

# Muscatine Public School

## C'mon, Catch Up

### USA

### School Integration in Iowa

#### Integration Ave.

1876 Iowa law said African-Americans could not write in Iowa unless they had type and paper to prove their freedom.

1876 Iowa's first public school system formed.

1876 Iowa law stated "schools shall be open and free alike to all white persons in the State between the ages of five and twenty-one years."

1876 Iowa law stated "...all real and personal property of blacks and persons in this State shall be exempt from taxation for school purposes."

1876 The normally general assembly would then discuss a bill of education and shall provide for the education of the children unable to receive schools."

1876 Under the direction of other provisions, Iowa law read: "It is hereby provided that the Board of Education of the State shall have the right to set up and maintain, open and be subject to a system of common schools."

1876 Iowa's first public school system opened in 1876.



1876 Iowa's first public school system opened in 1876. The school was built on the site of the first schoolhouse in Muscatine, Iowa. The school was the first of its kind in the state and was a landmark in the history of education in Iowa.

In 1876, three years after the establishment of the 1876 Amendment, Alexander Clark's integration lawsuit changed African American education in Iowa. Clark's victory in the case created diversity within Iowa schools. The rest of the United States would not "catch up" to Iowa until the middle of the next century.

#### Alexander Clark



Clark, and his wife, Catherine, thought that education was very important and wanted their three children to have access to the best.

1876 When Clark was denied admission to an all-white public school, his father, Alexander Clark, filed a lawsuit against the school board. The case was heard by the Iowa Supreme Court. The Iowa Supreme Court ruled in favor of Clark. The 1876 Iowa Constitution stated: "The Board of Education shall provide for the education of all the people of the State, through a system of common schools."

Clark's determination for equal education for his children was felt at a time when the rest of the country was still fighting after the Civil War. Clark's leadership in bringing down barriers to civil rights made him an important leader in Iowa's history.

Clark is remembered throughout the state for his role in desegregating schools.

Clark's lawsuit is a landmark in the history of education in Iowa. It is a testament to his leadership and his commitment to equal education for all.

"It is our duty to provide for the education of all classes of people in the State." - William Allen Crafts, Education, 1876

#### Short Term Impact

In 1876, Alexander Clark Jr. became the first African American to graduate from the University of Iowa Law School. The younger Clark was not admitted until the faculty cited the Iowa Supreme Court decision that made segregation in education illegal.



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