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Birney School Life Newsletter, November 1950

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You have bound them with links that cannot sever.
Because you serve: sacrifice: Love your community will live forever."

1. Personal Recollections.
2. Interviews with Mrs. A. B. Finlayson, Mrs. F. S. McLendon, Mr. W. A. Patterson and Mr. Dale.
3. When Anacostia was Union Town - The John Claggett Proctor - the Sunday Star, June 19, 1945.

* * *

Some Accomplishments of Birney Teachers

The teachers of Birney School have always been a group of high professional standards. They have always been a moving, vital force in the community, and several of them, who were residents of Anacostia, have made the education of the children here their life's work.

Among those teachers who lived and taught in this community were Miss Fannie Costin, Mrs. F. J. Shipley, Miss Emma V. Smith, and Mrs. Mary H. Addison. Miss Costin was an outstanding teacher of the Hillsdale School, which later became Birney School. Mrs. Shipley, a retired teacher, was active in civic work at the time she taught here. Miss Smith was active in recreation and civic work. She was elected the first secretary of the Birney Community Center.

We cannot think of the teachers of this school without remembering Dr. Eugene Clark, Miss Laura A. Robinson and Mrs. Nellie Brown Dawson. Dr. Clark started his teaching career at Birney School where he taught for over three years. Later he became the principal of Miner Normal School. His next position was Second Assistant Superintendent of Schools. Sometime later, after Miner had become a college, he became president of the college, a position he now holds.

Miss Robinson was an active part of this school for forty-five years. She was appointed here in 1891 and retired in 1936. She was an excellent teacher and much beloved by the community. She is still living at 1311 third Street, N.W. and is very interested in the activities of this school.

Mrs. Dawson is the wife of Congressman William Dawson of Illinois. She is renowned practitioner of the Christian Science Faith. Mr. James Hunter and Mr. E. M. Syphax were outstanding in fields other than elementary education. Mr. Syphax was an accomplished musician known throughout the city. Mr. Hunter is a retired teacher who taught at Armstrong High School.

Some of the teachers who formerly taught here have become principals of other schools. Among these are Mr. John Nalle, a deceased supervising principal; Mr. Walter Brown, deceased principal of Burrville School; Miss Valerie Chase, principal of Terrell Junior High; Mr. Cato Adams, retired assistant principal of Armstrong High School; Mrs. Molis Brown, retired principal of Sunday School; Mrs. B. E. Wade, principal of Grimke School; Miss Willie Brown, principal of Garrison School. Miss Emily M. Dyson, who was the teacher-in-charge of the Douglass Junior High School began her teaching career here at Birney.

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The accomplishments of the former teachers of

Birney School have been many and varied. Some of them have watched it grow from a four-room frame building to the fine edifice that it is today. It is fitting that at this time, upon the dedication of the new Birney School Building, we have made mention of some of the accomplishments of the people who helped to make Birney what it is today.

But what of the future accomplishments? We predict an extremely bright future for further teacher's accomplishments. Several of the present faculty members of the Birney School have excellent records along artistic, scientific and professional lines.

We have always had full cooperation concerning the health program from our principal, however Mrs. Thomas Nelson was an energetic chairman of the Health Committee and a conscientious worker who did much to improve the health of the Birney children. Each teacher was active and co-operative in assisting with the health program in their various rooms.

Mr. James Dunaway, Miss Ashline Robinson, and Mrs. Helen Jackson in Art, and Mr. John Hall in Music have done much for the artistic development of the individual child and the whole community.

Mrs. S. S. Rogers, Miss Maria Freeman, Miss Ashline Robinson, and Mrs. Sarah P. Moore have had special training in the Administration of Group Standardized Tests and are the best administrators of the school.

Some of the Birney Faculty members have furthered their education and received Master's Degrees. These include Mrs. Muriel F. Hershaw from Howard University in 1943; Mrs. Evelyn Peck from New York University in 1945; Mrs. Virginia N. Terrell and Mrs. Jacqueline W. Day from New York University in 1948; Miss Marian Freeman from the University of Pennsylvania in 1949; Mr. Walter Patterson from New York University in 1949; Mrs. B. E. Wade and Miss Annette G. Jones from New York University in 1950. Many other teachers are working on their M.A. Degrees.

Mrs. Helen Atkins is the poet and writer of the school. Her original poems and plays have been the delight of the school and the community.

Still others are aspiring for Ph.D. Degrees to help in the improvement of the up and coming Anacostia community. Our principal, Mrs. A. B. Finlayson has been working earnestly in obtaining such source material concerning the Anacostia community. This has aided others in the search for professional references in obtaining higher degrees.

Other teachers are advancing into other fields of endeavor such as Music, Art, Public Speaking, Choral Assembly, Training Program, and Supervising Positions all the greater self-improvement and community service.

We can look with pride at the accomplishments of former Birney teachers but a few—Dr. Eugene Clark, Second Assistant Superintendent of Schools, and Dr. Eugene K. Clark, Birney Teachers College.

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We have always had full cooperation concerning the health program from our principal, however Mrs. Thelma Bolon was an energetic chairman of the Health Committee and conscientious worker who did much to improve the health of the Birney children. Each teacher was active and cooperative in assisting with the health program in these various rooms.

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Superintendent of Schools, and Dr. Eugene E. Clark, Miners Teachers
College.

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