
In December 2015, a year-and-a-half after teenaged white supremacist Dylann Roof opened fire on a pew of Charleston’s oldest black church, his taped confession became public record during his trial for murder. The tapes showed that after being served Burger King and a “nice and cold” water, Roof talked openly about his act of terror. The specifics made him bashful. He said he would never want to look his victims’ families in the eye.

Roof’s intent was clear. His call to arms was inspired in part by the central tenant of “Lost Cause” sympathizers working to erect statues of Confederate leaders amid “Statue for Generations” in Richmond a “psychological terror.” As seen throughout Virginia, local governments continue to force black children to attend Confederate-named schools. After mapping where those schools are, spatial statistical analysis was used to determine whether this lingering “psychological terror” of the Confederacy falls disproportionately on black children.

Today schools in Virginia bearing the names of those who fought to enslave black Americans are often populated by a majority of black students. At a ceremony held two weeks before Roof’s massacre, a group of white and black Richmonders buried a Confederate flag. They called the continued Confederate presence in Richmond a “psychological terror.” As opposed to the Supreme Court’s Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1955, white students fled city schools that had worked desperately to keep black students out. In some areas of Virginia, newly built schools took on Confederate names as a warning shot to those who would seek to integrate them.

Sources
Virginia Department of Education 2015 enrollment data,
Virginia U.S. Census, 2015 American Community Survey

Conclusion
The pattern of black-white segregation in Richmond-Petersburg is revealed as a ring around the highest concentration of Virginia’s Confederate-named schools (left), whose districts serve the highest populations of black students in the state.

Methods
Pulling names of Confederate leaders from all Virginia’s schools, available from the Virginia Department of Education, the locations were geocoded and placed onto Virginia U.S. Census tracts.

After joining information about school enrollment from VDOE and demographics from the 2015 U.S. American Community Survey (bottom left), a Moran’s I spatial analysis test was performed to seek clusters of high black populations that are adjacent to low populations (below and left).

The percentage of black students at each of the 16 schools was then symbolized, indicating an extremely high percentage among six schools within a 34 mile span in the Richmond-Petersburg area (below and top inset). The percentage of black students was compared against the total black population as an indicator of possible segregation (left).