

Luman Boyden adapted texts

Simplified & Shortened

Luman Boyden diary, 28 September 1854

Luman Boyden (1805-1876) was a reverend who worked as a missionary in East Boston, Massachusetts. For his job, he visited and assisted families in the neighborhood. Up until 1856, Boston schools were segregated. The only school for Black children was located on Belknap St., far from East Boston. In this excerpt from September 28, 1854, Boyden describes meeting the Nutes, a Black family, and the difficulties segregated schools presented them.

Note: In the 1850s, lunch was not served at school. Students arrived at school in the morning, left school for lunch, and then returned for the afternoon.

Sept 28 Thursday - ... At Mrs. Nute's **colored** family. She was formerly a member of the Congregational Church in Portland [Maine]... in consequence of being colored they are suffering by a most **oppressive** arrangement. Their children are allowed to attend the primary schools¹ with white children but as soon as they become qualified to enter the grammar school², they are not admitted to the schools in East Boston but go to the colored school in Belknap St. about 2 miles from home. In doing this they are **obliged** to cross the Ferry & pay two cents toll each way. They have three children who attend the school in Belknap St. The ferry costs 12 cents a day, or if they should return at noon of 24 cents a day. This expense and travel would be too great; so, between the morning & afternoon school they are **obliged** to be in the streets in the hot and stormy, as well as pleasant days. During the hot days they were once quite sick... They say they have applied to the General Schools Committee³, but have accomplished nothing. I am resolved to plead their cause...

Glossary

Colored - Black

Oppressive - unfairly harsh

Obliged - made to do something

¹ Schools for children aged 4-7 years old

² Schools for children aged 8 and older

³ The School Committee was in charge of and created the rules for all of Boston's public schools

Full transcription

Luman Boyden diary, 28 September 1854

Luman Boyden (1805-1876) was a reverend who worked as a missionary in East Boston, Massachusetts. For his job, he visited and assisted families in the neighborhood. In the 1850s, many people immigrated from Ireland to East Boston. Up until 1856, Boston schools were segregated. The one school for Black children was located on Belknap St., far from East Boston. In this excerpt from September 28, 1855, Boyden describes meeting the Nutes, a Black family, and the difficulties segregated schools presented them.

Note: In the 1850s, lunch was not served at school. Students arrived at school in the morning, left school for lunch, and then returned for the afternoon. Primary schools were for 4-7 year olds. Grammar schools educated students 8 and older.

Sept 28 Thursday - ... At Mrs. Nutes colored family[,] she formerly member of Congregational Church in Portland. I think Mr Nute owns the house he lives in and appears quite respectable. House kept quite neat. Children dressed neatly but in consequence of being colored they are suffering by a most oppressive arrangement. Their children are allowed to attend the primary schools with white children but as soon as they become qualified to enter the grammar school, they are not admitted to the schools in E. Boston but go to the colored school in Belknap St. about 2 miles from home. In doing this they are obliged to cross the Ferry & pay two cents toll each way. They have three who attend the school in Belknap St. at an expense of ferriage of 12 cents a day, or if they should return at noon of 24 cents a day. This expense & travel would be to great consequently between the morning & afternoon school they are obliged to be in the streets in the hot & stormy as well as pleasant days. During the hot days they were once quite sick. They feel afflicted that while the dirtiest, vilest white children are admitted that theirs are excluded. Say they have applied to the General Schools Com^e but have accomplished nothing. I am resolved to plead their cause...