



THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL
RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN
FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

**Racial Desegregation
in Public Education in
Fort Collins
(1867–1975)**



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STATEMENT OF CONTEXT

This document is part of the Fort Collins *Civil Rights Movement Historic Context Study*. Based on the National Park Service (NPS) thematic framework *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites* and associated theme studies, this historic context narrative focuses on the experiences and activism of seven marginalized groups: women, Indigenous peoples, African Americans, Hispanic people, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, LGBTQIA+ people, and religious minorities. It covers the period from 1861, when Colorado became a territory, through 1975, the first full school year after the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Milliken v. Bradley* prevented school districts from redrawing enrollment zones for individual schools for the purpose of combating segregation, unless the segregation had been caused by that school district's discriminatory actions.

In Fort Collins, civil rights activism related to equal education is associated with the K-12 public school system attended by children living in Fort Collins in what would become Poudre School District R-1, as well as admissions to and student experiences at Colorado State University.

This historic context narrative examines federal and state judicial activity before turning its attention to equal education in Fort Collins. Unlike other historic context topics in this series, the federal government did not enact legislation that affected segregation or desegregation in public schools, and 1875 state legislation that required desegregation of public schools in Colorado was largely ignored by local communities. Only judicial activity had an effect on the segregation or desegregation of schools.

This document further identifies associated property types and significant sites associated with equal education within the city limits of Fort Collins as they exist in 2023.

Earlier documents that have informed this narrative include the NPS theme study, *Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States*, and *In the Hallowed Halls of Learning: The History and Architecture of Poudre School District R-1*, a historical context prepared for the City of Fort Collins in 2004.



Figure 1. Cover, "In the Hallowed Halls of Learning" historic context.

INTRODUCTION

The following information is derived, unless otherwise noted, from the NPS theme study *Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States*.

Prior to the Civil War, states and communities in the Eastern United States (both north and south) resisted educating African Americans, whether free or enslaved. Southerners opposed teaching Black people to read and write, both because those White people who supported slavery held two contradictory beliefs: that Black people were so intellectually inferior that they could not be taught and that educated African Americans would rise up against their enslavers. Nevertheless, free and enslaved Black people did learn to read and write, in homes and in schools. Where schools were made available to African Americans, they were underfunded and poorly resourced; in both Philadelphia and Boston in the middle of the nineteenth century, Black parents responded to those disparities through legal means or withholding taxes to force schools to integrate. While the lawsuit reached the Massachusetts Supreme Court before being dismissed, that state's legislature subsequently prohibited school segregation in 1855. African Americans also attended the few colleges and universities that would enroll them, primarily (but not entirely) in the northern U.S.

Following the Civil War, the Freedmen's Bureau and many church-based organizations took up the establishment of schools to teach formerly enslaved adults and children. African American communities also raised money to erect their own schools and hire teachers. Colleges were established by northern missionary societies as well as by the 1862 Morrill Act, which enabled states to create separate land-grant colleges for Black students. Most Southern White/Anglo people opposed providing any education for African Americans, unless it was strictly vocational or industrial in nature – training Black people “to perform manual labor, to serve the needs of Whites.”

During the late 1800s, many state governments across the U.S. — including Colorado — officially prohibited segregation during Reconstruction. The 1876 State Constitution of Colorado declared that public schools could not impose religious requirements on students or teachers as a condition of admission, “nor shall any distinction or classification of pupils be made on account of race or color.”¹ However, local communities did not universally comply.

Neither was segregation limited to African Americans. In the American West, Chinese children were also prevented from attending schools with White children and many Mexican children attended Catholic schools rather than public schools, where they were not welcomed. During this time, the U.S. government created boarding schools for Native American children, in some cases enrolling those children against the wishes of their parents, where the students were often mistreated and employed as an unpaid workforce.

Following the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which ruled that separate public facilities were constitutional as long as they were “separate but equal,” racial segregation in public education was effectively established by law throughout the United States.

The segregation of Asian students was complicated by the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907, which ended Japanese immigration to the U.S. but ensured that Japanese children already in residence would attend integrated schools. It is important to note

that, then as now, “Asian” people were not a homogenous group. For example, news articles of the time indicate that White/Anglo Coloradoans viewed Japanese people as far superior to their Chinese counterparts.² During World War II, when Japanese people on the West Coast of the U.S. were forced to leave their homes and businesses and imprisoned in internment camps, about 2,000 children were schooled in the Amache camp in Colorado, which had its own school district.

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, a huge wave of Mexican people migrated north into the American West, seeking work. Mexican children were routinely prohibited from speaking Spanish in school, in an attempt to “Americanize” them, or they were segregated from White students on the basis of language. Hispanic students’ education was often vocational or industrial in nature, reflecting the expectations of the dominant White/Anglo society.

During the mid-1900s, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) focused much of their efforts on school desegregation and the equitable funding and resourcing of schools for Hispanic children. In 1914, the *Maestas v. Shone* case in Alamosa, Colorado, resulted in a district court ruling that school officials could not segregate Mexican children on the basis of language.³ The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals subsequently found, in *Mendez et al v. Westminster School District of Orange County et al* (1946), that schools could not segregate Mexican American students on the basis of their Mexican ancestry, skin color, and/or use of the Spanish language. This case became a critical precedent for applying the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to racial segregation in public schools.⁴ In 1954, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* struck down the longstanding practice of providing “separate but equal” schools for African Americans. However, because Mexican children were considered “White by law” per the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hildalgo, school districts realized that they could separate White/Anglo students from Black and Hispanic students and technically meet the law. Another tactic was to provide “neighborhood schools” that effectively segregated non-White/Anglo children by race, since racial discrimination in housing prevented their families from living in integrated neighborhoods.

Although not directly related to education, the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Hernandez v. State of Texas* established that people of Mexican descent, although “legally White”, were a “special class” of people that could be discriminated against.⁵ Supreme Court cases in the late 1960s and early 1970s finally resulted in the protections of *Brown v. Board* being applied to Hispanic students.

In 1971, the Indian Education Act provided more parental control and community participation in developing culturally appropriate educational curricula. Also in the 1970s, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that public schools were required to provide instruction in English for non-native English speakers. During the 1960s and 1970s, more non-White/Anglo students enrolled in colleges and universities, and changes such as the social history movement resulted in an increasing focus in academia in cultural studies of non-White/Anglo communities.

College students in the 1960s and 1970s became more active in social and political movements, advocating for civil rights as well as peace and other social justice causes through protests, marches, sit-ins, and other activities.

Mexican children were routinely prohibited from speaking Spanish in school, in an attempt to “Americanize” them, or they were segregated from White students on the basis of language.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN LARIMER COUNTY AND FORT COLLINS

Public and private schools were established in Colorado as early as 1859, before the Territory was officially organized in 1861 and well before it became a state in 1876. The first school in Larimer County was a short-lived private institution opened in 1864 by Albina L. Washburn, a civic leader in her own right whose husband was a judge. A few public schools opened in the next two years. Three school districts were organized on October 1, 1868; although the districts were huge, containing hundreds of square miles, the total student population was 95. By 1870, the county had added three additional districts and increased the number of students to 203. Fort Collins, by then the county seat (although not yet incorporated), contained the most populated school district and employed its own school superintendent.⁶ The County continued to add districts for the next 90 years, and in 1960, Poudre School District was established by consolidating 38 smaller districts. Schools in Fort Collins, which had been part of Larimer County School District 5, became part of Poudre School District R-1.⁷

Public Schools in Fort Collins

The first school in Fort Collins was established informally during the summer of 1866. Elizabeth Keays (a widow) began by teaching her own child and another student in the home of her aunt and uncle Lewis and Elizabeth Stone, where she was living at the time; soon she had enough students to move to an abandoned building at the Fort. Keays was hired that fall to be the first teacher in the settlement's initial school district. Fort Collins formalized its school district (District 5) on December 28, 1870, and citizens raised money for a schoolhouse (115 Riverside Drive); in September 1871, it opened for classes.

As the population of Fort Collins grew, the locations of its schools changed as needed to accommodate increasing enrollment. The City's former public schools include:⁸

- 1870s: A storefront was rented at 201 Pine Street, on the corner of Jefferson and Pine, for an additional classroom; this remained in use even after the Remington School opened.
- 1879: Remington School (318 Remington Street); the building was demolished in 1969.⁹
- January 1, 1880: First kindergarten in Fort Collins (location unknown).¹⁰ This was the first kindergarten west of St. Louis, Missouri, home of the nation's first kindergarten, which had opened in 1873.
- October 1881: The kindergarten occupied the second floor of the Grange Hall until that building burned down on January 27, 1882. Shortly thereafter, the primary grades moved into the basement of the schoolhouse. As the student population continued to grow, the kindergarten was relocated several times. In September 1882, the kindergarten moved into the Episcopal Church building on Oak Street due to overcrowding. By 1886, the school district rented rooms on Jefferson Street, also due to overcrowding in the previous location(s). The specific location of the rented rooms is unknown.¹¹

- 1887: The Benjamin Franklin School (corner of Howes Street and Mountain Avenue) initially housed third through eighth grades. In 1889, it became the district's first high school. It was demolished in 1959 to make way for Steele's Supermarket.
- 1903: Fort Collins High School (417 South Meldrum), the first purpose-built high school, became Lincoln Junior High in 1925, after a new high school was completed. Most of the original building was demolished in 1977 to create the Lincoln Center events complex.
- 1906–1907: Laurel Street School (1906), 1000 Locust Street, and the LaPorte Avenue School (1907), 714 Laporte Avenue,¹² both elementary schools, were constructed from identical plans. The Laurel School is now known as Centennial High School. Many of the school district's Hispanic students attended LaPorte Avenue School, which was demolished in 1975 and replaced by Juan Fullana Elementary school that same year.¹³
- 1905: Children of German–Russian beet workers attended the Anderson Place School, housed in the original Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church building in the Andersonville neighborhood.¹⁴
- 1908: The four-room Rockwood Place or Rockwood School was built near Andersonville to replace Anderson Place.¹⁵ Rockwood School became the Sue Barton School in 1935¹⁶ before closing in 1944.¹⁷ In 1945, the former school building and grounds were purchased by the Dreher Pickle company.¹⁸
- 1919: Another set of identical elementary schools, the George Washington School and the Abraham Lincoln School, were constructed. Both schools are still in use; Lincoln Elementary became the Harris School, named after its first principal, Mame Harris.
- 1925: The second Fort Collins High School was built. CSU purchased this school building in 1996 and built a large addition for its performing arts program.
- 1949: Dunn Elementary (501 S. Washington Avenue), still in use.
- 1955–1956: The Putnam, Barton, and Moore elementary schools (400 Maple Street, 703 E. Prospect Road, and 1905 Orchard Place, respectively). These identical-plan buildings were the last schools constructed before Fort Collins' District 5 merged and became part of PSD R–1. PSD still operates all these buildings.¹⁹
- 1975: Lincoln Junior High (1600 West Lancer Drive) Lincoln Middle School.
- 1975: Juan Fullana Elementary School (220 N. Grant Avenue); now the Fullana Early Learning Center.

Catholic Schools

St. Joseph's Catholic Church traces its roots in Fort Collins back to 1879, when the parish bought the old wood-frame school building at 115 Riverside and turned it into their church. By 1901, the parish bought property on the corner of Mountain Avenue and Howes Street, and in August of that year dedicated a new \$12,000 church made of rusticated stone. St. Joseph's School (constructed 1925–1926) was built for \$66,000 and opened with 117 students. The school grew and, by 1966, provided classes through eighth grade to 300 students. St. Joseph's underwent extensive renovation in 1999–2000 at a cost of \$3.8 million, and, for a few years, taught nine grades. Today, the school once again teaches kindergarten through eighth grade students.²⁰

As Fort Collins' Hispanic population grew, the St. Joseph's Parish requested a priest to serve the Spanish-speaking community. A Presbyterian church on the corner of Whitcomb and Cherry Streets was purchased by the parish and consecrated in 1924. In Spring 1929, construction began on a new brick church building at a cost of \$12,000.²¹ Holy Family School opened in 1928, in the home of Margaret Murray, located at 315 N. Whitcomb Street.²² After the new church building was completed the following year, the school moved into the church's previous wood-frame building. Teachers included Jovita Vallecillo, the first Hispanic graduate of CSU. By 1934, Holy Family served 85 students through eighth grade. In 1948, the school building reportedly was condemned by the city, and classes moved into a new parish hall adjacent to the rectory. The school struggled financially;²³ a four-alarm fire damaged the church in March 1969.²⁴ The following month, the Denver Diocese announced it was consolidating Catholic school programs in Fort Collins; Holy Family would only provide classes for kindergarten, and grades 1–6 would be transferred to St. Joseph's School.²⁵ In 1975, Holy Family's kindergarten classes became bilingual.²⁶

In 1971, the PSD launched a pilot bilingual program in the Dunn, Harris, LaPorte Avenue, and Washington elementary schools.²⁷ In 1975, a bilingual class was held at Laurel Elementary School, supported by federal migrant education funding. Although 15 children were enrolled in the bilingual class at Laurel in 1975, it was scheduled to be discontinued for the following year. Federal funding for the Laurel class also provided for health and social services; the school district planned to provide those services at other neighborhood schools in 1976.²⁸



Figure 2. Holy Family parish hall, 324 N. Whitcomb Street

HISPANIC STUDENTS IN FORT COLLINS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The education of Mexican American children in public schools was contentious in the American Southwest. While Western farmers wanted Mexican American laborers to remain uneducated, in order to maintain a steady supply of cheap labor, that attitude was directly at odds with the philosophy of “Americanizing” or assimilating immigrant children.

Hispanic children in Fort Collins are known to have worked in the sugar beet fields. While first person accounts are not included in this research, the agricultural system utilized by Great Western and other sugar beet companies included production-based contracts that a male head of household simply could not complete on his own. Growers like Great Western knew that this system, which offered substandard wages, required entire families to work in the fields. Children of beet workers often missed school in order to thin and harvest beets;²⁹ for example, the Rockwood School in Andersonville closed during the late summer and early fall harvest.³⁰ A 1923 U.S. Labor Department report found that, in Larimer and Weld counties, the children of beet field contract laborers missed a quarter of the school year; Larimer County school district records noted that the children of beet workers missed school almost five times as often as school children from other families.³¹

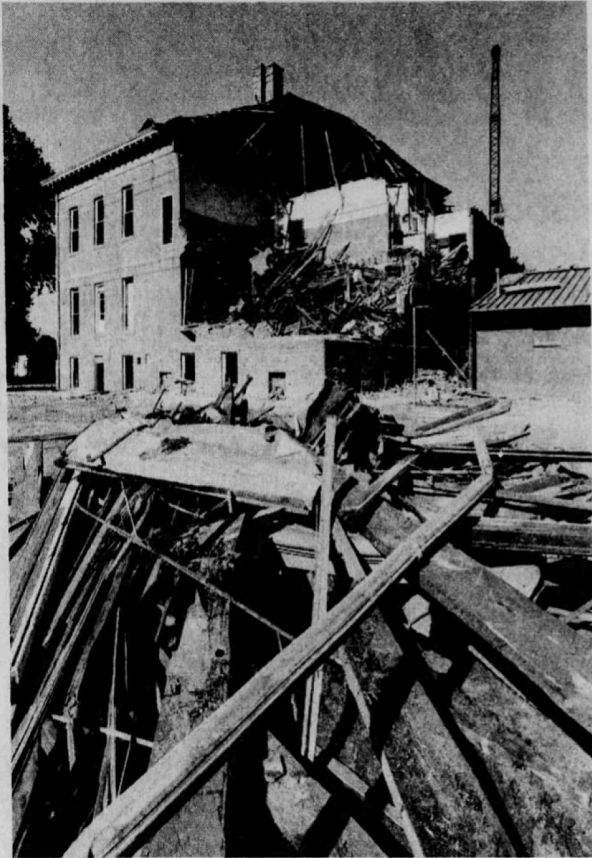
Children of beet workers
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children from other families.
Larimer County School District

The desire to Americanize immigrant children can be clearly seen in local coverage of the Rockwood School, built to educate the children of beet workers. Rockwood was a primary school located east of the sugar factory, “designed for lower grade pupils who live north of the river.”³² A 1914 retrospective of the Fort Collins school system states that the “avowed purpose of this school was to afford to the large number of Germans, Russians and other foreigners brought to the community by the beet industry an opportunity to secure our common school education. It has proven to be literally a factory for converting the ignorant, illiterate foreign children into fine Americanized boys and girls, who are annually going from its stores with prospects of becoming most desirable citizens.”³³ By the 1920s, the school’s student population had become mostly Hispanic, along with the Buckingham and Andersonville neighborhoods.³⁴ Hispanic children from another nearby neighborhood, Alta Vista (a “Spanish Colony” created by Great Western Sugar, first announced in 1923) also attended Rockwood School (later known as the Sue M. Barton Elementary School).³⁵ When the school property was purchased by the Dreher Pickle Company in 1945, it was described as a building with four classrooms on the first floor and two rooms in a half-story basement; in the period immediately after the school closed, the building was used as an “emergency farm labor dormitory.” The pickle company reportedly planned to continue the former school building during crop season for this purpose.³⁶

Once Barton Elementary School³⁷ closed in 1944, Hispanic children from Andersonville, Alta Vista, and Buckingham would have had a long trip to school. Children from Holy Family and the other Hispanic neighborhoods went to Laporte Elementary and Lincoln Junior High Schools. Laporte Elementary, in the Holy family neighborhood was 1.6 miles from Alta Vista; Lincoln is nearly 2.5 miles from Alta Vista. A 1951 study on migrant labor in Colorado confirmed that the distance to schools affected truancy rates for migrant children, while at the same time acknowledging that anti-migrant sentiment led to lax truancy policy enforcement. In the same report, Hispanic parents expressed frustration at sending children to schools where other children treated them poorly and teachers ignored them.³⁸

During the community-based research for this project, Hispanic stakeholders reported being treated as “others” in the Fort Collins public schools; they report being subjected to racial epithets from other students and being placed in special education classes they did not require, simply to get them out of the way. Community-based activities provided an extracurricular supplement to fill the gap for Hispanic students. For example, in 1973 local Chicano activist James Martinez founded “Ballet Zapatista,” a Chicano youth dance group funded by The Point and several Chicano professors at CSU, and inspired and assisted by cultural dance company associated with Denver-based Crusade for Justice. The community organization held their rehearsals at Laporte Avenue Elementary, 714 Laporte Avenue, where the participants had the opportunity to learn about history and cultural pride through traditional dance.³⁹ Multiple stakeholders who participated in this project confirmed that, in the 1970s, the dropout rate for Hispanic children in Fort Collins’ elementary and secondary schools was a pressing issue. As many as 40–50% of Hispanic children did not graduate from high school. The Parents’ Concilio for Quality Education was active at this time; LULAC and the Colorado Migrants Council were also active in Fort Collins and focused on the education of Hispanic students, including the children of transient migrant workers.⁴⁰ In 1980, one in four Hispanics students dropped out of the Poudre School District, double the number of White/Anglo students and higher than the average dropout rate for the state of Colorado and the United States as a whole.⁴¹

Another issue related to an equal education is adequate facilities. After Holy Family stopped teaching elementary school, Hispanic children went to LaPorte elementary, which was in poor condition. The school district wanted to build another school, but a 1968 bond issue for new construction failed. Hispanic leaders mobilized the community, canvassing door-to-door in support of funding; a new bond issue passed in 1969.⁴² One of the community members leading this effort was Isabel Gavaldon.⁴³ Also in 1969, LaPorte was declared structurally inadequate; additionally, 385 students had registered in Fall 1969 to attend the school, and LaPorte’s capacity was 270.⁴⁴ In 1973, delays in progress toward a new school led the Chicano Education Advisory Committee, led by James Martinez, to call a meeting at Laporte and question what was taking so long. School board members expressed concern that there could be charges of “de facto segregation” if the new school were built in the Mexican American neighborhood.⁴⁵ When the district decided to build the new elementary school outside the Holy Family neighborhood, the Hispanic community took action. It sought help from the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF); with assistance from students at the University of Colorado Law School, MALDEF established a pattern of discrimination on the north side of Fort Collins. The board changed course and approved a new school on the LaPorte site, letting the Hispanic community name the school.⁴⁶ In 1975, the Juan Fullana Elementary School was built to replace the LaPorte school; students were in class at Fullana by the last week of the Spring 1975 term. The old LaPorte school was demolished in June 1975, and Fullana Elementary was officially dedicated in December 1975.⁴⁷



Coloradoan photos by Joe Novotny

School falls to wreckers

The old Laporte Avenue School is falling to the wrecking crews, but chunks of the 68-year-old structure are destined to be recycled for decorative use. The Greeley demolition contractor,

who originally had planned to use all the rubble for "fill," is allowing an area builder to salvage the bricks. Helping salvage is Ann Baker (above) of 1730 West Mulberry Street. The replacement

school, Juan Fullana Elementary, was occupied by students the last week of this school year. It stands just northwest of the old building.

Figure 3. Photos from the Fort Collins Coloradoan, June 19, 1975, page 1.

OTHER MINORITY STUDENTS

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

While a small number of African Americans resided in Fort Collins during the period included in this historic context, no evidence of a segregated school for African Americans in the city has been located. It appears that African American students attended integrated public schools in Fort Collins. Hattie McDaniel appears to have attended the Franklin School at Mountain Avenue and Howes Street in the early 1900s; Virgil Thomas, FCHS' first Black graduate in 1940, was integrated with White students by the mid-1930s.

GERMAN-RUSSIAN STUDENTS

The Rockwood school was built specifically for children of beet field workers; these children are described as "foreigners" in local coverage in the early twentieth century.⁴⁸

ASIAN STUDENTS

Japanese workers were recruited to Fort Collins in the early 1900s to work in the agriculture and extractive industries; while no information about Japanese children attending public schools during that time period has been located, Japanese American students attended CAC (now CSU) by the 1900s.⁴⁹

NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS

Native Americans were officially collectively forced out of Colorado by 1880, but that does not mean that all tribal peoples left the area; some may have found ways to avoid relocating to reservations. Current research has not located any mention of Native American children attending school in Fort Collins during the early late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. Stakeholders who attended school in the city during the mid-1900s report being singled out for their ethnicity.

In 2022, the Colorado Legislature created the Federal Indian Boarding School Research Program Act, with research now underway under the auspices of History Colorado; a final report for this project is scheduled for June 30, 2023.⁵⁰ The City of Denver is also currently developing an American Indian/Indigenous Peoples historic context study.⁵¹ Any expansion of an educational context related to Native Americans in the Fort Collins should consider this research.

COLORADO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE /COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Fort Collins is home to Colorado State University, the only land-grant university in the state. In 1862, the federal Morrill Act established public colleges (now universities) dedicated to making a post-secondary education accessible to working-class Americans, not just wealthy people. Their curricula focused on agricultural and mechanical courses and military science; some of these colleges retain “agricultural and mechanical” in their names. The colleges were initially funded through *grants of land* (seized from Native Americans) that the institutions could then sell to raise money; this led to the descriptive term “land-grant college.”⁵²

The initial land-grant college in Colorado was authorized in 1870, six years before the Territory became a state. Originally known as Colorado Agricultural College, it was renamed multiple times, becoming the Colorado State College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts (CSC) in 1935; Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College (Colorado A&M) in 1944; finally, in May 1957, Colorado State University (CSU).⁵³

While students from marginalized groups were enrolled at CSU in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most of the information located during this project is related to a few notable students and rarely discusses discrimination that they may have experienced. This is likely due to the racialized attitudes of the majority White/Anglo population at that time; only exceptional students belonging to marginalized groups would have been considered newsworthy, and information about those groups would not have been documented, saved, or archived.⁵⁴

The few minority students during the early years of CAC/CSU for which this project located information include:

- Grafton St. Clair Norman, the first African American student at Colorado Agricultural College, who first enrolled in Spring 1892. The only African American student at CAC during that time, he graduated in 1896.⁵⁵
- A Mr. J. Mamamoto, a CAC student, who spoke at a Baptist Church study class on the “Religions of Japan” in 1906.⁵⁶
- Chet Maeda, of Japanese descent, who transferred from a junior college in California in 1940 to CSU, where he majored in veterinary medicine and enjoyed a successful football career.⁵⁷

Black athletes at CAC/CSU experienced discrimination, as illustrated by several representative incidents highlighted below.

- In 1905, the Denver University football team protested playing against Alfred Johnson, a Black CAC player, until it was agreed that Johnson could only play in a “practice game.” That was followed by a dispute over any agreements that teams had made as to whether Black athletes could play in the Intercollegiate Athletic Association, which comprised most colleges and universities in Colorado. CAC stated that, despite a unanimous agreement that Black athletes should not be encouraged to play, as a state and national institution the college could not prohibit anyone from a class or club, should they wish to be a member.⁵⁸
- In 1922, the national African American fraternity Alpha Phi Alpha established chapters at several Colorado colleges and universities, including CAC.⁵⁹
- In 1927, a newspaper article reported that three CAC Black athletes, then living with the Charles and Mamie Birdwhistle family, were “somewhat of a novelty for the Aggies who have not had any colored students for several years.”⁶⁰ Black students were not permitted to live on the CAC campus at this time.

- John Mosley began his career at the university in 1939, when Black students were prohibited from living on campus; Mosley and five other students, who he dubbed “the lonesome boys,” lived together at 228 Meldrum Street (no longer extant); nine Black students were attending CSU at that time. Mosley excelled at football and wrestling; when he was traveling with the football team in Salt Lake City, the entire team walked out of a movie theater, rather than stay after Mosley was told to sit in the balcony.⁶¹ When CSU played in Salt Lake City again, in 1947, Black players were prohibited from staying in the same hotel as their White teammates.⁶²

In one case, an incident of discrimination attributed to CSU appears to have taken place elsewhere. Adeline Kano grew up in Nebraska and Wisconsin, graduating from the University of Nebraska in 1948. She began a career at CSU as a research assistant in 1949. Her father, Hiram Hisanori Kano, emigrated from Japan and completed

his master’s degree in Agricultural Economics at the University of Nebraska in 1918. Mr. Kano farmed in Litchfield, Nebraska, and worked with the Japanese Americanization Society, teaching English and acting as a translator for immigrants. In 1921, Mr. Kano and an Episcopalian bishop in Nebraska helped defeat a bill in the Nebraska Legislature intended to bar Japanese residents from owning property and serving as legal guardians of their children. Mr. Kano subsequently became active in the Episcopalian church and was ordained as a priest in 1936. On December 7, 1941, shortly after conducting services at his church, Mr. Kano was arrested and interrogated by the FBI. Because of his family’s position in Japan and his position as a leader of Japanese immigrants in Nebraska, Kano was deemed a threat to national security and sent to an internment camp. While being held at five different camps, Mr. Kano spent his time teaching English. After being released in 1944, Hiram and the Kano family moved to Wisconsin. After

Adeline began her work at CSU, Hiram Kano and his wife moved to a small farm in Fort Collins, where Mr. Kano died in 1988.⁶³ A friend of Adeline’s anecdotally reported that CSU asked Adeline to give up a scholarship, because of her father’s previous imprisonment, and she refused to do so. While that story has yet to be corroborated, in 1944, 16-year-old Adeline was the valedictorian of her high school class in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. She was asked by the school to decline that honor, in writing, due to her father’s arrest and internment during WWII; she refused, stating her father was a victim of war and had not committed any crime.⁶⁴ It is likely that the informant conflated Adeline’s experience in high school with her career at CSU.

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of heightened student activism on the CSU campus, especially focused on the ability of minority students to attend the university, as well as minority representation within the faculty and staff teaching classes that embraced diversity. The Black Student Alliance (BSA) formed in 1968; the Mexican American Committee for Equality (MACE), which would become a chapter of the United Mexican American Students (UMAS), a nationwide group with independent chapters all over the country, formed the same year.⁶⁵ El Centro (Chicano Student Services) was established in 1979. Today, seven different diversity offices serve minority students on the CSU campus.

Transition, a student newspaper of the Associated of Students of CSU (ASCSU) (archived copies available for April 3–December 4, 1969) provides a view of student life and activism at that time. The newspaper was focused on student rights and also provided information about student services.

"Law officials didn't ask if it was dangerous for a man to write his family, or, since he spoke and wrote English, to serve as a scribe for immigrants who needed to send official documents back to Japan."

Article about Hiram Kano, 1989

The first issue of *Transition* announced a pre-organizational meeting for “Free University,” a CSU program offering diverse courses as part of “a participatory education in new lifestyles.”⁶⁶ “Free U” offered classes including “The Functioning of the University,” “Education and the Significance Of Life,” “Women’s Liberation,” “Institutional White Racism,” and “Legal Rights.”⁶⁷ An organizational meeting of a student chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) was also held at the Free University building.⁶⁸ Free University classes were held off campus, at “the Old Hort(iculture) house at Laurel and Mason” (possibly 191 W. Laurel Street). Although off-campus, that building apparently had been part of the CSU Horticulture Department. It is no longer extant.

Like their counterparts at other universities in the 1960s, CSU students were actively involved in efforts to improve diversity and end discrimination on campus.

- On Monday, April, 7, 1969, BSA presented the CSU administration with a 20-page document, containing 10 demands designed to address racial inequality on campus, and requested an answer by noon on April 9. MACE joined BSA in their efforts, and the leadership of both organizations walked out of a contentious meeting on Tuesday, April 8, with the State Agricultural Board (SAB) board, which then governed the university. On April 9, approximately 150 CSU students staged a sit-in at the university’s administration building, protesting CSU’s minority recruiting efforts. BSA spokesperson Paul Chambers spoke about that the university’s minority recruitment program, Project GO, stating that it was insufficient. The protestors agreed to the university’s proposition to form a task committee, which would prepare a presentation for an emergency meeting of the SAB later that month. The students then marched to the home of CSU President William E. Morgan and held a peaceful “camp-in,” calling for the recruitment of 400 Black, 400 Chicano, and 200 Native American students for the coming Fall semester.⁶⁹ The April 25 issue of *Transition* interviewed both Chambers and MACE leader Manuel Ramos to discuss the ongoing negotiations and meetings with the university; in October, the paper reported that CSU had failed to meet the April demands of BSA and MACE.⁷⁰
- In October, *Transition* announced a BSA rally at Hughes Stadium in support of 14 Black University of Wyoming athletes who were cut from their team and lost their scholarships after they wore black armbands to peacefully protest the discriminatory policies of Brigham Young University (BYU), which they were scheduled to play. BSA met with CSU President A. R. Chamberlain and two deans, asking for a guarantee that CSU athletes would be allowed to protest peacefully without suffering the loss of their scholarships. BSA reportedly found Chamberlain’s response to be bureaucratic and left the meeting dissatisfied.⁷¹
- In February, 1970, BSA was involved in a protest at a CSU-BYU basketball game held at the Moby Gym. Before game day, Paul Chambers and ASCSU President Jim Starr had negotiated a halftime protest of BYU and the practices of the Church of Latter-Day Saints (LDS), as well as CSU’s refusal to condemn BYU and LDS policies. On the morning of the game, students were told that the halftime protest would not be allowed, but they could voice their opinions prior to the game. A short demonstration subsequently took place before the game started; then, during halftime, about 50 Black, White, and Latino people walked out onto the gym floor in protest. Starr described the halftime action as peaceful until the Fort Collins police arrived, wearing riot gear. Once the police entered the gym, chaos ensued; an incendiary device of some type was thrown to the floor in front of the police officers but did not explode. A newspaper photographer was injured and seven people were arrested.⁷² The incident became known as the Moby Riot.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

“Associated property type” is a technical term used by NPS to describe historic resources that are related to the theme, geographic location, and time period for a particular theme study or historic context. The NPS theme study Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States identifies resources that could be nominated to the National Historic Landmarks Program, while this historic context identifies resources that could be nominated to the NRHP at the state or local level. Please refer to National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation for more information.

Property types identified in the theme study include:

- Schools associated with challenges to educational desegregation. This includes schools that illustrate school segregation conditions as well as desegregation litigation or other advocacy activities.
- Properties associated with individuals who were prominent in the fight for school desegregation. These properties must be associated with the individual’s productive life, such as a home or workplace.
- Properties associated with community groups that initiated or planned challenges to school segregation. These properties are likely to include homes, churches, or meeting halls where these activities took place.
- Properties associated with conflict or confrontation, such as schools where segregation was enforced or protest sites.

All historic sites associated with this context, if nominated to the NRHP, would be proposed under Criterion A: “Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history” at the local level of significance.

A building must also retain its historical and architectural integrity; in other words, it “must physically represent the time period for which it is significant.” Integrity is evaluated on the basis of seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Although eligibility for listing in the NRHP is generally limited to those resources whose period of significance ends more than 50 years ago, as all resources associated with the ongoing struggle for fair housing are identified, their data should be collected so that they can be nominated as they become eligible.

The resource types listed here and individually significant sites identified elsewhere were located through archival and historical research and/or information provided by individuals in the community.

Note: This project did not include a historic resources survey. Prior to further considering any of these resources for inclusion in a potential NRHP nomination, these properties should be appropriately surveyed and documented.

PROPERTY TYPE: SCHOOL

The school building most obviously associated with the civil rights movement and fight for equal opportunity in education in Fort Collins is the Juan Fullana Elementary School (now known as Fullana Learning Center, 220 N. Grant Avenue).

The Dunn, Harris, LaPorte Avenue, and Washington elementary schools held a pilot program in bilingual education prior to being required to do so by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Each of these is significant as a “school associated with challenges to educational desegregation.”

PROPERTY TYPE: COLLEGE

The Moby Gymnasium and the President’s House on CSU’s campus are both significant as “properties associated with conflict or confrontation.”

SITES TO BE PRIORITIZED FOR SURVEY

All historic resources identified during this project have been compiled in a single inventory spreadsheet, whether extant or not. The following historic properties have been confirmed to be extant and potentially significant at the local level under Criterion A.

220 N. Grant Avenue – Juan Fullana Elementary School



234 N. Grant Avenue (primary theme: Voting Rights) – 2nd Presbyterian Church; Grant Avenue Presbyterian Church; LULAC Hall; satellite office for the Colorado Migrant Council



501 E. Elizabeth Street – Abraham Lincoln School; Harris Elementary School



330 E. Laurel Street – Laurel Elementary School



233 S. Shields Street – George Washington School



645 S. Shields Street – Morgan residence (CSU President residence)

501 S. Washington Avenue – Dunn Elementary School

951 W. Plum Street (primary theme: Criminal Injustice) – Moby Gymnasium

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