

Schools

[Brunswick School Photos and Alumni information](#)

During the pre-Civil War days, men of highest educational qualifications conducted private schools. The pioneer school teacher of the town was Judge John M. Davis (a relative of James O. Kelliker's mother), who opened a school on the 19th of June, 1840, for a term of five months. There were about thirty pupils, among whom were: John, Ben, Charles and Samuel Spencer, Sterling Price, nephew of General Sterling Price, and Beverly Price, William Turner, Elias, Samuel, William, and Asa Elliott, Isaac and Samuel Hibler, James, Edward and John Keyte, William and Bettie Penick, Ann E. Price, Camilla and Bettie Price, Mat Spencer, and others. The school building was a log house, and stood south of where Grand River now runs. Some of the first school children named above are the ancestors of persons well known in the Brunswick area today. William Turner was the son of Mary Ann Herring and Elias Turner, who were Gerald Baxley's great grandparents.

Isaac and Samuel Hibler were older brothers of John James Hibler, Wm. D. Hibler, Jr's grandfather. Mr. Hibler (Bill) has in his possession a receipt for tuition which reads: Received of James H. Hibler ten dollars in part for the tuition of his children at my school this 18th day of May, 1858. It was signed, Watkins, A. Johnson.

Great grandchildren of Samuel Elliott still living in this area are: Sam Elliott, Turner Elliott, Ruth Elliott Magruder, and

Mattie Clair Elliott. (Mrs. Elliott's maiden name was also Elliott)

A private seminary, located on Keyte Street at the top of the hill north of the Methodist and Christian Churches, was attended by the children of many of our oldest families. Professor Douglas, a Harvard graduate, and Professors Parks and Mitchell, both college graduates, were some of the first teachers in the seminary. Until recently, North Scott street was called "Seminary Hill."

In the August 19, 1854 issue of the WEEKLY BRUNSWICKER is the following notice:

“Brunswick High School course of study will embrace a thorough English course, with languages, music on the piano and guitar, painting, and drawing. Every department will be filled with efficient and experienced teachers, with whose co-operation the principal expects to give entire satisfaction to parents and guardians. Such arrangements will be made as to enable the teachers to give special attention to the juvenile classes. Terms of School as follows: For Elementary studies 10 months, \$16; for higher English, \$20; for Latin, Greek, or French, \$5; Music on piano with use of instrument, \$40; guitar, \$30; painting and drawing, \$15; for incidental expense, \$100.”

While the majority of the children were required to pay tuition, poor children were allowed to attend free of

charge. When the Civil War came, these private schools were closed.

As soon as the war was over, a movement was started to secure a charter and state aid for the establishment of a free public school. Mrs. Audrey Magruder Merchant, who was a teacher in Brunswick schools during the 1920's and 30's, wrote an article which was published in *The Brunswicker* April 24, 1931. In it she said: "Our oldest citizens tell us that the first public school was held over the dry goods store of Bowman and Morgan in 1866-67. The assistant principal was Miss Lida Bradley. The old brick building which stood where Porter's (Bud Shull's) garage now stands, once known as St. Anne's Episcopal Church, was used for a public school in 1868-69 and was taught by Prof. A. D. Richards. During this time Miss Mollie Lyford taught a small private school in the old Methodist church building which stood where Peery's Lumber Yard was located."

The first public school building was erected where the James Trailer Court is today and was opened by Professor Beebe. He was followed by Professor Mc-Mullin whose assistant was Miss Mary Eliza Davis (an aunt of James O. Kelliker's mother.) The next principal (the word superintendent was not used then) was Professor P. T. Gallegher, a graduate of West Point. The Professor loved his "tipple" a little too much and was dismissed. Mrs. Emma Crawley, (also an aunt of J. O. Kelliker's mother) his assistant, took charge for the remainder of the year.

Professors called the students together by the ringing of the old hand bell. There were no such things as elective

courses and there were no graduation exercises. Those who wanted an education stayed in school until they had taken all the subjects offered. Mrs. Merchant said that in the early days the boy's playground was separated from the girl's playground by a high board fence. She added, "The older citizens tell us that boys had to sit on one side of the room and the girls on the other. They entered the building by separate entrances, and woe be unto him who was found trespassing!"

In 1881. the total enrollment of white pupils was 212; the enrollment of black pupils was 70, making a total enrollment of 282 pupils. The average attendance was 204. There were 7 teachers employed in the district; their average salary was \$42 per month. The highest salary paid a teacher was \$80 and the lowest salary was \$25. The total amount paid for teachers' salaries was \$2,173.75.

While Professor Hubbard was principal, the building burned to the ground, having been saturated with kerosene during the night by the incendiary, who confessed years afterward. The large three story building owned by Professor Hignight (located where the home of Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Newsom now stands) was used for a school until a new building could be erected.

The first graduating class of six girls and four boys was in 1890. Years later one of the graduates wrote a note to the editor of the high school paper saying that today they wouldn't be considered graduates, because some of them had taken all of the subjects offered by the school in two years.

The enrollment of the high school for the 1916-17 term of school was 78, the largest in the history of the school to that time.

The classes in the elementary schools were very large according to today's standards. In the seventh and eighth grades (then called the Grammar School), taught by Mrs. Audrey Merchant, there were 47 pupils. Miss Emma Davis (later Mrs. John Kelliker, mother of James O. Kelliker) had an enrollment of 48 in the sixth grade. The fourth and fifth grades, taught by Miss Tillie Woodward (Mrs. Gus Heisel), had an enrollment of 41. There were 57 pupils in the second and third grades, taught by Miss Mamie Kendrick. The editor of *The Brunswicker* commented on the enrollment of the first grade, "Miss Marguerite Jacquot has 51 healthy, noisy youngsters in the primary department, which will insure her a busy, as well as a "buzzy" season's work."

At that time the school district included just the town of Brunswick. There were 28 non-resident students in the high school. Many teachers of rural schools were high school graduates who had taken and passed a two-day examination; they received a two-year certificate to teach. These teachers were expected to do the janitor work and come early enough in the morning to build a fire to heat the building. Mrs. S. P. (Lucille) Sorensen came to Brunswick as a teacher training teacher in the early 1920's. Graduates of high school who had received teacher training were in great demand, because they had learned how to conduct a one-room rural school. They also had a thorough review of all the subjects they would teach. Many of these teachers attended summer sessions

at "Normal" schools or the university until they received their "60-hour Life Certificate." In the late 40's and early 50's these certificates became obsolete. In towns such as Brunswick, teachers were required to have a B.S. B.S. or B.A. degree; but teachers already in the system were allowed to continue teaching if they were working toward a degree.

On April 24, 1931, there was a special school edition of *The Brunswicker*. On the front page was a picture of "Brunswick's new \$60,000 high school". On the front page was also Mrs. Audrey Magruder Merchant's history of Brunswick's schools and a history of Brunswick by Miss Edith Marston. The B. K. Bruce School was being remodeled and the old school building was being remodeled to make it suitable for an elementary school. Previous to the building of the new school in 1931, the first floor of the old building on Seminary Hill (the site of James Trailer Court) had been used for the elementary school, and the second floor was the high school.

In this issue of *The Brunswicker* (1931) was a picture of Miss Edith Marston. Under this picture was this tribute to her: "An efficient teacher, an excellent disciplinarian, a friendly counselor to students, she has given generously of her time and energy to the work of educating the children of this community. Her kindly and helpful assistance can always be depended upon in any project which may be expected to further the interest of our schools." This same tribute should be given to many teachers who have taught in our schools.

Although started during a period of prosperity, the new school building was completed at the beginning of the great depression of the 1930's. Since many of the people could not pay their taxes, the school had very little money to pay for the school furnishings or interest on the bonds. *The Brunswicker* of March 30, 1934 urged everyone to vote for the tax levy, "80 cents. above 20 cents," which passed. The School district was about \$100,000 in debt - some \$40,000 above the bonds voted. Teachers taught for very small salaries, but even so, there was not always money for the teachers' salaries. At one time, the members of the board of education signed a note in order to get money for the teachers' salaries. Superintendent H. H. Schaperkotter thought the school should bring rural students into the high school by bus, but there was little money in the treasury, and the school board was afraid to go further into debt to buy a bus. Mr. Schaperkotter purchased Brunswick's first school bus!

The members of the board of education felt they had accomplished a great deal when in a brief ceremony held at a board meeting in September, 1941 they burned \$6,000 worth of bonds. Board members present were: Dr. H. E. Tatum, L. S. Storer, C. S. Bittiker, Dr. J. L. Fetzer, and Denton Grotjan.

The present junior-high and high school was built in 1957-58 at a cost of nearly one-half million dollars, and was occupied by students in 1958. This move vacated the former high school, built in 1931. It is used as a grade school now, and underwent a \$30,000 expansion in 1966.

During the 1940's many schools in adjoining districts were closed and the students sent to Brunswick schools. Because of a new state law, the Chariton County Board of Education made plans for the redistricting of the entire county and the plans were approved by the State Board of Education in 1949. The following districts became a part of District R-II; Brunswick, Indian Grove, Zion, Allega, Hazel Ridge, Foggin, Hickory Grove, Prairie Chapel, Bluff Point, Davis, Woodard, Warren, Brandt, Manson, Sleyster, Riverside in Chariton, DeWitt, East and West Smith in Carroll County. An elementary school was maintained in DeWitt for several years, but the other school buildings were sold at auction at the high school building, the prices ranging from \$61 to \$296.

An article in the Kansas City Star, Wednesday, February 7, 1968 told about integration of the Brunswick Schools in 1957. In an interview with V. C. Harrison, superintendent at the time of integration, he said he took the Brunswick post knowing he would face desegregation due to the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling. "The school board," he said, "agreed unanimously to close the Negro elementary school and to open the high school to students previously bussed to a state vocational school at Dalton, Mo. When Mr. Harrison left in 1960 after five years, school integration was working smoothly.

Mr. Huff, superintendent of the Brunswick School in 1968, was also quoted, "Huff points with pride to the accomplishments of Negro students. A graduate now serving in Vietnam, where he has been twice wounded, was named outstanding school citizen, chosen by the faculty. The Future Homemakers of America Chapter has

elected a Negro girl as its president. Many Negro boys have participated in the school's three sports, basketball, baseball and track. A Negro graduate is attending Moberly, Mo. Junior College on a basketball scholarship. Negroes are on the honor roll and participate in all activities. Huff said the best sign of acceptance of integration by students was the election last fall of a Negro girl as a junior high cheerleader."

Today (1976) Brunswick boasts an exceptional school system, which is rated as an AA school by the State Department of Education, but in many areas, the school is rated AAA (the highest rating). The fact that Brunswick schools have an average ratio of 15 students per teacher in the elementary system has brought favorable comments from visiting state officials. This allows teachers to give more individual attention to each child.

According to Supt. Eldon Powell, the total budget for the school year 1975-76 was \$569,872.00. There are 35 certified teachers and 3 administrators, with an average salary of \$7,836. The community is fortunate to have a registered nurse, Barbara Rice, as part of the personnel. 68 units of credit are offered in the high school and a student must have 20¹/₂ credits in order to graduate.

The amount of money spent, the number of teachers in the system, and the beauty of the school building are not the only standards by which a school should be judged. The citizens of Brunswick can be proud of our school, because of the many fine citizens who have graduated from it. Many of our graduates have held important positions in the business world; others are well-known

scientists; many have fought bravely in our nation's wars. Every spring we see the names of our graduates on the Dean's List of some college or university, the pictures of those who have graduated with honors, and of those who have been named in "Who's Who". A number of former students have been recognized by having been elected as members of Phi Beta Kappa.

The B. K. Bruce School

The Elliott School, the first school for black children, was named after the family who gave the land where the first school was built. The name was later changed to the B. K. Bruce School. B. K. Bruce, widely known Negro educator and tutor of appointees to the United States service academies, was born in Brunswick in 1859. He attended Lincoln University and received his degree from the University of Kansas in 1885. B. K. Bruce served as principal of a Negro School at Leavenworth, Kansas, from 1895 to 1939, when he retired. At that time he had tutored more than 1800 youths preparing to enter West Point, the Naval Academy, and the Coast Guard Academy. He once said that only three of his pupils failed to pass the entrance examinations. His father was one of the first black men to be given recognition in Washington, D.C.

Well remembered by the older people of Brunswick is the late Professor Samuel Bigby, father of Mr. Vernard Bigby, a resident of Brunswick today. He was a good disciplinarian, a conscientious teacher, respected by students, parents, and townspeople. Miss Jennie Ashby,

mother of Mrs. Mary Blanton, was a teacher in the 1890's and is still fondly remembered by many older citizens. For many years when people thought of the B. K. Bruce School, they thought of Mrs. Nannie Hopkins, a capable teacher, and a fine Christian woman, who now lives most of the year with her daughter and son-in-law in St. Louis.

Mrs. Constance Fristo contributed the following information: Several years before the B. K. Bruce School was closed because of the small enrollment, the Board of Education decided to transport the high school students to the Dalton Vocational School. At the end of the school year, the sophomores received a diploma certifying that they had completed a two year course of study in the B. K. Bruce School. Because of parental disapproval of the closure of the high school, the board decided to keep the school open for another year. At the end of the next year the students received another diploma showing they had completed three years work. Another diploma was issued to these students when they graduated from high school. Since they had received a diploma when they graduated from the eighth grade, they now had received four school diplomas!

That there were fine teachers in the B. K. Bruce School has been proven by their achievement since that time. The Rev. Ms. Marjorie Casson, who still lives in Brunswick, has graduated from Central Methodist College in Fayette, has taught special education classes in Salisbury, and is an ordained minister in the A.M.E. Church.

Mr. A. P. Chinn, who received his M.Ed. in 1964, is the son-in-law of Mrs. Herman Ewing of Brunswick. He was a

teacher for 12 years at Mandaree, N.D. on an Indian Reservation, and principal for two years at a high school in Busby, Montana. His wife, Norma Ewing Chinn, who also has a M.Ed., taught until they moved to Montana. For the past six years, Mr. Chinn has taught business mathematics and intermediate algebra at Haskell Indian Junior College, Lawrence, Kansas, which has an enrollment of approximately 1200 with a faculty of about 185. This spring the HIJC Student Council voted him the Outstanding Professor of the year 1975-76.

St. Boniface Parochial School

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In the early days, the Catholic people of Brunswick felt that, in order to have a substantial parish, it was necessary to have a parochial school. Thus, in the early 1870's, under the direction of Fr. Constance Hergenrother, the first parochial school was opened. The school progressed and it was not until the Rev. John J. Meinhardt was appointed to St. Boniface parish that it was found necessary to build a new school.

The school, a modern structure with all the latest fixtures, was completed in 1930 and passed the state inspection. Fr. Meinhardt placed the school in charge of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallen, Mo. They stayed until 1933 when the sisters of the teaching order of St. Francis

took over the school. The sisters of this order continued teaching in the school until May, 1968. Because of the small enrollment and the shortage of teaching sisters, the school was closed at that time. It remains closed except for CCD (Con-Fraternity Christian Doctrine) instructions that are held once a week during the school year.

Bowen Institute Of Pharmacy

Dr. W. W. Bowen, M.S., M.D., PhG., (Pharmacy Graduate) established the Bowen Institute of Pharmacy in Brunswick in 1910. He had once been a professor of the Eclectic Medical University of Kansas City, and was also a lawyer and a member of the American Chemistry Society. In 1910 persons who had worked as an apprentice under the supervision of a registered or graduate pharmacist for two years, could take the Missouri State Board of Pharmacy examinations and become a registered pharmacist. When Dr. Bowen learned that more than 50% of those taking the examinations failed, he realized the need for a pharmacy review course. The courses offered were: Chemistry, the metric system, crude drugs, and the Pharmacopea. After the student had paid the tuition, the school furnished instruction until he passed the state examinations.

During its first year, 30 students passed state boards of pharmacy. The school became well-known in the central part of the United States, students coming from as far south as Texas, from New Mexico in the southwest, and from as far west as Idaho. The March, 1934 class of nearly

70 students was the largest he had had in several years. A few years before Dr. Bowen died in 1937, he told a reporter from *The Brunswicker* that 5,000 of his graduates were registered pharmacists.

Day Care Center

In March 1964, under the Office of Economic Opportunities Program of the Johnson Administration, Day Care Centers were established in Brunswick, Keytesville and Salisbury. This was an effort to enable mothers who wanted and needed to work to have care for their children during the day, and to give care to other children who had special needs.

The starting staff in Brunswick was Geraldine Stroemer, teacher-supervisor, who is still in the program. In February 1965, Edmonia Meyer joined the staff and has been with the program since. George Marvin Underwood was the driver for eleven years.

During the first year, the Chariton County Program was enlarged to include several counties and became a CAP-Project with Art Summers its first director.

Later when the government developed Head Start, the Day Care Centers became a part of the program. After functioning for several years in this way, in 1973 the

Chariton County Centers became half day Head Start Child Development Centers and remain so at this time.

The present staff, which cares for twenty children, ages three through five, include Mrs. Stroemer, teacher-supervisor; Mrs. Meyer, cook; Carolyn Ellington, teacher's aide; Willard Agee, driver; Ora Lee Warden, custodian; and Mary Blanton, community aide. Community volunteers provide a second teacher's aide.