how Marengo stayed open for as long as it did, especially when compared to the lifespan of Demopolis Academy. Despite its gradual deterioration, Marengo Academy enjoyed measurable success over the nearly five decades it was open, notably obtaining a very dedicated alumni base. A good bit of this pride can be attributed to the success of their football team, finishing with an all-time winning percentage of 63% and winning nine state championships.[71] This football success translated into a strong alumni core; eventually, the only factor keeping enrollment afloat at Marengo Academy was the fact that parents were sending their children there to be second-generation Longhorns. However, this obviously was not enough to keep Marengo Academy or Linden viable. More and more parents began to send their students to Demopolis, which saw continued success throughout the 2000s.[72]

Marengo Academy on the other hand began to falter more and more. For the 2018-19 school year, there were only 150 students enrolled throughout the school. Going into the 2019-20 school year, that number had fallen below 100. Given those enrollment numbers, headmaster David Akins and the school board of Marengo Academy chose to close the school in July of 2019. Akins remarked that it was "pretty bad for the folks around here," and that the Academy was "a staple in the community for 50 years now." One of the other concerns voiced by Akins though was the returning athletes to the

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[70] Adams, "Social Capital," 113.
[71] "Marengo Academy Longhorns," *AHSFHS,* https://www.ahsfhs.org/teams2/teampage.asp?Team=Marengo+Academy.
[72] Adams, "Social Capital," 113.

school; Akins stated that they had lost "but a couple of seniors" and that he was "kind of looking forward to it."[73] Those students who were enrolled in Marengo Academy soon transferred to Demopolis City Schools.

Unlike Demopolis Academy, the story of Marengo Academy does not end at its closing. After its curtain call, Marengo Academy made state-wide and national news for its role in a state-wide fraud scandal, in which millions of dollars were stolen from the Alabama Department of Education. Though it did not surface until after their closing, the fraud took place during the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years. Alongside other private academies across Alabama, Marengo Academy worked with Limestone County Schools and Athens City Schools to "enroll" their students in the school systems as full-time students taking online classes. In return, Limestone and Athens received more state funding and that money got returned to Marengo Academy. In total, the scheme netted $5.7 million.[74]

Marengo Academy's liaison between the schools was the-then head football coach, David Webb Tutt, who was mentioned earlier as the former head coach of the West Alabama Prep Titans and the son of the first Marengo Academy headmaster, David Barr Tutt. For his role in the scheme, he received $259,000.[75] Alongside Tutt was the Athens City Schools superintendent William L. "Trey" Holliday III, who profited $2.59

[73] Edwin Stanton, "Marengo Academy Closing after 50 Years," *The Tuscaloosa News*, June 28, 2019, https://www.tuscaloosanews.com/story/news/education/2019/06/28/marengo-academy-closing-after-50-years/4785571007/#:~:text=After%2050%20years%20Marengo%20Academy,going%20on%2050%20years%20now.

[74] Trisha Powell Crain, "Alabama Asks $5.7 Million in Virtual School Payments to Be Paid Back," *al.com*, May 17, 2022, https://www.al.com/news/2022/05/alabama-wants-57-million-in-fraudulent-virtual-school-payments-back-from-defendants.html.

[75] Crain, "Alabama Asks $5.7 Million"

million from the scheme, teacher Gregory Earl Corken, who gained $1.3 million in the scheme, Limestone County Schools superintendent Thomas Michael Sisk, who only took away $13,000, and Athens City administrator William Richard Carter, who stole $1.3 million in the scheme. All five people involved in the scheme were ordered to pay back the money and were all sentenced to various prison sentences, with Tutt receiving a 24-month sentence in federal prison.[76] This scheme obviously was not enough to keep the school open, and it is unclear whether Tutt kept the money for himself or put it back into the schools, or if Marengo Academy took part in the fraud because of the economic turmoil that the school was in. All that is known is that Tutt had to pay restitution for it and that the school closed three years later regardless.

Overall, Marengo Academy did far more to hurt the city of Linden, essentially serving as a foil for Demopolis City Schools. Where Demopolis thrived off its school system into cementing its status as the main economic hub of Marengo County, Linden saw its public and private school systems continue the pattern of segregation and struggle to fundraise and keep the schools open, ultimately negatively harming the city of Linden's school system, and eventually, the state Department of Education.

[76] "Four Defendants Sentenced in North Alabama Virtual Education Scheme," Middle District of Alabama | Four Defendants Sentenced in North Alabama Virtual Education Scheme | *United States Department of Justice*, July 25, 2022, https://www.justice.gov/usao-mdal/pr/four-defendants-sentenced-north-alabama-virtual-education-scheme.

CHAPTER V: LONG-TERM EFFECTS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter will delve into the long-term effects of integration in Demopolis and Linden. In Demopolis, the tense indifference that integration was met with leaked into the early 2000s with the students of DCS falling into a pattern of *de facto* segregation. In Linden, the hostilities of the public school/private school conflict boiled over into a major standoff over a shared football field. Additionally, the attitudes of Linden presented in the newspaper articles of Chapter II seemingly never went away, with a prominent newspaper editor invoking racist rhetoric to attack his political opponents.

Integration and its fallout are vastly different in Demopolis and Linden. In Demopolis, federal agents enforced integration and then they left. Demopolis followed orders and integration ended with a school system that is considered to be one of the only viable school systems in West Alabama. In Linden, the school system refused to integrate even with federal pressure, and once they finally buckled, they simply reinstituted *de facto* segregation through the use of Marengo Academy, which had drastic effects on both Linden and Demopolis; Linden was hurt economically, and Demopolis benefited greatly from that. One might assume from this information that Demopolis is somewhat of a safe haven, a place where blacks and whites get along with each other beautifully. In terms of other cities, yes, Demopolis is a great city in that regard, but under a closer lens, Demopolis still dealt with and still deals with a great bit of *de facto* segregation themselves today.

The quote from Ann Jackson mentioned in Chapter Two illustrates the problems Demopolis had with integration from the beginning; on that first day that black and white students attended the newly integrated school, she stated that “They stayed in their group,

and we stayed in ours."[77] From the onset of full integration, the black and white students had hardly any desire to interact with each other. For them, it was far easier for them to remain in their own racial groups. This pattern continued far into the 2000s.

Up until the mid-2000s, Demopolis still had segregated school dances and homecoming courts, not by the design of the school, but by the design of the students. There were two main formal dances that took place in Demopolis: the homecoming dance in the fall and the "Spring Formal Invitational Only" (SFIO) in the spring. The homecoming dance was attended by the black student populace and the spring formal was attended by the white students. The SFIO also had the effect of segregating prom season, as black students attended prom instead. Adding to this atmosphere was the all-white sorority Delta Tau Delta, which was known for "hazing, and being rather elite." This practice was considered a fact of life in Demopolis, with one Demopolis High student unsurely stating in 2006 that "I guess blacks feel like they have enough with the homecoming dance and prom." One black paper mill worker in Demopolis noted that "we never really cared about white kids not coming to the dance," and stated that "my mama wouldn't want me dancing with a white girl anyway."[78]

Both Adams' "Social Capital" and the Washington Times piece on the toppling of the confederate monument note the fallout from these practices in Demopolis. Adams notes that Demopolis High football, which similarly to Marengo Academy has had a good bit of success over the years, "brings everything into perspective regarding race," while also being "absolutely confounding." The stands at the game are "divided like the

[77] "A Colorful History: Desegregation" *The Demopolis Times.*
[78] Adams, "Social Capital," 107-108.

Red Sea," and Adams metaphorically states that it is "as if there are 'colored and whites-only signs' etched into the consciousness of the elders." Those in the middle of the two segregated sections, mixed between blacks and whites, "exchange high fives with fervor."[79] David Montgomery of *The Washington Post* continuously pointed out the nuances of integration in Demopolis: how the east and west sides of town were essentially segregated, with most of the black population living on the east side and most of the white population living on the west side. He also noted that the segregated prom was hosted at Gaineswood, a former slave plantation that "looks exquisitely like the Old South."[80]

Demopolis is a success story; that is 100% true. Speak to anyone from Demopolis all the way to Union Springs in Bullock County and you will be told that Demopolis was the only school system that successfully integrated. When the city seemed prime for a racial conflict after the confederate monument fell, they simply compromised, similarly to how quickly the city integrated their schools. However, the attitudes of the citizens carried *de facto* segregation throughout the early 2000's, an attitude that carries over to today, creating a silent tension between the blacks and whites of the city. Meanwhile, in Linden, things have not changed much. Since the failures of integration, the city has dealt with multiple racial conflicts that reached conclusions due to reluctant compromise. Where Demopolis has a silent tension between the populations of blacks and whites, Linden has a *loud* tension.

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[79] Adams, "Social Capital," 108.
[80] Montgomery, "Car Crash," *The Washington Post,* 2017.

As mentioned earlier, the pride and joy of Marengo Academy was their football team. The football team played at what is called Linden Athletic Field, which was shared between Marengo Academy and the renamed Linden Patriots. In 2011, this relationship between the two schools would deteriorate and cause a conflict over the field. The field was owned by the Linden Athletic Association (LAA), which was sold to them in 1974 for $250. This selling was precipitated by the Linden City Council, who knew that their field would have to be shared with the black population. Thus, they sold the field to ensure that Marengo Academy would have a "field to call its own." Eventually, the LAA began charging schools a per-game fee to host their football games. This is where the situation between the two schools would escalate.[81]

A few weeks before the season opener, the LAA announced it would be raising their fee from $500 per game to a flat $6,500 a year fee, which translated to $1,300 a game. This was a move that Marengo Academy could afford, but not Linden High. In response, the Linden Board of Education voted to play their home games in Dixon Mills, Alabama, where Marengo High School played, for a price of $850 per game.[82]

The parents of Linden High School blamed the Linden Athletic Association for this move. The four members of the LAA were "all white men" and were all associated with Marengo Academy. At a Linden City Council meeting, various parents and residents voiced their concerns; Linden resident Bobby Jackson stated that Linden High should have been able to "own [their] own facility." Another resident, William Bryant, added

[81] Scarborough, "Linden, A Town Divided by Race."
[82] Alex Scarborough, "Mystery Surrounds Athletic Group's Actions in Linden," *The Tuscaloosa News*, September 4, 2011, https://www.tuscaloosanews.com/story/news/2011/09/04/mystery-surrounds-athletic-groups-actions-in-linden/28388108007/.

that "you've got MA signs all over. There are cattle gates out there," harshly stating that "they don't want us out there."[83]

Further research into the athletic association also raised a few questions. Hale Smith, the president of the association, claimed the fee increase was due to raising insurance costs, and also claimed to have receipts to back it up. When he was asked to present them to the Linden City Council, "none were provided."[84] The association was also a tax-exempt organization that paid "nothing to the city, county, or state for the 7.6-acre property." Strangely, Marengo County tax records showed that "tax assessors [had not] increased the assessed value of $20" since it was first assessed.[85] In September of 2011, the Demopolis Times reported that the Alabama Department of Revenue was interested in investigating the athletic association's "nonprofit tax status."[86]

Linden High School played the entire 2011 season away from Linden, taking away the economic boost of an additional five football games from the city of Linden. It was not until August of 2012, after Linden High had finished a 13-2 season and lost in the 1A state title game, that a compromise was reached. The Linden City Council would take back the field from the LAA and pay off their debt on the field. With a donation from Papa's Foods, a local grocery store, the per-game fee would drop to $400. After facing various allegations of racism by the parents of Linden High, Woody Dinning, the

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[83] Jeremy Smith, "Tension High over Linden Field Situation," *The Demopolis Times*, August 31, 2011, https://www.demopolistimes.com/2011/08/30/tension-high-over-linden-field-situation/.
[84] Scarborough, "Linden, A Town Divided by Race."
[85] Scarborough, "Mystery Surrounds Athletic Group."
[86] "Flags Raised on LAA Tax Status," *The Demopolis Times*, September 28, 2011, https://www.demopolistimes.com/2011/09/26/flags-raised-on-laa-tax-status/.

lawyer for the City of Linden, stated that "it wasn't a racial issue, it was a dollars-and-cents issue."[87]

This interaction between the white and black populations of Linden truly highlights the differences between the two cities as well as the continuing impact of integration on Linden. Years before Demopolis had to sort through the destruction of a confederate monument, which ended with a peaceful compromise after six months, Linden harshly traversed racial issues over a football field, causing the public school of Linden's state-title contending football team to play outside of the city.

This was not the last time the city of Linden had to deal with racial incidents. For over a century, the *Democrat-Reporter* was a major newspaper in the city and was edited by a man named Goodloe Sutton. In 1998, he received national acclaim for uncovering corruption in the Marengo County Sheriff's Office.[88] Years later, however, his reputation would change when he published an article that harkened back to articles such as "Wrong Way for The Negro."

In 2019, Sutton would publish an article titled "Klan needs to ride again," where he opens by simply stating that it's "time for the Ku Klux Klan to night ride again." Sutton argues that "Democrats in the Republican Party and Democrats" were a part of a scheme to raise taxes in Alabama. Sutton also suggests that using the Ku Klux Klan to combat these "Democrats" was the way to end the problem. Sutton ends the article by

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[87] Jason Morton, "Linden High, Marengo Academy to Share Field," The Tuscaloosa News, August 16, 2012, https://www.tuscaloosanews.com/story/news/2012/08/16/linden-high-marengo-academy-to-share-field/29896393007/.

[88] Greg Garrison, "Linden Newspaper Editor Once Praised, Then Scorned for Saying KKK Should Ride Again,' Has Died," *al.com,* September 26, 2023, https://www.al.com/news/2023/09/linden-newspaper-editor-once-praised-then-scorned-for-saying-kkk-should-ride-again-has-died.html.

stating “the Klan would be welcome to raid gated communities” in Washington, D.C. In an interview with *The Montgomery Adviser,* Sutton doubled down on these views. Sutton claimed that “if we could get the Klan to go up there and clean out D.C., we’d all been better off [sic].” He then elaborated that “cleaning out D.C.” meant lynching with “hemp ropes out, [looping] them over a tall limb, and [hanging] all of them.” Sutton promptly resigned the position and died in September of 2023.[89]

This episode in Linden history brings up the question of whether or not the attitudes of Linden changed at all from the 1960s. Over 50 years after integration, one of the city’s prominent newspapers was arguing for the KKK to lynch politicians in Washington, D.C., which is arguably a harsher message than the ones present in the Emma Hinton collection.

It shows why Demopolis was successful and Linden was not. Linden did not have the attitude or the character to support integration in its city, and it shows today. Linden is not the economic powerhouse Demopolis is. The school system in Demopolis has been thriving for decades as Linden City Schools takes a back seat. When racial problems arose in the city, Demopolis handled it with compromise while Linden let it fester into more racist ideology, leading to a city fractured by race economically, educationally, and socially.

[89] Melissa Brown, “Alabama Newspaper Editor Calls for Klan Return to ‘Clean out D.C.,’” *Montgomery Advertiser*, February 24, 2019, https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/2019/02/18/alabama-newspaper-ku-klux-klan-to-night-ride-again-linden-democrat-reporter-goodloe-sutton/2910436002/.

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