

SANFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL 1902-1977
75 Years

The development of Sanford Grammar School, formerly the Sanford High School, is a part of the early history of Sanford.

History records that there was a school house, also serving as a church, at the Fort Reed Settlement in 1846. While it was occupied by soldiers, it burned. Then a log building was erected on Mellonville Avenue on land donated by Mr. Augustus J. Vaughn for a Methodist Church. This log building was used as a school after Ernest Chapel, the Methodist Church, was built. (This would be at 2445 Mellonville according to Mrs. J. N. Whitner

Just before the town of Sanford was incorporated in 1877, the school in Mellonville had the largest enrollment of any school in Orange County. (Seminole County was not formed until 1913). Of the county enrollment of 150 students, fifty were at Mellonville. Orlando had 30, the Lodge (Apopka) had 25, and Blackwater, Lake Jessup and Cross Prairie each had 15.

The first school in Sanford was in Judge Wofford Tucker's home with Mrs. Augie Tucker as the first recorded teacher. She taught in 1877 and her salary ranged from \$32.80 to \$34.70. School terms varied with the amount of money available to pay the teacher. The rule of thumb for payment of teachers was \$1.00 per month per student. School was held for at least three months a year, at any time of the year. Before and after this first school some students went to private schools held in the homes of those who were teachers.

Public School Building No. 1 was built by the City of Sanford

at the northeast corner of Palmetto Avenue and Sixth Street. Mrs. Tucker was the teacher of grades one through twelve. Mr. W. B. Lynch, teacher at the Ft. Reed school, moved to the Primary Building and became teacher-principal in the early 1890's. In 1897 he also became the superintendent of schools in Orange County.

Growing pains were experienced almost from the time the first school opened its doors. By 1898 the need for a high school was felt. Interest was shown in two lots on Park Avenue belonging to Mrs. Rosalie Morris of Cincinnati, Ohio, but she would not sell.

Crowded conditions at the Palmetto Avenue school forced Mr. Lynch to secure permission to use one of the houses belonging to Mr. Dodd for the primary class. He requested the City Council on October 2, 1899 to approve and authorize use of the Dodd building and make a rental payment of \$4.00 monthly. Action was approved and temporarily the over-crowded conditions ceased.

On January 15, 1900 a Special Committee on School House reported it would cost \$1,616.18 to put the Dodd house in A-1 condition for primary class use. Mr. Randall, contractor, showed estimates which the City Council turned down. It was decided to continue to use the Dodd house until a new school could be built. In turn, the city council authorized the grounds around it to be enclosed to prevent trespassing and give privacy as requested by the teachers.

Members of the School Committee - Mr. Phillips, Mr. French and Mr. Whiteman - asked the City Council on September 3, 1900 about using the city park site between 6th and 7th streets and Myrtle and Elm Avenues for the new school, a most ideal site.

ever see the proposed school house filled with pupils. Finally it was voted to purchase the six lots. Further opinions were given that the money asked for school purposes could be used for that purpose only; that a suitable school house could not be built for less than seven or eight thousand dollars. The kind of building was discussed—the object to get the best suited to the means, the weight of opinion being in favor of brick. This matter was referred to the Citizens Committee and the Building Committee.

The lots for the new school were bought in December, 1901 with the stipulation that all buildings, fences and personal property were to be removed. After presentation of two different plans at different costs on December 16th, the Bond Trustees then decided to perfect the plans and the prices. The City Council in the meeting of January 6, 1902, referred the matter of the school building to the Building Committee with the power to act. They submitted the plans and specifications to the architect, W. B. Talley, who then had them accepted on February 3, 1902. (The price is missing in the correspondence). Construction was underway in March.

On the grounds where the new High School Building (Sanford Grammar) was to be, there was one cypress tree. There were four houses occupied by four black families who had endeared themselves to their white neighbors. They were lovingly called Aunt Mary, Aunt Julia, Miss Mary.

Between Oak and Myrtle Avenues and Sixth and Eighth Streets there was a large celery field farmed by Mr. George Fox. Sidewalks were laid out soon after the school was built but the streets were not paved until the 1920's. During rainy weather there were deep ruts and the streets almost impassable.

There was no electricity. The street lamps were lighted every evening (except on full moon nights) by the lamp lighter, Mr. Bill Cowan, who made his rounds. He rode a pony and carried a torch to light the gas lamps. Often the children followed him for a portion of the way. In the year 1900 the City Council records show that there were sixty-five lights in the city limits.

On April 19, 1902, in a very impressive ceremony, the cornerstone of the Sanford High School, Public School Building No. 2, was laid. It was such an important event in the city of Sanford that all stores downtown were closed and a parade to the site was led by the Sanford Lodge of Masons. Most of the townspeople joined the procession to West Seventh Street between Myrtle and Elm Avenues.

Work moved steadily along so that students would be able to start classes in the early fall. Mr. Walker was the chief brick mason. As the work progressed the furniture was ordered and shipped from the Hudson School Furniture Company in Athens, Ohio, for the amount of \$1,069.90. It was shipped July 26, 1902 to be on hand for the opening of school. Chase and Company insured the new building and its contents.

Professor Lynch, also the superintendent of public instruction in Orange County, moved from the Primary Building to the new school as its first principal. Grades one through five were housed downstairs with the older students going upstairs to Miss Jimmie Glass and ~~Miss Clara Louise Guild~~.

The teachers were: Grade 1, _____, Grade 2-Mrs E. W. Dunn, Grade 3-Miss Lula Tucker, Grade 4-Miss Tomkins, Grade 5-Miss Alice McRae and Grades 6 and up, the Misses Glass and ~~Guild~~

The flag was raised daily and flew from the belfry. Daily chapel services were in the homerooms. Auditorium assemblies were in the large room downstairs which housed the first grade. In the new building there was no indoor plumbing. The outdoor privies were in a separate brick building at the rear of the school with a board fence running from the main building to this outhouse separating the boys from the girls.

Once a week the "scavenger man" would make the rounds of the town hauling out the used buckets in the outhouses. At the school the scavenger man, Mr. A. J. Pinder, was a more frequent visitor. He came and made his rounds in a horse drawn cart.

To the left of where the flagstaff stands in 1977 was a flowing well where the students could drink. There was one also across in the city park. Circular steps went down to the well.

A short time after the school was built, oak trees were planted on the school grounds and around the town by Mr. A. F. Westerdick. Even now the school is blessed by the shade from the beautiful seventy-five year old live oaks.

Many of the children who came to the new school lived close enough to walk. There were large carrying wagons, flatbed trucks, the street car and private conveyances that brought the children from far and near. Mr. Arthur Vaughn's team of mules preceded all others. After him came Mr. J. O. Andes who started at Rutledge Station on the Oviedo railroad and picked up children all along the way, bringing them to the two Sanford schools. Mr. Lynch from Elder Springs followed Mr. Andes.

In 1908 the Sanford and Everglades Railroad was incorporated and ran through the farming delta. The tracks were laid on First Street and went on out through Oviedo. Later that year and for

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four years after, the Sanford Traction Company operated a street car on the tracks of the S. & E. Railroad. Children could ride from Cameron City into Sanford schools by the way of Hambone Station on Palmetto and 16th street. Now the children could be sent to school on cars at the county's expense. Previously parents had to reimburse the drivers.

The Sanford High School (this school) graduated its first class of seniors in 1907, four girls, one of whom is still living, Mrs. Mabel Bram. Mr. N. J. Perkins was the principal the year the first class graduated. The classes of 1907, 1908, 1909 and 1910 were all graduated from what is now Sanford Grammar School. During these early years there were several firsts:

First Graduating Class	1907	
Organization of Irving Literary Society (publishers of the first annual)		March 4, 1909
Organization of the Sanford High School Athletic Association		November 18, 1909
Publication of first <u>Salmagundi</u> (price, 15¢)		May 1910

In January, 1911, the new high school, Public School Building No. 3, was opened at Palmetto Avenue, between Ninth and Tenth Streets. At this time, this building was changed to Sanford Grammar School.

In July 1913, Seminole County was formed from Orange County and D. L. Thrasher was the first superintendent. His salary was \$125. per month with a \$100 annual expense account. School commissioners were: F. P. Forster of Sanford, chairman; S. C. Dickson, Longwood; J. Tilden Jacobs, Chuluota who became a principal shortly and was replaced by C. F. Harrison on the commission. The Board of Trustees included H. R. Stevens, B. F. Whitner and S. Runge. Architect was E. J. Moughton.

Professor N. J. Perkins was superintendent of the Sanford white schools in 1913 with a salary of \$225 monthly. Miss Clara Guild, his assistant, received a stipend of \$102 per month. Beginning teachers started at \$55 while experienced teachers drew \$65 per month.

When Seminole County was formed it was proudly noted by Co. Supt. Thrasher that the county would now have eight full months of school every year. The three white schools opened with approximately 600 pupils. Sanford Grammar School house grades 3-8 at this time with Miss Flora Walker as teacher-principal. Mr. Robert Lord was paid \$65 a month to transport children from the Ft. Reed area and the Vihlens were given \$25 a month to bring children from Upsala. These school busses were flatbottom covered wagons drawn by mules.

In May, 1914, there was another first - what we would now call a field trip. This was a straw ride to Woodland Park. Mr. Brady's double team of mules took the fifth grade class to the vicinity of the Central Florida Zoo.

During the years in which the school served as High School (1902-10) there was a morning recess and an hour off for lunch. Some of the girls like to gather in little groups for "girl talk" and the boys often had a tug-of-war, played ball or caught up on their fighting.

During the recess period Jim Spencer's Bakery Wagon came to the school to sell little pies to the students. These pies and cinnamon buns were popular and sold for 5¢. Later, about 1915, the Bakery truck, driven by Walter Holt came and Dominick's Ice Cream Push Cart was popular in the 20's. Ice cream sold for 5¢.

On Seventh Street between Laurel and Elm Avenues on the north side of the street Mr. Allen had a store. Every kind of candy was available for only 1¢. The children who saved money for this purchase were faced with a decision of what to buy.

Conditions were very crowded at Sanford Grammar School in 1913 when ^{Seminole} ~~the~~ county was formed. A large addition was desperately needed. Not until the Bond election for school purposes carried on September 6, 1915 could any definite plans be made for the expansion. The election was for school bonds in the Special School District No. 1 in the sum of \$75,000.00. Money was to be used to pay for school buildings and other property. From this point on the city of Sanford did not have the sole responsibility of the building and upkeep of the schools.

Public schools opened on September 27th in 1915. Grades one and two went to the Primary Building. All of the eighth graders and seventh grade boys attended the High School Building in the two new rooms constructed for that purpose. Students in grades three through six and the seventh grade girls attended Sanford Grammar.

For the first time automobile buses for the transportation of school children were provided. There were three routes. No. 1 from Cameron City, end of the brick road. No. 2 from P. M. Elder's place on Orlando Road and No. 3 from Stenstrom's corner on West Side. Transportation would be free but the pupils must secure cards from their teachers after the first transportation.

The week of January 11, 1916 was a very busy and important week. Examination of school students was made for the first time by the county physician, Dr. Oliver J. Miller. The law providing for this had just passed the last session of the legislature.

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It was noted that "there would be close scrutiny made of the eye, ear, nose and throat especially for contagious conditions" The scope of the exam would include the detection of malnutrition, anemia, enlarged glands, nervous, heart and lung diseases, deformities and malformations, rupture, hookworm disease and other conditions which if present might interfere with educational efficiency. Parents did not have to be present, but were urged to carefully fill in the form which would be sent home in advance.

On July 25, 1916 the contract was let for twin wings for Sanford Grammar School. At one point the architect proposed extending the brick building south, but when both plans were submitted, it was decided on the twin wings. It is interesting to note that Mr. Elton Moughton, Sr. made all the plans and specifications. The low bidder, however was G. W. Venable, local contractor. Although no record is noted of the contractual price, in the Sanford Herald it was noted that the wings meant an expenditure of \$15,000. along with the other improvements at the school.

One of the most interesting as well as most important events in the history of Sanford was the laying of the cornerstone for the new addition to the Sanford Grammar School Building August 19, 1916. A large crowd was present that Saturday afternoon to witness the ceremonies.

The Sanford Lodge of Masons had charge of the ceremonies and marched from their lodge rooms to the ground at the corner of Myrtle and Elm and Seventh Street. Upon the arrival of the Masonic parade, the flag on the Grammar School was raised by the janitor. The exercises were opened by prayer after which appropriate music was rendered by the Christian Endeavor and kindred societies of the city. The addresses were by Rev. F. E. Steinmeyer of the

Methodist Church and Dr. A. P. Montague, president of Columbia College. They spoke about the possibilities of the schools as moulders of the future generations of Sanford.

Honorable B. F. Whitner, member of the local school board, gave a brief review of the bond issue of the Sanford schools giving the history of the business side of the educational institutions.

The beautiful ritual of the laying of the corner stone by the Masons was then carried out under the direction of the Worshipful Master, S. G. Kennedy, and those present were greatly impressed, according to the Sanford Herald writeup, "with all that pertained to the ceremony and the beginning of this great work for larger and better schools."

The twin wings of Sanford Grammar School were completed and students were using them in the latter part of November, 1916. The new addition meant an expenditure of about \$15,000.

During the week of January 9, 1917, the Elson Art Exhibition was in the west wing and the corridors of the school. These educational pictures drew art patrons from great distances to view. Professor Flubart, Art Director of Stetson University, delivered a lecture on art appreciation Friday evening. Pictures were exhibited from 8:30-5:30 daily and Friday evening 7:30-10 p.m.

After the wing completion, Sanford Grammar School now had fourteen available classrooms, a library, office, and one big auditorium. The building had a covered hallway one block long. The whole building was heated by gas, steam radiators and the sanitary plumbing was one of the best of the style approved in public buildings.

The old staircase to the auditorium floor was remodeled and widened. The iron fire escapes were added giving ample facilities for safely and quickly emptying the building in case of danger

from fire. The middle room on the ground floor of the original building was set aside for exhibit of work from all the Sanford schools. Short drill in physical exercises and calisthenics were now a new feature in the school. Music and art were also added weekly to the schedule in 1917.

There was no lunch room at Sanford Grammar. The parents in the community decided that instead of going home for lunch or taking a packed one, the children ought to have hot lunches served at school.

The Woman's Club in Sanford decided in the year 1921 that the school should have a lunchroom as there were none at any of the schools. Since the School Board didn't have the money to build one, the ladies in the Woman's Club had some money making projects--bake sales, auctions, street dance, womanless wedding, suppers, house to house canvassing, and they raised \$1500. They built the building and ^{bought} the equipment. So on Oct. 10, 1921 Seminole County's first lunch room opened at Sanford Grammar School. Some of the pots and pans are still in use in the county.

There was no glass in the windows, but there was screen wire over the windows. One person was hired; the other two helpers were volunteers. When it was cold, the building couldn't be heated. The only heat ~~came~~ ^{came} from the cook stove. The workers dressed as warm as they could, then worked fast in order to keep warm. Lunches were sold for 10¢, but milk was an extra 5¢.

Grammar School used to satellite lunches to South Side School. The cooks carried the food in the pots in which it was cooked. They took it in a Model T. Ford to Southside and served lunch. After South Side got it's kitchen, the students from Sanford High on Palmetto walked to Grammar for lunch.

This didn't prove very satisfactory, because some of the students went downtown instead to the drugstore for a cherry coke and dill pickle. So Grammar started transporting lunches again, this time to Sanford High School. After several years that school got a kitchen, so Grammar started satelliting food to West Side Primary until their kitchen was built. Many years each school prepared ^{it's} ~~their~~ own food, but in 1969 the kitchen at West Side was closed, so the satelliting started again and was continued as long as there were students there. Now the lunches are satellited to Grammar ^{school} from Seminole High School.

Satelliting lunches goes back to 1922 in Seminole County with the very first production center being our lunchroom. The first lunchroom manager was Miss Virginia Smith.

The Lunch Room had a difficult time in the early years with financial assistance needed. In the early 30's Mrs. Albert Hickson, music teacher in Sanford, undertook moneymaking projects. These were the Spring Follies, talent shows, etc, with all the proceeds going to the Lunch Room Account. Mrs. Hickson went into the school and worked during and after school hours with students using them in special singing arrangements and dance routines. Parents under the leadership of Mrs. Stewart made the costumes.

Throughout the years on many occasions special May Day programs have been held. At first this was a day in which the king and queen were crowned ^{and} ~~the~~ the court honored. Maypole dancing ^{and} ~~and~~ folk dancing ^{were} ~~used~~ to entertain the court ^{These activities} ~~honored~~, and brought many parents to the school. In more recent years athletic events have been the main feature. Events such as high jump, standing broad jump, running broad jump, baseball throw, 25 yard dash, 50 yard dash, sack races, tug-of-war, etc., have been popular.

Before it was customary to have special teachers in Art, Music and Physical Education, everything was done by the regular classroom teacher. During the years many programs of various kinds have been presented at the school.

Some outstanding performances were presented by students in the classes of Miss Lucile Campbell. For several years "A Mid-summer Night's Dream" and "Peer Gynt" were alternated. Later "Hansel and Gretel" were presented by her fourth grade classes. The plays were stimulating and the children well trained and performed ^{in plays} ~~in~~ roles that were the finest in literature. The money raised from these projects was used to sponsor students in other countries. These ~~included~~ ^{included} for two years a French Student, a Finnish boy and a Vietnamese boy and for ten years a German girl. Students became interested in the countries represented and Social Studies became alive.

When Educational Television brought lessons in Spanish to the classroom ^{Miss Campbell} ~~her~~ students became interested in learning to converse in Spanish in the classroom. Science activities were also stimulated and again students performed at the TV station and made many tapes.

In recent years special reading, compensatory teachers and teacher's aides have been added to the staff. At present there are nine regular classroom teachers in addition to one for the mentally handicapped, one learning disabilities teacher, three compensatory teachers, a speech therapist, vision specialist physical education and a media specialist.

The fire escapes have been replaced with a fire tower. The large room downstairs now houses the media center the principal's office and the school office.

The auditorium upstairs has been made smaller by the construction of two classrooms. Much of the building remains the same. Although built originally for a high school, it housed grades one through twelve, then three through eight. For many years it was used only for grades five and six. Only recently has it become a facility for kindergarten through fifth grades.

Many of the outstanding leaders of the community attended the school which is the county's oldest school building ^{still} ~~and~~ used continually for educating children and the fourth oldest in the state of Florida.

Election for School Bonds in Special School District
No. 1 in sum of \$75,000.00 September 10, 1915

Bonds were to be used as follows:

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| \$35,000.00 | Refunding and paying to the City of Sanford monies due it with interest thereon, heretofore advanced for the purchase of a high school site and the construction of a high school building; which sum is now past due and owing to the City of Sanford. (This High School was on Palmetto Ave. between 9th and 10th Streets.) |
| 10,000.00 | To be used in funding the present outstanding and existing floating indebtedness of said Special Tax School District. |
| 15,000.00 | To be used for improving and enlarging the Grammar School |
| 5,000.00 | To be used in purchasing lot and constructing a primary school in the western part of the City of Sanford; said primary school to be located west of Myrtle Ave. |
| 2,500.00 | To be used in improving and enlarging the Primary School located on Palmetto Ave. in the City of Sanford, Fla. |
| 5,000.00 | To be used in improving and enlarging the colored school in said special Tax School District. |
| 2,500.00 | To be used for the purchase of furniture and school furnishings in said Special Tax School District No. 1 of Seminole County. |