

History Written in Our Time

IN OTHER columns on this page today is printed the complete text of the United States Supreme Court opinion in the public school segregation case.

The high court, reversing a previous opinion (1896) that the "separate and equal facilities" provision made by the southern states satisfied the requirements of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, banned all Negro segregation in the public schools as unconstitutional.

The court did not insist that its ruling take effect at once since it realized that major adjustments must be made in public thinking, as well as in physical facilities, in the school systems of 17 states in the Union.

Because of the far-reaching consequences of last Monday's court ruling, the opinion already is recognized as a historic document, one that will be read in future time along with the 14th and 15th Amendments, the Dred Scott decision and the Emancipation Proclamation as state papers dealing with the grant of equal rights

to Americans who were born with black or brown, rather than white skins.

We commend the text of the Supreme Court's opinion to our readers as history written in our own time.

The unanimous opinion, read by Chief Justice Earl Warren, is not merely a report of the findings according to the law and the Constitution. It is a discussion of the philosophy of public education, and of the local conditions which operate on the organization of school systems. It deals with the "separate but equal facilities" doctrine and the failure of such facilities to provide real equality of opportunity and of rights.

The other great documents in the history of American civil rights, particularly as they have been extended to the Negro, are pages in history texts. This latest document is of our own times, a newspaper headline and commentary on the radio. Every American should read it carefully. A knowledge of its social background and legal provisions will be useful hereafter.

May 23, 1954. The Urbana Courier.