

A COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY OF
ALEXANDER GRAHAM JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Master of Arts

by
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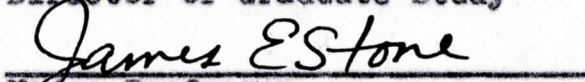
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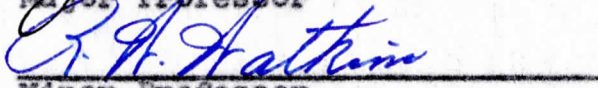

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Time has erased the memory of countless noteworthy institutions from the annals of education in North Carolina. The incentive to record a commemorative account of one advance in the structure of the North Carolina educational system was aroused by the fact that the original Alexander Graham Junior High School structure has been destroyed. The junior high school movement in North Carolina began and has progressed throughout the years through the success of the experiment conducted in 1923 at Alexander Graham Junior High School in Charlotte, North Carolina. This pioneer in the separate unit junior high school system which consists of grades seven through nine, has earned the position of historical data in North Carolina's educational history.

"Without history," said Vives, one of the greatest thinkers of the 16th century, "no one would know anything about his father and ancestors; no one's possessions would be certain or valid." This philosophy of Vives is expressed in the desire to record a history of the famed Alexander Graham Junior High School of Charlotte, North Carolina.

The junior high school movement in North Carolina began and has progressed with little centralized planning. Local schools were permitted to establish and operate junior

high schools without state approval, but the basic plan for the organization of schools is an elementary school of eight grades and a high school of four grades. The variation in regulations and difference in policy for the establishment of junior high schools within the individual states has contributed to the confused organizational pattern of the junior high school movement on the national level.

North Carolina usually set up its high school standards on the basis of grades nine through twelve; this arrangement automatically encourages the continuation of the eight-four organization. Charlotte, North Carolina decided to pioneer a method which would better serve to emotionally and mentally equip the students of the seventh through ninth grade levels for higher education.

The junior high school has a philosophy which is uniquely and distinctly its own. Although the purposes of the junior high school have been modified in application and revised to meet the changing needs, the fundamental objective of the institution remains constant. The leaders of the junior high school are dedicated to the premise that early adolescents are entitled to a program of education keyed to their developmental needs.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. Alexander Graham Junior High School once reigned as the only separate unit junior high school in the city of Charlotte, North Carolina. From this experimental unit, a new and successful grading system started for the city of Charlotte. The original structure has already been demolished and the site on which it was situated now displays a statuesque, new Young Mens Christian Association building.

The history of education has made no secret of the adjustment problems which have been ever present between the elementary and the high school levels. In their search for a sound solution to this undesirable aspect of the educational structure of Charlotte in Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, the leaders of education fostered the separate unit junior high school idea.

Research into the junior high school history tells us that the first junior high schools in the nation were established in Berkeley, California, and in Columbus, Ohio in 1909, and in Los Angeles, California in 1911.¹ Other

¹Mary F. Detjen, Home Room Guidance Programs for the Junior High School Years (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940). pp. 245-247.

cities followed in rapid succession and in most of the larger cities in the United States, the junior high schools were at first established as an experiment in only a part of the system. The same was true in Charlotte in the year 1923. The junior high school experiment was introduced in the educational curriculum. The fact that this beginning has grown and set a precedent, not only for the city of Charlotte but for many of the cities in the state of North Carolina, has evidenced the need for a written history of Charlotte's first junior high school: Alexander Graham Junior High School.

Though many schools in the state of North Carolina and in the city of Charlotte have contributed valuable assets to the system of education in this state, the purpose here has been to collect factual data pertaining to the beginning of the junior high system in Charlotte and to relate the virtues of this system. In doing this, the memory of Alexander Graham Junior High School shall not have vanished as has the structure which once housed that first junior high student body.

Need for the study. The success of this 1923 experiment has continued to reap a harvest, and the junior high units in Charlotte, North Carolina have gained both recognition and acclaim. The first of the units, Alexander

Graham Junior High School, continues to bring thought of endearment to countless Charlotteans. Therefore, this commemorative history has been presented in an effort to preserve the facts of interest related to the birth, the growth and the contributions of Alexander Graham Junior High School.

The rapidity of expansion of the city of Charlotte has created the usual problems of growth. A clear record of the growth of the educational system has not been offered and, yet, some of the changes and advances which were instituted in the Charlotte system have been precedential in improving the statewide organization. The lack of such records has provoked the need to accumulate the momentous fact of Charlotte's great contribution to the educational circle by having started the separate junior high school unit when the doors of Alexander Graham Junior High School were opened in 1923.

Limitations of the present study. Mention was made that the junior high school movement in North Carolina had little centralized planning. Local school systems were permitted to establish and operate the junior high schools without state approval. This meant that there were no records in the state files to show the time and dates that junior high units were added to the school systems of the

state. Therefore, a difficulty arose in finding accurate records or sources of information which were needed to substantiate the authenticity of a history on Alexander Graham Junior High School. Then, too, the passing of time and, consequentially, the death of some of the prominent leaders in the educational picture of the city of Charlotte and of the state of North Carolina, the sources of such information had become fewer in number.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Secondary schools. As has been implied in the name, the secondary school is a "second" school which follows the elementary or the "first" school. Alexander Inglis has been called the father of secondary education in America.² It was Inglis who established the aims and the functions of the stage in the student school life which provided a means for the pupils to adjust to their social environments; opened the way for them to become socially integrated and offered the opportunities to train according to their native abilities.

²J. G. Umstattd, Secondary School Teaching (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1944). p. 28.

The secondary school is extended downward to include the seventh and eighth grades, and upward to include the junior college grades.³

Junior high school. During the past two decades, America has witnessed the development of a new type of secondary school. This new school unit was organized for the early adolescent group and was named the junior high school. The junior high school serves the pupils of the seventh, eighth and ninth years and is actually the first stage of the secondary school. The junior high school system enabled the students to make a gradual transition from the elementary grades to the secondary level of study.

The "eight-four plan". Before the educational systems of the state and the nation became aware of the need for a means of bridging the gap between the elementary and the secondary levels, a system of eight years in the elementary grades and four years in the high school grades evolved. This was called the "eight-four" plan and has continued to be popular in many school systems to this day.

³George M. Wiley, The Redirection of Secondary Education (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1940). p. 29.

The "six-three-three" plan. With the introduction of the junior high school group into the educational system, the scope changed from the eight years in the elementary grades to only six years at that level followed by three years in the seventh, eighth and ninth grades, or the junior high group, and then the three final years of the secondary stage in the high school unit. This division of study was called the "six-three-three" plan.

"A. G." These two initials became the affectionate nickname for Alexander Graham Junior High School. School cheers, teams and the students were referred to by this means of abbreviating an otherwise lengthy title. To native Charlotteans, Alexander Graham Junior High School and "A.G." have become synonymous.

First and last principals. The name of Alexander Graham Junior High School has been carried on to another structure; however, this commemorative history deals with the original unit which was located on East Morehead Street. Reference to first and last principals thus referred to the first man, Aubrey M. Elliott, who guided the operation of the first junior high school in Charlotte; when the school was finally abandoned, the last man to be in charge was Frank W. Motley: the last principal. Pictures of these men have been submitted as Figures 1 and 2 on the following page

of this text.

Curriculum. When Alexander Graham Junior High School was first started, the entire course of study and added activities were on an exploratory basis. This content of courses and activities was referred to as the junior high curriculum. The original plan of study-or curriculum-was altered and added to as the necessity for such changes was realized. Edward Krug defines curriculum as all the experiences of the learner that are under the control of the school.⁴ This was the viewpoint followed throughout this study.

Co-Curricular activities. The curriculum entailed all--required and elective--experiences of the learner under the control of the school. There were some activities, however, that were closely co-ordinated in the junior high program and represented an integral part of the working plan but which could not be classified as scholastic requirements. Activities in this category were referred to as co-curricular activities.

⁴Edward Krug, Curriculum Planning (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. xi.



Figure 1. Frank Motley: Last Principal of "Old A. G.".



Figure 2. Aubrey Elliott: First Principal of Alexander Graham Junior High School.

III. PROCEDURES USED IN THIS INVESTIGATION

Through the compounded interest of civic leaders, educational leaders and dedicated faculty members, the Charlotte City Schools have grown in stature as well as in number. These same inspired persons were contacted and called upon in the effort to compose a commemorative history of one of Charlotte's proudest educational landmarks--Alexander Graham Junior High School.

The last accurate history of Mecklenburg County which included the educational development of the times is accredited to have been written by D. A. Tompkins. This account presented the facts up to and including the year 1903. Since Alexander Graham Junior High School was not established until twenty years later, Tompkins history was of no value in determining the history of this school and its establishment.

Dr. Harry P. Harding, Superintendent of the Charlotte City Schools from 1913 until 1949, promoted the idea of the separate unit junior high school system in the city of Charlotte. Dr. Harding died on July 13, 1959 but all the minute details of the Charlotte schools, Alexander Graham Junior High School included, did not go with him for Dr. Harding had had the foresight to keep a series of private notes on the growth and development of the Charlotte school

system. Many of the important historical data rendered in this report were accumulated from the pages of Dr. Harding's notes; in many cases, these notes were the only record of some of the facts pertaining to Alexander Graham Junior High School.

The man who was the first principal of Alexander Graham Junior High School, Mr. Aubrey M. Elliott, was most cooperative and helpful in providing documentary proof of the facts connected with the establishment of the first junior high school in Charlotte, North Carolina. Through his guidance, the annual reports of the school superintendent of 1923 were made available. From this source, the charter members of the faculty were revealed. The annual reports also stated the intent to organize and the organization of the first junior high school in the city.

Some of the charter members of the Alexander Graham Junior High School faculty were still teaching there during the final year of the school's existence on East Morehead Street. Others of that faculty were teaching in other parts of the city; while still others had gone into retirement. Personal interviews and letters from all of these were most helpful in substantiating facts for this history.

Attempts were made to secure documentary proof from the State Department of Public Instruction to verify that

Charlotte's first junior high school was also the first junior high school in the state of North Carolina. The fact that the organization and establishment of such units did not require state approval meant that there was no record on file in Raleigh to justify the statement that Alexander Graham Junior High was the first junior high school of the state.

Investigation continued by correspondence with the board of education in Asheville, North Carolina as it was known that this city had introduced the junior high school system into its educational pattern in the early 1920's.

Library research aided in presenting a better picture of the virtues of establishment of the junior high school system. Newspapers and periodicals provided records of interest concerning the demolition of the original "A. G." and the building of the new school bearing the same name.

Copies of early issues of the school annual and school newspaper were used to establish many of the facts included in the writing of the history of Alexander Graham Junior High.

The compilation of a commemorative history of this noteworthy institution was the product of material acquired from all of these sources.

CHAPTER II

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS IN NORTH CAROLINA AND THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE

As far back as Colonial Times, Charlotte, North Carolina had gained favorable notoriety in the educational realms. Within her city limits was the noted Queens College or Museum.¹ Noteworthy, also, was the D. H. Hill School which was at one time situated on the Southeast corner of Morehead Street and South Boulevard. This school was built in 1858 and at that time was a military school for boys under the direction of Commander D. H. Hill who later became a General on the staff of General Robert E. Lee. Even after the Civil War, this school was used for a brief time as a boys' school. Eventually in 1882, D. H. Hill School became Old South School: first home of Charlotte graded schools. Old South School was the only white school from 1882 until 1900. The property on which the school plant was situated extended East from Southern Railroad and included twenty-seven acres.

¹M. Allen, N. C. Sketches and Places (Raleigh: Ed and Broughton Company, 1946), pp. 19-20.

The South, with its Plantation life, Negro slavery and absence of manufacturing was largely unaffected by the changed social and educational conditions for people of Central and Northern States until well after the close of the Civil War.²

I. INCEPTION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NORTH CAROLINA AND CHARLOTTE

Parents preferred to send their children to private schools for as long as twenty years after the public schools were opened.³ Actually, the educational awakening did not come to the South for nearly a half a century after it was felt up North.

In 1880, a certain faction of the citizenry of Charlotte agminated to agitate the city council into buying the D. H. Hill school and land for use as a public graded school.⁴ This movement for educational advancement in the

²Ellwood P. Cubberly, The History of Education (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), p. 668.

³Edwin Bjorkman, Charlotte: A Guide to the Queen City of North Carolina, Writers Project, (Raleigh, N.C.: News Printing House, 1939), pp. 41-42.

⁴Mecklenburg County, Registry of Deeds (Book 33. Charlotte, North Carolina, April 16, 1883), pp. 431-433.

Queen City was not amicably accepted by all. An opposition force existed which held firm to their objection of a tax increase to finance such a purchase. Because of this opposing bulwark, the city aldermen, or council, resorted to deceptive means in the interest of public welfare. A price of \$15,000.00 was set by the owners, James H. Carson and his wife Margaret, of the D. H. Hill property and the council voted to accept that offer one Saturday night, April 16, 1883.⁵ The transaction was made in cash in preference to check so that the opposing forces could not get out an injunction to stop payment before the bank opened on Monday morning.⁶ In this fashion, D. H. Hill School became the Old South School which was the first home of the Charlotte graded schools.

The public school system was not concretely organized in the city of Charlotte until 1882 in spite of its early inception in the functions of the city government.

⁵Registry. op. cit., p. 433

⁶Harry P. Harding, "The Charlotte City Schools" (unpublished report for the archives of the Charlotte Schools, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1949). pp. 2-4.

The man in charge of this organization process was Superintendent T. J. Mitchell, a native of Ohio.⁷ Mr. Mitchell was succeeded in 1886 by Mr. J. T. Corlew who, in turn, was followed by the distinguished Dr. Alexander Graham.

Growth of the system. The system added schools for both white and negro students, but the number of grades increased also. The original eight grades expanded to ten; then to eleven in 1908 and finally to twelve grades in 1924. Charlotte was one of only three cities in the state of North Carolina that used the twelve year course system after its introduction in 1924.⁸

The years brought changes and additions in the curriculum. In the summer of 1912, a radical change was made. From a system where all grades were organized in separate rooms and taught all subjects by one teacher, the departmental plan was put into action.

The high school grades were together and organized as a high school in the Fall of 1912.

⁷Ibid., p. 3.

⁸Bjorkman, loc. cit.

Reorganization of the system. The 1912 introduction of a separate High School system was the beginning of the internal changes that took place in the organization of the Charlotte schools.

The American school system had been based on the tripartite basis--elementary, secondary and higher education. Suddenly, the need for reorganization of the secondary level seemed to have reached a stage of importance which called for immediate action. Under the stimulus of suggestions and recommendations of leaders in the educational circles, several cities shortened the elementary school course to six years and lengthened the secondary school to six years. The benefits gained from this new system gave prominence to the values reaped by dividing the secondary unit into two units: the junior high school, usually comprising grades seven to nine; and the senior high school, usually comprising grades ten to twelve.⁹

II. BIRTH OF THE JUNIOR HIGH SYSTEM NATIONALLY

During the past two decades, America has witnessed the development of a new type of secondary school. The growing demand that high schools make more provisions for

⁹Ward G. Reeder, A First Course In Education (New York: MacMillan Company, 1947), pp. 149-150.

the different abilities and interests of the pupils was the basis for the idea that students should be better prepared before entering high school so that they would know which course of study to follow. The search for a solution to this problem ended in the junior high school idea.

The junior high school was an experiment and has remained in the experimental stage to this day. However, educators are agreed on the fact that one of the most significant readjustments that has been made in the entire field of secondary education is in the earlier adolescent level--the seventh, the eighth and the ninth grades. The junior high school placed its emphasis on individual needs and the gradual adjustment of the individual to his environment in which one must cooperate with his fellow man.

Traditional program out-dated. The traditional type of program found in the upper years of the former eight grade elementary school had long out-lived its usefulness. The total inadequacy of this type of organization was well expressed by Ettinger as follows:

1. The older eight-four plan in relation to secondary and college education made the period of formal education entirely too long to meet present social conditions.
2. The seventh and eighth grades, as ordinarily organized, were merely an intensified repetition of the work of the preceding years, rather than an appeal to new interest and more mature powers.

3. The work of the upper grades did not articulate with the work of the first year of the senior high school.

4. Pupils were taught and handled en masse.

5. The traditional activities and studies of the old-type school did not recognize the budding and diversified interests of early adolescence, and as a result, the discipline, the mode of instruction, and even the theory of class administration failed to meet the mental, emotional and vocational demands of the adolescent.¹⁰

Junior high program used. After the realization that the need for an intermediate type study program was needed in between the elementary and the high school levels, the junior high school organization spread rapidly. Attention must be given, however, to the fact that many of these schools were organized in name only, but the basic and fundamental characteristics of the new type of school for early adolescents were not recognized. In many cities the junior high schools originated with departmental teaching in the seventh, eighth and ninth grades and were not at first separate schools. This was true of the introduction of the junior high school plan in Charlotte, North Carolina. That type of reorganization was in name only and did not represent a true junior high school system.

¹⁰Address before Junior and Senior High School Principals, New York City, 1923.

Purpose of the junior high. Reasons for the establishment of the junior high school have been stated by many authorities on the subject, such as T. H. Briggs, M. E. Herriott, Harl Douglass and countless others.

The summation of their combined thoughts has revealed the following facts to be the purpose of a junior high school unit:

1. To provide a gradual transition period between the elementary and the senior high schools by separating the children who are approximately twelve to fifteen years of age from younger and older children whose interests are different.

2. To provide a mode of study by which the student is enabled to pass gradually from elementary to secondary subject matter without an abrupt break between the two.

3. To offer pupils a variety of exploratory subjects which permit them to make more intelligent selections of their high school courses and ultimately, to make wiser choices of their occupations.

4. To provide a medium of extracurricular activities and elective subjects for self-expression and individual differences.

Junior high school curriculum. The junior high school level is one part of the school organization for which a definite and final program has not been formulated.¹¹

In the first few years of experimentation, the

¹¹George M. Wiley, The Redirection of Secondary Education (New York: MacMillan Company, 1940), p. 150.

curriculum was developed with a gradual elimination of subject requirements as the student passed from the seventh to the ninth grade. The seventh year was composed of required subjects and only occasional electives. The eighth graders were given a curriculum equally divided with required and elective subjects. By the ninth grade, the student was required to take only a few required subjects and was offered a wide selection of electives. Evidences of this general tendency continue to exist, although significant influences have managed to bring about needed changes in the planned curriculum for the junior high school student.

The junior high school of a decade ago presented a new challenge for the adolescent child through its progressive curriculum. The earlier trend of the educational cycle offered no preparatory period of approach to the elective system of the junior high school; this new unit offered the guidance program at a time when it proved most valuable to the pupil. This new type of curriculum provided, to some extent, a plan by which the twelve to fifteen year old student might learn something of the great major fields of interest and activity by which their choice of study would be led to purposeful sequential study.

The increasing emphasis on English, social studies, health and science, together with an adequate activity program, and group and individual counseling and guidance

service, include some of the major phases of the newer type of six-year secondary schools.¹²

III. JUNIOR HIGH GROWTH IN NORTH CAROLINA

In 1954 the United State Office of Education, upon information compiled for the year 1952, reported that North Carolina had the smallest per cent of reorganized schools in the nation. Lloyd Yates Thayer tells us, "The time is ripe for an increase in the number of junior high schools in North Carolina. That increase is now in progress although the junior high school enjoys only permissive status in North Carolina."¹³

Most of the junior high schools in North Carolina are in city administrative units. A poll was taken in the Spring of 1956 which revealed the fact that there were seventy-three schools in North Carolina which could be accurately designated junior high schools.

After Charlotte's Alexander Graham Junior High School was organized in September, 1923, junior high schools were

¹² Ibid., p. 152

¹³ Lloyd Yates Thayer, "The Junior High School Movement in North Carolina," The High School Journal, (March, 1958), p. 237

organized slowly but fairly regularly in North Carolina until 1949.¹⁴ The preceding fact was found in the writings of Lloyd Thayer and indicated that his study showed the first junior high school in North Carolina to have been Alexander Graham Junior High School of Charlotte.

Growth has been slow in the establishment of the junior high school unit in North Carolina, but record progress was made in the State between 1951 to 1955 during which time nineteen junior high schools were added to the statewide system.

The junior high school in Charlotte, North Carolina. Charlotte, North Carolina finally adopted the junior-senior high school plan in 1923-24. This marked the beginning of the 6 (elementary)-3 (junior high)-3 (senior high) system.

The reorganization of the learning process in Charlotte schools by the introduction of the junior high unit closed the gap which had been an obstacle of insurmountable size to a great portion of the schools enrollment. The junior high unit provided its pupils with such conveniences as the following: (1) differentiated courses with the introduction of electives; (2) departmental

¹⁴Ibid., p. 239.

teaching; (3) a guidance program; (4) flexibility of grouping and other adaptations to individual differences.

The junior high system of Charlotte really had its beginning in 1921, at the First Ward School which was located on Ninth and Brevard Streets.¹⁵ Mr. Aubrey Elliott was made principal of what was called First Ward Grammar School. The seventh, eighth and ninth grades of the territory north of Trade Street were housed here; these grades constituted a junior high school and were so called although this arrangement was in name only.¹⁶ The purpose of the junior high school was fulfilled in the sense that the early adolescents--seventh, eighth and ninth grade students--were separated from the older high school students.

Superintendent Harry Harding was guiding the school system when the junior high unit became an integral part of the Charlotte schools. Alexander Graham Junior High School was the first strictly junior high unit in the city of Charlotte as a result of this innovation.¹⁷ To the memory of this cornerstone of the Charlotte educational structure,

¹⁵ Statement by Susan Stephens, March 1960 personal correspondence with author.

¹⁶ Harding, op. cit., p. 60.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 61a

these pages have been organized to commemorate a humble beginning which has led the way for improving the status of learning in the Charlotte schools. Figure 3 on the next page depicts the architectural structure of the original Alexander Graham Junior High School.

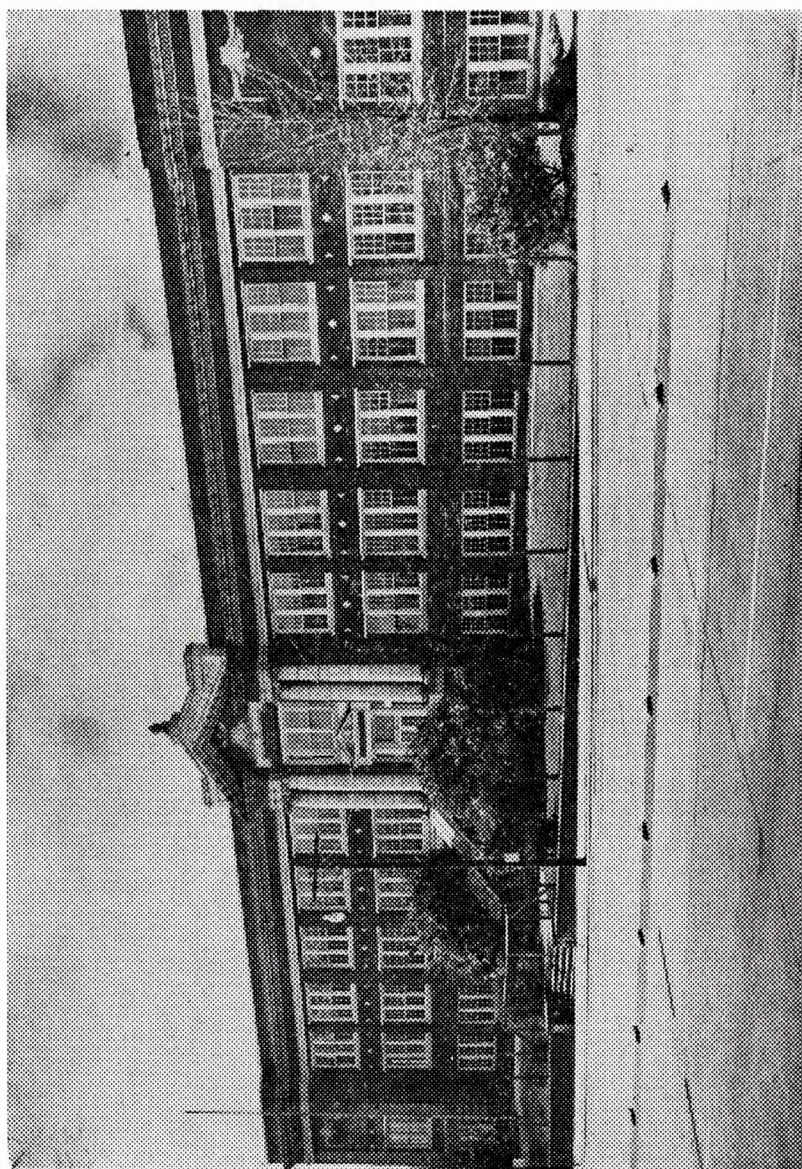


Figure 3. The first junior high school in Charlotte, North Carolina---
Alexander Graham Junior High.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL UNIT OF CHARLOTTE

Alexander Graham Junior High School was named for the first Superintendent of the Charlotte City Schools: the late Dr. Alexander Graham. This proud building was destined to become a monument in the educational realms of the city of Charlotte.

On April 5, 1920, the impressive, new building of red brick with white stone trim was dedicated in honor of Dr. Graham and designated to be a Senior High School. Mr. Fred B. McCall was elected to be principal of this newly created school structure but in 1921, when the school board failed to grant a requested pay increase of twenty-five percent, Mr. McCall resigned along with four other principals of various schools in Charlotte.¹

Dr. Elmer Garinger filled the vacancy left by the McCall resignation and the operation of Alexander Graham High School continued at the Morehead Street address until 1923 when a new edifice for High School students was opened. As the Senior High students moved to their new quarters at

¹Harry P. Harding, "The Charlotte City Schools" (unpublished report for the archives of the Charlotte Schools, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1949). p. 73.

Central High School in 1923, a new era of student grading was initiated in the building they left.

Under Dr. Garinger's direction and guidance, the entire high school system underwent a change; Alexander Graham High School followed the most advanced teaching methods which had been adopted by the best high schools in the nation.

The class of 1920 had the distinction of being the first Senior class to be graduated from Alexander Graham High School.²

I. CONSTRUCTION OF ALEXANDER GRAHAM HIGH SCHOOL

The United States became involved in World War I in 1917 just before the contracts for building a newly designated High School had been let. On account of the exigencies of the times, Mayor McNinch urged the Board of School Commissioners to postpone the building of the High School unit until after the end of the war. The plans and specifications of J. F. Leitner of Atlanta had already been accepted.³

²Alexander Graham High School Students, "School History", Snips and Cuts, XIII (1922), 6.

³Harding, loc. cit. and confirmed by telephone conversation with Mrs. C. C. Hook, widow of C. C. Hook, a famed architect of the time, who was credited with Alexander Graham school plans.

The delay, as requested by Mayor McNinch, was short lived as construction on the new high school was started the following year under the direction of the J. A. Jones Construction Company which had been awarded the building contract.

The original structure contained classrooms, a Home Economics and Science laboratories along with an industrial shop, an auditorium and offices.

The new school on Morehead Street was opened with appropriate exercises on April 5, 1920. The Chairman of the School board, Mr. Plummer Stewart, announced that the school would be named in honor of Dr. Alexander Graham who had been a figurehead in North Carolina education for more than forty years.

Additions. The year 1921 saw additions made to the already modern facilities housed in the "A. G." edifice. The East wing, including the cafeteria and twelve classrooms, was added to the building.

The Parent Teacher Association pushed the operation of the cafeteria. There was a decided deficit the first two years of operation, but, in 1923, Mrs. P. Hall, who later became Mrs. Welbourn Colquit, was made manager of both Central High School and Alexander Graham Junior High School cafeterias. Under her able management, a surplus was

realized and this permitted the purchase of additional modern equipment and facilities.

Expansion did not cease with the construction in 1921 for the continued growth in the ranks of the school aged population made it necessary to add the West wing in 1929. The West wing completed the school plant. In this final addition, a music room and a gymnasium were an integrated part of the fifteen classrooms that were attached at that time. A complete floor plan of the school is given in Figures 4, 5 and 6 on the following pages.

II. THE JUNIOR - SENIOR HIGH PLAN

When the twelfth grade was finally added during the 1923-24 term, the city system of schools was organized on a 6-3-3 plan. This introduced the six years of elementary study, three years of Junior High work and three years of Senior High education.

State approval was not required in establishing or operating junior high schools. Any actual record of the start of the junior high system in the city of Charlotte was contained in the Superintendent's annual report of 1923-24:

The seventh, eighth and ninth grades from the other parts of the city were organized into a Junior High School in the Alexander Graham building. It is our policy to move all junior high school grades from the Central High School building as soon as the Junior High

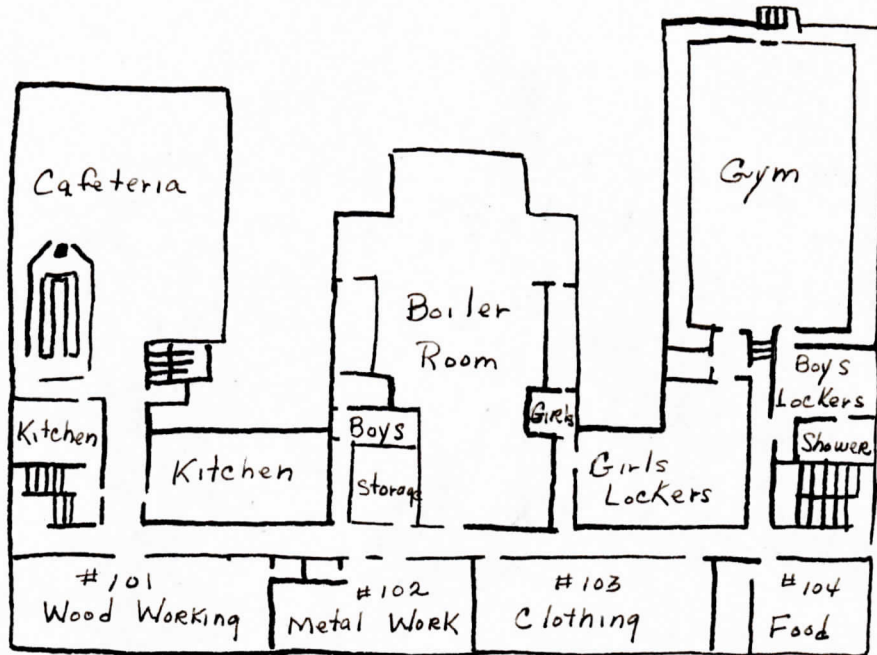


Figure 4. First floor plan of Alexander Graham Junior High School.

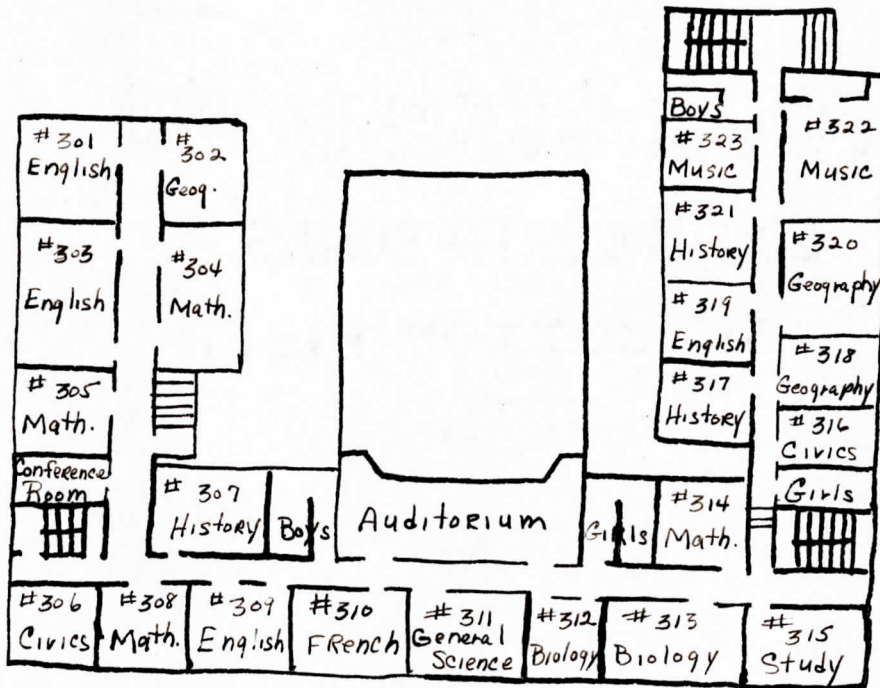


Figure 5. Third floor plan of Alexander Graham Junior High School.

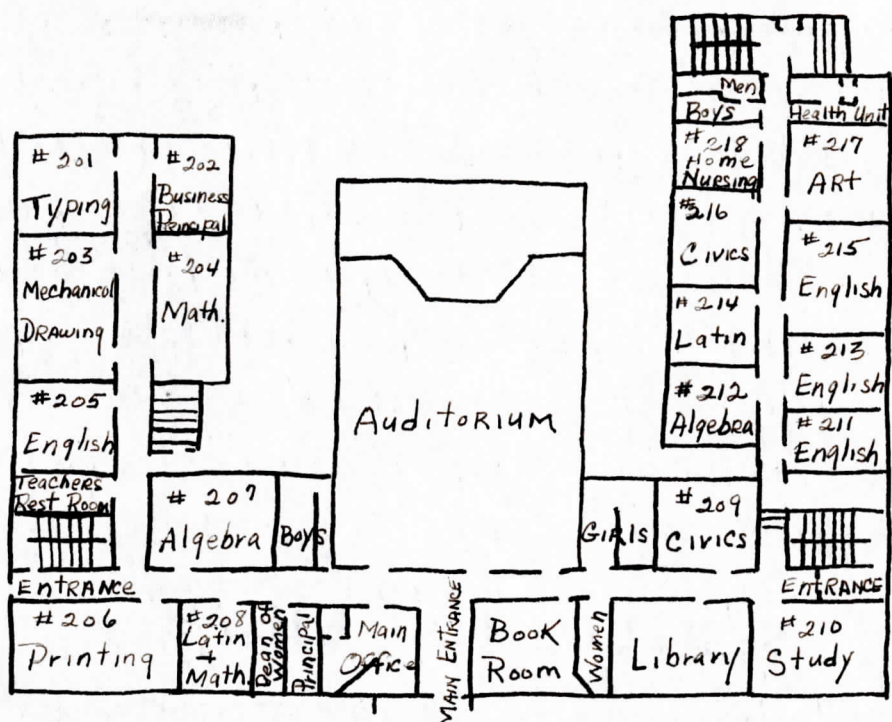


Figure 6. Main floor layout of Alexander Graham Junior High School.

Schools are built - we hope by September, 1925. We shall then complete our plan of having Elementary Schools of grades 1-6 in the various sections of the city, three Junior High Schools with grades 7-9, and one Senior High School with grades 10-12.

September of 1923 saw the Senior High School transferred to the new Central High building. Dr. Elmer Garinger went with the Senior High group and Mr. Aubrey M. Elliott took charge of the newly instituted Junior High unit. This was the first strictly Junior High unit in the city.

One of the most gratifying results of this new system was the statistical revelation that a larger percent of the older boys and girls, grades seven to twelve, were staying in school. Credit for this fact was traced to the enlargement of the program for the adolescent child of the junior high level and of the enriched courses of elective studies in the higher grades.

The school year of 1929-30 was the last year of the school expansion prior to the Great Depression. After this, salaries were forced to be cut about 15%. Though the enrollment of students increased, a curtailed budget made it necessary to reduce the number of classroom teachers by eighteen white and one negro.

This meant that the classrooms were crowded and the teacher loads were increased. Conditions had gone from progressiveness to recessiveness and the situation by 1933 had become decadently worse.

The depression years brought dilemma to the graded school system. A reduction of 61% in the school operating budget forced many changes into what had up until this time been a system of advancement. For the first time since 1882, the school term in the city of Charlotte was for just eight months as the result of the rulings of the 1933 Legislature.⁴

The curtailment of the nine month school year also saw the discontinuation of the twelfth grade. The extra functions of the schools, both junior and senior high, were voided. In all, the Charlotte City schools had reverted to the status of a very poorly financed rural school with a school term of eight months.

Restoration. There were those who knew what could be accomplished and who were willing to renew the struggle for better education of the young citizenry of Charlotte.

After countless legal procedures, a Charlotte Administrative Unit was created by request by the State School Commission. Elections were called to authorize the levy of special school taxes which were necessary to resume the fight for better education.

⁴Harry P. Harding, "The Charlotte City Schools" (unpublished report for the archives of the Charlotte Schools, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1949). p. 120.

Following the election of April 16, 1935, the efforts of the city's educational pillars were rewarded. Teachers salaries were increased from the maximum of \$720 to \$1200 per term.

The twelfth grade was restored and the schools organized again on the 6-3-3 plan. The ninth school month saw its rebirth at this time also. The school board wisely sought the benefit of all educational services that were available and offered by the State or Federal governments.

III. THE ORIGINAL JUNIOR HIGH ORGANIZATION

With the passing of time, the facts surrounding the growth and development of Charlotte's first junior high school are fast disappearing. Records of its organization have been poorly kept or otherwise destroyed. Death of original staff members and organizers has robbed us of other sources of information supply.

Original faculty. When the first junior high school went into operation in Charlotte, a tremendous challenge was presented to those teachers who had been chosen to comprise the original staff. They were the focal point of a new system which would succeed or fail depending on their attitudes and aptitudes. In their charge was placed the education of approximately eight-hundred students of the

seventh, eighth and ninth grade level.

Mr. Elliott conducted many study sessions with the different groups of his faculty to properly inform them of the aims and philosophy of the junior high program. Miss Susan Stephens, a charter member of the Alexander Graham Junior High School staff, stated, "We went through the pros and cons of exploratory routine, the homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping and teaching the "whole child" philosophy during those first few years. We had visitors not only from North Carolina, but the entire South."⁵

The members of the faculty were asked and expected to give forth their best efforts and they, in turn, required the same of their students. The nucleus of this new school organization was a happy and contented faculty which knew it had the full support and assistance of an exceptional principal, Mr. Elliott.

Names of first faculty. A complete listing of the first faculty to serve at Alexander Graham Junior High School was found in the records of the Superintendent's annual report and may be found in Appendix B.

The faculty roster fluctuated with the rise and

⁵Statement by Susan Stephens, March, 1960, personal correspondence with author.

decline of student registration. The opening year of this hallmark in North Carolina's educational history found but thirty-three teachers on the faculty. This number grew to forty-five instructors during the peak years and dwindled to twenty-five during the last year at East Morehead Street.

Charter faculty members at final graduation. When the doors of the "Old A. G." were closed for the final time, with graduation of the class of 1958, the names of Miss Susan Stephens, Miss Hazel Hope, Miss Nancy Wall, Miss Jeanne Black and Mrs. Josephine Miller Hood were still proudly on the teacher roster. They had served this distinguished school from its beginning and were present when the final graduation exercises were executed at Charlotte's first separate unit junior high school on East Morehead Street.

Miss Stephens, Miss Black and Mrs. Hood continued to serve the honored name of Alexander Graham Junior High as members of the new school on Runnymede Lane, in Charlotte, which bears that same name.

Teacher salaries. On the petition of the teachers, their salaries were ordered paid in twelve payments by the board. This plan began with the set salary in 1923. At the end of the nine months school term, funds were accumulated in the school board treasury from the with-holdings from the

teachers salaries to meet the payments of the three supplements.

Accurate records designating that portion of the salary budget which was paid solely to the "A. G." faculty were no longer available. Personal correspondence and interviews with some of the charter faculty members and also with Mr. Aubrey Elliott have revealed that the approximate average salary of that first faculty at Alexander Graham Junior High School was \$120 to \$150 per month depending on the experience and the certificate rating of the teachers.

School board members. The charter of the city was amended in 1923 so that the members of the school board were not all elected every two years. In the years that followed, two members were elected at each city election to serve six years, except at the third election when three members would be elected. Members appointed by the board to fill vacancies which occurred were required to stand for election at the next city election for the unexpired term. Originally in 1913, seventeen members were elected by wards every two years. This number was reduced by the Legislature in 1919 to seven members elected at large. The entire board had to be elected every two years. All through the years, the board of School Commissioners received no financial

reimbursement for their services. The names of the members of the board who were serving in 1923 when Charlotte opened its first junior high school may be found in Appendix B of this report.

Attendance boundaries. There were no set boundaries for attendance at Alexander Graham Junior High School during its opening year in 1923. As the city grew and new schools were built, boundaries were eventually established.

During the final year on East Morehead Street, the boundaries for attendance were definitely established and adhered to. Some students came from the county districts to attend Alexander Graham Junior High but these were tuition students. A broad area was served by "A. G." as may be seen in the statement of the boundaries as found in the Appendix C.

Enrollment. The original enrollment of students at Alexander Graham Junior High in 1923 was approximately eight-hundred students. In 1933, Alexander Graham Junior High School reached its peak enrollment of sixteen-hundred and eighty pupils. The last year at the original site, there were only three-hundred and ninety-one students enrolled. As other junior high schools were built and opened in the district which Alexander Graham Junior High once served entirely on its own, the students were dispersed to those

schools in other zones and, therefore, the number in attendance at "A. G." decreased considerably.

IV. SCHOOL SYMBOLS

School colors and song. The innovation of being the first junior high unit found the students at Alexander Graham eager to establish the usual composites of school government and organization.

The choice of school colors was greatly influenced by the fact the Mr. P. H. Long, who was directing the athletic teams of this newly established school, was a graduate of North Carolina State College. From there, he brought the suggestion which quickly became the choice of colors: red and white.

A new school needed a school song. The original school song was written by Robert Chaplin to the melody of "The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi". However, the years brought a change in this element of the school repertoire. The song which was later adopted by the students as "A. G. Red and White" was written by Hazel Henley.

V. PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Throughout the years in which Alexander Graham Junior High grew and became a shining example of the rewarding values of the junior high system, it had the assistance of

a Parent Teacher Association. This group of conscientious parents joined their efforts with those of the principal and the faculty to make Alexander Graham Junior High a school which was highly recognized in educational circles and one which proclaimed its success by living example.

As the school grew, the problems magnified themselves, also. The first leader of the newly organized junior high's Parent Teacher Association was Mrs. A. A. Knee. Predecessors of Mrs. Knee continued from her beginning to augment the services rendered by this integral function of the school's make-up.

In 1958, the final year that the original building on East Morehead Street housed the "A. G." student body, Mrs. John Crosby was the president of the Parent Teacher unit.

VI. NAMESAKE AND PRINCIPALS OF CHARLOTTE'S FIRST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Ideas and ideals have been the driving forces in man's unending effort to improve or perfect our ways of existence.

The history of education in North Carolina during the 19th century is in a large part the history of a few leaders and dreamers, effective teachers and practical school administrators, on whom bitter attacks were now and then

made. Alexander Graham Junior High School was privileged to have been led by three dedicated men: (1) Aubrey Elliott, (2) Dan Cagle and (3) Frank Motley.

From the inspirations and efforts of one Alexander Graham, the Charlotte schools bursted into bloom. In commemoration of his good works, Charlotte named one of her finest school structures in honor of Dr. Graham. His greatness becomes even greater in the fact that this same school was destined to become the first junior high school unit in Charlotte and in the state of North Carolina.⁶

Dr. Alexander Graham. Alexander Graham was prominent among the educators of North Carolina. His life spanned more than fifteen years of the old South, the Civil War period, the tragic era that followed and the industrial period in the history of North Carolina. Graham was the first man in North Carolina to put high school studies in a public graded school and the first to start a manual training school in the state. His contributions to the educational development of North Carolina are limitless.

He was born near Fayetteville, Cumberland County, North Carolina on September 12, 1844. Preparation for college was done in the schools of Fayetteville. During

⁶News item in The Broadcaster, May 26, 1958, p.2.

the 1860-61 term, he taught in the public county schools. Then in 1862, Graham was made principal of Richmond Academy in North Carolina. Dr. Graham then joined the class of 1869 at University of North Carolina as a Sophomore in the year 1866. While a Senior at the University, he was elected principal of an academy in Bladen County, North Carolina and he retained this position until October 1871 when he was elected to be a teacher in the Anthon Grammar School of New York City. Dr. Graham filled that position and then entered Columbia College Law School from which he was graduated in May 1873. Immediately following his graduation from the law school, he was licensed to practice in New York.

In January of 1875, Alexander Graham returned to his native North Carolina and was admitted by the Supreme Court to practice law in North Carolina. This pursuit of a law practice ended in 1878 when Graham was elected to be Superintendent of the Fayetteville city schools. Re-election enabled Graham to continue in this capacity for the next ten years. During this time the degree of AM was conferred upon him by State University. The University of North Carolina bestowed the title of Doctor of Laws on

Alexander Graham in 1920.⁷

Dr. Alexander Graham was elected Superintendent of the Charlotte Schools in February 1888. He became a general in the army of education in Charlotte and continued in that role until June 1913.

During most of his administration, Superintendent Graham had used his home as his office. The school board ruled, in 1908, that the Superintendent of the City Schools should be permitted to conduct his business each day for one hour from the Mayor's office. Thus it came about that Superintendent Graham used the office of the Mayor from the hours of four until five each afternoon.⁸

Alexander Graham served as the Superintendent of the Charlotte City Schools for twenty-five years. He was the third Superintendent for Charlotte having followed Mr. J. T. Corlew who had succeeded Charlotte's first school organizer, Mr. T. J. Mitchell. He served as assistant superintendent from 1913-1927 and superintendent emeritus from 1927-1934. Death claimed this champion of education on November 4, 1934.

⁷Edward Knight, "Tribute to Alexander Graham," Education in North Carolina, Vol. 2 (January, 1936), pp. 156-159.

⁸Harding, op. cit., p. 86.

First principal. Mr. Aubrey M. Elliott was born on September 6, 1895 in Birmingham, Alabama. Though the earlier part of his schooling was taken in Birmingham, the eighth through the eleventh grades were attended in Charlotte, North Carolina. Mr. Elliott selected the University of North Carolina as the place for his college work. His attendance there embraced the years of 1912 to 1917. Dr. Graham received a report that in his freshman year at the University, Aubrey Elliott of Charlotte won first rank in Latin, English, and Mathematics; and second in Greek. A true student as his records indicated.

World War I interrupted this career in education; however, it afforded Mr. Elliott the opportunity to study at the Sorbonne, Paris, France. His Army service terminated in 1919. It was then that he came to the Charlotte system of schools having had some experience in the teaching realms while a member of the faculty at Baylor School of Education in Chattanooga, Tennessee after his 1917 graduation from the University of North Carolina.

Work was started on a Masters degree with summer courses at Columbia University in New York in 1922. In 1925 the MA degree was awarded to this man who went on to become a hallmark in the educational progress of the Charlotte City Schools.

Mr. Elliott, along with Dr. Elmer Garinger and Dr. Harry P. Harding, had taken extensive study in the Junior High courses while in college. The Junior High system was gaining recognition throughout the nation and from their exposures to this trend of thought, birth was given to Charlotte's Junior High School system.

Alexander Graham Junior High School was always well organized and administered under the capable leadership of Aubrey M. Elliott. He came to the newly organized separate unit Junior High School from his job as principal at the First Ward School which was located on the corner of North Brevard and East Ninth Street. At First Ward School, he was principal of the seventh, eighth and ninth grades of the territory North of Trade Street. These grades constituted a Junior High School and were so called; however, they were not conducted in a separated unit as was the case with the classes at Alexander Graham Junior High School on East Morehead Street.

Congeniality, respect and discipline and progress ruled during the time which spanned Mr. Elliott's appointment as the first principal of North Carolina's first junior high school unit.⁹ In October of 1951, Mr. Elliott

⁹Lloyd Yates Thayer, "The Junior High School Movement in North Carolina," The High School Journal, (March, 1958), p. 239.

was called to the City Hall Educational Offices to assume the duties of higher administrative nature. While at "A. G.", he was efficient, firm and fair, and demanded the best of his faculty. Through his frequent study sessions with the various contingents of his faculty, A. M. Elliott was able to explain the aims and philosophy of the junior high system so that they were capably enacted.

By having kept abreast of modern trends and having perfected a smooth-running organization, Mr. Elliott succeeded in gaining a permanent status for the separate unit junior high school system in the Charlotte schools.

Dan F. Cagle succeeds Elliott. Mr. Cagle was a native of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. He was graduated from Davidson College and taught at Piedmont Junior High School, Charlotte's second junior high unit to be added to the system. Later, Mr. Cagle joined the United States Air Force during the Second World War. When he completed his tour of duty with the Armed Forces, Mr. Cagle returned to Roanoke Rapids before choosing Charlotte as a home for his family and the location from which he would pursue his educational aspirations.

On October 3, 1951, Mr. Dan F. Cagle came from Harding High School where he was the assistant principal and teacher of eighth grade mathematics to fill the vacancy

which was created when A. M. Elliott was called to serve in the Educational Administrative Offices at City Hall. Mr. Cagle served "A.G." until 1955.

Unlike his predecessor, Mr. Cagle terminated his administration at Alexander Graham after only four years of service to move on to a similar position at the helm of a newly constructed junior high school--Sedgefield Junior High School in the southern portion of Charlotte.

The years at Sedgefield were interrupted for a year of study towards his doctorate at Columbia University. Mr. Cagle came back to Sedgefield after earning his title of "Dr. Cagle" but was called to greener pastures as Superintendent of Schools in Georgia.

Last principal. Frank Motley was born in Blairs, Virginia and prepared for his teaching endeavors at Lynchburg College where he was awarded an A. B. degree. Eastern Tennessee State College granted him an M. A. degree. Later, Mr. Motley furthered his educational pursuits with work at Duke University, the University of North Carolina and Colorado State College where he worked on credits towards a doctorate.

The move to assume the responsibility of leadership of "A.G." in 1955 was preceded by three years in service with the Armed Forces, three years as a teacher of English

and History in Virginia where Mr. Motley gained two years experience in administrative capacities as assistant Principal; and finally, three years as an English teacher at Myers Park High School in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Alexander Graham Junior High School was no longer the new and modern institution when Frank Motley came to assume the principalship of this educational cornerstone. His was not an easy chore; still, his unrelenting execution of administrative duties permitted the glory and spirit of a proud school to be maintained.

During the summer preceding the 1952-53 school term, the main structure of Alexander Graham Junior High was condemned as inspectors found imposing cracks in the concrete supports of the superstructure. The East and West wings were not affected and these facilities were forced to handle all the activities of the school. Though a large portion of the school plant had been rendered useless, the high caliber of scholarship and loyalty existed through the last day in the original landmark of Charlotte's first junior high school unit.

The closing years at the "Old A. G." were marked in historical contributions by the admission of a negro student to the ranks of the previously all white enrollment. This admission was granted to Delores Huntley a seventh grade student. Her integration created uneasy situations in the

lunchroom, Physical Education classes, at school dances and in attendance records. Though there was never any physical violence, Miss Huntley was literally "alone" among her three hundred-ninety classmates.

Without a doubt, the attendance by a negro in 1957-58 was a marked event in the history of this history-making school, and Mr. Motley was responsible for shouldering this added burden in his operation of "A. G.": the school which had already survived partial condemnation of its physical facilities and now faced the final stages of operation at the East Morehead Street site.

Public dissent and opposition to integration placed Frank Motley in the precarious position of executing the duties of his office in a situation which promised non-conformity and severe criticism. As the "A. G." principals before him, Mr. Motley rose to the occasion and safely guided his school over the troubled waters. Loyalty to a monument in Charlotte's educational circles did not die.

CHAPTER IV

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The scientific study of individual differences has been one of the great influences which gave impetus to the development of the junior high school program. Because of these differences, the traditional line of study was not fulfilling the needs of all the students. The curriculum had to undergo a major readjustment and this problem has continued to exist. Just as the differences in individuals was taken into consideration, the adjustment of the student to his environment became an articulate part in the planning of the curriculum for the junior high schools.

Previously, the seventh and the eighth grades had been a period of intensified repetition of the work covered in the preceding years rather than affording the student any new interests and more matured powers.

This new trend of education had many things to consider in composing a curriculum. The aims and purposes of the junior high school program were used as the guide-posts in the early program. From the beginning, progressive thought and constructive experimentation have been characteristic of curriculum development in the junior high school.

The attempt to rectify the injustices of the old

"8-4" system of education was carried to extremes. By the time a junior high student reached the ninth grade in those early years, he had very few required subjects open to him but a wide choice of the electives.

The present trend is to regard such subjects as English, social studies, health and science and probably general mathematics as the common integrating subjects or core curriculum for the junior high level. To these many introductory courses, in the practical and industrial arts, music, activities and other optional offerings, depending on the size and character of the community, have been added. There is an increasing emphasis on English, social studies, health and science, together with an adequate activity program, and group and individual counseling and guidance service included in the major phases of the newer type of junior high school. The balance of the work in junior high school is largely exploratory in character, for the purpose of aiding the early adolescent in making wise and worthwhile choices of subject material and so that they may be given the very best opportunity for growth and development in this period of their study.¹

¹George M. Wiley, The Redirection of Secondary Education (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1940), p. 152.

I. EARLY CURRICULUM OF ALEXANDER GRAHAM JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Statistical records concerning the early format which was followed at Alexander Graham Junior High School have been destroyed. The curriculum that was pursued in 1923 and those early years has been handed down from memory by members of the first faculty to serve at Charlotte's first junior high school.

The curriculum in 1923, was the departmental plan. Each teacher taught one subject. The seventh grade course of study included: English, mathematics, history, geography, music, art, home economic or industrial arts and physical education. The eighth and ninth grades were on the same plan with electives added. Under this set-up, the major subjects convened each day and the electives alternated.

This was an exploratory system and, thus, changes in curriculum were both expected and introduced. Civics was added as a required subject; Latin was offered as an elective to the eighth grade students. By 1924, the need for a study of science was realized and this subject was placed on the required subject list.

Evidence of the actual curriculum of Alexander Graham Junior High School by the time of the 1930-31 term is given in Table I, on the following page.²

Band. Music had been a part of the junior high program in Charlotte from the beginning. When the West wing was added on to Alexander Graham Junior High School, the students were given the benefits of a music room. These expanded facilities permitted the music program to be broadened and in 1929 a band was organized by Robert Smith under the supervision of L. R. Sides at Central High School.

Newspaper. Journalism was an elective subject for the ninth grade. These classes were responsible for publishing the school newspaper--The Broadcaster. From its beginning, this publication was of noteworthy caliber. The entire publication process was completed within Alexander Graham Junior High School as the copy was sent from the journalism class to the print shop where the students in the printing class produced the finished product.

II. CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

History of the Honor Society. This organization did

²Smith. "Plan of the Building," The Red and White Handbook, May 1930, p. 16.

TABLE I
CURRICULUM OF ALEXANDER GRAHAM
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL*
1930-1931

SEVENTH GRADE

Required Subjects--	Periods Per Week	Elective Subjects--	Periods Per Week
English	5	Orchestra	4
History and Reading	5	Band	4
Mathematics	5		
Geography	4		
Industrial Arts or Home Economics	4		
Music	2		
Art	2		
Physical Education	1	Total periods elective 0 to 4	
Total periods required	28		

EIGHTH GRADE

Required Subjects--	Periods Per Week	Elective Subjects--	Periods Per Week
English	5	Latin I	5
Mathematics	5	Business Practice I	4
Civics and Occupa- tion	($\frac{1}{2}$) 5	Art I	($\frac{1}{2}$) 3
Music	1	Penmanship	2
Physical Education	1	Public Speaking	($\frac{1}{4}$) 2
CHOOSE ONE OR TWO--		Home Nursing	($\frac{1}{4}$) 2
General Science	($\frac{1}{2}$) 4	Orchestra	($\frac{1}{2}$) 4
Home Economics I	($\frac{1}{2}$) 4	Band	($\frac{1}{2}$) 4
Industrial Arts I	($\frac{1}{2}$) 4	Total periods elective	4 to 7
Total periods required	21		

* See reference on preceding page.

TABLE I (continued)

NINTH GRADE

Required Subjects--	Periods	Elective Subjects--	Periods
	Per Week		Per Week
English	(1)	5 Any 8th Grade Electives	
Mathematics (Algebra or		Latin II	() 5
Business Arith-		French I	(1) 5
metic	(1)	Spanish I	(1) 5
Biology or	(1)	Ancient History	(1) 5
General Science	($\frac{1}{2}$)	Business Practice II	(1) 5
Physical Education		Typewriting	($\frac{1}{2}$) 4
Music		Woodworking	($\frac{1}{2}$) 4
		Mech. Drawing	($\frac{1}{2}$) 4
		Printing	($\frac{1}{2}$) 4
		Home Economics II	($\frac{1}{2}$) 4
		Glee Club	($\frac{1}{2}$) 3
		Dramatics	($\frac{1}{2}$) 3
		Journalism	($\frac{1}{2}$) 3
		Electricity I	($\frac{1}{2}$) 4
Total periods required	17	Total periods elective	8 to 10

Note--Figures in parenthesis represent the amount of credit in units allowed each subject.

not become a reality at the newly organized junior high unit until the year 1927. At that time a group of thirty-five boys and girls of Alexander Graham Junior High, who had made an average of "B" or better, assembled in the library of the school to hold a meeting of honor students. A constitution was drawn up and Margaret Blankenship was elected to the presidency. Vice-President was Allan McLean and Secretary-Treasurer was Jack Stinson. It was not until March 17, 1927 that it was definitely decided that Alexander Graham Honor Society was to be the name of the society.

In December of 1931, this organization became part of the National Junior Honor Society. When the school term was reduced to the eight month session during the depression years, Alexander Graham Junior High was no longer able to be part of the National organization.

III. MERITS OF THE JUNIOR HIGH PLAN

The variation in regulations and difference in policy for the establishment of junior high schools within the individual states has contributed to the confused organizational pattern of the junior high school movement on the national level.

Charlotte school leaders were quick to realize the extent of the benefits derived from this new system they had begun in designating Alexander Graham Junior High as a

separate unit. They knew that the philosophy of the junior high school was unique and distinctly its own. It evidenced that junior high school leadership was dedicated to the premise that early adolescents are entitled to a program of education keyed to their developmental needs.

At Alexander Graham Junior High, the seventh, eighth and ninth grade students were given the opportunity to make the transition for instruction by one teacher to instruction by many teachers in a more gradual manner. Here the gifted students were offered speedier advancement while the retarded child was also offered help. Through the use of the junior high homeroom period, the students of Charlotte were given an exposure to individual counseling and guidance. Students at Alexander Graham Junior High School had the privilege of planning their course of study through the introduction of electives under this departmental plan.

Soon after the move to the modern facilities housed on East Morehead Street, a group of men from the Department of Education came to Alexander Graham Junior High for several days of observation. This group studied the functions of North Carolina's First Junior High School and reported these findings at a meeting in New Orleans.³

³Statement by Mamie Robinson, March, 1960, personal correspondence with author.

From the success of Charlotte's junior high unit plan, in 1923, the way was paved for the growth of the junior high system throughout the state. Alexander Graham Junior High set an example and growth of the statewide junior high system was slow but fairly regular thereafter.

CHAPTER V

REINCARNATION OF ALEXANDER GRAHAM

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The spirit of Charlotte's first junior high school has been spared the fate of complete extirpation by reincarnation in the form of a new, modern school plant in another section of the city of Charlotte. Here, the honored name of Alexander Graham Junior High School continues to serve the Charlottean generations from a location which is farther eastward in the city.

I. "OLD A. G." ABANDONED

The residential sections of Charlotte were moving away from the center of town and Alexander Graham Junior High no longer represented a central location for any one residential area. The fact remained that a portion of the original structure had been condemned and this fact plus the change in population distribution prompted the decision to abandon "Old A. G." for a better site.

Land trade. After surveying the possibilities of a new location and upon the advice of Engelhardt, Engelhardt and Leggett, School Consultants of New York, the decision was made to exchange parcels of land with Mr. and Mrs. James

J. Harris. This exchange involved the surrender of the East Morehead Street site to the Harris' in return for a parcel of land adjoining Myers Park High School and fronting on Runnymede Lane in the eastern part of the city of Charlotte. The old "A. G." site was given to the directors of the Young Mens Christian Association for the purpose of erecting a new building to accommodate their activities.¹

Mementos removed. When it had been agreed that this structure which had served generations of Charlotteans for thirty-five years, was to be replaced, the plaque in honor of Dr. Graham was moved to the new school. The impressive spread eagle which adorned the top of the main entrance aroused some controversy when "Old A. G." was demolished by Crouch Brothers, Inc. in 1958. Historians felt that this memento should be incorporated in the new "A. G." and permission was granted by the Young Mens Christian Association now owners of the Morehead Street location, to have the spread eagle ornament donated to the school board in hopes that it would be used at the new Alexander Graham Junior High School building.²

¹Registry of Deeds of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, Book 1428, p. 313 (March 8, 1950).

²News item in The Charlotte News, July, 1958.

II. "NEW A. G." ERECTED

Just as the original building which housed Alexander Graham Junior High in 1923 was the modern edifice of the times, the reincarnated "A. G." was proclaimed to be the finest in school building architecture. This new school was designed by J. N. Pease and Company. The "new" Alexander Graham Junior High was built in 1958 but was not put into full operation until the Fall of 1959.

Sedgefield Junior High a temporary home. The new "A. G." was not completely constructed in time for the 1958-59 student body to occupy it. Therefore arrangements were made to share the facilities at Sedgefield Junior High School by having the seventh and eighth graders of Alexander Graham attend there until their new school was ready on March 11, 1959. The ninth graders went to Myers Park High School and remained there the entire term.

Five units. This new plant consisted of five units. Each unit was connected by a covered walk and construction was of brick and window walls. The main unit served as the academic building. In this portion there were two full floors of twenty-three rooms and a half floor occupied by the administrative suites. The other buildings housed the library, a two-hundred and forty pupil cafeteria, the

gymnasium, and the arts and television units. All of this was placed on a portion of the one-hundred and twenty-five acres which comprise the Alexander Graham Junior High and Selwyn Elementary area. The new "A. G." was built at a cost of \$984,000.00³

Principal. Frank Motley remained in charge of Alexander Graham Junior High School. Under his firm direction and leadership, the principles of spirit, loyalty and of scholarship were maintained at the reincarnated "A. G.".

³News item in The Charlotte Observer, February 27, 1959.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr. Alexander Graham was justly honored when the Board of School Commissioners of Charlotte, North Carolina elected to name the first separate unit junior high school for this devoted father of education. Through the years, Alexander Graham Junior High School has built up high standards and ideals. These memories of historical growth have never been collected before. Now that the original walls have been demolished and removed from their original site, the need was seen to record facts and figures about this proud junior high school for the posterity of Charlotteans.

The inevitable deaths and the retirement of the founders and leaders of Alexander Graham Junior High School has made the need for immediate recording of an "Old A. G." documentary more urgent.

The leaders of education in the city of Charlotte saw the need to make some readjustment in the type of system which had been developed. The early adolescent was not being properly prepared for high school study and due to this fallacy in the system, far too many students were dropping out of school as soon as they became of age.

The search for improvement led to the development of

the junior high school system for this city and for the state of North Carolina. In their efforts to make a quick improvement, the junior high type classes were established in 1921 and were composed of seventh, eighth and ninth grade classes. The first attempt to ease the void which existed in the education of twelve to fifteen year age group was made under the direction of Aubrey M. Elliott and was established in the First Ward School on Ninth and Brevard Streets. Although this grouping constituted the junior high classes, they did not result in the ultimate arrangement of a junior high school.

As soon as physical facilities were available, the leaders of education in Charlotte promoted the establishment of the city's first junior high school. The culmination of their efforts and planning resulted in the opening of Alexander Graham Junior High School on East Morehead Street in the year 1923.

Alexander Graham Junior High School, from its very beginning, has been a shining example of the merits derived from the junior high school unit type of teaching. A new trend of learning was initiated at this famed school. The adolescent students were afforded the opportunity to expand their capabilities and to explore wider fields of interest and curiosity. The need for individual guidance and counseling was fulfilled because the need for such advisory

channels was met in a new type of curriculum which was designed to mold the entire span of adolescent education.

One of the most gratifying results of this new system was that the schools had found a method to cater to the educational requirements of students from all walks of life by affording them the means to prepare for future needs with the help of an education.

Alexander Graham Junior High School was started on the experimental basis and improvements were ever in progress. To this day, the junior high school type of organization has not been defined or delimited with any finality; however, the citizenry of Charlotte and of North Carolina should be justly proud of the caliber of success attained by Alexander Graham Junior High School on its mission. This example of the rewards which can be reaped from a junior high school system have promoted the expansion of such a program in the State.

Much may be said for the type of system and the facilities in which they were originated; yet, the three principals who directed the activities and the members of the dedicated staff who carried out their duties cannot be forgotten. There is no level of the school service where the contribution of the individual teacher is more important than at the junior high school stage. The honest and untiring efforts of the first staff of Alexander Graham Junior High

School merit distinguished recognition.

In 1958, the years of progress which were originated at Alexander Graham Junior High School on East Morehead Street came to an end. The sanctuary of the first junior high school was abandoned and destroyed. The annals of "Old A. G." showed an unending loyalty by all who were associated with this proud school. Here, in summary of the memories this structure has accumulated, is a verse to expound and express those virtues which have been bestowed to the advancement of education in the city of Charlotte, North Carolina:

Here within this red brick building
Famed among all Junior High schools,
Eager hearts and minds for learning
Toil and strive in search of knowledge;
Here they laugh and talk together
Have such pleasant times together
That the name and fame of A.G.
Will forever be in memory.¹

Undoubtedly there are great values accruing to the senior high school from the marked progress which has been made in the curriculum development of the junior high school since its inception in the Charlotte school system. Relatively few parents or Charlotte citizens are aware of the important function of the junior high school in the education of the child. An even smaller number are aware of

¹Author unknown, "School", The Signing Off, (1938), pg. 5.

the great contribution to North Carolina's educational system that was started in the city of Charlotte. To lessen the incidence of ignorance in this area, the recommendation is made to: (1) safeguard original records until such time when they can be composed into a history and permanently filed in a library or archive; (2) to intermittently refresh the public of the things which add to the greatness of the city and the state educational systems through various efforts within their ranks so that they will be instilled to answer the call to assist the efforts to continue marked progress; and to (3) orientate those who comprise the faculty of the new school which bears the revered name of Alexander Graham Junior High School with the historical facts of the school's origination, in order that they will serve this educational institution with devotion and pride equal to that of those who pioneered the junior high school endeavor.

The fact that Alexander Graham Junior High School led the city and the State of North Carolina in the search for better educational opportunities warrants recognition. For those who have served this noble school at any time, there has existed an avid desire to commemorate the glory of this great school; their helpful contributions enabled this history of Alexander Graham Junior High to be constructed.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY
1950
RESEARCH REPORT
No. 10
BY
J. H. HARRIS
AND
J. E. HARRIS
PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
1950

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2. Manuscript Diaries

Mecklenburg County, Registry of Deeds: April 16, 1883. Book 33, pp. 431-433.

_____. Registry of Deeds: March 8, 1950. Book 1428, p. 313

3. Personal Correspondence of Author

Letters from charter faculty members: Jean Black, Hazel Hope, Mamie Robinson, Gertrude Smith, Susan Stephens, Lela Tomlinson and Nancy Wall. April, 1960.

Letter from third principal: Frank Motley. March 19, 1960.

4. School Handbook

Smith, A. G. (ed). "Plan of the Building." The Red and White Handbook, May 1930, pp. 9-11.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

ALEXANDER GRAHAM JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

PROPERTY DEEDED TO JAMES HARRIS¹

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Beginning at the point of intersection of the southerly margin of East Morehead Street with the westerly margin of South Caldwell Street and running thence in a southerly direction with the westerly margin of South Caldwell Street 203.5 feet, more or less, to the northeasterly corner of the lot conveyed by R. N. Littlejohn and wife to Ida L. Young and Dolph M. Young by deed recorded in Book 240 at page 150, of the Registry for Mecklenburg County; thence in a westerly direction with the northerly line of said lot and parallel, or about parallel, with Lexington Avenue 150 feet, more or less, to the northwesterly corner of said lot; thence in a southerly direction and parallel, or about parallel, with South Caldwell Street 235 feet, more or less, to the south-westerly margin of Lexington Avenue of the lot conveyed by R. N. Littlejohn and wife to Mrs. Bessie M. Herring by deed recorded in Book 139, at page 445, of the Registry for Mecklenburg County; thence in a westerly direction with the northerly margin of Lexington Avenue 310.7 feet, more or less, to the point of intersection of said margin of Lexington with the easterly margin of South Boulevard; thence with the easterly margin of South Boulevard N. 46-06 E. 137.82 feet; thence with a board fence S. 40-01 E. 96.12 feet to a fence post; thence with a board fence N. 50-15 E. 329.82 feet to the southerly margin of East Morehead Street; thence with the southerly margin of East Morehead Street 365 feet, more or less, to the Beginning, comprising part of the land conveyed to the city of Charlotte by James H. Carson and others by deed recorded in Book 33, at page 431, of the Registry for Mecklenburg County, part of the land conveyed to the city of Charlotte by R. N. Littlejohn by deed recorded in Book

¹Registry of Deed of Mecklenburg County (Alexander Graham Junior High School Deed to Mr. James Harris, March 8, 1950), Book 1428, p. 313.

322 at page 648 of said Registry, and all of the land conveyed to the city of Charlotte by W. M. Long and wife by deed recorded in Book 438 at page 264 of said Registry and being known as ALEXANDER GRAHAM JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL property.

ORIGINAL ALEXANDER GRAHAM JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

FACULTY (1923-1924)¹

Aubrey M. Elliott, Principal	
Mae Ellis	English
Irene Whisnant	English
Margaret Milhous	English
Mrs. C. W. Jones	English
Bonnie Lee Barrett	English
Jean Black	English
Ruth Wyatt	English
Gertrude Smith	Mathematics
Ruth Blythe	Mathematics
Mary Stone Grier	Mathematics
Susan Stephens	Mathematics and Science
Hazel Hope	Mathematics
Fannie Little	Mathematics
Ralph L. Warren	Science
Virginia White	Science
George Farrington	Science and French
Josephine Miller	Latin
Josephine Henderson	Latin
Ernestine Mitchel	Spanish
Jane Lee Grier	History
Mamie Robinson	History and Civics
Cora Annette Harris	History and Civics
Julia Tucker	History and Civics
Mrs. W. I. Bost	History and Civics
Connie Horn	History and Civics
Nancy Wall	Geography and Mathematics
Mildred Hamer	Geography
Mrs. A. M. Elliott	Home Economics
Lavinia Klinard	Home Economics
E. C. LeGrand	Manual Training
Shirley Ross	Art
Lela Mae Tomlinson	Music

¹Board of School Commissioners of the city of Charlotte, "Course of Study," By Laws and Rules, Annual Report of 1923-1924, (Charlotte, North Carolina: Queen City Printing Company, 1924), pp. 36-37.

MEMBERS OF THE CHARLOTTE
SCHOOL BOARD (1923-1924)²

Harry P. Harding, Superintendent
Mayor J. O. Walker, Chairman, ex officio
Mr. J. L. Wolfe, Vice-Chairman
Mrs. J. R. Purser
Mr. J. Paul Lucas
Mr. Frank Kennedy
Mrs. Gordon Finger
Mr. D. H. Johnston
Dr. A. G. Brenizer

²Board of School Commissioners of the City of Charlotte, "Course of Study," By Laws and Rules, Annual Report of 1923-1924, (Charlotte, North Carolina: Queen City Printing Company, 1924), pp. 36-37.

APPENDIX C

BOUNDARIES 1957-58¹

South Tryon Street to East 4th, East 4th to Crescent Avenue, Crescent Avenue to Alberta Street, Alberta Street to Dartmouth Place, Dartmouth Place to East Morehead, East Morehead to Latta Park to East Park Avenue, East Park Avenue to Camden Road, Camden Road to West Tremont, West Tremont to Irwin Creek, follow Irwin Creek to East Morehead Street, East Morehead Street to Mint Street, Mint Street to West Stonewall Street, West Stonewall Street to South Tryon Street.

¹Submitted by Frank Motley, principal of Alexander Graham Junior High School, April, 1960.

A COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY OF
ALEXANDER GRAHAM JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Education
Appalachian State Teachers College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Vernon Joseph Dreibelbis
August 1960

A COMMEMORATE HISTORY OF ALEXANDER
GRAHAM JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

by

Vernon Joseph Dreibelbis

The city of Charlotte, North Carolina has been influential in the advancement and improvement of the educational system of the State. A prominent change in this educational plan was the origination of a separate unit junior high school in the Charlotte school system. This first junior high school was the Alexander Graham Junior High which was named in honor of Dr. Alexander Graham, a noted educational leader of North Carolina from 1878 until his death in 1934.

The junior high system was inaugurated in Charlotte on a trial basis in 1923. From this beginning, a successful pattern of education for the early adolescents was developed. Alexander Graham Junior High School has, therefore, become part of the history of North Carolina. Though defects in the concrete superstructure caused the school to be partially condemned and finally abandoned and demolished, the memory of "A. G.", as the school was affectionately referred to, continues to flourish in the hearts and minds of the people who served this famed school.

The early educational trends of the nation and the state were influential in the inception of the junior high

system. A study of progress in these areas was made so that the advantages of the junior high plan could be properly illustrated.

Further investigation of the junior high school curriculum established reason for the initiation of this type of system into the secondary school.

Recognition has been given to the men who were influentially connected with Alexander Graham Junior High and who contributed greatly to the continued progress of the school. The charter members of the faculty and the curriculum of the first junior high school unit were discussed in detail.

Great effort was exerted to properly record the planning, building and organization of Alexander Graham Junior High School before all the visible signs of the school's existence were eradicated and left to memory only. The fact that Alexander Graham Junior High was the first junior high unit merits recognition; however, the valuable contributions rendered to the city and state educational systems by the success of this new type of secondary school teaching have not gone unnoticed.