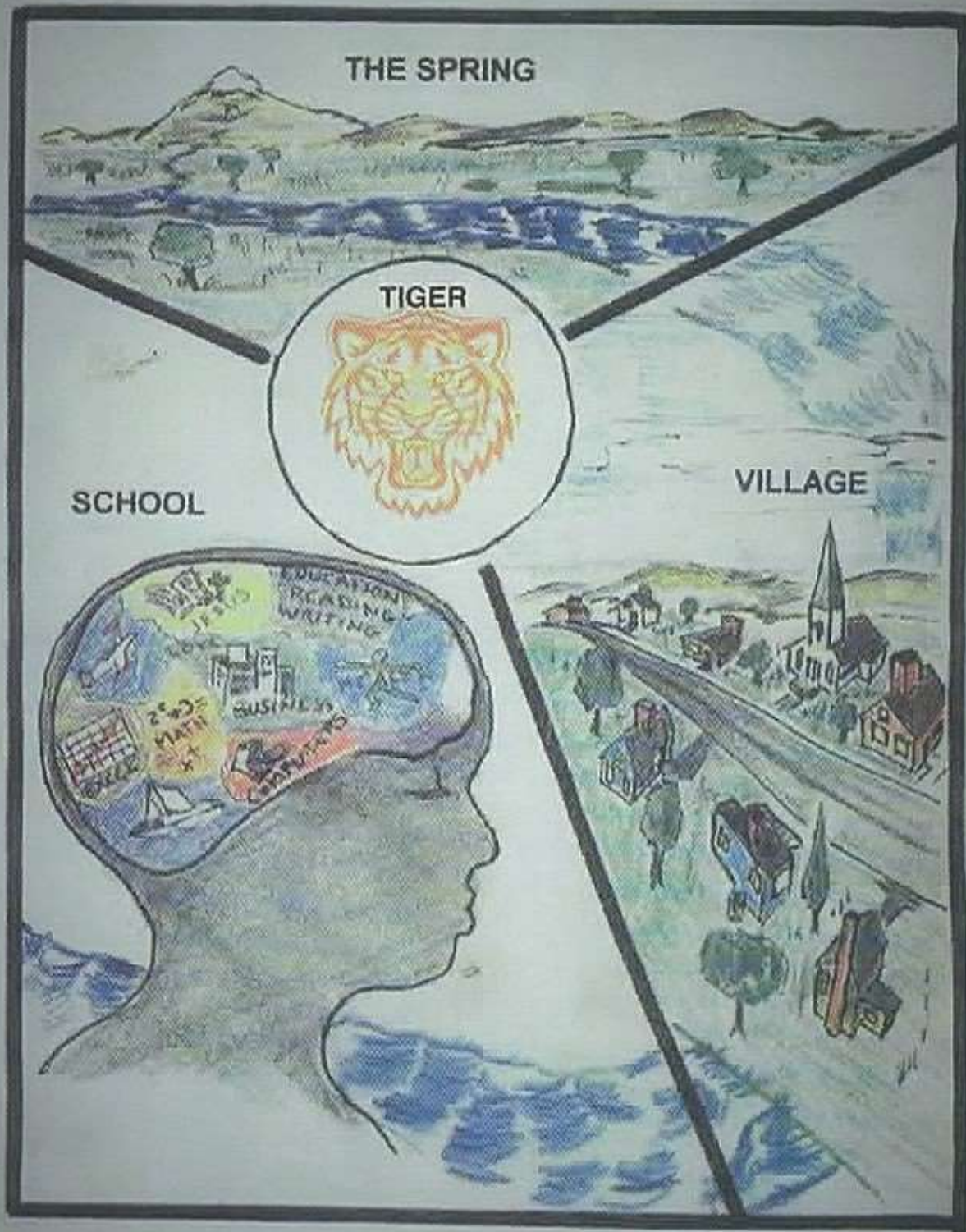


The Legacy of a Spring Village, School and a Tiger



Author:
Foreword:

Emanuel Evans
Rochelle Davis, Jr.

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RESEARCH DATA

Shreve Memorial Library System, Shreveport, Louisiana
Louisiana State Museum
Louisiana State Library
Louisiana Department of Education
Southern University
Grambling University
Coushatta Chamber of Commerce
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FOREWORD

Occasionally, a book or an author comes along that have the potential and ability to help a people evaluate the past, appreciate the present, and focus on the future. Bro. Emanuel Evans is one of God's gifted authors who has the ability to inspire a people with his penmanship, to evaluate the past, appreciate the present, and focus on the future in a positive way. He also motivates people to suffer without becoming bitter, because bitterness will confuse, corrupt, and destroy a vision; a movement; a people (Hebrews 12:15; Ephesians 4:31).

The purpose of this book is to show how a people that lived in Red River Parish, Springville Community, State of Louisiana moved forward against many adversaries, but kept their vision in focus and would prepare students to excel in education from a school named "Springville High." The content of this book is about a spring in a village, a people with a vision, and a tiger as the school mascot. These entities made a contribution to this legacy.

For those who will read this book and especially you and your offspring who have been influenced by their vision, I hope this book will inspire you to keep this legacy alive during your lifetime and pass it on to the next generation.

Bro. Evans is the author of "If You Can't Say Amen Say Ouch," a book of poetry; "The History of Temple of Faith Baptist Church," and the life story of "Ollie Matson." He also coauthored "Laity on the Move" and "A Man in Touch with God."

Rochelle Davis, Jr.



DEDICATION

To each and every one of you early Pioneers who saw a star and reached for it. To all of you who wanted a better way and a better day for the children of the future. This is for you!

Your dedication lends to my dedication of this book to each of you that played a part in pursuing a dream, capturing a vision, and the ability to bring it into a realization that so many have enjoyed the fruits of the seeds that you sowed.

God bless you and I am sure that each and every student owes each of you a special sense of gratitude for all the efforts and sacrifice you gave on behalf of them. Thank you Church, thank you village, thank you parents, and above all, thank you teachers.

Emanuel Evans

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Introduction

“Go Tell It on A Mountain”

“The business of leaders, of heroes, is tricky. Leadership is not something that is done to people, like fixing your teeth. Leadership is unlocking people’s potential to become better.”

*Bill Bradley
Retiring US Senator*

“I DREAM A WORLD”

I dream a world where man
No other will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its path adorn.
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedoms way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will Share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free.
Where wretchedness will hand its head,
And joy like a pearl,
Attend the needs of all mankind,
Of such a dream-
Our world.

By Langston Hughes

When you talk from a historical perspective on any given subject, be it geographical, a school, a church, a town, a person, or a group of people, it becomes important that all your data is authentic. Not in any way should it be distorted, altered, or composed of half-truths. History and historical data must pass more than just being objective, subjective and “almost the truth.” So carefully we looked at Coushatta’s history that led up to the writing of this book, with a fine toothcomb. It is authentic. It is true. It is real.

It becomes so ironic like the pieces of a puzzle being placed in its proper place and quickly as a researcher, a journalist, and one who not knowing the depth and destiny of this amazing story. It is choice not chance that truly determines human destiny. You quickly find yourself becoming a part of this historical finding. You soon become a viable fixture in the discovery and uncovering. You watch how God has a history of using the insignificant to accomplish that which so many will deem as the impossible. This book points out the torchbearers—a sense of even the smallest deed being better than the greatest intention.

As this book began to form and take root, as a writer, one begins to see the pattern of a proven history. You see people moving forth against all odds. When even as novice historians see a legacy in a rural setting, it is not easy for us to digest and see it for what it is. These were just ordinary people who made some very important historical feats that can’t go unnoticed or unmentioned. So often I think of that old saying, “Pay less attention to what people say, just watch what they do.” So often many will just offer a lot of “lip service” without thinking of *John 12:26* which says, “To know the will of God is the greatest knowledge, to find the will of God is the greatest discovery, and to do the will of God is the greatest achievement.” So it was those who were godly that did the will of God. They did it all with great determination and a lack of fear. It is fear that makes the wolf bigger than he is.

In compiling information from historical documents, you quickly find it is not only a story, but history that has neglected to be recorded. An important part of a people’s past that was left out and somehow not recorded. Of course this does not in any way make it any less important because was not recorded. History is something that can’t be overlooked or ignored, but if the historical event is important enough, somehow, someday, somewhere, someday it will be reported and it will be recorded. Out of this can come those who follow and know not of the past to suddenly have it thrust upon them. They will see, hear, feel the pain, as well as the shallow victories that these early pioneers encountered along the way. Too often

young people who come along after the fact— do not have an inkling of the proud heritage from which they stem. They know little or nothing about their parents, grandparents; those real heroes and pioneers that gave to history some fifty years ago in the town of Coushatta, Louisiana.

It was in 1940 when young people grew up in an era that was tedious and with lots of built-in problems they had to overcome and it was their parents who knew that they could not fix what they would not face. So it was these parents who put it all on the line. It did not matter the status— they were people with the vision to see, the faith to believe, and the courage to do. They didn't like the road they were traveling— so they started paving another.

Our greatest problem in life comes not so much from the many situations that we may confront, as from the doubts about our ability to handle them. To these people just reading it, saying it, preaching or teaching it, does not make it work. The only way they knew to do was through application. To do more than see the invisible, feel the intangible, to achieve the impossible. So they took hands-on application with lots of determination. Above all, they simply knew that when in doubt— PRAY! Although records, notes, papers, and clippings do not indicate it, we all know now that a lot of dark days resulted in them going into those dark closets for consultation. A lot of those cold uncertain moments resulted in a lot of timber being “sent up yonder.” For the one certain answer— answered prayers.

Those lean days, old timey days when doors and windows were shut, locked, and impossible to open, but they held on in Red River Parish to a thing called hope that resulted in a bigger thing called determination. They awaited the answer to prayer and even when not answered right away, they held steadfast to determination. They knew somehow that the unjust would be made just and even when God said so— “Thy will be done.” The importance and the goal were never altered. Perhaps delayed and setback at times, but the foremost goal was the proper education of these young children coming along. A lot of wisdom and unselfishness in that desire to achieve for all of the children. No egos to be massaged, no pats on the back needed. No “I” before “we”, as this was a goal and project that required input from all whom could be of help in any way— large or small.

Along the way there were some that became discouraged and yet there were others to come along with that much needed encouragement to continue along that path. Some fell along that path and others were there to stand and be counted. It was a battle that was not going to be lost— they were not going to

lose because they had some real determination—but they also had God on their side and there was no such force as the force of a people determined to rise.

Let history of this event be recorded that when people strive for betterment of their community, in the world success means power, prestige, influence, money, but in the Christian world, it simply means pleasing God. It has been proven in any historical accomplishment that determination is always that certain ingredient that keeps us going on. To keep us keeping on. It has always been said and proven that determined people possess a certain amount of stamina and courage to pursue their ambitions despite the criticism, ridicule, or unfavorable circumstances. The unparalleled ventures that faced them in an era when it was almost a “take what you can get” time in Louisiana. It was also ironic that in doing the research, I found some very interesting data about Louisiana.

Throughout the United States in every geographical community, we have within our state—boundaries that in most every instance are called counties. While in Louisiana, the counties are known as “parishes”. This is adapted by the State and is exclusive as the only one that does this. I found this interesting as to why Louisiana chose to be the only State in the Union to use this biblical term. In going about putting together this very important and essential historical data, perhaps it was necessary to set the scene of an area that many will not be in any way familiar with the geographical and economical importance to the State of Louisiana in its enrichment of the agricultural nature it represented.

Unfortunately, we live today in what I have coined the “me” generation and I can only hope that those of the “me” generation will grow up to understand that they may one day run out of people to dump their responsibilities on. These are the people who need to know of the struggle put forth by those like Hilaria Moore, Sam Jones, and Mr. Lee Arthur Williams, to name a few of those pioneers who made a difference. They need to know the sacrifice, the price paid. How we had people who kept the faith, but not to themselves. A group of people who never valued their privileges (what little they may have had) above their principles, as they knew people who did— soon would lose both.

So to give a real perspective of this land in and around Coushatta, Louisiana and Red River Parish, the layout of the land and the people, we open your mind to a state of placing this historical data through a time frame that you can consume. So, let us go into the background of early Red River Parish and Coushatta, Louisiana. It is necessary for you to see this area in your mind in order

to report a more accurate account of the history we report.

There are 386 square miles in the area known as Red River Parish; 165 are Red River bottom lands and 221 are uplands. In 1879-80, there were 33,930 acres for cultivation; 19,200 for cotton; 30,564 acres of corn; 88 acres of sweet potatoes, and 9 acres of sugar cane. There were 11,512 bales of cotton produced. The uplands were divided between Grand Bayou, Black Lake and Red River. Here, the river flows through a narrow channel cut through solid blue or red clay to a depth of 40 feet. This area is rich in timber and unsurpassed fertility. All the fruits and vegetables known are produced here. Sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes both produce very good results. It was nothing to get 150 bushels of potatoes per acre. Sorghum and field peas both grow lucratively in this area of God's country.

It was after the Civil War and an attempt made to form a new parish out of Natchitoches, DeSoto, Bienville and Caddo, but for many reasons the scheme was not brought to perfection until 1871, when a legislature was found willing and capable of giving the authority to organize. In May, 1871, the first police jury organized within the old store building of Lisso & Bra at Coushatta. M.H. Twitchel was elected President and he, along with P.E. Roach, George A. King, F.S. Edgerton (killed in 1874), E.W. DeWeese (killed in 1874) and Prior Porter (colored) formed the board. Howard Wells and James Grant (both colored) were also members of the jury about this time. A lot of historical events were recorded in this community. This information is important because it establishes a pattern of how even a few years after the Civil War, we find black people involved. We had people of color that were activists, team players, early historical pioneers, who in this rural yet productive setting— set the pace for so many things to follow in this book.

We wish to thank all of the people who had a part in putting this book together through a lot of blood, sweat, tears, and prayer. It was a lot of the latter that saw us through. Thank God for prayer!

To Mr. Fredrick Adams, thanks for the wonderful cover design. It really depict how so many things are inter-twined and how each of them yet so separately, can how such a profound affect on people lives.

To Mrs. Trenise Lowe, thanks for editing, typing and being able to get through all of my "Chinese" writing. A special thanks to Pastor Rochelle Davis, Jr. for asking me to take on this task and all of the help in coordinating and input of this great story.

To that "Louisiana Connection". Mrs. Exie Whitehurst-Miles, Mrs. Alberta Wilkes, Mrs. Pearline Williams, Mrs. Myrtle Bass and all of the others in Red River Parish who offered support and passed on information. To Mr. Leon Williams in Gardena, California, thanks for the input and

dedication to this project. To the Coushatta Chamber of Commerce, Southern University at Shreveport, Grambling University, Baton Rouge Library. The Schomburg African-American Library in Harlem for all of the excellent data they had on Louisiana and allowing me to come there.

And a very special thanks goes to all of those early pioneers in Red River Parish—the teachers, the parents, the community, the church, and all of you students who passed that way. For without each of you, there would have been no story to tell. You are this book. You are the history.

Martin Luther King, Jr., in his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” included a story to illustrate the rewards of perseverance in the non-violent tradition. He wrote about a 72-year-old black woman who walked a long distance every day during the Montgomery bus boycott. She was tired and physically weak and someone asked her why she continued to support the non-violent protest. Her response will always be treasured; *“My feets is tired”, she said, “but my soul is at rest.”*

You have left a proud legacy that we now record for austerity and move into a realm of honoring you for giving so much to those who followed. Rests you weary travelers for truly your souls are at rest. Thank God Almighty, We’re Free At Last!!!

I can recall a little poem that basically sums up the strong dedication and fulfillment of those pioneers who paved the way for those who followed it, went like this...

**We are so often bothered
By two fussy little men
Who sometimes block our pathway—
Their names are How and When.
If you have a task or duty
Which we can put off a while
And we do not go and do it—
You should see those two rogues smile!
But there is a way to beat them
And I will tell you how
If you have a task or duty,
Do it well and do it now.**

As we draw to a close of the introduction to this book, I can't help but say in a saddened sense, how young children in rural, deep South Louisiana could excel despite obstacles and in comparison to the young people of today— were better educated. Despite all of the toils and snares, the obstacles, the heartaches, the disenfranchised, the forgotten, the downtrodden— they somehow excelled and did it despite Jim Crow and Mr. Charlie with a foot on their necks. These pioneers of a well-documented history should serve as mirror images for all to see, to emulate, to learn, and to do better.

In her book, **“Guide My Feet,”** Marian Wright Edelman wrote, *“Lord, we have pushed so many of our children into the tumultuous sea of life in leaky boats without survival gear. Forgive us and help them to forgive us. Help us now to give all our children the anchor of faith, the rudder of hope, the sails of education, and the paddles of family to keep them going when life’s sea gets rough”.*

Thank you,

Emanuel Evans

Many Paths, but only one journey—by Emmanuel Evans

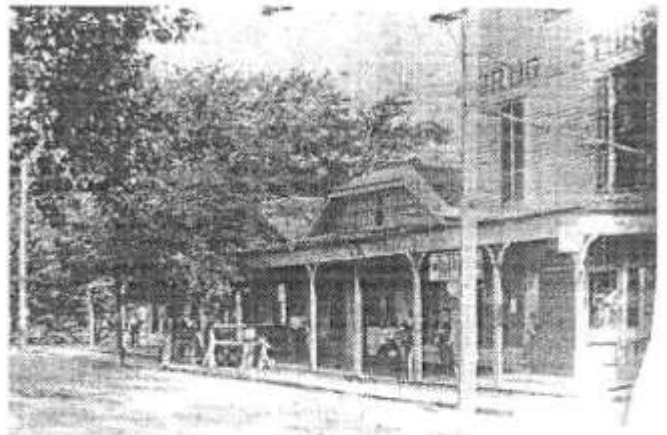
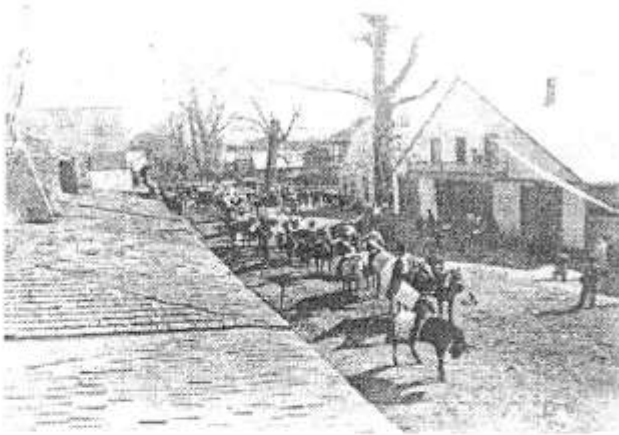
There are so many paths in life we take from day to day,
But let us always keep in mind that only one journey is the way.
We find ourselves going in circles and then we go around the bend
many paths, but only one journey is our goals in the very end.
We got on the road in the morning and we may walk on it all night
And in the course of our travel we sometimes may lose sight.
But we travel on through the rough road and smooth will appear,
many paths, but only one journey and you keep our God so near.
There are roadblocks, there are detours and on the road the rain may fall,
But keep in mind and focus on that journey it is your all and all
For one day the travel will be over and no more walking will it be
And you stand at the River Jordan many paths, only one journey.

“Red River Parish History”

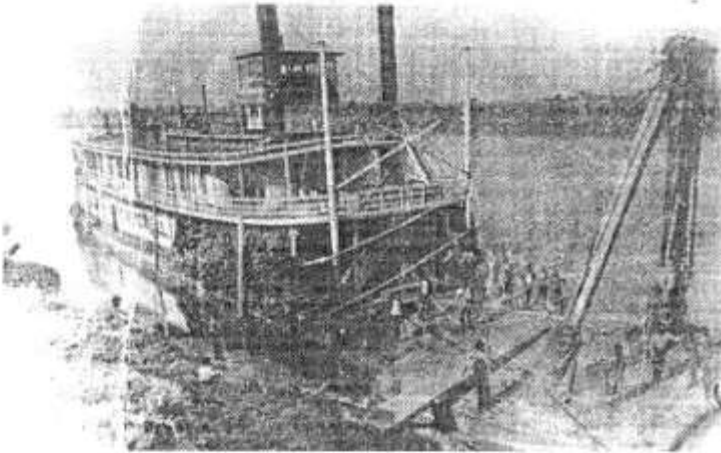


“Photos of Coushatta in the 1900’s”

Mardi Gras—Front Street in old town.



Edgerton Drug Store, Coushatta, early 1900's.



*Left: C.H. Howell snagboat docked at
Coushatta, around 1910.*

When we look back at the many deplorable conditions, it is important that we take a long hard look at the attitudes of those who held the power, as well as, the purse strings. Many early advocates after and during the Reconstruction Period, had ideas of just how the Negro should move forward. From W.E.B. Dubois to Booker T. Washington to Carter G. Woodson—they all so vocally voiced their opinions in open forums and private meetings of what was “*best*” for “*us*.”

It was Blacks who, following the Civil War, fought for the establishment of state school systems. It is also ironic that black children were enrolled into the school system at a higher percentage than Whites. However, as history reflects, this would soon change and by the 1900’s, that very situation did change. The Whites began to exert control over the state political systems and in order to assure control, they began to pass discriminatory laws.

This was almost a renewable ability to place the shackles on the mind and to recapture the Negro into a state of being uneducated and to remain somewhat literate, but not enough to advance in society as his counterpart. The two major leaders; Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois were miles apart in their approach to the education of the masses. However, even though they had different perspectives in the matter and manner of education, they both saw what was happening in the denial. So it was the Washington approach to the establishment of segregated schools, whereas Dubois strongly influenced the founding of the NAACP which opposed school segregation. They both watched and fought their bloodless battles with little avail.

The per-capita cost of elementary and secondary education, far outweighed the disproportion between the races. In Louisiana, the amount spent on a white child was \$48.37 and on a Negro child; \$6.33! It was also a documented fact that of the 1,430 Negro schools, of which one teacher ran 1,036 of them!

But the one great thing about the leadership—no matter how flawed, how uncertain, how unjustifiable there was a certain loyalty to finding a better way and a better day for the youth. They understood not so much the fairness as we pointed out, but to concentrate on the quality of education that the students would receive, not the quantity. By all, this became a primary concern of a community that intertwined with all aspects that it served from the teachers, the parents, and the church. They all were of one mindset to serve the betterment of the students. It was indeed a moral responsibility that they held; not afraid to reveal their pain, but to do all in the relief of less suffering for those to follow. They saw a struggle to make it less

painful and a bit more comfortable for those to come; with a better chance and a better opportunity. They could talk it out, walk it out, write it out, but they knew they had to eventually get it out to those in need; the children.

Today, we look back and hopefully think about where we would be if there were no books or people like those who guided us when we needed it. Then it becomes easier for us with an extended hand to pull someone else along. There was a great struggle and like minds participated in their own way to offer up sacrifices for many that came behind. The stats speak for themselves when we find all of the many obstacles that were hurdling in leaps and bounds to where each of you stands today. When one takes that rare opportunity to walk back in time, you can't help but feel the hardship and look at how, despite disproportion in everything from, school supplies, teachers, buildings, and expenses—it did not deter those with their eyes on the prize. It did not cause excuses for shortcomings that the “easy way out” could have been adapted. Instead, they chose to fight the fight and formed an association of teachers in a collective spirit of unity. All being on one accord, they looked to the community, the parents, and the church for their guidance. They were responsible for reiterating to the students in a daily ritual the importance of their pursuit of education. It was important for them to come face to face with the realities of this undemocratic educational system.

It was the strength of the Louisiana Colored Teachers Association that as early as 1944-45 began to flex their muscles and make demands. If there were to be separate schools in the South—at least give us equal access to the educational process was their cry. They went after securing more teachers, better teachers and better salaries, providing improved educational facilities accessible to all children, establishing full sessions, and adapting the educational program to community needs.

As they moved into the 50's under this leadership, we began to see the political power of the vote having an influence. It was not quite different from the 40's when in the entire State of Louisiana, there were only 200 Negro registered voters! Most of them were in New Orleans, but it was the Louisiana Colored Teachers Association who participated in movements to get black citizens registered and actively involved in the political dynamics of their communities. They knew as well as or better than those politicians, the power of the vote. They knew that for them it was a leverage to obtaining the things on their wish list for a better education for their students.

A great and hard fought battle was contended for us and won by them. As early pioneers, they had the healing power of spirit that is in each of us. Each of us today has that same power to first heal ourselves, but also our world and those around us. We too, as they did, must realize just who we are, the blessings we have been given, the power we embody and just what we too must do to continue a fight for education under a completely different set of circumstances. There is never a reason to settle for less than the best. Our early pioneers felt the unfairness and they would not accept it as a permanent fixture. They fought, they clawed, they argued and they somehow, some way, changed the status quo. They went to the table knowing that the only reason you get less is because you don't ask for exactly what you want. They knew that they deserved more than they had. It became a matter of a built-in determination factor that would not be moved or altered. There was not going to be a settlement for anything less. It soon became a strong case that may seem dim, but you still look reality in the eye and deny it. It was largely a matter of being able to hang on after others had let go. And for all of their efforts, it was the realization of their strong dedication in doing this not for glory or fame, but for the help it would give to the young black people of Louisiana in all of the various parishes. This was indeed a sign of maturity for this organization (maturity always begins its growth when you can sense your concern for others is outweighing concern for you). They were not coy in their many demands and did not try to sugar coat or tip toe around the issues at hand. They had an agenda and it remained only slightly flexible, but in their good, sound negotiations they never tried to take a fence down until they knew precisely why it was put up.

These were not people who would worry, but people who were concerned. A worried group of people sees a problem and a concerned group of people solves the problem. They were advocates not bogged down with excuses, but people who in wanting something to turn up, started with their own shirt sleeves rolled up and went to work on it; focusing on remedies not faults. They also did not want to live in the past—they had already been there!

In the State of Louisiana in 1920, there were 535,632 Negroes. The number of illiterate was 206,730 (roughly 38.5%). By 1930, there were 776,326 Negroes in Louisiana and 15 of the States 64 parishes (counties) had more Negroes than whites. It was an uphill battle for the Association because so much parity had to be gained. In the early days, conditions were revealed affecting the education of

Negroes in rural elementary schools. In one study in 36 of the 64 parishes, there were 232 schools in churches, 66 in lodge halls, nine in dwellings, and five in stores. Only 436 of those 838 schools are were owned by school boards. In spite of the fact that Louisiana was obligated legally to provide free books—many did not. In 24 of the schools, children had to sit on boxes and in 130 schools, on backless seats. The schools were also inaccessible; 2,800 black children walked 10 miles or more to and from school, 3,133 walked 8 miles, 7,735 walked 6 miles, and 11,124 walked 4 miles. There were no water fountains in 30% of the schools.

There were only four High Schools in Louisiana : (Xavier, Southern, Albert Academy, and St. Paul) that were accredited by the same measuring rod as white schools, and 12 parishes (Red River, Evangeline, West Feliciana, Point Coupee, St. Martin, Cameron, St. James, St. John, St. Charles, Terrebonne, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines) had no High Schools at all for Negroes. *(This information provided by the Department of Education of Louisiana State Bulletin No. 448, 1941). This is some of what the early education for African Americans were like. It indeed was an uphill battle, but it became the cooperation of the community, church, parents, and teachers to turn around and get something done for Red River Parish. There was such a void and it was the diligent effort put forth by those early advocates who saw a need and met it!

This was an effort that required all forces of strength throughout the entire Red River Parish. It was a joint effort of cooperation and all ego's checked at the door before entering the arena. It was the churches with the prayer, the parents with the dare, the teacher's with their care, and the children awaiting knowledge to share. It was a win-win situation and the desire was there in an effort to just focus on what was right for all of the young students of color. It did not matter how much Hanna did and Coushatta didn't. There was no competitive edge or contest to see which community would be the one to contribute the most. It was an effort put forth to focus primarily on what could be done to benefit and make it better for the entire Parish educational system for Blacks. All of those throughout the community, whether it be the church, parents, or the teachers, had strengths and weaknesses to bring to the table. They all sorted out and compiled their strengths over weaknesses, all of their positive aspects over negative ones. They did not come to the table with a lot of despair and resentment for someone or something. The bottom line was a search for accomplishments and this could not be carried

out if there was a division in the ranks of communities. It was highly successful because it was being done unselfishly in personal or group admiration. It was a task to be carried out and executed by the effort of all for the betterment of all the children of the Parish. In their long-range thinking, it was a tedious task to not only look at today, but as well as the tomorrows that all would be facing in decades to follow.

So let us, in the reading of the legacy of Red River Parish not get bogged down in who is mentioned and who is not. Everyone from the custodian to the principal; from the member on the pew to the Pastor in the pulpit; from every student of early grades to those awaiting graduation; from the sharecroppers to the farmers; every hamlet big and small— each had a role in all that transpired. Every one of you, from Hanna, Coushatta, East Point, Grand Bayou, and Springville— all of you made a contribution and the legacy and history will live on and on for that which you all made possible for those who walked on a smooth road that you made imaginable in your enduring effort.

“LOOKING FOR A RIVER—STANDING BY A STREAM”

“I did a favor yesterday
A kindly little deed
And then I called to all the world
To stop and look and heed
They stopped and looked and flattered me
 In words I could not trust,
 And when the world had gone away
 My good deed turned to dust.
A very tiny courtesy
I found to do today,
Twas quickly done with none to see
And then I ran away.
But someone must have witnessed it
For truly— I declare
As I sped back the stony path
Roses were blooming there.”

Unknown

When we speak of the State of Louisiana, we think of it as shaped like a pair of worn out boots, with the southwest coast forming the heel and the southeast forming the toe which appears all tattered and torn, and it is dipping into the warm and sometimes turbulent waters of the gulf. **This is the State of Louisiana.**

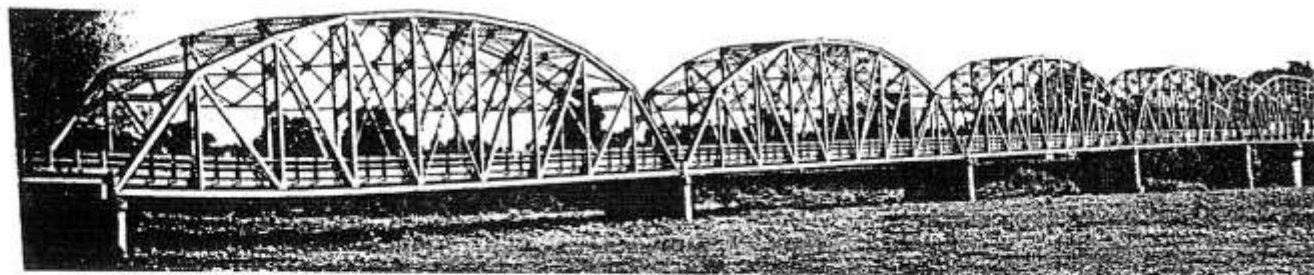
We find Texas to the West, Arkansas to the North, and Mississippi both north and east of some of it. These boundaries place Louisiana entirely within the land region known as the Gulf Coast Plain. Generally, the land rises gradually from the coast. Much of far southern Louisiana is an eerie land of swamp and soggy prairie. One of the most precious of all of it's resources— it's water. The average daily flow of all of the rivers of the state reaches the total of 450 billion gallons. This is half as much water as is used for all purposes in the entire nation! The Mississippi alone flows billions of gallons of water a day past New Orleans.

Around Coushatta, we find the Red River located in the Red River Parish in which our history begins. History records explorer Hernando de Soto as the discoverer of the Mississippi in 1541 and the first European to touch Louisiana soil. At the point where the old mouth of the Red River joined the Mississippi, the great explorer became ill and died. Because the Indians believed the Europeans were immortal, it was necessary to keep de Soto's death a secret, so his body was cast into the Mississippi in the late night hours. A fitting burial place for the discoverer of the Father of Waters. This entire Red River Parish shares a great deal of historical happenings. Harriet Beecher Stowe, the writer of Uncle Tom's Cabin (although never going to Louisiana) placed the plantation scene of her story somewhere on the Red River.

Shortly after slavery was abolished and Louisiana was readmitted back into the Union in 1872, began the slow process for Blacks in all fields of endeavor— especially in education. It has been said that all great people glorify their history and look back upon their early attainments with a spiritual vision. This area was no exception, for in those days following slavery and leading up to reconstruction, we were limited in literacy and literate spokespersons. However, that did not stop the progress— no matter how fragile, how small, how little. For the course of history can be altered, but it can never be halted. We went about making history. No matter how crude or how unorganized by protocol, whether people called them names or not, somebody had to speak and somebody had to be a pioneer.

History is made, not by accepting it as it is, but by people writing it as they make it. They had to step forward to write, record, and make history for the community, the youth, the church, and without this kind of revolution there would be no history. One has to grasp one's place in history. You cannot wait for others to hand it to you. Pioneers came forth. Those who looked for the Red River as they stood by a stream never lost sight of their goal. For they served to prepare people to be clear about their roles, to tap their potentials so lives could be meaningful, to be productive, and useful for the community today and tomorrow. What these pioneers in the Red River Parish is a testament to their faith in wanting education for their children and this valor of their pursuit required great sacrifices from them in part. American society in this early beginning viewed education as a privilege primarily granted to the elite rather than a right possessed by all citizens regardless of race, political clout, or economic resources.

In slavery until fairly close to the turn of the century, we find that education only came from surreptitious or inadvertent help from whites. Training, when it did take place, consisted primarily of basic skills in reading, writing, and some arithmetic, but this was not common doing amongst slave owners who, for the most part, did not want blacks to be literate. But having a vision—a venture, it became apparent that they must go beyond just the first mile, for in doing the first mile, you simply do what is required of us. It is when we go the second mile that excellence is achieved and minor miracles happen when standing by that stream, one can begin to see the Red River.



**ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT SHOES
(EVEN RED SHOES)**

“To honor the struggle and sacrifice of those who came before us...

We dedicate ourselves to this...

Preservation of a culture almost lost...

A heritage almost forgotten”

Reprinted from Internet

The Culture of the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana

“The Struggle to Maintain our Dignity

The Struggle to Preserve our Heritage

The Struggle to Strengthen our Culture”

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Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana

Reprinted from Internet

All God's Chillun Got Shoes

(Even Red Shoes)

“All great people glorify their history and look back upon their early attainments with a spiritual vision”

Kelly Miller ~ 1906

Good meaning folks with a novice nature should perhaps take the time to read and learn about the rich history of this place called Coushatta, Louisiana. Many will perhaps look at Coushatta as some little small “hick town”, just a bug bite on a map. But to those of us who did the research, were taken back by the historical feats of this town, Coushatta in the state of Louisiana. It would do this book a great dishonor if the early history of this area were not reported. Sometimes history offers only one path and all are obliged to take it.

So, in this portion of the book, let us reflect and give you a brief, but great historical meaning of the history of Coushatta and the “Red Shoes” people. We will introduce you to the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana. There is an old African Proverb that says, “if you want to know the end— look at the beginning.” I think that God had a very special purpose for Coushatta and as we look at the cultures of two down-trodden people, we can quickly point out the similarities in the struggle they both were up against. I am sure that black people could look around and probably see many things they would like to change. I am sure that many gave up and gave out in the early stages. Many were angry by the lack of respect and the insensitivity to people and their needs. Many wanted to speak out and strike out to make the changes happen, but there were those who didn't forget that God works from the inside out.

History serves as a reminder to all of us that our life traditions were wholly encompassed by our kinships and tribes in that Red River Parish area. For if you can successfully rob a people of their sense of history you can then take away their hope and Coushatta, Louisiana didn't let that happen. It was Daniel Webster who once said, “if we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work upon bronze, time will efface it; if we build temples, they will crumble into dust, but if we work on immortal souls, if we imbue them with just principles of action, with fear of wrong and love of right, we engrave on those tables something which no time can obliterate, and which will brighten through all eternity.” According

to legend, the name Coushatta Tribe means, “Lost Tribe.” It originated when there was a band of tribesman who came upon a group of white men. When asked who they were, the Indians misunderstood the question and answered, “koashatt”, meaning that they were lost. This was translated by the white men as their tribal name which eventually came to be “Coushatta.”

The heritage and history of the Coushatta in Louisiana is one that almost goes hand in hand with that of the struggle of the black people of Coushatta. The tribe has 70 acres of land devoted to rice and crawfish farming and the Coushatta move each day toward self-determination by Tribal Job Programs. Coushatta women, who once on the road peddled their pine needle baskets, are now displaying their work in the newly constructed gift shop in the reservations retail complex. It also has a convenience store and restaurant and is owned and operated by the Coushatta Tribe and its members. It is hard to imagine that this same group of people in the last decade were mostly on welfare and working menial jobs, but now find fulfillment in a growing number of similarly useful, important tribal job programs. With effective leadership and over the course of tried and untried, came the development of a strong tribal government. It was the remake and revival of a culture almost lost, a heritage almost forgotten.

Today, just like the doing of the non-Indian Blacks of Coushatta, the Coushatta Nation’s future has rebounded and filled with hope and rich with opportunity. The “lost tribe” wanders no more... Somewhere, red shoes are smiling. A great history prevailed from not only the sovereign nation of the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, but of the proud nation of Blacks of Coushatta, Louisiana. The dark years have ended for the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana. Red Shoes People are now sensing an awakening of pride in themselves. Early on, without loss of respect and pride, they found that many Coushatta men of the tribe, who once worked as loggers, have turned their skills to construction of new tribal housing. As they saw the needs in the new and next generation, they slowly adjusted to changes in lifestyle and a new way in that new day of existence.

The family unit was then and is today, the most important social tie in the Coushatta community— both Indian and non-Indian in the Black community. They both have that sense of a family tie that through diligent, hard work has maintained throughout. In early Coushatta, shortly after the turn of the century, many early pioneers of the Black community saw many things they wanted to change. There was injustice, inequalities, hatred and poverty that disturbed them and even in those days

long before Civil Rights, was all the civil wrongs that existed. Yes, they were angered by the lack of respect and the insensitivity to their people and their needs. They too, wanted to speak out and to strike back out to make the many changes happen, but even then in their rural make-up and unsophisticated approach to a problem—they knew in their hearts that God works from the inside out. They knew in their limited vision that they must first look within themselves to eliminate the fear, the anger, and the imbalance in their lives. It was then and only then, that they moved forward to create peacefully and powerfully the changes needed in Coushatta. They placed the foundation to the bridge that others to follow would complete and make upright. When we stop to look at the history of two once oppressed and denied people, we can't help but see in each of them, a strong sense of perseverance that each maintained.

To those that are fisherman or just plain “down home” upbringing, you can relate to fishing as a sign of true perseverance. Each day in some known country creek, a group of young men from Coushatta would go to their spots, bait their hooks and on some of those summer days, not even a nibble to get. A ray of hope. It was a frustrating event to witness, but the part about it that a novice wouldn't understand is that the very next day you get up and you do it all over again. Back to that very same spot. Perhaps it is the timing. Perhaps you are coming too early or too late. Maybe it is the bait you are using. Maybe the casting of your line is somewhat off and maybe it is time to reel in and to go find another spot.

But the bottom line remains the same; that we don't give up! We must go on fishing for our dreams, our visions and yes, there may be long stretches when we go home with empty pails, this too is okay, as long as we don't lose faith. For out there with our names on it—is the catch of a lifetime, just waiting for us as long as we remain smart and persistent. However, you still have to find a way to make people know you're there.

The early pioneers, as well as, the Indians had to have a vision of themselves as being successful. On a day to day basis, they kept that vision alive. Even on those days when they occasionally felt as though they may act unethically to the vision, they would place themselves back in reality and would always look to words of encouragement, “things that have always been— don't have to always be” was a theme often heard in the era of the Civil Rights struggle. The encouraging words passed on

throughout this historical feat and all the minor moments that now seem so major, as thoughts are put here on paper.

We now, in a historical perspective, look at Coushatta and the surrounding community as significant and meaningful as the achievement may not have been seen as big in that day. However, we cannot discount the very real, personal power and the effect one had on the lives of others. It was as we look upon it today, both magical and awesome. In those days, it was not thought of as a tedious task to show those in need learning more about the community and working to address their problems. In those days, there was no six o'clock news for awards, but they had countless awards as we open our eyes to them in this historical data. It was Marian Wright Edelman who said, "we must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee."

History of The Louisiana Colored Teachers Association

Table 1
Black State Associations by Year Organized

<i>Association</i>	<i>Year Organized</i>
Ohio Colored Teacher's Association	1861
Kentucky Negro Education Association	1877
Georgia Negro Teacher's Association	1878
North Carolina State Teachers' Association	1880
Alabama State Teacher's Association	1882
Colored Teachers' and School Improvement League of Virginia	1888
Florida State Teachers' Association	1890
West Virginia State Teachers' Association	1891
Ida B. Wells Teachers' Association, Oklahoma	1893
Tennessee State Association of Teachers in Colored School	1895
Arkansas Teachers' Association	1898
South Carolina State Teachers' Association	1900
Louisiana Colored Teachers' Association	1901
Mississippi State Teachers' Association	1906

The development of these organizations eventually led to the establishment in 1904 of the National Association of Teachers in colored Schools-later the American Teachers Association (ATA)- through the efforts of J.R.E. Lee of Tuskegee Institute. In 1947, the National Education Association agreed to recognized black associations as affiliates in states maintaining segregated school systems; but with the passage of resolution 12 by the NEA Representative Assembly in 1964 and the merger agreement between the ATA and the NEA in 1966, dual teacher associations based upon race were doomed to extinction.

“The Early Years” (Education for Blacks in Red River Parish)



THE HISTORY OF BLACK EDUCATION IN LOUISIANA

What was said!

What was done!

What was recorded!

“The past actually happened, but history is only what someone wrote down”

~ Unknown ~

When we refer to the education of black people in the area of the Red River Parish, history reveals to us that Georgia, South Carolina, and Louisiana suffered more from the corrupt and extravagant carpet bag rule than any of the other Southern states during the Reconstruction Period following the War Between the States and the history of Red River Parish bears witness to this statement.

During this era, it is recorded in history that many people from Tennessee, Kentucky, and the eastern seaboard came to North Louisiana as those sections of the United States became more thickly settled or the land began to show the effects of continued cultivation. This was particularly true of those settlers who came to Red River Parish just after the Mexican War. Some of the soldiers of this war were paid in land at a valuation of ten cents an acre. Also, following the War Between the States, several attempts were made to form another parish from DeSoto, Natchitoches, and Bienville Parishes. It was not until 1871, however, that through a legislative act that was passed creating that which was known as the "carpet bag" parish of Red River. This phrase was used because the parish was created and organized under carpetbag rule. Tradition says it was created for one Colonel Mitt Twitchell, who according to historical records, was president of the first Red River Police Jury. Most of those on this first police jury were men who had drifted in from the North and one Pryor Porter, was listed as being "colored".

In 1912, oil was discovered in the Parish, the community of Harmon, and oil boom towns sprang up on the Texas and Pacific Railroads, all between the stops of Gahagan and Grand Bayou. It soon became the center for the oil activities in the Parish on the west side of the river.

A modern and well equipped brick high school building provided education for the "white" children of this section. At the peak of this oil boom the school had an enrollment of 500, staffed with capable and well qualified teachers, but as the oil well produced less, fewer workers were needed. In 1945, the Gulf Oil Company, which had the largest holdings, sold its interest and moved away. The high school was discontinued during World War II, and in 1946-1947, only employed two teachers for an enrollment of less than 50. With the loss of the large oil fields on the west side of the Red River, Harmon became a trading center, serving the adjoining productive plantations.

Coushatta is the Parish seat and then there is Springville, located ½ mile east of Coushatta. It's name came from the plentiful supply of water from the many fine springs beneath the rocky hills. Some

of these springs are a source of water supply to the Black settlement now settled there, just in back of the “white” cemetery. The sad commentary of this time, this place, this era; is the lack of doing anything for blacks of any significance that would amount to education as in terms of that which was done for the white students.

Its easy to become critical of the South for it’s backwardness in education, but giving them the mere benefit of the doubt— one must not forget that after the Civil War they went back to a country stripped bare by conflict. So, they began to build a new economic life from the ground up. An even greater problem was to build a public school system, for prior to the war, there had been nothing except private schools for the whites and none whatsoever for the blacks. How soon it was forgotten or perhaps never thought of in terms of compassion of how this great nation was built on the backs and sweat of black slaves and it was only the white children who were thought of when Louisiana be lifted out of it’s unenviable position of illiteracy by a perfect system of schools for the whites. It also determined that the blacks shall have the same opportunities for a full secondary education, but that realization fell far short of separate but equal. Take the following comparison of facts from a report in 1920:

Percentage of educatable children enrolled: (white-71% — black-55%)

Average school days per school: (white-164 — black-114)

Average pay for teachers: white men: (\$1,375 — black men-\$452) white women: (\$991 — black women-\$425)

Average cost per pupil: white students: (\$33.71 — black students-\$7.81)

State approved High Schools: white-204 black-

With all of this in mind, there came a time when leadership in the Negro community was desperately needed. It was going to take people, willing to take great responsibility and a sense of getting things done in a timely manner to be able to hold the other’s together in unity by keeping a safe route to their destination. Those who led knew that to lead meant to serve. The concept of servanthood is what was called leadership in its truest form. There was no one’s own agenda to be served, but the interest and purpose was to serve those under their limited authority.

In that era, the Bible and it’s explanation of leadership was not taken literally, it was commanded to be fulfilled. Jesus had a word— a harsh word for those who proclaimed leadership and did the exact opposite. He called them “white-washed tombs” (*Matthew 23-27*) hypocrites who pretended to be what they were not. The hallmark of true leadership came from those throughout Red River Parish in the Black community who sincerely wanted betterment of education for their children. So it was this leadership that came from the

churches, the parents, the community at large, as well as, the teachers whose interest was not monetary but what they could do to bring about a better day for the children of the surrounding community. So, it was each individual with their own strengths and weaknesses who took their rightful role by carefully placing the needs of the children and their well being above their own.

The very first responsibility of leadership is vision. The second responsibility is impartation of that vision, but vision as it was in that day had a value system that determined whether vision builds or destroys. So it was, in all of it's considerations, to have strong convictions of spirit and truth and prayerfully dealt with in all conclusions. For vision derived from Christian thinking and doing, is the value system of absolute truth; vision that will produce true leadership with no societal malaise. There in Red River Parish, came forth leadership that was destined for great works. No failure, perhaps setbacks in it's leadership and in their vision. Out of this servanthood and to that vision based on God's revealed truth came the students to say, "it was done, it was said, it was recorded." For there emerged a new generation of leaders worthy of the name. It was a time in our history when these people of ordinary means stepped forward to be counted. All did not equally give, but all were willing to participate in what they could give of themselves. These were parents who seized the moment. It was churches that pressed forward in what they could do; it was the community at large who listened to the leadership and was focused on a vision and the teachers who waited with great anticipation for the opportunity.

The times spelled out that despite any and all obstacles, the young people had to be taught to fully understand an intellectual work ethic and it's very importance to their future, to instill in them discipline; good study and work habits. This too, was all part of the vision that was carefully thought through. It was the parents who gave to those teachers their full cooperation. They made sure that their children understood fully the concept of the cause and effect, as well as virtues of hard work, perseverance, and paying attention in class. The teachers were instrumental in the eradication of any and all apathetic ideals and those false pretensions placed there by peers and others. With all of that misguided and misdirected notions. The teachers became beacons to direct the paths of each young person to instill a kind of exuberance for intellectual success.

History does not record this, but based on assumption, it is almost safe to say that the education set forth by those in leadership, those who did the teaching—that the children of that era quickly found

what their talents were and then challenged themselves to set goals. They then utilized all resources within reach and it mattered not how limited or short of the mark it left them. Then, with all in tact—they strived to make a difference. They moved forward with limited resources, but not limited in knowledge. There was nothing to rob these young people of the freedom to do their very best! The odds of course, were certainly stacked against them, but through it all with a minimal amount of scratches and bruises— managed to move forward. Perhaps at a snails pace, but never the less, there was a victory to be won. For even those with the power to blow out your candle, it did not make their light shine any brighter. The children of this era were extraordinary people who were ordinary people with extraordinary determination. They saw life through a telescope not a microscope. Obstacles were only those frightful things seen when their eyes were taken off the goal. For then and only then will it lead to vastly different outcomes. It was truly choice and not chance; faith not feeling; prayer not wishing that determined the destiny from the classrooms of Red River Parish to where we stand today. Others may determine what happened on the outside, but it was only you and God to determine the inside fate. I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” (*Deuteronomy 30:19*)

The church in the historical perspective played a major role far beyond just the spiritual aspect. For it was that church leadership that fully instilled faith and obedience in carrying out to the very end the task at hand. When many thought it was futile, the spirit was there to touch those hands and say, “I’m with you.” Always there to be in control of each of those lives in every capacity, every obstacle, to take every sharp curve, dodge those large boulders, speed us through scary passages. Letting God take the front seat; letting His decisions be final, “Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” *Psalms 100:3*

That which you went after was not only within the realm of reality, but even more importantly, it was a part of God’s plan for your life. Any other goal is likely to have been unworthy of pursuit. Life (even then) afforded no greater responsibility, no greater privileges, than the raising of the next generation! It was not in the interest of those who sought and prepared to go forth with the seeking and betterment of your education, but it was to be an ongoing task—to pass on those that follow. Each of them also had a stake in the vision.

History was not just being made, but it was history being laid out in preparation of an ongoing thing. What it was that stood out so readily in this great accomplishment was not endurance, not thoughts of failure, but that determination to hold on to God's everlasting, trusting hands. To go into this venture with faith. For faith is not blindly believing in the impossible or hoping for the unknown. Faith was then and still is today, based upon the evidence of God's word and the belief that what God has said, God will do. The faith that the pioneers had was manifested when they acted upon that premise; that what their Bible told them was true and then discovered in their doing that it was! So it was not a difficult task for them in their teachings to those who followed and latched upon this same vision—to live in faith, to live by faith, and to live with faith in the daily struggles in their lives. Others can only stop us in our endeavors temporarily—you are the only one who can do it permanently. Can't was not a word they adapted to or adopted in their vocabulary. They were bound and determined. They had been blessed with a vision and a sense of know-how, and knowing and not doing are equal to not knowing at all!

Today, we so often hear "I don't have time" as an excuse to avoid getting involved in the needs of our community, but back then those folks found the time. A lack of time in a so-called "too busy agenda" is really just a mask for a lack of care. Parents, teachers, the church each knew the right thing to do and they loved others enough to do it! These were people with little or nothing, but they sought not only a better day, but a better way for all of us! The Lord never expected for them to follow Him blindly, He gave them the light of His word as evidence for faith: "Though your beginning was insignificant, yet your end will increase greatly." *Job 8:7*

It is one thing to sit around and define a problem or theorize about solutions, its quite another to actually solve the problem and the solving of the problem is precisely what this historical event we write about is all about. So many times we do not even have the realization that greatness lies not in being strong, but in the right use of that strength and it was the strength of character in all of these people of color in Red River Parish and their willingness of them to give of themselves unselfishly. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." *Ephesians 6:10*

Someone once remarked: "you cannot discover new oceans unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore." Those people had the courage, the fortitude, the tenacity to go out and lose sight of the shore. To be an African American in this era was to be marked and differentiated like no other ethnic group in the country. This is not a complaint, just a fact. It was this skin color, hair texture, and facial features that have marked us as a people held in bondage, and ever after emancipation, we have

been marked with ongoing discrimination. Like those of Red River Parish we continue the struggle, each and every one—through unity, self-determination, collective work, responsibility, creativity, purpose, and faith. So, today we look at our heritage and decide what it will mean for those who shot for the moon and missed, but fell among the stars.

Public Education in Louisiana

Louisiana is a state of many contrasts. Louisiana has a rich cultural history due to its history under French and Spanish rule prior to becoming an American state in 1812 (Louisiana State University College of education, (LSU (COE), 1960). Even today, the traditions of France and Spain are still evident in New Orleans along with modern American culture. The first public school in Louisiana was established by the Spanish regime in New Orleans in 1791, with the hope that a public school system might help in reconciling the hostile French to Spanish rule (LSU (COE), 1960). The plan failed because the French refused to send their children to a public Spanish-language school (LSU (COE), 1960). Thus, the French and Spanish continued to rely on parochial schools, private tutors, and apprenticeships.

The United States Constitution of 1787 did not include a provision for education. However, the Legislature of 1812 made meager provisions for public school funds. Throughout the nineteenth century, many people in Louisiana felt that public funds should be spent only for impoverished children (LUS (COE), 1960). Up until 1845, no school funds were raised at the local level except in New Orleans. The public school system of Louisiana has its early beginnings in New Orleans in 1841 (DSFA, 1954). In 1847, Louisiana passed its first state wide public school law (LSU (COE), 1960). This provision created a public school system at the state and parish levels and full time superintendent of public education at the state and parish levels.

After the Civil War, most people in Louisiana were poverty stricken, thus, supporting the public school system was not feasible. The Reconstruction Convention of 1868 adopted a constitution that forbade separate schools for the races (LSU COE0, 1960). This destroyed the prospect of public schools for a while. This created a fear of forced integration should schools be established (LSU (COE), 1960). To make things even worse, an investigation of the Department of Education of Louisiana revealed that from 1869-1877 the sum of \$2.1 million had been lost by the public schools through corruption and mismanagement (Porter, 1938).

Since White children were being denied public educational opportunities during Reconstruction, the Peabody Fund set up thirty-three rural schools for white children (LSU (COE), 1960). It provided financial assistance for a normal school it established in 1868 until 1883. From 1885 to 1911, the Peabody Fund contributed money to teacher education in Louisiana.

Throughout the nineteenth century, many parents who could afford private schools would not send their kids to public school because they did not want their children considered as objects of charity or members of an inferior class (LSU (COE), 1960). This prejudice against public schools was particularly strong in south Louisiana. Opinions improved after training schools for teachers were established. Teachers attending these schools returned to their homes and taught the children in their own communities.

Before 1884, a small percentage of teachers in Louisiana received any pre-service training. Most of the teachers were trained in college and academies, and the education they received in general was of a low level (LSU (COE), 1960). In 1884, the first state supported normal school was created to prepare white teachers. The Louisiana State Normal School was established in that year in Natchitoches by the Louisiana Legislature (LSU (COE), 1960).

During the early history of Louisiana, churches and private philanthropy played key roles in the development of the educational system. In 1900 the number of children enrolled in the public schools was 43.6 percent of all children 5 to 17 (DSFS, 1954). In 1950 this percentage increased to 75.3 percent enrolled in the public schools. In 1910 the average school term for a parish was 158 days. By 1950 the average school term increased to 178 days.

RIGHT DON'T WRONG NOBODY

“Any religion that professes to be concerned with the souls of men and is not concerned with the slums that damn them, and the social conditions that cripple them, is a dry-as-dust religion.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Stride Toward Freedom, 1958

A historical perspective is a lot more than recapping, reliving, redoing, remaking that legacy that passed many by and many who didn't know that it ever passed that way. I felt that in all that many of you surpassed there must be more than words to speak of your deeds, because this legacy is a lot of blood, sweat, and tears that far too many have never and will never be placed in a similar situation. A lot of discipline, a lot of love, a lot of real togetherness is what these young people of Red River Parish in Louisiana had and displayed so readily each day as they walked miles to obtain their education. They stood together with that one single thought of success. More than an outlook, they had an uplook.

They were not bitter, they were not angry, they were despite any and all obstacles—unstoppable. They never allowed fear to prevent them from trying. They listened to the unwritten message of that era that said so loudly: It was a realization that only they could control what they would become. It may have mattered early on that they walked those miles as the bus (with the white children) would pass them on the road, but time heals all wounds and nothing was given to them as a gift—gifts are the opposite of achievements, so they held on to a belief that their tomorrows would be better. Their gift was togetherness.

The title of this chapter was from an old saying from my grandmother who, with her astute mother-wit knowledge captured hearts with her saying, "Right don't wrong nobody" and so true were these words spoken as a group of you—day after day, year after year, you walked. The wrong was there and one day long after your walking would come the righting of a wrong. Just because for so long, so many didn't get the meaning doesn't mean that which was right was not meaningful. You conquered all because your edge was not having fear. If fear wins, you lose. The message here is to be one that young people in school who have no real inkling about the struggle and sacrifice that you endured; not a clue as to just what it was like—back in the day, but they must know or to be somehow captivated by this great legacy that is there's to emulate. They must be made aware. They need to have a very clear conception of what it is they want, to see themselves a vivid vision, a goal or set of goals powerfully imagined as those before them had, and a strong confidence that they too, under better circumstances—attain their goals. A determination and persistence in all of your thoughts and actions. Above all, as you reach back to view that which went before you in and on that pioneer trail of making it better for you, there must be your sense of good character to guide you and to keep you on course.

You indeed are blessed not only to endure the hardships of a difficult past, but with the opportunity to show the gratitude for that foundation and legacy they left for you. These young people, not even realizing their own strength were so admirable in their unselfish conquest. They were strong in spirit and could recognize their weaknesses, but they also recognize their ability to overcome those weaknesses. They never for a moment recognized how strong they truly were.

We ponder in our thoughts as we look at generations and do not at that moment connect how God so wisely and ever so quietly intervenes in our most unsuspected moments. To have so diligently instilled without a moment of hesitation, a winning attitude in these young people who each day walked to school, because as winners there too is no ultimatum, but a consequence. Winners will always keep track of results, it is losers who keep track of reasons. They were by no stretch of the imagination any extraordinary young people. They did have ordinary talents and extraordinary perseverance, and with this, all things are attainable as they found out. The teachers, the church, the parents, the community not only saw the potential in each one of them, but they believed in them and they worked hard to enhance and to deliver a strong sense of values. They preached it daily and followed up with it nightly. Each one reaching out to reach one. A task that was carried out each day. Perhaps it was a manner of tough love that is lacking today in young people with no pains or burdens to bear.

It can become so easy to get into a “comfort zone” and second guess what history has already recorded. It can become a simple task of turning into that so-called “armchair quarterback” and play the game from that perspective “walk six miles to school each way, each day?” “No way would I have done that.” “I would have stood out in the middle of that road and stopped those buses.” It can be so easy to place the shoe on the other foot as one tries to alter history and events. We had some perilous times and today, in order to understand history as it was made, one must not try to place the thinking of today on what transpired yesterday. Those young people were placed in a situation that they endured and went through, but it was met with firmness and with a persistence to accommodate everything the best way practicable. Do not let yourselves become complacent to ideas of how you would have done it so differently. Maybe, just maybe, if young people of today did a better job of listening, history wouldn’t have to repeat itself.

They endured and listened to those in their community, but parents, teachers, and the church

were not just sitting idly by doing nothing. It was an era that was not like any other we see today. They had to await the opportunity, pray for a better day for their children, but there is no medicine like prayer, no incentives so great, and no tonics so powerful as the expectation of God bringing you something tomorrow. This is what they hung their hats on and it was the closet prayers, the timber sent up (not kindling). All of this made a better day. Of course they put some feet on those prayers and the rest is history.

So much can be learned in this very tedious historical journey. Try to be one to focus the attention not on what was wrong, but on what they loved enough to participate in that birth of a better future. Ushered in by the sacrifice made in walking each and every day to an inferior school in comparison to other schools, but a school filled with knowledge and teachers so anxious to share it. It is so ironic that this chapter was written after I shared with one of your classmates (Rochelle Davis, Jr.) the experience of walking to school. I found myself as a writer, walking in my mind and trying to capture that moment as I listened to him. I knew that this was something that must be shared. Words have power. Words have altered the course of history and changed forever the destiny of individuals who spoke out. Take heed young people, young parents, teachers of today, church and community—right don't wrong nobody.

HELP THE HOPELESS FIND HOPE

When you stand on that Christian battlefield looking for a victory to be won,
There are those filled with hopeless looking for something to be done.
No matter how hard the battle you must help them in their fight.
You must help the hopeless find hope to defeat their wrong for what is right.
Help the hopeless find hope and stop old satan who resides in their lives, for now he will try to bring you
down and cover your strife.
Pray that devil away from the hopeless and to show them how to rebuke and be new,
Help the hopeless find hope in everything that they may do.
Help the hopeless find hope on all of the decisions they must make,
Help the hopeless find hope in going for the high ground in the road they will take.
Be there to lift them up and help them climb on a sometime slippery slope,
Be about doing a good job, help the hopeless find hope.

Mr. Jim Moore and His Wife Mr. Hilaria Moore Truly were Pioneer in the development of the Springville Community and High School



Jim and Hilaria (McInnis) Moore 403

The marriage of Jim Moore, III and Hilaria McInnis on June 12, 1921, near Ringgold, Louisiana, in Bienville Parish was the beginning of a family that now extends to the fourth generation, with a total of 108 members.

Hilaria McInnis was born August 8, 1895 in Jeff Davis County, Mississippi. Her parents were C. J. McInnis and Henrietta Madison McInnis. Both were school teachers and farmers. Her father was also a minister.

Her maternal grandparents were Alexander and Piney Madison Alexander was a powerful Baptist Minister. Her paternal grandparents were Jay and Venus McInnis. Jay was sold off an auction block in Galveston, Texas, and brought to Mississippi. Her other grandparents, all former slaves, came from Georgia.

Jim Moore, III was born in Red River Parish on August 4, 1900 to the union of Jim and Kate Brown Moore.

His maternal grandparents were Ann and Lively Brown. Ann died when Kate was a little girl. Lively Brown purchased some land from E. P. Foster on January 15, 1870. (NO. 13540 - Clerk of Court - Red River Parish). This is the same land that is the site of the Springville Junior High School. His paternal grandparents were Jim and Mandy Banks Moore. All were born in slavery. It has been passed down by word of mouth that all of his grandparents were brought to Louisiana from Georgia.

Hilaria, was reared near Mt. Carmel, Mississippi. Her early education was received from her parents. She attended Alcorn College and graduated from Prentiss Normal and Industrial Institute. She received her B.A. from Wiley College. She has done further study at Grambling State University, Southern University, and Northwestern State University.

Her parents migrated to Louisiana during World War I and settled at Grand Bayou. They then moved near Ringgold in North Red River Parish.

After Hilaria and her sister, Aurelia, graduated from Prentiss Institute they followed their parents to Red River Parish, where they taught in the school system.

Jim attended the school at Springville. The teacher was his Uncle, Lawrence C. Moore. Jim was a handsome, shy hardworking young man, esteemed

by the older people of the community. He was Janitor for the school board office, in addition to being a farmer.

When he and the new school teacher met and became acquainted, romance soon blossomed into love. After they courted for about two and a half years, they were married by Rev. B. A. Ammons on June 12, 1921.

During the first years of their marriage the young couple lived in Shreveport. Jim was employed by the Jewella Glass Company.

They both liked farm life, so they decided to return to Red River Parish and established their home.

They purchased the property that belonged to the Lively Brown heirs (Jim's grandfather). This is the present site of Springville Junior High School.

Their ten children were born and reared here. They are: Florence Henrietta Kate, Emmett James Othello Linlove, Edward Herman, Myrtle Beatrice, Curtiss Clark, Milton Brown, Herman William, and Mary Elsie Moore.

Jim and Hilaria worked hard to rear and support their family. They were farmers. Jim produced most of the food and Hilaria preserved it. They functioned as a team and were most supportive of each other. Hilaria taught school whenever she could. A new baby each year sometimes prevented her from teaching. In addition to farming, Jim was Janitor of Coushatta High School, First Methodist Church, Springville High School, supplied wood to the Community and did many other odd jobs during his lifetime.

Their children worked along beside them on the farm, in the home and at other jobs. This experience taught them the value of honest work.

Hilaria raised chickens, turkeys, geese and guineas for sale and home.

A deep faith in God, the desire to educate their children and develop them into good citizens were the guiding principles of their lives.

Each of their ten children graduated from Springville High School, while Lee A. Williams and Irvin F. Jones were principals. Especially did Lee A. Williams contribute to the dream of an education that Jim and Hilaria had for their children. He was a bright young graduate of Tuskegee Institute who brought a vision with him. He motivated the Moore children to believe that they could achieve. He expanded their horizons. He "cast down his bucket" at Springville and built it into a high school. He was an ideal role model for his students.

Emmett and Florence were among the first six graduates of Springville High School. Jim and Hilaria were supportive of Sam Jones who persuaded the whites and blacks that a high school was needed in this parish. They supported L. A. Williams throughout his teaching career as principal of Springville.

Although times were hard, Jim and Hilaria sent all their ten children and one granddaughter to college. Florence, Emmett, Myrtle and Lawrence are graduates of Southern University. Edward is a graduate of Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas. Mary and Lula Virginia (granddaughter reared by the Moores) are graduates of Grambling State University.

EARLY PIONEERS

Their Prayers & God's Power

“As we attempt to live like Christ in action, words, and deeds, We'll follow His design for prayer and pray for others needs.”

~ Our Daily Bread ~

June/July/August 2000

~ TO OUR EARLY PIONEERS ~

Teachers, Preachers, Reachers,

Pray-ers, Say-ers, Lay-ers,

Mountain Climbers, Road Pavers!

When we look at major accomplishments of a people, we seem to look at the surface of that finished product, but we too often fail to pull back that layer to look at how we got there. We tend to forget those who fought to make it all possible, the pioneers of that time. Pioneers are very special people in the history of this Parish and many have gone on without realization of the major role they played. Being a pioneer was being first and it is always difficult in being the one to make the path to lead to the road that so many to follow would travel. As you make this path as a sojourning traveler, you don't know that things can be done, that dreams can be fulfilled, that great accomplishments can be realized until somebody takes that first step. Truly, like the journey of a thousand miles—it begins with the first step.

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Make your plans big enough to include God and large enough to include eternity." It is only fitting that those of you today who are the by-product and finished commodity of those whose sweat, tears, and prayers led you to where you stand today and that which you stand for. They had to hold on to that anchor of faith and rely on the power of God to lift and strengthen them as they set out to better your tomorrows. They were united in all walks of life with a common goal. They took a positive attitude and they chose to rejoice in spite of obstacles or circumstances. For they had so boldly equipped themselves with a spiritual and emotional support system that would become their invisible shield. They kept on keeping on and would not turn around once they started their journey. They were persistent in their walk and their talk. Persistent in trusting God, even when He seemed so far away from Red River Parish, but their teaching had so carefully taught them that it was God's word and God's teachings that would prevail.

It can become so easy for a pioneer to just say, "is it worth it?", but then it became the time to pray for understanding and strength. To understand that they were not the only ones who had been persecuted and so they resisted the temptation of the evil one and would not fall victim to that persecution complex and martyr syndrome. So, they spiritually armed themselves with their prayers and God's power and they started on that journey. Someone once said, "You've got to think about "big things" while you're doing small things so that all the small things go in the right direction." On a

personal level, I don't know if such a movement could even get off the ground! Today, we look for pats on the back and glorification in even our smallest deeds and accomplishments. We tend to be more inclined to make sure that our name is spelled correctly in the press release.

If we take the time to turn back the clock to this period of our lives as young children, we would truly see the great work done throughout this nation by the "little people" of color. People who fought the good fight to instill and to give to us that which they wanted us to have. If we study our history, our legacy carefully and unemotionally, we find that invariably, greatness was developed, tested, and revealed through the darkest periods of their lives. When they were faced with the many roadblocks, they didn't turn around—they simply found a way to get around it. They adapted to persistence and persistence is what produces progress.

It was not easy as their daily lives and daily chores were not neglected, but now added to their daily walk. They had burdens to bear and often despair, depression, and fear blocked them. However, being tested was their faith and to utilize prayer to clear the negatives that was blocking that journey. They were going to be like Rosenwald—a bridge builder. They too, were building your bridges. So, let us pause and say a prayer of gratitude and thanks to those who through their prayers and God's power brought you this far. A great debt is owed to them and begins to repay it by never letting their legacy and their contributions be forgotten. The spirit of those who paved your way can never be tamed. It will live on. It can not and will not be ground down to a fine powder, but to stand like the great rocks of an ocean and refuse to be blown away. Let this spirit rest so deeply within you that all of the prejudice of the past (oppression, riots, lynchings) can never corrode or destroy them. Remember forever what they did for you. Let your soul look back and not forget. *Often we forget as we eat out daily bread,*

From whom we all remember, to us who are well-fed;

But may we all remember, as we walk upon this sod,

That everything we have is from the hand of God."

~ Our Daily Bread ~

***“A Bright
Shining Star”***

SPRING A MOUNTAIN— FROM A HILL

Faith without work cannot be called faith.

~The New Open Bible~

"Let not what you cannot do tear from your hands what you can"

~Ashanti Proverb~

Our faith should always be put in those things that produce good for us and faith must inspire action on our part. Those in and around Red River Parish had to stay focused on the project; the plan that was before them. This is always one of the most difficult challenges that is faced in the starting and completion, as well as, the all in between. It is as they knew, their words and actions determined the fullness of their cup.

First and foremost are always the many obstacles and deadlines to meet and of course, all of the expectations to live up to. There was so much pulling on them, distracting them, keeping them from their goals. There was lack of focus for some, which was caused by fear of the unknown. It brought on a sense for some not wanting to get involved; not to disrupt the status quo. So following the key of those who stayed focused, their spring a mountain from a hill. All of those frightening little details were miraculously taken care of and before they knew it, they were exactly where they said they wanted to be.

Perhaps this was an era in our early history as a people in America who could, in good conscious, settled for being content. Contentment does not mean you cannot want and do more for others; it means you are at peace and when confronted with a problem, you were ready and willing to abandon your contentment and go about it in a positive manner to get done what was needed to be done. We as a people survived slavery because we held onto one another. We as a people, picked up the fight for the children of the area. They saw a need and they did what they had to do. They moved from a spot of contentment to a voice of yearning. Yearning for a better day, a better way. They came out fighting!

In this era of much hurt, it was not uncommon to see the hurt before you, the wronged before you, the hungry before you, the beaten before you, the humiliated before you. Yet, somehow they survived another day—and it came a time when it was time to overcome, time to recover, time to heal. A time to stop and take notice of how each of you could make a difference for those young children. How you could plant a seed and cultivate a crop of a new beginning for those to follow. It was show-me time in Louisiana.

In those days there were many causes to battle, confront, and overcome. Throughout history

there has been a myriad of physical and spiritual forces that have drained us. I am sure that many had found other causes to work on in the past and once again, many were asked to take their drained, imbalance energy along that same beaten, well-worn path. It is called self-realization that requires us to take a look at ourselves and free ourselves from all encumbrances in order to look within and discover the spiritual freedom that is our calling for this extraordinary vision. With prayer as their application—they soon knew for sure exactly who they were and where they were going. It is so adequate and so special when a cause is led by spiritual guidance. Too often, we tackle problems without a source as strong as the Holy Spirit and you can't solve a problem because in essence you don't know what it is. However, in this case, there was adequate leadership. So many people then and now, will spend the better part of their lives putting out little brush fires with a teakettle, without ever realizing there was a forest fire burning right by them and a fire hose was needed. However, we found in Coushatta and the Red River Parish people who knew it was not they who were in control. They quickly realized that there was a divine source, a powerful source, a perfect order that controls everything! The sooner they recognized it, acknowledged it, and surrendered to it, they didn't have to worry about the luxury of a struggle to solve problems. For God and only God, will perfect that which concerns you when you surrender control and put it into His hands. No one said the road would be easy, for with every great feat comes not only burdens, but there were the trials and tribulations, the rocky roads, the valleys, and the storms. Through it all, they held on and snatched from the hands of defeat—a victory for the young people of Coushatta and Red River Parish all around.

This great triumph should serve as an everlasting reminder to all that will follow. This should serve not only as a tribute, but a historical time when people of little means went after their own Goliath. They knew that from that first day forward they had to move beyond the mind set of powerlessness. They learned quickly to hitch it up for action on the broadest daring and biggest scale they could find. So, they had a goal of getting power of every kind. Power in education, science, industry, and politics. That kind of power will stand out and let you be recognized as well as, reckoned with. All that powerlessness would do is breed a race of beggars, but with soul searching and daring, they put together the power of organization and the power of spirit. No one can say that this journey and gathering of power to fight the enemy was an easy task. No problem is ever solved by drifting

backwards and away from the problem. You solve problems by tearing down barriers so you can get at them. Most of the people who have scaled the heights, who have climbed the mountains, who have gone through the valleys of their lives were people who had not been content to just stand. They took that stand and even if they would be forced for a moment to their knees and had to creep to anchor themselves before they got up—they stood again.

It was the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Saeb S. Sallam who said: *“It is never too late to maintain one’s national judgement; Never too late to preserve one’s courage and composure; Never too late to comprehend lessons; Never too late to seek new opportunities; Never too late to depend on true friends; Never too late to uphold the struggle for a just cause.”* Susan Taylor of Essence Magazine said, “Our greatest problem in life comes not so much from the situations we confront as from the doubts about our ability to handle them.” Reading it, saying it, preaching or teaching it does not make it work. The only way to do it is through application. To do more than see the invisible, feel the intangible, achieve the impossible. You must, as they did in Louisiana, take that hand on approach with lots of determination. Their strong suit above all, was simply the knowledge that when troubled and uncertain of the next step—pray. The research, records, notes, papers, and clippings will not indicate it, but all believers will verify that a lot of those dark days were met with prayer. They found themselves going into those dark closets for that consultation with God. A lot of those cold, uncertain moments were answered prayer when they came out!

In those lean days when all those doors in Louisiana and other places in the South were shut, locked, and impossible to open, they held on in Red River Parish. The force of a voice for the people that was determined to rise. God forever there to make the decisions to give the “final answer”. His basic principle being that He didn’t ever make decisions because they may be easy. He didn’t make them because they are cheap. You don’t see Him making them because it is popular— He made them because they’re right.

“In everything, the good is there— our goal is to find it.

In every person, the best is there— our job being to recognize it.

In every situation, the positive is there— our opportunity is to see it.

In every problem, the answer is there— our responsibility is to provide it.

In every adversity, the blessing is there— our adventure is to discover it.

In every crisis, the reason is there— our challenge is to understand it.”

~Ibid~

GOOD ENOUGH NEVER IS...

A BRIGHT LIGHT IN THE VILLAGE

“Do you walk your walk or do you just talk the talk? Often the true measure of how serious you are on the path toward a particular dream or goal is how much you have given up in order to reach it. Have you given your vision the time, energy, and resources it deserves? Don’t ask yourself how much you are willing to sacrifice for it. Instead ask, “How much have you sacrificed lately?” — Sunita Singhi

Throughout the country as slavery was being abolished and freedom for the former slave was apparent, a great awakening grew. It was the awakening of people that required leadership to avoid the disarray of this new-found freedom. All throughout the land stood a group of people like lost sheep without direction. A people just drifting, for the most part, in search of a trail, a path, guidelines on what to do and how to do it. They were like a small boat tossing on a stormy sea with no compass to guide, no rudder to steer and only hope that the storm would soon end and somehow they would drift into calm waters. There was a big problem facing the Nation with a challenge of how to deal with the problem of freedom for the former slaves. The majority of them without skills, education and illiterate— just left to wander and to exist the best way they could. No one had answers.

As the years passed and many just settled on doing odd and menial jobs, and sharecropping, it became apparent to so many that they wanted a better day for the children. So it was in rural Louisiana— the Red River Parish started at the turn of the century a movement to do something about education and to do it now. It was perhaps in the very early stages of the planning process to do something when the Association of Churches became so concerned with the quality of education for the young people throughout the Parish that they bought 10 acres of land and dedicated it to the future education of black children. So often we hear so much about how it takes a village to raise a child and these people of this village truly had a dream that God would send someone to help their dream of bringing a High School here on that 10 acres. Perhaps to some it was an impossible task— but if you go to God with a thimble— you can only bring back a thimble full!!! So many successful ventures have been aborted because of half finished plans and non-executed resolutions. However, these were people with the right frame of mind, the right spirit of optimism and they all went in knowing that if they truly wanted to accomplish anything of merit and lasting value in life, they would have to face their fears— including the fear of failure. For knowing and not doing are equal to not knowing at all.

It was more than a pipe dream; it was hope for the future through the children of this Louisiana village. There was even long-range thinking that it may someday develop into a College. Yes, it was a well-laid out dream where the children could take full advantage of the opportunities it would offer. It was in the book, "**Guide My Feet**," by Marian Wright Edelman that these words were said, "Yes, we have a vision! Let us gather to now seek God's vision for the children of our world, and God's guidance as we work to pursue it." Yes, there was plenty of enthusiasm and people willing to walk the walk and talk the talk. So many attempts by these devoted Christian pioneers of Red River Parish were made, but the obstacles continued to be placed at their feet and for the most part, it seemed it would end in failure for lack of money. We must keep in mind that these were community church God-fearing people. These were people who wanted to leave behind an intangible inheritance for future generations. Knowing that they could endure most any circumstances, tackle the obstacles, and face most any enemy—including the oppressor!

They were ambitious and even with the lack of funds to move at a faster pace, they started a building. Death even claimed some of the most fervent leaders. So for many years, the work was slowed down—practically abandoned but not forgotten. As the saying goes, "if you can't feed a hundred people then just feed one." And if you could feed just one—the dream was not dead. Stimulation may have been on its deathbed, but the roots remained alive and only needed moisture to restart the dream of sprouting again; this time many years later.

Someone once said, there are three kinds of people in the world; those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who wonder what happened. Hilari McInnis Moore was not one to watch or wonder what happened. She was one who made things happen. A young woman (school teacher) came to this Parish in 1918 and later married one of these pioneer Christians son's, Jim Moore, Jr. Jim and Hilari were interested in community progress for the black children. After all, over a period of years to come, they were blessed with 10 children of their own!

Most of us don't know what we cannot do until someone tells us. Most of us are willing to try almost anything, go anywhere, stretch ourselves to the limit in pursuit of our dreams, and then we will make the fatal mistake of talking to other people, sharing with them our dreams and aspirations. They will be quick to remind us of how dangerous it may be, how ridiculous it sounds, what a chance we will

be taking. People have no problem informing us of all the obstacles, down sides, and pitfalls. They like to tell us how we should “wait”, how others before us failed. They are so quick to give us all the warnings, cautions, and helpful hints about not getting involved; about all the others who tried “similar” things and failed. And so sadly, many of us are browbeaten and intimidated and talked right out of our dreams by those “who watch and wait for things to happen”. Nevertheless, the Moore family had a dream they wanted to come true, and the only way to it was through it. They closed a deaf ear to advice and criticism; took the chance, took the risk, and leaped fully into it. God never asks about our ability or inability, just our availability. For deeds, not stones are true monuments of the great. Enduring for the long haul— not concerned with the outlook, but knowing that it was the up look that counted. They took with them the notion of spiritual guidance— whatever the question— God had an answer. Whatever the need— He had the solution. To do their best and then expect God’s best. Along the way, they had to experience failure in order to truly understand success. They wanted so badly, the knowledge that this school could offer, they went after it while conditions were still unfavorable. For they were as others were— people with the vision to see, the faith to believe, and the courage to do

Mrs. Moore found that the black parents were interested in community progress for the children. So it was often discussed among the parents of the Springville community, the problems of better schooling and education for the children of Red River Parish. As a teacher and educator, she saw many of the children who had the potential for good leadership. In her observation, she soon approached parents about sending their children to the nearest High School for advanced learning, but this was an era in our history when money was a problem for most families. Here was a lady that was in tune with hindsight, foresight, and insight. In her hindsight, she knew where she had been. She had the foresight to know where she was going and the insight to know when she had gone too far or not far enough. She was a woman with not only a vision, but it was God’s vision for the children of this area and she worked along with many others to pursue it. She was truly a woman of God.

People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care, and in those early “lean” years in and around Coushatta and Red River Parish, it was not only parents and community, churches and parishioners, but teachers who sincerely cared. It was so important in their mind-set and dedication to education, that many of our teachers taught in the churches in order that no child would not be exposed to some kind of education.

A LITTLE HOPE

A LITTLE DREAM

AND A BIG PROMISE

(The Beginning of Springville School)

“Nobody who ever gave his or her best regretted it”

***~ George Halas ~
Pro Football Coach
Chicago Bears***



Springville High School



L.A. Williams, Principal

SOME PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF SPRINGVILLE SCHOOL

Rev. J. P. Powell & Family

Rev. H. Hodge & Family

Deacon Jim Moore & Family

Mr. L.A. Williams & Family

Mr. Johnnie Moore & Family

Mr. Jerry Gye, Sr. & Family

Mr. John B. Moss & Family

Mrs. H. Speed & Family

Mrs. Annie Mae Jones & Family

Rev. L.A. Durham & Family

Rev. Henry Woodson & Family

Rev. Nattie Gains & Family

Mr. Ervin Jones & Family

Mr. Ora Newton & Family

Professor D. Douglas & Family

Mr. Edd Stafford, Sr. & Family

Mrs. Vera W. Price

When we turn back the pages of history, we will find that unwritten story of those whom we shall call the unsung heroes of Red River Parish. There were people who had that instilled vision of seeking a better way of life for the young people to follow. They did not just talk about a better day, but they placed feet on their dreams and began to do something about it. These were people of great ability and no ego's of self-gratification. It was a time, a place, and an era that required hard work and dedication to their cause. It was a time when diligence ruled over discontent for that era. These again, were people who would have been more disappointed by the things they didn't do, than by what they did do. So, they sailed away from the safe harbor— to catch the trade winds in their sails. Explored, dreamed, discovered. Right there in Red River Parish.

Again, these were people who had not only courage, but faith. They never looked upon their mission as one that would fail. They carefully lined up all the facts they thought were against them, and without being pessimistic, thought positively! Whatever they needed to discourage, they eliminated; too old, too unknowledgeable, too unprepared, too inexperienced, or not quite ready to take on the establishment. However, their positive approach became one of— if we miss a few details, we can always find someone to help face the facts. The facts after all, speak for themselves, except they are not true. Courage is doing it anyway, whatever it is. Too often we doubt ourselves before we get out of the starting gate and the race is conceded.

We find however, in those days setbacks, stumbling blocks, or difficulties did not discourage people. They were praying people, loving people, determined people, God's people. Their success was determined by the ability to treat the many toils and snares as just mere incidents and none of the incidents as toils and snares. It was persistence for pioneers such as Hilaria Moore. They saw themselves in a situation that had endured and gone on far too long. So, they met the challenge with firmness and a plan to accommodate a practical way to solve it. They worked to lessen the evil, for only fretting and fuming simply served to increase their own torment. For there is no medicine like hope; no incentive so great as the expectation of something better tomorrow.

Someone once said that “the have's and the have not's can be traced back to the did's and the did not's.” It always goes without saying that, “There is a choice you have to make, in everything you

do. And you must always keep in mind, the choice you make, makes you.” When we look at the early history of Red River Parish, it became a Parish in May of 1871. A man by the name of Homer Twitchell became State Senator to represent this new Parish. He was by far, the most important man in the area, as well as, the most powerful man. He championed the cause of Blacks and succeeded in establishing schools and obtaining voting rights. He was a strong supporter of education for the masses and was instrumental in establishing two schools in each ward; one for whites, one for blacks.

The very rural beginning of the vision of a high school in Springville had to begin in the well-laid out plan of God. Jim and Hilaria Moore had 10 children and Mrs. Moore was an educator. Both of her parents were school teachers. Her father was also a minister. Jim Moore was born in Red River Parish. His grandparents were Ann and Lively Brown. Lively purchased land from E.P. Foster in 1870 and is important to the story because it is the same land that is the site of Springville Junior High School! Hilaria McInnis Moore’s parents migrated to Louisiana during World War I and settled at Grand Bayou where she and her sister, Amelia, taught in the school system. Jim and Hilaria Moore worked hard to support their family. They were farmers. Jim Moore produced most of the food and Hilaria canned and preserved it. Mrs. Moore taught school when she could (between children). In addition to farming, Mr. Moore was the janitor at Coushatta High School, First Methodist Church, and Springville High School, and supplied wood to the community and did many other odd jobs during his lifetime. He was a very busy man, with a deep faith in God and the desire to educate and develop their children into good citizens. All 10 of the Moore children graduated from college!

But, before we get ahead of ourselves, let us talk about the beginning of Springville High School. It was in 1938 when school was held in Springville Baptist Church and was a dream of the Moore’s to have a school in Springville. It is important to note that Springville School was a Junior High, that later became a High School. Mr. Sam Jones, who was the County Agent, would serve as a coordinator to get the Parish together to help form a high school. At first, the county wanted a high school in St. Mary’s Community, but the Association had set aside some land dedicated to educate students. This was the Black Baptist Association that agreed to donate to the School Board this land if they would build the school in the Springville community: *Rev. J.P. Powell; Rev. L.A. Durham; Rev. H. Hodge; Rev. Henry Woodson; Deacon Jim Moore; Rev. Nattie Gains.*

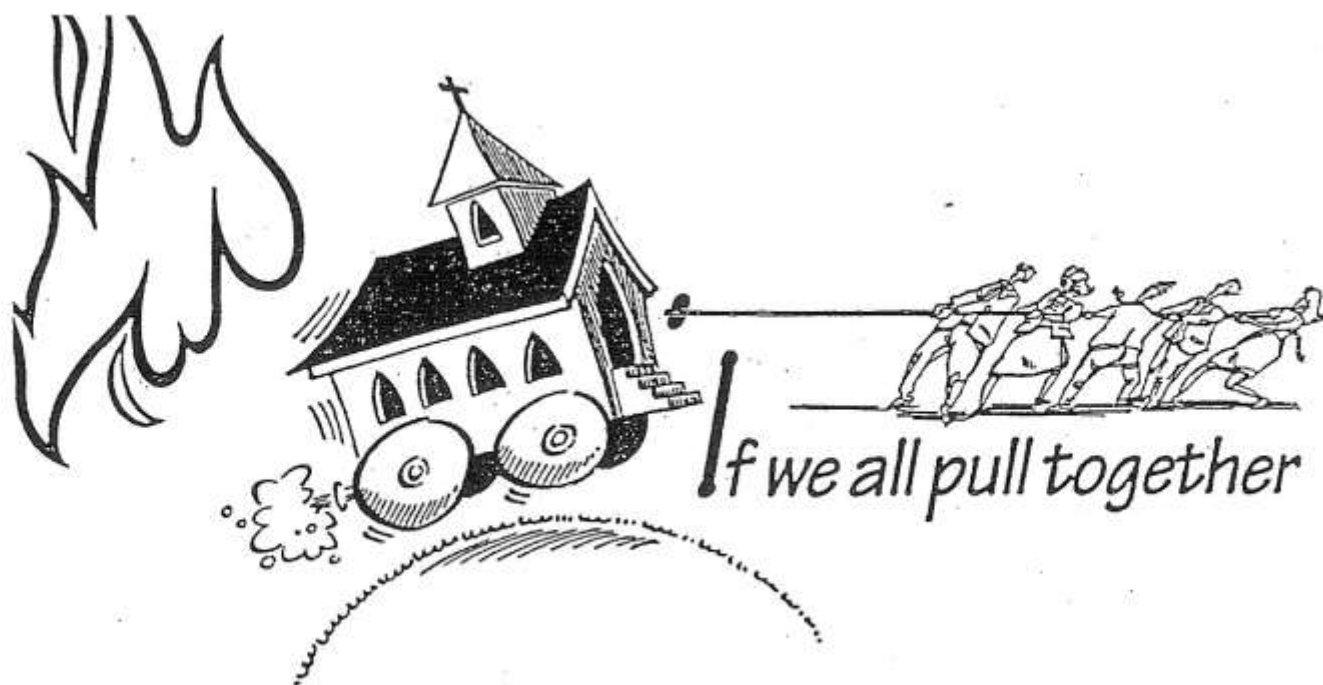
Sam Jones persuaded the Blacks to donate the land and then the whites to build the school. At first, this caused bickering among the people because the Blacks thought perhaps the whites would take the land. However, Sam Jones persuaded the Association to trust that the whites would keep their end of the bargain. So, they donated the 5 acres of land to build the school. While the school was being built, classes were held at Springville Baptist Church. At first, it was just a 5-room building; later the other buildings were added.

L.A. Williams was the first principal of the new school in 1938. The 6th grade students were: T.L. Horton, Robert D. Patton, Myrtis Demery, Evalee Mitchell, Othella Moore, Myrtle Moore, and Edward Moore. The 8th grade students were Cassie Irvin, R.L. Stevens, Florence Moore, Annie Demery, and Annie Owens. This was such a small class, but small numbers make no difference to God. There is nothing small if God is in it. These were people who looked at a vision and pulled together to do what was best not only for the community, but for the children.

Along the West Coast of the United States, there are huge groves of red cedars. They grow tall and lovely and appear to be very strong, but their roots are shallow. When one falls, others often follow. But do you know what holds up these beautiful trees? They lean on each other. Their branches touch and support one another. Not one of them can stand-alone. This is not a comparison, but all of these people from the St. Mary's community {Coushatta, Grand Bayou, Hanna} all come together in support. All of the people were driving forces in getting the school established. There was always a mission and life without a mission is a tremendous omission. This was uplifting for the people of this era, whose tenacity was strength reached by their great faith in higher learning. They knew that just being smart is not the same as being wise. Being tough is not the same as being strong. Being wealthy is not the same as being rich and being shown is not the same as being led.

When we look back on the past (granted it is not all-good), it serves as a reference for today. We can look with open minds and understand how bravely some of our people took a stand. Perhaps not so popular with many, but positions taken that turned out to be not at all indecisive, but worthy of the input it had and made on the children. Perhaps to some this may not be history worthy of recording, but this was more than a mere "dot of an I or crossing of a T." However, that is the essence of the simple, unvarnished truth of everyone's history. Whether the history is known or not, it's still there.

Attempts to ignore or deny it doesn't mean it didn't happen. It only means that it was not in someone's best interest to tell it like it is. First Teachers at Springville: *Mrs. Myrtle Johnson & Mrs. Alice Steele.*



***“Walk Together
Children”***
(Communities Contributions)

History and those who make it are always people with strength, character, tenacity and integrity (let it be said that these were God's people). They became very instrumental in the leading of others through some challenging times and navigating the yesterdays that were to lead to our today's and all of the unforeseen tomorrows—they embodied many key attributes as they empowered and communicated as they led by example and throughout the task, they followed a well drawn out plan that was very much focused and spiritually intact. With a lot of sweat and tears, as well as, spirit-led prayers, it led to that successful outcome. They not only proposed, but carried out a task of leading by example. A noble, unquestionable and unblemished character, their quality performance and persistence in a never say never philosophy of dutifully completing the task.

This was an era in our history when the education gap was wide in terms of black and white students. It was so common, more so than rare, that Blacks attended the substandard schools (only to 8th grade) mostly throughout the South. Most parents could only wish that their children might have the same facilities as white children, then their educational problems would be solved, but as history shows for many—they couldn't have been more wrong. This was education in Red River Parish. Years later, integration would come and it was not the panacea for educational inequality. For many of the students of the black-run, all black teachers, all black schools— did quite well in Red River Parish when given the opportunity to excel. They got the job done!

There were not only high expectations but quality teachers that offered motivation, along with old-fashioned prayer, along with self-determination and lots of family support. This indeed was a journey that started on a rough road paved with a legacy that we now take time to write about. Never is there a limit to that which you can do if you don't care who gets the credit. These were people of that "old school" thinking who readily checked their egos at the door and the things these ordinary people did to be spectacular and dynamic in their venture. They planned purposefully as they prepared prayerfully and then proceeded ever so positively and they pursued persistently to that task.

Yes, there were perhaps many moments that they may have felt it would be a failure, but then they looked beyond worldly thinking, were led by the spirit to pray and began to truly understand the task ahead and how to diligently proceed, for Psalm 37:23-24 says, "if you do what the Lord wants; He will make certain each step you take is sure. The Lord will hold your hand, and if you stumble, you still won't fall." Someone once said that snowflakes being of nature, but also of God, are one of His most

fragile things, but just look at what they can do when they stick together! So can people who are undergirded with faith. These were people who were steadfast with their eyes on winning and accomplishing their task. Their interest was not in the storms they encountered, but will they bring in the ship. Success is never final and failure never fatal—it is courage that counts. Through the clarity of their mission, their ideas rested and depended on the scope of the success in this great endeavor.

What made them successful was that they wanted for those young Black scholars— knowledge so badly that they sought it at a time when conditions were still unfavorable. They were brave warriors who placed their entire belief in the deliverance from God. ***“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.”*** *Isaiah 40:31*. In this journey, as history will reveal itself, there were battles to be fought; it was not all easy. In battle, you sometimes have to get up more times than you fall. On that road to victory it is always dotted with so many tempting parking places, but you keep on keeping on and you travel to that bridge — the bridge between failure and success and it is called hope. “And happy is he — whose hope is in the Lord his God.” *Psalms 146:5*

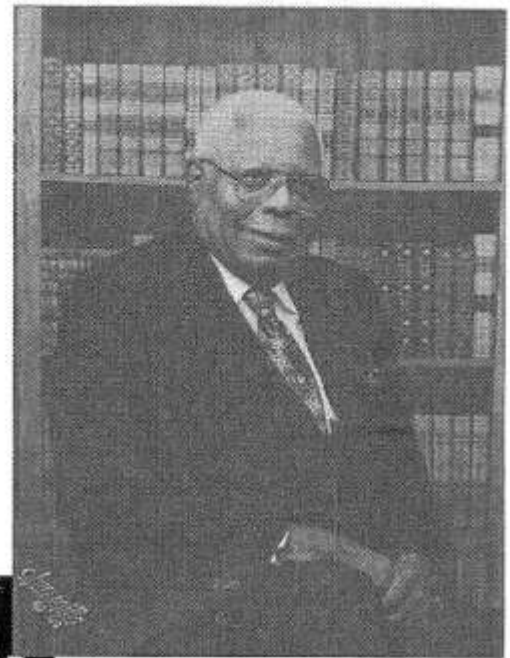
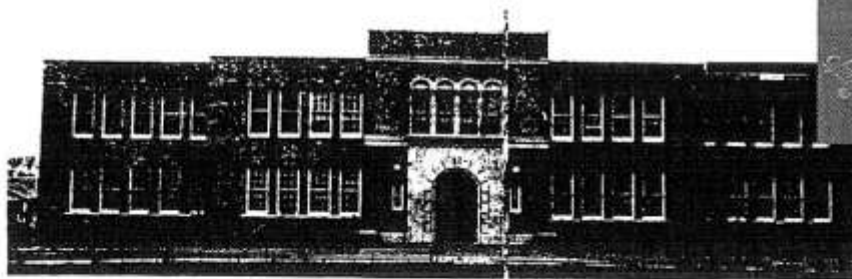
This was a task that did not start with multitudes of people because it has been written in the Book of Life that small numbers make no difference to God for there is nothing small if God is in it. No one said it was going to be easy and like that journey of a thousand miles— that step was taken. It is written in *Matthew 7:8* “For everyone who keeps on asking receives; and he who keeps on seeking finds; and to him who keeps on knocking, (the door) will be opened.” You just may have to fight a battle more than once to win it— but with God on their side, they didn’t lose! They couldn’t lose!

Many of you will only know that, which has been told or written about, but those who attended the school and those teachers who taught the students have a special sense of warmth in recapturing the moments of this era. They will always feel it. It is so refreshing to open up the doors of the past and to share the good, bad, indifferent. To refresh and to enhance the thoughts of those yesteryears and all of the laughter, tears, moments of sadness, moments of joy; all compiled for your reading pleasure, as we do for you.

To those of you that are now adults, to those that have passed on to Glory, a special place and a special gratitude is owed to you for taking and making the journey. It is going to open up those good-old days and rethink and relive in

your minds what transpired over 50 years ago. It is an era that we should emulate today. Many of you will recall Mr. John Henry Chitman, who because of no school bus in the beginning drove his flatbed truck to school with the student's feet swinging from it! Many will recall Mr. Donnie Porter who drove a covered pick-up truck owned by Rev. William Kessee to bring children to school. Throughout the book, we will place you into the classroom and reenact those days.

Our young people today can learn so much from "whence you came". They too must be made aware of your proud heritage. The teachers, the churches, the parents who all stood tall— who stood firm, who stood with a dedication to move forward— despite obstacles of segregation and little opportunities. They showed through spiritual guidance of the church, how to make a way out of no way. They knew that in being successful, you didn't do a thing "nearly" right, but by doing it "exactly" right— and with God. To be like the duck who is smooth and unruffled on the top, but paddling furiously underneath, they moved on. So they did their best and received God's very best.



Mr. Buggs, Principal

Grand Bayou Junior High School

SOME PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF GRAND BAYOU SCHOOL

Rev. J. P. Powell & Family

Deacon J. H. Chitman & Family

Deacon Ponder Clinton & Family

Rev. L.C. Kessee & Family

Rev. Charlie Henry, Sr. & Family

Rev. Richard Kessee & Family

Mr. Blanch Wilson, Sr. & Family

Mr. Riley Gibson & Family

Deacon Kenon Gibson, Sr. & Family

Mr. Ethel King & Family

Rev. A.B. Kessee & Family

Rev. K. P. Jones & Family

Deacon James Wilson, Sr. & Family

Deacon Rochelle Davis, Sr. & Family

Deacon Tommy Lee Small & Family

Deacon Willie Wardell, Sr. & Family

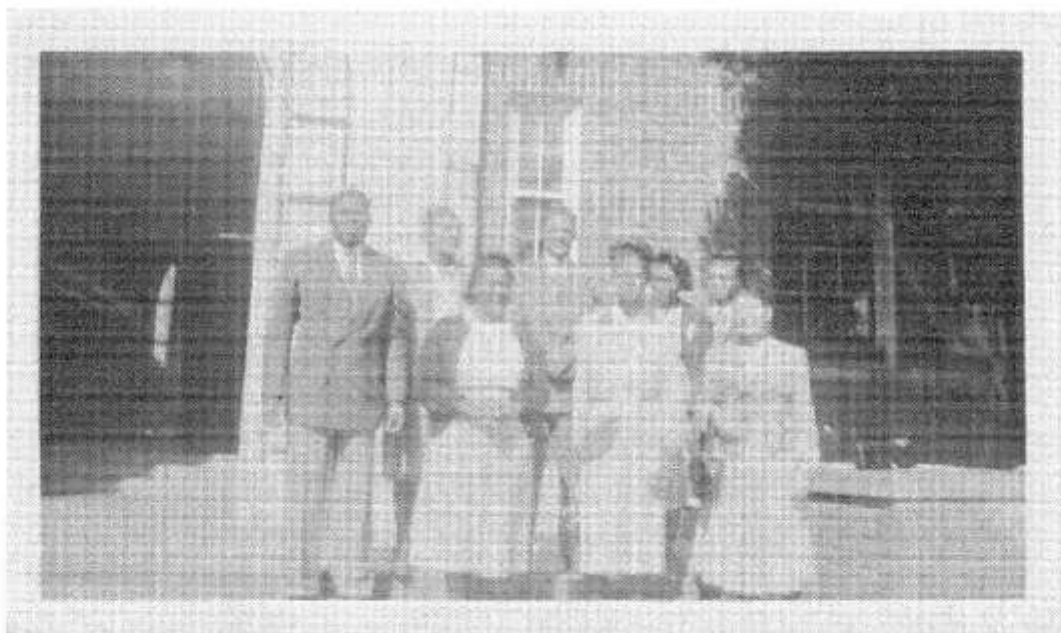
Mrs. Phyllis T. Whitehurst & Family

Mrs. Maple McCray & Family

Deacon Charlie Anderson & Family

Mrs. Rosie Ross & Family

GRAND BAYOU JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STAFF



*Second Row: Principal Buggs, Mrs. Buggs, Mr. Sims, Mrs. Taylor,
First Row: Ms. Dinkins, Ms. Nash, Ms. Lee and Ms. Gilbert*

HISTORY OF GRAND BAYOU JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

When Grand Bayou School came into existence, there were 29 schools in Red River Parish. Some of the Black teachers were teaching in churches, but they consolidated Hanna, Harmon, and Jerusalem. It was the fall of 1948 when Grand Bayou was opened for Blacks. The teaching staff were: P. Lee Buggs, Principal; Bernice N. Buggs, Charlie B. Spencer, Mrs. Larry B. Gaines, Elvira Taylor, Ernestine Gilbert, Laura Luke Moore, Viola P. Nash, Virginia Hall Leon. The student body was around 400. Mr. Buggs and Mrs. Henry were at the school for the entire 25 years until it closed in 1973.

When the young people who attend Grand Bayou were transferred to other schools, the reports were all the same on how well mannered, well prepared, and well behaved they were. How they showed interest and respect. What a great reflection on the staff at Grand Bayou. Grand Bayou was known to be the best record keeping school in all of Red Parish. They also rated very high athletically and academically. As one teacher described the students at Grand Bayou—“Many shot for the moon and missed, but fell among the stars.” There was a lot of hurt when this school closed and it was apparently for no real good reason. Yet, it didn’t stop the young people from pursuing their goals. They were energetic and ready and willing to move on to their chosen destiny. Many ministers and Pastors serving today attended Grand Bayou School. All of the students were instilled with the message “you are somebody.” They will be living monuments that cannot be erased. This will always live in the hearts and minds of others {that they successfully passed this way}. Their accomplishments made history throughout the community. The trail was well blazed. It was in the fall of 1948 when Grand Bayou School was opened for Blacks. It serves as a reminder for children today as to the sacrifices and great hardships endured to get children to school— let alone learning! Parents and teachers alike felt a yearning deep inside for those young people— a yearning for them to learn at any cost. They set forth determination so strong that it could not be overlooked by the young people who sensed this great importance. Some walked to school, some rode on the back of a flatbed truck, some in an old dump truck. But walk, run, ride; they came. They came to that destination by any means necessary and any many available. They came with that eager thirst and hunger to learn to absorb all they could. They not only had the spirit, but the ability, the will, and the inspiration to learn. To seek a better day and a better way with these vital sacrifices made for them.

People of this era, as our history will point out, were of a special breed that is so far removed in

today's young and old alike. It is so sad that today we find our people would prefer to stay with problems they understand, rather than look for solutions they're uncomfortable with. But people of this era knew it was always education and the importance of solving many problems created by slavery that was always listed as top priority. Young people growing up in these times had such a great sense of awareness that was instilled by their parents, teachers, and spiritual leaders in Sunday School and church. They didn't place any limitations on their goals. They knew their parents had no shiny tools from a shiny toolbox to pass on to them. There was no saw of discernment; no hammer of wisdom; no sandpaper of patience. Instead, they took on these rusty bent old tools. Friendship, prayer, conscience, honesty—and they said to them, “do the best you can with these. They'll have to do.” And you know what? Against all odds, it was enough. They gathered their rusty tools and they moved forward as bright lights in that village. For it is true that things do not happen accidentally. I believe they are earned.

Before these people stood a mandate and it became apparent that they wanted a new day, a new horizon for the young black children of that day and time. They had a plan and they executed it. For progress is what happens when impossibility yields to necessity. Someone once said do not

fear going forward slowly, fear only stands still. They may have progressed slowly, but it was not at a stand still. They were determined and willing to make any and every sacrifice to get the job done. I am sure that there were many moments when they felt the fear of this great task, but they did not let fear overtake them to the point of quitting. “The wise man in the storm prays to God, not for safety from danger, but for deliverance from fear. It is the storm within that endangers him, not the storm without.”
— Ralph Waldo Emerson.



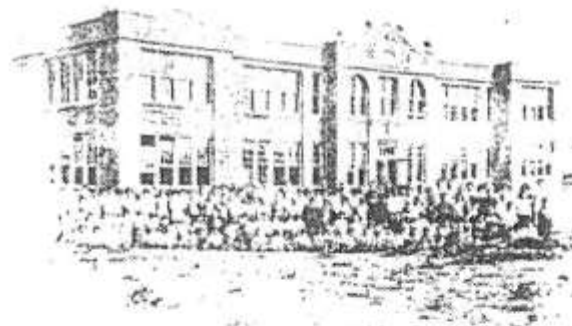
Early school at East Point



B. Bennett, Principal



East Point, one-room school



East Point Junior High School

SOME PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF EAST POINT SCHOOL

Mrs. Mildred Bennett & Family

Deacon Charlie Bogan & Family

Deacon Garland Bell & Family

Deacon Charlie Barfield, Sr. & Family

Brother Roger Hills & Family

Rev. Charlie Myles, Sr. & Family

Deacon Eddie & Leanna Bell & Family

Mr. Sprangly Morston & Family

Rev. Ike & Nancy Bogan & Family

Mr. Emmitt & Albert Moore

Brother Charley & Palestina Jackson, Jr. & Family

Deacon Robert Bell & Family

Rev. M.C. Miller & Family

Deacon Booker T. Williams & Family

Deacon Jack Durham & Family

Deacon Grant & Willie Mae Love

Deacon Robert Mills, Sr. & Family

Mr. Robert Maxie & Family

Mrs. Morning Rorgers & Family

Mrs. Rever Collins & Family

Mrs. Maple Simmons & Family

HISTORY OF EAST POINT HIGH SCHOOL

When Red River Parish was settled a plentiful supply of good drinking water, often from springs and streams, as well as good farming land, were determining factors in early settlement. Every plantation on the Red River had its own boat landing. The two largest of the early River Trading Post were Lake End and East Point. East Point, just above the 7000-acre plantation owned by Captain Marstoe, became the trading post of the northern portion of the Parish. East Point grew to be a thriving little village. It was the center of a prosperous river farming community until the oil fields grew less productive, and people moved elsewhere for a means of making a living. Also, the decline was due to US Highway 71 being routed through the hills and East Point. However, East Point continues to be home to several old Parish families, still surrounded by prosperous plantations whose owners are overcoming today's labor shortage with all kinds of mechanized farming equipment.

As early as 1897, twenty-five white schools were established by the School Board to operate for 3 months and twenty-two Negro schools to operate for a period of 2 months. There were other districts besides Coushatta created in the Parish; one for each of the communities of Martin, Methvin Harvey, East Point, Grand Bayou, Academy, Hall Summit and Hickory Grove. It was not just a matter of what the white schools received in comparison, because the difference was so obvious. We looked at the many discrepancies and the parity that was not there. New gymnasiums were constructed at Coushatta, Hall Summit, Grand Bayou, and East Point. A new High School was constructed at Martin and a new Junior High at Hanna. On the other side, 4 new two-room buildings and a training school for Black children was all they got.

The greatest need and therefore, the greatest improvement was to be in Negro education. Thirty-four small Negro schools were closed and children transported to "better" schools. It was really the farming pattern that was shifting and the loss of that oil revenue. Methvin, Grand Bayou, and East Point were all closed. Grade Schools were set up at Hanna, Grand Bayou, and East Point with the High School students all being transported to Springville. By the mid-sixties, there were only three High Schools and two Grade Schools in the Parish!

At present, five public schools are in operation in Red River Parish. They are Martin High School, Hall Summit High School, Coushatta Elementary, Springville Middle School, and Coushatta High School. One private school, Riverdale Academy, is in operation at East Point. From day to day,

they kept that vision alive, even when they occasionally felt that they might have acted in ways antithetical to that vision. Picturing themselves as not always patient, tolerant, or like-minded but working to engage in a stimulating and engaging interaction with each other gave them something to work toward. Even in moments of disarray and disagreement, they recovered faster when they kept their ideal in mind—the children.

People of this era were more than people that needed to do, but people that just needed to dare. A people that broke from the restrictions that bound them. They sought to rid themselves of those internal stop signs and the narrow expectations of others. All of this called for a certain daring. For just being there and doing nothing was being invisible and in invisibility, there is little if no power. They knew that despite obstacles, their active presence had influence. The act of just putting together a plan of action had a subtle impact. They went far beyond a subtle impact. They were successful in being that bright light in the village because they were truly a people with the vision to see, the faith to believe and the courage to do. There was not a moment that passed in this historical endeavor that any of the pioneers felt a sense of this not being worthwhile. In the words of William Arthur Ward—*The Nine Aspects of Life* includes: the adventure of life is to learn, the purpose of life is to grow, the nature of life is to change, the challenge of life is to overcome, the essence of life is to care, the opportunity of life is to serve, the secret of life is to dare, the spice of life is to befriend, and the beauty of life is to give.

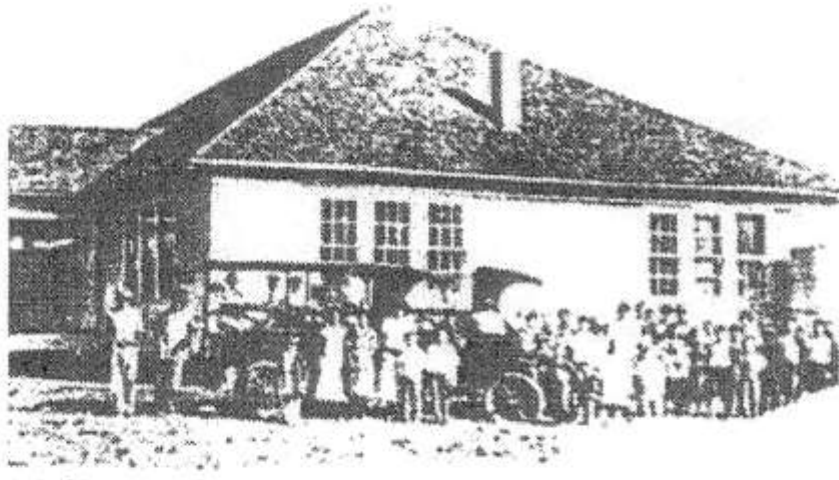
And give these people did—of themselves to others. Along the way perhaps they did stumble, and they may have even fell, but that too, was the norm and to be expected of any journey. Sometimes slowly and sometimes quickly they got back on their feet, chastened but wiser, and they continued on down that road. That large rock that once stood as an obstacle to the weak became a stepping stone now in the path of those pioneers who had become strong. From the beginning they worked on the erasing of the word “can’t” because this assignment and their abilities to carry it out was given to them by God to do what needed to be done. For true to the word is that success is never final and failure never fatal—it is courage that counts.

Many years ago, Dorothy Law Nolte gave to us a powerful essay on children. It included these lines: “If children live with fear, they learn to become apprehensive. If children live with encouragement, they learn to be confident.” There was not a greater gift that they could have given the children of this era—courage and confidence. Not only did they give but demonstrated it by bringing it all about. As an

observer, after the fact, I can say almost without exception that these young people who achieved greatness or near greatness in their lives are the people they are today because they had someone believe in them— A parent, a teacher, a minister. We all become what we think about, but to a greater extent than we may recognize we may also become what others think of us.

With that brighter light in the village came not only a brighter day, but a brighter tomorrow that still hangs on to the legacy of those who made it possible. I don't know if a legacy is enough to hang one's hat on, but the proud history should be more than enough to be appreciated by all those who follow. For it is only when you have been to and back in the deepest valley can you appreciate the highest mountain. Going through life without a single mission can only serve as a tremendous omission.

Of course throughout the struggle there were costs and risks as it is with any great endeavor, but it was far less than the long-range risks and costs of just plain comfortable inaction that so many choose. The first leg of this journey was get-to-it-iveness; the second part was stick-to-it-iveness!



Hanna School



**Sherman Newton, Principal of
Hanna Junior High School**

SOME PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF HANNA SCHOOL

Deacon Shermon Newton, Sr. & Family
Mrs. Ethel Thirs & family
Mr. Morris Mitchell & Family
Mr. Aldorsey Prelow, Sr. & Family
Mr. Leon & Virginia Thomas & Family
Mr. Dock Williams, Sr. & Family
Mrs. Le'sa Bowman & Family
Mrs. Lillie Former & Family
Mr. Clyde Wilson & Family

Mrs. Bertha Mae Jackson & Family
Mr. Chuck Moore & Family
Mr. John H. Williams & family
Mr. Dutch Wells, Sr. & Family
Deacon Jessie Thomas & Family
Rev. Versie Clark & Family
Mrs. Tina Stewart & Family
Mr. Franklin Clinton & Family
Mr. John H. Richmond & Family

HISTORY OF HANNA SCHOOL

Under the leadership of Superintendent A.H. Horton before he retired in June 1941, he and the School Board completed a huge Parish-wide improvement program with the help of the Public Work Administration. New gymnasiums were constructed at Coushatta, Hall Summit, Grand Bayou and East Point. A new high school was constructed at Martin and a new junior high at Hanna. Although Red River Parish has had a declining population for the past 25 years, the School Board has worked toward having a high caliber school system for white children with good school plants and well trained school personnel.

Due to changes in farming practices and loss of oil resources in the Parish, it became necessary to close some high schools. Methvin, Grand Bayou, and East Point were closed and pupils were transported to other schools in the Parish. Hanna and Harvey were also closed as grade schools during this period of time. The greatest need and therefore the greatest improvement over the last two decades has been in Negro education. Thirty-four small Negro schools were closed and children transported to better school plants. One large combination grade-high school was organized at Springville. Grade schools were set up at Hanna, Grand Bayou, and East Point with high school children being transported to Springville. [Submitted by A.L. Sigler, Superintendent of schools in Red River Parish 1941-1968] Mr. Sherman Newton was Principal of Hanna Junior High School from 1949 to the mid 70s. Hanna had 300 students!

Extraordinary people, as we find in this era, were generally ordinary people with extraordinary determination. East Point School and they did not merely see the world through their own eyes, but through the eyes of those children to follow. For a better day for them was the key ingredient in this heart-felt determination. Many histories of our people in slavery, peace, hard times, and bad times are written and each serves a purpose. In many of these books the writers disseminated the fragmentary knowledge where the spark of learning had awakened the soul to thirst for more and better food. However, it was not given and many were standing with empty plates waiting to be served. They had no substance—like meat without salt, they bore no analogy to accomplishments and achievements.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "We are not makers of history. We are made by history." It was

these people during this era— who were made by history; not even knowing or caring that what they accomplished would be a major feat. Of course as any historian will tell you, that the budding future will always be stronger than the withering past, but that which has withered has left strong roots for that budding future to absorb. The withering past like the amber flickering glow of an almost dying fire, but in that smoldering smoke from that flame lies the history that was made. History is our notes taken yesterday to review today. It is history— good or bad in the recording of it that informs us of not only our past transgressions and mistakes from which we can learn today without repeating them. It also inspires us and gives confidence and hope for those gallant victories already won. We let the light of history enable us to see enough good in people who care enough to give back to the community their very best.

The late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said it best, “Light has come into the world, and every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness.”

THROUGH IT ALL

“Educate your sons and daughters, send them to school and show them that beside the cartidge box, tha ballot box, and the jury box, you have also the knowledge box.”

Frederick Douglas, 1892

I, TOO

by Langston Hughes

I too sing America

I am the darker brother

They send me to eat in the kitchen when company comes,

But I laugh

And eat well

And grow strong.

Tomorrow

I'll be back at the table when company comes

Nobody will dare

Say to me,

Eat in the kitchen

Then

Besides

They'll see how beautiful I am

And be ashamed—

I, too, am American.

I, TOO

by Langston Hughes

I too sing America

I am the darker brother

They send me to eat in the kitchen when company comes,

But I laugh

And eat well

And grow strong.

Tomorrow

I'll be back at the table when company comes

Nobody will dare

Say to me,

Eat in the kitchen

Then

Besides

They'll see how beautiful I am

And be ashamed—

I, too, am American.

When we look throughout the historical data of Red River Parish and all accomplishments as well as, failures must be recorded in the historical data and legacy of that which was said and done. Each town, each parent, each teacher, each church and it's congregation, played a significant role in bringing about a commitment to stand together as one to make changes and major accomplishments for the children throughout the entire Parish. It was a time when concern was the major factor in getting the job done as it's sole ingredient. East Point was not competing with Hanna nor Grand Bayou with Coushatta. It was an effort on the part of all the concerned parents to see that the very best education be delivered to their children and all of the many generations to follow all over Red River Parish. In those days with the early leaders were the many messages from leadership manned by Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglas, W.E.B. Dubois, and Ida B. Wells, who not only spoke out for the need of education and how without would rob the people of that day of whatever little chance they had for advancement. Their message was one of education did not simply teach work— it also taught life. All throughout the Parish from Hanna, East Point, Grand Bayou and all the others, were the teachers, parents, and the church; all eager in a collective effort and in order to somehow revolutionize the social order of this community, it was important that all within the Parish of color, work together for the educational system is worthless unless it accomplishes the task. It took from the parents to the educators, people with the insight to look ahead to the big picture or the good of all of the children to lead them into the light of better days.

So, let us salute all of the teachers and principals who helped in the journey those who were there— through it all. It was Booker T. Washington who said, "No race of people ever got upon it's feet without severe and constant struggle, often in the face of the greatest disappointments."

IT CAN BE DONE

Author Unknown

**The one's who miss all the fun
Are those who say, "It can't be done".
In solemn pride they stand aloof
And greet each venture with reproof.
Had they the power they'd efface
The history of the human race.
We'd have no radio or motor cars,
No street lit by electric stars;
No telegraph nor telephone
We'd linger in the age of stone.
The world would sleep if things were run
By those who say "It can't be done".**

God Given - God Sent

A Bridge Builder

“There is no limit to the good a man can do if he doesn’t care who gets the credit.”

~ Unknown ~

Rosenwald, Julius (b. August 12, 1862, Springfield, Illinois, U.S.—d. January 6, 1932, Chicago, U.S.) merchant and unorthodox philanthropist who opposed the idea of perpetual endowments.



Rosenwald

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was so eloquent in his words that said, "I refuse to accept the idea that the "isness" of man's nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the "oughtness" that forever confronts him." So, it would not be fitting to write the historical background of this community, this Parish, this people and not include the contribution of a man who had the insight and foresight to look far beyond the pigmentations of one's skin. A man who gave of himself a commitment to doing a right for a people who had throughout their existence in this country been wronged.

Here stood tall a man who knew that everything in this society was geared to keeping a black child from growing into manhood with a lot of baggage to carry along on this trip. Julius Rosenwald was born August 12, 1862, in Springfield, Illinois. He died in 1932. He owned 1/4 interest in Sears Roebuck and Company and through his wealth he gave a lot to Jewish charities. However, his main concern during his lifetime and beyond, was the welfare of Blacks throughout the South. In 1917, he established the Julius Rosenwald Fund whose main purpose was the improvement of education for Blacks. Throughout the South he built two and three room schools. This fund paid for the construction of more than 5,000 schools throughout 15 southern states. Let us not forget this was in the early 30's and 40's in the deep South! A man who was a great innovator and whose generosity was indeed God-given and God-sent. A young man with a vision and ambition who once had confided to a friend that ambition to earn in the distant future. According to his schedule, it was to earn \$15,000 annually. He had a plan to spend \$5,000 on his family, save \$5,000 for a rainy day, and have the joy of donating \$5,000 to charity. The Hebrew word "tzedakan" is one that has a deep meaning when we dissect and get to the root word. In looking for it's deep meaning in interpretation we find justice, righteousness, and sharing. It was not the word, but the ideal that impressed him at an early age, because in reality the Hebrew language has no word for charity only tzedakan.

Wealth consists not in having great possessions, but in having few wants. It then allows one to help fill the need of those with wants. A man like Mr. Rosenwald could make himself content with who he was and what he had. It was not for Lego building, not for showmanship, or prestige, but a man with a true act of concern. Success in any endeavor stems from what we don't choose to do as it does from what God wants us to do. This was not Julius Rosenwald's idea, but it was God's plan being carried out. He was an instrument placed there by God to be one to interact as God's messenger and it was the

strength of such a man who insisted in finding out the way God is going and go that way.

Too often, so many long after Mr. Rosenwald came and passed this way, but they were “wind-sent” not God-sent. They were so quick to fix the blame and to ignore fixing the problem. Proverbs 16:9 says, “A man’s heart chooses his way, but God directs his steps.” With that in mind, we all should not wonder where we are going or just how we will get there. The great lesson in this chapter had to have been learned by so many of you who perhaps knew very little about the contributions made by Mr. Rosenwald, but even in your lack of knowledge, you had parents, teachers, a community, a church that taught you to accept defeat. To have learned to accept the reality of the bad things that happened to you without accepting emotional defeat. To add up those few joys and to never count your sorrows and to look at what you have lost or never had in the first place.

Perhaps in today’s realm of looking at what Julius Rosenwald accomplished would not seem so great in its monetary appeal to the media and such a story would not have rated a press release in it’s reporting as being newsworthy by today’s standards, but here was a man not looking to the media for accolades or pats on the back for all of his endeavors. He was just a man, just that instrument of God who was placed in this era of time to do as humanly as possible, the correcting of a wrong in the time frame that God had allotted him to do. Julius Rosenwald had to have known that today’s necessity was yesterday’s luxury. No, he did not have all the answers because any man who knows all the answers is likely to have misunderstood the question. In closing out this chapter, I came across this poem with these lines written by that great Black poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar.

*The Lord had a job for me, but I had so much to do,
I said, “You get somebody else, or wait till I get through”
I don’t know how the Lord came out, but He seemed to get along,
But I felt kind of sneaking like— I knowed I’d done God wrong.
Now when the Lord He have a job for me, I never try to shirk,
I drop whatever I have on hand, And does the good Lord’s work.
And my affairs can run along, or wait till I get through,
Nobody else can do the work, that God marked out for you.*

“The Role of The Church”

LET THE CHURCH SAY AMEN

(The Churches of Red River Parish)

“God help us to be like bamboo, which bends and bows and sways in the winds of change but never breaks.”

Unknown

Lord, please help me to hang on. Please don't let me give up. Help me to remember that, like the sun in the morning, you come when it is time.

Unknown

“The Role of the Church”

1985

Springville Baptist Church



The Legacy of the Great Pleasures of Life is doing what people say you cannot do. For those growing up, reared up, fired up in rural Louisiana, it was more than a challenge to make accomplishments. They had a pipeline to a Higher Source and when faced with a stand-up, sure-fire problem or situation— they always went to God in prayer. Perhaps today are gone the great progressive clergymen of yesteryear. If we look around, we can see some who are throwbacks to those of this era who walked the walk and talked the talk in unison. So often opportunities' favorite disguise is trouble. Getting people to be on the same page becomes a major task for so many of today's clergy. It was something about those people of the church back then that drew them together to work it out with prayer and faith in God answering the petition sent forth.

That old adage was imbedded from Frederick Douglas who said: "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." With this in mind, the church was always in the forefront molding and shaping those young mental skies. They understood and understood so well the importance of our young people being equipped with knowledge. They also understood and stressed respect and dignity as to who and what they were. I recall someone once saying: "If you have a setback, don't take a step back— get ready for the comeback." With this being practically set in stone, the young people of that era dared to be all that the church wanted them to be.

Today we find that great majorities of the clergy are mostly reactionaries, both politically and theologically, who choose not to expand human or civil rights, but constrict themselves instead. They only think locally and not from a global perspective. Back when education played a significant role in the lives of the young people, it was the church that steadfastly took the lead. The church knew that the one quality more important than "know-how" was the quality of "know-what," by not only determining how to accomplish their purpose, but what their purpose was to be.

The teachers who took their lead from the church would always let the students know with no uncertainty that it was important to know which questions to ask. You don't need to ask, "do I have what it takes to be successful?" The answer to that was always a resounding, YES! The key question was, "were you willing to pay the price for the success they desired?" In the days of Jim Crow and segregation, it was not a very easy road for Blacks to travel. There were far too many obstacles that stood in their path, but this is where the church played her role in the offering of

faith and lots of prayer. The church and its leadership throughout the South played such a role in the things we as Blacks enjoy today. Those who fought to overcome slavery like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Frederick Douglas. Those who wrestled segregation to the ground like Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hammer. How the church was so actively involved and how four small black children were killed in a Sunday School class

As children coming up in the church, they were taught from a very early age to pay their dues with effort to earn their rewards with work, to make themselves necessary— indeed indispensable. If they wanted to get ahead, do more than was needed before it was asked, to do it well without expecting huge praise, and to understand that freedom was not free. In fact, in those days, it brought on responsibility and demanded continuing vigilant effort. In church such a song as, “Give of Your Best to the Master”, so that they truly understood that doing their best carried out to every aspect of their young lives. Serving God and others well was synonymous with excellence— it was an internally driven ethic rather than an externally imposed requirement. This was the “duty” of the church through Sunday School and other activities to pass on and carry out thoroughly.

Practical adult advice to young people always was grounded in a deeper message of purpose and of service reinforced by the examples they so carefully set. Education was about lifting self and about lifting others and the young people found no-nonsense teachers in both schools— Sunday School and public school. You didn’t put setbacks to a perspective. For the church made it clear to the young people that no single setback or failure is ever determined by one’s life. They were to pick them up then they fell or thought their world was coming to an end because of some setback or minor obstacle. The church placed and saved us from action paralysis and self-pity by putting our so-called “problems” in spiritual and historical perspective.

They shared lessons of the mighty oppression of slavery, of the Great Depression, of segregation, Jim Crow. They also made them see that they did not have to fight those battles and skirmishes alone— that God was on the side of truth and righteousness, which would eventually prevail. These young people filled with promise and vigor never let go of that early training. They looked far beyond the worldly shallowness and pettiness. For without the seeds of faith, prayer, music that were planted in these youthful souls by parents, teachers, and oh yes, the church.

In this era, there was no worry about young people lacking a sense of the sacred or moral obligations towards their peers and adults. They knew very well the line and carefully dared not to ever cross it. In their daily lives from school and church, they gathered and they kept in tact all of those core values; honesty, discipline, work ethics, perseverance, community and service. It was an era that young people did not grow up without boundaries; without respect for others nor their property and personal space; without enough role models at home, at school, in the church. It was an era where church and church life meant something as your priorities found church at the very top or at least close to the top. It was not a time when the young people could become easy prey for the false idols, and vultures of culturally manufactured glitz we find the children facing today.

Today we are faced with not only a changing church in her role by some, but few today wish to escape the suffocating vise of these things in our spiritually famished society. Today, unlike that role taken by those churches throughout the South, we find too much rhetoric. No value as the Word by far too many, is being compromised. Just keep the cash registers ringing and plastic smiles, plastic cards, and plastic souls have lost touch with the genuine. In the day of yesteryear, it was unheard of to expose their children to messages glamorizing violence, sex, and alcohol with so few mediating influence from responsible adults.

Today we have subjected our children to the tyranny of drugs and guns. The schools are not those teachers who care and find the concern in our public schools. Let us begin by praying that God's spirit will be born anew within and among us in our communities and churches. We cannot recreate what they had in Louisiana in the past, but we can teach and try to live the same enduring God-given and life-giving values of faith, integrity, and service. Let us now look back at some of those old churches and some of that "ol time 'ligion."

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF RED RIVER PARISH (Contributed
partially by Red River Parish Chamber of Commerce)
Coushatta, Louisiana**

“Lord help me to keep moving ahead when I want to give up and turn back. Help me to put one foot in front of the other to get over this new mountain, you’ve given me to climb on the way home to you.”

“Guide My Feet”

Marian Wright Edelman

So they started on a journey with many obstacles that we will cover throughout this book, but they continued on. Yes, some fell by the wayside— those who were timid and thought they had too much to lose were not willing to try for the next hill. Thank God for the church. The church in Red River Parish had always known just how it could direct and instruct its people to go in “righting their wrongs”. It was also the church in her leadership who perhaps single-handedly saved us as a people from the fate of the oppressed groups of other races. For they (the church) provided the direction to handle our cause and case in a diplomatic way for us to obtain a victory. “I have taught them in the way of wisdom. I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straightened; and then thou runniest, thou shall not stumble.” ~*Proverbs 4:11-12*

The people in this era were filled not so much with knowledge, but with “mother wit.” They quickly adapted to not being upset with what they didn’t have for that is to waste what you do have. People may have doubted what they would say, but they would always believe what they did. For their task was not a burden, but to lighten the burden of others. The smallest deed they carried out was far greater than the greatest intention that never got off of the paper. Was it not said, “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” ~*I John 3:18* What does it take to win? Certainly the desire to win, but above all of that is a commitment to pursue one’s goal; the ability to focus all energy on the goal. The true belief in that which you are seeking. The ability to face the hurdles, to endure any and all setbacks and last but not least— to hang in there long after others have given up. Not only must you forge ahead despite the pessimism and skepticism of others, but even your very own self-doubts and self-defeating moments when they come up.

None of this was easy for the pioneers. Success is not something that comes along when we want it to appear. It perhaps took many years longer than they anticipated or hoped for. They found that they had to resist getting sidetracked and disillusioned. Throughout their course, they often had to be flexible and improvise. Someone or a group of “someone’s” as the case will be understood that in order to change things, they needed more control, more power and influence over their destiny. They understood full that their communities would not— could not— did not develop through anyone’s effort but their own. That meant to roll up one’s sleeves and to build on what they had already and at the same time, work diligently to really infiltrate the so-called mainstream to have input and impact on every aspect of American life. It was Booker T. Washington who said, “ a sure way for one to lift himself up

is by helping to lift someone else.” So easily it could have been so overwhelmingly different. Try as it may, there are times when these very pioneers could have just wallowed in their own pitiful, sorrowful selves, reflecting on how bad it was for the Negro. They could have chosen to do nothing and wait for someone else to do it or never get it done. A lot of people of this era were farmers, sharecroppers, farm hands and their mentality spelled out the thinking of those in an agriculture state of mind. For as the farmer who cultivates his fields, likewise they had to cultivate their lives. If they neither attended to the soil and not bothered to sow any seeds, there would have been no harvest, no bounty to sustain them or their families.

So it became a matter of voices of leadership to step up and step out. To be in that position to “feed” others— to help them directly and to lead them to emulate and to be inspired by their example. These people who will share this history of the heritage and foundation laid down were people of a strength beyond measurement. It was people who got stronger as they went about not demanding but commanding a better education for the children in that parish, when they sought out and got teachers who cared. They became stronger as they valued their spirit and mind, and nurtured them accordingly. When you become stronger as you dream, stronger still as you pursue those dreams. Stronger as they succeeded, stronger when they fail because failure couldn’t diminish their strength, but only added to it. They quickly found out through their Christian being— you get stronger when you are willing to do what is necessary. They who went forward did not and would not allow others to reduce the scope of their vision. In this era of our history of course, the bad somehow seemed to outweigh the good and life to these people in rural Louisiana suffered a string of defeats and disappointments. Through it all, however, they not only had determination, but faith that end in the end— God had something good in store for them. With this faith, they moved ahead from the stream to the river— as they put forth their very best effort. Without faith, without prayer, without hope, we give up and become lackadaisical to accept whatever comes our way, good or bad. Our dreams, our visions will begin to seem absurdities. Coach Robinson of Grambling once said, “There may be disappointments in a game and it may take a while to regroup, but as long as we stay in the game, there’s every chance we’ll score. On the sidelines we can only watch as others do the work and the winning.”

It is so sad to see today what was done yesterday by people with far less expertise, far less

networking, far less skills; but they had far more determination to climb that ladder. There are times I am sure, in their climb when they looked up and could not even begin to see the top of that ladder, but this became a rallying point to look down and see how far they had already come. This assured them that no one's energy and effort is required but your own and they could climb as long as it took to claim their spot at the top of that ladder with their biggest lesson being to reach down to help others on the way up.

They truly left a legacy that in a lifetime of striving to fulfill or to even duplicate that which they had done. Of course, their efforts did not always meet with resounding success, but that which appeared as failure or a setback was simply God waiting to fulfill and to finish that which He participated in. If we have learned, we have not failed and no matter the outcome— if God was in the plan, we won't be deterred in any future efforts. With education, we have for our children onward and upward mobility. They knew that it was education that would give them wings. Wings to soar to heights beyond the capacity of their greatest ability. Without it, they could not compete and they would play into the hands of those who would want them to drop out of the competition. Someone once said, "The masses must move, but it must be the classes that move them." We can't and couldn't be leaky boats in a turbulent sea and thank God that there were those who found the Red River and moved from the stream into the water once murky to the eye, but clear in it's message.

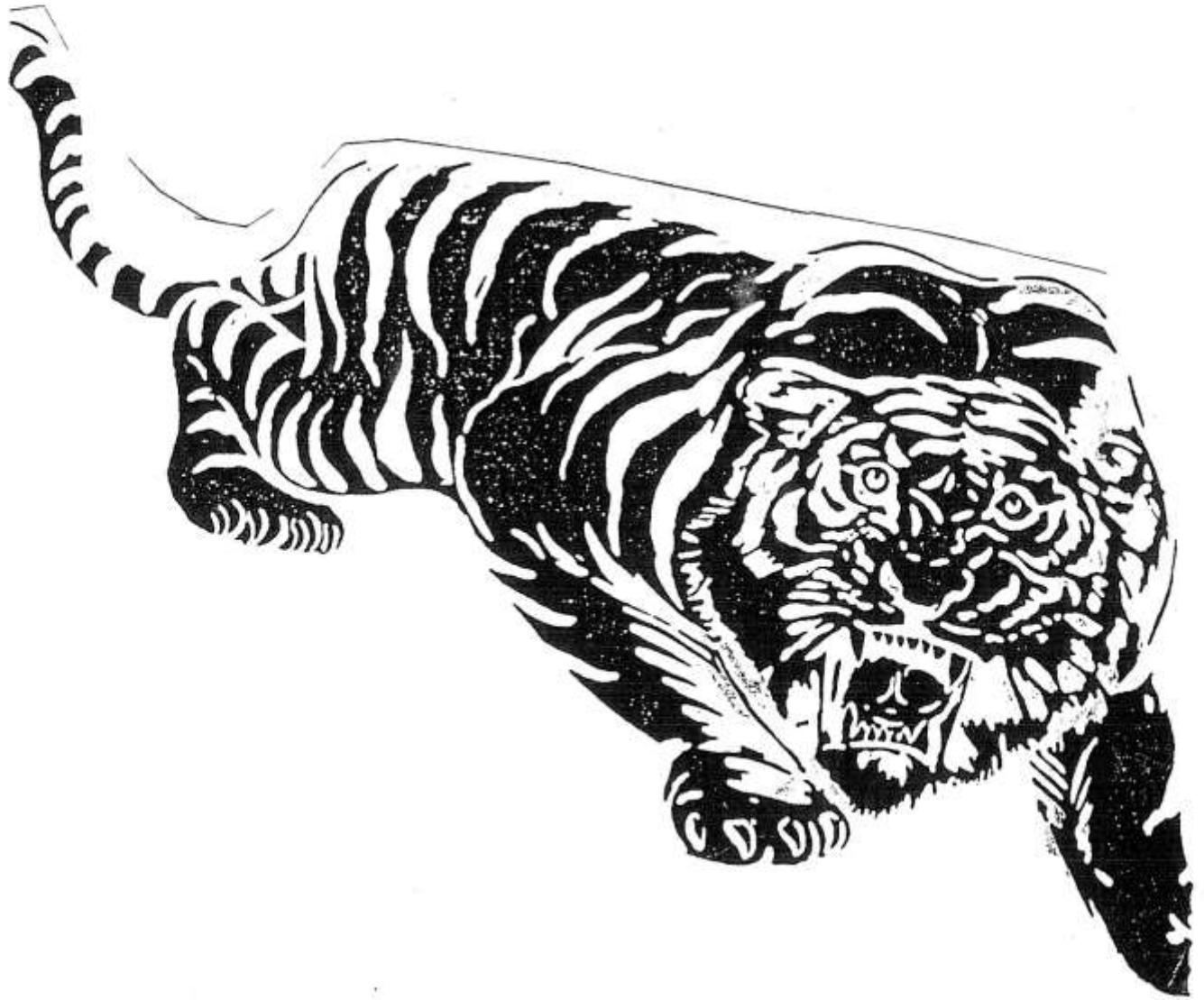
These pioneers paved a way out of no way. Who became not whiners but workers; not getters but givers; not a hindrance but a help; not a critic but a catalyst for the good and the betterment for others. The fulfillment and the end result were a direct outcome of knowing that they did their best. "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is— his good, pleasing and perfect will." *Romans 12:2*

“ENTER THE TIGER”

“Enter The Tiger”



“TIGER ON THE LOOSE”



THE MEANING OF THE TIGER

"What are we going to do?", said Baby Tiger to Mama Tiger in the jungle. "Here comes a Hunter, and he has five rifles, three special sighting scopes, and devices to allow him to see in the dark." "Hush", answered Mama Tiger and she taught her cub how to quietly come up from behind and pounce. The Hunter was never heard from again.

All of which goes to prove that technology may be fine, but it will never be a substitute for a good basic education.

~Unknown~

"Courage is the determination not to be overwhelmed by any object, that power of the mind capable of sloughing off the thingification of the past."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Where Do We Go From Here?" 1968

"If you don't have confidence, you'll always find a way not to win."

Carl Lewis

The tiger, throughout so many of our schools, has been symbolized as the mascot or team emblem. What is it about a tiger and its input or impact on so many of our schools? First of all, the tiger is a large, graceful, beautifully colored jungle cat of Asia. Its only real rival in strength and fierceness is the lion, but it is said by those who truly know both animals the tiger is more powerful. Likewise, in symbols and mascots, we tend to favor the tiger as our choice of acceptance in this area. Said a son to his father after he read a story to the youth about a tiger being slain by a hunter, "Father, in these stories why does the tiger always lose?" The dad's reply, "Son, it will always be that way—until the tiger learns how to write..." The tiger has learned how to write this time and the tiger has also learned how to become the hunter— not the hunted.

It is courage, fortitude, wisdom, and tenacity that springs forth in the action of all who choose to adapt the tiger as a symbol of those compelling characteristics they too wish to emulate. This adoption of the tiger was to subside and eradicate the fear that perhaps uncertainty was there. As a people, we try to deny or push aside what frightens us, because it's not acceptable or easy to admit when we're scared. We will not be cowards. We'll be strong. We will carry with us a symbol of our strength; our purpose. So, why not a tiger?

Fear was only a signal. When we can identify what frightens us, we can begin to cope with it in a positive way. So, let the tiger stand as our shield, but only as a shield; for we knew the real protector through all of this was God. The tiger has learned to write this time and that symbol of strength and boldness lives on. It is the symbol to give each of you encouragement! The people in the church did not contribute one dime to help me with my education, but they gave me something far more valuable. They gave me encouragement.” ~**Benjamin Mays**

When we stop to look back at the history of an institution or it's people, we fail to see the wisdom and forethought that was enamored in their selection process of choosing a name, symbol, or mascot. I am sure that in this process, great consideration and thought were given to the final selection of the name you would use. Many times people back then did not have knee-jerk reactions or spur of the moment decisions, but a lot of deep thinking went into their well thought out ideas. A reason, a purpose, and all of it's ramifications would play a part in justifying a name.

Our Pastor (your classmate), Rochelle Davis, Jr., has a unique way of dedicating a baby to the Lord at our church. He always ask's the parents', "Why did you name this child this name and just what is the meaning of the name?" If they don't know, he then suggests they do their research on that particular name and pass it on to the child. Far too often we just place a name on some person, building, or thing and we have no clue or idea as to why we did it. Too often we counter with the notion that it just "sounded good" or you heard it somewhere and you just had to use it. Our ancestors, as well as the Native Americans, were always careful in taking very seriously the task of naming their children. It was spiritual, to say the least. If it was not biblical, it had meaning of importance to the make-up of that child and what was foreseen in them.

When you look at a tiger, we must first look at the attributes of a tiger and of a people with strength. They had a lot of hidden wisdom in their thought process that was so spiritual in their approach. They so wisely depicted the tiger and it's strength as the ideal thing for their children to emulate as a way they could transform themselves. They looked at that tiger and saw far beyond the concept of a "frightening jungle cat." Instead, they keyed in on this strength they wanted their children to portray.

First, you must know that they looked with depth into how those tigers are so protective of their cubs; as they were with each of you in wanting nothing but the best. Secondly, a mother tiger is

affectionate and eager to teach her cubs the ways of the jungle; so much like your parents in preparing you for life in Red River Parish. But far too often we can only see as far as that “Hollywood” portrayal that we adapt and so quickly coin as gospel and if we do linger long enough to take a look far beyond the scope of what Hollywood tries to give us as reality, we could then see in a new light what our ancestors were crying out to us in a simple, yet meaningful way. A mind-set of a people far removed from it’s homeland and despite Hollywood’s version of depicting tigers in Africa (there are no tigers in Africa) they could still adapt such an animal as a symbol for one of it’s most important institutions— it’s school and you as it’s young people.

As young people, many of you did not see then as you perhaps do now, view the importance or the deeper meaning of the tiger as the symbol it truly represented in that which each of you have become today. For that spirit of the tiger, unbeknownst to each of you— lived in every victory, every triumph, every defeat you have had in your lives; far beyond the football field and basketball court. It was indeed a spiritual awakening that rested ever so quietly in your soul. However, contrary to your doing, you in essence became that tiger in all of your actions and reactions in facing the challenges of life.

To list the major accomplishments of each of you couldn’t be measured in one chapter. I would have to write another book! So much can be said of what and who you are; who you became. That which is in you that is God-given and God-rewarded is that which springs from that given name or symbol of the tiger. Many of you overcame obstacles placed in your path and went on to reach plateaus far beyond that which you could ever imagine. You opened those closed doors as you made in-roads and firsts’ in many fields, such as, medicine, education, law, law enforcement and the ministry, to name a few. Many of you stand here today as teachers and you salute those who instilled in you that desire to follow in their footsteps and pass it on to those whom you teach. Some of you in other parts of the Country have spread your wings and become involved in various endeavors. Rochelle Davis, Jr., Pastor of Temple of Faith Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan, became a trailblazer as he made history in the Southern Baptist Convention as the first African American President of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, as well as many other accomplishments. The list goes on and on for each of you who accomplished so much with so little at such a crucial time in your lives. It goes a lot deeper than the racial prejudice— the journey of walking to school; the desire to excel; challenges given to you by your

teachers, your parents, your church. However, to be given any recognition, let us not forget the tiger. For if truly given its recognition, that old tiger was there to remind you of that God-given inner strength that you were made of.

W.E.B. Dubois said these words: ***“The Africans who came as slaves started their attempts to reclaim their lost African heritage soon after they arrive in this country. They were searching for the lost identity that the slave system had destroyed. The Black man’s search for an identity to the world— his identity as a human being with history before and after slavery that can command respect.”*** So your identity with the tiger must take on a whole new meaning to pass on to the young sisters and brothers who will follow. They must not only know the importance of the tiger as a symbol, but for you to share how it was your strength in all that you sought to accomplish. As you encourage them, share with them the battles you endured and that which was instilled in you by teachers, parents and the church. Let it be in them that strength of a tiger to achieve and to conquer. Let it be in them that strength and courageous steadfast stand, a challenge that no other can rival in the ability to beat any and all obstacles in the way. Long live the tiger!

“Marching to Victory”

“Marching to Victory”

“CLIMBING TO THAT NEXT MOUNTAIN”

“And he came to Capernaum and being in the house he asked them, “What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?” But they held their peace, for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, “If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.” And he took a child and set him in the midst of them: And when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, “Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me receiveth not me, but him that sent me!”

~ Mark 9:33-37 ~

Frederick Douglas said it so well when he said, ***“it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men and women.”***

It was perhaps, God’s will and His grace that at this time in your lives, you were so fortunate to have grown up with and taught to teach and touch lives forever. You had a strong viable force in your teachers, your families, and above all, your church family. When you had a setback, you didn’t take a step back, you just jot ready for the comeback. This was all part of climbing that next mountain. For nobody in this era that ever gave their best ever regretted it. You were instilled with an ideal that the true meaning of your life was to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit. A sense of hanging on after others have let go. You were instilled with a sense of not having fear of the uncertain— for it is fear that makes that wolf bigger than he really is. So, it was a maturity for you as young people that began to grow when from your early teaching of church and school, you could sense that concern for others that outweighed that concern for you. There was a chance you had to make in everything you were to do, but you always kept in mind that those choices you made, made you.

In climbing the next mountain, you look back at that very first hill that got you there. You look at those who held your hand, directed your feet, set the pace, and gave to you the courage. For what you get by reaching your destination wasn’t nearly as important as what you became by reaching that destination. To dream, to visualize and to then convert those dreams into tasks, to convert those tasks into steps, then to take that first step on your journey to climbing that very first mountain. It was God’s will, God’s directing.

Teachers, parents, churches, all could have been cut from the very same cloth as those of Coushatta, Hanna, Springville, East Point and Grand Bayou; all throughout Red River Parish. For in a descriptive mode, they described to you the actions of a pessimist as one who sees a glass containing water as being half empty; but they went on to tell you that there was an optimist who saw it as half-full. They didn’t just stop there, for they taught each of you that a giving person sees water in a glass and starts looking around for someone who might be thirsty— for if you don’t, who will?

Many wise things that went far beyond book learning, but in the realm of common sense, respect, and reaching out to others came in their teaching. The difference between worry and concern is that a worried person sees a problem and a concerned person solves a problem; how not to ever take a

fence down until you truly know why it was put up and how people in the world are down on anything they are not up on. Perhaps the very best gift that was given by those around you as family, church, and teachers was that lifeline that was cast upon that first mountain to climb: ***How far is far, how high is high; we'll never know until we try.*** That early learning and the hunger to learn was instilled by not only their words, but their deeds and it was amazing what they accomplished because they did not care who got the credit. For more important to them than your know-how is your know-what, which determined not only how to accomplish your purpose, but what your purposes were supposed to be. So many people today have no real lifeline (as you did) and they prefer to stay with problems they think they fully understand, than look for solutions they're uncomfortable with. The lifeline you had was one that did not add unnecessary layers of pressure that would constrict body and spirit and would ultimately rob you of that freedom to do your very best.

It was so ironic that so many in this community of Red River Parish were not teachers by profession, but in some respect they were someone's teacher. Whether it was a parent, a deacon, a neighbor, a Sunday School or a church member, they showed so many that they too, cared. Caring enough to do important things with you or helping with problems. Caring enough (like your school teachers) to believe in your abilities. They were also the lifelines that stuck by you and not give up on you. Even in hard times and minimal opportunities— these were your teachers and others who truly believed that you could change the world if you cared enough. For it was certain that once people knew how much you care, then they would care how much you know.

A great lesson was perhaps a daily ritual of instilling into young people of this era was the fact that each of you could do just about anything that you wanted to and made up your mind to do. Their lesson was always letting you know in no uncertain terms that each of you was capable of greater things than you realized. They told you to have the desire, the faith, the persistent effort, and ability, but if you were lacking the first three factors— all the ability in the world would not help you. T.E. Lawrence said, "All people dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their mind wake in the day to find that it was vanity. But the dreamers of the day are dangerous people, for they may act their dreams with open eyes to make it possible."

Whether you knew it then or know it now, those teachers in their quest to give you a dream left

you with a vision. To let you know that always in your life—“do” is the critical word. Opportunity merely knocks—temptation kicks the door in. No matter in life how tall the stature of your teacher with all of their lifelines, all of the charts mapped out for those mountains for you to climb—you still had to do your own growing. They taught, they preached, they fussed, and they lectured. Words have power; words have altered the course of history and changed forever the destiny of individuals who spoke out. Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglas, Martin Luther King, Hilaria Moore; a preacher in a pulpit, a teacher in a classroom. Each one in their own way focused someone’s attention, daily and hourly, not on what is wrong, but on what we love and value. That, which allows us to participate in the birth of a better future, ushered in by what we each go after. It is indeed important to be a go-getter, but it is even more important to know what it is you want to go and get!

Many of you reached your mountain, many of you reached for the moon and held on to the stars. Each of you has the ability to look back and thank God for those who guided your path long before you were able. There was for each of you, no medicine like hope; no incentive so great and no dream so powerful as that truly forthcoming expectation of something better tomorrow. However, your future always begins today, not tomorrow. You always had that lifeline, that desire, that incentive, that dream, that vision; to go on to that next mountain, that next hill, that next valley, that next stream, that next venture.

There was but a small window of opportunity for those young people of this parish whose skin was black. Being taught that others of a different pigmentation were no smarter nor richer in knowledge, than they were. For what cannot be seen nor measured is a person’s attitude about what they do. All success, whether you come from the bottom of the hill or from the top, begins with a positive attitude; it is the most valuable asset we may own. Success is a product of that which is instilled, it is a product of what you as students put out. Those teachers instilled in each of you, a good feeling about where you were and where you wanted to be.

It doesn’t matter what road you take, hill you climb, or path you’re on, you will always end up in the same place—learning. As the teachers made all preparations early on in your lives to make a commitment to themselves of just how important the task of education for it’s young people. The strong and mighty lived and walked by faith. Faith is not believing, trying, or hoping. It is the knowing

by which you do and live by. Faith that produced the doers. Faith is obedience to the Spirit and that great message learned and used as a guiding light on your path— to put your faith in only those things that produce good for you. For faith without work cannot be called faith. So often when the anger has subsided, we can all look back at this era to that community, society, or world as it was for you. There were so many things that needed to change. Injustice, inequality, hatred, and poverty. All of these things perhaps disturbed you as it did your parents, your church, your teachers. You were angered by the lack of respect and insensitivity to people of color in that era, but you had teachers, parents, and a church who looked beyond placing blame and instilling hatred; tit for tat. From these institutions of school, home, and church you were given solid and worthwhile instructions. Not to ever forget that God works from the inside out and that you first must look within yourself to eliminate the fear, anger, and imbalance in your lives. So, it was all of them that helped you to move forward to create peacefully and powerfully the changes needed in the world around you. We move in the power of a mighty past. We have faced far too many obstacles, but yet we look for another mountain to climb. We are the children of those who chose to survive, yet we look for another trail to blaze; another dark and unchartered road to rekindle.

The joy of your learning, the mind enhanced, and all that was passed on to you had endured. So, as you look for that next mountain to climb, do all in this lifetime that God has given you to do. Someone once said, “When you don’t have a grip on life, it will definitely get a grip on you.”

Life is: “A mystery, unfold it; A journey, walk it; Painful, endure it; Beautiful, see it; A joke,
 laugh at it; A song, sing it;
 A flower, smell it; Wonderful, enjoy it; A candle, light it;
 Precious, don’t waste it; A gift, open it; Love, give it;
 Unlimited, go for it; Light, shine in it.” ~Unknown~

“Conclusion”

WHEN WE REACH THE END OF THE JOURNEY

“Mine has not been an easy road. Very few of my generation found life easy or wanted it that way. Your road may be somewhat less rugged because of the struggles we have made.”

~Mary McLeod Bethune, 1945~

As you find yourselves drawing to the end of this most prestigious and historical journey, you can now ponder on all that has been written. This is really not the end of a journey for it is a living legacy that will always live in the hearts and minds of those to follow. For history is not only made to be recorded, but history is a living legend of a people and their struggle! It is your legacy for others not only to learn, but to live by. You were all part of a truly historical journey that perhaps chartered the course for those that followed and to those you now leave the challenge. To those in Hanna, Coushatta, Springville, East Point, Grand Bayou, throughout Red River Parish and beyond; pass it on! You not only passed this way, but you stopped and made a difference. You left a little part of yourself in those you met and touched along this journey. You walked and talked to many. Did you issue a challenge to some child? Did you stop to mentor some child? Did you reach out to some child? Did someone along the way become a reflection for you to emulate? When you look back at this journey, let it be said of the good, the bad, the indifferent that stood in your way, that the block that stood as an obstacle stood only in the path of the weak. For it only served as a stepping stone in your path. Ralph Waldo Emerson said: *"The wise man in the storm prays to God not for safety from danger, but for deliverance from fear. It is the storm within that endangers him, not the storm without."* Each one of you passed through an era that was filled with hatred, storms, and fear. It was at a time in our history that compelled many of us to be strong, to be daring, to stand together and to pull one another up. For this was an era when responsibility was mandated and it was a characteristic that too many had to possess. For even then (as is now), nothing ever happened until someone stepped forward and said, "you can count on me."

"If you think you are beaten, you are.

If you think you dare not, you don't.

If you like to win, but think you can't, it's almost certain you won't.

Life's battle don't always go to the stronger woman or man,

But sooner or later, those who win are those who think they can."

~Unknown~

In writing this, this poem reflects the thinking of the teachers who so gallantly taught you. Who instilled along with your parents and your church a set of values that you cling to even today. Often, I am certain, that in your thoughts are things said by a teacher that you never forgot and you reap the harvest of those golden precious words that will never tarnish. As you reach this point of that journey, it becomes easy to look back and reflect not only on accomplishments, but on those dedicated souls who paved the way. For a journey of a thousand miles must begin with the first step and along the way, it matters not how many times you were knocked down, it's whether you got up again. For as long as you

can look up, you can get up and when opportunity knocks loudly at your door— you can't complain about the noise!

You can look back and think of all of those teachers that taught you to see for yourself, listen for yourself, and above, to think for yourself. For them, the task was so insurmountable that they would not dare call it teaching if there was no learning. For their concept of teaching and rule of thumb was that you couldn't teach what you didn't know and believe firmly yourself. For one cannot give energy if you are not on fire on the inside. They taught as if you were but a diamond in the rough and their job was about smoothing and polishing you up to sparkle and shine. So they improved themselves as they improved the students. They taught you early on to believe that you were worthwhile and that each of you could do many praiseworthy things. Frederick Douglas said, "A little bit of learning, indeed may be a dangerous thing, but the want of learning is a calamity to any people."

Teachers back then did not care about the status quo. They didn't care if you were the preacher's child, the sharecropper's child, or just a dirt poor child. Despite your monetary situation, they always were there willing and able to instill a purposeful life for each of their students. They had a true conviction to the task of teaching and a strong belief in self-reliance. They had a universal spirit, set with a charge and a strong willing commitment to each of you to pass on the knowledge that was a necessity. This historical path was set for you and each of you were obliged to take it. The course of your proud history may have changed, but the work and dedication put forth by your teachers was never halted. It never ended.

Achievement is largely the product of steadily raising one's level of aspiration and expectation. This was the tedious task of every teacher to share with you the knowledge they already had and the greatest good they did for each of you who that way, was not only to share that knowledge, but to reveal to you your own daily understanding and to map your future. Many thoughts, many dreams, many blessings, were all part of those years spent in those classrooms. Even those parents, Sunday School instructors, deacons, and Pastor's might not have been teachers by profession, but in so many respects they too were your teachers. They gave their very best. Caring enough to stick by each of you through tough times and not give up on you. Giving you a shoulder to lean on. And as many of those school teachers were so fond of saying, "You can change the world if you care enough. For once people know how much you care, then they'll care how much you know."

As you look back at the journey that has brought you this far, thank God for an era that is so unlike today. As you reflect, pray for those children who today wake up in the morning in dens of dope, rather than in homes of hope; with hunger in their bellies and hunger in their spirits; without parents or neighbors to care for, affirm, and lovingly discipline them. No longer the “village” concept. Sadly, there is no extended family to welcome them in their hearts. No real caring teachers in the sense of the worth of teachers like you had. The village is burning down! So today, pray for these children who truly have no one to pray for them or to protect and guide them. For they so desperately need loving attention and positive alternatives.

Someone once said, “An African Proverb reminds us that the rain falls on each and every village hut and not just on some.” So all of you were affected throughout the Red River Parish by the education you received. Today it rains and people are only concerned with their own hut, but let us remember our neighbor’s children in huts. Remember that all are our neighbors and all their children are our own. We are all a part of that village! You were so truly blessed in your journey. As the Lord helped you in spending less time on what you needed to have and more time on what you needed to be; what you needed to do with your hands and feet and voice of mercy and justice in the world. Throughout your journey, your small mustard seeds of daily service grew into great shrubs of change and trees in whose branches the birds could nest and whose shade your children can rest and feel safe.

For those gallant teachers with hands that reached out and were received by those of you who took those healing hands of knowledge. Hands that held for you the promise of the future— your’s for the asking. For those strong willed, strong minded, strong in faith teachers who reached outward to give each of you the anchor of faith, the rudder of hope, the sails of education, and the oars of family to keep all of you going when life’s sea got rough. You all had your sea legs! The teachers who opened up those tiny mental skies in that time when you didn’t know yourselves, your abilities, your frailties, and even your real virtues. They, your teachers with dedication and forethought had a special subtle way of teaching what was far beyond anything learned in college. For these teachers went directly to your hearts, minds, and souls; teaching each of you the basic standard education, but also preparing you for the world you would soon face. They molded and shaped your minds, leaving behind a young person ready to struggle like a Medgar Evers; walk the walk and talk the talk like a Dr. King; to speak the truth of power everywhere like a Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglas, or Booker T. Washington.

So you, the youth of Red River Parish, were convinced by word and deed in the actions of your teachers, that you could make a difference. You were taught to never bury your talents in the ground nor to let the spirit of hope wither on the vine of life. Each day spent in your perspective schools, you were taught and trained to light your small candle. An eternal flame that burns those words of encouragement from Springville, Coushatta, Hanna, Eastpoint, and Grand Bayou. With your burning light you got involved; you tutor, you mentor, you teach Sunday School, you preach the Gospel, you raise your family, you smile at a small child that has no smile. Each day you relight that candle and let it shine a little brighter, a little farther. It might be the one that sparks the movement to save the many upcoming generations and this nation's future. You have made a difference! With your utmost thought being that all the darkness in the world cannot snuff out the light of one little candle.

Those teachers, those churches, those parents all had a vision and together as one they gathered to seek God's vision and guidance for the children of this Parish as they worked to pursue it. In the words of Frederick Douglas, "If there is not struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one, and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and it never will."

There were many obstacles as well as, steep hills to climb, but they had their teachers. They knew your road would be rough but the haves and the have nots can be traced back to the dids and did nots. They were doers and they did it well. Their message always the same, "think wrongly if you please, but in all cases think for yourself." So, they prepared each of you for the fight of your light as they instilled you with a fortitude of courage. They equipped you with a sense of being and the knowledge to have a strong belief system in the very Highest Power. For the world was not in the least interested in the storms you encountered, but whether or not you brought in the ship. Perhaps along the journey you would stumble and perhaps through your tedious career your camp up short and short again, but you have been taught that if all your endeavors were for worthy causes, then all of your doing will have never been done in vain. Small numbers make no difference to God. There is nothing small if God is in it.

You stand today as the people you have become because of those teachers, those preachers, those parents, those like Mrs. Moore and the many

fine principals and staff, and of course Springville Baptist Church. They were the anchors from which you safely could rely on. They were the soft breezes on a windless day when you looked for comfort. They were the candles that lit the trail on your journey when your's was flickering and about to blow out. One of the greatest lessons that could be taught and to be instilled in each of you did not come from any textbook. It did not come from a planner, but it came from teachers who held high esteem for your self-esteem. They not only practiced what they preached, they could see foresee a better and brighter day. They knew that for each of you it was never going to be too late.

“Never too late to preserve one’s courage and composure.

Never too late to comprehend lessons;

Never too late too seek new opportunities;

Never too late to depend on true friends;

Never too late to uphold the struggle for a just cause.”

There was something that is almost a lost art today in the kind of education that you were so fortunate to receive. It was not so much the lesson plan as it was that instructor who went far beyond that extra mile. They mapped out for you a course to follow throughout your tenure here on earth. They stressed the importance of following guidelines, mapping out your destination, having a plan, and above all, family values. Through Christian teaching and learning as your guidepost, how to stand and be counted, not to linger in the background. How to not be a whiner, but a worker; not a getter, but a giver; not to be a hindrance, but always there to help; to be a catalyst for good and not a critic. You were good, strong pieces of leather— well put together. You were timber, not kindling. ***“The tree that never had to fight for sun and sky and air and light. That stood out in the open plain and always got it’s share of rain. Never became a forest King, but lived and died a common thing.”*** You were indeed tough and strong timber that endured all that you faced and even today— the journey must go on.

In today’s world, it is as if the clock has turned itself back in time because before us is now a strange chapter in our history. Once again, but in a different light, we find our young people in slavery, in bondage. Slaves to dope, to alcohol, to peer pressure, to gambling. More of our young African American males in state pens rather than enrolled at Penn State. We have children killing children and babies having babies. So, it now becomes your charge and your challenge to give to them what was

given to you. No, there is no way you can bring back the education you received nor the teachers you had, but you can instill in some young person a kind word of encouragement and motivation; you can mentor, counsel, preach, teach, reach, help, pray; take a child to Sunday School and his/her parents to church. Be the voice of goodness and have tolerance to challenge those who teach our children today. Nothing is so bad that some good may not come out of it. Be a part of the solution to the problem. Be the ones that say it can be done and go out and do it!

A poem by an unknown writer says it so well:

***“Who does God’s work will get God’s pay,
However long may seem the day,
However weary be the way,
Though powers and princes thunder “nay,”
Who does God’s work will get God’s pay,
He does not pay as others pay,
In gold or land or raiment gay;
In goods that vanish and decay;
But God in wisdom knows a way,
And that is sure, let come what may
Who does God’s work will get God’s pay.”***

There was never a doubt in those pioneer teachers to stress the importance of the task beyond the classroom. Their job went far and above preparation for academic achievement as they prepared you to face life; to make sure that today’s win didn’t give rise to tomorrow’s loss. They instilled in all of you the importance of always having the respect of others. A task never dictated, legislated, demanded, or required, but to never be taken for granted. For respect from others can only be earned and those teachers drove home the point of acceptance and receiving respect through expressions of love, honesty, fairness, and high moral values. Those teachers had the power to open doors, but you had to keep them open once they directed you to them. You were taught to fully understand the intellectual work ethic and its importance. There was always a committed effort in the arena of activities and techniques to develop discipline and good study and work habits.

Fortunately, in your era, there was no apathetic ideals and false notions placed by peers and misguided leadership. Everyone from teacher to parent, was on the same page, with the same song, in the same key. You were encouraged to attribute your success to ability and your failures to a lack of effort on your part. This signaled the need for more intense effort and a rethinking and rebuilding of your self-confidence. You were flowers in the garden and not weeds that would grow wild as long as

they manned the garden. They never threw up their hands in defeat, for they knew that with a little more effort, a little more patience, you would have success! For as the tide goes clear out, so it comes clear in. These teachers knew so well the importance of education. They wanted these young people to live their lives to the fullest and best. They were not there to meddle, interfere, dictate, give advice that wasn't wanted, or assist where services were not needed. Their job and mission was to help you build character, giving you the opportunity to help yourselves. To uplift, to inspire, to lead by example, to make suggestions, to make demands. For with their persistence, with a little more effort on your part, and what seemed hopeless failures turned quietly into glorious success. As they always said, there was no failure except in not trying and there is no defeat except from within, and no insurmountable obstacles in our path except your own inherent weakness.

Today, let us look beyond and before to those who truly paid the price. Those and others like them (their names less known) have made our heritage, our history into a dwelling place. Their graves are mounds from which flares our torch from your lit candles. The simple, honest, unpretentious slaves and our forebearers who worked, struggled, toiled; carrying burdens often paid with ingratitude; spurned, misunderstood, misused, but who still carried on. Sometimes robbed of recognition. To all of those throughout this land who sleep in forgotten graves, our hearts look to you for the legacy of continuation given to us. For you pointed the way through this journey that led to love, truth, and usefulness.

There is now but a fork in the road of your journey. There you stand with the light awaiting the path to take. No, it is not time to blow out the candle. This is the light of hope. Instead, hold it high as a guide by day, a pillar of fire by night, to cheer each pilgrim on his way. Yes, there have been times O God when we have forsaken our past, but in each forsaking moment there will always be that reminder from which we came. The past will always be your history and it is more than just bare facts to be memorized by today's school children, nor does it stand in the backyard like an old picket fence slowly and silently rotting away. The past is a real world that is inhabited by those who passed this way and their contributions made along the journey. Their story becomes your story—it is the tie that binds each generation to all of the others that are to follow. It is history; it is your heritage.

The very best upbringing that your generation received was that of observing those teachers and

it was their quest to take care of themselves in the upmost in mind, body, and spirit. As youngsters, you grabbed on to the dreams and visions your teacher's had for each of you. Then, like a magnet, it stuck. It held and bonded like cement to all your future endeavors that they as teachers sought for each of you. There is an old saying, "If you give me rice, I'll eat today. If you teach me how to grow rice, I'll eat every day!"

So, as you traveled over those countless obstacles onto the plains and prairies; over the hills and mountains; through the streams, ponds, and rivers; wandering amongst the stars hovering over you; into the cities, towns, countryside; behind prison walls and church walls, you ponder over the early church and think to yourself, "*where He leads me, I will follow.*" You had teachers whom you emulated in every fashion. They were honest and you learned honesty. They were kind and you adopted that kindred spirit. They were faithful to their task and you too learned faith. Beyond all, they showed you love and you too became loving in all your ventures, all your endeavors. Your teachers were a very special class—they were God's very best sent to you. Going above and beyond the call to encourage each of you to become all God meant for you to be. They wouldn't for a moment, allow you to wallow in uncertainty, but made you elevate all your strengths and possibilities; not let you dwell on the impossible, but to excel in the possible. To be like bamboo, which bends and bows and sways in the wind, but never breaks. To pay your dues with effort; earn your rewards with work; and to face reality with challenges. There is an old African tale that sums it up best when we speak of going after what is out there. It goes like this: "*Every morning, when the sun comes up, a gazelle wakes. He knows that he must outrun the fastest lion or he will be eaten. When the sun comes up, the lion also wakes. He knows he must outrun the slowest gazelle, or he will starve. In the end, it doesn't really matter whether you are a lion or gazelle, when the sun comes up, you had better be running, or you will starve or be eaten.*"

REFLECTIONS OF THE PAST

“Every generation needs the instruction and insights of past generations in order to forge its own vision.”

Jesse Jackson

Each of you, as you now reflect, had to have expected that setbacks would be a part of the ongoing effort. In your reflections, as you now look back, it helps now to say that you truly see from all perspectives those days now gone by. To know that you are where you are because of the bridges that crossed. Sojourner Truth was a bridge, W.E. B. Dubois was a bridge, Booker T. Washington was a bridge. Your Pastor and your church were bridges. Your parents, neighbors, classmates were all bridges that helped you to cross. Now you are that bridge to help direct and guide the path of others.

DREAMS——by Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams

For if dreams die

Life is a broken-winged bird

That cannot fly

Hold fast to dreams

For when dreams go

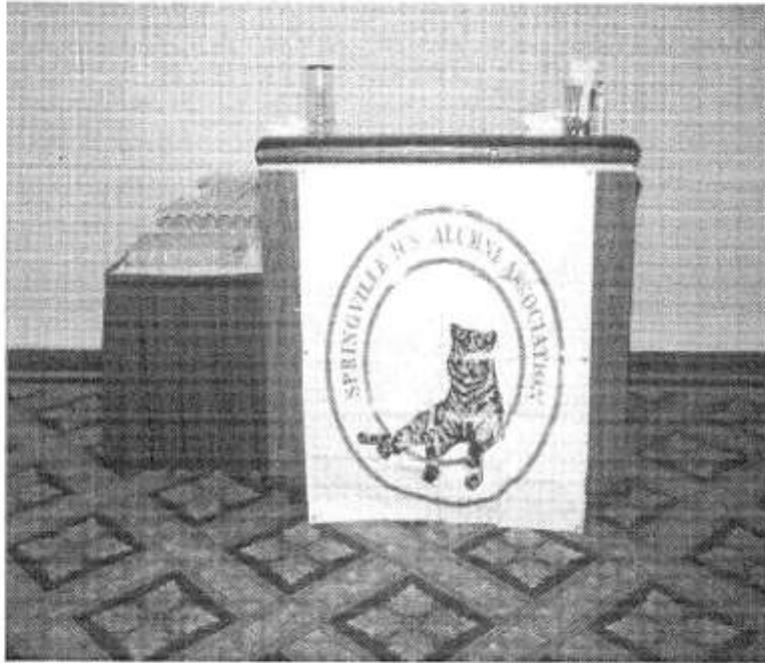
Life is a barren field

Frozen with snow.

A Brief History of The Springville High School Alumni Association

Founded 1966

Los Angeles, California



During the early to mid-1960's, it was recognized by all ex-Coushatta residents and Springville High School graduates and associates that there was a growing population of "Home Boys & Girls." There was much socializing among them and in fact there was an amateur basketball team in the City of Los Angeles and County of Los Angeles Leagues that was made up of entirely of ex-Springvillites. During the intermingling of these individuals at the basketball games and related social events, the subject of the formalizing a means of getting together was often brought up.

In the spring of 1966 a meeting was held at the home of Oletha and Odrie Wells where the first serious discussion of forming The Springville High School Alumni Association was discussed. At the first meeting, many ideas were brought forward, but there were few resolutions. Two out three meetings were held shortly after the initial meeting and it was decided that a slate of officers should be elected. There were originally four (4) officers elected. They were: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer. Leon Williams, Peter Drakes, Oletha Well-Sibley, and Leroy Bell respectively were elected to fill those offices. After a few months of operation, a charter was drafted,

and a Board- of- Directors named. The charter was filed and The Springville High School Alumni Association was certified as a non-profit organization in the state of California. This was done in anticipation of raising money and distributing those funds for furthering the education of direct descendants of Springville Alumni.

In 1968, the first scholarship was awarded to Waverlyon Grant. Ms. Grant entered Grambling State University and graduated in the field of education. She is currently a Middle School Principal in Red River Parish. The Alumni Association continued to award scholarships for several years. In the early to mid-seventies, due to a number of changing situations....not the least of which was the change of status of Springville High School, there was a period of inactivity.

In 1980, a series of events led to the organization of reunion of Springville High School Alumni. Everyone who had attended Springville was invited to attend. The event was held at the school and was well attended by Springville Alum's from all over the country. Since that first reunion, there has been another every two years since, and they too have been well attended and on each occasion there are some new faces and some that have been able to attend all, or nearly all, of them. The first six reunions (1980-1990) were all held in Coushatta, Louisiana on the Springville campus. In 1990, some of the activities were held in Shreveport and from that point forward the reunion and all of its activities have been held at locations outside of Coushatta. They have all been well attended and well documented.

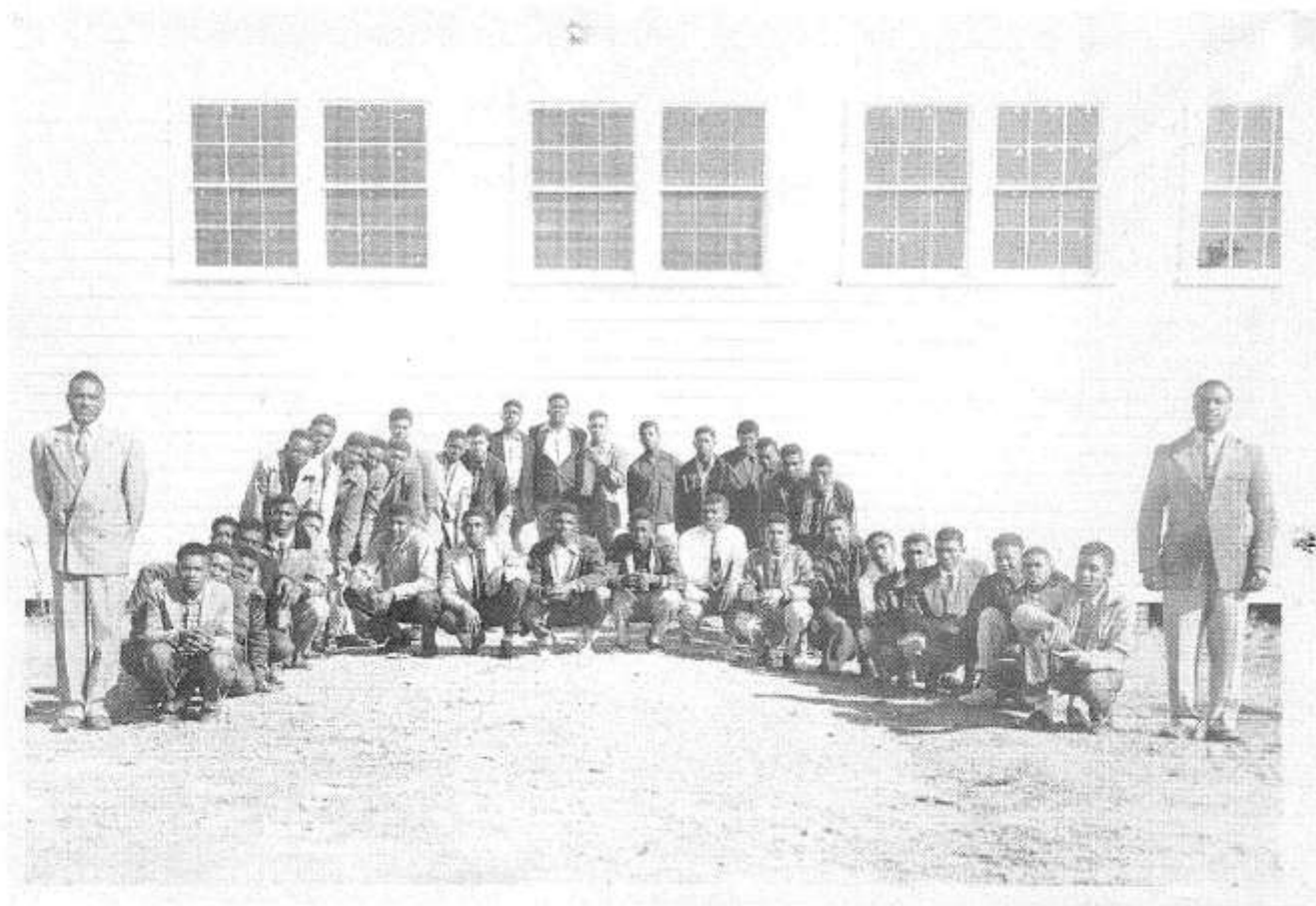
With the resurrection of the Alumni Association through the bi-annual reunions and the activities associated with it, the Los Angeles Chapter also became active again. Due to the long period of inactivity the original charter was no longer valid and in order to be a viable organization again and to be able to generate funds on a tax exempt basis, a new charter had to be drawn up. That process was completed in 1992 and is still active and operating today as a charitable, tax exempt organization working to enhance the opportunities of Springville High School Alumni and their descendants.



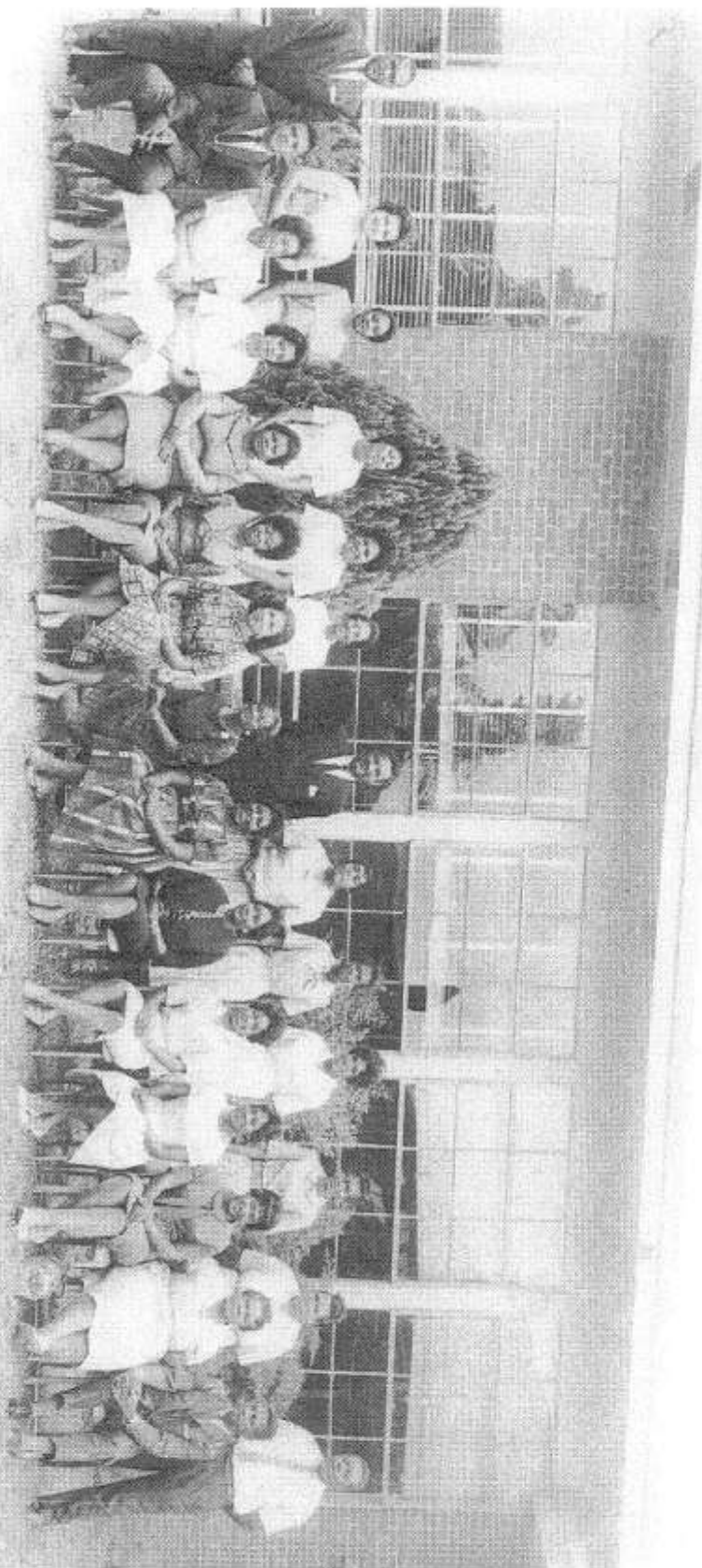
Faculty Staff of Springville High School participation in the 1st Reunion Church Service at Springville Baptist Church.



John B. Moss Memorial Park



Springville High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) with—L.A. Williams, Principal, and Sherman Newton, Teacher.



Springville High School Faculty Staff—1962

Springville Homecoming



SPRINGVILLE HOMECOMING QUEENS — Homecoming Queens and Attendants of Springville High School, Coushatta, La., are shown above. They are, from left to right (standing); Miss Lora Dell Grant, first attendant; Miss Wanda Elaine Sibley, Homecoming Queen & Miss Gloria Jean Bryant, second attendant. Seated, left to right, are Miss Rosalyn Renee

Grant, first Elementary attendant; Miss Bertha E. McShepard, Elementary Queen and Miss Sandra Taylor, second attendant.

These young ladies were honored during Springville High School's Homecoming activities Nov. 17, 1960, including the annual Homecoming Parade through downtown Coushatta. Band and drill teams from Natchitoches, Winnfield,

Ringgold, Campt, East Point, Hanna and Grand Bayou took part in the parade.

Sponsors of the queens and attendants are Mrs. Margaret Knighton, Miss Ernestine Rountree, Mrs. Myrtle Jackson, Mrs. W. K. Barr, Mrs. Bonnie Hall, Miss Vera McBride and Miss Thelma Banks. Lee A. Williams is principal.

Springville High Staff is working on a float preparing for Homecoming.





Springville High School Marching Band participating at parade in Coushatta.



Springville High School Marching Band



Springville High School Basketball Team—1952



Springville High School Football Team—1952

**PICTURES of PERSONS who PARTICIPATED
in the
ALUMNI CELEBRATION**



**PICTURES of PERSONS who PARTICIPATED
in the
ALUMNI CELEBRATION**



Myrtle Bass
B.S., Southern
M.S., N.S.U.
Librarian



MILES—Home Economics



MURRAY—Speech

GAFFORD—History



GLENN—Typing



KNIGHTON—Agriculture



1970-71

The First Blacks at Coshatta High School

In the year 1976



**Oscar C. Hamilton, Jr.
B.S. Grambling
Band**



"I've Got To Use My Imagination"

In the year 1976



**Assistant Principal: MR. VERLIE KNIGHTON
B.S., T.I.
M.Ed., Southern
+30, Southern**

Faculty 1976



CLEVELLA GAFFORD
B.S., Grambling
Geography; Gen. History;
Social Studies



MYRTLE BASS
B.S., Southern
M.A., N.S.U.
Librarian



MARGARET GLENN
B.S., Southern
M.Ed., Southern
Typing



MILDRED JACK
Teacher's Aid



JO ANN KNIGHTON
B.S., Grambling
M.Ed., N.S.U.
30+, N.S.U.
General Science;
Biology



LULA WILLIAMS
B.S., N.S.U.
Special Education

**The largest group of Black Teachers
of Coushatta High School**

NED McCRAY
B.S., Southern
Industrial Arts



EXIE B. MILES
B.S., Grambling
M.Ed., N.S.U.
Home Economics

ROY MURRAY
B.S., Grambling
M.S., L.S.U.
30+, S.U., T.S.U., N.S.U.
Civics, Sociology,
American History



OPHELIA RUSHING
B.S., Southern
Reading



PEGGY THOMAS
B.S., Grambling
English, Speech

