



## Viewing Guide: *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950)

### The Background of the Case (00:00-2:25)

1. What did the Texas Constitution of 1876 say about segregation and separate but equal with regards to education?
2. What group had achieved some progress in the courts to end segregation in public schools?
3. At this time, what two leaders in the NAACP were determined to dismantle and end segregation?

**Stop and Think:** Why do you think that the NAACP concentrated on ending segregation in public education?

### Heman Sweatt (2:26-6:10)

4. Who was Heman Sweatt and what did he do? Who was Theophilus Painter and what role did he play in the controversy?
5. What did the Texas Legislature do in response to Mr. Sweatt's lawsuit?
6. Why did Mr. Sweatt continue his lawsuit against the University of Texas even after the Texas Legislature and the University of Texas had attempted to solve the issue?

**Stop and Think:** Would you have been satisfied with the solution to the issue offered by the Texas Legislature and the University of Texas Law School? Why or why not?

### Question brought to the Supreme Court (6:11-7:39)

7. What was the question that the Supreme Court had to answer in this case?  
[Formula for issue=Yes/No question + facts of the case + part of the U.S. Constitution in question]

8. What were the two arguments used by Sweatt's attorneys in arguing the case?

**Stop and Think:** What did the attorney mean when he said they hoped to “cut the roots out of segregation”?

**The Ruling (7:40-10:20)**

9. What was the ruling of the Court and the major reason for this decision?

**Stop and Think:** Do you agree or disagree with the decision of the Supreme Court? Defend your answer.

**The Impact of the Case (10:21-12:27)**

10. What was the impact of the case on Heman Sweatt? On other African Americans who wanted to attend the University of Texas Law School?

11. How did this case change segregation of public education after the decision?

12. What was the response of the NAACP with regards to the *Sweatt* decision?

**Conclusion:** *“More than 60 years after Sweatt was the first African-American to apply to [the University of Texas School of Law], his story continues to be emotionally and politically relevant, and his case... led directly to the end of segregation.”*

—Gary M. Lavergne, author of “Before Brown: Heman Marion Sweatt, Thurgood Marshall and the Long Road to Justice”

13. Paraphrase what this quote means in your own words.

14. Do you agree or disagree with the conclusion drawn by Mr. Lavergne that this case directly led to the end of segregation? Defend your answer.