



MARION INDUSTRIAL HIGH

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History of Marion Industrial High School

In the early part of the twentieth century African American students who lived in Union Parish could advance to the tenth grade in public community schools which were scattered throughout the parish at 12 mile intervals. A noted teacher at this time was Mrs. Ora Lee Talton Wayne who delayed her education at tenth grade and taught school in a tent located on the grounds of Marion Baptist Church. She simultaneously pursued higher education at Grambling College on weekends and during the summers. She obtained her degree in 1947. During this time she and other teachers taught as many as forty students at all grade levels. Other teachers who taught were Professor Johnny Ross at St. Paul's Church and Lucille Wayne at Marion Union Church which was known as Center Line. Mount Airy School was the southernmost school in the parish and Marion School was the largest.

Students traveled to school by their own means. Some walked and others traveled by horse and buggy in the early days. The first buses were in use in 1949. In 1950 Marion Industrial High School expanded its offerings from 10th grade to 12th grade courses. School size increased as a result of mergers of the various community schools and a succession of four principals followed. The first principal was Mrs. Georgia Wayne followed by Mr. Ellis Lowe of Farmerville. Reverend Clyde Oliver of Ruston, Louisiana was the third principal and Mr. Lorenzo Burch was the fourth principal.

A new arrangement of schools occurred in 1950. Marion School became Marion Industrial High School. The last class to graduate from Marion Industrial High School was in 1959. At this time Marion Industrial High School and Union Parish Training School merged to create East Side High School.

Notable exploits of Marion High School were four merit scholarships to Southern University in 1959 at a time when only one scholarship was awarded per school in Louisiana. The four students were set as examples by the university president by welcoming them to sit on the dais at a school function. Athletic success occurred in 1957 when the school won the 1957 state "A" championship in football. An impressive 19 total points were scored on the defense in the entire 1957 campaign. The school also had excellent basketball and baseball programs.

Several noted achievements occurred when a student repeated as a time magazine scholarship awardee in current events. The school had excellent teachers and the school was recognized by the entire community in the fall by having the only varsity high school football program in the town. East Side High School was the successor to Marion Industrial High School and its doors were closed at the time of integration.

History provided Mr. James Wayne