

UC Berkeley

Berkeley Planning Journal

Title

Architecture and Landscapes of Segregation: An Historical Look at the Built Environment of Educational Facilities in the United States

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8h15x7zd>

Journal

Berkeley Planning Journal, 18(1)

Author

Kirchler, Leslie

Publication Date

2005

DOI

10.5070/BP318111502

Copyright Information

Copyright 2005 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

Peer reviewed

Architecture and Landscapes of Segregation: An Historical Look at the Built Environment of Educational Facilities in the United States

Leslie Kirchler

Abstract

Within the field of landscape architecture and architecture, historians and critics often have sought to view the “college campus as art.” This concept portrays the individual buildings as a collection of artifacts, giving little attention to the cultural and historical meanings of space, both surrounding the buildings and between the buildings. Studies of this nature tend to focus on styles, motifs, and artistic significance of individual edifices. Likewise, historic architectural studies examine the importance that buildings have in relation to their adornments, their design motifs, and their artists or architects who created them. This analysis challenges these values and associations through an evaluation of historically black college and university campuses (HBCU’s) and “segregated public schools” of the Southern United States. Through a review of literature on court cases about school segregation and an examination of built environments, this article suggests that architectural and landscape studies are important in conveying notions of inferiority and tradition that were used in segregation cases across the United States. The case studies in this analysis jointly express how architecture and landscape represent and shape race relations in the United States and address shortcomings in the literature of architecture and landscapes that fail to show a connection between the antebellum and postbellum lives of African Americans in the United States. A comprehensive understanding of segregation requires an investigation of spatial and built environments to analyze the feelings and experiences of people throughout time, rather than a simple focus on historic events.

Introduction

Within the field of landscape architecture and architecture, historians and critics often have sought to view the “college campus as art.” This concept portrays the individual buildings as a collection of artifacts, giving little attention to the cultural and historical meanings of space,

both surrounding the buildings and between the buildings. Studies of this nature focus on the style, typology, and artistic significance of individual structures. Thus, historic architectural studies demonstrate the importance that edifices have in relation to their adornments, their design motifs, and the artists or architects who created them (Grandison 2001). Historically black college and university campuses (HBCU's) and "segregated schools" of the Southern United States challenge these values and methods. Grandison (2001, 63-64) argues that "such issues as the geographic location, layout, and orientation of these African American spaces raise questions not only about the applicability of these conventional values and methods to the minority and working class spaces, but also the larger aims of interpreting any built environment from the point of view of the canonical history."

Through an analysis of court cases and the creation of public school districts, this paper will demonstrate that the architecture and landscapes, or the built environment, of HBCU's and segregated schools display notions of inferiority and physical inequities between white and black children and adults. Through an analysis of three particular case studies in Cincinnati, Boston, and New Haven, this research will show that segregation not only involves the separation of races, but also that the inequities within the built environment, architecture, and landscapes, are necessary centerpieces for studying the emotions and symbolism created for the purpose of segregation. Together, these case studies show that architecture and the landscape both represent and shape race relations in the United States. This paper additionally will critique two recent studies that focus upon the built environment but have several shortcomings in their analyses, thereby stressing the need for additional comprehensive and interdisciplinary studies for the purpose of developing community building techniques and educational programming. In review of these case studies, this paper presents the notion that studies of the built environment are a necessary component of analyses on segregation as the built environment and movement through it symbolize feelings of inferiority and represents a continuity of antebellum sentiments towards the separation of races.

Current studies on segregation primarily focus on the effects of school divisions based on white and black racial separation, rising rates of poverty caused by this type of segregation in black communities, and the mental and physical impact of racial divisions on black children and adults (Anderson 2004; Massey 1990; Wolff 1963). An even greater number of authors discuss community battles and legal aspects over school segregation and the separation of other public facilities (Irons 2002). As noted by the variety of scholarly publications on segregation, studies clearly show the relevance of understanding the division between

black and white students within American schools. However, few of these studies have incorporated an analysis of the built environment, a necessary component of a holistic understanding of segregation in the United States.

Throughout the last half of the nineteenth century and into the latter half of the twentieth century, numerous judicial cases of school segregation have been decided in the United States. Within these cases, the primary defense of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) did not rest upon unequal education facilities, but upon the notion that black children would feel inferior to white children if they were placed in segregated schools. The two primary cases are *Roberts v. City of Boston* (1849) and *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954). The personal memories and experiences wrapped within these cases are built intentionally and unintentionally into the man-made environment. The architecture and the landscape both represent and shape personal and group identities, including people's identification with race. As part of this analysis, brief comparisons will trace these features to Southern plantations and antebellum slavery with particular reference to the built environment. This will deviate from other analyses that primarily focus solely on the postbellum or antebellum South neither suggesting the continuity between the periods nor addressing the similarity of the architecture and landscapes and the feelings associated with them that were created during these times.

In this manner, Kenrick I. Grandison's work on architecture in predominantly black colleges and universities today shows how architecture and the use of space can represent prevailing attitudes about self and groups of people. Grandison (2001) claims that his work explores an interdisciplinary approach for using the landscape as a primary document for understanding history. He analyzes "how the campuses of historically black colleges and universities record through space the African American struggle for higher education and, more generally, the cultural history of race relations in the postbellum South" (Grandison 2001, 55). He primarily addresses higher levels of education and the experiences of adult students.

Amy Weisser (2001) conducts a similar study in which she analyzed primary schools involved in the Jim Crow cases. However, unlike Grandison, she advocates a position in which she wants these schools to become positive elements for a community rather than a continuance of demonstrating inferiority. She poses a series of questions that will be useful in presenting a holistic perspective of how architecture and landscape both represent and create race relations. These in-

clude: "How does the preservation of a building whose existence was predicated by exclusion make a place for a diverse community? How do buildings gain positive meaning for those who had no voice in their existence but who had primary experiences within them? Can lack of place, or absence, be marked?" (Weisser 2001, 106). Her study recognizes the need for present day use and rehabilitation of the built environment for the purpose of community building and recognition of historic efforts among African Americans and whites.

Using the Built Environment to Understand the Past

Through an analysis of representative court cases and the creation of school districts concerning segregation in schools, ranging from *Roberts v. City of Boston* to *Brown v. Board*, Leigh (1997), Ficker (1999), and Stewart (2003) demonstrate the significance of the predominant argument of the NAACP attorneys. These representative analyses show that although black children are placed in sub-par schools, they are hurt most by the lack of integration with white children. These studies represent only a small portion of the cadre of literature that discusses issues of segregation on the basis of feelings of inferiority. In these articles and cases, and others like them, the attorneys claimed that segregation created a system of placing the black race in the position of inferiority and the white race in a position of superiority. Each author provides a significant case study in which location and placement of black institutions is extremely important to understanding how segregation created feelings of inferiority among black residents. Nonetheless, these authors did not discuss directly how space was both created and defined by race relations, a shortcoming that is addressed within this analysis. By acknowledging differences within the environment for black and white people and using these differences in conjunction with architectural studies, a more comprehensive history of segregation and its related spaces could be written.

Heretofore, landscape architecture and architecture not only represent race relations, but they also help to shape them. Although Grandison (2001) indicates that landscape architecture and architecture of historically black schools challenge traditional theory of "college campus as art" and that the buildings and land solely represent inferiority, he fails to demonstrate how these landscapes and buildings are means of empowerment and continuity of community, primary symbols for understanding the past as it truly was. Like Leigh (1997), Ficker (1999), and Stewart (2003), he does not show the positive out-

comes of black struggles within the United States, especially as these outcomes are represented in architecture and landscape. On the other hand, Weisser (2001) evaluates the positive and negative accounts of Jim Crow schools in the South, but she limits her study to two schools and presents no conclusion as to how her methods could be applied to other public settings in which race is represented and created. Her questions, however, posed in the framework of segregation articles show the promise of evaluating architecture and landscape in conjunction with historical studies for developing community education and building programs.

Architecture and landscape serve three main purposes in addition to traditional use value. First, architecture and landscape are mnemonic devices. That is, they provide cues for people to remember the past. Second, placelessness may provide a strategy for understanding absence. For instance, for every school in which black students were not allowed, a story is present in the absence of this community. Lastly, the built environment can contain multiple meanings depending on one's vantage point including race, age, gender, and locality (Weisser 2001, 107). Hence, a complete picture of understanding the past is to view both the positive and negative ways in which architecture and landscape represent and create race relations in the United States. In order to accomplish this task, Leigh's (1997), Ficker's (1999), and Stewart's (2003) work present the necessary framework for understanding how school segregation created a sense of inferiority among blacks in three Northern cities. Grandison (2001) and Weisser (2001) use similar historic studies to show how these relationships are represented and created through the built environment.

Cincinnati, Ohio: Lincoln High School District

Although the focus of Leigh's (1997) article is on education and the issues of segregation, she cites intentional city planning efforts, which drew black residents of Cincinnati to a different, marginal area of the city than white residents. She demonstrates that race and class cannot be separated in order to determine a person's social standing. Through an analysis of the racial, political, and economic environment from the late nineteenth century to the twentieth century, Leigh evaluates the linkage between economic systems and the level of educational attainment as a means to disenfranchise freed blacks during slavery and all communities of blacks into the present. A parent's educational attainment, therefore, has a direct impact upon the prosperity of the children. Thus, when parents had little education, children were not encouraged to become educated either by white educators or boards

of education. Leigh shows that segregation was harmful because it drew upon a dichotomy of black and white, which did not allow for mobility within economic and social status for black residents. Segregation created feelings of inferiority among blacks even if schools had the same facilities as white schools. Specifically, Leigh analyzes city planning practices that created efforts to segregate the population along municipal lines; these included zoning practices and raises in maintenance fees.

Additionally, Leigh emphasizes that the predominant attitude of white residents was that blacks had created their own slum conditions within their communities. These whites believed that blacks naturally “gravitated to such conditions and held Blacks themselves responsible for the conditions that were, in reality, forced upon them” (Leigh 1997, 127). This attitude increased as blacks arrived from the South in increasing numbers throughout the decade prior to the focal period of Leigh’s analysis (Woodward 2002). Although not her intention, this last point is the strongest element of Leigh’s argument in reference to analyzing architecture and the space between buildings and man-made constructions.

Similarly, in the antebellum South, African Americans were forced into crowded locations by today’s standards. Commonly, slaves and even free blacks were living in small cabins or quarters ranging in size from twelve by twelve feet to fourteen by sixteen feet. Several slave families, even if not related to each other, would share these quarters often in areas sectioned away from the main houses. Typically, these cabins were hastily built and made of crude materials (Vlach 1993). African Americans were forced to live in these tight quarters both during and after slavery. After attaining their freedom, many African Americans had limited access to resources and improved accommodations, and thus, they remained in similar types of housing. Small freed communities then clung to these close living styles for the sense of community and corporate spirit that allowed them to survive slavery (Joseph 2000). Although many African Americans found these accommodations comforting, white residents would not accept these communities; they were described as ghettos and havens for disease and crime. Ultimately, conditions within them began to reflect the labels given by the white inhabitants.

In Cincinnati, the educational system failed to provide equal access to all its residents. This system was a phenomenon typical of other urban-industrial areas across the United States (Leigh 1997). A new school was built specifically for black residents in the Lincoln High district in 1958. It also served as a center of black community life, despite inten-

tional efforts by white residents to draw the blacks out of racially integrated schools (Leigh 1997). The space was designed strictly for education, but came to be a symbol of the community.

The school was built on marginal land, like the remainder of Lincoln District, and contained few resources that matched those of nearby schools for white residents. Nonetheless, this school serves as a symbol of race relations for the community of Lincoln District. Leigh acknowledges that many successful graduates overcame obstacles and graduated from this school and others like it. Therefore, the school and the district serve as mnemonic devices to the past. By offering architectural cues that trigger memories, they remind people of the gerrymandering, intentional zoning, and residential separation that occurred in Ohio. It also shows the difference between schools of white and black residents by representing the placelessness felt by black residents as they recognized the differences between their own economic opportunities and those of Cincinnati’s white residents. The school would have been experienced differently by each of its attendees, its teachers, and its supervisors. The building exemplifies these different feelings by physical markers left upon it. The building has its own history of changes to its architectural structure, but more important is what is contained inside; the decorations, the students, and the educational materials. This school, the result of intentional segregation, was also the first place that gave opportunity to black residents, which would not have been possible if the residents had not had a place to go for schooling; a common occurrence prior to its construction in 1958 (Leigh 1997).

Today, this school district could be commemorated through programs for its aging alumni, which link current students to those who once experienced segregation at the school. The issues of segregation no longer are limited to a dichotomy of white and black. Outreach programs not only will help to conserve the physical edifices of the district, but also preserve the memories of the attendees by passing stories and experiences on to future generations.

Boston, Massachusetts: The *Roberts* Case

In a discussion beginning with the judicial decision of *Roberts v. City of Boston* (1849) and leading into the twentieth century, Ficker (1999) demonstrates that the Supreme Court had the basis to outlaw segregation, especially after the passing of the Fourteenth Amendment. However, they did not do so until 1954 with the *Brown* decision. The court perpetuated a separation that existed since antebellum slavery.

Ficker (1999) traces the history of school segregation through important judicial decisions that affected how blacks perceived themselves. Using Boston as a case study, he shows that the school system of the late nineteenth century was segregated because of a growing number of freed blacks in the city. In 1800 and 1835, two independent black schools were created, and only blacks were assigned to these schools. After a short time, blacks within the community became concerned that the schools were not beneficial to their children as they implied that their children were inferior due to segregation. In addition, they feared that these schools would set a precedent in which blacks would be separated for years to come.

Ficker's main argument shows that segregation effects were not equal for all children, and not due to the physical separation of the children.¹ In some ways, white children also were harmed by segregation by not having the ability to interact with people who were perceived as different from themselves. Segregation caused blacks to feel inferior to whites, and hence, this reified the notion of a racial system divided into black and white, inferior and superior. It "provided whites with a false sense of superiority by legitimating personal judgment through one's skin color" (Ficker 1999, 303). In other words, white school officials had the ability to determine whether or not a child could attend a school based on his or her appearance alone.

The *Roberts* case in Boston became the precedent for other states and was a strong symbol of educational segregation (Ficker 1999). In this particular case, Charles Sumner, the attorney for Roberts' family, argued that distinctions were being created between whites and blacks, and the law did not sanction these distinctions. He contested that blacks should be judged along with whites and opinions should be based upon individual merit. Ultimately, the case was lost, and segregation in this city was upheld.

This loss signaled a surprising departure from antebellum interactions between whites and blacks in Northern cities. On a daily basis, each group worked alongside one another in industry and domestic settings. Black industrial workers labored alongside poor whites and at times their supervisors. Black domestics freely entered the households of whites to complete daily household chores and often to care for white children. Unlike parts of the rural South, African Americans made daily contact with whites based on their proximity within the cities and the necessity for business procedures (Berlin 1998; Welch 1998; Sobel 1987).

¹ See Travis and Anthony (1978) for further discussion of psychological effects of segregation.

In spite of the court's ruling, Ficker shows a key component within the case of *Roberts*. He emphasizes that the plea of the attorney is based upon emotions and feelings attached to segregation. This argument is precisely the sentiment found in the movement through the landscape that the children would have experienced as they traveled to and from black schools.

Benjamin Roberts, for whom the case is named, pursued the lawsuit, because his daughter Sarah had to pass five white public schools on her walk to the black school (Ficker 1999). Her movement would have been "straight through" other children proceeding along similar pathways to their own respective schools. The distance itself is symbolic of the way in which black children had to work more and put forth greater effort than white children, yet they received a lesser quality education than their white counterparts. These paths serve as indications of inferiority that are manifested within the physical environment. In addition, these paths are mnemonic devices for the past movement of children and symbols of absence as the children would have passed numerous schools that they were unable to attend. Thus, the landscape represents both racial distinctions between white and black, and also how it created them. Weisser's (2001) classification of architectural purpose contends that experiences are different and depend upon the person's individual characteristics. Distance for a child would be perceived differently than by an adult. Thus, one only can imagine the feelings that a child would have felt watching others walk to closer schools, while he or she needed to continue on his or her way, sometimes through cold, rain, or snow, to a farther school.

Historic accounts of plantation settings show the hidden nature of paths and greater distances of slave travel, as well. On numerous plantations throughout the United States, hidden or sunken paths were used by slaves so as to remain hidden from the white owners while they completed their daily chores. White owners knew the slaves were there, but preferred to keep their work out of sight. Extensive work and materials were invested in keeping the slaves invisible from guests (Kryder-Reid 1994).

Peter Irons, a civil rights' attorney, noted his personal experience as a child, in which he played with his friends outside, and then parted ways at school. His black friends went off in their own directions, as he went to school with other white children. He acknowledges that he never thought of why he had not seen these children at school, as the realization that his school was for whites alone did not occur to him (Irons 2002). As in the *Roberts* case, black families, however, knew these paths of education were different for their children. They had experienced

the results of this separation, feelings of inferiority and less economic opportunities than if they were white. Ficker claims that judicial rulings were made to represent society's beliefs, and as a result, architecture and the landscape, or the movement through buildings and the land, should be interpreted in a similar manner (Ficker 1999).

New Haven, Connecticut: The New Haven Negro College

Like Grandison (2001), Stewart (2003) discusses segregation through the stories of institutions of higher learning. He uses the establishment (or the failure) of the New Haven Negro College to tell the history of race in New England. He describes the creation of mixed colleges in which many black teachers were trained for educational opportunities in segregated schools. The creation of New Haven Negro College, however, never was completed. To the contrary, two integrated colleges, Oberlin and Oneida, had important functions within the nationwide community of blacks.

The plan for New Haven Negro College began in 1831, but failed shortly thereafter. News of Nat Turner's bloody slave insurrection in Virginia had arrived in the North, and whites in New England feared the growing number of blacks within their communities. In response to the news, mobs attacked New Haven's black communities, forcing many to suffer severe damage to their homes and places of business. White supporters of the College were also targets of the attacks. White residents of New Haven clearly demonstrated their dislike and their lack of tolerance for the black community. In response, plans for the College were abandoned.

However, two other colleges were created by white abolitionists involved in the New Haven failure. Financial backing for the creation of Oberlin College and Oneida Institute was provided by a white abolitionist named Arthur Tappan, a supporter of the New Haven plan. Oberlin and Oneida promoted black education. Nonetheless, this was mostly done behind closed doors. These institutions were funded by white philanthropy or self-funding and consequently were influenced by white initiatives and feelings. Therefore, blacks with high class standing were promoted more quickly than blacks as a whole.

Stewart ends his discussion with a description of the *Roberts* story and trial. The case itself was not a victory. A petition enacted four years later for outlawing segregation in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts won the end of school segregation, but the motives of the laws

were not for equality (Stewart 2003). Rather, Massachusetts' politicians were attempting to protect their black population from "slave catchers" and the influences of "slavery and caste oppression."

As a result of these successes and failures, Stewart argues that race could not be defined neatly into two categories. He shows that segregation was harmful to blacks because of the feelings of inferiority that it created. Like Leigh (1997) and Ficker (1999), he did not discuss the ways in which race relations were depicted within the physical environment or how they were created by architecture and space, but he did signal these interactions of place with anecdotes. The physical position of New Haven College is central to the ways in which place is associated with emotion and important community values. New Haven was chosen, because of its association with and its proximity to Yale College, a mnemonic symbol for respect and prestige. White abolitionists had chosen this location by assuming that Yale College, a place where blacks were not accepted, would serve as a resource to the Negro College (Stewart 2003). In this case, position and spatial relationships showed how blacks of the time not only emulated white institutions, but how they sought to achieve similar goals for their own communities. For this reason, the plan for the Negro College also stood for the hope of positive experiences and opportunities for individuals within the black communities.

Another perspective is to compare this setting to the typical Southern plantation in which slaves were located near the main houses and worked within them, but did not enjoy the privileges attached to being free. Among the slave communities, African Americans were themselves part of an internal hierarchy, where domestic slaves often held more responsibility and prestige than those slaves who worked in the fields. In part, their proximity to the main house implied that they were valuable through their access to the internal portions of the main house (Webber 1978). Despite this privilege, however, they were slaves and still susceptible to physical and mental punishment if they did not fulfill their duties. In this respect, their proximity to the main house was to their disadvantage, since they constantly were under the watchful gaze of their masters. Slaves could view and even touch privilege, but they were not equal to the masters or the white families. In New Haven, the placement of the college near Yale would have allowed white supervision, even if the location was sold as a privilege to African Americans.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Grandison (2001) provides an interdisciplinary analysis to prove that spatial relationships, such as those present within the stories of Cincin-

nati, Boston, and New Haven, represent and create race relationships. He analyzes the historically black college and university (HBCU) campuses of the Southern United States and demonstrates how the architecture and the layout, or use of space, represents emotions and feelings of inferiority. In addition, he describes how these arguments are circular, since the campuses purposefully were placed onto marginal land as a reflection of their positions of inferiority to white institutions and people. Thus, some critics, such as A.H. Albertson and Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes, early twentieth architects with the Department of Interior, claimed that black institutions were designed in a haphazard manner; Grandison seeks to show them wrong (Department of Interior 1917 as cited in Grandison 2001).

Through an analysis of Tuskegee University in Alabama, Grandison explains how historically black colleges and universities use the concept of the "backway" in their designs. He selects particular cases of comparison for showing the differences between this university and others like it compared to prominent institutions in which a majority of the students could be identified as white. The "backway" is a term first used by Robert E. Park in 1934 for race and architectural studies. Park (1950) conducted research to understand the difference between the beaten pathways of tenant farmers and the paved ways of Southern whites. The humble paths or backways were what the blacks had to follow. They were unplanned, unplotted, and unsanctioned, while the public highways occupied comfortable ridges and were used most often by white residents of the various towns (Grandison 2001). Similarly, slave passages on plantations are difficult to detect today, as they often were unpaved dirt roads that lead from work areas to living quarters. Spaces occupied by slaves frequently were swept yards, where the earth was hardpacked from constant movement (Heath and Bennett 2000).

Tuskegee is representative of this particular type of campus, where the backway becomes the primary element of design. "The historic section of the campus of Tuskegee is preserved as the Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, documenting the work of Booker T. Washington, and those who followed, modified, and dissented from his philosophy" (Grandison 2001, 67). The campus is located in Macon County, near Montgomery, the center of Alabama's Black Belt. This region was the economic, political, and social hub of the Deep South prior to the Civil War. This institution was built with \$2000, which was given to the university to cover the costs of salaries and expenses of the students. With few funds, Booker T. Washington did not choose an ideal location for Tuskegee. The site was an abandoned cotton plantation with one hundred acres, known locally as the Burnt Place. Three buildings re-

mained after several fires. A stable, a chicken coop, and a kitchen were all made of wood, a symbol of temporary or unstable existence. These buildings were similar to the slave quarters and outbuildings of various plantations. In many of these settings, little time, energy, and material was dedicated to the development of slave space, where heavy investments were placed on the mansions and immediate yards (Vlach 1993; 2002).

The acreage of the old plantation was comprised of gullies and ravines. This caused a significant amount of trouble in regard to stability and topsoil. Whenever rains came, the land would be flooded or would lose nutrients due to runoff. Furthermore, landslips were common, which limited the potential for constructing new buildings. Additionally, hilltops were exposed to various wind damage and limited the places in which buildings could be placed. As a result, a large, unmannered gully gives Tuskegee campus its heart (Grandison 2001). Despite these severe conditions, the founders and black students felt that this land was infinitely better than the huts behind the Big House of slave masters, since here they were free.

Another school, Alabama State University, was driven out of town by racial tensions which forced it onto marginal land as refuge. It is situated on Beulah Hill in Montgomery, where US Steel operates. This provides numerous distractions to the students who attend the university, as well as creating environmental damage (Grandison 2001). Hence, the first difference to white institutions is the marginal land upon which these universities and colleges are placed. The most valuable land is supposed to be the birthright of those with significant resources at their disposal and institutions of society at their control, which evidently is not the black community (Grandison 2001).

Furthermore, traditionally white universities often have a central or ceremonial axis in which their buildings are organized. Like many Southern plantations, the long drive to the central part of the site created a symbolic gesture of power and extravagance saved for a particular class of people (Orser 1988). For instance, "...commanding the focal point of the front lawn of the campus of Pennsylvania State University, the first land-grant college in the United States, Old Main proudly faces what was Main Street-now College Street-in the town of State College" (Grandison 2001, 62-63). Here, education is valued highly and displayed prominently as a focus of the town's layout. "HBCU campuses are frequently also laid out 'backwards' according to dominant design paradigm. Many black campuses put their 'best' facades inwards not outward" (Grandison 2001, 76). The first classes at Tuskegee were held at the stable and the hen house, not in prominent architectural edifices

that stood along a main avenue. Today, too, Tuskegee's Carnegie Library decisively is turned to face Old Montgomery Road, rather than the town near it or a broad boulevard.

Another difference between white universities and HBCU's depends on ingress and egress. At many prominent white universities, a main gate or entrance entices people onto the campus. At Yale University and the University of Chicago, for example, large public facades invite people onto the campus. They serve as large imposing entrances that display superiority and authority. A double message of these schools is to show who has the right to dominate space and who has the right to be there; while those who belong must show respect, and those who do not belong must be reminded of it (Grandison 2001). Plantations were similar; as to enter the main compound, visitors had to transgress several levels of gateways and passages to enter into the quarters of the master class (Olmsted 1959; Sale 1923; Capen 1905). In contrast, HBCU's, "the main gates to these campuses, as a rule, are hard to find. When one does find them-these campuses are usually fenced-like Albertson, one is likely to feel that one is arriving on campus by a back or side way" (Grandison 2001, 76). In numerous freed black communities, the entrances were hidden due to fear of invasions, and also to protect their privacy (Beckles 1998). At Tuskegee, the entrance to the university is on marginal land. Access to the school is restricted somewhat by natural topographic boundaries (Grandison 2001).

From these comparisons, Grandison shows the importance of understanding the "backway" in reference to African American history. The notion of the backway can be overlooked easily if one does not understand or place architecture and landscape in their proper historic context.

Occupying or entering by way of the 'back' has always been a pervasive metaphor for the marginal status of blacks in American society. Black captives and their families, in antebellum times and long after, could enter the white households they served only by way of the back door. When churches in the South were segregated, black attendants were required to sit at the back pew or sometimes in the back balconies (Grandison 2001, 79).

In all of these examples, architecture and landscape represent and create race relationships between white and black residents of the South. These concrete, everyday experiences with space are embedded within the consciousness of those who experienced it firsthand and future generations to experience unequal laws and segregation (Grandison 2001).

Therefore, unlike Leigh (1997), Ficker (1999), and Stewart (2003), Grandison (2001) began analyzing race relations through physical manifestations. He challenges traditional architectural interpretations that focus on the adornments and decorations that exhibit elements of grandeur. He does not focus on the arguments that segregation creates feelings of inferiority among black students, but he states that these feelings are embodied and even celebrated at times by black universities and colleges. Additionally, Grandison emulates the practical or everyday experiences of black students at HBCU's. He shows how these places have overcome struggles between educating blacks and merely providing technical skills. Therefore, in these places, blacks have created community and identity through the use of space. They maintain separation, but these are the intentional choices and decisions of black communities. Traditionally black universities and colleges serve as reminders of inequality and as evidence that blacks were forced to attend their own universities rather than universities or colleges with white students. Furthermore, these universities and colleges represent collections of individual achievements and memories, ones that live within the minds and bodies of each student, teacher, or administrator who attended or visited these schools. The HBCU's should become interpreted symbols for the communities in which they rest and be opened to a large community of visitors that extends beyond African Americans.

Jim Crow Grammar Schools

Through an analysis of two grammar schools in the South, Weisser (2001) provides an intimate portrait of how architecture and landscape were important factors overlooked in the *Brown* decisions of 1954. She stresses how attorneys and Supreme Court Justices felt that segregation created harmful feelings of inferiority for black children. The psychological impact on children was the most prominent argument in which attorneys won rulings against segregation in public schools. Weisser briefly outlines the history of the rulings. She cites how, as a result of these rulings, historians and architects have sought to preserve sites associated with African American history, in order to commemorate the end of segregation, but not the movement from segregation to integration. Included amongst these sites are houses and churches. Thus, these preservation projects (i.e. houses and churches) deny the use of public space by African Americans throughout history. Public spaces were the arenas of important black history events, and these arenas especially included segregated schools. Consequently, "[Weisser's] discussion includes the reciprocal impact of architecture

and social values and the possibilities for marking African American presence for the future" (Weisser 2001, 97).

Weisser formulates her argument to explain the neglect of attorneys to pursue the architectural differences as part of the reasoning for the harmful effects of segregation. She analyzes a case study in Vicksburg, Mississippi. In 1937, the same architects created the two schools she selected. The Bowmar Avenue School was for white children, and the Cherry Street School was for African American children. "To a critic examining the Bowmar Avenue and Cherry Street Schools today, the physical difference between the buildings corroborates their identity as the product of a racially divided social structure. Although the two schools have a similar façade, organization, and style, they differ markedly in character and complexity" (Weisser 2001, 98). These differences are at the heart of segregation, since place is experienced by everyone.

"Vicksburg voters believed that architecture could advance pedagogy, and they saw the new school buildings as community investments" (Weisser 2001, 100). They were correct in their assumption, but they failed to see how architecture also could hinder pedagogy. The architecture of the schools suggests this paternalistic discourse. The Bowmar Avenue School's plan expresses its dedication to happiness and delight in discovery. The school is situated on an eight and a half-acre site, in which abundant room is available for children to run and to play. On the other hand, the "dynamic promise of the ahistorical exterior is only skin deep" (Weisser 2001, 101). The Cherry Street School rests at the edge of a 1.4 acre site, with no regard to natural advantages, such as sunlight. The front and rear facades are identical with blank side walls. The representation of these two schools suggests a system of hierarchy, in which the blacks are at the bottom, just as in antebellum slavery (Weisser 2001). On numerous large plantations throughout the South, African Americans were afforded the basic necessities, such as food, shelter, and clothing. However, clearly the quality of the goods and the input of labor were inferior to those allotted for the master's family. Many slaves were given second hand goods or raw materials rather than manufactured goods, as in the case of many primary schools during segregation (Ferguson 1992; Debow 1858).

Overall, Weisser found that the architecture of the white schools showed that more money was spent on their education and was reinforced by teaching these children to be leaders in their communities. White schools were made of brick and had many advantages over black schools (e.g.: running water, indoor flush toilets, bus service, lunch-room attendants, janitorial service, adequate desks, specialized classes

and classrooms, and student teacher ratios below 28 to 1). On the other hand, one in three African American schools had no water or no electricity, and some even lacked desks. Consequently, these buildings internalized disparities in education between the races. They both represented and created difference between the races of white and black.

Weisser finds a second fault with interpreting these buildings as symbols for African American history without consulting historic accounts or individuals who experienced these places. Many formerly black schools have been stripped from the landscape, in hopes of erasing the past and in order to forget how public schools and United States officials once enforced segregation through their spatial presence and through the policies and actions of people involved with them. Therefore, she seeks to support positions of advocacy for not changing the emphasis of segregation interpretation, but rather showing how these buildings and places associated with segregation can stand for positive associations with the past, as well as negative emotions or feelings (Weisser 2001). Today, these schools should be preserved as rehabilitated structures. They can serve as meeting places, museums, or the centers of historic districts. These buildings not only represent segregation, but also the lived experiences of the numerous students who passed through them.

Historic Segregation of Grammar Schools, High Schools, and Universities in the United States

"Right here it is well to admit, and even to emphasize, that laws are not an adequate index of the extent and prevalence of segregation and discriminatory practice in the South" (Woodward 2002, 102). For this reason, Grandison's (2001) and Weisser's (2001) works are essential to creating a representative analysis of how segregation has affected the everyday personal places that people, even today, experience. Measures of inferiority are difficult to substantiate or to enumerate, but these emotions can be felt and understood through architecture and the landscape.

Leigh (1997), Ficker (1999), and Stewart (2003) present only a few case studies in which segregation is described through a lens of feelings of inferiority. Nonetheless, they do not show how to measure these feelings or to place these feelings into concrete manifestations that are recognizable to audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Their stories are selected to exemplify the potential that historic accounts have in

explaining a history riddled with intentional and unintentional acts that represent and create race relations. The case studies were selected to show different levels of education (primary, secondary, and higher education), to reveal how a child could have been affected by segregation and throughout his or her life. Segregation harmed the smallest of children as well as adults. As a result, segregation created the buildings and landscapes in which people experienced inequality. It also was represented within these same structures and lands. The schools and the surrounding grounds serve as the places in which segregation occurred. These locations were also places of absence, where blacks were prevented from attending schools or becoming important parts of a community.

In addition, among all of these discussions, only Weisser (2001) indicates the importance of positive and negative associations with architecture and the landscape for preserving monuments to segregation for the future. Her argument flows from recent indications that slaves and freed blacks experienced numerous privileges despite being involved in situations of being owned or placed into positions of inferiority (Morgan 1998). Material culture studies on slavery, for instance, indicate that the layout of slave quarters allowed for the slaves to have moments of privacy and control over their own personal matters (Morgan 1998). Accordingly, numerous preservation movements of African American history have sought to incorporate these discoveries. Weisser acknowledges these discussions through proposing questions in which sites should be recognized as public places of African American history. An extensive list of possibilities to develop these sites as interpretative centers of African American history exists. The buildings and landscapes can serve as museums, community meeting places, or foundations of historic districts.

The information that is not provided in the architectural and landscape analyses of Grandison (2001) and Weisser (2001) is complemented by details and anecdotes found in historical accounts and research such as those of Leigh (1997), Ficker (1999), and Stewart (2003). Although these accounts are not representative of the canon of literature on segregation, these authors provide three important case studies, one at each level of education. Each author begins with the telling of the decision of *Roberts v. City of Boston* (1849), thus showing the importance that one event can have on other schools and children throughout the country. Together these documents create an understanding of segregation and its effects upon people and place. More important though, is that jointly these authors express how architecture and landscape represent and shape race relations in the United States. These stories are told through the construction of a secondary school in Cincinnati,

through the movement of people in the city of Boston, and through the location of a college at New Haven.

Segregation exists in the position of buildings and in the architectural lots on which they stand. The feelings of inferiority that many blacks experienced are measured in the architecture and the landscapes of the United States. They are the feelings that are stirred when viewing the buildings of formally segregated schools or walking through the hallways of a school and noticing the lack or presence of different groups of people. These are the feelings that are embodied in prominent institutions, so people will not forget the effects of segregation and the harm that it has done to both blacks and whites. With regard to these case studies, this paper has shown how the built environment is a necessary component of segregational studies. It explores how feelings of inferiority were created by the built environment and shows how lessons learned from the past can be applied to current development to prevent negative psychological impacts in the future. The information provided by comprehensive studies that entail positive and negative effects of segregation can empower people to use historic resources for the development and benefit of their communities.

References

- Anderson, James D. 2004. Crosses to Bear and Promises to Keep: The Jubilee Anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*. *Urban Education* 39(4): 359-373.
- Beckles, Hilary McD. 1998. Freedom Without Liberty: Free Blacks and Slavery in Barbados. *Plantation Society in the Americas* V (2&3): 255-280.
- Berlin, Ira. 1998. *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, 347 U.S. 483 (USSC+) (1954).
- Capen, Oliver Branson. 1905. *Country Homes of Famous Americans*. New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company.
- Debow, James Dunwoody Brownson. 1858. Domestic Treatment of Slaves. *DeBow's review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources* 24(1): 63-64.
- Ferguson, Leland. 1992. *Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Ficker, Douglas J. 1999. From Roberts to Plessy: Educational Segregation and the "Separate but Equal" Doctrine. *The Journal of Negro History* 84(4): 301-314.
- Grandison, Kenrick Ian. 2001. Negotiated Space: The Black College Campus as a Cultural Record of Postbellum America. In *Sites of Memory: Perspectives on*

- Architecture and Race*, edited by C.A. Barton. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Heath, Barbara J. and Amber Bennett. 2000. "The Little Spots Allow'd Them": The Archaeological Study of African American Yards. *Historical Archaeology* 34(2): 38-55.
- Irons, Peter H. 2002. *Jim Crow's Children: The Broken Promise of the Brown Decision*. New York: Viking.
- Joseph, J.W. 2000. Archaeology and the African American Experience in the Urban South. In *Archaeology of Southern Urban Landscapes*, edited by Amy L. Young. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.
- Kryder-Reid, Elizabeth. 1994. As is the Gardner, So Is the Garden: The Archaeology of Landscapes as Myth. In *Historical Archaeology of the Chesapeake*, edited by P. A. Shackel and B. J. Little. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Leigh, Patricia Randolph, 1997. Segregation by Gerrymander: The Creation of the Lincoln Heights (Ohio) School District. *The Journal of Negro Education* 66(2): 121-136.
- Massey, Douglas S. 1990. American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass. *American Journal of Sociology* 96(2): 329-357.
- Morgan, Philip D. 1998. *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Olmsted, Frederick Law. 1959. *The Slave States Before the Civil War*. New York: Capricorn Books. Original edition, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* published in 1856 by New York: Dix and Edwards.
- Orser, Charles. 1988. The Archaeological Analysis of Plantation Society: Replacing Status and Caste with Economics and Power. *American Antiquity* 53(4): 735-751.
- Park, Robert E. 1950. *Race and Culture*. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press.
- Paulding, James K. 1959. An Unpublished Sketch of James Madison. *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 67(4): 432-437.
- Roberts v. City of Boston*, 59 Mass. 198, 5. Cush. 198 (1849).
- Sale, Edith Tunis. 1923. *Historic Gardens of Virginia*. Richmond, VA: The William Byrd Press, Inc.
- Sobel, Mechal. 1987. *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth Century Virginia*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Stewart, James Brewer. 2003. The New Haven Negro College and the Meanings of Race in New England, 1776-1870. *The New England Quarterly* 76(3): 323-355.
- Travis, Cheryl B., and Sharon E. Anthony. 1978. Some Psychological Consequences of Integration. *Journal of Negro Education* 47(2): 151-158.
- Vlach, John Michael. 2002. *The Planter's Prospect: Privilege and Slavery in Plantation Paintings*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

- _____. 1993. *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery*, 1st ed. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Webber, Thomas L. 1978. *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community 1831-1865*. New York: Norton.
- Weisser, Amy. 2001. Marking Brown v. Board of Education. In *Sites of Memory: Perspectives on Architecture and Race*, edited by C.A. Barton. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Welch, Pedro L.V. 1998. The Urban Context of Slave Life: Views from Bridgetown, Barbados, in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. *Plantation Society in the Americas* V(2&3): 281-296.
- Wolff, Max. 1963. Segregation in the Schools of Gary, Indiana. *Journal of Educational Sociology* 36(6): 251-261.
- Woodward, Comer Vann, 2002. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow: A Commemorative Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Young, Amy L. 2000. Introduction: Urban Archaeology in the South. In *Archaeology of Southern Urban Landscapes*, edited by A. L. Young. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.

Leslie Kirchler is a dual Ph.D. degree candidate in the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning and the School of Natural Resources at the University of Michigan. She has extensive experience in historic preservation projects, especially in reference to cultural landscapes and ephemeral landscape features, such as slave quarters and activity spaces.