

Legacy of the Pearson Brothers



Levi Pearson

Brothers Levi and Hammitt Pearson, two black landowners in Clarendon County, South Carolina, were on a quest to get bus transportation for black



Hammitt Pearson
1895 - 1977

school children in the 1930s and 1940s. Two and three teacher schools, with bare wooden buildings provided by churches, were scattered about the countryside during that era, and the walks to them were long. Levi had 12 children and Hammitt had 8. Their children had to walk the journey to and from school. The state of South Carolina provided bus transportation only to white children. The brothers tried unsuccessfully to establish their own bus transportation. They appealed to Rev. Joseph A. Delaine, a teacher and founder of the Clarendon County NAACP. In 1947, Levi Pearson sued for school bus transportation in the name of James Pearson, his son. In July 1947, attorney Harold Boulware mailed notice of the suit to school trustees. In March 1948, Pearson's lawsuit was filed in federal court. It was dismissed in June. In March 1949, the Pearsons encouraged Thurgood Marshall to keep pushing the Clarendon County case. Thus, their lawsuit requesting a bus was transformed into a larger petition for equal buildings, books, and teachers' pay. The lawsuit, *Briggs v. Elliott*, became one of the *Brown v Board of Education* cases.