

History of Jackson High School

By Nomie D. (McDonald) Farley

Prior to 1922, there were no schools for blacks in the Jonesboro area. St. Rest Community established a school in 1886. Other schools were established throughout Jackson Parish and were financially supported by patrons and black churches. These schools were of one-room structure, with one teacher, and all elementary grades. These early schools were poorly organized and poorly attended.

In August of 1922, four white citizens of Jonesboro decided that an organized school for blacks was needed in Jonesboro. These white citizens were: Elma Cox, Martin Shows, Dr. Edd Simonton, and Superintendent of Jackson Parish Schools, George Odom. They decided to contact Professor G. L. Hawk, who, at that time, was principal of Dodson Training School for blacks in Dodson, Louisiana.

Professor Hawk, a noted educator, was born in Macon, Georgia, on June 1, 1864, on the Hildred Hawk Plantation. His parents were Andrew and Milissa Blossombone Hawk.

His parents were slaves, and 13 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, his family moved to Louisiana. The Hawk family settled on Sugar Creek in Claiborne Parish on the Big Ben Plantation. Professor Hawk attended the school on the plantation provided for the sharecroppers' children, and advanced enough at this school to teach.

Later, Professor Hawk attended Coleman College in Bienville Parish, and taught school in a settlement around Homer, Louisiana. He erected the Evergreen School in Bienville Parish, served as principal in Ruston, Louisiana, and erected a Rosenwald School in Dodson, Louisiana. Professor Hawk resigned from the Dodson Training School and came to Jonesboro to set up a school for blacks.

School was first held in the Old Travelers Rest Baptist Church. Later, three acres of land were purchased from Jessie Jones for \$30.00 an acre. The present Hawk Primary School is located on this plot of land.

The school was known as Jackson Parish Training School. The first classes were held in October, 1922, with the following teachers: Professor G. L. Hawk, Principal; Mrs. Willie B. Hawk Pearrie, Domestic Science; Mrs. Willie Mae Boyer, Basic Education. Later, Mr. A. J. Pearre was employed as agriculture teacher, and Mrs. Sadie Banks was employed as music teacher.

After school opened, the blacks in the community made plans to raise their part of the money to qualify for a Rosenwald school building. Professor Hawk was informed by the Rosenwald Foundation Agency that the Jackson Parish School Board must not only accept the plan, but it must pay a certain percent of the building fund before the Rosenwald funds would be approved.

The school board agreed for only a four-month school term, but the Rosenwald Foundation required an eight-month school term. The teachers agreed to work four months for whatever they made from their school closing concerts for their pay.

There were hardships. There was not enough money to finish the four-room building. The carpenters discontinued their work on the building and blocked the doors to keep teachers and students from entering until they received their \$175.00, the cost for labor. Mr. Bud Garner, a leading black citizen, paid the \$175.00 debt on a promise that the black community would pay him back when they raised the money.

Many white friends supported the newly-organized school, but there were many whites who didn't support it and threatened to destroy the school by burning it down. The black men armed themselves and watched the campus at night. Two buildings were later destroyed by fire.

There were nine black citizens who supported the newly-organized school during its lean years. They were: Reverends W. M. Boyer, H. J. Jordan, and W. M. Rush, Mr. Bud Garner, Mr. Sim Jones, Mr. Cecil Knox, Mr. O. L. Lindsay, Mr. Mose McDonald, and Mrs. Dora Rogers.

The first high school graduation was held in May, 1937. Professor Hawk retired in 1937. Mr. J. R. Wilson became the principal. In 1939-40, the school was divided into separate schools—an elementary and a high school. A building was erected on the present Jackson High School site, housing grades 8-11. Mr. J. R. Wilson served as principal from 1937-1965, Mr. Jerry Cole, Jr., served from 1965-1969, and when Jackson Parish Schools were integrated in January of 1970, Mr. Verlon Malone was the principal.

When the school was closed in January of 1970, the small flame that started in 1922 was now a great blaze; for Jackson Parish Training School, Jonesboro Colored High School, and Jackson High School had educated, inspired, and motivated students to excel in spite of handicaps.

Jacksonites are scattered all over the United States and abroad. They have made and are still making positive contributions to the American society. The Jackson High School is closed, but the Jackson High School spirit will live forever.

Pictures of Some of the First Buildings



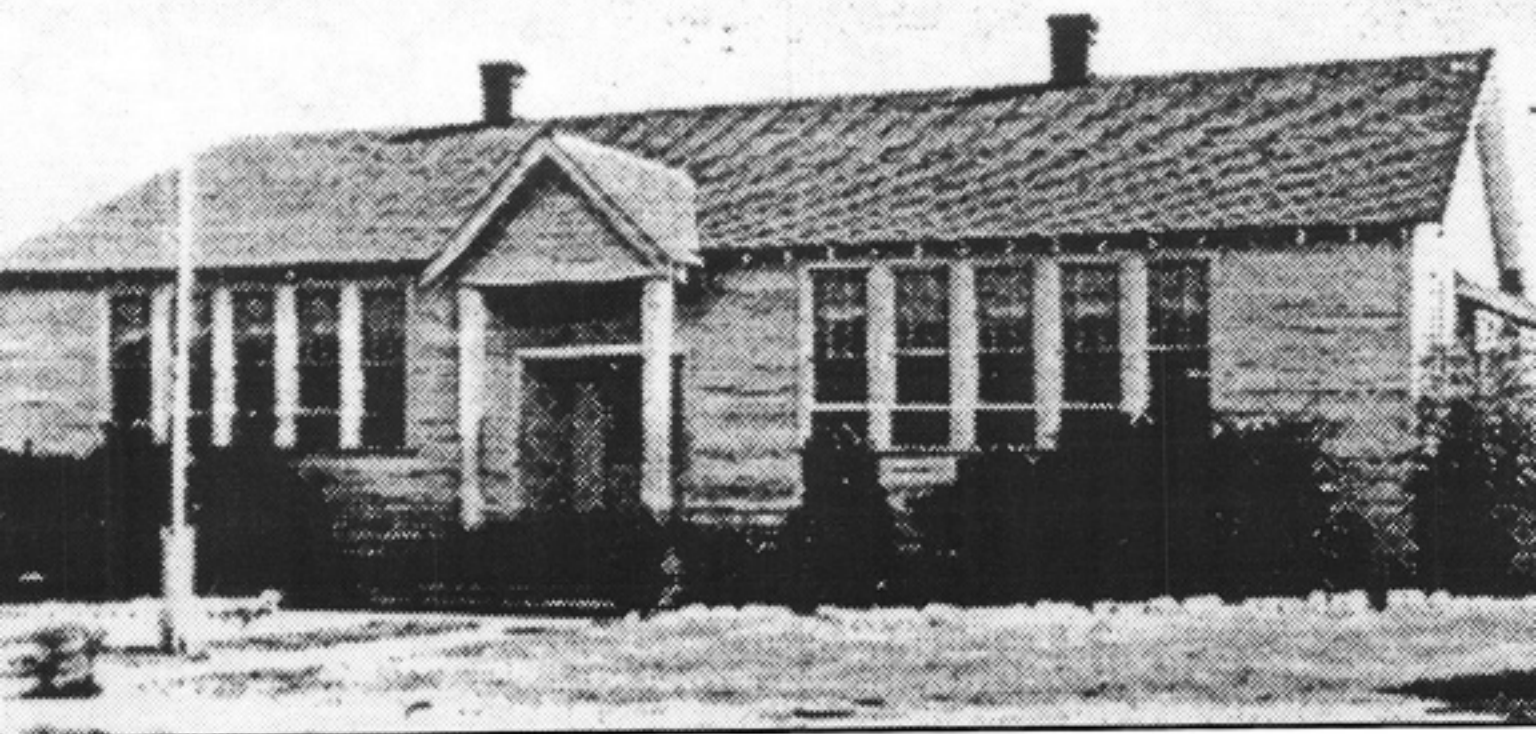
Jonesboro Colored High School

The building above was erected in 1939. Classes were held for the grades 8-11 in September, 1939. It consisted of four rooms—English, social studies, home economics, and a bookless library. A one-room Agriculture building was located behind the main building. There were four teachers: Mr. J. R. Wilson, teacher and principal (social studies, science, and math); Miss Vera C. Powe-English; Mrs. Rosie M. Gillie Jackson-home economics; and Raymond E. Sudds-agriculture.

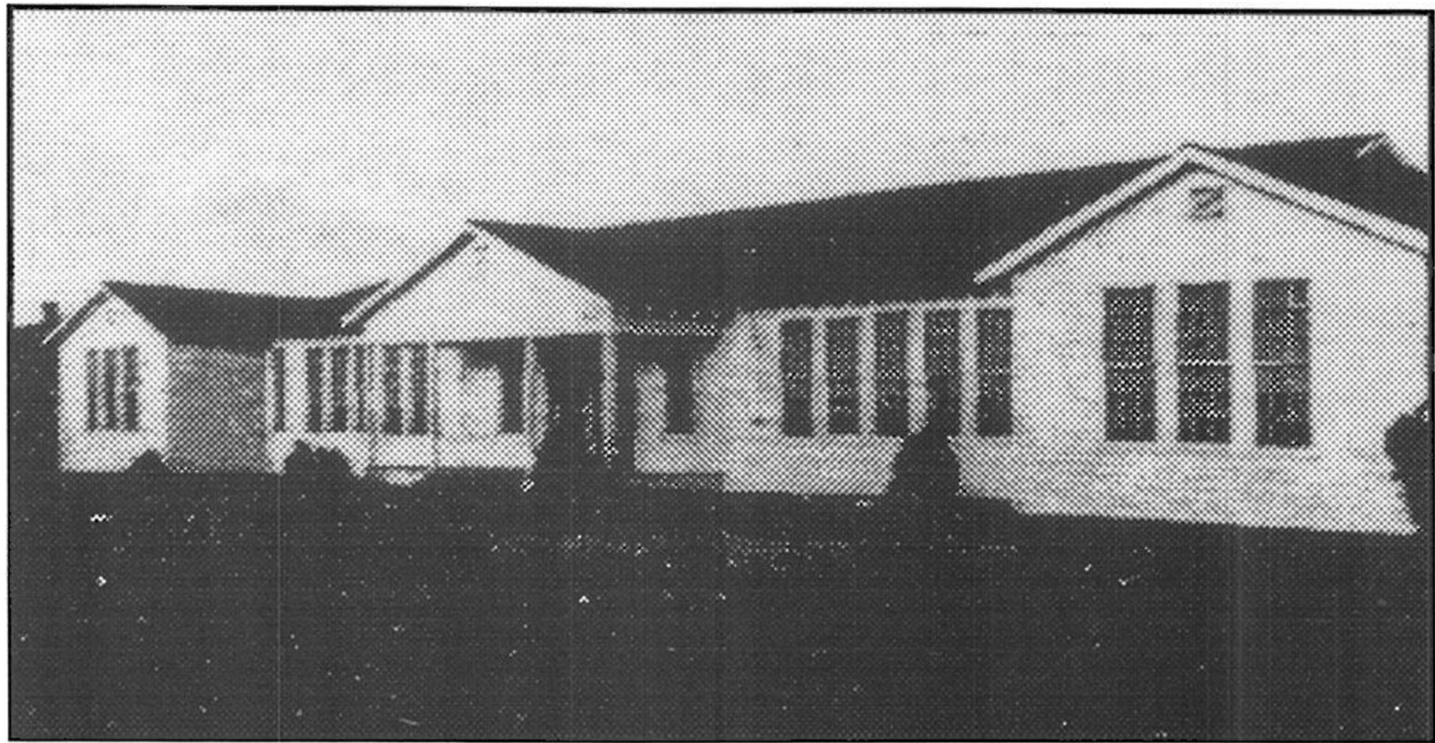
Inside picture
of building
at left.



This building was erected after World War II. The lumber used in this building was salvaged from Camp Beauregard, built by local carpenters, and remained unpainted on the inside until it was demolished.



High School Department
Jonesboro Colored High School



Jonesboro Colored High School

Accolades for the Builders *of the* **Jackson Parish Colored School**

August, 1922

Four white citizens were
responsible for the first school
for black children in
Jonesboro, Louisiana.
Later it met the
Rosenwald qualifications and
became the Jackson
Parish Training School.



Dr. Augustus Edd Simonton



Julius Rosenwald
*Philanthropist,
Financial contributor*



John Elmo Cox

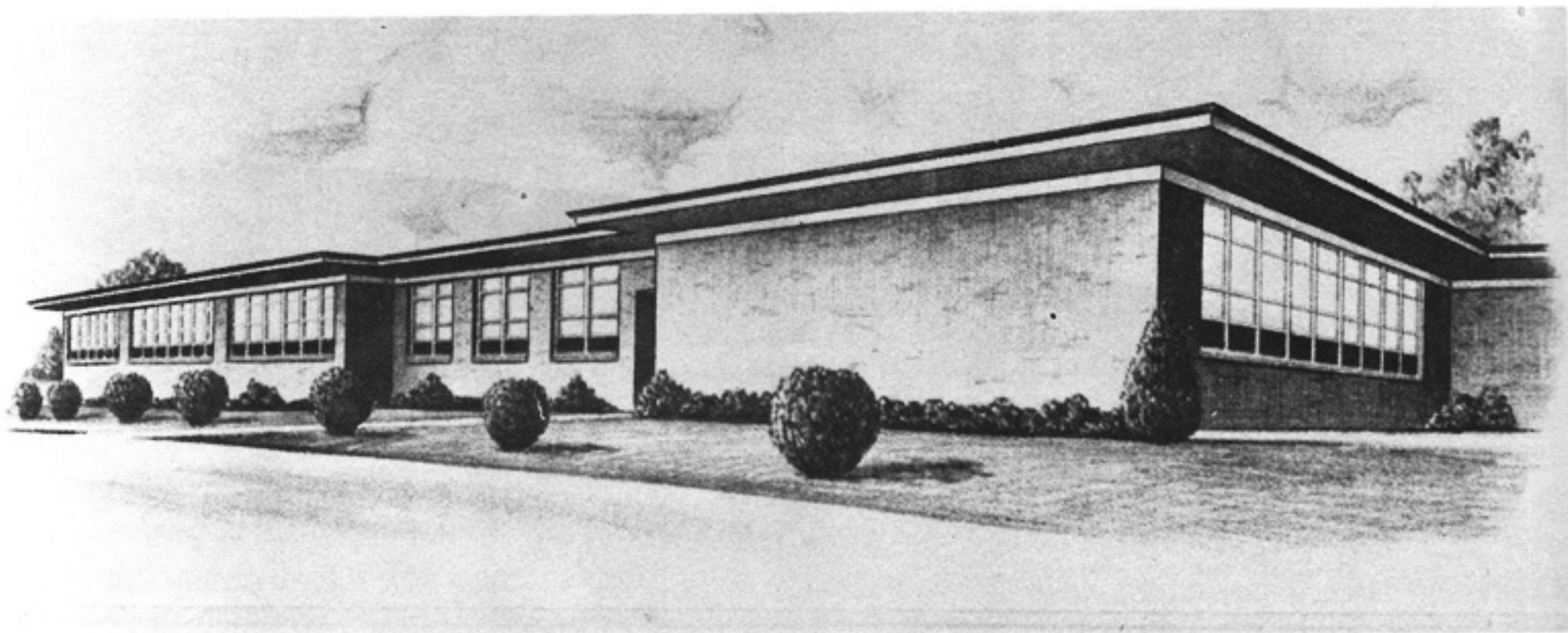
Not Pictured:
George Odom, Superintendent
Martin Shows

Community Supporters

Mrs. Dora Rogers
Deacon Ollie Lindsay
Bud Garner
Cecil Knox
Mose McDonald

James Pearrie
Reverend Horace Jordan
Reverend William Rush
Reverend W. M. Boyer
Sim Jones

*"When we build, let us think that we build forever. Let it not be such work as our
descendants will thank us for, an let us think as we lay stone on stone, . . ." Rushkins*



Jackson High School — Main Building 1970

*Tribute to the Educator of three schools and
Author of the school Alma Mater
(1938 – 1970)*



Mrs. Rosa Jackson
Home Economics

ALMA MATER
(Dear Jackson High School)

*Dear Jackson High School
aims for the Golden Rule;
This keeps our school in line,
always on time.*

*Jackson we're on your side,
Your buildings and grounds
are admired;
They help us all to be inspired.*

*Jackson our dear school,
we'll love you ever;
Always remember rules,
forsake you ne'er.
We'll never stray, but always pray
That our school will go onward
day by day.*

*Our school adores
its purple and white,
It means to all we are right.
With Jackson spirit, we'll always stand the test
Whether we are far away or near.*



Sandy Woods

Our Founder

Professor Green Lucillious Hawk

1867-1958



Educator, Philosopher, Visionary Leader

First Principal

Jonesboro Colored School 1922

Name Changes to:

Jackson Parish Training School
(Rosenwald founded) since 1927

Jonesboro Colored Elementary School 1949

Hawk Elementary School 1953

Jackson High School
(founded in 1938)

The Builder

You've crossed the chasm deep and wide
Why build you this bridge at evening tide?
The builder lifted his old gray head,
"Good friend, in the path I've come," he said
There followed after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way
The chasm has been as naught to me
To that fine youth it may a pitfall be;
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim,
Good friend, I am building that bridge for him.

An old man traveling a lonely highway
Came at evening cold and gray,
To a chasm vast, and deep and wide
The sullen stream had no fear for him,
As he crossed the twilight dim.
But he turned when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.
"Old Man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
You are wasting your time by building here,
For you never again will pass this way.

JACKSON PARISH TRAINING SCHOOL

Ms. Maurine Jenkins

and her group of students

1927



G. L. Pearrie (Candyman)

is the grandson of the

FOUNDER

*"The best way to succeed is to get your wisdom
from old people and your enthusiasm from young people."*

~DENNY J. BRAKE~