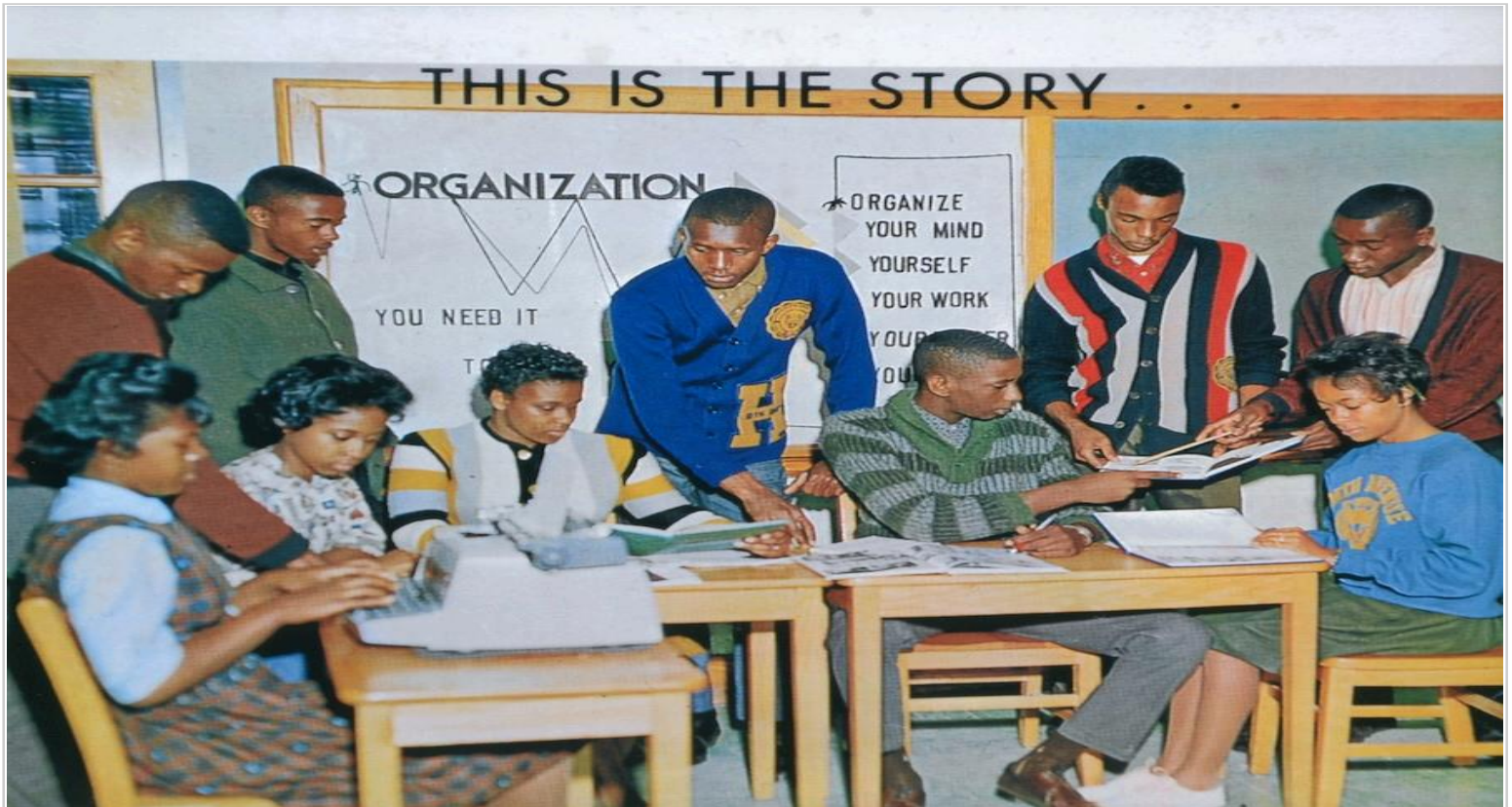




New documentary highlights black education before desegregation



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Hendersonville commemorates the 60th anniversary of the integration of schools with the first showing next month of a new film documenting the black community's thirst for education.

A documentary by David Weintraub and the Center for Cultural Preservation, "Color Beyond the Lines" premieres at 7 p.m. Saturday, June 21, at Thomas Auditorium at Blue Ridge Community College.

"Going back to when our people were enslaved, we realized that if we were going to truly be free it was important to have a good education," says Ronnie Pepper, president of Hendersonville's Black History Research Group. Despite the fact that black students were forced to use old, tattered books and attend schools far from their home, the schools they created became treasured institutions. Ninth Avenue School, for instance, offered a quality education while maintaining a close-knit family relationship. With desegregation in 1965, the black community was excited to have access to resources that they never had before. But the change came at a high price — the loss of their cherished schools.

"What struck me as I interviewed black elders throughout the county was their great desire to instill a good education in their children," said David Weintraub, the film's director. "Although most embraced integration of schools, they were saddened by the loss of precious institutions like the Ninth Avenue school."

Edward King is a Ninth Avenue alumnus who was interviewed in the film.

"Growing up we knew that we had to out-perform, out-think and out-read the white community if we were to succeed," he says. "We had a great pride in our black schools and we felt like something was taken away from us."



Archival photo of the 9th Avenue School circa 1964.

The film documents the discrimination the black community in Henderson County and Western North Carolina faced and how black families overcame it by building a nurturing, supportive community, led by area churches such as Star Bethel Baptist Church. Sports, too, played an important role after integration in developing unity. And black athletes excelled as demonstrated by the 1972 Hendersonville High School Bearcat team that won the state basketball championship with unprecedented four black students in the starting lineup. Check out a trailer [here](#).

The premiere of “Color Beyond the Lines” will begin with a local musical performance, followed by the screening and ending with a discussion with local black leaders on progress and challenges ahead. The film is made possible by the Community Foundation of Henderson County, the Arts Council of Henderson County and North Carolina Humanities.

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General admission tickets are \$20. To order tickets visit www.saveculture.org. Ticketbuyers get \$5 off the price of the DVD if they buy it in advance.