1957

Varina School, Henrico County, 1909-1957.

Vera Palmore Morton
College of William and Mary

Varina School
Henrico County
1909 - 1957

A Project

Presented to

Dr. Kenneth Cleeton

College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

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by

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Original Building erected 1909(left)
High School (Stucco) Building erected 1920*

*The Varinian 1928, p. 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to present an accurate, detailed account of the events of Varina School from its inception in 1909 until the present time.

As a member of the faculty for over a period of twenty-three years, the author has a personal interest in Varina's history.

As far as can be ascertained no history of the school has been written. A booklet, by the Varina Community League (Parent-Teacher Organization) published in 1928 deals briefly with the history of the League and its school activities. The unpublished Masters' Thesis of Mr. R. R. Marks, Secondary Education in Henrico County 1607-1945, supplied pertinent data concerning the high school.

Primary sources of information were used wherever possible. Henrico County Records were used extensively. The Annual Reports of the Superintendents of Public Instruction of Virginia gave detailed information which was most helpful completing the charts and tables. Minutes of Board Meetings were also used. Articles in the Richmond Times Dispatch and the Richmond News Leader were of invaluable aid. The Varinian, the school

annual and True Relations, the newspaper, are responsible for the various photographs and other interesting information.

Many residents of the community, graduates, former principals, and teachers have been most kind in their contributions which have enabled the author to assemble the various facts and data about the school.

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF VARINA SCHOOL

Varina is the largest (due to its agricultural nature) and most sparsely populated district in Henrico County. This area, rich in colonial history, gets its name from Varina plantation, a tract of land originally composed of three plantations--Varina, Fair Hill, and Dutch Gap; including in all about 2,200 acres, lying along the banks of the James River, twelve miles below Richmond. It was so named because of the similarity, both in texture and aroma, of the tobacco grown here, to that imported from Varina, Spain.[1]

John Rolfe, coming to America in 1610, settled at "Varina" and established the first commercial plantation in the English Colonies.[2] Here in 1614 he brought his bride, Pocahontas, and the couple lived at "Varina" for several years in a house near the present mansion, and here their son Thomas was born in 1615.

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1 Pamplet: History of Varina Farm--1948, p.2.

2 Robert, Joseph C.: The Tobacco Kingdom: Plantation, Market and Factory in Virginia and North Carolina. 1935, p. 251.

The first Henrico County Courthouse was at this location, it having been established in 1632, and its records from 1677 to 1752 are still extant.[3]

Varina is one of the most progressive rural communities in the State of Virginia.

Perhaps one of the greatest factors in the growth and development of Varina has been the establishment and expansion of Varina School which serves the entire white population in this area both of elementary and high school age.

Varina School was the second consolidated school in Virginia, the first being in Lunenburg County.[4]

It was formed by consolidating four one-roomed, district schools: Osborne was located on the Schoolhouse Road one-fourth mile off the Osborne Turnpike near the home of Mr. Tom Barlow. Fort Harrison was a one room brick building near the National Cemetary on Varina Road. Later it was moved to the intersection of the Varina and Kingsland Roads on the Stennett farm. Town Hall was a frame building across the road from the present residence of Mr. and Mrs. Allan T. Dotson

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3 The Varinian, 1926, p. 6.

4 A Brief History of The Varina Community League, 1928, p. 1.

on the John Tyler Memorial Highway. Laurel Hill, the fourth of the one room structures, was on the corner of the present Laurel Hill Methodist Church yard.[5]

The members of the School Board from Varina District were: Mr. S. C. Freeman, Chairman; Dr. J. C. Blanton, Clerk; and Mr. Charles Miller. Mr. Charles Robinson, architect, submitted plans for the building which was authorized by the Board in 1908. It was erected at a cost of $12,000, of which $6,000 was derived from local funds and $6,000 was borrowed from the Literary Fund.[6]

On completion of the building, Mr. Charles Billings, the wealthy owner of Curles Neck Farm and a most civic-minded individual, sent several teams of mules, a host of workmen, fertilizer, grass seed, and shrubs for the beautification of the surroundings of the "new school."

The building was ready for occupancy in February of 1909. There were impressive dedicatory exercises with the Governor of Virginia, William H. Mann, delivering the address of the day.

Miss Rena Armstrong was the first principal, with Miss Sarah Woodson and Miss Page Pierce as grade teachers.

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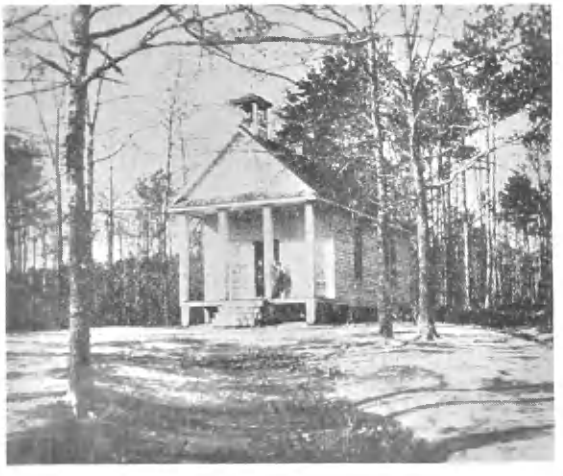
5 True Relations, April 8, 1954, p. 1.

6 Bienniel Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, p. 47.

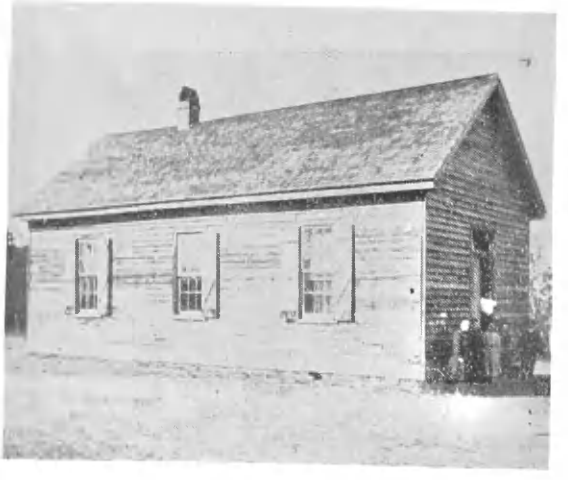
Four One-room Schools*

Osborne

Fort Harrison



Town Hall



Laurel Hill

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*True Relations, April, 1954, p. 1.

There were forty-five pupils enrolled. Only one year of high school was offered.[7] Later, a two-year course was given, and Miss Roxalena Perry (Mrs. W. W. Hill) was the first graduate.

In 1916, through the efforts of Mr. George F. Baker, the principal, a full four year course was offered; and the school was placed on the state accredited list. It has maintained this status through the years.

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7 A Brief History of the Varina Community League, 1928, p. 2.

Mr. George F. Baker*
B. S. V. P. I.
M. A. Columbia
Principal 1916-1940

*The Varinian, 1926, p. 3.

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND CURRICULUM

In its forty-eight years, Varina School has experienced the leadership of seven principals. These dedicated men and women have given their best to the establishment of ideals, the spreading of knowledge, and the development of an institution in this community of which we all may be justly proud.

Unceasing effort and a devotion to duty has spanned the years since Miss Armstrong and her two teachers laid the foundation for the present, modern, well-equipped school, under the principalship of Mr. R. R. Marks with a faculty of fifty teachers.

The School has kept pace with the trends in education and filled the needs of the community. The teachers have met the standards of certification required by the State Board of Education and applied themselves diligently to the tasks at hand.

As the enrollment steadily increased, the faculty grew accordingly. Even at this early date, the question of teachers' salaries came to the surface. In the 1910-1911 session County funds reached such a low level that the Board was obliged to shorten the term, but the Community League came to the rescue and raised

enough money to continue the operation of school for another month.[8]

With the coming of World War I, there was a decided drop in enrollment due to the enlistment of many of the high school boys. Mr. G. F. Baker was the only male member of the faculty.

The session of 1918-19 was a dark one. Shortly after the opening of school, the epidemic of influenza swept thru the community. Schools were closed by the State Board of Health and were not re-opened for six weeks. During this time the "flu" had taken its toll. Among the victims was Miss Page Pierce, one of Varina's three original teachers.

Miss Clara Atkinson was appointed to fill this vacancy. In order to complete a full term's work, the school day was lengthened, and students attended classes on Saturdays and holidays. It was reported that, "in spite of the serious drawbacks, the year was completed in fairly good shape."[9]

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8 Ibid.,p. 5.

9 Richmond News Leader, Jan. 12, 1939.

AGRICULTURE

In March of 1919, the patrons in Varina began the consideration of a plan for making Varina a Smith-Hughes Agricultural High School. Under the provisions of the Smith-Hughes Act (and later the George-Dean Bill) vocational agriculture would be carried on as a joint responsibility of the national, state and local governments, where need for such training existed and the residents expressed a desire for such training. Mr. Thomas Eason, Director of Vocational Education, in an address to a group at Varina assured them that Varina School was entitled to such a program if $3,000 of the funds necessary was raised locally.[10] The following committee was appointed to study the plan and investigate ways and means of raising money.

Mr. G. F. Baker	Mr. Elmer Eberly
Mr. George Drinker	Dr. J. C. Blanton
Mr. E. B. Keelley	Mr. J. A. Loving
Mr. Hugh Nelson	Mr. George Stoneman

This committee not only decided to meet the requirements of the Smith-Hughes Act, but felt that the new building to be erected must include one feature which had been lacking in the first structure, an auditorium.

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10 A Brief History of the Community League, 1928, p. 6

After a meeting with Mr. W. L. Prince, the Superintendent of Schools in Henrico County, final plans were set in motion. The new high school building was completed in January of 1920, at a total cost of $20,000.[11]

Its completion was most timely. The Tree Hill Grade School was destroyed by fire at this time. The two teachers, Miss Dorothy Bauer and Miss Adell Burkman and their pupils came to fill the vacancy just created by the high school departments' move into the new building.

Varina now became Varina Agricultural High School. Mr. G. F. Baker taught the Agriculture classes for the first two years. The first full-time teacher was Mr. Guy Rice who came in 1922.

This program was continued with full credit until 1941 when, at that time, the classes became very small. Due to our envolvement in World War II, many of the boys were enlisting and others were working in various war plants rather than on the local farms. A questionnaire was sent to the patrons concerning the continuance of vocational agriculture. After due consideration on the part of the School Board, patrons and interested students, a decision to discontinue the program was reached.

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11 Ibid., p. 8.

HOME ECONOMICS

A Home Economics Department was also inaugurated in 1919-1920. Miss Eva Rooshup (Mrs. Elmer Kohl) was the first teacher. This department has maintained its popularity through the years.

It occupied a portion of the second floor in the new building until in 1939 it moved into the more spacious quarters of the beautiful, modern, well-equipped Cottage. Under the leadership of excellent teachers, this department has become a most vital part of the program of instruction offered at Varina.

LIBRARY

In 1924 the League lists as one of its outstanding activities of the year, the donation of $46 for books to be placed in the high school library.[12] As early as 1918 mention is made of gifts of books for the school. The patrons, early realized that the library is the "heart" of a school. A library as such, was still quite a distant thing. One high school teacher said she used her study hall for checking out books and kept her records in a composition book. In the grades, books

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12 Pamphlet: First Twenty-Five Years of Varina Library, p. 2.

Home Economics Cottage*
Completed 1939

*The Varinian, 1952, p. 1.

were kept in each teacher's room and the first move toward a central library was when Miss Stokeley, the supervisor, asked each teacher to post the names of the books she had on the outside of her door. The following year Miss Stickley, another supervisor, and Mr. Baker, principal, appointed a primary teacher and an elementary teacher to collect all the books from the various rooms and fix them in the little library room in the primary building. The shelves at one end of the room were used for the primary books and the shelves at the other end for the elementary books. The room was equipped with several tables and odd chairs, and once a week each teacher brought her class to the library at a regularly scheduled library period.

On the back of a program for commencement exercises dated June, 1938, the following was stated among Pertinent School Facts:

> Our school remains on the Southern list of accredited schools where it has been since 1927, but it has been warned that it must have a full-time librarian or be dropped.

This warning proved very effective, for with the beginning of the fall session, 1938, Miss Vi Martin came to Varina as the first full-time librarian. She immediately began cataloging the books, and chose one of the larger side rooms in the old high school building

for the library. The following year, 1939, the high school moved into the new building; and the library, which extended across the front, had a choice location and was complete with shelves, newspaper racks, magazine stands, repair room, and office. The elementary books were moved here and became a part of the central library. The little room in the primary building was used exclusively as the Primary Library.[13]

When the new addition was completed in 1953, there was a large library room to house both the primary and elementary books, magazines and newspapers. Miss Moody, with the help of her Junior Librarians, had soon arranged both books and schedules and everything was running smoothly.

In 1954 Miss Moody was replaced by Miss Lilli Ottesen, and Mrs. Mable Marks as her assistant was in charge of the elementary library.

Due to the crowded conditions existing in 1955, the elementary library had to be used as a classroom, and the books were returned to the various grades appropriate to their use. Each class was alloted a certain number of books to be exchanged with other classes at an appointed time. Although the atmosphere

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13 A Brief History of The Varina Community League, pp. 2, 4.

of a library was lacking, this system was found to have its advantages.

To date, there are 2,818 elementary books and 3,181 high school books. A total of 5,999 books in all, 17 magazines, 1 daily newspaper, and the weekly issue of The New York Times in the library. Film strips, maps, globes, and other audio-visual aids are also handled as an added service of this department.

MUSIC

The value of music as a part of the total school program was manifested early. In the session 1910-1911 the four teachers with the help of the Community League purchased a piano and later, in 1917, a victrola was bought.[14] Several members of the faculty had a background of musical training and were very talented. Accounts of various programs given from time to time by the students displayed how well these teachers passed on their musical knowledge.

The coming of Mrs. Louise Thimsen in April, 1926, was an asset to both the community and the school. She gave private piano lessons at the school and in return

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14 Ibid., pp. 3-4.

served as pianist for all the school functions, such as operettas, plays, folk-dancing classes, rhythm bands, weekly song classes, and commencement exercises. It was with a feeling of great loss that the school saw Mrs. Thimsen retire in 1952.

The first county-supported music program in which Varina participated was in 1943 when we shared a band director and instructor with Highland Springs High School. At this time Band was offered only to high school students.

Miss Carrie Anderson, aside from her duties as head of the English department, did a splendid job as director of high school Glee Club and Chorus.

In 1945 Mrs. Mary Houff came as Band instructor and director of Glee Club and Chorus. She also taught classes in Music Appreciation.

Following Mrs. Houff, Mrs. Irene Covington divided her time between the Physical Education Department and a full music schedule. Band instruction was offered to the elementary pupils also. Mr. Louis D'Arville and Mr. Jim Green preceded Mrs. Betty Hermanson, our present head of the Music Department. There are three band groups--Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. Music Appreciation is taught and there are both Glee Club and Chorus groups. Both Band and Glee Club have participated

in State Music Festivals, acquitting themselves with a creditable performance.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The parents in Varina have been ever mindful of the value of moral and spiritual training of their boys and girls. It was with this thought in mind that they took advantage of the opportunity offered them in 1939. by the Virginia Council of Week-Day Religious Education.

According to the provisions of the Council, a teacher would visit the school and conduct classes in religious education. This instruction was to be non-sectarian in nature. It was to give Bible history background, both of the Old and New Testaments, have the elements of character-building, high ideals, and right living. The teacher was to be a person who was especially trained to do this type of work. (Two of the teachers had their Master's Degree in Religious Education.) The classes were optional. If parents did not wish their children to participate, the regular classroom teacher made other plans for them.

The program was sponsored by the combined efforts of the several local churches and the teacher's salary was paid by the contributions of the members of these churches and other interested patrons.

The three ladies, Miss Ella Lee Sowers, Mrs. Elizabeth McLean, and Miss Marguerite Hall, who conducted these classes at Varina over a period of 17 years, contributed much that can never be measured. They created in their pupils a love for those things in life which are noble, good, and true.

It was with a feeling of regret among many residents of the community that it became necessary to discontinue these classes in 1956.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Varina, from its earliest years, has been interested in the physical growth and development of its students. The Health and Physical Education Department has done a commendable job in developing strong healthy bodies and a spirit of good sportsmanship which makes the students welcome anywhere.

The story of "sports" at Varina would be a history in itself. It can be said, however, that the students who have participated in athletic contests on local and state levels have been a real credit to their school. The basketball and football teams have won their share of the games, and there have been individuals who have been among the state champions.

The first coaches had to combine their duties with regular classes; but now, the head coach, Mr. Ellett McGeorge, devotes all of his time to the activities of this department and is assisted by Mr. Jerry Adams.

Mrs. Mable Marks is director of health and physical education for the girls of the high school. The girls have not only made a creditable showing on the basketball court but the Girls Athletic Association has sponsored a number of projects such as, Christmas Baskets, March of Dimes, and Muscular Dystrophy Drive, which has shown the true spirit of the group.

The interest and cooperation of the patrons in the athletic activities of the school has been displayed in a number of ways. Tennis Courts were constructed by men of the Parent-Teachers Association in 1953. The baseball field was equipped with electric lights for night playing through the efforts of other patrons. A time clock was installed in the gymnasium in 1955 by members of the Recreation Club. The Ruritan Club and the local American Legion Post have in cooperation with the above mentioned groups, from time to time, contributed money for the purchase of uniforms and other needed equipment for the physical education department. These groups feel that their investment in Varina's youth is one that will pay high dividends.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES
1956-1957

ORGANIZATION	SPONSOR
1. Annual, "The Varinian"	English Department
2. Band	Music Department
3. Beta Club	S. C. A.
4. Chorus	Music Department
5. F. B. L. A. Future Business Leaders of America	Commercial Department
6. F. H. A. Future Homemakers of America	Home Economics Department
7. G. A. A. Girls Athletic Association	Physical Education Dept.
8. Library Club	Library
9. Newspaper "True Relations"	English Department
10. Quill and Scroll (International honor society for high school journalist)	English Department
11. Safety Patrol	Physical Education Dept.
12. S. C. A.	Social Studies Dept.
13. Science Club	Science Department
14. 4-H Club	Henrico County Agent

GUIDANCE

In 1950 a guidance department was initiated under the direction of Miss Catherine Carter. She was succeeded in 1953 by the present director, Miss Jane Leitch. Through an effective guidance program, the high school boys and girls are given the benefit of a unique service. The director assists them in choosing a curriculum best fitted to their needs and abilities. A well planned testing program including, intelligence tests, aptitude tests, ability tests, and interest inventories enable the student to discover how he can fit into a program of study and how to direct his efforts in the most worthwhile channels.

This department also provides students with information concerning state and national scholarship requirements and is alert in the area of job placement on the local, state, and national level.

The director of guidance supervises the administration of tests and the handling of data dealing with the State Testing Program in the seventh and eighth grades. (The California Test of Mental Maturity and The Iowa Silent Reading Test)

Through the accomplishments of this department, one is made aware of the vital contribution it makes to the progress of Varina School.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum at Varina has continued to expand to meet the educational needs of its students. The twelve-year program was adopted in 1945 along with the other schools in the county. There are seven elementary grades, the eighth grade which is exploratory in nature, and a regular four-year high school program.

The following courses were offered at Varina in the high school department for the session 1956-1957. They comprise a total of forty unit and four one-half unit classes.[15]

English 8
English I 1 unit
English II 1 unit
English III 1 unit
English IV 1 unit

Social Studies 8
World Geography 1 unit
World History 1 unit
American History 1 unit
Government 1 unit

Shop 8
Shop I 1 unit
Shop II 1 unit
Mechanical Drawing I 1 unit
Mechanical Drawing II 1 unit

Art I 1 unit
Art II 1 unit

Latin I 1 unit
Latin II 1 unit
Spanish I 1 unit

Arithmetic 8
General Math I 1 unit
Algebra I 1 unit
Algebra II 1 unit
Plane Geometry 1 unit
Solid Geometry ½ unit
Trigonometry ½ unit
Refresher Math 1 unit

Science 8
General Science 1 unit
Biology 1 unit
Chemistry 1 unit
Physics 1 unit

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15 Letter to Parents of High School Students at Varina, p. 1.

Home Economics 8	Band 8
Home Economics I 1 unit	Beginning Band 1 unit
Home Economics II 1 unit	Advanced Band 1 unit
Home Economics III 1 unit	Chorus 1 unit
Home Economics IV 1 unit	

Physical and Health Ed. 8
Physical and Health Ed. I ½ unit
Physical and Health Ed. II ½ unit
Physical and Health Ed. III no credit
Physical and Health Ed. IV no credit

Jr. Business Training 1 unit
Typing I 1 unit
Typing II 1 unit
Shorthand I 1 unit
Shorthand II 1 unit
Office Practice IV 1 unit
Bookkeeping I 1 unit

To receive a high school diploma, the pupil must have completed successfully the following subjects above the eighth grade:

4 years of English	4 units
1 year of any Mathematics	1 unit
1 year of any Science	1 unit
American History	1 unit
Government	1 unit
2 years of physical and health education, ½ unit each year	1 unit
	9 units

The remaining 8 units may be elected from other offerings carrying credit. A total of 17 units are required for graduation.

To the student who wishes to select a particular course of study, a complete 4 year curriculum is scheduled for each of the following:

1. College Preparatory
2. Business
3. Home Economics
4. Shop

COLLEGE PREPARATORY CURRICULM

First Year	Second Year
English I	English II
Algebra I	Algebra II
World Geography	Biology
Latin I	Latin II
Beginning Band	Advanced Band
General Science	World History
Art	Art
Physical and Health Ed.	Physical and Health Ed.
Chorus	Chorus
Speech	Speech

Third Year	Fourth Year
English III	English IV
American History	Civics
Plane Geometry	Solid Geometry (½ yr.)
Spanish I	Trigonometry (½ yr.)
Speech	Physics
Chemistry	Speech
Advanced Band	Chorus
Chorus	Advanced Band
Art	Journalism
Journalism	Art
	Refresher Math

BUSINESS CURRICULUM

First Year	Second Year
English I	English II
World Geography	World History
General Science	Biology
Jr. Business Training	Latin II
General Math I or	Chorus
Algebra I	Algebra II
Latin I	Art
Physical and Health Ed.	Typing I
Chorus	Physical and Health Ed.
Art	Speech
Speech	

BUSINESS CURRICULUM (Continued)

Third Year	Fourth Year
English III	English IV
American History	Civics
Algebra II	Plane Geometry
Plane Geometry	Solid Geometry
Spanish I	Trigonometry
Chemistry	Physics
Chorus	Office Practice
Art	Bookkeeping I
Journalism	Journalism
Typing II	Chorus
Shorthand I	Shorthand II
Bookkeeping I	Art
Speech	Refresher Math
	Speech

HOME ECONOMICS CURRICULUM

First Year	Second Year
English I	English II
World Geography	Home Economics II
General Science	Algebra I
General Math I or	Biology
Algebra I	Latin II
Home Economics I	Art
Art	World History
Physical and Health Ed. I	Physical and Health Ed. II
Speech	Chorus
	Speech

Third Year	Fourth Year
English III	English IV
American History	Civics
Home Economics III	Home Economics IV
Plane Geometry	Solid Geometry
Chorus	Trigonometry
Spanish I	Chorus
Chemistry	Journalism
Art	Art
Journalism	Physics
Speech	Speech
	Refresher Math

SHOP CURRICULUM

First Year	Second Year
English I	English II
General Math or	Algebra I
Algebra I	Algebra II
World Geography	Biology
General Science	Latin II
Beginning Band	World History
Chorus	Shop II
Shop I	Art
Art	Advanced Band
Latin I	Physical and Health Ed. II
Physical and Health Ed. I	Chorus
Speech	Speech

Third Year	Fourth Year
English III	English IV
American History	Civics
Algebra II	Plane Geometry
Plane Geometry	Solid Geometry
Spanish I	Trigonometry
Chemistry	Physics
Mechanical Drawing I	Advanced Band
Advanced Band	Mechanical Drawing II
Art	Art
Speech	Refresher Math
Journalism	Speech
	Chorus
	Journalism

LIST OF TEACHERS

Session 1956-1957[16]

High School

Name	Position
Robert R. Marks	Principal
Henry D. Ward	Assistant Principal
Jane M. Leitch	Director of Guidance
Jerome Adams	Geography, History
Mrs. Mary B. Barlow	Commercial
Ronald L. Blankenship	Mathematics
Mrs. Elmira Bowen	Physics, Science
Glenn Brands	Biology, English, History
Mrs. Marjorie H. Cleveland	Mathematics, Science
Mrs. Julia M. Ferguson	Mathematics
Norma A. Henley	English
Mrs. Betty Hermanson	Music
Ellett R. MacGeorge	Physical Education
Mrs. Peggy McNutt	Chemistry, Art
Mrs. Mabel Marks	Physical Education
Mrs. Grace N. Mistr	English, Latin
Maude B. Motley	Social Studies
Lilli M. Ottesen	Librarian
Mrs. Elora B. Pruden	Social Studies, English
Mrs. Patria Skinner	English, Spanish, Speech
Mrs. Margaret W. Smith	Home Economics
Trueman R. Tremble	Industrial Arts
Robert A. White	English
Mrs. Jackie Williams	Commercial

Elementary

	Grade
Mrs. Mattie S. Jones	Seven
Mrs. Eloise H. Moore	"
Mrs. Vera P. Morton	"
Mrs. Ann K. Walker	"
W. I. Dickenson	Six
Mrs. Florence D. Haskens	"
Earle B. Harper	"
Mrs. Doris Y. Jones	"

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16 Directory of Henrico County Public Schools, 1956-1957, Henrico County Courthouse

Elementary (Continued)

	Grade
Mrs. Betty S. Conner	Five
Mrs. John B. Dubovsky	"
Mrs. Mittie M. Nelson	"
Mrs. Frances Ball	Four
Mrs. Julia Chapman	"
Mrs. Ethel Dewberry	"
Mrs. Loie Miller	"

Primary

Harriet Childrey	Three
Mrs. Mary T. Enroughty	"
Mrs. Mable B. Nelson	"
Sara Lee Perkins	"
Mrs. Thelma L. Beadles	Two
Mrs. Lena Bland	"
Marguerite Winn	"
Mrs. Mary P. Moseley	"
Mrs. Virginia L. Cosby	One
Mrs. Dorothy N. Dotson	"
Mrs. Fannie Hanback	"
Mrs. Jane M. Pitts	"

Mr. W. Howard Mears*
B. S. V. P. I.
M. A. William and Mary
Principal 1940-1954

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*The Varinian, 1953, p. 3.

OFFICE STAFF

With the growing number of students and faculty members, the duties and responsibilities of the principal was greatly increased. For years each principal had an assistant, into whose hands certain delegated duties, powers and privileges had fallen. Not until 1953, however, was the present assistant principal, Mr. Henry D. Ward, relieved of his teaching duties so that he could devote all of his time to his position.

Prior to 1943, students, majoring in commercial work, served as office assistants. These girls not only received valuable training but were most helpful in taking care of the many clerical tasks involved in keeping a school running smoothly and efficiently.

The first full-time office secretary was Miss Josephine Bond, one of the 1943 graduates. She was followed by Mrs. Frances Childress and Mrs. Harris Ragsdale.

At the present time, Mrs. Lucille Gaulding assumes the secretarial duties in the office, while Mrs. Phyllis Snelson serves as accountant. Students who are taking Office Practice assist both of these ladies at regularly scheduled periods each day.

CAFETERIA

While teachers were looking to the needs of the mind, there were those who realized that children do not study or learn on an empty stomach.

The first record of progress toward a cafeteria is an account stating that in May of 1922, "plans for serving hot lunches to the children were being made."[17]

In 1926 the patrons held a "pound party" for the cafeteria which then occupied the basement of the Middle Building. In the spring of the same year, Mrs. Gordon Hatley presented the cafeteria with a new four-burner oil stove which was found to be most helpful that summer, as a number of the ladies of the Community League met at school to can vegetables of various kinds for the cafeteria.[18]

The Home Economics Department assumed responsibility for the supervision of the cafeteria until the coming of Mrs. Boone who was in complete charge. Mrs. W. W. Hill who came in 1934-35 was succeeded by Miss Katie Wilson, who served as manager for thirteen years. While under her direction, the cafeteria was moved to the new high school building. Lunches were served in shifts according

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17 A Brief History of The Varina Community League, p. 11.

18 Ibid., pp. 14-15.

to primary, elementary and high school groups, because the space and seating arrangements could not accommodate so many at one time.

When Miss Wilson left in 1949, Mr. John Deitrick added a masculine touch to the lunch period. He remained as head of this department for four years.

At present, Miss Louise Myers, director, with three assistants are doing a splendid job in serving nourishing meals on an average of 270 plate lunches per day. Operation is still on the shift basis. The cafeteria is now located in the new building (1953 addition) and is equipped with freezing units, steam tables, automatic dish washer, and the best in other modern utensils.

CLINIC

In 1954-55 through the efforts of the P. T. A., Mrs. Mary Madison was installed as school nurse.

Prior to this time, the teacher whose room was nearest the clinic "kept her eye on things." Later, Mothers in the community took turns supervising the clinic on a daily basis.

In a school as large as Varina, one cannot expect everybody to remain hale and hearty, to say nothing of skinned knees, toothaches, or poison oak rash. The community feels very fortunate in having the efficient services of Mrs. Madison who fills a very definite need of the school.

CUSTODIAN

No history of the school would be complete without mention of those faithful hard-working individuals who keep the buildings clean, safe, and comfortable. Long before the teacher is on the job, the custodian and his assistants are busy firing the furnace to have the rooms warm and cheerful when the school day really starts. In the warm days of spring and fall, the purr of the lawn mower reminds one he is doing his best to make the surroundings as attractive as possible.

The author regrets that she was unable to find the names of some of the first custodians. It was reported that this was a part-time job. The school-wagon drivers took turns firing the furnance. In between farming and meeting their morning and afternoon loads, others tended to the cleaning and repairing of buildings, furniture, etc.

Mr. Garton, Mr. Throckmorton, and our present Mr. Brown are the ones the author has known personally.

Mr. Brown has served as head of his department for 16 years. He has a crew of 8 workers who are operating on two shifts. These folks are cheerful, obliging, and efficient people who are a vital part of the school.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL PLANT

When the original building on a three-acre plot of ground was completed in 1909, there were those in the community who felt that the School Board had been too ambitious. They said the building would never be filled. Today, as we view the eight buildings, the spacious playground area, the athletic field, tennis courts, black top, picnic area, and beautiful lawn, Varina is indeed grateful that these founders were men of vision.

The growth and improvement of the school plant has continued through its forty-eight years to be a community project. In 1920 the Community League installed an electric light plant at a cost of $685. In 1922 a group of patrons laid cement walks between the buildings, painted the interior of the grade building, and observed several "Gravel Days," (when gravel was hauled for the school grounds and drive ways were drained and graded). On these occasions the ladies served hot lunches to the hard-working men.[19]

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19 Ibid., p. 8.

SCHOOL PLANT

Buildings	Date	Cost*
Elementary	1909	$ 12,000
High School (stucco)	1920	20,000
Primary	1928	44,736
Industrial Arts (shop)	1934	4,200
High School	1939	97,000
Home Economics Cottage	1939	9,200
Cannery (field house)	1945	4,200
New Addition	1953	237,000
Cottage (rented to Coach)	1953	10,000

*Henrico County Minute Book, 1909-1953

In May, 1923, a water system was installed which supplied all the buildings. The system consisted of a new well, a 7,000 gallon covered tank on a forty foot steel tower, an electric pump, sanitary drinking fountains in the grade and high school buildings, running water in the chemical laboratory and toilets. It is reported that a number of patrons gave their time, others donated necessary articles, while still others obtained materials at cost.

During this same year, the flag pole and the first flag was placed on the school grounds. This was accomplished through the efforts of the Community League as well as the planting of a number of trees and shrubs.[20]

The session 1926-1927 opened with the largest enrollment the school had experienced. The elementary grades were terribly crowded and the high school auditorium was being used as a classroom.

The County was aware of the dire need for space at Varina; and the bond issue which had been twice defeated at last was successful, and the Primary Building was completed in 1928 at a cost of $44,736.

This building consisted of six classrooms, clinic, teachers' lounge, small music room, boys and girls

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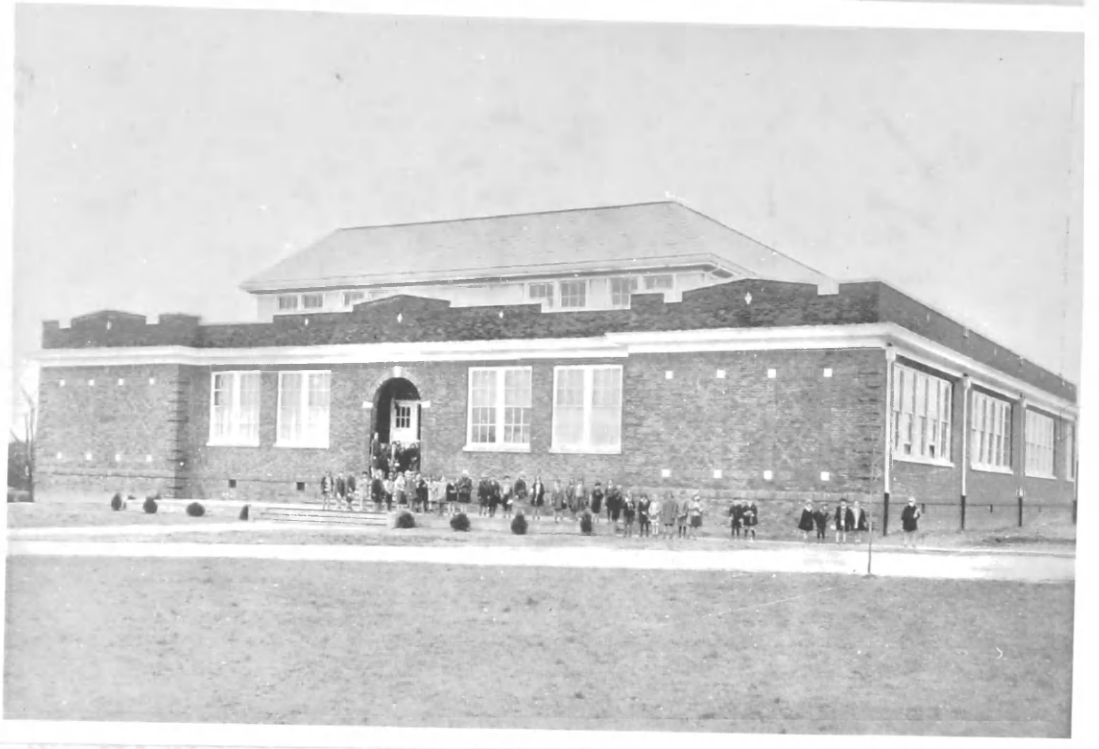
20 Ibid., p. 9.



Primary Building erected 1928*

*The Varinian, 1929, p. 1.

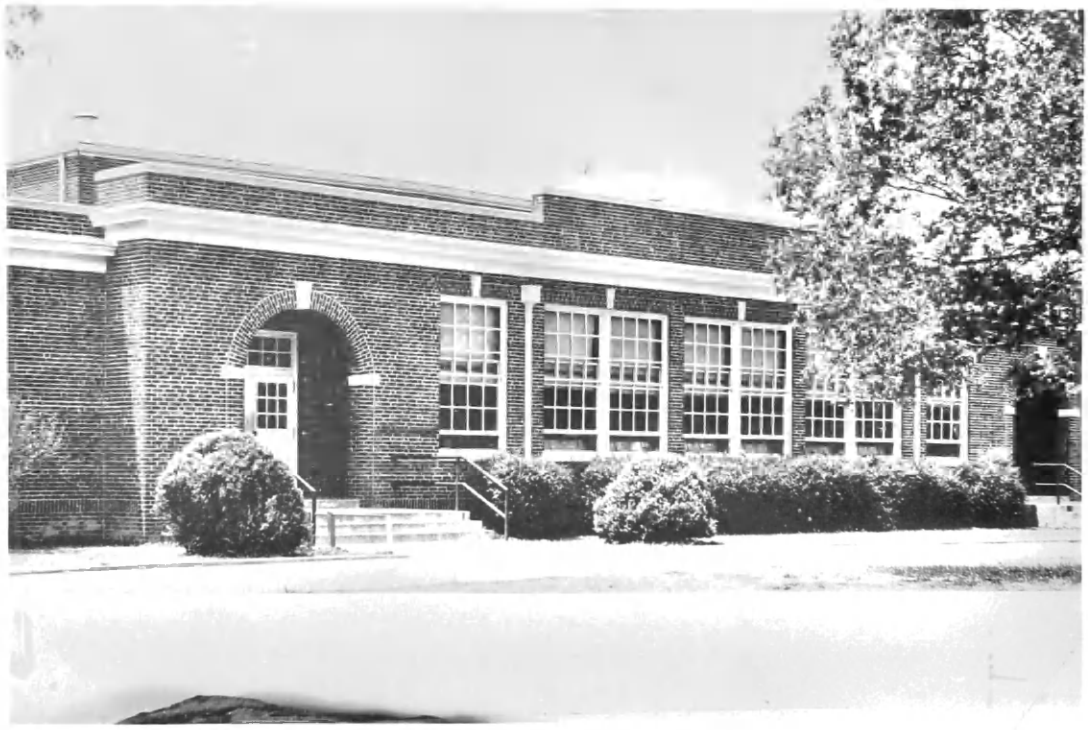
bathrooms, and a large auditorium complete with balcony having a total seating capacity of six hundred.

In 1934 a small stucco building was erected to take care of the Agriculture and Industrial Arts classes. Prior to this time, the activities of these classes had been conducted in the quarters of the Agriculture department. This move to a separate building proved most satisfactory to not only the students and teacher in shop, but the noise of machinery, the sawing of wood, and the constant hammering would not distract the attention of those exerting their mental powers in Latin and Physics classes.

Varina's enrollment continued to grow. Not only was the high school feeling the stress of numbers, but the Old High School (stucco) Building was condemned as unfit for use.

The year 1939 marked the completion of the "new" high school building. The writer well remembers the laying of the cornerstone, (her name, along with several others of the present faculty, was enclosed) and later the dedication exercises.

This building contained twelve classrooms, gymnasium, library science laboratory, girls' and boys' bathrooms and shower rooms, teachers' lounge, Assistant Principal's office, Coach's office, Guidance Director's office, and cafeteria which now serves as the band room.



High School Building erected 1939*

*The Varinian, 1954, p. 2.

There is also a charming little courtyard off the teachers' lounge which has been the basis for several science projects for both high school and seventh grade students, in the area of "soil study" and "landscape gardening."

Due to the interest in home canning in this area of the county, a cannery was erected on the school grounds in 1945. This was a cinder block building complete with large pressure cookers, boilers, screened porch, and area for preparing foods to be canned.

These facilities were used by both white and colored residents of the community on scheduled days of the week. The operation of the cannery was under the direction of Mrs. W. W. Hill.

The girls of the Home Economics Department found the cannery an added source of help and interest in their work.

With the coming of the home freezer, canning became a thing of the past, but the cannery was still in demand. The bumper crop of "war babies" were now old enough to begin their quest for knowledge, and Varina was again trying to find space to accommodate the overwhelming enrollment. In 1951-52 some second graders were holding their classes at the Four Mile Creek Baptist Church. One third grade was occupying

a room in the Shop. Two first grade groups were using the Recreation building. The Cannery, minus the boilers, pressure cookers, and other equipment was converted into a little two-roomed school and the seventh graders had a new home.

It was dubbed "Seventh Heaven." It is interesting to note that the 1957 graduation class is largely composed of that group of "angels" from "Seventh Heaven."

The new addition was completed in 1953 and included a principal's office, cafeteria, elementary library, boys' and girls' lavatory, and seven classrooms.

Since the Cannery was no longer needed for classrooms and because of its nearness to the athletic field, it was converted into a "field house" in 1953.

Once again there was room for all,but the situation was short-lived. In 1954 we had to again resort to double shift operation of the first two grades.

It is hoped that the completion of the George Frances Baker School in September of 1957 will solve Varina's problems. The Baker school plans to assume responsibility for grades one through four in Varina District.

In order to enlarge the playground space, the cottage and land adjoining the school property was purchased from Mr. Crowder in 1953. The head coach,

Mr. McGeorge, rents the cottage and the additional acreage has made a decided improvement in the school's surroundings.

Mr. Robert R. Marks*

B. S. William and Mary

M. A. University of Virginia

Principal 1954-1957

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*The Varinian, 1955, p. 3.

Principals of Varina School*
1909-1957

Name	Tenure
Miss Rena Armstrong	1909-1913
Mr. E. U. Sydnor	1913-1914
Mr. Collins	1914-1915
Miss Mattie Mills	1915-1916
Mr. G. F. Baker	1916-1940
Mr. W. H. Mears	1940-1954
Mr. R. R. Marks	1954-1957

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*Annual Report of Division Superintendents, 1909-1956

Air View of Varina School*

*The Varinian, 1953, pp. 1-2.

Summary

Varina School presents an attractive, well-kept appearance to the casual passer-by. To those who are a part of its daily life, both teachers and students, it has become more than just eight buildings and twenty-six acres of land.

It is: holding Mother tightly by the hand on that first day, sometime in September when at the tender age of six, school life began; cramming for exams in June; the awed hush of the Christmas Pageant; victory at a basketball game; a theme to write, a good book from the library, lunch in the cafeteria, a skinned knee, the clinic, faculty meetings, assembly programs, graduation--all this is Varina School!

Two years before its Golden Anniversary Varina School and the citizens of Varina may review the past forty-eight years with a feeling of pride and satisfaction. Through the efforts of interested patrons, the support of county officials and the devotion to duty of classroom teachers, the youth in this community have been given the best.

As the demand grows for a more highly educated citizenry and the requirements of industry becomes more technical, Varina School, with the spirit which has been manifested in the past, will be ready to meet the challenge.

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

List of Principals and Other Data For Varina School[21]

Year	Principals	Enrollment in High School	Enrollment in Grades	Total Enrollment	High School Teachers	Elementary Teachers	Total Teachers	Graduates
1909	Miss Rena Armstrong	1	44	45	1	2	3	
1910	Miss Rena Armstrong	3	113	116	1	3	4	
1911	Miss Rena Armstrong	5	134	139	2	2	4	
1912	Miss Rena Armstrong	10	148	158	1	4	5	1
1913	Mr. W. E. Sydnor	25	166	191	2	3	5	1
1914	Mr. Collins	19	175	194	2	5	7	?
1915	Mr. G. F. Baker	21	173	194	2	4	6	1
1916	Mr. G. F. Baker	29	110	138	2	5	7	9
1917	Mr. G. F. Baker	26	117	143	3	4	7	3
1918	Mr. G. F. Baker	29	186	215	3	4	7	3
1919	Mr. G. F. Baker	43	215	258	3	5	8	8
1920	Mr. G. F. Baker	66	245	311	4	6	10	9
1921	Mr. G. F. Baker	87	218	305	6	6	12	12

21 Annual School Report of Superintendent, 1909-1957.

APPENDIX B (continued)

List of Principals and Other Data for Varina School

Year	Principals	Enrollment in High School	Enrollment in Grades	Total Enrollment	High School Teachers	Elementary Teachers	Total Teachers	Graduates
1922	Mr. G. F. Baker	102	220	322	6	6	12	15
1923	Mr. G. F. Baker	132	217	349	5	7	12	19
1924	Mr. G. F. Baker	123	253	376	5	9	14	24
1925	Mr. G. F. Baker	97	330	427	6	8	14	20
1926	Mr. G. F. Baker	126	206	432	6	7	13	8
1927	Mr. G. F. Baker	122	*		6	8	14	9
1928	Mr. G. F. Baker	129	*		7			16
1929	Mr. G. F. Baker	139	*	*	7			*
1930	Mr. G. F. Baker	156	*	*	8	10	18	25
1931	Mr. G. F. Baker	176	*		8	12	20	28
1932	Mr. G. F. Baker	193			9	10	19	26
1933	Mr. G. F. Baker	219			10			
1934	Mr. G. F. Baker	218			9			

*Data for blank spaces was unavailable.

APPENDIX B (continued)

List of Principals and Other Data for Varina School

Year	Principals	Enrollment in High School	Enrollment in Grades	Total Enrollment	High School Teachers	Elementary Teachers	Total Teachers	Graduates
1935	Mr. G. F. Baker	205			9			
1936	Mr. G. F. Baker	218			9			
1937	Mr. G. F. Baker	235		723	10			35
1938	Mr. G. F. Baker	293	455	748	13	14	27	44
1939	Mr. G. F. Baker	308	490	798	14	14	28	44
1940	Mr. W. H. Mears	326	473	799	16	14	30	60
1941	Mr. W. H. Mears	300	462	762	16	14	30	61
1942	Mr. W. H. Mears	258	449	707	15	14	29	34
1943	Mr. W. H. Mears	240	459	689	16	14	30	53
1944	Mr. W. H. Mears	213	462	675	15			40
1945	Mr. W. H. Mears	202	495	697	14			32
1946	Mr. W. H. Mears	241	487	728	13	15	28	38
1947	Mr. W. H. Mears	310	229	765	14	14	28	41
1948	Mr. W. H. Mears	275	557	832	14	15	29	61
1949	Mr. W. H. Mears	279	591	870	18	14	32	23

APPENDIX B (concluded)

List of Principals and Other Data for Varina School

Year	Principals	Enrollment in High School	Enrollment in Grades	Total Enrollment	High School Teachers	Elementary Teachers	Total Teachers	Graduates
1950	Mr. W. H. Mears	282	647	929	17	16	33	32
1951	Mr. W. H. Mears	289	646	935	17	23	39	42
1952	Mr. W. H. Mears	290	722	1012	18	24	42	24
1953	Mr. W. H. Mears	337	745	1082	20	24	42	42
1954	Mr. R. R. Marks	360	810	1170	20	24	44	49
1955	Mr. R. R. Marks	353	868	1221	22	23	45	52
1956	Mr. R. R. Marks	382	818	1200	22	27	49	

APPENDIX C

Superintendents of Schools
Henrico County[22]
1908-1957

Name	Tenure
W. A. Maddox	1908-1910
A. D. Wright	1910-1916
J. D. Harris	1916-1918
W. L. Prince	1918-1920
A. C. Cooper	1920-1928
D. W. Peters	1928-1929
J. M. Shue	1929-1937
G. J. Oliver	1937-1938
C. K. Holsinger	1938-1954
C. E. Davis	1954-1956
G. H. Moody	1956-

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22 Marks, Robert R.: Secondary Education in Henrico County, 1607-1945. (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Virginia, 1946, p. 149.