



Circumstances for Change

In the 1940s there were a number of factors that created a desire for change and the willingness to take action in SC:

- I. **Social, economic and political conditions** were dire. Three-fourth of the people lived in rural communities where there were high rates of illiteracy and poverty for both Blacks and Whites.
- II. **Great Disparities** in the quality of life for Blacks and Whites
Educational Spending-Clarendon County 1949-1950

Whites

\$149/child
12 schools worth 673,850
Rode buses to school

Blacks

\$43/child
61 schools worth \$194,575
Walked up to 9 miles distance

- III. a. **People and organizations** emerged and came together to create change. African-American WWII veterans returned to SC. They had fought for democracy for others but their fight for freedom abroad created in them a yearning for the same kind of freedom at home. They wanted a better way of life for their families.

Harry Briggs was a World War II veteran. Briggs, a gas station attendant, and his wife, Eliza allowed Rev. J.A. DeLaine to use their home for people to sign the petition that became Briggs v Elliott. Eventually, Briggs was fired from his job on Christmas Eve and Mrs. Briggs lost her job as a motel maid. The case of Briggs v Elliott was named for Harry Briggs, who was listed first on the petition.

b. A group of **well-trained Black and White lawyers** who were activists were willing to make the necessary sacrifices to help Blacks achieve equality through appropriate lawsuits. These visionaries included Charles Hamilton Houston, Thurgood Marshall, J. Waties Waring who knew that the time for change had arrived.

c. **Organizations** such as the NAACP, (1909) the Urban League (1910) and Congress of Racial Equality (1942) challenged laws and customs of segregation, while working to create racial, social and political justice for all.