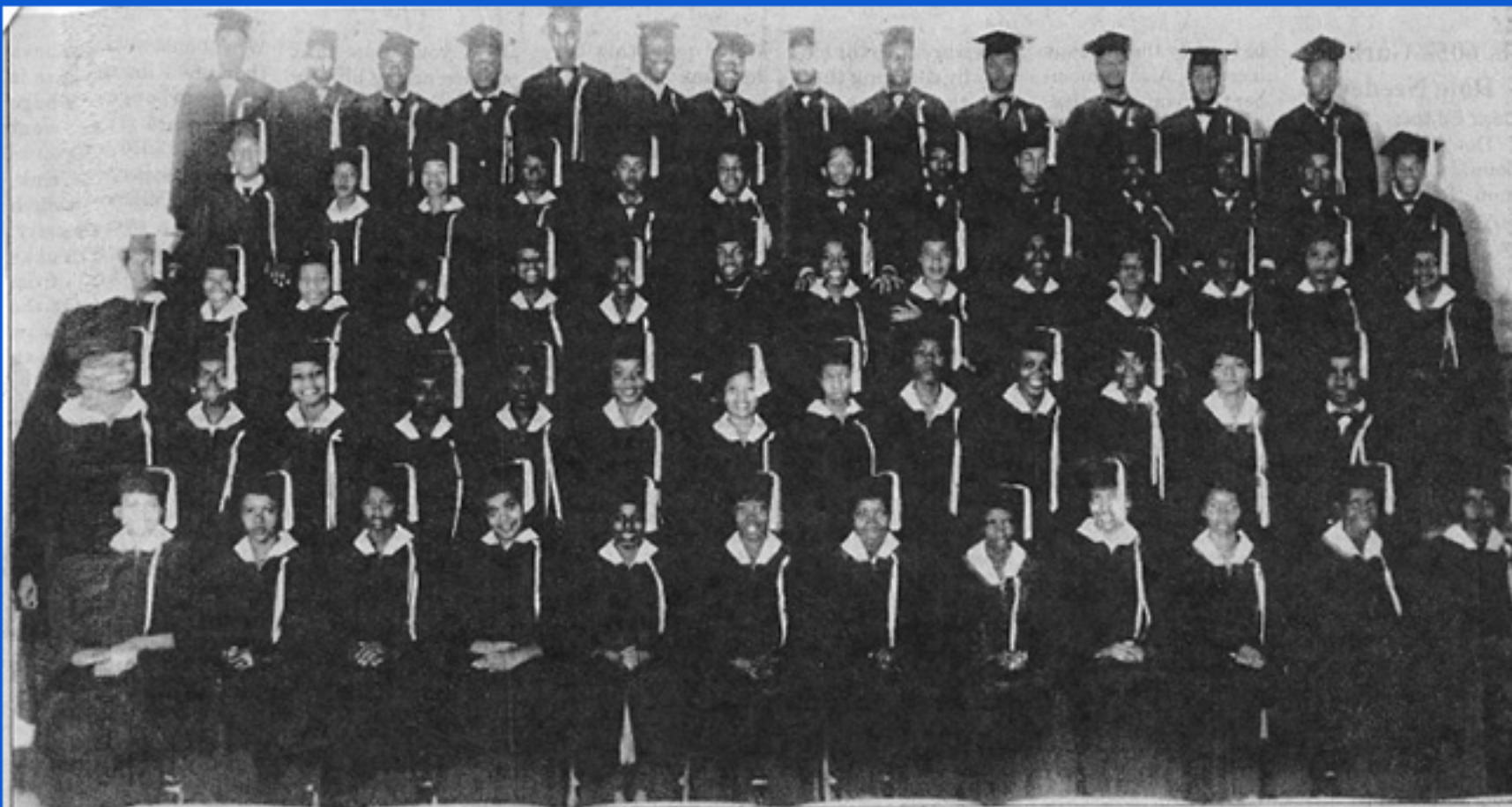




"\$100,000 Monroe Colored High School built in 1922, circa—1922." *From the Collection of Antoinette Brooks.*



Carroll High School - Class of 1954

Pictured above, top row, from left to right: Arthur Long, Eugene L. Jones (deceased), James Reed, Wilbert Mitchell, Jimmy Haywood, Joseph Hamilton, Louis Harris, Fred Davis, Lavelle Conley, Isaac Wilson, Leroy Danzie, Ernest White, Louis Pargoud. Second Row from top, left to right: Jesse Wilson, Eula (Peoples) Green, Bobbie J. Harris, Roylene (Ellis) Jones, Eben Hoston, Ruby (Smedley) Cooper, Walter Allen, Albert Hall, Willis Lawrence, Walter Williams, Theodore Adams, Louis C. Thomas, Sidney Baggs, Jr. (deceased). Third row from top, left to right: Hildred

(Starr) Sheppard, Joan (Adams) Johnson, Ivy Honeycutt (deceased), Dorothy J. Chambers, Fannie (Toombs) Everfield, Barbara (Moss) Cupil, Joseph Napoleon (deceased) Mary Y. Napoleon, Catherine (Butler) Moses, Beverly (Smith Foster), Minnie (Jackson) Glenn, Ethel M. Steele (deceased), Myrtis (Allen) Bryant, Iona (Ervin) Smith.

Second row from bottom, left to right: Betty (Alexander) Johnson, Emmitt (Bell) Franklin, Eddye (Gordon) Yokum, Ida (Ealy) Levels, Eva M. Johnson, Jerridine (Ford) Woods, Barbara Flewellyn, Barbara (Straughter) Mercy, Melvie Celie (Robinson) Stone, Eula (Taylor) Presley, Lula (Johnson) Reed, Katie (Jackson) Woods, Abe B. Nicholson.

Bottom Row, left to right: Rosie L. Diggins (deceased), Lettie Jones (deceased), Delores (Menyweathers) McKenney, Vernell (Smith) Blade, Gloria (Conley) Bailey, Jeroline (Willis)

1920

Life in the Decade: Education

Monroe City Schools open doors wide to black students

By ALISA MABRY

Staff Writer

The trend in public education was progressive during the roaring 1920s.

Public schools throughout the state were booming with their finances and construction.

An editorial in the May 1928 issue of *Louisiana Teachers' Association* states 344 high schools were in Louisiana with 38,664 pupils enrolled and 2,000 teachers employed.

Monroe City Schools were definitely on the upswing. An increase in enrollment caused the district to build new schools throughout the 1920s.

At the time, with E.L. Neville serving as superintendent, Monroe City Schools' enrollment soared with 2,300 white students and 1,500 black pupils.

Yearly revenue of \$155,000 was generated from the city — city court fines, a three-mill tax and a 1½ mill

special tax.

Public education in Monroe increased to include more blacks. Before the 1920s, many blacks were taught through home schooling or church.

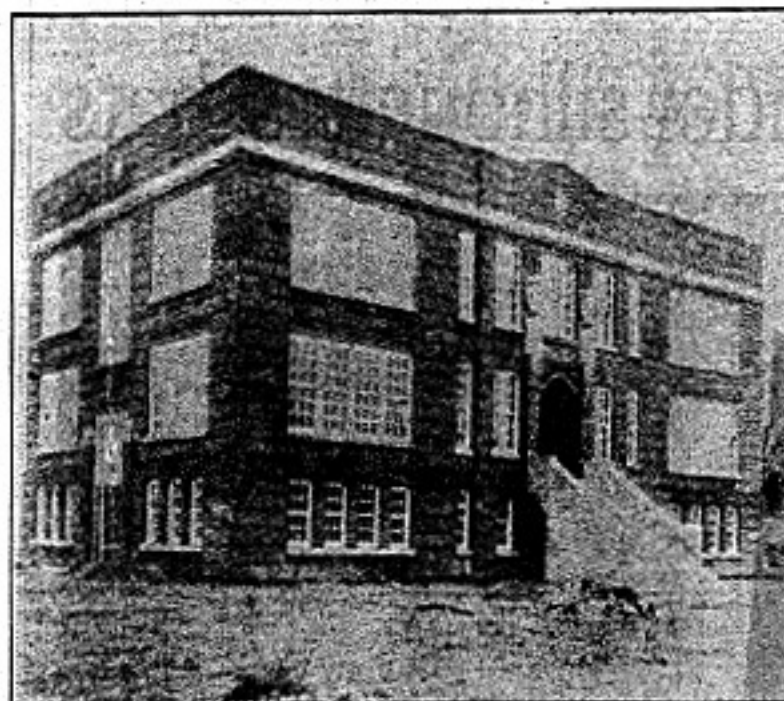
In 1920, Professor Madison James Foster became the first principal of the Monroe Colored High School. Today Madison James Foster Elementary and Foster Heights, a housing project, bear the name of the education pioneer.

Foster's grand niece, Jo Ella Burton, a retired Monroe City schoolteacher, said her uncle brought tremendous joy to education.

"I feel that my uncle was a great leader," she said. "Every encounter with him was inspiring and made you want to be somebody."

In 1922, a new Monroe Colored High School was built. (Today the land houses J.S. Clark Magnet School.)

The same year, Georgia Tucker



Monroe Colored High School, at the site of the present J.S. Clark Magnet School, opened in 1922.

and Barkdull Faulk schools were added to the district.

Lida Benton School opened on Sept. 12, 1927, at Lee and Lydell streets. The school cost \$165,000 compared to the Monroe Colored High School, which was estimated

between \$75,000 to \$100,000 to build.

Close to the end of the decade strides were still being made in public education. In 1928, an act was passed that provided free textbooks for public schools.

The News-Star

April 25, 1999



1st row: Henry Carroll, Principal (deceased), Dorothy Wright, Mildred Hodge, Verdel Williams, Almeda, Annie Ann, Allie Broadway Heard, Zomia Pargrue, Eliza Mae Heard, B. D. Robinson, Instructor (deceased). 2nd Row: Alberta ----- Gladys Allum -- Eula Williams, Instructor (deceased). 3rd Row: Laura Brown - Ruby Jawal, Roosevelt Hattan, Mammie Jackson, Leo Secrease - Betty Ruth Jones (deceased). 4th Row: Dorothy Hill ----- Rosetta Tucker. 5th Row: --- Minnie Jackson, Melvin Wesley. 6th Row - Reed ----- On

Do You Remember?

Do you remember the 1947 graduating class of Monroe Colored High School 56 years ago? M. H. Carroll was the principal.

We were unable to name most of the classmates. If you can name them, send the information to Monroe Dispatch, Do You Remember, P. O. Box 4823, Monroe, LA 71211.

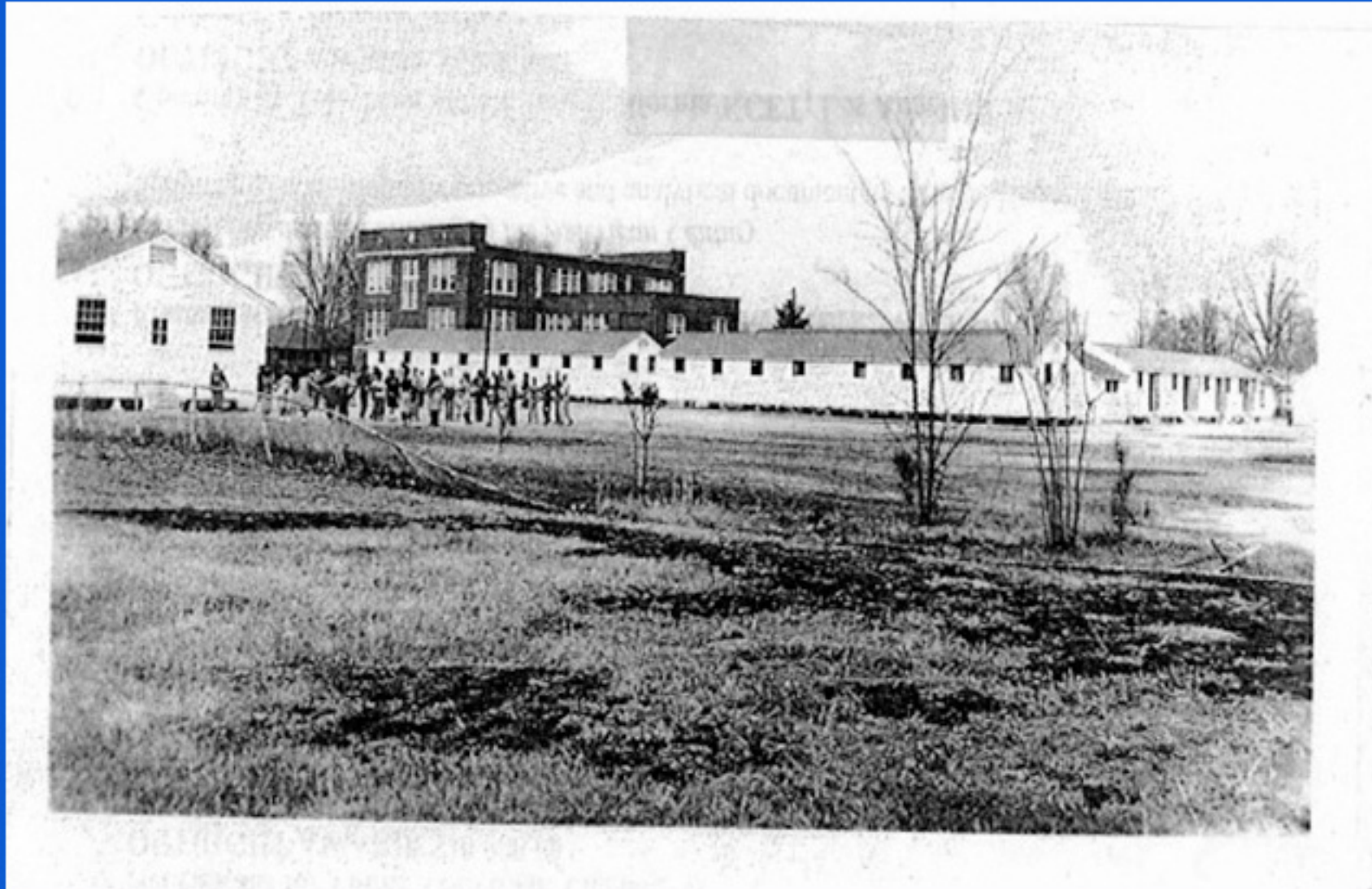
If you have a photo for the "Do You Re-

member" column, send to the above address. All photos are returnable and must be 20 years old or older. Please remember that there is a fee for all unsolicited photos printed in the Dispatch.

This photo was sent by Annie Ann from Indiana to Bessye Anderson and forwarded on to Magdalen W. Young, then on to the Dispatch.

*The Monroe
Dispatch*

*Jan. 29 - Feb. 4,
2004*



Monroe Colored High School on Washington Street. "Barracks-type buildings" were extra classrooms until Carroll High School was built.

The Monroe Dispatch

MARCH 19- MARCH 25, 1998

E DISPATCH



Do You Remember?

Do you remember the 1943 graduating class of Monroe Colored High School 55 years ago? This photo was sent to the Monroe Dispatch by the Fisher Brothers, Calvin and Elijah. This photo was featured in the Dispatch in December 1997 with most of the names omitted. Three of the Monroe classmates have practically identified all of the classmates.

Bottom Row: (left to right) J. Benny Thompson, Asst. Sect. & Salutatorian Ozenia Simmons, Prof. M.J. Foster, Doris Spears (Valedictorian), and Tom Henderson, Jr. (President).

Second Row: Josephine Pierce, Bessie L. Drawhorn, Irma Wyatt, Unknown, Ideria Tolliver, unknown, Mr. B.D. Robinson (History Teacher).

Third Row: Lizzie T. Johnson Larkin, Qumie Wesley Young, Versie Nolley Moy, Willie M. Goins, Bessie L. Jones, unknown.

Fourth Row: Jennie Allen (Treasurer), Leontyne Carroll (Business Mgr.), Alberta Foy Williams (Secretary), Sarah Frances Ellis, Vertie M. Logan, Amy L. McWilliams, Jerolene W. Wyatt.

Fifth Row: unknown, Herman Jones (Vice President), Louis Tappin, Calvin Fisher, Clarence Taylor, Elijah Fisher, Isaac Haynes.

Was just delighted to see the Class of '43 in the paper. I've been working with Alberta Foy Williams and Qumie Wesley. This is the best we could do.

Thanks for the memories,
Lizzie Larkin

School provided

By LISA ROBINSON
Staff writer

The old Monroe Colored High School provided one of the few opportunities for blacks to learn how to read and write.

Built in 1923 on Breard Street on the present site of Clark Elementary School, the high school's enrollment was nearly 700 students.

Teaching the basics of education and more, its educators helped to mold the minds and develop character of its students.

Students were taught right from wrong. They were lectured daily by their principal, the Rev. Madison J. Foster, on how to care for themselves when it seemed all odds were against them. And for

those who wanted an advanced education, many were trained to be teachers.

The Monroe Colored High School was torn down in 1952 and replaced by Carroll High School at another location, but many former students still remember their old high school.

"We really enjoyed school. Everyone was friends, and the teachers were really helpful. We were all like brothers and sisters," said 1929 graduate, Mrs. Ollie Mae Burns.

Attending school was not compulsory in the 1920's. Nonetheless many blacks went to the high school even if it was for a short while.

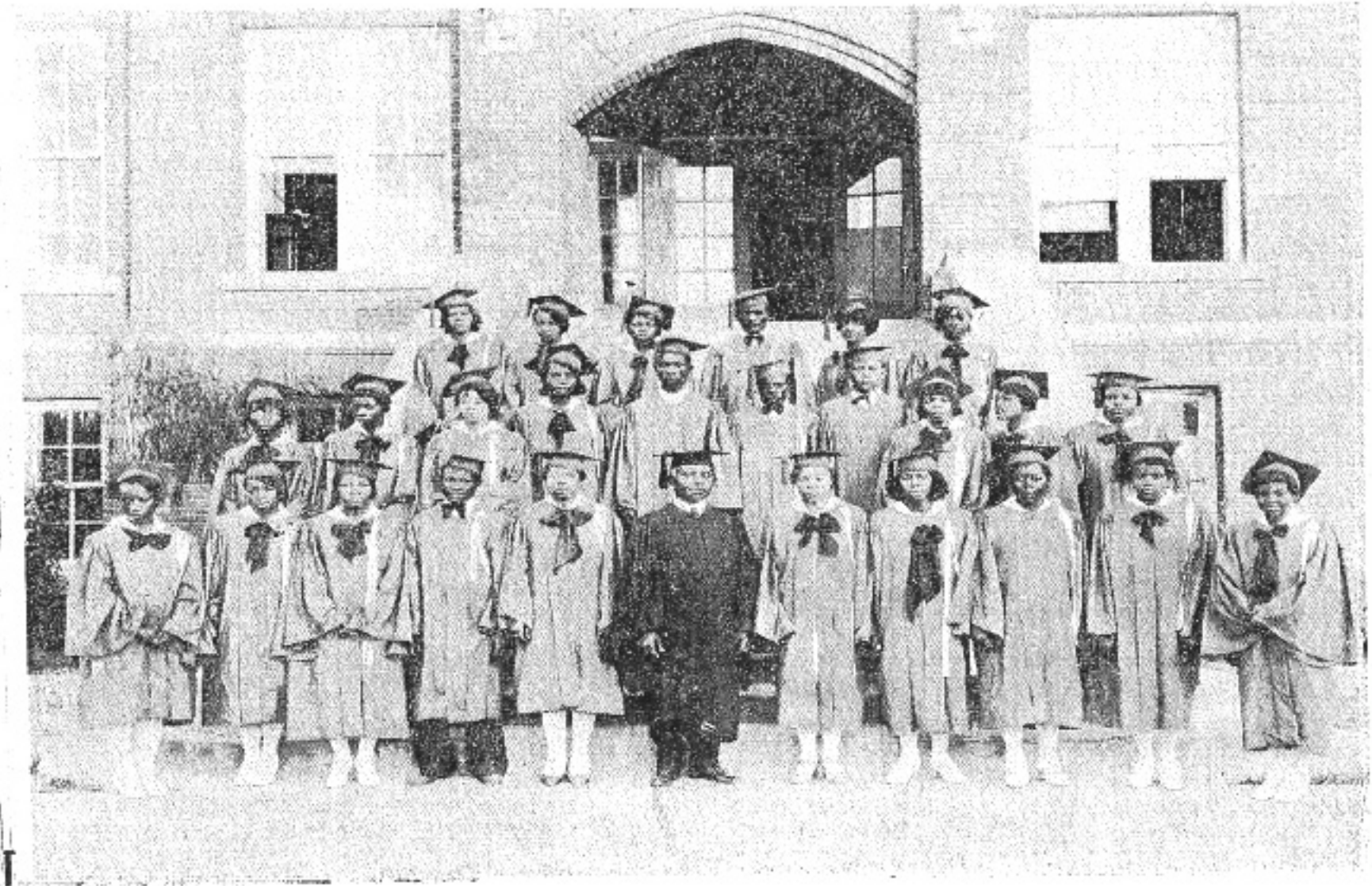
"When the kids went to school,

they could read to their parents, or read their Sunday School lessons in church. Going to school did not always help blacks get better paying jobs, though. That is why so many dropped out before they graduated," Mrs. Burns said.

Although career opportunities were limited for blacks, the Monroe Colored High School helped to open professional doors for some students.

"When the school offered courses in teacher training in 1928, some took advantage of the program. Many students who had graduated that year, came back to school to get their teaching certificates.

"That program was a good deal. Many people in our class who got in the program stayed in the educa-



The Morning Star

BK. A6

opportunities

tional profession until they retired," Mrs. Burns said.

Prior to the existence of Monroe Colored High School, blacks attended Wisner High School which only offered classes through the ninth grade.

When the Monroe Colored High School was built, it, too, only offered classes from the first through the ninth grades. However, in 1926, the 10th grade was added at the school, and a year later, the state's highest grade, the 11th grade and the teaching program.

"Rev. Foster was a very ambitious and aggressive principal. He was always climbing for more. People in the community also fought to have more grades added on," Mrs. Burns said.

Before the 10th and 11th grades were added to the school, blacks had to go to colleges like Southern University in Baton Rouge in order to get a complete high school education. But with the expansion of the Monroe Colored High School, area students came to Monroe instead, some from as far away as Rayville.

"We grew up in a separate system and that didn't bother us. Everything was designated by race so you knew what belonged to whom. That was just the way things were. What irritated us was to get old, used books. Some of our classroom equipment was also limited and used, too," Mrs. Burns said.

But in spite of limited facilities, the Monroe Colored High School was highly regarded by the students and faculty who attended it.

"We really thought we had something, and we did. It was better than the frame of a building that we came from," Mrs. Burns said.

Teachers, too, enjoyed the teaching experience and the students.

George S. Mills, who taught at the high school, 1924 to 1928, was a math, science and civic teacher, and he also coached the boys' sports activities.

Mills introduced the first football team to the school. He also provided music for the school's musical activities.

"I never met a student here who

'When I came to Monroe, I was only going to stay one year, but I fell in love with the people. The students and faculty at the high school were very friendly.'

—George S. Mills



Morning World

'When I think of high school days, I think of basketball. I loved to play basketball. I am remembered as one of the star players.'

—Mrs. Viola Holts

