

Dover, Delaware, November 13, 1925.

A Brief Statement of the Transition from the Old School Building of
Dover to the New School Building.

This day marked the transfer of the colored children of the Dover public schools from the two old school buildings,—the one on Slaughter Street and the other on Division Street,—to the splendid and adequate new school building erected at the west side of Dover by the Delaware School Auxiliary Association through the generosity and philanthropy of Mr. Pierre S. DuPont of Wilmington.

The day opened with clouds obscuring the sky and threatening rain, but soon the sun broke through and contributed to the pleasure of this Red Letter Day.

The children gathered at their respective school buildings where they were grouped for their pictures before departing for their new school building. Mr. Herman C. Taylor took the picture of the large group at the Slaughter Street school. This group, after singing, formed in double column and marched up Kirkwood Street to Division Street.

After taking this picture, Mr. Taylor immediately went to the Division Street school where he took the picture of the 55 children gathered there that morning. The Division Street school housed the 5th and 6th grades in one room, and the 7th and 8th grades in the other room.

Next the pupils of both schools joined in a triumphal march on Division street out to the new school building. This happy procession was made up that morning as follows: 18 pupils of the 7th and 8th grades accompanied by their teacher Miss Mary Brown headed the procession carrying a banner entitled "Dover Special District." Next

in the line of march came the 5th and 6th grade rooms numbering 37 pupils led by their teacher, Mrs. Genotieve Anderson. Those two rooms have been housed in the Division Street School.

Next in the procession came the 4th grade numbering 29 pupils led by their teacher, Mrs. Eva Raikes. The fourth group in the line was the 3rd grade numbering 49 pupils led by their teacher, Mrs. Carrie Blackson; next came the 2d grade room numbering 36 pupils led by their teacher, Miss Flossye Buckner; and the last in this triumphal march came the 1st grade room with 42 children in line and accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Edmonia Ruffin. The last four rooms have been housed in the Slaughter Street School.

210 colored children and their 6 teachers were in this memorable march on Monday morning, November 13, 1922, which left their old School buildings about 9 A.M. and arrived at the splendid new school building erected on a 6-acre tract of ground at the west edge of the Dover Special School District.

The line of colored children assembled in front of the new colored school building where another picture was taken by Mr. Herman C. Taylor. One of each of these group pictures will be enlarged, framed, and placed on the wall of the office in the new colored school.

Under the direction of the builder of the new school, Mr. E. M. Henderer, the official photographer of the Delaware School Auxiliary Association took additional pictures of the new colored school while the colored children were grouped in front of the School and after they went into the auditorium. This official photographer also took pictures of the interior of the school auditorium.

Next the two upper rooms formed a circle around the new steel flag-pole and saluted the American flag as it floated proudly in the breeze on this eventful day.

Following the flag-salute the children assembled in the large auditorium which seats 500 persons. Several of the parents and friends of the children also gathered in the rear of the auditorium to enjoy the first chapel exercise held in the new School.

Miss Mary Brown led the singing and Mrs. Genovieve Anderson presided at the piano, while several songs were sung by the children from the new music booklets provided for their use.

Supt. W. B. Thornburgh had charge of that first program designated as the opening program.

Dr. Wm. C. Jason, Principal of the State College for colored children, led the devotional exercises. The 23rd Psalm was read as the scripture lesson. Following a short prayer by Dr. Jason, he then made a brief talk in which he expressed the cordial appreciation of his people for the magnanimous gift which had been given them through the philanthropy of Mr. Pierre S. DuPont. Dr. Jason urged his people to prove their appreciation of this wonderful gift by developing into the type of citizens that would be a credit to this country.

The other persons seated on the platform during that program were as follows: Mr. John Carrow, president of the Local Board of Education, Mr. Herman C. Taylor, a Member of the Local Board and Mr. Harry C. McSherry, Editor of the Index. Mr. Taylor, representing the Local Board of Education, spoke briefly setting forth the purposes for which the new school was erected, and expressed the hope that the colored children and their parents would respond to, and measure up to their new opportunities.

Supt. Thornburgh then gave definite suggestions and instructions to both children and teachers covering the care and use of the new school building and grounds.

Following the closing song by the children the first chapel exercises closed, and the six groups of children gathered in their respective new class-rooms in the following locations: Miss Mary Brown's group, 7th and 8th grades, in the Southwest room, Miss Genevieve Anderson's group, 5th and 6th grades, in the Southeast room, Mrs. Eva Raikes' group, 4th grades, in the West room, Mrs. Carrie Blackson's group, 3rd grade, in the East room, Miss Flossye Buckner's group, 2d grade, in the Northeast room, and Mrs. Edmonia Ruffin's group, 1st grade, in the Northwest room.

On the afternoon of the opening day, the colored schools of Dover began their regular school work in the new colored school building in Dover.

Monday, November 13, 1922, will be long remembered as a memorable day by the colored people of Dover.

NOTE:- These data were prepared by Supt. W.B.Thornburgh.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON COLORED SCHOOL

DOVER, DELAWARE

This is a one and one, equal to two stories, part basement brick building, composition pitch and slag flat roof, interior finish, plaster on brick walls, hung wire lath and plaster ceilings, wood floors, trim and doors; auditorium, buff brick walls, hung wire lath and plaster ceiling, wood floor; heat is furnished by a low pressure steam coal fired boiler.

Section Built 1919-1920

Total cubic feet	234,813
Cube factor .30 =	\$70,443.90
Depreciation 20%	<u>14,088.78</u>
Estimated Value	\$56,355.12

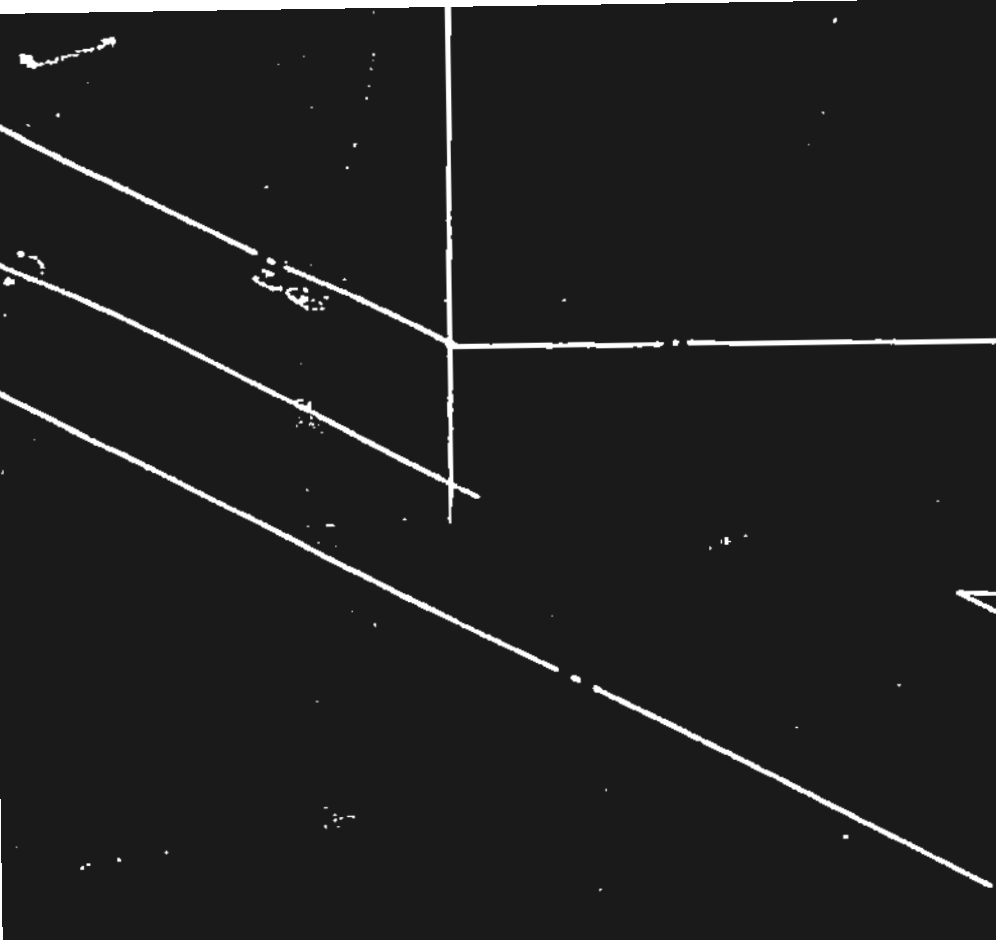
Section Built 1934

Total cubic feet	103,078
Cube factor .30 =	\$30,923.40
Depreciation 9%	<u>2,783.11</u>
Estimated Value	\$28,140.29
	<u>56,355.12</u>

Total Estimated Value	\$84,495.41
Call	\$84,500.00







portion of
Blueprint - Plot
Plan for 1934
Addition

Alteration & Addition to
DOOKER-T. WASHINGTON SCHOOL
 Dover Delaware

Sheet 1 PLOT PLAN - W.D.

Comp. 181 Scale: 1/32" = 1'-0" Date: 2-9-34

George Edwin Paves
Architect
806 Boulevard Building Wilmington Del.

Booker T. Washington Colored School
Dover, Delaware

Dorothy A. Mitchell

July 24, 1991

ED 603

Dr. D. Koble

History and Philosophy of Education

Booker T. Washington School, now West Dover Elementary, has had a long and interesting history and has undergone both a name change as well as numerous additions and renovations. It has changed from a small all colored school serving grades 1-8 in the Dover Special School District to a sprawling, integrated school serving students from grades K-4 in the Capital School District.

Prior to its construction in 1921-1922, "colored" children attended 2 schools in downtown Dover; the 2 room Red Hall School on Division Street housing grades 5-8 with 2 teachers and the Slaughter Street 4 room, 4 teacher school housing grades 1-4. These schools, while segregated, were under the authority of the newly named Dover Special School District. (the School Laws of 1919 created 13 special school districts statewide, mainly in urban areas.) All the funds for the initial construction of Booker T. Washington School came from the Delaware School Auxiliary Association, endowed by the generosity and philanthropy of Mr. Pierre S. Dupont of Wilmington. In fact, many in the Black community refer to it as a Dupont school. However, I was unable to find any records of construction plans or costs, though it had a total cubic footage of 234,813 according to 1941 insurance valuation records in the state archives. The builder was Mr. E.M. Henderer.

Booker T. Washington was officially opened on November 13, 1922 with a triumphal march of 210 students and 6 teachers from the old buildings to the new, located on 6 acres of land on the western edge of Dover. Picture taking, speeches, devotions, games, and singing helped mark the occasion. Persons attending included District Supt., W. B. Thornburgh, Dr. William C. Jason, principal of the State College for colored children, Harry C. McSherry, Editor of the Index, a weekly newspaper, plus members of the school board and Delaware School Auxiliary Association.

The classes were broken down as follows:

Slaughter Street School

Grade	# students	teacher
1	42	Mrs. Edmonia Ruffin
2	36	Mrs. Flossye Buckner
3	49	Mrs. Carrie Blackson
4	28	Mrs. Eva Raikes

Red Hall School

Grade	# students	teacher
5-6	37	Mrs. Genevieve Anderson
7-8	18	Miss Mary Brown

The first addition to Booker T. Washington in 1934 consisted of 4 classrooms, 2 on either side of the main structure, a total of 103,078 cubic feet according to the 1941 insurance valuation records and cost roughly \$38,000. The district received an appropriation of \$28,000 from the State Board of Public Instruction and a \$9,000 Federal Grant to fund these additions and alterations. The architect for the project was George Edwin Pope, Rupert & Fulenwider of Wilmington was the general contractor, and J.E. Workman, Inc. of Wilmington was the roofing and sheet metal contractor. The contract provisions called for an hourly wage of \$1.10 for skilled labor, \$.45 for unskilled, no Sunday work, a 30 hour work week, and no convict labor.

As a matter of interest, Delaware State College, around 1934, was forced to upgrade its curriculum from a junior college/normal school to 4 year status in order to receive accreditation by the Middle Atlantic States. Therefore, it was necessary for the "colored" schools to provide a 9th grade education since this was now required for entrance to Delaware State. Thus, Booker T. Washington reorganized, as did many "colored" schools, to add a junior high encompassing grades 7-9 in 1934-35. At the same time, Home Economics and Manual Arts were added to the curriculum. I spoke with Mr. W.C. Laws (Dr. Ruth Laws' husband) the first shop teacher and he described the program as generally a bad situation. They met in a regular classroom located in the basement, stored lumber in the cloakroom, used all hand tools, and had no hot water. A Mrs. Floyd was the first home economics teacher and I understand the situation wasn't a great deal better.

In 1941, The General Assembly appropriated \$94,000 to improve the educational facilities of Booker T. Washington. An agricultural teacher was hired on a 1/3 time basis at a salary of \$1800 (part federal funding) with \$200 for travel and \$100 for supplies. The 10th grade level was also added at this time.

Another addition consisting of 2 or 3 classrooms on the west end of the building was accomplished in 1952-53. At this time music was added to the curriculum and Thelma Draine was hired for this purpose.

In 1952, Wm. Henry was opened and the 9th and 10th grades were transferred there, turning Booker T. Washington back into a grades 1-8 school once again. Harley S. Taylor was the first Wm. Henry principal followed by James Hardcastle who was principal until the closing of Booker T. Washington and Wm. Henry as "colored" schools in 1965. At this point the buildings were converted by the district and made a part of the total educational system of the district. Booker T. Washington's name was changed around this time to West Dover Elementary and became a first through 6th grade school for awhile. The name change for this school created much dissension within the community and no official reason was ever given for the change though a number of stories evolved.

A major renovation took place in 1976. At this point, the existing classrooms were remodeled to incorporate the open classroom concept and the former Green Room (original all purpose, 500 person assembly, cafeteria, etc.) was converted to the school library. The architect for the project was Thomas J. Walters of Wilmington, EJT Construction Co. of Dover was the general contractor, and Diamond State Engineering of Dover was in charge of the mechanical engineering aspect. The final addition that I was able to document was a 4 classroom addition on the back of the building in 1989.

S. Marcellus Blackburn was the first principal of Booker T. Washington. At first, in addition to administrative duties, he also taught 8th grade math and English. His principalship there spanned 40 years from 1923-1963 when he retired after 47 years in public education (1916-1963--46 in Delaware). Today there is a hallway dedicated to him at the West Dover Elementary.

Since, there has been a succession of principals, some staying only a short time. Helen Hicks, retired secretary (1990) at Booker T. Washington and West Dover, said she worked under about 10 principals during her 35 year career. She was also a former student of Booker T, as was James Hardcastle who was an 8th grader in 1927. These principals included Herman Clayton, Mary Hearne, Henry J. Papernick,

Herman Glass, Joseph Threadgill, Wesley Hall, 1 year without a principal when Martin Duffy died early in the year (Martin Burns and Earl Corchran looked in on them occasionally) and finally Dan Kingery who remained from 1975-1990.

Some interesting trivia which I picked up from looking at old registers and talking to various people are as follows:

Jim Hardcastle told me that as an 8th grader in 1927, all 8th grade boys and girls walked from Booker T. Washington along the railroad tracks to Delaware State College once a week where the boys could choose from woodworking, auto mechanics, and agriculture while the girls participated in home economics. This was going on before, probably as early as 1925 he thought and continued for some time afterwards. They walked regardless of the weather.

In 1927-1928 according to Mr. Blackburn's register, there were 400 books in the school library.

In 1925 there were 190 school days. By 1930-31, this number had dropped to 185, and by 1948-49 the number had dropped to our present figure of 180.

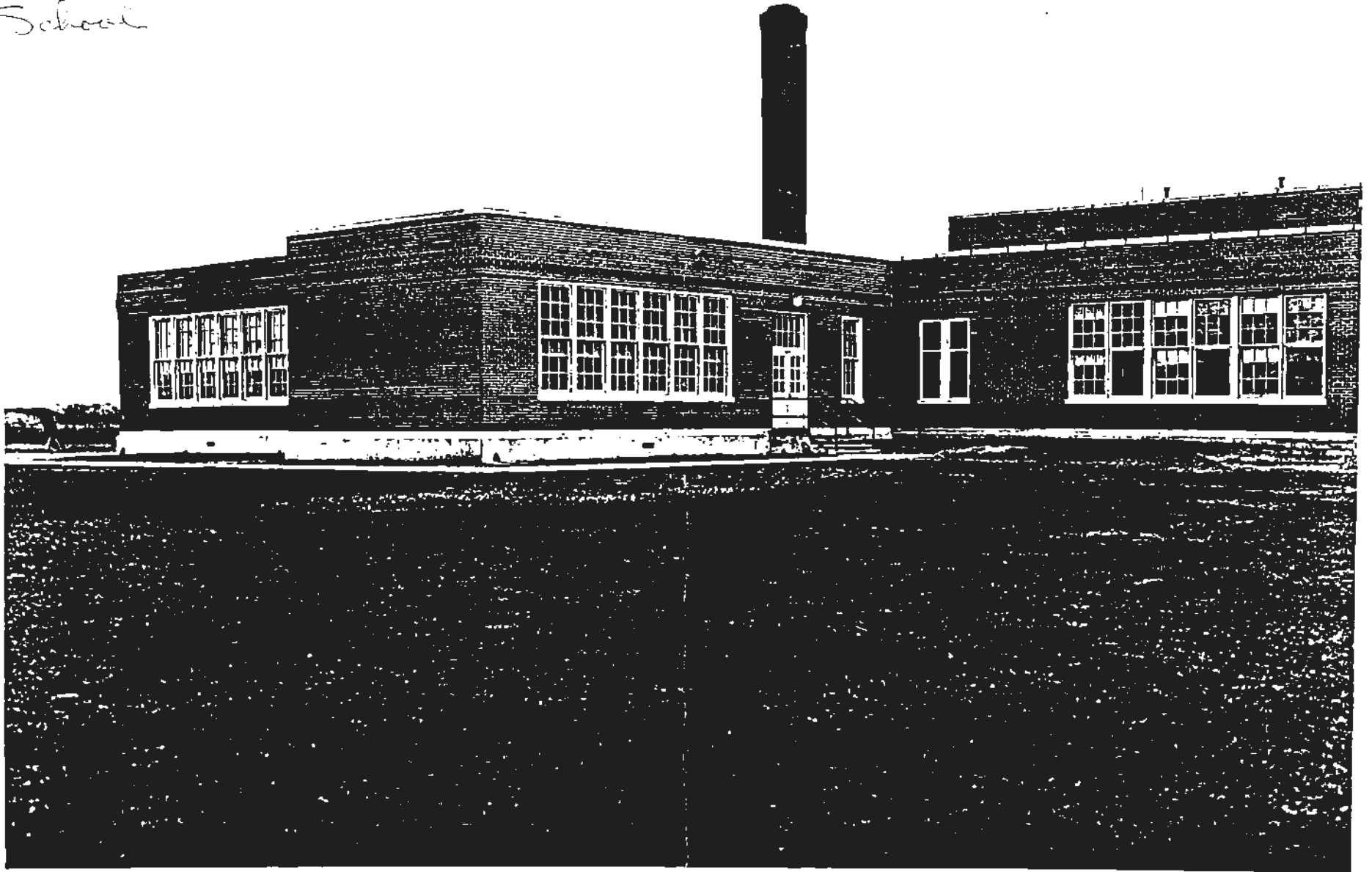
Yearly salaries were as follows:

year	amount	# years experience
1925-26	\$ 750	1
1927-28	1000	5
1930-31	1000	5
1931-32	1300	15
1938-39	1200	21
1948-49	2800	31

The information in this short history came from research of old DPI records stored in the Hall of Records, and conversations with James Hardcastle, W.C. Laws, Juanita Cooper, and Helen Hicks. There is a great deal of information out there but it is scattered in many places. I also gleaned some information from old registers which are presently stored in the kindergarten wing at West.

1934

Addition to
School



1927
1927-28

B. P. M. Schertz - M. T.

DELAWARE
SCHOOL REGISTER

North School District No. _____

Kent County

Beginning with the School Year 19____

TO THE TEACHER: This Register should be kept at School for inspection by visitors, and *must be left in the school* when filled.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Entered Your School					Other Reasons for Late Entrance	Age		No. of Pupils	BOYS			Grade Entered	Grade Promoted to	If Not Promoted, Why?
Date		From				Sept. 1,	19 ²⁷		(Report no boy who is under six years of age. Remember if his sixth birthday comes before January 1st, he is to be counted as six on September 1st.)					
Mo.	Day	This District	Another Dist. This State	Another State (name)					Years	Mos.	Last			
9	14	V ²	3	4	10 ⁵	12	0	1	Calahan	William		IV	C ¹⁰	C ¹¹
9	7	V				10	0	2	Carter	Hiram		IV	V	
9	7	V				10	6	3	Craig	Ellwood G.		IV	V	
9	7	V				10	7	4	Johnson	Alfred W.		IV	V	
9	7	V				10	6	5	Patton	Clarence J.		IV	V	
9	7	V				11	2	6	Ridgeway	Martin W.		IV	V	
9	7	V				12	1	7	Stevenson	Clarence		IV	V	
9	7	V				10	6	8	Stevenson	William W.		IV	V	
9	7	V				9	5	9	Waters	Stanley J.		IV	V	
9	7	V				12		10	Wilson	Seldon		IV	V	
9	7	V				10	9	11	Wilson	Howard		IV	V	
11	1	V			T.P. ⁸	9	0	12	Wiltbank	Charles		IV	V	
10	17	V			5 ⁿ	13	0	13	Washington	Winfield		IV	V	
11	1	V		N.Y.	9 ⁿ	9	0	14	Hansley	Harold		IV	V	
12	12	V ¹⁴⁴				12	0	15	Lovington	Anderson		IV	V	
								16						
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								39						
								40						

Entered Your School					Other Reasons for Late Entrance	Age		No. of Pupils	GIRLS			Grade Entered	Grade Promoted to	If Not Promoted, Why?
Date		From				Sept. 1,			(Report no girl who is under six years of age. Remember if her sixth birthday comes before January 1st, she is to be counted as six on September 1st.)					
Mo.	Day	This District	Another Dist. This State	Another State (name)		Years	Mos.		Last	First	Initial			
9	7	V ²	3	4	5	9	9	7	Bowen, Mildred		9	10	11	
9	7	V				8	6	2	Brown, Mary E.		IV	V		
9	7	V				9	1	3	Griffin, Luchnia		IV	V		
1	7	V				11	11	4	Adria, Eva M.		IV	V		
9	7	V				13	4	5	Jackson, Hazel E.		IV	V		
9	7	V				10	9	6	Merrill, Gladys M.		IV	V		
9	7	V				10	9	7	Mokey, Jeanette J.		IV	V		
9	7	V				10	10	8	Palk, Clara Th		IV	V		
9	7	V				9	-	9	Stevenson, Caroline		IV	V		
9	7	V				11	11	10	Vincent, Rachel A.		IV	V		
9	7	V				9	11	11	Winters, Pearl E.		IV	V		
7	28	V			"7"	12	0	12	Webb, Pauline A.		IV	V		
9	7	V				11	0	13	Jackson, Blanche		IV	V		
1	16					21	0	14	Demby, Dorothy		IV	V		
1	16					10	3	15	Demby, Ruth		IV		"C"	
								16						
								17						
								18						
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								39						
								40						

NUMBER OF DAYS		Percentage of Attendance	Left Your School				Other Reasons for Stopping School Early
Belonged	Attended		Date		To Enter		
			Mo.	Day	Another District in This State	School in What State?	
12 179	13 176	14 92.1	15 5	31	16	17	18 5"
190	189	94.4	6	15			
190	183	96.5	6	15			
179	158	88.2	6	15			
162	139	85.8	6	15			
190	171	90.0	6	15			
190	182	95.7	6	15			
190	172	90.5	6	15			
190	190	100	6	15			
190	167	87.8	6	15			
190	175	93.1	6	15			
59	50	99.9	12	23			"9"
178	158	88.9	6	15			
69	57	82.6	6	15			
69	58	84.0	6	15			

Reasons for Late Entrance or Early Withdrawal

(Columns 5 and 18)

- Poverty.
- Quarantine.
- Illness of Pupil.
- Illness in home.
- Agricultural work.
- Other work.
- Parental indifference.
- Truancy or suspension.
- Out-of-town (visiting).
- Dislike for school work. (Indifference).

Principal Causes of Non-Promotion

(Column 11)

- Stopped school.
- Bad home conditions.
- Irregular attendance.
- Mental deficiency. (Dull.)
- Lack of use of English speech.
- Mental backwardness. (Timidity.)
- Lack of application. (Indifference.)
- School not suited to pupils' needs.
- Malnutrition, physical defects, illness.
- Lack of previous educational opportunities.

Annual Report of *Mary E. L. Pette*.....
(Teacher)

District No. District Name *Lower Special Dist.*

County *Kent*..... Grade of Room *IV*.....

For School Year Beginning *Sept. 7* and Ending *June 15*,

School Questionnaire

- Total number of days school was open... *190*.....
- Number of days school was closed on account of legal holidays... *13*.....
- Number of days school was closed on account of institutes... *2*.....
- Number of days school was closed on account of quarantine... *0*.....
- Number of days school was closed on account of storms... *0*.....
- Number of days school was closed due to teacher's illness... *0*.....
- Number of days taught by yourself... *190*.....
- Number of days taught by a substitute... *0*.....
- Total number of days taught... *190*.....
- Teacher's salary per year *10.00*..... Amount paid substitutes.....
- Number of visits to home of children by teacher... *35*.....
- Number of Eighth Grade Graduates *34* H.S. graduates... *0*.....
- Total number of pupils promoted... *25* Not promoted... *2*.....
- Number of volumes in library exclusive of supplementary or school texts... *47*.....
- Date when first employed as teacher in Delaware... *1925*.....
- How many years have you taught in present district... *2*.....
- How many years have you taught in Delaware... *3*.....
- Total number of years' experience in teaching... *5*.....
- Number of visits to school by patrons... *170*.....
- Number of pupils neither absent nor tardy during the year... *3*.....

Best Pupil

Stanley Waters

Grade IV

Room IV

Attendance

100 %

Reportment

90 %

Scholarship

92 %

Health

90 %

Sewing Achievements

June 15, 1928.

Grades ⁹ to ¹¹.

I. Bags - - - - - 6

1. Laundry
2. Sewing
3. Handkerchief

II. Aprons - - - - - 8

1. Sewing
2. Cooking
3. Fancy

III. Dresses - - - - - 3

1. Doll dresses
2. Gingham dresses

IV. Undergarments - - - - - 10

1. Underbody
2. Bloomers
3. Slip

V. Fancy Work - - - - - 5

1. Luncheon sets
2. Aprons
3. Center pieces

Total - - - - - 32

Maryle C. Pitts.

Inventory Supply List
Room IV 1927-1928. Grade IV

- 1 clock
- 5 large pictures
- 1 teacher's desk
- 2 chairs
- 2 maps
 - United States
 - Delaware
- 1 box chalk
- 11 board erasers
- 1 box rubber bands
- 1 thermometer
- 1 United States flag
- 12 Window shades
- 1 window stick
- 1 pencil sharpener
- 1 doz. pairs scissors

From: G. V. F.
To: G. V. F.

Dover, Delaware
June 15, 1928

Girls:

Promotion List.

Boys:

1. Mildred Bowen

2. Mary Brown

3. Dorothy Remby

4. Luvinia Guffin

5. Eva Harris

6. Blanche Jackson

7. Hazel Jackson

8. Gladys Merrill

9. Jeannette Mosley

10. Clara Polk

11. Caroline Stevenson

12. Rachel Vincent

13. Pearl Winters

14. Hiram Carter

15. Elwood Craig

16. Alfred Johnson

17. Clarence Patton

18. Marten Ridgeway

19. William Stevens

20. Clarence Stevens

21. Winfield Washington

22. Stanley Waters

23. Howard Wilson

24. Seldon Wilson

25. Charles Wittbank

Myrtle C. Pitts
Principal

From: Gr. IV

Dover, Delaware

To: Gr. V

June 15, 1928

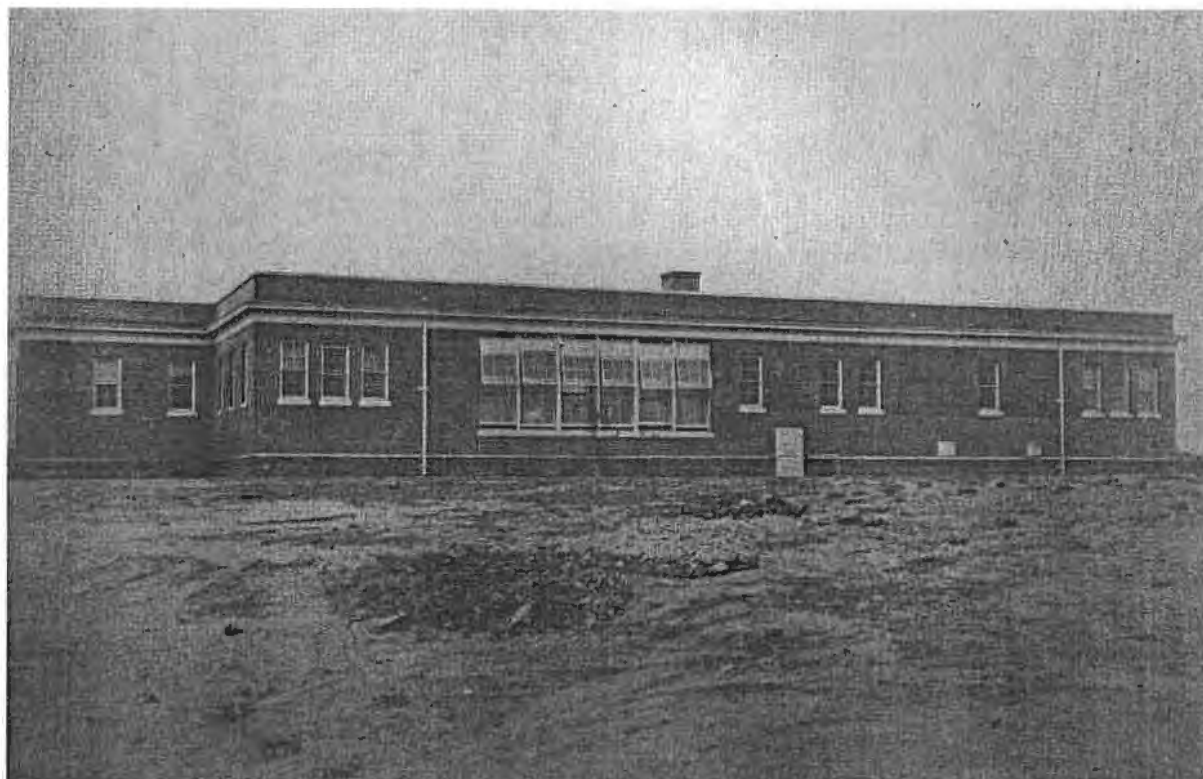
Girls:

Promotion List.

Boys:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Mildred Bowen | 14. Hiram Carter |
| 2. Mary Brown | 15. Elwood Craig |
| 3. Dorothy Demby | 16. Alfred Johnson |
| 4. Luvinia Guffin | 17. Clarence Patton |
| 5. Eva Harris | 18. Marten Ridgeway |
| 6. Blanche Jackson | 19. William Stevens |
| 7. Hazel Jackson | 20. Clarence Stevens |
| 8. Gladys Merrill | 21. Winfield Washington |
| 9. Jeannette Mosley | 22. Stanley Waters |
| 10. Clara Polk | 23. Howard Wilson |
| 11. Caroline Stevenson | 24. Seldon Wilson |
| 12. Rachel Vincent | 25. Charles Wittbank |
| 13. Pearl Winters | |

Myrtle C. Pitte
Room IV.



Benjamin Banneker Milford Colored School, New Castle County

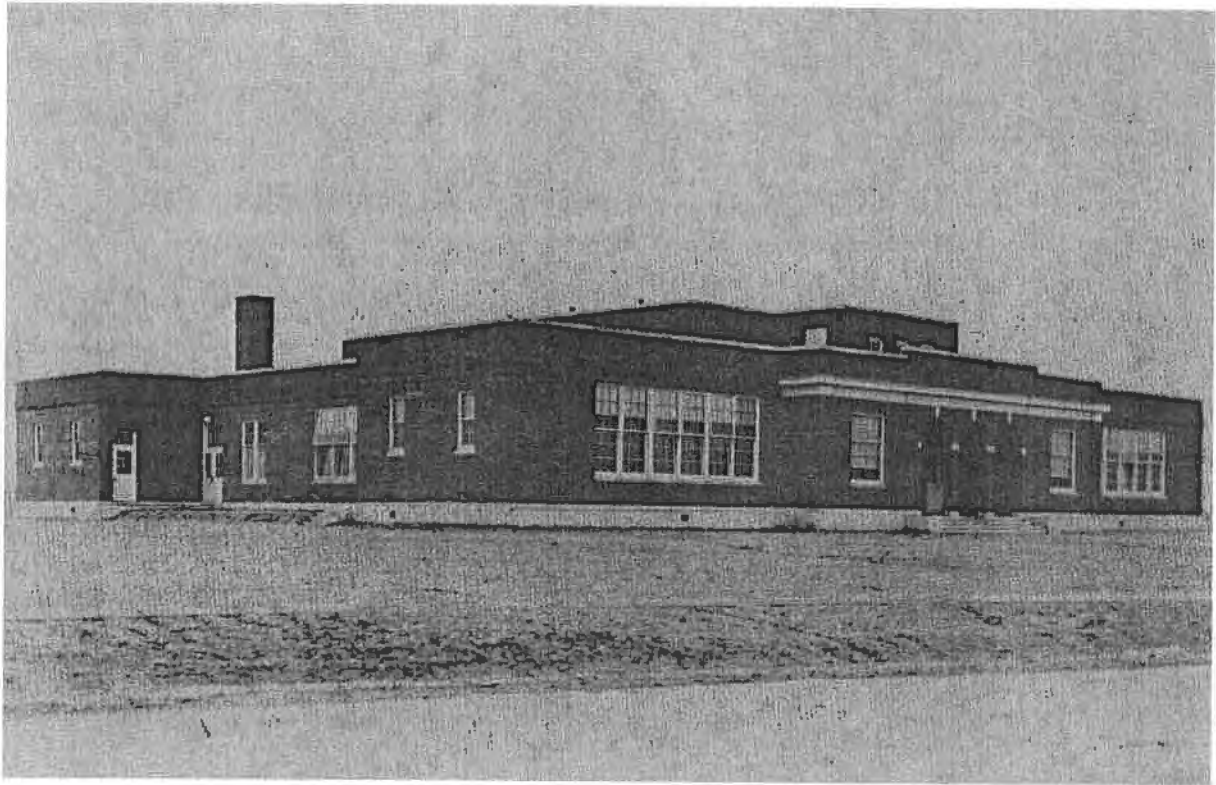
Board of Education Collection

Courtesy of Delaware Public Archives

Booker T. Washington Junior High School

By the end of 1922, most of the schools were completed or nearly finished including Booker T. Washington Colored School under construction in Dover. It included a junior high school in addition to the standard six grades, which characterized most schools. Booker T. Washington Junior High School at Dover was a model design for consolidated schools that contained eight grades or a Junior High School. This was the largest school in Dover at the time costing \$84,955.47. The brick building contained seven classrooms and two auxiliary rooms holding a capacity of 300 students. It was located on a 6 ½ acre plot with a playground in the center of the African American neighborhood in Dover.¹⁸²

¹⁸² Delaware State Parent-Teacher Association, "The School as a Community Center," Series IV (Wilmington, Delaware, April, 1924)6:10-11, Education: Public Schools, Delaware State Archives, Dover, Delaware.



Booker T. Washington Colored School in Dover, Kent County
Courtesy of Hagley Museum and Library

After completing the building, the school added an auditorium and other rooms in 1923. These were added to the two rear sides of the H shaped building. Service Citizens of Delaware was very proud of the new facility in Dover. In its 1922 Annual Report, the Service Citizens boasted:

The largest colored school in the state will be in Dover and the plans adopted call for a central auditorium. This auditorium will meet a great need in the state. At present, there is no hall in which the colored people can meet for their various conventions and conferences. As such an auditorium will be used more for community purposes than for school exercises, it is felt proper that

we should equip that hall with seats, motion picture outfit and stage properties, at a cost of \$3700.¹⁸³

The Auxiliary Association usually located new school buildings near the old schoolhouses. If surveys showed a change in the concentration of the population, then they made attempts to locate the new school to reflect it. They tried to locate the new schools in the center of population concentrations. The new site for the Booker T. Washington school reflected shifts in the African American population away from the south side of Loockerman Street to the north side of it. There were numerous complaints about these new school locations that came mainly from Euro-Americans. Mrs. Nolan Steele from Dover complained in a letter to duPont about the location of the Booker T. Washington School. She wrote:

I have a little matter to bring before you. We own the farm that joins the ground on which the colored school-house stands here in Dover. Our land joins it on the west and north. My own two little boys, 7 and 11 years of age walk into Dover school every morning, and they are compelled to meet the road full of negro [sic] children...Partly on account of this we put our farm in the agent's hands for sale. Two or three different parties have been out to look at the place and because of the negro [sic] school-house, would not have it any price [sic]. You see it not only causes a depreciation in the value of our property, but knocks the sale of it entirely.¹⁸⁴

By the mid 1920s, the Auxiliary Association had completed fifty-three buildings with 156 rooms. The Auxiliary Association had under construction an additional twenty-nine buildings and sixty classrooms for both Euro-American and African Americans. During the 1920s, African Americans began settling into their new schools and began operations.

¹⁸³ "Co-operative Citizenship in Delaware," Report to the Annual Meeting of the Service Citizens of Delaware, (May 12, 1922), 74, Purnell Collection-Service Citizens, RG 9200, Delaware State Archives.

¹⁸⁴ Mrs. Nolan Steele, Dover, Delaware, to P.S. duPont, October 26, 1923, P.S. duPont Papers.



LEST WE FORGET: Russell McCabe, outreach services administrator of the Delaware Public Archives, William Holden Jr., former student, Helen Hicks, school secretary from 1955-1990, Rep. Nancy Wagner, sponsor of the marker, and Rep. Donna Stone check out the new marker, which indicates that the school opened in 1922 and was the largest African-American school in Delaware at that time.

PORTRAIT OF BOOKER T: During a historical marker dedication at Booker T. Washington Elementary-Sept. 4, former student Doretha Cale proudly displays the portrait of Booker T. Washington she painted for a graphic arts class at Delaware Technical and Community College. Copies of the portrait are available by calling 697-0598.



MADE A DIFFERENCE: Morgan Little, former student, student teacher and principal in 1990-1991, and former teachers Susan Young Browne and Dorothy George were among those on hand for the ceremony. Little acknowledged many of the teachers present at the ceremony and told how they had really made a difference.

Dover school earns marker

By Cathianne
Werner-Porterfield
Delaware State News

DOVER — Visitors to Dover's Booker T. Washington Elementary School need not be history buffs anymore to truly understand the significance of the school.

Thanks to a group of dedicated alumni, a historical marker was placed at the school Saturday morning, commemorating the history of the building as the state's largest African-American school until segregation ended in 1965.

"It was an all-colored school," said Dover resident Bessie Crane, who attended the school from 1957-63.

Marker text

On November 13, 1922, 210 children and 6 teachers marched from two old school buildings located on Slaughter Street and Division Street to a new school for African-American students in Dover. Funding for the building was provided by the Delaware School Auxiliary Association, through the generosity of P.S. du Pont. The school was named for Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), a former slave who became the nation's foremost African-American educator. Originally built for grades 1-8, this was the state's largest African-American school at the time of its opening. Grades 9 and 10 were later added. S. Marcellus Blackburn was the school's first and only principal for forty years. His daily motto was "Lest we forget." Following integration in 1965, the school became known as West Dover Elementary. The original name was restored in 1998.

Although the school was segregated during that time, Ms. Crane felt it was important to note that the quality of the education at Booker T. Washington was second to none.

"I remember that we had

excellent teachers," Ms. Crane said.

"Our teachers made sure we knew we were there to learn and we were taught that no child was dumb. You were

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Attending Saturday's historical marker dedication at Dover's Booker T. Washington Elementary School are, from left, former teacher Susan Young Brown; former teacher Dorothy George; Dr. Bobbie Brown; C. Wallace Hicks; Russell McCabe, outreach services coordinator for the Delaware Public Archives; Anita Boyer; William Holden Jr.; Helen Hicks; Rep Nancy H. Wagner, R-Dover; former teacher Lola Tue; and Rep. Donna D. Stone, R-Dover.

Marker

Continued From Page 1

expected to learn. We had no choice. They treated us like we were their own children. They cared about us and we cared about them. I think we had some of the best teachers available during that time."

In the school's earliest days it served students from first to eighth grade, but once a student had graduated from the eighth grade, their options for continuing their education were slim.

"If they wanted to go further they had to go to Wilmington or to Delaware State College to finish high school," Ms. Crane said.

By the time Ms. Crane left the school, she had more options.

She moved on to William Henry School, then Dover High, which by that time was being integrated.

She noted that William Henry seemed to have more to offer than Dover High.

"It depends on which class you talk to," she said. "Older classes say they weren't equipped. We were well equipped. We had an audio-visual lab and computers, a new auditorium, a new gym. We also had the planetarium. It was a first-class school."

The alumni placed a marker at William Henry last year and had hoped they could have the Book-



Delaware State News/Doug Curran

Doretha Cale displays a painting she created of the school's namesake, famed African-American educator Booker T. Washington.

er T. Washington marker placed prior to the death of one of its most notable students.

"I wanted to get it done before (James C. Hardcastle) passed away, but it didn't happen that way," she said. "He was one of the first pupils to go to Booker T."

The third-generation Dover resident, who died at 89 in February, was the first black member of Dover City Council, serving from 1974-84, and was principal of William W.M. Henry High School for 11 years before the school was integrated.

His career as an educator

began as a mathematics teacher at Booker T. Washington, then an all-black junior high school.

Ms. Crane said the placement of the marker served as a sort of kickoff to a weekend's worth of events for the alumni group, which numbers about 15.

Also planned for the group was a tour of William Henry, a silent auction, brick dedication, dinner, athletic honors banquet, dance, breakfast and church service.

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