

# Curiosity Corner

Treasures from the FCS Archives

Welcome to *Treasures from the FCS Archives*, a repository of resources for teachers and history enthusiasts! Every month, we are sharing photos, artifacts, documents and other treasures for you to review, discuss and discover. We encourage you to click the links, scan the photos and dig deeper into these treasures, all of which can be found in the Fulton County Schools Archives. Enjoy!

## DUCK AND COVER: COLD WAR CIVIL DEFENSE IN OUR SCHOOLS



**Fallout Shelter Drinking Water Tank and Sanitation Kit c. 1966**  
 Office of Civil Defense, Manufactured by Continental Can Company, Inc., New York.  
 Size: two canisters, 22"x18" each FCS Archive: FIC.2016.19.36

For the 45 years after World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union were engaged in a standoff known as the Cold War. A nuclear attack during this time would have threatened millions of civilian lives in a matter of minutes. Public schools, the most centralized public spaces in most communities, became the front line for federal policies and procedures known as Civil Defense. By 1952, nearly 90% of all the schools in America had some form of civil defense training for students.

Perhaps the most recognizable role schools played in civil defense was to house an extensive network of public fallout shelters. In 1962, at the height of the Cold War, President John F. Kennedy allocated \$207,600,000 to fund a public shelter program that would rely largely on the use of schools as places of refuge. The drinking water tank and sanitation kit you see here were, until recently, stored at Mimosa Elementary School and were typical items in a school fallout shelter. Although relatively compact, this drink water (dark green) tank would supply 17½ gallons of fresh water. Once the water was consumed, the tank doubled as a commode. The sanitation kit contains items such as toilet paper, a syphon spout, and gloves.

By the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many fallout shelters in Fulton County schools were either abandoned or repurposed to account for “natural” disasters, such as tornadoes and floods. Still, items like the drinking water tank and sanitation kit remind us of a time when fallout shelters—and survival—were national priorities that impacted communities and schools directly.

For more information and resources or to connect with staff at the **Teaching Museum**, contact Jena Sibille at [sibillej@fultonschools.org](mailto:sibillej@fultonschools.org).

**Curiosity in the Classroom:** [Close Reading Guide](#)

*A Closer Look*

Click on the image above for a higher resolution jpeg. Ask students to carefully look at the image using the following questions. For more in depth study, click on the close reading guide [pdf](#).

**Ask students:**

- Describe what you see.
- Does the list of contents raise questions for you?
- Is there anything that is surprising or unusual?
- What do these containers and contents tell you about life in the United States during the 1960s? Support your ideas with evidence from these primary sources.

**Lesson Ideas & Links: Connecting to Standards**

- [Elementary School Connections](#)
- [Related Primary Sources](#)
- [Middle School Connections](#)
- [Ask the Teaching Museum](#)
- [High School Connections](#)
- [Additional Online Resources](#)

**TEACHING MUSEUM**  
 Fulton County Schools