

## CHAPTER 6

# A Documentation Case Study

## *The Desegregation of Virginia Education (DOVE) Project*

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### Introduction

In the late 1980s, in Prince Edward County, Virginia, an attorney new to the area and a telephone company employee discussed how the latter could get a better job. The employee, an African American, told the newcomer that he could not get a promotion because he never learned how to use a ruler. He missed key parts of a basic education because when he was a child the local schools closed to prevent integration. The attorney was stunned, having never heard of Virginia's Massive Resistance.<sup>1</sup> Prince Edward County was an extreme case, closing its schools for five years. Elsewhere in Virginia, the governor shut down some schools for five months to a year, locking out more than fourteen thousand students to keep white children and black children from learning alongside each other.

Scenes of the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, are seared into our national consciousness. We all recognize the image of young Elizabeth Eckford walking with great dignity as a crowd of angry whites yells and taunts her, and we likewise nod familiarly at film of the 101st Airborne escorting a few black teenagers

into the school. By contrast, the struggle to integrate Virginia's schools produced no iconic images and has faded from popular memory, though not from the memories of those who lived through it. If others have any image of school integration in Virginia, it likely is based on *Remember the Titans*, the movie that recounted the rocky but ultimately successful melding of whites and blacks on the football team of Alexandria's T. C. Williams High School in 1971. Despite the far-reaching effects of Massive Resistance, little documentation of this turbulent time is publicly available in the state's historical repositories, threatening to make permanent our collective amnesia.

A curation initiative, the Desegregation of Virginia Education (DOVE) project, begun in 2008, seeks to create a broad base of support for documenting school desegregation and in so doing to raise an awareness of the importance of archives and research institutions.<sup>2</sup> DOVE's purpose initially was to identify, locate, catalog, and encourage the preservation of records that document school desegregation in Virginia. Led by Special Collections and University Archives at Old Dominion University (ODU) Libraries, DOVE includes historians, archivists, librarians, and public officials from numerous institutions. DOVE intended to identify record holders, such as school districts, historical societies, civil rights organizations, and libraries and archives, and inventory their records. Over time, it has evolved to become a creator and collector of records, particularly through oral histories.

This chapter recounts DOVE's experience dealing with issues such as leadership, naming, organization, institutional competition, survey methodology, funding, and outreach. It provides specific recommendations for other documentation projects. The problems DOVE encountered and the insight gained along the way may be instructive to other documentation projects dealing with sensitive topics, especially those related to race, that have divided our society.

## Background

### Virginia School Desegregation

To understand the challenges DOVE faces and the cultural context in which it exists, one must first understand the history of public education and school desegregation in Virginia. While eighteenth-century Virginia clearly did a fine job of educating its elite such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, it largely ignored the education of the rest of its population. The legislature in 1796 authorized counties to establish free schools, but few did. By 1860, free schools for whites existed in just fifteen counties and towns. The laws specifically forbade teaching blacks to read and write.<sup>3</sup> Despite the lagging condition of primary education, higher education flourished. In addition to the long-established College of William and Mary, the state boasted numerous denominational and two nonsectarian state-funded colleges, all enrolling only whites.<sup>4</sup>

The post-Civil War era saw a school building boom. Northern missionaries and the Freedmen's Bureau founded numerous schools to teach freed slaves. During Reconstruction, radical Republicans enacted a new state constitution in 1869 that required the creation of a public school system for both whites and blacks. The legislature in 1870 specified that the schools should be racially segregated. By 1877, some 3,442 schools for whites and 1,230 schools for people of color dotted Virginia's landscape.<sup>5</sup> Segregation extended to higher education, with the founding of two new colleges for African Americans, now known as Hampton University and Virginia State University. Many alumni of both institutions became teachers in the public schools.<sup>6</sup>

In the late 1800s, state governments throughout the South began to codify segregation through what came to be called "Jim Crow" laws. The Supreme Court upheld Jim Crow in 1896 in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, sanctioning the doctrine of "separate but equal." Virginia's new constitution in 1902 mandated segregation, ordering that "[w]hite and colored children shall

not be taught in the same school but in separate schools." By every measure, however, Virginia's separate public schools for blacks were not equal. By the 1910s, some counties were spending more than ten times as much per white student as per black student. A census in 1920 found more than 22,000 white students in high school, compared to 297 black students.<sup>7</sup>

The state's black population did not passively accept separate but unequal schools. In 1937 and 1938, two African American teachers in Norfolk sued the school system to demand that their salaries be the same as those of white teachers. In 1940, the Fourth Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals ruled against the schools and made it a class-action suit, applicable to all black teachers in Norfolk.<sup>8</sup> World War II interrupted the desegregation effort, but after the war, African Americans in Virginia became even more active in demanding the equalization of facilities, curricula, and every aspect of schooling. In 1951, African American students at Farmville's Robert Russa Moton High School and their parents sued in federal court, alleging that the school was not equal to the white high school in Prince Edward County. Their case became one of the four cases that the Supreme Court packaged together as *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.<sup>9</sup>

The Supreme Court's momentous 1954 decision overturning "separate but equal" stunned Virginia's white leaders. At first, Governor Thomas Stanley and others seemed, however reluctantly, to accept the decision. But white parents in Southside, the region with the highest percentage of black students in the state, immediately demanded that the state resist. Southside was the heart of the Byrd Organization, the Democratic Party machine that had run the state under the leadership of Senator Harry F. Byrd since the 1920s, and Byrd listened to the white parents. The governor then created the Gray Commission to determine how to respond.<sup>10</sup> In November 1955, the commission issued recommendations designed to delay desegregation as long as possible but allowed localities

to decide if they would desegregate quickly or not. This local option did not sit well with many whites, and in February 1956 Byrd proposed what came to be called "Massive Resistance." In September 1956, the state legislature enacted Byrd's plan, denying state aid to any locality that allowed desegregation of even one school, authorizing the governor to close any school that integrated, and providing tuition grants to help white parents send their children to segregated private schools.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, black parents sued to force the state to implement the *Brown* decision. As the school year began in the fall of 1958, federal judges ordered schools in Warren County, Charlottesville, and Norfolk to integrate. Governor J. Lindsay Almond Jr. shut down those schools, locking out twelve thousand students. Ironically, the decision to close schools primarily affected white children, not black. The schools targeted for integration were white schools that had a few black students assigned to them. In any case, on January 19, 1959, state and federal courts simultaneously ruled the school closings to be unconstitutional.<sup>12</sup>

After briefly considering shutting down the state's public schools entirely, Virginia's white leaders reluctantly allowed integration to proceed very slowly. Warren County, Charlottesville, and Norfolk public schools reopened with a handful of African American students attending previously all-white schools. However, the remaining provisions of Massive Resistance legislation, such as tuition grants and a pupil-placement program, minimized "race mixing" in all districts. Rather than risk any desegregation, the government in Prince Edward County, in the heart of Southside, shut down its public school system entirely in 1959.<sup>13</sup> Using state tuition grants, many white students attended a new private academy, but the closure left other white students and all African American students without schools to attend. More than 1,700 students were without schooling for five years. In 1963, Surry County closed its white high school and converted it to a private school to avoid admitting seven

African American students. In 1964, the Supreme Court ordered Prince Edward to reopen its public schools and Surry County to open its white high school.<sup>14</sup>

De facto segregation continued. The reopening of the Prince Edward schools provided African American students with public education, but few whites joined them, resulting in the continuation of a segregated school system in the county.<sup>15</sup> By the mid-1960s, only 5 percent of African American students statewide attended integrated schools. In 1968, the Supreme Court invalidated the pupil-placement program and ordered an end to separate white and black school systems.<sup>16</sup> Two years later, federal judges ordered a busing plan implemented to desegregate Richmond and Norfolk schools. Not until the late 1980s did busing end for most schools.<sup>17</sup>

Higher education in Virginia desegregated slowly as well. In 1950, the public system of higher education included eight universities for whites and one for blacks, Virginia State University. Since the 1930s, the state had provided funding for African American students to attend out-of-state schools if Virginia State University did not have the program they wanted. In 1950, in the aftermath of recent Supreme Court decisions involving higher education in other states, a federal district court ordered the University of Virginia's law school to admit an African American applicant. Paying for a student to go out of state was no longer an acceptable alternative. The white schools slowly began to admit a small number of black applicants to programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels if Virginia State University had no program in that area. Federal legislation in the 1960s, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Higher Education Act of 1965, along with pressure from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, finally forced public higher education in Virginia to undertake serious integration efforts. Racial divisions, however, continue to this day.<sup>18</sup>

## Why a Documentation Project?

In April 2008 at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Sonia Yaco, the new special collections librarian and university archivist, hosted a meeting of the local archivists' roundtable. She displayed some of ODU's rich collections on school desegregation and asked her colleagues which archives might house related materials. Those present could think of only a small number of school desegregation collections. They expressed concern about the lack of documentation and suggested establishing a group to locate, preserve, and catalog existing manuscripts related to school desegregation in Virginia—and so was born the Desegregation of Virginia Education Project, DOVE.

During the second half of the twentieth century, the massive increase in the number of records produced helped spawn a new approach to archival collection development known as a *documentation strategy*. According to Helen Samuels, one of the originators of the term:

*A documentation strategy consists of four activities: 1. choosing and defining the topic to be documented, 2. selecting the advisors and establishing the site for the strategy, 3. structuring the inquiry and examining the form and substance of the available documentation, and 4. selecting and placing the documentation.*<sup>19</sup>

In this approach, the archivist no longer simply tries to collect the records of past events but becomes an active participant, working with various partners to shape the creation and retention of records of current events and to ensure thorough documentation.

The most successful documentation strategy is that of the American Institute for Physics, begun in the early 1960s and continuing to the present day. The institute's "goals were to locate important records,

ensure that some responsible repository would take custody of them, supplement the written record with oral history interviews, compile biographical data on American physicists, and support the study and teaching of the history of physics." It has gained cooperation from many major physics research facilities so that appropriate records are created as projects proceed. And by not collecting records itself, except as a "repository of last resort," it has earned the trust of other repositories.<sup>20</sup>

Other institutions and partnerships have undertaken documentation strategies, but they have not been as successful. A federally funded project to create a documentation strategy for six counties in western New York in the mid-1980s foundered on the shoals of too much material, institutional competition, and lack of funding to sustain the project. A proposed project to document the high-tech industries around Boston withered for similar reasons. More recent successful projects have tended to be sponsored by one institution, not by partnerships.<sup>21</sup> None of these projects, successful or unsuccessful, has focused on the subject of school desegregation.

DOVE adapted the documentation strategy model to document not an ongoing issue but a past one. In 1991, Michael Ryan, then curator of special collections at Stanford University, noted that "documentation strategies can be used retrospectively as well, and might be turned to good effect on the social, cultural, and political idioms of the past."<sup>22</sup> That is precisely what DOVE seeks to do. The remainder of this chapter examines various issues relating to the establishment and operation of a statewide project to document school desegregation in Virginia. Any documentation project involving multiple institutions and dealing with sensitive or controversial topics is likely to face similar challenges and struggles. This case study gives archivists considering the establishment of a documentation project a starting point of issues to consider and serves as a model for such projects.



## Structural Issues

### Leadership

To those outside Virginia, it may seem that the logical choice to lead DOVE would have been a person of color, given the subject matter. However, the members of the local archivists' roundtable, a multiracial group, urged Yaco, who is white, to spearhead the project. As a northerner new to Virginia, Yaco believed that she was a poor choice. Not only did she lack local ties, but she also had a noticeable Yankee accent, a potential handicap when asking southerners for race-related materials, and she was a newly minted archivist. But the roundtable members considered her interest in the subject, frankness in addressing a matter Virginians sometimes avoid, and willingness to take on the project of far greater importance than her racial identity.

Still hoping to find another leader for DOVE, Yaco approached several potential sponsors. Both the state chapter of a regional archives organization and the Library of Virginia, the state library and archives, expressed interest in participating in but not leading DOVE. Beatriz Hardy, the director of the Special Collections Research Center at the College of William and Mary, was willing to provide support and advice but did not have the time to lead the project. Eventually, Yaco concluded that if she could find someone who knew the subject area well and enjoyed good connections within Virginia, she could co-lead the project. James Sweeney fit the bill. A white history professor at ODU, Sweeney is a scholar of the civil rights era with good contacts. He and Yaco became co-chairs.

Yaco and Sweeney launched the documentation project with an exploratory meeting at the Virginia Historical Society in July 2008. They sent invitations to some individuals as well as general invitations to historian and archivist listservs. A diverse group attended the project's first meeting and made some important decisions.

A critical decision was what to call the project, as the name would set the tone. Given the sensitivity of the subject, it was particularly important

that the name be neutral. There were two groups whose cooperation was vital to DOVE's success. The first comprised those African Americans who suffered discrimination and fought against segregation but who potentially could be leery of the Virginia archival community, given its history of undervaluing their records. Segregationists who supported Massive Resistance but who might be reluctant in the early twenty-first century to publicize their support of or role in segregation made up the second group. DOVE seeks to ensure that the records of both sides survive, so it was critical to find a name that would be acceptable to both groups. Hardy proposed Desegregation of Virginia Education Project, or DOVE. While that emerged as a favorite for its peaceful connotation, some expressed concern that it suggested a whitewash of an era in Virginia's history that was not at all peaceful. Before the group officially adopted the name, Yaco sought feedback from various people of color residing in Virginia and elsewhere. They reacted favorably, considering DOVE to sound conciliatory.

### Membership and Organization

From the beginning, the membership of the steering committee included historians and other academics, archivists, librarians, government employees, and elected officials. Participants worked at universities, public libraries, and government agencies. Archivists from Hampton University, George Mason University, Virginia Tech, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Norfolk State University were among the first to attend DOVE meetings. Librarians and historians from the Norfolk Public Library participated. Public officials, such as George Schaefer, clerk of courts for Norfolk, and Delegate Kenneth R. Plum, representing the 38th District in northern Virginia, attended early meetings and showed ongoing interest in DOVE. Outreach

efforts brought Jefferson Moak of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Regional Archives-Mid-Atlantic Region in Philadelphia to the project.

The steering committee considered this diversity of membership critical for DOVE's success. Historians provided subject expertise, typically had done research in numerous repositories around the state, and often knew of materials in private hands. Archivists and librarians not only were themselves keepers of records but also served as contacts within their professional communities in Virginia. Government employees, such as education and court officials, helped DOVE to identify the location of records still held by local governments. Elected officials helped gain publicity and support for the project. The steering committee expected education contacts to prove valuable in promoting use of DOVE in the future.

Another important decision at these early meetings was DOVE's structure. The participants decided that DOVE would have a statewide steering committee to set policy and smaller task forces to coordinate the actual surveying work. The steering committee initially met every two months to plan the project, set policies, and forge institutional ties. The co-chairs sent open invitations to meetings to archivist and historian listservs. While the first few meetings had limited agendas and lasted only two hours, later meetings lasted longer to cover more ground and allow participants a chance to get to know each other. Starting the meetings in mid-morning proved a convenience to those driving long distances. After holding several meetings in Richmond, the steering committee concluded that as a statewide documentation project, DOVE needed to encompass all parts of the state and avoid the tendency to focus its attention on a central location, whether the capital or the state's largest city. Consequently, the DOVE steering committee began holding its meetings throughout the state. Doing so sent a message to DOVE

members and the heads of their institutions that DOVE was concerned about records and organizations in all regions of the state; educated DOVE members about regional resources; and ensured that all shared the burden of traveling to meetings.

In fall 2009, at the end of a year of steering committee meetings, DOVE designated chairs of the regional task forces. After considering the establishment of task forces based on types of record holders, different aspects of desegregation, or geographic regions, the steering committee settled on regional task forces as the most practical in terms of logistics. Members of the steering committee believed that finding convenient locations for task force meetings and recruiting and training volunteers would be accomplished more easily on a regional than on a statewide basis.

### Volunteer Recruitment

The initial goals of the regional task forces were to identify likely record holders and recruit volunteers. By spring 2010, the task force chairs, all of whom were members of the steering committee, were to begin inviting a variety of people to join the task forces, keeping in mind DOVE's philosophy of diversity. Among those to be invited were people knowledgeable about local history or the location of relevant records. In addition to historians and librarians from local history rooms at libraries and historical societies, the task forces also could include realtors, on the assumption that they often are the first to hear about people moving out of their houses and wishing to find a secure place for their personal papers or organizational records. To assist in recruiting volunteers and gaining cooperation from people who have privately held records, task forces also were to enlist people who were active in churches and civic organizations. Other potential task force participants included members of the local media, who typically have

wide-ranging contacts and could help publicize DOVE locally, as well as politicians, who could provide political legitimacy and support.

The task force chairs did not all recruit members with equal enthusiasm and vigor for a variety of reasons. Some task force chairs participated in DOVE as volunteers on their own time and simply could not devote sufficient time to the project at this initial stage. Others were unsure of the extent of their supervisors' support for the project. Another factor was uncertainty about the purpose of the task forces, other than recruiting volunteer surveyors, and that people they approached were more enthusiastic about surveying than about serving on the task forces. Consequently, the state of the task forces varied a great deal, with some regions not having active task forces.

Those task forces that did exist began recruiting volunteers to survey records. Depending on the community, potential sources of volunteers included the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), archivist organizations, retired teacher organizations, church newsletters, "volunteers wanted" listings on local United Way websites, and other community organizations. Local colleges and universities also proved a good source of interns and volunteers, particularly when professors were members of the regional task force and could identify and recruit interested and capable students.

One problem that the task forces encountered was that the recruitment of volunteers began before DOVE was fully prepared to train and make use of them. Recruitment began even as DOVE was still working out policies and procedures and before training materials had been created. Consequently, there was some lag time before volunteers could be put to work. That dissipated their initial enthusiasm and caused some volunteers to withdraw from the project. In hindsight, it would have been better to wait until DOVE was ready to survey before it began recruiting volunteers. But, at the time, taking advantage of the publicity

relating to the fiftieth anniversary of Massive Resistance created a sense of urgency to get the project underway, even if funds and materials were not yet available to provide training.

## Funding

Paying for training pointed to one of DOVE's major challenges: lack of a secure funding source. Individual participants and institutions in the early years absorbed all of the expenses. As budgets tightened in the years after DOVE's establishment, it became harder to get even limited institutional funding. Old Dominion University Libraries was and remains DOVE's biggest supporter, housing the project and providing server space and staff support. Yaco's leadership of DOVE regularly required approximately 15 percent of her time. Other ODU library staff members involved in DOVE include the system librarians who created and maintain the DOVE catalog, metadata cataloging staff who provide keyword tagging of the records, and librarians, interns, and volunteers who provide grant-writing expertise. ODU has committed to permanent support of the DOVE catalog and housing the DOVE organizational archives. The College of William and Mary provided a volunteer to design an informational brochure about DOVE and funded its printing; William and Mary also paid for promotional pens for the statewide program. Institutions hosting DOVE meetings have provided free meeting space, and many institutions have allowed steering committee members and task force chairs to devote some work time to DOVE. Most steering committee members and volunteer surveyors have paid their own travel expenses.

The DOVE steering committee and Yaco explored grant possibilities but faced some daunting challenges. One of the major issues was that in the difficult economic environment of 2009 through 2012, no institution wanted to devote the resources needed to develop and apply for grants

for a cooperative venture when it had many needs of its own. In addition, DOVE was a young and informal organization and lacked a track record—important to funders who want to make sure their dollars have maximum impact. Nonetheless, with ODU's leadership, DOVE sought funding for meetings, training programs for surveyors, and outreach.

The most successful efforts occurred with organizations whose interests related to DOVE's goals. Specifically, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Commission, a state commission commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of school desegregation, provided DOVE with a partnership grant to train surveyors.<sup>23</sup> In 2012, DOVE formed a partnership with AARP Virginia, the Virginia Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Urban League of Virginia. The partnership expanded DOVE from a surveying project to a surveying and collecting project. The partners jointly sponsored "School Desegregation: Learn, Preserve, and Empower" events to spread knowledge about and collect stories and historic documents detailing Virginia's journey toward the desegregation of its schools. AARP Virginia provided funding for creating a traveling exhibit, printing fliers and generating publicity for partnership events, hiring a graduate student to accompany the traveling exhibit, and paying travel costs for volunteers.

Publicity from the "School Desegregation" events brought an offer from a private donor to support further oral history gatherings. DOVE has requested funds from the donor to help regional volunteers with money for gas and to host training sessions. Although the donor approached Yaco with an offer to provide ODU Libraries with funding, she instead suggested that the funds go to George Mason University, an active partner in DOVE. George Mason University, led by DOVE's Northern Virginia chair Robert Vay, had designed the oral history portion of the "School Desegregation" events, conducted volunteer training, and provided technical support at most of the events.

## Interinstitutional Competition

Despite ODU's cooperation in directing a donor to George Mason University, competition among institutions proved a major challenge for DOVE. Historically, interinstitutional competition has been one of the biggest challenges faced by documentation projects. Virginia's libraries have a tradition of cooperation. The state's academic libraries, public and private, work together in the Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA), which provides collective purchasing of databases, interlibrary loan services, and shared training opportunities. Many of the larger archival repositories cooperated in creating Virginia Heritage (VH), an electronic union catalog of finding aids.<sup>24</sup> Despite these areas of cooperation, the repositories are competitive and territorial in other regards. For example, staff members from some of the older, wealthier institutions questioned the validity of a relatively new university such as ODU leading DOVE.<sup>25</sup>

One issue that came up repeatedly at steering committee meetings was a concern that DOVE surveyors would interfere with long-standing donor cultivation efforts by different repositories. Committee members from several institutions explained that they had been cultivating potential donors of collections for several years and did not want DOVE to contact those people. The committee members thought that having a DOVE surveyor contact these record holders might infringe on those relationships. The state archivist wrote Yaco in 2009 suggesting that "groups involved in desegregation efforts . . . may be confused when approached by unknown individuals asking to survey their records without coordination with their previous contacts."<sup>26</sup> The steering committee decided that it was up to individual institutions to inform the appropriate regional task force chairs of any long-standing relationships, and the chairs would then decide how to proceed in each case.

A related issue was a fear that institutions would use the DOVE catalog as a shopping list for acquiring collections and that the bigger



institutions in the state would swoop in and grab the best collections. The steering committee considered recommending that record holders be asked to donate their collections to the nearest DOVE institution, but the statewide institutions objected that this was unfair to them, given their statewide mandates. In the end, the steering committee decided that DOVE would not recommend any specific institutions but would instead simply urge record holders to place their records in an archival repository to be preserved for posterity.

A final issue that caused interinstitutional tension occurred when representatives from several institutions expressed a belief that the DOVE catalog unnecessarily duplicated Virginia Heritage, the electronic union catalog of finding aids mentioned above. They suggested that rather than having a separate DOVE catalog, record holders should simply enter their information in VH.<sup>27</sup> However, VH contains only a small portion of the holdings of the state's archives. Only twenty-three repositories participate in this catalog, and it contains only those finding aids that have been encoded in the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) standard. The College of William and Mary, for example, is a charter member of VH, but as of September 2013, only one-sixth of its collections were in the catalog. Smaller repositories sometimes lack the expertise and funding to create finding aids, let alone to encode them in EAD. For the same reason, VH is unsuitable for cataloging records held by most government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private individuals. However, to ease the burden on institutions that already had desegregation-related collection finding aids in VH, ODU library staff entered relevant records from VH into the DOVE catalog.

## Methodological Issues

### The DOVE Catalog

From the first meeting of the steering committee, DOVE's goal was to create a catalog of manuscripts and other records relating to desegregation in Virginia. The steering committee considered what type of information should be included in the catalog records. Yaco recognized the need for a flexible descriptive standard. EAD would be an appropriate standard if the project were only describing manuscript collections with finding aids. However, DOVE's catalog was going to include a variety of objects and collections from many types of repositories, including digital collections, public records, and traditional archival collections. Because of the flexibility required, Dublin Core, a standard typically used for digital objects, seemed more appropriate. Initially created for use by people without archival or librarian training, Dublin Core also suited DOVE's volunteer workforce. Yaco chose a subset of Dublin Core components and added fields to describe the surveyor and repository for each collection.

ODU Libraries created and hosted the catalog, based on the fields Yaco and the steering committee had selected. The catalog initially displayed as a simple list of records with a basic search function. This catalog could answer the question at the root of DOVE, "Where is there material about the desegregation of schools [or a specific school]?" But it did little else.

DOVE ideally wanted a tool that would display the catalog in a format that would be graphically appealing to educators, scholars, and the general public. Yaco and others envisioned being able to find collections by looking at a map of Virginia or a timeline rather than by searching for text. Constraints on staff time dictated that any such tool would need to be installed, customized, and maintained without requiring significant support from ODU's information technology unit. DOVE's lack of funding meant the tool also needed to be free.

In 2011, Greta Kuriger Suiter of George Mason University Libraries attended a workshop at the Library of Congress and learned about a tool that provided exactly what DOVE needed. Viewshare is a free web application administered by the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP) at the Library of Congress. Running an instance of the open-source Recollection software, Viewshare publicly launched in late 2011.<sup>28</sup> Viewshare includes a sophisticated search engine, map, and timeline. Yaco and Suiter configured Viewshare and imported catalog records. The new catalog resides on a Library of Congress server, but is displayed on Old Dominion University's DOVE website. The DOVE Viewshare catalog allows patrons to easily find records for specific school locations or date ranges.<sup>29</sup>

### What to Survey

At an early meeting, the steering committee determined that DOVE would seek to document the entire struggle for desegregation from the pre-*Brown* challenges to school segregation in the mid-1940s to the *Riddick* case that first ended court-ordered busing in 1986.<sup>30</sup> To provide evidence of the full spectrum of experiences, DOVE volunteers are surveying records not only in the places where Massive Resistance actually shut down schools but also in the places where schools integrated peacefully, albeit gradually and reluctantly. In addition, DOVE volunteers are searching for records of the experiences of all participants from schoolchildren, parents, teachers, school administrators, school board members, politicians, and others affected by the struggle for desegregation, regardless of their stance.

Initially, the steering committee planned a two-phase survey. Phase 1 was to cover materials held in libraries and archives, and Phase 2 was to cover materials housed elsewhere. This plan was based on the assumption that repositories had well-developed inventories and would be willing to

survey their own collections. It quickly became apparent that smaller repositories often lack adequate inventories to allow for easy identification of school desegregation materials. In addition, some larger libraries notified the steering committee that they would not be able to survey their own holdings due to limited staffs, budget cutbacks, and DOVE not being an institutional priority. The steering committee's alternative plan to survey in-state repositories using their online finding aids proved unworkable when a trial survey showed that few had finding aids online. Consequently, the regional task forces now survey all types of record holders concurrently.

DOVE volunteers survey materials housed in public repositories and offices such as archives and libraries, courthouses, governmental agencies, and school district offices, as well as records held by individuals and private institutions, such as churches and citizens' groups. Governmental records being surveyed include court proceedings, meeting minutes, and school board resolutions. Nongovernmental records include newspapers and newsletters, diaries, publications, organizational minutes, personal correspondence, audiovisual materials, scrapbooks, and photographs. Due to privacy and confidentiality concerns, DOVE has chosen not to survey individual student and personnel records.<sup>31</sup>

One issue that the steering committee long debated was whether or not to include privately held records in the DOVE survey and catalog. The committee decided to include the records to make the catalog as comprehensive as possible. To protect record holders from unwanted attention, however, DOVE makes collection descriptions public in its catalog only with the record holder's written permission. Surveyors provide record holders with a permission form to that effect, and the signed forms are kept with DOVE's organizational archives at Old Dominion University. The catalog record specifies access requirements, such as needing to contact the record holder in advance.

Some surveying has occurred outside of the regional task force structure. Record holders have contacted steering committee members about school desegregation materials on an ad hoc basis, resulting in additions to the DOVE catalog when appropriate. The regional task forces do not cover out-of-state repositories, some of which are known to have collections relating to Virginia school desegregation. DOVE members and especially ODU staff and students are surveying them and using electronic union catalogs, such as OCLC's Archives Grid, to identify other possibilities.

### How to Survey

Developing procedures and training materials for surveying took more time than anticipated. The DOVE steering committee eventually agreed on a procedure, which Robert Vay, the Northern Virginia chair, codified in a manual. The procedure basically involves:

**Step 1:** *The regional task force identifies possible record holders and relevant collections.*

**Step 2:** *With coordination from the regional task force chair, volunteers contact record holders to schedule an on-site visit, sending a letter of introduction outlining the DOVE project and requesting written permission to include the collection in the catalog.*

**Step 3:** *The volunteers prepare for the on-site visit, confirming the visit with the record holder.*

**Step 4:** *The volunteers (usually in teams) survey the collection, using a standard DOVE records survey form.*

**Step 5:** *The volunteers send the survey to the DOVE regional coordinator, who assigns a task force member to enter the survey into the DOVE catalog.*

**Step 6:** *ODU Libraries cataloging staff check the catalog entry and provide keyword tagging.*

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Commission in Virginia provided funds to create training materials and hold workshops. Yaco, Tonia Graves, and other ODU staff developed a program to train surveyors. With help from ODU's Center for Learning Development, they created a web-based training module, which they tested on DOVE's regional task force chairs. The program introduces archival research methods and records surveying, particularly the records survey form (see Appendix A). In addition, surveyors need to have a solid grounding in the history of school desegregation, so they will recognize relevant topics. The training program provides a brief background of the history of school desegregation in Virginia. This program can be used in person, but it also can be used online. It is available on CD and as a two-part podcast on iTunesU.<sup>32</sup> Yaco and DOVE regional chairs held training workshops around Virginia from late 2010 to May 2011 for volunteer surveyors.

## Outreach

In addition to surveying, outreach was a critical task for DOVE and is an important part of developing any collaborative documentation project. Outreach helped attract volunteers and support, made record holders aware of the project, and educated the generations born after Massive Resistance about the history of desegregation in Virginia. But questions

that still had to be addressed included who should do the outreach; to what audience, for what purpose, and how.

Initially, DOVE's audience comprised historians and archivists. In addition to posting to listservs, the DOVE statewide co-chairs gave talks at regional and national archivist, librarian, and historian conferences. This helped build networks while also raising DOVE's profile and adding to its credibility. It also allowed the steering committee to gather information about the needs of scholars and to recruit volunteers.

A second aspect of DOVE outreach was creating public awareness of the project on a continuing basis. Yaco, together with Hampton Roads DOVE co-chair Charles Ford and others, coauthored a book on the history of school equality in the Hampton Roads region of Virginia, creating a public platform to discuss DOVE at book-signing events.<sup>33</sup> This in turn generated a newspaper article about DOVE by a local reporter who had previously used ODU's school desegregation collections for an award-winning series about the end of Massive Resistance.<sup>34</sup> The Associated Press picked up the DOVE story, and newspapers across Virginia subsequently printed it. Both the speaking events and the newspaper articles generated volunteers and donations of materials. In addition, the state president of AARP, Dr. Warren Stewart, became interested in DOVE after seeing the newspaper article; he invited DOVE to participate in AARP's Diversity Conference to recruit volunteers. DOVE's leaders continue to seize every opportunity to publicize the project statewide.

Regional task force chairs similarly created awareness of DOVE in their communities through outreach. Typically professors, librarians, or archivists who are well respected in their communities, the task force chairs gave DOVE credibility and connections to networks of people in their regions. They sought opportunities to speak about DOVE at churches, chapters of organizations such as the NAACP, and other civic organizations. Community newsletters and websites, letters to the

editors of local newspapers, and public service announcements on local radio and community cable television stations provided other outreach possibilities. They also tapped the expertise of media people on the regional task forces to help promote DOVE. The purpose of this outreach was to recruit volunteers and encourage record holders to contact the task forces about having their records surveyed. To assist the task forces, the DOVE steering committee developed a brochure about the project to be distributed as part of outreach. The brochure had the added benefit of providing a consistent message about DOVE across the state.<sup>35</sup>

The partnership with AARP Virginia, the Virginia Conference of the NAACP, and the Urban League of Virginia provided excellent opportunities for outreach. The partnership held a series of events entitled "School Desegregation: Learn, Preserve, and Empower" in Hampton, Portsmouth, Richmond, Farmville, Lynchburg, Alexandria, the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and Roanoke during the spring and summer. The events' focal point was an audiovisual exhibition that included photographs of those involved in the struggle for school equality, such as Oliver W. Hill, Thurgood Marshall, and others, along with a timeline of key events. DOVE volunteers and staff at the events encouraged participants to share their communities' experiences through the donation of photographs, letters, fliers, or posters, or by telling their own personal experiences through oral histories. Oral history gathering events and stand-alone exhibits occurred across the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2012 and 2013, most notably at the General Assembly Building in the capital in January.

### A Success Story

While the road has not always been smooth, DOVE has had a positive impact on the discoverability and preservation of records related to



Virginia school desegregation. In September 2013, the DOVE catalog contained 211 records from 62 repositories in 11 states and the District of Columbia. DOVE's outreach efforts stimulated numerous people to express interest in donating collections. Following policy, surveyors and other DOVE staff refer potential donors to the appropriate regional chairs to find homes for their collections. While no information is available about how many collections have been donated statewide, ODU's Special Collections and University Archives has acquired approximately fifty linear feet of manuscript collections because of DOVE. These items document busing for racial balance in Virginia and elsewhere, the role of the Norfolk Unitarian Church in ending Massive Resistance laws, and legal struggles over school desegregation in Virginia and North Carolina. One significant collection contains surveys done in the late 1970s of African American teachers who integrated K-12 schools in Virginia. In addition, DOVE gathered approximately one hundred oral histories.

## Implications for Other Documentation Projects

Although DOVE is a relatively new initiative, one of its goals is to serve as a model for school desegregation documentation projects in other states. AARP is exploring the idea of replicating the "School Desegregation: Learn, Preserve, and Empower" partnership in other states. DOVE is equally applicable to documenting other events affecting racial or ethnic minorities, such as the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The name of the project is important, as are acronyms: the name Desegregation of Virginia Education (DOVE) Project sets a conciliatory tone. It demonstrates the importance of testing potential names with important stakeholders. The favorable reaction to the DOVE name

from people of color during testing led directly to its acceptance by the steering committee.

The best way to organize a documentation project will vary, depending on its subject and goals, but diversity is critical to achieving the goals of a diversity-related documentation project. Creating a diverse group with membership across professional, institutional, racial, and geographic lines can help to build a broad base of support for a project. The participation in DOVE of faculty and staff from historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) played a key role in attracting several donors and partners. The racial diversity of those partners was important in building networks of interested people. DOVE's multiracial makeup in turn helped attract mainstream, local, and African American media outlets.

Diversity contributed to DOVE's success in several other ways. It gave DOVE credibility in a variety of geographic, institutional, and ethnic communities. That the project includes both archivists and historians made several grants possible. Particularly attractive to granting agencies is the fact that the leading historians of Virginia school desegregation in the nation serve as regional chairs of DOVE. Acts such as holding meeting locations around the state symbolize the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness. DOVE's efforts to build ties across the entire state paid off when the project began looking for local partners for the traveling exhibit.

Leadership is critical to a documentation project's success. While on the surface, it may seem important to have a member of the affected groups lead a project to document diverse populations, the most critical requirements are a willingness to do the hard work needed to get the project started and good connections within the community of interest. Having co-leaders is an excellent way to fill multiple needs and share the work.

One mistake that DOVE made was to recruit volunteers to be surveyors before it was ready to train and send them out to work. While it

will be necessary to recruit some volunteers to serve on task forces and to fill other roles in planning a project, it would be better to decide on procedures and create training materials before recruiting the bulk of the volunteers. Otherwise, the volunteers may become disenchanted and leave the project, as occurred with some of DOVE's early volunteers. The "School Desegregation" initiative took these lessons to heart and designed training before recruiting individual volunteers.

Resources, especially funding, are often a challenge for consortia, and in the end, most documentation projects likely will rely a great deal on having one or two institutions commit a substantial amount of in-kind support. A project like DOVE, which focuses on a subject about which people care passionately, is fortunate to be able to rely on the support of volunteers through their donations of time and expenses. In terms of grants, organizers should seek smaller grants as soon as possible to establish a history of success before applying for larger grants. Recruiting people skilled in grant writing to serve on the steering committee would be useful. DOVE's experience also demonstrates the necessity of being flexible; had DOVE been unwilling to create oral histories, an evolution of DOVE's initial mission, it would not have been able to partner with AARP Virginia, the Virginia Conference of the NAACP, and the Urban League of Virginia.

Another major challenge for documentation projects is institutional competition. It is important to discuss disagreements and clarify misunderstandings as soon as they arise, so the participants can resolve them promptly. Solutions should not favor any one institution or group of institutions but should take into consideration the needs of all.

Understanding the historic context of the social phenomenon being documented is one of the most important tasks in a documentation project. To maximize utility for future researchers, it is important to be as comprehensive as possible. Strategies need to be developed to reach out

to parties on all sides of an issue, including those who may be ashamed of their past. That may require the adoption of several methods of outreach and of information gathering. Members of the media can be immensely helpful in this effort. Many opportunities for outreach are free, except for the time commitment, so lack of resources should not be a major obstacle to promoting the project.

Finally, it is hard to find the right time to do certain documentation projects. The economic recession of 2009–2012 made some people consider it poor timing to initiate the Desegregation of Virginia Education project. Other people observed that DOVE should have been done thirty years ago when more stakeholders were alive, before crucial records were thrown out and when people still knew where the records were located. Yet no one stepped forward to undertake such a project at that time. Now, in the wake of publicity about the fiftieth anniversary of the end of Massive Resistance, there is a great deal of interest in desegregation. Stakeholders, many of them in their eighties, are dying, and their children are making decisions about what to do with their papers. There will never be a better time to document school desegregation in Virginia. For most documentation projects, the same is likely true: there is no time like the present to preserve the past.

## Appendix A: DOVE Record Survey

Desegregation of Virginia Education (DOVE) Project Record Survey					
Date of Survey:					
Name of Surveyor:		Phone:			
Repository Information					
Name of Repository:					
Address:					
Contact Name:		Title:			
Phone:		Email:			
Dove Region:					
Description Access:	Repository has given permission to make collection description available to the public.			Yes ( ) No ( )	
Collection/Resource Information					
Title:					
Creator:					
Call Number/ Manuscript Number:					
Part of Larger Collection?	Yes ( ) No ( )				
If Yes, Title of Larger Collection:					
URL of Digital Image, Finding Aid, or Inventory:					
Date Range:	From:		To:		
Types of Records:					
Access Restrictions:	Yes ( ) No ( )				
If Yes, List Restrictions:					
Geographic/School District Coverage:					
Size:					
Physical Condition (mark with X)	1 ( ) Poor/ Illegible	2 ( ) Barely Acceptable	3 ( ) Fair	4 ( ) Good	5 ( ) Excellent
Description: (Write description below, continue on additional page if necessary.)					

## [ NOTES ]

1. Gregory D. Underwood, speech to Norfolk City Democratic Committee, Norfolk, Virginia, 2009.
2. DOVE—Desegregation of Virginia Education, “About the DOVE Project,” <http://www.lib.odu.edu/specialcollections/dove/>.
3. Ronald L. Heinemann, John G. Kolp, Anthony S. Parent Jr., and William G. Shade, *Old Dominion, New Commonwealth: A History of Virginia, 1607–2007* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 166, 199; Peter Wallenstein, *Cradle of America: Four Centuries of Virginia History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 216; and Emily J. Salmon, ed., *A Hornbook of Virginia History*, 3rd ed. (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1983), 193–94. During the eighteenth century, some Native American boys were able to attend the “Indian School” affiliated with the College of William and Mary, and there were several schools for African Americans, including one in Williamsburg from 1760 to about 1774. These opportunities no longer existed in the nineteenth century. See Karen A. Stuart, “‘So Good a Work’: The Brafferton School, 1691–1777” (master’s thesis, College of William and Mary, 1984); and Thad W. Tate, *The Negro in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg* (Williamsburg, Va.: Colonial Williamsburg, 1965), 134–52.
4. Heinemann et al., *Old Dominion*, 198–99; and Salmon, *Hornbook*, 194.
5. Wallenstein, *Cradle of America*, 216, 233; Heinemann et al., *Old Dominion*, 254–55. An 1866 Virginia law defined anyone with at least one-quarter Negro blood as a “colored person” and any noncolored person with at least one-quarter Indian blood as an Indian. For purposes of education, however, the state tried to assign Native Americans and African Americans to the same schools. The state’s small Native American population did its best to steer a course independent of both whites and African Americans and refused to allow their children to attend schools for African Americans. A public school on the Pamunkey reservation existed starting in the 1870s, and Norfolk opened a school for Nansemonds in 1889. Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas’s People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia through Four Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 200–02.
6. Heinemann, *Old Dominion*, 255; Salmon, *Hornbook*, 198, 204–205.
7. Wallenstein, *Cradle of America*, 265, 328–331; Heinemann et al., *Old Dominion*, 280–81, 301.
8. Alston et al. v. School Board of City of Norfolk et al., 112 F.2d 992.

9. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (I) 347 U.S. 483 (1954) was a consolidation of four U.S. District Court cases: *Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka et al.* (Kansas); *Briggs v. Elliott*, No. 2 (South Carolina); *Davis et al. v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Virginia, et al.*, No. 4; *Gebhart et al. v. Belton et al.*, No. 10 (Delaware). Wallenstein, *Cradle of America*, 331–35, 340–41; Heinemann et al., *Old Dominion*, 334, 340.
10. Old Dominion University Libraries, "School Desegregation in Norfolk, Virginia," January 6, 2010, <http://www.lib.odu.edu/specialcollections/schooldesegregation/timeline.htm>.
11. Wallenstein, *Cradle of America*, 344–47; Heinemann et al., *Old Dominion*, 341–43.
12. The Virginia Supreme Court decided *Harrison v. Day*, 200 Va. 439; 106 S.E.2d 636 and a three-judge U.S. District Court decided *James v. Almond*, 170 F Supp 331 (E.D. Va.).
13. For a discussion of the struggle for school equality in Prince Edward County from 1951 to 1964, see J. Rupert Picott and Edward H. Peeples Jr., "A Study in Infamy: Prince Edward County, Virginia," *Phi Delta Kappan* 45, no. 8, "With All Deliberate Speed" (May 1964): 393–97.
14. *Griffin v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Va.*, 377 U.S. 218, 232 (1964). US Supreme Court.
15. William F. Bagwell, Robert Blackburn, et al., "Opening Closed Doors: Narrative of the American Friends Service Committee's Work in Prince Edward County, Virginia. 1959–1965" (undated): 7, <http://webarchive.afsc.org/archives/princeedward/openingcloseddoorsPec3.pdf>.
16. *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, 391 U.S. 430 (1968).
17. Wallenstein, *Cradle of America*, 350–59; Heinemann et al., *Old Dominion*, 348–49, 361–62.
18. Peter Wallenstein, "Segregation, Desegregation, and Higher Education in Virginia" (paper presented at the Policy History Conference, Charlottesville, Va., 2006), 6–10, [http://www.history.vt.edu/faculty/Wallenstein/Wallenstein-Policy\\_Hist-rev\\_060606.pdf](http://www.history.vt.edu/faculty/Wallenstein/Wallenstein-Policy_Hist-rev_060606.pdf).
19. Helen W. Samuels, "Who Controls the Past?," *The American Archivist* 49 (Spring 1986): 116.
20. Quote is from Andrea Hinding, "Inventing a Concept of Documentation," *Journal of American History* 80 (1993): 174; see also Larry J. Hackman and Joan Warnow-Blewett, "The Documentation Strategy Process: A Model and a Case-Study," *The*

*American Archivist* 50 (Winter 1987): 12–47; and R. Joseph Anderson, “Difficult to Document: The History of Physics and Allied Fields in Industrial and Government Labs,” *Journal of Archival Organization* 3 (2005): 7–21.

21. For New York, see Richard J. Cox, “A Documentation Strategy Case Study: Western New York,” *The American Archivist* 52 (Winter 1989): 192–200; for Boston, see Philip N. Alexander and Helen W. Samuels, “The Roots of 128: A Hypothetical Documentation Strategy,” *The American Archivist* 50 (Winter 1987): 518–31. For more recent one-institution strategies, see Jack Wertheimer, Debra Bernhardt, and Julie Miller, “Toward the Documentation of Conservative Judaism,” *The American Archivist* 57 (Spring 1994): 374–79; and René Boatman, “A New Archival Model? An Examination of Documentation Strategy via The Fales Library and Special Collections’ Downtown New York Collection,” *Journal of Archival Organization* 1 (2003): 41–51. Another example is Christine W. Ward, “Documenting New York: Identifying and Saving New York’s Primary Sources,” *Public Historian* 33, no. 3 (2011): 99–115.

22. Michael T. Ryan, “Developing Special Collections in the ’90s: A *fin-de-siècle* Perspective,” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 17 (1991): 292–93.

23. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Commission, Special Subcommittee on the 50th Anniversary of Public School Closings in Virginia, “Desegregation of Virginia Education (DOVE) Project, Partnership Activities Report” June 17, 2011, [http://mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov/va\\_school\\_closings/pdfs/DOVE\\_mlk\\_summary\\_report.pdf](http://mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov/va_school_closings/pdfs/DOVE_mlk_summary_report.pdf).

24. The Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA) Virginia Heritage, Guides to Manuscript and Archival Collections in Virginia, last modified July 25, 2013, at <http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/small/vhp/index.html>.

25. One example of Library of Virginia raising such questions was in September and October 2009 meetings of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Commission, Special Subcommittee on the 50th Anniversary of Public School Closings in Virginia. Agendas for the meetings, <http://dls.virginia.gov/groups/MLK/schoolclosing/schoolclosingmtgs/ag092309.pdf>, and <http://dls.virginia.gov/groups/MLK/schoolclosing/schoolclosingmtgs/ag101409.pdf>.

26. Conley L. Edwards, Library of Virginia, letter to Sonia Yaco, June 16, 2009.

27. Edwards to Yaco.

28. Library of Congress, “About Viewshare,” <http://viewshare.org/about/community>.

29. DOVE—Desegregation of Virginia Education, “About the DOVE Catalog,” <http://www.lib.odu.edu/specialcollections/dove/catalog.htm>.



30. *Riddick v. School Board of the City of Norfolk*, 627 F. Supp. 814 (E.D. Va 1984).
31. For a discussion of how three repositories with Virginia school desegregation collections are handling confidentiality and access issues, see Sonia Yaco, "Balancing Privacy and Access in School Desegregation Collections: A Case Study," *The American Archivist* 73 (Fall/Winter 2010): 637–68. Richard Pearce-Moses's *Glossary of Archival Terminology* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005) defines *privacy* as "1. The quality or state of being free from public scrutiny. 2. The quality or state of having one's personal information or activities protected from unauthorized use by another. . . ." *Confidentiality* is defined as "1. Kept secret within an authorized group. 2. Not to be disclosed."
32. Desegregation of Virginia Education (DOVE) Project, "How to Conduct a Records Survey" 2010, <http://www.lib.odu.edu/specialcollections/dove/training/player.html>.
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34. Denise Watson Batts, *When the Wall Came Tumbling Down: A Story in Six Parts* (Norfolk, Va.: The Virginian-Pilot, 2008); Denise Watson Batts, "A Catalog of Integration," *Virginian-Pilot*, May 26, 2009.
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