

Introduction to Jackson County Schools

In 1785, the U.S. Congress committed the 16th section of every township for the maintenance and promotion of public schools. This commitment continued as a stipulation when Alabama was admitted to statehood in 1819. Over the next several years much of this property was sold and the proceeds deposited in the state bank. The state bank failed in 1843 and the funds were lost forever. In addition, several of the 16th sections were located under water or on restricted federal lands and as a result a county's 16th section lands were often taken from another county. For instance, Covington County's 16th section lands are found in Tuscaloosa County.

The State Commissioner of Conservation and National Resources is responsible for the management of the 16th section lands. Until 1995, state law did not allow the school boards to receive additional funds from the income or interest of 16th section lands. Any 16th section funds distributed were, in turn, deducted from state appropriations so no system has received an increase in funding from 16th section lands. During the 2002 legislative session, legislators approved a bill to reduce the likelihood of proration anti to ensure that county systems would receive their fair of the 16th section land funds

This topic is hard to explain, and I think it is obvious that much confusion exists over these funds. As a result of a recent court case; the state transferred approximately \$24.7 million to the Covington County court. This money is invested in Covington County in an interest-bearing account. The Covington County Board of Education's share is approximately \$8.2 million. Pending a report by the State Examiners of Public Accounts, the Covington County judge will determine the distribution to the local boards of education.

From the April 1979 Chronicles, based on conversation with Nelson Varnell, Mrs. Eliza Mae Woodall, Ann Chambless, and Wendell Page.

"In 1850, the white population of Jackson County, Alabama was 11,754. The 1850 census for Jackson County shows that only 15 men listed their occupation as that of teacher. More than likely, there were others who listed some other occupations (such a minister or even farmer) as their primary occupation because school teaching only occupied two to three months during the year. The teachers taken from the 1850 census are:

John Montgomery: Long Island (near Harris Chapel)
Hugh Cameron: Long Island
James Verner: Doran's Cove
John Sherley: Bolivar
Martin Milligan: South side of the TN River near Caperton's Ferry
John A. Hall: Roach's Cove
Robert Jones: Woods Cove/Sauta Area
William Higgins: Larkinsville
Ira G. Wood: Larkinsville
Henry Shelton: Boxes Cove
Joel C. Ledbetter: Woodville
Adam L. Hider (Hyter): Paint Rock Valley
Francis Larking: Paint Rock Valley
Benjamin Toney: Paint Rock Valley

William War: Bellefonte (lived at Daniel Martin Inn)

The first record of a female teacher found in Jackson County was in 1860 Jackson County census. Martha McCord, age 20, was living in the household of Elijah Baker Ligon and was listed as a school teacher. She was not relation to the Lions and was found in the household in 1860 because she was boarding with the family and teaching their children This family had donated land and some funds for a community church in the Sauta area, and possibly Martha McCord daughter her school in Ligon Chapel.

David H. Harris

From Jimmy Sentell: This is from a google newspaper article, you will find that a lot of those first schools in the county were in section 16.

From Heritage of Jackson County, written by Steve and Joyce Kenamer

The first public schools in Jackson County were established after 1856. At that time the Alabama Legislature created a state school system, established the office of County Superintendent of Education, and allocated \$100,000 for the whole State of Alabama's educational needs. The money for this came from a state wide lottery. In addition the State relied on the funds from the 16th section of each Township for the support of local schools. Unfortunately, most schools remained pay schools until after the Civil War. In 1874 the public schools in Jackson County received the sum of \$1.75 per pupil in public funds as an allocation from the legisla- ture. All schools at that time and until June of 1956 were under the Jackson County School System. Given the nature of the times from that period of time until the sixty's, all schools were segregat- ed pursuant to State Law. For a number of years the county had up to 125 one, two and three room or more schools. Among the schools were Temperance Hill, Cumberland Mountain (started by U. S. Government,) Flat Rock (started by the Methodist Episcopal Church), Green Academy, Shoemaker Grove, Shook Sinks, Gross Springs, Similar, Sunset, Trention Poplar Springs, Hymer, Byrds Hill, Wininger, Wannville, Woodville, Beeches Grove, Johnstown, Fairfield, Bridgeport, Stevenson (founded by the Austin family), Cave Springs, Carver, Deans Chapel, House of Happiness, Nila, Crescent Hill, Rash, Larkin, and

even on called Sodom. Most of these were elementary schools, but a very few were junior high schools. The first high school in Scottsboro was the Male and Female Institute which became Baptist Normal School, which after being established by the Baptist, was run by the Methodist and became Jackson County High School, the Scottsboro High School, then Scottsboro Junior High School and now, Page Elementary School. A school building has been at this site for longer than 120 years. At approximately the same time, what eventually became Stevenson High School was founded in 1875 as William and Emma Austin College. The ultimate successor institution is the new North Jackson High School. By the 30s Jackson County High School, Carver, Woodville, Paint Rock Valley, Stevenson, Bridgeport, and Pisgah were the high schools in Jackson County. Jackson County High School evolved into Scottsboro High School and Carver High School was closed and merged in what is now Scottsboro High School. The Bridgeport and Stevenson High Schools have been combined into the North Jackson High School and in addition to those other schools in the 30s, there now exists Skyline High School, Section High School, and North Sand Mountain High School.

Since 1954, the City of Scottsboro has had its own system. The system has three elementary schools, namely Brownwood, Caldwell, and Nelson Elementary Schools. The old Jackson County High School is now called Page School and houses the fifth and sixth grades, and High School houses grades nine through twelve. A new Scottsboro High School is currently being constructed to be completed before the millennium. All schools in the county were integrated in the 1960s without the necessity of federal court orders, and schools now reflect the communities in which they are located.

Opportunity Schools and Adult Education

In February 1930, a column in the Progressive Age titled "News from the State's Capitol" discussed the problem of adult illiteracy. "An intensive drive against illiteracy is being waged over the state, with the object of giving Alabama as high a rating as possible under the 1930 Federal census. Rapid progress in the work has been made in recent years, especially since the 1927 legislature made a generous increase in the State's appropriation for the work. Reports of parent-teacher associations locating men and women, boys and girls, who cannot write their names are coming to the State Department of Education from all parts of the State, according to Miss Cutie Bloodworth, who is in charge of the campaign against adult illiteracy in the State. 'Write-you-name' campaigns are being happily organized in the localities sending in lists of fifteen or more people who cannot read and write. The taking of the Federal census will begin in April and Alabama's rating in the nation as to illiteracy will stand for ten years in the 1930 U. S. census," Miss Bloodworth stated.

"The census of 1920 showed that 3.1 percent of the adult voting population of Alabama could not write, and 12 percent of the children 7 to 20 years of age. The last school census of 1928 showed that the State had made a 43 percent reduction in children's illiteracy. Each county as a unit should make a vigorous effort to teach every illiterate within its borders before April."

On May 22, 1930, the Progressive Age reported that Alabama was showing a lot of progress in its fight against illiteracy, an effort which had started in earnest in October, 1929.

PROGRESS BEING MADE IN ILLITERACY FIGHT

Progress in the fight against illiteracy in Alabama is shown by the fact that since October 1st of last year a total of 86 counties of the State have made requisition for aid from the State and the **Greenwald** Fund appropriation to carry on the work. Figures on total enrollment in the schools for adult illiterates are not yet available, but partial reports show an enrollment of 4,123, of which 3,336 were white and 787 colored. Jefferson County headed the list with an enrollment of 2,246; Dallas was second with 630, and Baldwin third with an enrollment of 584 reported to date.

Other counties ranking high in the list included; Tuscaloosa, 475; Etowah, 448; Pike, 383, and Crenshaw, 362.

According to Supt. Hodges, Jackson County will again conduct its opportunity schools, commencing about the middle of July. Nineteen of these completed the courses in 1929 with an enrollment of nearly four hundred, and from the interest already being shown it is believed that the 1930 school will exceed these figures.

C. P. Nelson will again be in charge of the Jackson County Opportunity Schools, working in co-operation with the County Board of Education. For the information of those concerned, the Age is requested to state that any community may secure one of these schools provided they can guarantee an average daily attendance of ten pupils.

These schools are open to any one who feels that he or she can better themselves from an education.

Things to cover:

- Assigning District Numbers and electing trustees
- Opportunity Schools
- 3 mil tax votes
- public auctions of school property
- How the 16th sections were used to raise money
- Significant state legislation affecting county schools

Impact of school busses.