

## Glimpses of History of Faison Area Schools

In the early times the education of the children in the area was done in the homes. A tutor was hired who lived and taught several weeks in one home and then moved on to another.

There were two schools in Faison around the turn of the century.

A free one-room school was located at what is presently the corner of Soloman Street and Faison Avenue. The students of this school were not divided into grades. They sat on long benches and had one teacher who taught all the subjects. The area around the school was wooded. The school operated for only a few years.

There was much opposition to free education. Sometimes it became so fierce that fights resulted. Around 1908, this free school consolidated with the Faison High School. This consolidation made available the credits needed to earn a free high school diploma. The parents had to buy the textbooks for their children until the mid 30's. These books were passed on to siblings or sold to parents of other students. After the mid 30's, textbooks were furnished for a rental fee.

A deed was recorded on October 17, 1842, for the land on which the Dunn-Faison Academy was to be built. The wooden building was located in what is now the center of Park Circle. The school studies offered up to college-level courses for boys only. It was widely known as one of the best schools in the area. It was a tuition school operated jointly by the citizens of the community and the parents of the students. Mr. Isham Roland Faison (1825-1911) gave the land for the school.

Col. C.D. Hill, W. E. Hill, J. C. Pass, E. J. Faison, and Dr. H. W. Faison were the trustees. They paid for the building and the furnishings. Dr. James Hicks, who was a county physician, was very interested in the school. He made every effort to secure the best teachers - giving them their board in order to keep a good school in the community. Latin, mathematics, music, spelling and penmanship were emphasized. The students were well-prepared for college. At one time Faison had more students in college than any town between Goldsboro and Wilmington.

The same wooden building, with additions, was used for the Presbyterian High School. On November 12, 1901, the Wilmington Presbytery assumed the directing of this boys school. The trustees were: B. B. Witherington, Dr. James M. Faison, I. L. Faison, A.F. Johnson, W. M. Cummings, R. M. Williams, D. P. McGeachey, L. P. Best, S. H. Isler, and Dr. W. L. Smith. In addition to the regular courses, military training was required of the older boys. The out-of-town students roomed on the second floor of the building and ate in private homes designated by the school. The first floor served as the classroom area. The Wilmington Presbytery operated the school for seven or eight years. This school was also called the Faison Academy and Faison High School. When the school ceased to operate as a boarding school for boys, the school principal and his family lived upstairs and the classes still were held in the downstairs area. The enrollment of Faison High School was 65 in 1890, and John S. Hill was principal.

When more state and county funds became available, a new two-story, \$60,000, brick facility was constructed. The new building was located in front of the old one. The old wooden school was moved when the new structure was completed in 1923. The old wooden building is not in existence today.

In the fall of 1985, North Duplin Junior High was merged with North Duplin High School, using the high school campus. The newly organized school was then called North Duplin Junior-Senior High School. Later the P. W. Moore building was sold to the Faison Manufacturing Company.

During the summer of 1988, a complete renovation, with additions, was begun on the North Duplin Junior-Senior High School.

In the mid 30's, the WPA, a federal agency, sponsored a soup room in the Faison High School. Prior to that time, all students brought lunches or walked home for lunch. This soup was made and served behind a partitioned area at the crossing of the two halls on the first floor.

A gym/lunchroom combination was begun in 1937. The WPA and local interested citizens provided the labor and materials. The first floor was used for athletic games and various social activities and the basement was used for a lunchroom. Later, designated areas of the basement floor were used for classrooms. Since 1974, when the school was demolished, the gym/lunchroom has served the area well. The first floor of building is used for junior high sports and the town sports program. The basement is used for an office for the WIC (a health program), a clothes closet, and a distribution center for meals for Senior Citizens.