

## Natchitoches Parish Training School, Natchitoches, LA



### The Secondary School Study Web Exhibition by Craig Kridel, Curator

In 1940, Natchitoches Parish Training School (Natchitoches, LA) was invited to participate in the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes' Secondary School Study. Selected and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, sixteen of the most distinguished black high schools in the United States participated in an experimental program to reexamine administrative, curricular, and instructional practices. The University of South Carolina's Museum of Education is pleased to feature the Natchitoches Parish Training School and its participation in the study.

#### Web Exhibition "Rooms"

*"The teachers truly cared about us. One can't necessarily explain what the caring of a teacher is, but they can act it out. And that's what was done at Natchitoches Parish Training School."*  
Rev. J. D. Dupree

[Introduction to the Secondary School Study](#)  
[The Natchitoches Parish Training School Building](#)  
[Curricular Experimentation](#)  
[Educational Leader: Principal F. M. Richardson](#)  
[Natchitoches Parish Training School as Community](#)  
[Social Activism and Social Justice](#)  
[LNC Archives](#)  
[Curator's Statement](#)

## Letter of Invitation to Participate in the Study



William A. Robinson

January 23, 1940

We would like to include the most promising high schools in the Region. For instance, the school should have as principal one of the most promising principals in the state from the standpoint of his training, energy, capability and general alertness to educational progress. The staff should have good fundamental training and an intellectual approach to their work with materials, with boys and girls, and with community problems. We should select in each state the school that has already made the most intelligent approach from each of these angles, that is, is already carrying on a successful program.

Sincerely yours,  
W. A. Robinson, Director  
Secondary School Study  
Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA

While the Association sought to achieve accreditation for its member schools and to make strides for equitable support—separate AND equal—for black education, some educators believed teachers were not involved in progressive education’s “stream of educational ideas” and, thus, were placing too much emphasis on traditional instructional practices. For this reason, the Rockefeller Foundation invited distinguished schools to help define promising practices and to serve as a laboratory for determining goals for black youth.

With oral history  
interviews conducted  
October 30-31,  
2008 (listed in  
alphabetical order)  
with  
Lusetta Anthony  
Grace T. Baptiste  
Pearline Baptiste  
Geneva B. Barrow



Alma C. Braxton  
Reverend J. D. Dupree  
Alma Loftin Johnson  
Sarah R. W. LaCaze



Sylvia M. Morrow  
Pearl H. Payne  
Dorothy J. Presley  
LeRoy Wafter



Marcella Walter  
Arthur Welch  
With special thanks to  
Edward Ward, Jr.

and with great appreciation to Dr. Mary Lynn Wernett and Annette Merrell of  
the Henry Research Center, *Watson Memorial Library*, and Dr. Dayna Lee of the  
*Louisiana Regional Folklife Program*, Northwestern State University.