

ALTO HIGH SCHOOL



TIGERS

## History of Alto High School

Alto High School located in Alto, Louisiana, opened as an institution for Blacks in October, 1949. Prior to that time, it had served as an elementary school for white children.

Alto originally included grades one through ten, but because of the large number of eleventh and twelfth grade students that lived in the school district, the Richland Parish School Board voted in early November, 1949, to add two grades. Before the last two grades were installed, many students who lived in the area enrolled and attended Rayville Rosenwald and other schools. Those same students returned immediately to Alto after the board's approval.

Shortly after Alto was approved for grades one through twelve, some students were lost to Rhymes High School due to the fact that Rhymes High School had been approved as a grade one through 12 grade school, as well.

Professor Peter Haynes, Jr. of Mangham, Louisiana, was appointed as the first principal of Alto High School. Professor Haynes had recently been discharged after serving several years in the U. S. Army. He was previously a teacher-principal at Hopewell School.

Under his administration, Alto High school became a growing institution, not only in student enrollment but also in academics. He assembled an excellent faculty and staff. A large number of students from places like Alto, Egypt, Goldmine, Nelson Bend, Pardue, Boeuf River, Archibald, Mangham, Delhco, White Hall, Four Forks and other areas made up the Alto Family. The school district extended from Nelson Bend near Rayville to the back of Goldmine at the Franklin Parish line.

Tragedy and sadness came to the school and its community when Professor Haynes was killed in an automobile accident near Mangham in December, 1954. Mr. Claude Minor, faculty, and staff held the pieces together until the school board would appoint a new principal. The parents, under the leadership of Mrs. Liza Ware, played important role during this interim period.

In January, 1955, the Richland Parish School Board appointed Professor Frederic D. Perkins as the new principal of Alto High School. Mr. Perkins had served as a mathematics instructor at Rhymes High School and as a professor at Natchez College in Natchez, Mississippi. The school continued to grow and prosper under the administration of Mr. Perkins and became a leading academic institution in the area.

The high school officially closed its doors in May, 1970, in compliance with the Federal Desegregation Court Order. Although the school was physically discontinued, be assured that it did not close our love, admiration, heart, or our soul for Alto High School that meant so much to all who passed through its doors.

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