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## Black History exhibit showcases 50 years of information and artifacts

Hannah Cox  
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In celebration of Black History Month the Historically Black Schools of Mecklenburg County host a month long exhibit each year, sharing the local history of school segregation and integration.

The exhibit showcases various photographs, newspaper articles, school uniforms, interview footage and many other resources specific to the four historically black high schools that were once operational in Mecklenburg County.

This February, information on the Thyne Institute, Mecklenburg Training School, West End High School and East End High School could all be found inside of the Thyne Memorial Presbyterian Church in Chase City.

This small church not only houses the exhibit, but is also part of the Thyne Institute's history. The church was once the place of worship for all the children attending the Thyne Institute.

Before the Historically Black Schools of Mecklenburg County organization was formed in 2014, there was a display of donated black history items that was shown at the R.T. Arnold Library in South Hill.

So, according to Glanzy Spain, an organizer of the exhibit and member of the HBSMC organization, the items inside of the museum/library have been collected for over 50 years.

Spain's wife and another member of the HBSMC organization, Jean Spain, refers to the collection not as a museum, but as a "library of resources that can be used to increase peoples' knowledge of black history."

Along with the items that are on display, the exhibit features a video containing interviews of people telling their stories of what it was like to live and go to school in Mecklenburg County during the freedom of choice period.

The interviewees in the video are all people that during the Freedom of Choice time period from around 1965 to 1970 chose to go to an integrated school in Mecklenburg county.

Spain's wife said the idea behind the interviews is to "tell the story of where you came from and where you are going."

Spain's wife is still looking for anyone willing to talk about their experience during that time whether they were in elementary, middle or high school.

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If anyone is interested in answering a few questions and telling their story for others to hear you can email Jean Spain at [yougobears@hotmail.com](mailto:yougobears@hotmail.com).

The exhibit is open to the public Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the remainder of the month of February. The Thyne Memorial Presbyterian Church is located next door to the Thyne Institute Memorial at 5188 Highway 47 in Chase City.