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# *Rosedale's Educational Development* *1876-1976*

DOUGLAS McDONALD

### *Schools of the Rosedale Area Prior to 1900*

The noted educator George Peabody once observed that "education is a debt due from past and present to future generations." The development of western Bolivar County from an immense forest and canebrake has witnessed each generation make efforts to provide an adequate educational system for its young people. When the county was created, education was conducted almost entirely by tutors serving in plantation homes or in privately supported neighborhood schools. According to J. C. Burrus, at the time, Bolivar, County, came into existence as a political subdivision there was only one small neighborhood school. It was located in the Beulah community and was conducted by a Mr. Berger.

The implementation of public education in Bolivar County was the result of a resolution passed by the Board of Police of Bolivar County and adopted on October 17, 1839:

Dr. Douglas McDonald is a Professor of Education and Director of Institutional Research at Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi.

Resolved, by the Board, that the Judge of Probate of this county be requested to attend the above stated term of this board to be held on the second Monday of November, next, to take into consideration the propriety of establishing a common school in the county of Bolivar, under the provisions of the late act of the Legislature of the State of Mississippi in relation thereto.

Despite this resolution, the school system developed slowly, for seven years passed before the first school commissioners were selected. However, on July 13, 1846, the following individuals were appointed by the Board of Police to serve as commissioners: First District, Matthew Farrar; Second District, Isaac Hudson; Third District, Joseph McGuire; Fourth District, John R. Patterson; and Fifth District, John Thompson. The Board further directed that "the school commissioners would meet on the first Monday of September, 1846 to organize."

Around 1856, a school was organized in the Beulah community. The first two teachers in that school were Berger, as noted above, and a Mr. Skyland of Virginia. Among the children attending this school were John and Marcellus Noble, Lizzie Tiller, Mary and Carry Worsham, J. C. Burrus, and other children of the Burrus family. Around 1859 Colonel Frank Montgomery built a schoolhouse for the Beulah community. The children involved rode on horseback to this school in good weather. Piano and singing were taught in this school, as were the traditional "three R's." A spelling bee was held on Friday afternoons and was attended by the neighborhood mothers, and occasionally by the fathers as well.

Just before the outbreak of the Civil War, a school was operated by the cemetery on what was later the Boyd place, near, Gunnison. William Payne was the first instructor. During the war Jane Love taught at the same place for several months before Columbus Arnold opened a school at what is now Gunnison. It has been reported that these were small schools and that they operated only a few months during the year. However, "they represented an earnest effort on the part of parents to give their children some education." The traditional reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling were taught, and occasionally piano and singing lessons were given.

Probably the most famous name related to early schools in the Rosedale area was Brander. A native of Scotland, J. B. Brander had taught in a boys' school in Arkansas. While there, he met and married Jennie Elder, a fellow teacher. In 1860 the Branders came to what then was the county-seat town of Prentiss, where Brander was superintendent of the school, assisted by his wife and his niece, Maggie Burnett. This was the first school which children of more than two or three area families attended. Among the scholars at the Prentiss school in 1861 were the following:

Charles McGuire	Oscar McGuire
John C. Burrus	Will Claire
Will Scruggs	Jack (John) Scruggs
Alex Irwin	Will Kimble
Will Jones	Lewis Ebling
Al Snodgrass	Mack Snodgrass
Belle Peake	Penelope Scruggs
Liza Knuckles	Tina Ebling
Sallie Ebling	Lou Snodgrass
Belle Snodgrass	Liza Hughes
William Peake	Anne Peake
Will Knight	Will Bridges
Sallie Bridges	Joseph McGuire
Leilia McGuire	Eliza McGuire

The Historical Research Project, Bolivar County, prepared by the Works Progress Administration, revealed that

There were . . . not many towns or neighborhoods where a sufficient number of children could be gotten together to make up a school. In the towns where already were private schools, these became semi-public. An idea of the time was that the public schools were maintained for the poorer children. In Cleveland, Rosedale, Gunnison, Benoit, and other communities of the county, there were a number of schools privately managed. Throughout the county there was no lack of teaching for the well-to-do class of people. In most of the plantation homes there was a tutor or governess. In many communities there were private teachers to whom pupils were sent to be instructed.

When the town of Prentiss was burned iii the school there was closed. However, the Branders remained in Bolivar County to teach. During the last two years of the Civil War Brander taught at a boys' school at Stamps Lake, near what is now Gunnison, and his wife taught at Holmes Lake, near the present-day town of Shelby. In 1866-1867, Mrs. Brander taught at Beulah, and later at Concordia and Rosedale. Many of the older residents of Rosedale and the western part of the county are sons and daughters of individuals who received their educational training in schools served by this couple, a man and a woman so closely connected with Bolivar County's early efforts in education.

In Rosedale, a Presbyterian minister, Mr. Murray, succeeded Mrs. Brander as teacher, and Murray then was followed by his son in that capacity. Among the early teachers in this school was the young Walter Sillers, Sr., who taught during the year 1874-1875.

An eventual public school system for Rosedale was provided for by the State Public School Bill, passed in 1864; indeed, the system was not well established until 1886. In Bolivar County the population was so sparse even in 1886 that the operation of a worthwhile public school was quite difficult. Thus, many private schools were maintained. Separate elementary schools were provided, whenever feasible, for white children and for black children. Such was the case until the end of the century.

### *Rosedale's Public Schools 1900-1920*

In 1902 the children of Rosedale presented the following petition to the town council:

We, the children of the Rosedale school ask the people of Rosedale to help us build a new schoolhouse. We have to sit three on a seat and some of us on the floor. Everytime it rains, it leaks on the recitation bench and we have to stand up, and the soot blows on the little girls' aprons.

We are going to give a dollar each. Won't you please help us?

The petition was signed by the following pupils: Pattie Bryant, Fontaine Jones, Florence Sillers, Richard Nugent, Katie May Yerger,

Postelle Chaney, Dulaney Clark, tugene Chaney, Vera Joest, Lillian Lobdell, Genevieve Stone, Lottie Kirchner, May Pearl Scott, Leslie Joest, Ethel Bryant, Finley Linnell, Hugh Sutherland, Zoe Roberts, Alex Yerger, Georgia Scott, John Lobcleft,'jim and Charlie Caldwell, Richard Shelby, Dot Washington, Ward Gary, Lena Roberts, Mary Lapresto, Sheffy McBroom, Eva Joest, Vernon Barrett, Edna Linnell, Louise Lapresto, Virginia Hines, and Bertha Kimball. There were others who signed, but their names have been lost.

This petition apparently was successful, for in 1904, under the administration of Mayor W. H. Fitzgerald, the town through a bond issue provided \$6,000 to build a new school. Charles Scott donated land for the building. An attractive two-story white frame building with Corinthian columns subsequently was constructed. However, only the two downstairs rooms were equipped for school purposes. The hall, or auditorium, was financed by the young men of the town, and others, as a place to dance. The second year it was converted into recitation rooms with removable partitions, and more teachers were employed. Asa McCain of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, was hired as the first principal of the new school and Tillie Montgomery was the first teacher. During the next several years either Miss Montgomery or Miss Hattie Chambers taught the primary grades at the school, while a succession of men taught the upper grades and served as principal. Besides McCain, other principals were a Mr. McGaughey of Natchez and Garland Whitfield of Jackson, a close relative of Governor Henry L. Whitfield.

Mrs. Evelyn Pearson recalled that when she began school in 1905, the faculty members during that year were Miss Montgomery for grades 1-3, Miss Chambers for grades 4-6, and a Mr. Campbell for grades 7-10. Campbell also served as principal of the school. After Campbell left, there was a period of time when the school had no male principal. However, between 1906 and 1911, Miss Montgomery and Miss Chambers continued in their positions, joined by Miss Hester Chambers, Miss Hattie's sister, a Miss Maury, and Miss Frances Hamblett, who soon married.

The people of Rosedale indicated their desire to have good schools in the town, and the community consequently began to

strive to upgrade their school whenever and wherever possible. Indeed, the school system came to be recognized for excellence by surrounding areas, and children rode on horseback from Beulah or rode the train of the Peavine Railroad from Pace, Symonds, and Malvina to attend Rosedale's school. During this time Charles Scott brought in Italians via New Orleans to work his farm. The children of these immigrants could not speak English, but Miss Montgomery worked diligently with those who enrolled in school. Eventually, she was able to teach English to many of them, and many learned to read and write.

In the 1910-1911 school year, the school board felt that a male was needed in the system. As a result, it secured the services of James D. Thixton and his wife. Originally from Missouri, the Thixtons at the time were teaching in Kilmichael, Mississippi. At the end of this year Miss Montgomery and Miss Chambers retired. Miss Marjorie Maxey of Brandon replaced Miss Montgomery as the teacher in the primary grades and Mrs. Thixton succeeded Miss Chambers in the intermediate grades. During the period Thixton served as principal (1910-1914), the school was expanded and upgraded. Under Thixton's leadership, additional grades were added to the school so that grades one through twelve eventually were offered. Others who taught during that period of Thixton's tenure as principal were Miss Beatrix Maxey, Miss Virginia Crook, and Miss Bess Clements.

After Thixton left Rosedale in 1914 Miss Bowdin Hudson was named high school principal. Also, a Miss Netterville was named to succeed Mrs. Thixton. Miss Hudson served as principal for only one year and was replaced by Miss Edna Graham, who was in the position from 1915 to 1919. In 1919 she married Max Sansing and moved from Rosedale. She was succeeded by A. H. Ramsey, who served two years as principal. However, Ramsey left his position as principal to take over the Ford automobile dealership in Rosedale, which he kept only a short time before accepting the position as superintendent of the Pace Consolidated School. In 1935 he was named County Superintendent of Education, succeeding A. K. Eckles. Ramsey served as County Superintendent until 1959. Other faculty members who served during the period between 1915 and 1921 were Mary and Martha McCrady, Miss Janie Rice, and Miss Mary Griffin. Eventually

all of these ladies married Rosedalians with one of the outstanding events of 1920 being a double wedding for the McCrady sisters. Mary married Eugene Chaney and Martha wed Gurney Gardner. The names of Janie Rice McMillan and Mary Griffin Dorough became prominent in the town in later years.

*The Consolidation of Rosedale Area Schools  
and the Impact, 1920-1950*

In 1920 the Rosedale school was consolidated to include the Beulah and Malvina communities, which resulted in a school district of some 35,440 acres and the taxes from which to provide the revenue for school operation. A large brick building, modern and well equipped, subsequently was built at a cost of \$160,000. (The current high school occupies this building, which is of Spanish design. In 1956 the building was refurbished through the application of a stucco veneer. Contractors indicated that sandblasting the brick would be destructive and recommended the stucco process in keeping with the architecture.) The building commissioners were George McGee, H. H. McGowen, and J. E. Dattel. The building was located on the site of the old George Scott residence, which was obtained for the cost of \$10,000. District bonds for \$125,000 were floated to obtain funds to build the school. McGowen personally circulated a petition to establish the district by virtue of the new state law for consolidation of schools. Also, he was the first president of the new board of trustees, a position he retained for many years. In addition to McGowen, McGee and J. E. Dattel served on the board.

In 1921, upon completion of the new school E. L. West was appointed superintendent, and he served for two years. He employed in 1922 a sister-in-law of McGowen, Miss Rae Wolfe, to teach in the primary grades. Ultimately, Miss Wolfe had the longest tenure of any teacher to serve in the Rosedale schools, retiring in 1958 after thirty-six years of devoted service. At the time of her retirement, Miss Wolfe was teaching the second grade. Indeed, her death in 1962 marked the end of an unprecedented era in the Rosedale school system. Other teachers who made outstanding contributions to the

new consolidated school system, and who assured its success, were Miss Mattie D. Hall and Miss Tessie Murphy.

According to Mrs. Evelyn Pearson, one of the participants, girls had a basketball team in these years which played on an outside court; however, the athletic program for the boys was completely lacking. Nevertheless, with the coming of West as superintendent athletics became a vital part of the life of the school system. Among the first noted athletes were Al Gervin, John D. and Benson Jeter, Billy Priestley, Bob Wilson, and Toby Michael. The athletic teams adopted the Bulldog as their mascot and decided upon the team colors of maroon and white. Allen Webb served as the first athletic coach. Toby Michael indicated that with the exception of Priestley and Wilson, none of them had ever seen a football game prior to their own first endeavor. Nevertheless, they were ready to play. Their schedule consisted annually of two games each with Merigold, Cleveland, and Boyle. During the second year of competition they defeated the heralded team from Cleveland, a real accomplishment for them.

In 1923 West resigned his position and the board sought the services of J. H. Nutt, who was principal of the school at Enterprise, Mississippi. Nutt assumed his duties as superintendent of the Rose-dale Consolidated School in September, 1923, having spent the summer in study at the University of Chicago. According to Mrs. Frank Paden (who was formerly Mrs. Nutt, but who remarried after the death of Nutt in 1939), she and her husband were accustomed to middle class, native-born, Protestant American whites in the school system and in the community. However, they found quite a contrast when they moved to the Mississippi Delta, for in the community were many blacks, as well as Catholics, Jews, and Chinese. Indeed, the Nutts found that Rosedale was quite cosmopolitan in terms of ethnic origins. Nevertheless, they adjusted quickly and learned that the several ethnic groups lived harmoniously in the community. Throughout the school system as well, the same feeling of ethnic cooperation was found. Among the first students to graduate during Nutt's tenure were Dorothy Reams, Daty White, Elizabeth Priestley, Elliott Wilson, and Toby Michael.

Serving as teachers during the early years of the Nutt administration were Ben Ellis, Miss Wolfe, Miss Murphy, Miss Effie Henry, Miss Cliffie Pickering, and Miss Lyde Robinson. Early in Nutt's superintendency, the citizens of Malvina asked to be given representation on the board of trustees, and W. T. Bush was named to this position. Also, bus service was soon provided to Malvina and Beulah. When the people of Beulah indicated their desire to have a teacher live in the community and ride the bus with the students, Miss Wolfe agreed to do this and lived for many years in Beulah with her sister, Mrs. Ora Lenoir.

Under the supervision of Nutt the school program and plant was vastly improved and enlarged. Among those achievements for which he was responsible was the attainment of accreditation for the high school by the Southern Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, later the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This accreditation was given in 1924, and the Rosedale High School has been accredited by the SACS every year since that time.

Nutt made other impacts. One of the traditional practices in the Rosedale school system prior to his service had been to dismiss school when a fire occurred. However, soon after Nutt came to Rosedale a boat on the River caught fire, and all the students left school to go watch the spectacle. Superintendent Nutt, however, followed the students and brought them back to the school, thus breaking a tradition which had prevailed before his tenure.

No history of the Rosedale schools would be complete without briefly mentioning a case involving desegregation which occurred in 1927. *H. Wong vs. Greek Rice* became an historic case when H. Wong attempted to enter the Rosedale school, which prevented admission to persons of color. The case was brought against one of the school trustees, Greek Rice. The court decision was not in favor of H. Wong; consequently, a Chinese elementary school was organized in Rosedale, maintained partly by the county and partly by Chinese parents. In an organizational meeting at the First Presbyterian Church, the Chinese parents employed one instructor to teach both elementary and high school work to the seventeen students enrolled. Reverend L. A. Streete, the Presbyterian minister, taught at the Chinese school

for seven years. Not until 1955, after considerable effort by then-Superintendent Rex Burrow, were Chinese children admitted to the former all-white school. Coincidentally, the first Chinese children to enter the previously all-white school were relatives of H. Wong, who had initiated the suit in 1927. These youngsters were the children of Steve Wong, Raymond and Betsy, who proved to be outstanding students.

In 1930 a new addition was made to the Rosedale school. This addition eventually became the elementary complex, which is still in service much as it was at that time. In 1935 Nutt completed his master's degree at the University of Chicago. This was an outstanding feat, for it was unusual for schools in the state to have personnel with the master's degree. It was in this year also that he completed his twelfth year of service as Superintendent of Schools. Since his initial group of first graders was graduating, Nutt was asked to make the graduation address, and he agreed to do so.

Also during the tenure of Nutt, the publication of the *Pied Piper*, the school newspaper, was inaugurated. This newspaper subsequently won numerous awards in state competition. Too, the academic program under Nutt was considered to be one of the finest in the state, as evidenced by the excellent performances of students in the literary competitions conducted under the auspices of the Mississippi Activities Association until the outbreak of World War II. An outstanding athletic achievement of this period was that of Bobbie Rogers, daughter of the Baptist minister in Rosedale. In 1936 she set the state record for the girls' high jump, a record which stood for more than thirty years. Debating was initiated during this period, and the Rosedale debate team achieved excellent ratings throughout these years. Miss Bess Norman, who came to Rosedale during the latter years of Nutt's tenure, coached the debate team for a long period of time. When Miss Norman left Rosedale in 1947, she was succeeded by Miss Alice Kamper as debate coach.

Miss Kamper was another teacher who served with Nutt for many years and who made a noticeable impact on the school and community. Upon completing college, Miss Kamper began her teaching career at Enterprise, her home town, and was there for a year. In 1927 the policy was implemented to forbid natives to teach

in that system, and Miss Kamper was invited to teach in Rosedale by Nutt. She taught in the Rosedale system from 1928 to 1950, at which time she married LeRoy Jones, grandson of Lafayette Jones, the founder of Rosedale. In her last year to teach, Miss Kamper (now Mrs. Jones) coached the debate team which won the state debating championship. On this championship team were Elizabeth Costanzi, Marsha Pogue, Betty Jackson, and Ralph Conger.

Mrs. Jones recalled that when she came to Rosedale in 1927, she was assigned office work, served as librarian and kept the study hall, and taught eighth-grade English. She also made out all high school report cards. In time, she was assigned more classes until she soon was teaching all of the high school social studies courses. Mrs. Jones completed her master's degree at the University of Alabama in 1942, in the process writing a thesis entitled "A Social and Economic History of Antebellum Bolivar County, Mississippi."

Mrs. Jones remembered that a commercial department was added during the mid-1930's, and that the former first-grade classroom was remodeled and converted into the present commercial department room. She also emphasized that, in her opinion, among the most important subjects taught in the school was Latin. Indeed, Latin was a part of the course of study at Rosedale until the early 1970's. Mrs. Jones referred to the excellence of the academic program at Rosedale, pointing proudly to the accomplishments of many former students: Beaver Street, an outstanding Air Force Colonel who achieved an admirable record during World War II; Joe Eddins, Jr., an outstanding commander in the Navy; Dr. Gene Nobles, a noted surgeon in Memphis; Sammy Ray, an outstanding marine biologist; John Pearson, Jr., an eminent attorney and State Representative from Bolivar County; and Walter Raleigh Coppedge, a noted educator who served as headmaster at Lausanne School in Memphis and later as President of City College of Charleston, South Carolina.

Upon the untimely death of Nutt in 1939, C. O. Brunson, who had served as head athletic coach in Nutt's latter years of tenure, was named superintendent. Brunson served the system during the World War II period. In these years, the school participated in salvage drives and in bond sales while continuing to do well in state literary meets.

Brunson appointed Miss Wolfe principal of the elementary school when he became superintendent.

After World War II ended, Brunson resigned as superintendent to go into the insurance business. The board then secured the services of Dick Leigh, who was superintendent for the 1946-1947 school year. He immediately implemented a Veteran's Program in conjunction with the school, employing Al Friddle to instruct the returning veterans. Friddle had an office in the small dressing room on the south side of the auditorium stage. His classes were primarily at night, for he worked with the veterans "on-the-job" during the day.

Leigh's service was cut short due to cancer, which caused his death prior to Christmas of 1946. His wife took over his position on an interim basis and completed the year. Meanwhile, the board of trustees searched diligently for a new superintendent. Named to this post was R. H. Jackson. He continued the Veteran's Program during his period as superintendent and high school principal. Jackson recalled that there were few changes in the academic program while he was superintendent but that during this period a cafeteria was established, staffed by Mrs. J. Y. Dawkins and Mrs. J. H. Brister. Mrs. Brister headed the cafeteria staff until her retirement in 1962 and was succeeded by Mrs. Rosa Tucker. Also, Jackson noted that a Home Economics Department was instituted under him. Both the cafeteria and the Home Economics Department were housed in rooms on the first floor of the elementary school building. During Jackson's superintendency the high school building and auditorium were renovated, and the heating system was changed from a coal furnace to an oil furnace. He remembered that board members with whom he worked were Charlie Allen, Ben Bogy, Henry McCaslin, Jr., Neal Streater, N. E. Simmons, and Lawrence Wilson.

While Jackson served as superintendent, he made one dramatic change. Based on new state regulations, in order to qualify for AA rating, a school principal had to have a college degree. Thus, Miss Wolfe, who had served many years as principal of the elementary school but who did not fulfill this state requirement, was relieved of her duties as principal and fifth-grade teacher. Mrs. Inez Lorange was named as Miss Wolfe's replacement.

*Changes in the Rosedale School 1950-1957*

In 1950, Jackson resigned as superintendent of the Rosedale School to assume a similar position at Minter City, Mississippi. He was succeeded by Rex L. Burrow, who had served for several years as superintendent of the schools in Tutwiler, Mississippi. Burrow worked to improve the school, and among his first efforts was that to build a home economics building, a cafeteria, and a gymnasium. In particular was the gymnasium a worthy addition to the school plant. In the past, the basketball teams had practiced on a dirt court outside and south of the high school building. All of their games were played away. Thus, the gymnasium was a welcome addition to the Rosedale School facilities. Burrow also led the Rosedale School through another accreditation evaluation, and the system continued its membership in SACS.

When Burrow was named superintendent, he appointed Jess Wade high school principal and head coach. Mrs. Lorance, as noted above, had just become elementary school principal. In 1952, Mrs. Lorance resigned because of pregnancy and Miss Margaret Winters, who had taught with Burrow at Tutwiler, was named her successor. In addition, Miss Winters continued to teach the sixth grade as she had done since 1950.

In 1953 Wade resigned his position and was replaced by Donald Hemphill. Billy B. Shirley was named head coach at this time, and during his four years in the position he fielded several of the best football teams in the history of Rosedale High School. Shirley taught mathematics, and when Hemphill resigned in 1954, Shirley replaced him.

In 1956 the school joined the Cotton Boll Athletic Conference. In the fall of that year Rosedale lost the conference championship in football in its first year of competition. In a thrilling game with Shelby, Rosedale was on the two yard line of the opponent, trailing by the score of 20-18, when the game ended. Outstanding players on that team were Leroy Morganti, Steve Sizemore, Will Gourlay, Tommy Barr, George Shaddock, William Kurts, and Boyd Couey.

Shirley resigned as high school principal in 1956, and Douglas McDonald replaced him, coming from the West Tallahatchie High

School in Webb, Mississippi. In addition, Mrs. McDonald was named music teacher in the system; however, she learned that she was pregnant before assuming the position, though she taught until Christmas. At that time she was replaced by Mrs. Laura Dalton of Cleveland, who served until Mrs. McDonald returned the following year.

### *Reorganization of the Rosedale School's 1957-1965*

In the latter part of the 1950's, several dramatic changes relative to the Rosedale school system occurred. By virtue of an act of the Mississippi State Legislature in special session in 1953, all schools in the state had been required to be reorganized by September 1, 1957. Consequently, a number of survey teams were active across the state by 1955, including one under the direction of H. M. Ivy, retired superintendent of the Meridian Municipal Separate School District. Ivy was employed by the Bolivar County School Superintendent and the County Board of Trustees to make the required survey and recommendations for Bolivar County. After extensive study, Ivy's committee presented three proposed reorganization plans. Although none of the plans submitted in the 1955 study was actually adopted, one proposal was revised and adopted by the county officials. This plan was then submitted to the Educational Finance Commission in Jackson and was subsequently approved on June 18, 1957. This plan called for the following districts: District One to include Gunnison, Pace, and Rosedale; District Two to include the Benoit Special Consolidated District; District Three to include Shelby, Alligator, and Duncan; District Four to include Cleveland, Boyle, and Merigold; District Five to include Litton, Shaw, and Skene; and District Six to consist of the Mound Bayou Consolidated District.

After the approval of these new district lines by the Educational Finance Commission, the reorganization became effective for the 1957-1958 academic year. Thus, the Gunnison High School (grades 9-12) was transferred to Rosedale, and the president of the first senior class under this new consolidation plan was Oscar Scott, Jr., of Gunnison. The Pace High School students who had been attending

Cleveland High School, and students in grades seven and eight in the Pace School, were transferred to Rosedale.

As a result of these transfers, Mrs. Erna Symonds came from Pace to teach the second grade at Rosedale, and Mrs. Violet Taylor, also of Pace, assumed her duties as junior high mathematics and social studies instructor. In 1960 Mrs. Symonds was named principal of the elementary school, and in 1959 Mrs. Taylor was transferred to the senior high school to teach Latin and mathematics. Mrs. Symonds retired at the end of the 1974-1975 school session, and Mrs. Taylor followed suit in 1975-1976. Both of these ladies made invaluable contributions to the Rosedale system during their years of teaching.

In 1957 Miss Winters resigned as elementary school principal during the latter part of the summer, and, due to the short time before school was to begin, McDonald was appointed principal of the entire Rosedale system. In the face of the recent reorganization and due to these added responsibilities confronting the principal, Burrow assisted McDonald by teaching a senior class in American Government. However, because of the demands of administering the entire district, Burrow had to discontinue his teaching in the middle of the year. Indeed, according to McDonald, after teaching four classes, supervising twenty-six teachers, and operating without a secretary, he seldom had a minute to himself for anything!

During the 1957-1958 session, vocational agriculture was added to the curriculum, and G. O. Sanford, who had taught this area at Gunnison, was the first instructor. The Rosedale School did not have a location for an agriculture classroom; consequently, a building three blocks away, near the Courthouse, was rented to serve as an instructional building. The boys taking the course had to pass through "Paradise," a black section of town, and this situation did not always lend itself to the most pleasant circumstances. However, this temporary situation existed for two and one half years before a physical facility was constructed on the campus.

By virtue of the state-ordered reorganization system, the black schools in Rosedale became a very vital part of the overall system. Buford Holmes, who had served as principal of the Rosedale Negro

School, resigned to accept a position at Mound Bayou, and the selection of his successor was left to Burrow. Competition for the position was keen between two of the instructors in the black high school. The two men were Morgan Brown and Joseph T. Keesee. Brown was a native of Rosedale and rallied a great deal of support from the black citizens of the town. On the other hand, the faculty of the black school generally favored Keesee. After analyzing the credentials of each man and assessing the need for the best person, the board of trustees accepted Burrow's recommendation and appointed Keesee to the position, which he subsequently held for twelve years. This episode indicated the various problems which had to be faced by the board in the rush of reorganization. The men who served at that time did yeoman service. On the first board of trustees of the Bolivar County School District Number One were James V. Newman of Pace, Chairman; Leo McGee of Gunnison, Secretary; Ben Bogy of Malvinas M. J. Dattel of Rosedale; and Vance Davis of Rosedale.

When Coach Shirley left Rosedale in 1957, Carlee Nevel, who had been at Merigold High School, assumed the position of head coach. Nevel molded an untried, untested group of youngsters into a winning football team, which lost the conference championship two years in a row to Tunica by virtue of a 7-0 loss in 1958 and a 14-12 loss in 1959. During these years the names of Waldo Patterson, Bobby Latham, Frankie Alford, Brother Wilson, Ned Travis, Robert Louis Coleman, Albert Louis Owen, John Garrison, Wayne Neyman, and Jimmy Dunn became well known in the athletic circles of the Delta. The boys' basketball teams of 1958-1959, 1959-1960, and 1960-1961 won the conference championship under the tutelage of Wallace Wiggins, who also taught science in the high school. Outstanding on these teams were Kimbrell Sosebee, Benson Dexter, Albert Louis Owen, Robert Louis Coleman, Ned Travis, Fred Weinke, H. M. Chennault, and John Garrison. Although Rosedale never won the Bolivar County championship, for three consecutive years the school was named recipient of the Sportsmanship Trophy by the coaches of the county. During these years John Garrison was acknowledged to be the most outstanding athlete, and he later excelled on the football team at Mississippi Delta Junior College and

starred for Northeast Louisiana University. He was the first athlete from Rosedale to be named to a state all-star team, becoming a member of the all-star state basketball squad in the summer of 1961.

During this period additions were made in the course offerings with the introduction of physics, solid geometry- trigonometry, and Spanish. A Parent-Teachers Association was established in 1955 with Mrs. Mike Litton as president. Mrs. Litton served for two years and was succeeded by Mrs. J. R. Turner, who also served two years. In 1959-1960, Mrs. Sam Dewey served as president of the organization.

McDonald recalled that possibly the most amusing incident to occur during his tenure as principal was that on Halloween night in 1959. Fortunately, Halloween was on a Saturday that year, and the junior class sponsored a carnival. Although night watchmen were employed to observe the school building throughout the night of Halloween, several boys who obtained a mule from a man south of Rosedale had certain plans. Waiting until early light on Sunday morning, they broke a window light to get into the school building and then brought in the mule and left it. After the act the leader of the group, Tommy Tullos of Pace, began to have second thoughts, called the town marshal, Charles Crawford, and told him what the boys had done. Crawford in turn called McDonald to tell him of the incident. However, since McDonald had gone to Shelby to speak at a church service that morning, Crawford telephoned Superintendent Burrow, who went to the school building, led the still-bridled mule out, and tied it until the owner came to claim his property. When McDonald returned to his home he was informed of the event by his wife. Gathering together his janitors, McDonald and the custodians cleaned and mopped the hall corridor thoroughly. But the odor seemed to get stronger. Although air freshener was used extensively, three weeks passed before the stench was finally dissipated.

In the summer of 1958 the board of trustees purchased a plot of ground and constructed a new football field and field house there. The old football field at the southeast corner of the elementary school, which had been in use since 1921, was used for a new addition to the existing building complex. The new structure was to provide two science classrooms, two additional general classrooms, an agriculture classroom and shop, and an office for the District

Superintendent of Schools. The agriculture classroom and shop and the Superintendent's office were occupied at the beginning of the second semester in 1959-1960. For the first time funds were secured from the National Defense Education Act of the Federal government to equip the new science laboratory. The science facilities and the classrooms in the new building were not occupied until the opening of school in 1960.

McDonald and Mrs. Lucy Jackson sponsored the senior class of 1960. McDonald reported that he "placed his head on the chopping block" when he arranged the graduation program for the honor graduates to conduct. These students used the theme "The Price of Liberty" for their addresses, and McDonald was primarily responsible for the content of these. In one speech, the statement was made that "unless we provide adequately for the Negroes, we will be forced to admit them to our public white schools." Although McDonald was acknowledged to be a staunch segregationist, on the basis of this program he was immediately labeled an extreme integrationist! Several prominent women of the community began to criticize the particular remark, asserting that "as long as Rosedale existed, no Negroes would be in the public white schools of this town." McDonald pointed out that he was only attempting to be realistic about a situation which many people could not accept at the time, and that at least he caused some people to think about the issue which was confronting them. In part because of the community reaction to the graduation exercises, he left during the summer of 1960, after requesting release in the midst of a two-year contract, to become Director of Instruction in the McComb Municipal Separate School District. McDonald noted that he almost rejected the offer of the McComb position in spite of his wife's insistence that he accept it, for he did not relish the idea of running away from criticism. Nevertheless, he finally decided to go to McComb and was succeeded by Jack Cheatham of Philadelphia, Mississippi, who had just completed a term as County Superintendent of Education of Neshoba County. Mrs. Symonds was named principal of the elementary school.

The school district made its next addition to the premises in the summer of 1960 with the purchase of the old Vardaman house,

adjacent to the north campus and facing Highway 1, for the use of the new principal. This was the first time the school system had ever owned living quarters for a school administrator. The house was owned at the time of the transaction by Dr. Scott Galbreath, a veterinarian in the town.

Cheatham served for four years as principal, and during his tenure he experienced a severe tragedy. In May, 1963, his son Ricky was found murdered near a lake east of Rosedale. The murder was never solved. Cheatham continued as principal for one year following this tragedy and then resigned. He attended graduate school at the University of Mississippi for one year prior to becoming principal of the Raleigh Consolidated School in Smith County. Moreover, in his last year, besides his personal tragedy Cheatham had additional responsibilities, for long-time Superintendent Burrow was stricken with cancer and remained in University Hospital in Jackson for several months. However, Burrow overcame the physical odds against him and returned to serve his last year as superintendent of the Rosedale Schools in 1964-1965. During the last year of Burrow's service several black students enrolled in Rosedale's white high school to initiate token integration. Also, in 1963-1964 an addition was made to the campus with the construction of a junior high school building on the north side of the existing plant.

When Cheatham resigned, the board of trustees sought a high school principal to serve for one year and then assume the position of superintendent in 1965. Former head coach and high school principal Billy B. Shirley was employed. Shirley had left Rosedale in 1957 to become head football coach at Baytown High School in Baytown, Texas. G. O. Sanford, vocational agriculture teacher since 1957, resigned in 1964 to assume full management of his farm near Gunnison. He was succeeded by Joe G. Barnes, who came to Rosedale from Kilmichael, Mississippi. Bobby Barrett of Leland was named head football coach. At the end of the 1964-1965 academic year, Mrs. Lucy Jackson retired as vocational home economics teacher and Burrow retired as superintendent of Bolivar County School District Number One.

*Changes in the Rosedale School System 1965-1975*

Shirley, the new superintendent, named Joe Barnes, his vocational agriculture teacher, high school principal and inaugurated his administration as chief administrative officer of the Rosedale system. After serving as high school principal for one year, Barnes accepted the position of principal of the Hernando Schools in Hernando, Mississippi. The board then secured the services of Charles Hardin as principal to succeed Barnes. Hardin had served several years as principal of the Louise, Mississippi, Elementary School, which closed as a result of consolidation in 1966. He then had served for one year as an elementary school principal in the Pascagoula, Mississippi, school system. During Hardin's one year as principal the basketball team, led by Bill Parker and Johnny Glorioso, advanced to the finals of the North Mississippi Basketball Tournament.

While he was superintendent for two years, Shirley and the school attorney, John Pearson, Jr., were constantly in court. In 1965-1966 the schools of Rosedale were ordered to desegregate immediately by the Federal government. At the end of the academic year 1967-1968, Shirley submitted his resignation and returned to Baytown, Texas. The board immediately asked former high school principal Joe Barnes to become superintendent. After one year of service in Hernando, Barnes reluctantly left Desoto County to become chief administrative officer in Rosedale. At once he secured as principal Herbert Savell of Jayess, Mississippi.

At the end of the school year 1968-1969, Keesee resigned after twelve years as principal of the Negro School, and Reverend J. Y. Trice was named to replace him. Savell was then named Trice's assistant, and Billy Tabb, a member of the coaching staff, was appointed high school principal of the predominately white school.

During Keesee's administration, vast expansion was made in the physical facilities and enlargement was achieved in curriculum offerings at the Negro School. A band and a chorus were established. Business education, home economics, and industrial arts provided a wide range of offerings to the students. A guidance program was introduced, with Mrs. Gertrude Wells serving as first counselor.

Keesee had secured accreditation for the school, and his influence as an educator was deeply imprinted on the blacks in Rosedale.

Keesee was ably assisted during his tenure as principal by the Reverend J. D. Wynn, who served as elementary principal. In 1964 Reverend Wynn left Rosedale, and James Wilson of Cleveland replaced him. When Keesee resigned, Wilson continued as high school principal and currently serves in that position.

Although there had been token integration in the Rosedale system while Shirley served as superintendent, Barnes was faced with the impact of full-scale integration. The Federal court initiated this system when it ordered that there be one white and one black teacher in every grade of the elementary schools. In view of the difficulties accompanying this action, the school was subsequently allowed to make sincere efforts to integrate. In 1968-1969 teachers who were of a different race were assigned to the various schools. Lee Walter Brown, a black from Louisiana, was assigned to the former all-white elementary school. Two white women from the North, Patricia Nixon and Joanne Whitcomb, were assigned to the previously all-black high school, and Catherine Peterson, a white, was assigned to teach fourth grade in the former all-black elementary school. These three women remained in Rosedale only one year. In 1969-1970 two black teachers, Mrs. J. Y. Trice and Mrs. Mary Rodgers, were assigned to the white elementary school. Under the circumstances, Barnes did an outstanding job to bring about integration in the school district with minimal upheaval. With the advent of integration in the schools, approximately one-third of the white students in Rosedale, about 300 in number, transferred to Bayou Academy at Boyle, Mississippi. However, the other whites remained in the public schools.

In 1970-1971, Bolivar County School District Number One became a unitary system with one junior high school and one senior high school located in Rosedale, two elementary schools in Rosedale, one elementary school in Gunnison, and one elementary school in Pace. This rearrangement of the school system brought about drastic changes in other areas. The former all-white high school, with the colors of maroon and white and with the Bulldog mascot since 1921,

and the former all-black high school, with the colors of blue and gold and with the Viking mascot since 1953, gave up these traditional colors and symbols. The students then selected the colors red, white, and blue with the athletic teams to be called the Eagles.

In 1972 Richard Thomas of Beulah was named to serve as the first black member of the board of trustees. He has served ably and impartially and, according to Superintendent Barnes, is one of the most capable members with whom he has been associated.

When Tabb resigned as high school principal to enter farming, he was succeeded in 1973 by Ralph Mills, formerly principal at Shaw High School. Also, Herbert Savell, after one year at the West Bolivar Training School, became Assistant Superintendent of Bolivar County School District Number One. Reverend Trice, after two years as high school principal, resigned to become Federal Programs Coordinator for the school district.

The Rosedale School in 1974 received a special citation for fifty consecutive years of accreditation by the SACS. This award emphasized the fact that Rosedale's schools have long been recognized for their academic excellence and were one of the first schools to become a part of the elite accrediting agency.

In 1975, when Mrs. Symonds retired as elementary principal after fifteen years in this position, Mrs. Billy Tabb was named head teacher of the elementary school. Robert Deloach now serves as junior high school principal.

Under the guidance of Superintendent Barnes, courses in the curriculum have been made more practical. Individualized instruction was implemented in the schools due to his guidance. Although special education courses were introduced in 1965 by Shirley, Barnes believed these could be made more utilitarian. For example, a special course in vocational home economics for disadvantaged students was implemented in 1972. In the 1975-1976 school year the special education program was expanded to three classes for educable mentally retarded, one class for the trainable mentally retarded, and two classes in vocational work. Barnes has reported that the high school vocational courses designed for special education students in cooperation with the Vocational Rehabilitation Department of the State Department of Education are one of the most rewarding

undertakings he has observed. Many of these students return to academic classes after their vocational courses are completed.

In 1971 an administrative office building was constructed on school property at the intersection of Highways 1 and 8 in the southern area of the community. The building is an impressive brick veneer structure and contains offices for all the administrative staff of the school district.

Thus, as of 1976 in the Rosedale schools, integration has taken place, students have come to accept one another as individuals, a stable teaching staff does a commendable job of instructing the students, the administrative staff is conscientious in its efforts to mold an outstanding school system, and the community supports its schools just as it did in 1902 when the youngsters circulated their petition requesting the town to build them an adequate school. This feeling was reinforced in the spring when the voters of Rosedale responded with overwhelmingly positive action in favor of a vocational- technical complex and cafeteria for the school district.

Currently Rosedale has a unitary school system and is providing an educational program which is commendable. According to Superintendent Barnes, the system is "the best school in the world."