

DILIGENCE

1924

INTEGRITY

1970



thru

CITIZENSHIP



History of Acadia Parish Training School and Armstrong High School



History is a written record of important events which occurred in the past, those which are occurring at present, and a prediction of those things that will occur in the future. The schools have been instrumental in producing students who can go into communities and the world of work and exhibit the skills learned because of the love and dedication of teachers. Anyone who has succeeded can attribute his/her success to some humble teacher.

Miss Mary Ella Armstrong, the daughter of Clara Prince McCray and William Armstrong, was born in the city of New Orleans. She attended the New Orleans public schools, Southern University and Straight University. Before receiving her first teaching certificate, she successfully passed an examination given by Professor John McNeese of Calcasieu Parish in 1886.

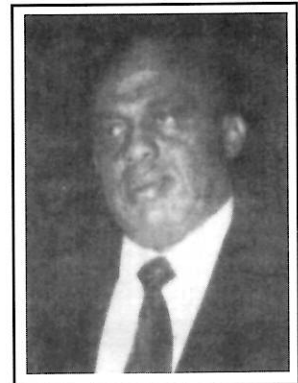
Later, she came to Acadia Parish and made her home in Rayne. She taught many boys and girls in the Cunningham C.M.E. Church. She worked hard to raise funds to buy land and to secure a building to be used as a school for Black children. For many years, she was the third grade teacher at the Acadia Parish Training School. In 1927, she was selected to serve as principal of the Midland Negro Public School. She retired from that position in 1937 and Superintendent A. T. Brown gave her high praise for a job well done. She worked for God and her race until she died in July of 1948.

Following in Miss Armstrong's footsteps was Professor R. U. Clark, who was born February 15, 1881, in LeCompte, Louisiana, to Mr. and Mrs. Tom Clark. After elementary school, he attended Leland College and completed his studies in 1908. He also attended Hampton Institute, as well as Tuskegee Institute. Professor Clark began his teaching career at Baton Rouge College with Dr. J. S. Clark. After leaving West Baton Rouge Parish, he was employed as a supervisor and as an assistant to the superintendent in Acadia Parish. In October of 1915, he was appointed principal of the Acadia Parish Training School. Along with his wife, he gave many hours of untiring service to many students. The school made rapid strides in the fields of education, music, and recreational activities through their efforts. Professor and Mrs. Clark retired from the Acadia Parish School System in the spring of 1948.

Mr. Oldring Welcome, a native of New Iberia, Louisiana, and a graduate of Southern University and the University of Denver, Denver, Colorado, was appointed principal. He and his wife, Odessa, who served as teacher-librarian, worked at APTS from 1948 to 1954.



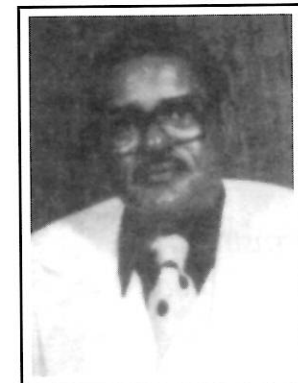
*Professor Ruben Ulysses Clark
Principal, 1915-1948*



*Mr. Oldring Welcome
Principal, 1948-1954*



*Dr. Lucius J. Frazier
Principal, 1954-1967*

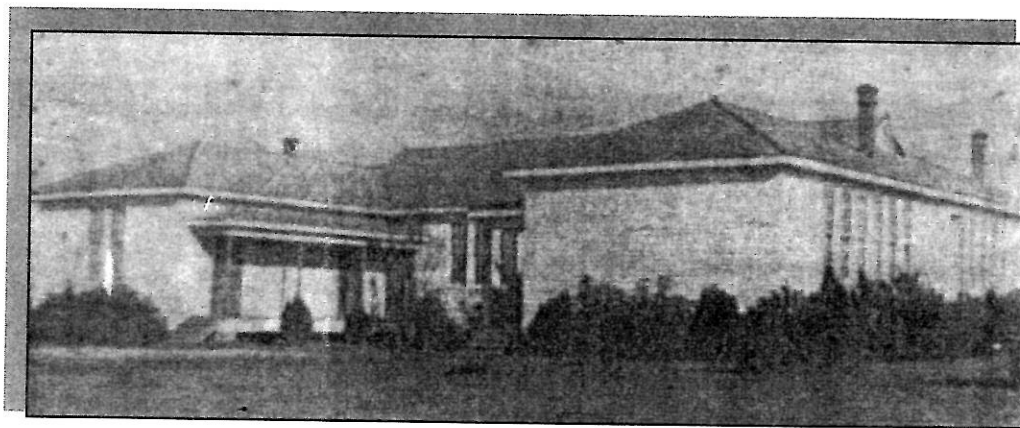
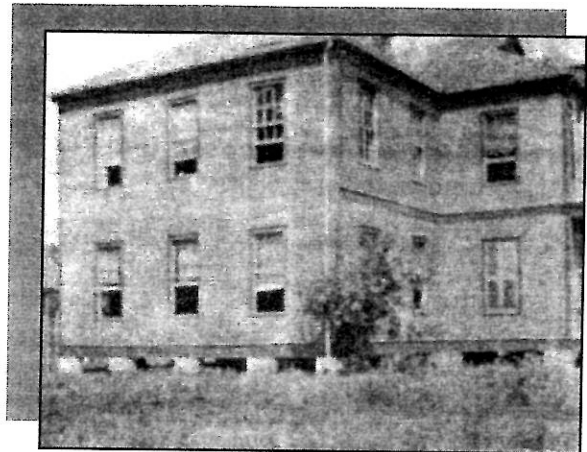


*Mr. Alfred J. Norman, Jr.
Principal, 1967-1970*

*Scenes
from the Past*

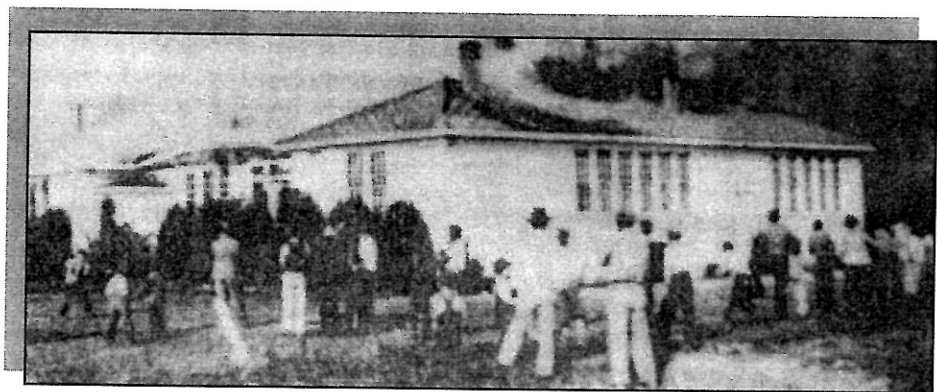


*Acadia Parish Training
School, Circa 1920*



*Acadia Parish
Training
School,
Circa 1940*

*Acadia Parish
Training School
being destroyed by
fire, Circa 1950*



*Armstrong
High School,
Circa 1967*



The TYPICAL RURAL NEGRO SCHOOL in ACADIA

NEGRO STUDENTS PROVIDED REAL CLASS PROGRAMS

Modern Buildings Erected To Afford Them All Educational Opportunities

The negro population of Acadia parish is relatively small in comparison to the white population. Outside of the cities of Crowley, Church Point, and Rayne, the negro population is scattered and sparse. This necessitates the establishment of many small one- and two-room schools. Because of the sparse and scattered population the number of pupils to the teachers is also small, which accounts for the relatively high cost per capita for instruction. The average cost of instruction per negro pupil in Acadia parish is \$15.93, while for the state the median per pupil is \$8.27.

The two largest negro schools are situated at Rayne and Crowley. There are 14 teachers in the Crowley school, which has an enrollment of 567 pupils. There are three courses

offered at this school: academic, home economics and industrial arts. There is a trend toward the vocational courses in the large schools operating for the negroes. The object is to give instructions that will ultimately result in a vocation. The school board recently completed a \$12,000 six-room elementary building. Further expansion in the facilities for this school are anticipated should federal aid materialize. This school is in need of modern toilet facilities, additional class rooms, and a gymnasium, as well as additional land for school site.

The Rayne negro school is the second largest in the parish, with eight teachers and 285 pupils. The Rayne school plant recently burned and plans are now underway to replace this structure with expanded facilities. Work on moving two frame structures from the old North Rayne site to add to facilities of this school has already been started. This will give them a teacherage and several additional rooms, which will either be included in the new structure or built separately. It is the hope that in addition to these

facilities that a gymnasium-auditorium in skeleton form can be provided. There are located on this site a combination home economics and shop building and the principal's home.

The teachers, pupils and principal at Rayne have taken a great pride in the appearance of their school site. For the past several years this school has won first place in a state wide contest for school ground beautification. Through the untiring efforts of the principal, R. U. Clark, and the efforts of the white, as well as the negro citizens, much cash money has been raised to assist in expanding the facilities of this school with little or no cost to the school board. This spirit of cooperation is to be highly commended.

After the proposed facilities are provided this school will have a very fine school plant, adequate in every respect to take care of the needs of the Rayne negro population for many years.

The school board has constructed five one- and one two-room negro schools during its recent building program. Additional rural schools will be

Early School For Ebenezer Built in 1888

(Continued from Page 9)

en a fifty-foot flag pole. This is at the main entrance of the school yard.

During Mr. Browne's administration our auditorium was completed (1933). At that time sanitary toilets were installed. In 1937 a large first grade room was added. In that same year the building was completely remodeled at a cost

built as rapidly as adequate sites are provided. Such buildings are to be constructed at Iota, Church Point, Branch and Frey.

The total number of pupils enrolled in the negro schools for the session of 1938-39 was 1,453 with the teaching personnel numbering 39. In addition to the teachers employed, the school board has one Jean's supervisor, whose duty it is to supervise the instruction of the rural negro schools.

of \$2700. All buildings were repainted in 1938.

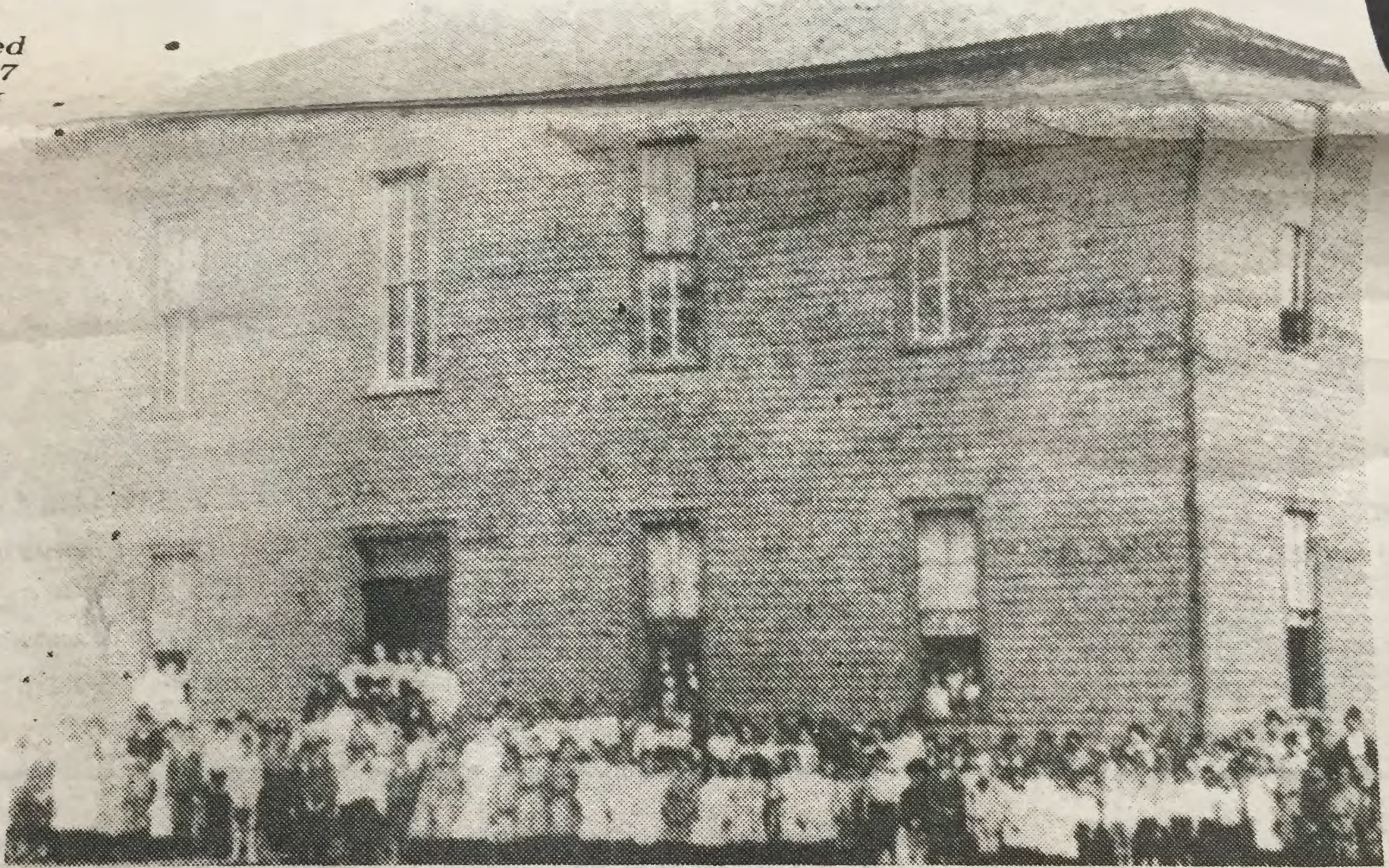
At the present time our enrollment is 156. In the past 20 years our enrollment has remained between 150 and 175, which shows that the population of the community has remained practically the same. Nearly all of these pupils are transported to the school by Mr. Frank Sarver, Mrs. Price Hains and Mr. Ward Faulk, the three transfer drivers.

Reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, spelling, English and science are the main subjects studied in this school.

The faculty is composed of six teachers. Miss Viola McMillan has charge of the first grade; Mrs. C. C. Sonnier has second grade; Miss Pauline Abadie has the third grade; Mrs. Mina Roux has the fourth and fifth grades; Miss Opal Keene has charge of sixth and seventh grades, and Mr. J. W. Faulk, principal, teaches arithmetic and geography.

Although the Ebenezer school is an elementary school it is one of the most outstanding schools in the parish.

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The first public school building in Rayne was built from funds derived from a community supper in 1888. It was located at the present day location of Central Rayne Elem. It served the students of Rayne until 1912, when a new three-story brick building was completed.

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Bunche Library To Officially Open May 24

Official opening of the Bunche Library for the colored people of Rayne has been scheduled for Sunday, May 24, according to Mrs. Virginia Wilkins, Parish Librarian.

Work has been completed on the building with Earl Smith and James Sennette responsible for the labor. The building is a neat one room frame building with a fresh coat of white paint located at 305 Reynolds. Books are being selected for the library and the library will be opened for registration on Wednesday, May 20.

Barbara S. Daily has been hired to serve as librarian, her qualifications for this position being excellent, according to Mrs. Wilkins.

The library will be open from 3 to 5 p.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays and as circulation increases the library hours will also be extended.

The library has been named the Bunche Library for Ralph Bunche, scholar, statesman, diplomat in the affairs of men, Nobel prize winner in 1950, and the first Negro in American history to take over a desk in the State department.

The library will be opened on Wednesday May 20 and Saturday, May 23, and a general open house scheduled for the official opening on Sunday, May 24, with the general public invited to attend.

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*Acadia Parish Training
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