

Aberfoil School

½ mile off the Troy Highway
6 teachers, 2 male and 4 female
all subjects

Aberfoil Public School was organized by Reverend C.H. Thornton in 1890. He deeded the land and had a one room log cabin type school building. The first teacher was his wife, Amanda Thornton. Grades Pre-primer through three were taught. School lasted three months each year. After a few years, the school was upgraded from pre-primer through grade six under the leadership of Professor Ernest Mahone.

The county took over the county schools in 1927, Mr. M. K. Johnson was the Superintendent. In 1936, Ms. Tessie Oliver served as unofficial Superintendent of the Black Schools. Among the Professors were: Annie Pruitt, Carrie Townsend, Sallie Olgetree, and Evelyn Crawford. In 1939, Aberfoil was rebuilt and housed grades one through ten becoming known as Aberfoil Junior High School. The students that desired a high school education went to Snow Hill Institute, Snow Hill, Alabama. In 1952, the black schools were consolidated. Students in grades eleven and twelve were bused to Perote High School, Perote, Alabama. In 1964, Aberfoil Junior High School was closed. All the students were bused to various areas according to where they lived.

Reverend C. H. Thornton, was a land owner as well as a farmer in the community of Aberfoil. He owned about fifty acres of land. He was pastor of the local church, which served the entire community. They worshiped in the local brush arbor until he deeded ten acres of land. He and the men of the community built a wooden frame church and a two-room school. Today, the school, church and baseball diamond we have are located on the same site as the original school building and church. Rev. Thornton named the church and school. His wife Amanda served as the first school teacher. Rev. Thornton erected both the school and church. He served as pastor from July, 1887, until his death in September, 1901. His last request to the congregation was "to mourn his death for six months and then seek another pastor" which the members obliged.

The materials used to build the church and school were purchased by Rev. Thornton.

Rev. Thornton had his own ideas for building the church and school. There were no other school or church in the area. The school served the entire community. The students were able to walk to school or were driven in wagons by parents one week at a time. The parents also furnished wood during the winter months.

We do not have any information on the enrollment of students. All I know is it served the entire community. The school was upgraded to the six grade in 1905. It was upgraded to the tenth grade in 1939 when it was rebuilt by the school district. Each time it was upgraded it was based totally on the needs of the community (supply and demand). Aberfoil was a large farming community.

The people in the community demanded assistance from the school district such as better teachers, more days per school year for the students.

The old building was torn down and a new and larger building was erected. It was still a wooden frame building. New outdoor toilets were replaced, made with cement. One for the men and one for the girls. The church also used them on Sundays.

In 1961, indoor plumbing was installed. Since 1946, there was electricity in the building. Each room had one light hanging from the ceiling. Well water was used, the well was located on the school ground between the church and school. The school was heated with wood and later we used coal to heat the rooms. Each room had a heater in it.

All the people in the community were farmers and/or sharecroppers. Today all the outhouses are gone. The only things on the ten acres of land today are the church, the school, and the playground. A basketball court, church cemetery, baseball diamond and a storage house are also located adjacent to the school. The children in the community use the basketball court and in the summer, softball games are played. Also, we have a summer feeding program.

People that have been successful in higher education from Aberfoil school are listed below: Prfessor Ernest Mahone, Professor Clinton Thornton, attended Aberfoil school, then returned to teach and encouraged others to do the same. They are now deceased.

Rev. G. W. Smiley, was pastor of the church on the same ground, really encouraged the parents to assist their children in going to school as opposed to staying in the fields during farming seasons. The people considered him the "rock." There were a lot of teachers from Montgomery that were very positive as well as encouraging to the community. Today, there is one living in Montgomery. Mrs. Sadie Penn, who made great contributions to the school and community. There are many families went on to further their education, returned to the area; to name some are: The Anderson's, Christian's, Thornton, Clinton, Newby's and Walker's. Rev. Smiley was successful in getting Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak to us in 1961. The school won many basketball trophies during the out doors basketball court days. A handicapped ramp was added in 1964, when the school became a Nursery or Day Care Center. The pictures will show the changes that have taken place since the school became a Nursery school.

The Alumnus of Aberfoil school had various careers, such as the U.S. Armed Forces retiring as Lt. Colonel's, Teachers (Elementary and Secondary), Counselors, Businesses, Dieticians, Corrections Officers, and Beauticians.

There are many families went on to further

5 miles south of Union Springs
owner: Elizabeth Baptist Church

four room school with a closet in each classroom
it is in need of many repairs and paint

since the school closed, many repairs have been made to just to keep it up
has a tin roof
school was used as a daycare since it closed
has access for handicap use
it has running water, electricity, now the auditorium has carpet
it was used for a recreation center until it started leaking from the roof during inclement weather
however, some BEA classes are held there and an adult exercise class on a weekly basis

The Aberfoil Junior High school is eligible for listing to the AR under criterion A in the area of education. As one of the only remaining African American schools in Bullock County (except Merritt School). It embodies both the opening of opportunities for blacks during the early 1900s. The school was in operation until the federal government mandated implementation of racial desegregation.

Education for blacks in Bullock County in the early 1900's received little support beyond the local community. Local churches and parents assisted with such projects as donating wood and lamps to help teachers.

There was much local support in the community, especially by the men who had recently returned home from serving in the war, having been exposed to the opportunities available through education. The classrooms were used by students during the day and veterans during the evening hours, with teachers giving of their time to teach them.

A total of 10 acres were deeded for the church and school

One room originally
extended it to two rooms then four rooms

1887

c. 1920

c. 1945-four rooms

church built log building in 1887

Rev. Thornton gave ten acres

He built the church and school

his wife taught in the school

He was a native of Bullock County

His father was a white man

gave him 30 acres of land

one of a few blacks that owned land

he was a farmer and minister

white church would allow blacks to worship

most were sharecroppers

Rev. Thornton and the community built the school by cutting down trees on land

pot belly stove for heat

first school for blacks in Aberfoil

students either walked to school or were brought by wagon

1-6 grades in one room with one teacher

later two teachers

teachers originally came from community or lived with someone in community

4 room (1-10 grades) 4 teachers

originally the community paid the teachers

1946-county get involved

basic classes when school was 1-6 grades

when school was expanded to 4 rooms, subjects such as home economics, 4-H Club, agriculture, and carpentry was added.

County agent would teach home economics

black men- Mr. Norman and Mr. Nance

enrollment increased

originally school year lasted only 3 mos.

When the school was expanded to two rooms, school year was expanded to 6 months and when the school became four rooms, the school year was 9 months

after the kids finished at Aberfoil, they went to Snow Hill Institute in Wilcox County or Perote High School in Bullock County to finish their education. Some never went anywhere after completing Aberfoil

in 1952, they started busing students to Perote High School

in 1954, they opened Carver High School in Union Springs

in 1961, integrated Union Springs High School

Ben McGhee of the local chapter of the NAACP met with County BOE to negotiate the admission of 2 black students to Union Springs High School

By the late 1960's, Union Springs HS was integrated

when Aberfoil was extended to a four room school, the county agent got desks for the school before then, students and teachers at Aberfoil made desks

county provided a principal when it was a four room school

after the school became four rooms, electricity and running water were added (indoor plumbing)
had outhouses up until right before the school closed
After the Korean Conflict (War), the Aberfoil community started to decline
industry included Springer Lumber Company and Cotton Gin
The church was rebuilt in 1956 and still has the original windows
Church still owns land on which the school sits

The school closed in 1964. When it closed it was accommodating students in grades 1-11
after the school closed, all of the students were bused to ?
Perote High School burned in c. 1960
Union Springs elementary (k-3)
South Highlands Middle School (4-6)
Union Springs High School (7-12)

As whites died, blacks would stay, farm the land, and pay for it
1964-1978 Adult education center supported by federal government through Tuskegee Institute and
Robert Taylor

1978-1986 Preschool supported by the Community Action Agency out of Troy

1986- community building
exercise classes and GED
rent it for family reunions, class reunions, the church held functions in it such as missionary
meetings, Sunday School classes, etc.
About ten years ago, hurricane damaged
windows were damaged and part of the roof was ripped off
When the building operated as a nursery, some changes were made such as
windows replaced throughout
paneling installed
carpet installed

underneath the paneling is the original board and batten interior siding and in some places, the board
and batten is exposed
pine
original interior doors are wood five panel
pipes where wood burning heater/stove was are still exposed
brick piers with concrete block infill foundation was done when the building was used as a nursery

north elevation

one story wood frame lap siding building
standing seam tin (metal) roof
paired wooden five panel doors with transom
transom pane replaced with solid wood panel

inset with three poured concrete steps
poured concrete basketball court c.1990's
school sits south of church

west/east elevation

four double hung metal windows covered with wood paneled
one five panel wooden door
inset
poured concrete and brick steps
brick chimney with concrete block cap

rear/south elevation

five metal double hung 2/2 windows
2 sets of paired double doors and door hood
concrete block ramp with modern iron railing

brick pier foundation, concrete block infill
added circa 1980
2 outbuildings originally on property-demolished
gable on hip roof

Aberfoil School Information

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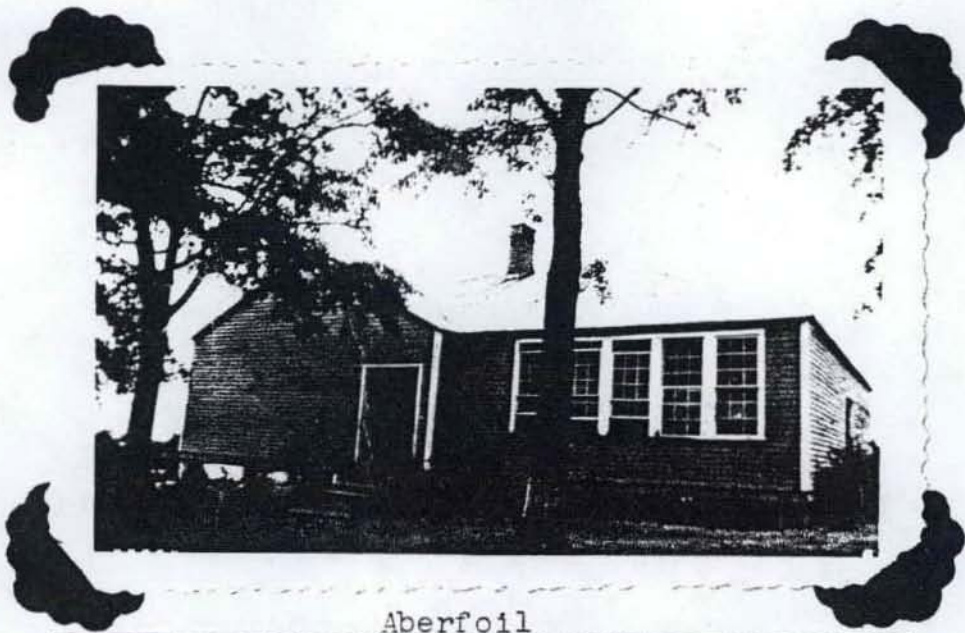
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If further information is needed, you may contact me at (334)- 7383276.

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This report is being compiled by:


(Mrs.) Billie Newby Hazzard



Aberfoil

1. Town village or highway school is located nearest _____
1/2 Miles of Troy Highway
2. Number of teachers Male 2 Female 4
3. Type of Certificate held Defense 5 _____ Defense 4 _____
Defense 3 _____ Defense 2 _____ Class F _____ Class D _____ Class C 1
Class B 5 Class A _____
4. Enrollment Male _____ Female _____ Total _____
5. Number of grades taught by each teacher (2) 1 (1) 2 (3) 2
6. Number of subjects taught by each teacher All Subjects
7. Average Daily Attendance 118.70
8. Building ownership
State or County X Community _____
9. General aspects of school plant:
 - a. Lighting system--Electric X Oil Lamp _____
 - b. Water system--Electric pump _____ hand pump _____ open well _____
covered well _____ Spring _____ elevated water tank _____ distance
to walk for water
 - c. Kind of water container--bucket _____ Cooler _____ Fountain _____
 - d. Seating Desk _____ Chairs _____ Benches _____
 - e. Musical Instrument Piano _____ Phonograph _____ Radio _____
10. The farthest distance a child walks to school _____