

HISTORY OF DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL

GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA

MAY 4, 1955

Dunbar High School began about sixty years ago, in what was known then as the masonic hall located on Palmetto Avenue on the site where the Donaldson's home now stand.

It then had one teacher, Professor Carl Edwards, and a small group of children. The school was ungraded and the term was only four months.

A few years later, a tourist, Mr. Gail Borden, came to this city to live. He gave the Negro Citizens of Green Cove Springs, a Public School on Wallburg and Cypress streets. It had, at this time, three teachers, Professor John A. Wright, Mrs. Carrie Wright and Mrs. Emma Bailey. The school term increased to six months. Because of the law by state legislature school terms were lengthened to nine months.

The following persons served as principals between 1896 and 1924, John Anderson, James Williams, John Hopps, B. P. Hartwell, O. F. Wiles, N. W. Ross, Edwain Groover, H. C. Williams and E. J. W. Day.

In 1924, one of the schools Elementary graduates was brought back as principal, namely, W. N. Zanders. The first P.T.A. was organized during this term. In the meetings held monthly, monies were raised to purchase school supplies. The trustees then were: J. P. Tillinghast, J. C. Willis, and J. W. Locket.

The first Junior High School graduation was held May 8, 1908 with the late B. F. Hartwell as principal. The following persons graduated: Sarah Collins, Anna Willie, Edwin Carter and William Hall.

The Senior High School had its beginning in 1931 with Professor R. C. Bannerman as principal, who named it "DUNBAR" in honor of Paul Lawrence Dunbar. The first graduate of the NOW acquired high school was Mrs. Celia Bannerman, the wife of the principal, in 1934.

The school being condemned for several years, Principal Bannerman interceded with the Clay County Board of Public Instruction for getting a new building on a new site.

The Negro Citizens and teachers, namely, Bernice Hall Forde, Martha Robinson Jones, Rosa B. Aarons, Theresa Redmond Marie, Virginia Clayton Ray, Susie Small and Mozelle Francis Peters, were sent out to select a site. The site selected was the home site of the renowned Augustus Savage. Miss Savage was happy to sell for this purpose and sold for \$500.00, which the teachers and citizens raised. In 1938-39 the P.T.A. of which Mrs. Estelle Trumpler was president, Mrs. Hattie Flowers, vice president, Mrs. Rosa Lee Stewart, secretary and Mrs. Ruth Bennett, helper, raised money which bought utensils for lunchroom and helped to purchase the present site of building. Professor Bannerman, having worked hard these many years, became suddenly ill was unable to complete the task started. He resigned because of illness. After the resignation in 1945, Theresa R. Marie, who was a teacher at this time, became principal in the old school, with the following teachers added to the staff: Eugenia Powell Argrett, Jerusha Major and Josephine Strong. During this year the old building was torn down and the school was held in the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church and Hall. While having school in these places the Church was destroyed by fire. Because the hall was not large enough to house the children, classes were moved into the incomplete building that was being erected on Middleburg Avenue, the present site. There were no doors, windows or heat. Classes were held outdoors with fire being built of tire tubes. Through hardship and toils, we endeavored to have school.

The Principal, Theresa R. Marie, became ill in 1945 and Homer Williams came to this school as principal with no new members added to the faculty. In 1947, N. W. Campbell came as principal with the new teacher being Pearl Crump. In 1948, James A. Ellerbe, was appointed to serve as principal with F. W. Hinson as new teacher. Mr. Ellerbe served the term and the following term, Mr. Hinson became principal, and remained until 1954, with new teachers being added as follows: 1949-50, Thomas Brown, 1950-51, Morean Thomas, Mildred Bannerman, and Cornelia Hinson, 1951-52, Joseph Johnson. During these years the following buildings were erected; The Industrial Arts, and Cafetorium and the setting up of the first Library Unit.

The present school term 1954-55 took on new life by, enriching the curriculum improving and beautifying the physical plant and surroundings, and increasing the personnel with Maxwell W. Saxon as principal, who came to the position August 17th. Prior to this term, many classes were over crowded, teacher loads were over the minimum, there was no provision for the teaching of Science in the High School. The Home Economic teacher has been attempting to teach science without laboratory equipment or supplies and seats were inadequate for classes. Many students carried seats from room to room as the class period changed. Class room supplies were furnished at a minimum through the efforts of teacher's personal purchases. The newly built Industrial Arts Shop was equipped with some electric machinery but did not have the every day hand tools, hammer, saws, etc., which boys would need to learn to use. The newly built Industrial Arts building was dedicated on April 4, 1955 and named W. N. Zanders, graduate and former principal of this school. The Cafetorium, which had been in use for a year, was dedicated at this time also, April 4, 1955 and named T. R. Marie, former student, principal and teacher. During the dedicational services the following distinguished school administrators, citizens of Florida were honored with meritorious Service Awards: Hon. Harris C. Long, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Clay County, Green Cove Springs, Florida; Mrs. Hannah B. Miller, Civic and Religious Leader, Green Cove Springs, Florida; Mr. Joseph L. Muldrow, Fraternal and Civic Leader, Green Cove Springs, Florida; Mrs. Rosa B. Aaron, Retired Teacher, Green Cove Springs, Florida; Rev. W. N. Zanders, Graduate of Dunbar, former Principal, Missionary and Evangelist; Mrs. Theresa Redmond Marie, former student and principal, presently teaching at Dunbar, Mr. Charles W. Francis, Educator, Daytona Beach, Florida; Mr. W. R. Hall, Good Service to Sick and Distressed, Green Cove Springs, Florida.

The typing classes had not been established as such. Students sat on discarded army mess hall tables and attempted typing as an activity without credit. The Home Economic department did not have cooking stoves, sink, running water, (hot or cold) dishes, kitchen utensils, cabinets, or any of the essentials for teaching, with the exception of a used dilapidated refrigerator, one electric machine and one old treadle top, an electric iron and board. The play and physical education area was hazardous, the light poles and the basketball goals had deteriorated to the extent that some of them had fallen to the ground, no adequate office space for the principal was provided, and proper utilities for the safe keeping of records.