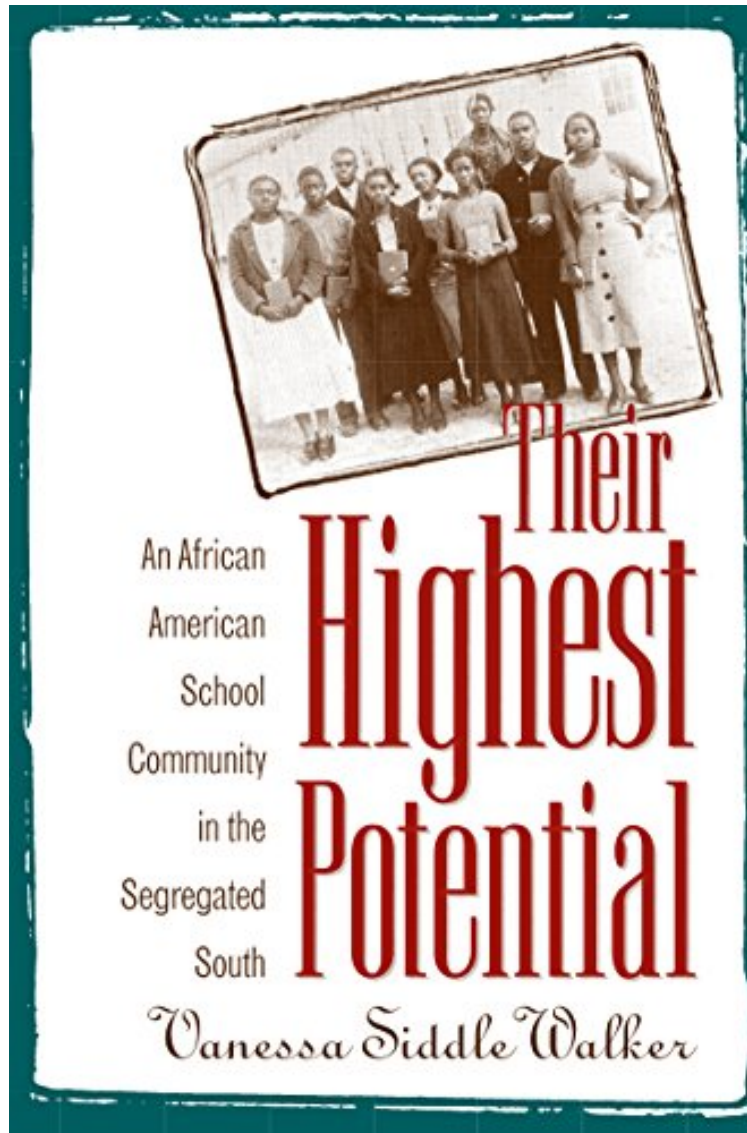


[Free pdf] Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South

## **Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South**

*Vanessa Siddle Walker*

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**Vanessa Siddle Walker : Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South:

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following review helpful. Five StarsBy paula matabaneprofound understanding of southern black education experience44 of 48 people found the following review helpful. The book focuses during the period of legalized segregationBy A CustomerTheir Highest Potential, written by Vanessa Siddle Walker, is an extensively researched book specifically covering a southern African American school community in Caswell County, North Carolina until its last year of segregated operation ending in 1969. The book focuses during the period of legalized segregation of public schools and how African American students were not equally as funded compared to that of white schools. Regardless of the unequal funding and the poorer facilities, Walker goes further in detail about how the untold story of this school system in Caswell County was able to provide the means necessary for their students to succeed to their highest potential. Walker states, to remember segregated schools largely by recalling only their poor resources presents a historically incomplete picture (p. 3). Through a series of interviews, Walker incorporates vivid memories of the past to help bring to life the existence and development of Caswell County High School. The book begins explaining how the environment and atmosphere of segregated schools was actually a good thing for black children. In segregated schools there was no conflict of racism nor did black children recognize themselves as a minority. Within the segregated school they were not treated like second rate citizens, but they received the attention and education they deserved, despite the lack of resources. Through out the years the school board reluctantly provided any materials necessary for satisfactory operation. Yet, the black community continuously in the dilemma of not having resources and room for the growing number of people, still managed to enlighten students. Determined parents time after time lobbied for a new school with the help from N. Longworth Dillard, the principal. Eventually, the overcrowded Rosenwald School moved to the newly built Caswell County Training School in March of 1951. After years of prying, the people finally had the newest and largest school in the county (p 61). During its time, the school became the only accredited school in the county by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges in 1955 and remained that way until after desegregation (p. 8). The forming of Caswell County Training School was dedicated to Dillard's perseverance but could not have been accomplished if it was not for the parental advocates. Advocates in which Walker calls them, were adults who took an active role in seeking the materials needed for the children. These advocates positioned themselves between the needs of the school and the lack of response from the school board (p 65). Whether it was from parents donating lumber to teachers staying after to help a student, the community made an environment that produced achievement. With this unified effort, black children received the education they deserved despite the hardships of having less than adequate supplies. In particular, this school system was the ideal learning institution where the principal, teachers, parents, and students all worked together to achieve common goals

African American schools in the segregated South faced enormous obstacles in educating their students. But some of these schools succeeded in providing nurturing educational environments in spite of the injustices of segregation. Vanessa Siddle Walker tells the story of one such school in rural North Carolina, the Caswell County Training School, which operated from 1934 to 1969. She focuses especially on the importance of dedicated teachers and the principal, who believed their jobs extended well beyond the classroom, and on the community's parents, who worked hard to support the school. According to Walker, the relationship between school and community was mutually dependent. Parents sacrificed financially to meet the school's needs, and teachers and administrators put in extra time for professional development, specialized student assistance, and home visits. The result was a school that placed the needs of African American students at the center of its mission, which was in turn shared by the community. Walker concludes that the experience of CCTS captures a segment of the history of African Americans in segregated schools that has been overlooked and that provides important context for the ongoing debate about how best to educate African American children. African American History/Education/North Carolina

A compelling story."Journal of American History""This is a first-rate book and a very moving story.James D. Anderson, author of "The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935""Excellent. . . . Clearly, a much-needed addition to an overly lopsided history that continues to ignore 'their highest potential.'"MultiCultural ""This is a must read for anyone seriously interested in promoting excellence for African American learners.Gloria Ladson-Billings, University of Wisconsin-Madison" This is a first-rate book and a very moving story.James D. Anderson, author of "The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935"Excellent. . . . Clearly, a much-needed addition to an overly lopsided history that continues to ignore 'their highest potential.'"MultiCultural "This is a must read for anyone seriously interested in promoting excellence for African American learners.Gloria Ladson-Billings, University of Wisconsin-Madison Walker reminds us of at least two important things about the education of African American students. First, African Americans always have been and always will be able to educate themselves. Much of the literature attempts to suggest that African Americans are incapable of providing quality education for themselves. Walker's book is empirical proof to refute such notions. Second, her book reminds us of that moment in history when school was a caring place for African American children--a stark contrast to what many experience in schools today. Caswell County Training School was an integral part of the community where the hopes, dreams, and aspirations for academic and cultural excellence were mutually reinforced by school, home, and community. This is a must read for

anyone seriously interested in promoting excellence for African American learners.--Gloria Ladson-Billings, University of Wisconsin-Madison [if used with Anderson quote, use her book title instead of affiliation: author of *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*]Excellent. . . . Walker should be commended for her work in bringing forth the 'voice of the people.' Clearly, a much-needed addition to an overly lopsided history that continues to ignore 'their highest potential.'--MultiCultural This is a first-rate book and a very moving story. . . . [It is] without question the finest re-creation of African American education in the rural South from the post-World War I era to the modern civil rights movement.--James D. Anderson, author of *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*A compelling story. . . . *Their Highest Potential* is noteworthy for the author's innovative use of community informants as her primary source for documenting the existence of an educational system designed to subvert the corrosive messages of a racist society.--*Journal of American History*From the Back CoverThe history of the public schooling of African Americans during legalized segregation has focused almost exclusively on the inferior education that African American children received. Indeed, the meager materials, the inadequate facilities, the unequal funding of schools and teachers, the lack of bus transportation, and the failure of school boards to respond to black parents' requests are so commonly named in most descriptions of segregated education the the segregated schooling of African American children.