

HISTORY OF GEORGE ROGERS CLARK SCHOOL

The George Rogers Clark School was built at a cost of \$245,000 and opened its doors to the pupils of the Belmont area in September, 1931. The school had an enrollment of 656 students in grades one through seven and its first faculty consisted of 18 classroom teachers, an office teacher, the principal and a secretary.

The school was named for the great American frontiersman, George Rogers Clark, who had been a native of Albemarle County during the early years of his life.

Miss Florence de Launey Buford was chosen as the school's first principal and served in that capacity until her retirement in July, 1964. She became an active participant in the civic affairs of Charlottesville and it was through her wide knowledge and interests in many fields that the school was to pioneer in improvements through organizational changes as well as innovations in the teaching-learning process.

When the school opened, a special room had been included in the plans to be developed into a library. During the first year, some books were purchased and patrons of the school donated many other books. Although the school had no librarian, a classroom teacher, Mrs. Jo Wright, worked after school hours to encourage children in the use of these books. Later, she became the school's first librarian. She served in this position until her retirement in 1962.

Clark School did not have a planned lunch program until October, 1946. During the first years, needy children were furnished lunches through the cooperation of Miss Buford and Mrs. Suzie Johnson, a maid who had a keen interest in sharing the problems of children in those early days. Lunches brought from home were often supplemented by milk and a few other items which could be bought from a stand operated by the home economics teacher. This lunch stand began operation during the first year of the school. In 1934, hot soup, sandwiches, assorted pies and cakes were also sold. In the fall of 1946, the first real lunch program was organized. Lunch, including sandwiches or hot dogs, fruit and milk, could be purchased for 15¢. During that year the cafeteria, named Sacajawea Tea Room for the Indian maiden who helped guide the Clark expedition, was opened with a staff of four persons. The present cafeteria manager, Mrs. W. P. Newman, came to Clark School in 1950. Through the years the lunch program has grown in the number of students served hot lunches as well as in the quality of the well balanced meals. With the aid of federal funds, the program of free lunches for needy children has been expanded.

The first PTA was organized for the school on March 16, 1939, with 48 members. Miss Buford was temporary chairman. She fostered the start of a strong organization which was to become a factor in the growth of parent-teacher relationships.

throughout the history of the School. Many gifts from the PTA have brought about improvements in furnishings as well as added comforts to the school. The organization has promoted many programs to aid in the enlightenment of its members to school and community work.

Clark School was the first school in Charlottesville and the second in Virginia to have a class for the mentally handicapped. Sensing a need for this, Miss Buford assisted the American Association of University Women, which resulted in the organization of a Council for Retarded Children in the spring of 1953. This council asked the Charlottesville School Board to appropriate funds to start a class. The class for the mentally retarded began at Clark School in the fall of 1953 with Mrs. Viola Wingfield as its teacher. Since Clark School pioneered in this, Charlottesville had developed a program of special education which covers many areas.

The curriculum was expanded during Miss Buford's principalship to include many areas. During the first two years, cooking and sewing were taught in a home economics class. The school had a director of vocal music from its opening date in 1931, with Miss Nell Cowan as its first director. During the depression, this program had to be eliminated. In 1941, an elementary band was organized at Clark with Mr. James Berdahl as its first director. Stringed music was also taught during the early history of the school.

Miss Buford was a sports enthusiast and much of the achievement in sports can be credited to her. Clark has won many trophies. Perhaps the greatest honor was in 1932 when the school won the Achievement Trophy Cup, which was given to the school with the highest points in sports as well as in other areas. Clark scored 63 points to win over McGuffey with 49 points and Venable with 39 points in boys' basketball, boys' track, girls' track, boys' baseball and marble tournament as well as in areas of cooking, reading and public speaking.

Under Miss Buford's leadership, Clark School pioneered in changing its organization from a graded program to a non-graded primary department in 1954. Several years later this innovative organizational pattern was deemed so successful at Clark that the city school system adopted the non-graded concept in the primary area for all elementary schools.

In 1954, in an effort to improve the teaching of reading, Clark School was the first to incorporate a developmental program of phonetic instruction throughout the primary department. After a study by all Charlottesville teachers of first and second year children, this program was recommended by these teachers for adoption throughout the city schools.

In 1959, a new wing was added to the old building. It provided six classrooms planned for early primary children and a gymnasium.

When Miss Buford retired in July, 1964, Mrs. Evelyn Bickham became principal of Clark School. Her additional qualifications as a reading specialist encouraged the continuing improvement of the reading program in the school. It was through her guidance that the first year of integration was successfully achieved at Clark.

After two years, Mrs. Bickham was succeeded by Mr. Scott Hamrick, who served as principal for three years. During his term of office a language skills teacher, a resource teacher and several classroom aides were added to the staff through federal funds. Mr. Hamrick encouraged innovations in organization as well as in programs of instruction. The team-teaching concept was implemented with several groups of beginning children.

In the fall of 1969, Mr. William Chapman succeeded Mr. Hamrick and has served as principal since then. He has encouraged experimentation with new methods and materials in an effort to improve the achievement of students. Team-teaching has increased and two innovative programs of individualized reading instruction are being used in the school. A reading teacher has been added to the faculty since Mr. Chapman has been principal.

With the building of two new junior high schools, the seventh grade moved out of Clark School in 1965, in accordance with the planning for a six-three-three organization pattern for Charlottesville schools. In 1966, the sixth grade was moved out in a city-wide plan which created one school for all sixth grade students.

The school now consists of classes from kindergarten through fifth grade. Some additional space for the playgrounds has been provided with the purchase of adjacent property to the school property.

Clark School has always been a center for community interests. The gymnasium doubles as an auditorium. The school is used for meetings as well as PTA sponsored fairs, carnivals, suppers and other programs which are very popular with school patrons. After-school recreational programs use the gymnasium and the school playgrounds. The school is used as a voting precinct. Free aid in computing income taxes, occasional clinics and other community services are held at the school.

Part A. The School Community

1. A brief description of the community served by the school (location, size, and unique features) is as follows:

George Rogers Clark Exploratory School, Belmont Avenue and Monticello Road, is located in the Southeastern section of Charlottesville. It is on Route 20 and near Interstate 64. It serves children from homes on Chesapeake Street to Elliott Avenue and from the Ridge Street area to the Franklin Street area.

Clark School began serving children in 1931 with seventeen rooms, grade 1-7 inclusive. Today there are 23 classrooms for kindergarten through fifth grade students. The addition of the primary wing in 1959 added six classrooms, a gymnasium, showers and bathroom facilities. Also available is a cafeteria, library, principals' office, office space, media center, two teachers' lounges, and a limited clinic. Additional resource people are provided. They are librarian and library clerk, learning resource teacher, reading resource teacher, orchestra teacher, band instructor, gym teacher, language skills teacher, classroom music teacher and five teacher's aides.

The school community is served by many facilities such as churches of varying denominations, a public library, junior high school, senior high school and university. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are offered to the children, and the Salvation Army has a planned program for the children of this area. Many boys participate in Midget football and Little League baseball. A few of the children take music lessons.

b Store room for chairs would be on same level as girls' playroom. Store room number one and store room number two would be on levels to correspond with the slope down to girls' playroom.

c I have already written you about eliminating steps in girls' toilet.

d There ought to be either a door leading from girls' playroom into coal room or some other means of giving ventilation for the coal and a way for the man to get out. The man's getting out or into the room after the coal is stored could easily be taken care of over the doorway leading into the boiler room.

I can see many serious objections to having any opening at all from coal room into girls' playroom and on the whole I think it extremely unwise to have any connection between coal room and girls' playroom but sometimes the coal heats in the bins. In fact we had serious trouble at Venable school at one time. I can very readily understand that in the event that the coal would begin to smoke the thing most of all that we would want to prevent would be the passage of this smoke through a door or other opening into the girls' playroom.

e We have definitely decided that we will have the partitions cutting the basement stairways off from the playrooms. This may cause some congestion in the small space enclosed but on the other hand in view of the fact that both of these playrooms will in time be utilized more or less for assembly purposes it is absolutely necessary that children may be able to enter either toilet room without going into the playrooms. It would be quite disconcerting for some of the pupils to be going to the toilet room through the playroom while assemblies might be in process. We break our school enrollment into about three sections for assembly purposes so you can see why we should have these partitions even though they were not necessary for smoke screens for the stairways.

f A very careful study of your proposed elevations as indicated on the elevation sheet read in connection with the basement floor plan brings up a thing that I feel is worthy of consideration, the making of the basement floor a uniform pitch of twelve feet. The practical situation would then be that we could use either the boys' or the girls' playroom as the assembly room or we could use both of them as assembly rooms, a thing that might be extremely wise in the long run. Neither you nor I nor any other one can tell what demands may be put upon a school building in the future.

THE FRONTIERSMAN

Vol. VIII, No. 5

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK SCHOOL, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA, JANUARY 31, 1939

PRICE FIVE CENTS



CLASS OFFICERS

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| THELMA SHELTON | President | ROSALIE DOUGLASS | Historian |
| ELMO SANDRIDGE | Vice-President | BETTY PACE | Poet |
| GENEVIEVE WILBERGER | Secretary-Treasurer | LAMONT DUDLEY | Sergeant-at-Arms |

MOTTO . . . "You May Be Whatever You Resolve to Be"

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|------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| CLASS FLOWER | Pink Carnation | CLASS COLORS | Blue and White |
|------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|

CLASS ROLL

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Beatrice May Broyles | Dorothy Willis Gentry | Margaret Lee Mowbray | Thelma Neal Shelton |
| Marianna Cash | Lillian Alice Harlow | Calvin Vickers Moyer | Norman Jackson Shiflett |
| Martha Madeline Craven | Nancy Cole Herndon | Betty Marie Pace | Carroll Bledsoe Thomas, Jr. |
| Dorothy Mary Diggs | John Alfred Houchins, Jr. | Bessie Virginia Powell | Wallace McNeil Thomas |
| Yvonne Rosalie Douglass | Roy Manley Jett | James Kelly Puckett, Jr. | Elizabeth Ann Wells |
| Lamont Dudley | Mary Louise Lambert | Frances Rhodes | Genevieve Deloris Wilberger |
| Lester Eley Garrison | Frank Samuel Morris, Jr. | Lacy Elmo Sandridge | |

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THE FRONTIERSMAN

VOL. VIII, No. 9

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK SCHOOL, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA, MAY 31, 1939

PRICE FIVE CENTS



CLASS OFFICERS

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-------------|---------------------|
| RUTH VEST | President | HAZEL BUCK | Secretary-Treasurer |
| GEORGE DUDLEY | Vice-President | HERMAN PACE | Sergeant-at-Arms |

MOTTO: "No one knows what he can do until he tries" CLASS FLOWER: Red Rose CLASS COLORS: Red and White

CLASS ROLL

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Laurice Elton Batton | Ruth Louise Easton | Shirley Winifred Loving | Edward Lee Robinson |
| Ellen Virginia Black | Robert Randolph Ekstein | Rosa Bell Marsh | Earl Lee Scruggs |
| Pearl Joyce Breeden | Margaret Cornelia Garrison | John Franklin Marshall, Jr. | Ethel Estelle Scruggs |
| John Paul Brooks | Mary Louise Lambert | Katherine Lewis Morris | Maxine Edward Scruggs |
| Joyce Faye Brown | Elizabeth Ann Lane | Burgess Almond Newman | Norman Jackson Shillett |
| Everett Randolph Buck | Edward William Lang | Doris Odelle Pace | Silas Wilson Thompson |
| Lillie Hazel Buck | Virginia Mae Lang | Herman William Pace | Alpha Elizabeth Timberlake |
| Alice Louise Chewning | Henry Gray Liles | James Francis Phillips | Ruth Raimelle Vest |
| George Lawrence Dudley | Charles Edward Lilly, Jr. | James Kelly Puckett, Jr. | Russell Mortimer Wells |
| Floyd Ray Easton | | | |

than in colonial days for we have
so many more advantages than they
had.

CORA BELLE SCHUMER, MEDIA
HUFFMAN, MARY GLENN
CRYSTAL SNEED, SEATON
RODAMER, MARTHA MOORE
DORIS LANE, RUTH MOORE
LINE, DOROTHY FAYE, 3B Grade

JAPAN

little maid upon my fan
id you come from far Japan?
yon that dear sunrise land
the maid upon my fan.
derneath the pretty cherry tree
Japanese child far can see.
Fugi is always covered with
snow
that it will brightly show.
CHARLOTTE LEE GERN, 3B Grade

TREES

a little fir tree
ing all alone in the forest
ld say every day
ow I wish I had some com-
ny."

day a little bird
nest within its branches
pt it company all summer
fir tree was happy and
ent.
ERNICE BUCK, 7A Grade

A BROOK

g brook is a beautiful
long through a meadow
o laugh, and play and
s and splashes its way
ea.

through the fertile
tening rocks and sand
n to meet the sea.
ge-old rendezvous.
THOMAS, 7A Grade

THE

FRONTIERSMAN

Vol. VIII, No. 4

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK SCHOOL, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA, MAY 31, 1939

PRICE FIVE CENTS



CLASS OFFICERS

by fan
far Japan?
rise land
y fan,
y cherry tree
can see.
covered with
y show.
LEE GEN.
3B Grade.

e forest
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py and

Grade.

CHARLES CALROW
ALAMOR BROWNE
THOMAS FITZ-GIBBON

CALROW, BROWNE & FITZ-GIBBON
ARCHITECTS
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

MEMBERS OF
THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE
OF ARCHITECTS

October 11, 1929.


Dr. James G. Johnson,
Charlottesville, Virginia.

Dear Doctor,

Please give me the elevation
of the sewer on Belmont Avenue.

Do not worry about getting soil
for your fill. I think that with what will come
out of taking the high point off of Belmont Ave.
and the excavation of the Basement will give us
very nearly enough for the terracing we need.

Very truly yours,


Chas. J. Calrow.

CJC/A

CHARLES J. CALROW
R. MAURY BROWNE
T. DAVID FITZ-GIBBON

CALROW, BROWNE & FITZ-GIBBON
ARCHITECTS
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

October 16, 1929.

MEMBER OF
THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE
OF ARCHITECTS

Dr. James G. Johnson,
Charlottesville, Virginia.

Dear Doctor,

I am sending you herewith prints of the floor plans showing final suggested scheme.

Except for modifications required by the introduction of the stair to basement at the middle of the building, the present scheme takes care of the changes we have discussed.

You will note:-

(a) That the change over of position of main stack takes up the room at the west side toilets which would have gone in the small store rooms mentioned in your letter of September 13th.

(b) The necessity for landing the basement stairs near the entrance to the janitor's room (your letter of September 24th) kept the stairs on the north side of the center line.

(c) The above changes call for placing the Library on the north side of the center and the Rest Room on the south, and from this follows the placing of the principal's toilet and toilets above.

(d) The stair enclosures on first and second floors have been omitted.

(e) If the Belmont Ave. sewer is low enough the steps up to the girls' toilet (Basement) can be omitted, otherwise this toilet should be elevated and the sewer run under terrace to Belmont Ave. saving the long run to Moores Creek.

I am also sending you a sketch showing the proposed elevations following your instructions of August 6th. These grades are worked out to save any filling for floors inside the building and permit all of the cut to be used in the exterior fill. I do not think you will need any extra earth.

-2-

The exterior windows have been omitted pending the working out of the elevation scheme. I believe we will be obliged to hold to a group window scheme.

I am sending you the prints in duplicate so that you may work up one set and return to us retaining the other for your own records.

Very truly yours,

Chas. J. Calrow.

CJC/A

*Note - Individual urinals shown
in Boys Toilet in Basement,
c/c*

CHARLES J. CALROW
R. MAURY BROWNE
T. DAVID FITZ-GIBBON

CALROW, BROWNE & FITZ-GIBBON
ARCHITECTS
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

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October 17, 1929.

Dr. James G. Johnson,
Charlottesville, Virginia.

Dear Doctor,

I notice that we failed to show the stairway to the roof. This stairway will run from the Library to the roof directly over the stairway from the second floor to the first floor (center stairs).

Very truly yours,


Chas. J. Calrow.

CJC/A

CHARLES J. CALROW
R. MAURY BROWNE
T. DAVID FITZ-GIBBON

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October 19, 1929.

Dr. James G. Johnson,
Charlottesville, Virginia.

Dear Doctor,

Taking into consideration
the toilets we have on the first and second
floors, I would recommend fixtures for
toilet rooms in basement as follows:-

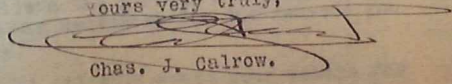
| | |
|--------------|---|
| <u>Girls</u> | 16 W.C. 4 Basins |
| <u>Boys</u> | 10 W.C. 10 Urinal stalls 4 Basins |

Judging by information gained
from local schools the above would be ample and
might even be cut a little without causing con-
gestion.

The sewer for the girls base-
ment toilet (with steps eliminated) will leave
the building just as you had figured at from
88' to 90', this will enable us to get into
the Belmont Ave. sewer without trouble.

Expect the elevation studies in
a few days.

Yours very truly,



Chas. J. Calrow.

CJC/A

CHARLES J. CALROW
R. MAURY BROWNE
T. DAVID FITZ-GIBBON

CALROW, BROWNE & FITZ-GIBBON
ARCHITECTS
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

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October 30, 1929.

Dr. James G. Johnson,
Charlottesville, Virginia.

Dear Doctor,

We are sending you by this mail prints showing one study for the exterior of the school. As you will realize by this time it is a pretty hard task to reconcile the requirements of large window areas and window groups to the proportions demanded of the classic architecture and especially that used by Thomas Jefferson. The scheme sent you to-day is worked out in the style of the Georgian Period which flourished about the time of Sir Christopher Wren, and is not unlike that used in this Country at a later period in such buildings as the Pennsylvania State Hospital and in some of the early buildings in New England.

The scheme submitted does not provide for any projecting porches but rather for railed terraces on the East and South fronts with a series of steps overcoming the differences in level from walkways to entrance doors, yet holding a level line at elevation 100 entirely around the building, except at boiler room entrance on the West. The walkway shown on the East of the building very nearly follows the present grade of the lot, and advantage is taken of the slightly increased elevation at the building site to reduce the terrace fill to a minimum.

I want to try another combination on the elevation using a so-called Colonial Style instead of the stricter Georgian Period used in this design. I do not know how it will work out at present, but in any event we know that we can always go back to the scheme used at Venable or McGuffey and get a successful building.

Very truly yours,



Chas. J. Calrow.

CJC/A