Old Coppin's halls echo laughter and tears

School's closing ends an era

Preface By
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City Editor

"The old order changeth and gives place to the new, lest one good custom corrupt the world." This is what the poet says may be the reason for the vanishing of the "good old days".

Nevertheless, as thus turns the earth, many a tear is shed each day over what used to be "Old Baltimore" and especially the disappearnce of longtime and famed old educational institutions such as Coppin Elementary and Coppin Normal and Teachers College over on Mount Street.

The "Grand Old Lady" where fashionable and wellbred teachers used to study and practice, where many youngsters used to learn their ABC's, is no more by the time June, 1979 ends.

Thus closes an era and as the months go by, people of today will little note nor long remember Dear Old Coppin.

It used to be such a beautiful school. But then, the history as we look back, will still remain beautiful.

Perhaps those who used to know Coppin's wonderful halls of learning will pass the legend on to their children.

END OF
THE STORY.

Here is the end of the story as recorded by the teachers and those whose memory is still bright and loving and echoing laughter and tears:

On June 30, 1979, Coppin Elementary School No. 132, at 1114 N. Mount Street, a landmark institution of learning in West Baltimore, closes its doors.

The Board of School Commissioners and administrators feel that this is necessary because of the low enrollment at this time, the lack of modern facilities that should enhance the learning program (No cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium nor an adequate media center), the availability of classrooms in the neighboring schools to house pupils and the lack of capital funds for improvements in the building.

The Demonstration School opened in 1932 and the then Coppin Normal School occupied the top floor, remaining there until 1952.

Most of the 398 students presently enrolled will be transferred to public schools Nos. 107 and 138.

The building will be occupied by Region Central West.

MISS GWENDOLYN BENNETT

Vandalee Clark is the Regional Superintendent. Also in the building will be the offices of the Sandtown - Winchester Improvement Association and the Urban Services Agency, Area 16

COPPIN'S NAME

The school was named in honor of Fannie Jackson Coppin, a former slave who purchased her freedom and became the first black woman in the United States to receive a college degree and to introduce teacher training in the educational system of Philadelphia.

Dr. Miles A. Connor was the first principal of the Coppin Elementary School. While serving in this capacity, he was also president of the college.

FORMER
PRINCIPALS

Other former principals are Rosalie McGuire, Clarence Gittings, Mabel Booker, Milton Dugger, Rosa Bright, Lucille Williams.

The present principal, Mary Hines, attended the then Coppin Teachers College in this building and was a member of the graduating class of 1948.

Former assistant principals include Daniel Brewington, Samuel Wilson, Charlotte Harper, Geraldine Griner, Eula Watkins, Roosevelt Hobbs.

Ethel Day was the longtime secretary under Dr. Miles Connor. Others are Martha Howell, Geraldine Griffin and Barbara Dungee.

During the "clean - up" period, members of the faculty came across Coppin Normal and Demonstration School bulletins dated in 1932 and 1933. Entries that may prove interesting

THRIFT

"Preparations are under way for the opening of the school bank. Systematic saving of a little at a time will make you feel 'good' in the future."

ENERGY SAVER

"On cloudy days we should first raise the shades as high as possible before we turn on the lights. Perhaps the lights will not be needed."

SECURITY

"Whenever you leave the building late in the afternoon, you are urged to push the door and be sure it is locked.

INFLATION

The price of milk has advanced from three to four cents . . . one cracker is still to be given with each bottle. . . Crackers sell two for a penny."

FORMER
TEACHERS

A survey revealed the following are former teachers at Coppin Elementary.

John Ashby, Dorris Badden, Glascoe Baker, Constance Brent, Janet Brigman, Maryanna Bestry, Pearl C. Brackett, Emma G. Bright, Rosa Bright, Carolyn Bonds, Marguerite J. Brown, Lanita Blake.

Dr. Rebecca E. Carroll, Mae Cornish, Gwendolyn Chester, Lillian Dantley, Cleo Diggs, Minnie Dorsey, Leanna Ferrell, Vera Flint.

Ruby Grooms, Walter Gantt, Elpise Gross, Cheryl Gilbert, Jesse Green, Charlotte Harper, Roberto Henderson, Colyn Harrington, Lillian Johnson, Thelma Jackson, Beverly Ann Jones, Grace Lessane.

Louise G. Murphy, Vernice Matthews, Rosalie McGuire, (vice principal, 1945, later became principal), James McDonald, Catherine McDonald, Ken Maccallini, Linwood Macer, Lola Massey, Coretha McNeill, Elaine Nolan, Mary Thompson Oliver.

Alfread Pinkney, Charles Pitts, John Pullen, Nina Perry, Gharlotte Perry, Sara Roach, Doris Smith, Alice Smith, Mary Carter Smith, Lilly Stevenson, Edith Thomas (vice principal under Dr. Connor), Irene Templeton, Ann Thompson.

Anita White, Mamie Watson, Amy H. Weaver, Adah H. Weaver, Irma Woodland, Lois Washington, Elizabeth Young.

MEMORIES

Mrs. Ethel Day recalls:

"When the building was being built, Coppin State Teachers College thought it was being built for them, but they found out it was going to be an elementary school building, with the teacher's college on the top floor. That was in September, 1932.

"Dr. Connor was not president then, they didn't call it president.

I guess you have to say principal of both the Demonstration School which was the elementary school and the college department.

He carried with him that year Mrs. Edna G. Johnson who was the vice principal and she had charge of the elementary school with Dr. Connor.

"The grades at that time were Kindergarten to Sixth Grade.

On the first floor, were the Primary Grades, the second floor had the Intermediate Grades as they were called then.

MILK AND
CRACKERS

"I did a little bit of everything there, like a housekeeper and I sold crackers and milk to the students. I did most of the work with Dr. Connor although Mrs. Johnson was in charge.

"It was amusing to note that on the second floor there was one large room towards the railroad tracks in that direction which we had to use as a library.

"Of course it wasn't extensive but it was all that we had at the time.

"I had to serve as keeper of the books (Mrs. Day chuckles at this point). You see I was a little bit of everything at that time. There wasn't much organization."

LAST
MEETING

On Wednesday, June 13, the faculty of Coppin Elementary School, No. 132, at Thompson's Sea Girt Restaurant on York Road to be together for the last time before the final closing of the school.

Present were Mrs. Mary H. Hines, principal, Mrs. Frances Ward, Parthenia Graves, Ever Lynn Lewis, Pat Wilson, Pauline Claybourne, Ruth Watkins, Grace Taylor, Miss Ollie Smith, Paulette White, Pamela Saunders, Michelle Farley, Mary Kincaid, Diane Steinberg, Rebie Stokes, Sharon Petters, Louvenia Graves, Mildred Blunt, Viola Johnson, Terry Burrell, Miriam Randall, Carolyn Page, Cora Brown, Ethel Baskerville.

The affair was opened with a poem, entitled "Coppin", written by Mrs. Louvenia Graves.

A gift from the faculty was presented to Mrs. Hines. A poem entitled, "Roots" written by Mrs. Parthenia Graves was read.

According to Mrs. Hines, "The affair was viewed with mixed emotions, eagerness, relief, apprehension and sadness."

Awards Assembly

On Thursday, June 14, the entire Coppin family assembled in front of the building where teachers made presentations of awards to students, co workers and parents.

Mrs. Rebie Stokes, DEC teacher, presented Miss Gwendolyn Bennett, senior teacher with a gift from the faculty for her dedicated service.

The Dance Group under the direction of Mrs. Parthenia Graves, performed several dance numbers. The Sixth graders sang two selections.

The entire ensemble gave a salute to Coppin — "A Grand Old Lady."

The program was chaired by Mrs. Geraldine Williams and Mrs. Pamela Sanders, Sixth Grade teachers.

COSING
PROGRAM

Closing exercises for the last Sixth Grade classes were held Wednesday, June 20 in the auditorium of the School No. 107, located at Gilmore near Laurens Streets.

ON MORE THAN 38,000 separate occasions in 1977 - '78, the American Red Cross responded to a disaster somewhere in the United States. On an average of one every 14 minutes, the Red Cross provided relief to disaster victims.

LAST GRADUATING CLASS — The 6th Grade Class with Mrs. Pamela K. Saunders, teacher, is the last group of students who will be graduated from Old Coppin. In this historic class are these youngsters who will look back as the years pass and perhaps tell the history to their children. They are: Sarah Saunders, [illegible] Tucker, Fran[illegible] Johnson, Diane Lassiter, Leslie Brooks, Towanda Miller, Delores Jones, Sharron Hawkins, Sylvia Keys, Sharon Perry, Lurl Pope, Michele Powell, Tonia Bell, Frentice Williams, Terri Sheppard, Tia Parker, Pamela Hunter, Cheryl Anderson, Kimberly Taylor, Sonya Robinson, Cathy Turner, Denise Faulkner, Tracey Williams, Tonya Ridgeway, Hugh Brown, Warren Baskerville, Dennis Randall, Tyrone Thomas, Sean Butler, Angelo Sanders, Samuel Gilbert, Garry Fenwick, Linton Broughton, Kenneth McClary, Tyrone Braxton, Donya Moore, Gerald Williams, Joseph Meyers, James Feagins, James Bell, Joseph Keys, Nathaniel Smith, Melvin Cromwell, Larry Green, Reginald Gibbs, Curtis Corbet, Modesto Smith, Veda Oliver, Peggy Hudson, Ziva Singletary and Joyce Tuck.

TEACHERS AND STAFF — Mrs. Michele Farley, Mrs. Louvenia Graves, Mrs. Mattie Jackson, Miss Mary Kincaid, Mrs. Evelyn Lewis, Craig Schulze, Miss Ollie Smith, Mrs. Diane Steinberg, Mrs. Rebie Stokes, Mrs. Grace E. Taylor, Mrs. Frances Ward, Mrs. Ruth Watkins, Mrs. Geraldine Williams, Mrs. Adah Jones, Mrs. Geraldine Griffin, Miss Gwendolyn Bennett, senior teacher; Mrs. Ethel Baskerville, Mrs. Mildred Blount, Mrs. Dorothy Johnson, Mrs. Joan Johnson, Mrs. Viloa Johnson, Mrs. Donna Lee, Mrs. Betty Mellerson, Mrs. Carolyn Page, Mrs. Meriam Randall, Mrs. Pauline Clayborn.

LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY — Here is a photo from a Coppinite's Memory Book which shows the girls in baby doll slippers, short socks, hair braids, ribbons, bangs and fresh, scrubbed faces. The boys wore shirt, coat and tie, closely cropped hair, broad smiles and in those days held great respect for elders and ladies. The plaque on the wall recalls the Coppin namesake, Fannie Jackson Coppin, a former slave who purchased her freedom and became the first black woman in the United States to receive a college degree and to introduce teacher training in the educational system of Philadelphia.

THE NO. 1 SCHOOL

GROVE PARK

Elementary

THE NO. 1 BAND 1st Row — (L to R) Michelle Jackson, Andrea Maclin, Tonia Poindexter, Audrey Jones, Rene Cox, Lisa LeCompte, Jermont McCoy, Marvin Willett, Nelson Neville, Joseph Queen, Johnny Stith, Cecilia Horton, Trebbie Stevens, Robin Ellis. 2nd Row — Ernest Wells, Nichelle Barrow, Curtis Dingle, Melanie Byrd, Lynn Merritt, Cheryl Pender, Matthew Talley, Alexander McNair, Karl Taylor, Timothy Melvin, Steven harris, Alma Moore. 3rd Row — Garvin Forde, Brendan Mundell, Avon Bellamy, Judy Warwick, Maurice Honeyblue, Floyd Stokes, Raymond Johnson, Frank Toland, Christine Ferguson, Robert Carr, John Honeyblue, Ronnie Fullard, Byron Brooks, Kyle Golston, Kevin Davis, Timothy Nickens, Mia Smith. 4th Row — Roosevelt Turner, Anthony Hilton, Rosa Newton, Tonia Poindexter, Shawn Broadway, Calvin Watkins, Donte Miles, Richard Pender. Conductor — Ms. Carolyn Foulkes.