Webster High School Historical Society News

"Bringing Forth the Past To Archive and Present To The World"

August 2022 Webster Historical 1922@gmail.com Volume 1, Issue 5, page 1

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### **August Storytellers**

Class of 1957
Jean Cotton Davis
Gloria Rabb Hampton
Herrise Kimble Rawls
Bobbie Theus

#### Former Warsaw Residents

## Patricia Kennon Mouton

Gloria Cotton Davis Michael J. Allen Delois Allen Hall Virginia Jefferson Jean Taylor Rabb Bobbie Harper Theus Bobbie Wright Vernadia Taylor John C. Walker

#### **Membership**

A Membership Application is enclosed with this letter.

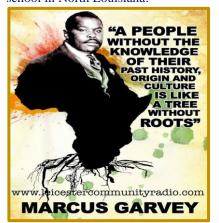
## **Donation Form**

A Form to submit historical artifacts, memorabilia, documents and anything Museum worthy.

Acknowledgements
Thanks to Delois Allen
and Danette Ausborne for
their editorial review.

## Greetings to all Webster High School Alumni and Friends!!!

It's great to share the search/research that we have found since last we wrote. Our Vision/Goal is the creation of the *Webster High School Historical Museum of Classes*, *Community and Culture*. You can help make this a reality. Everyone that has had a connection to Webster High has something to share so that we can complete a more comprehensive history of the greatest school in North Louisiana.



| Minden District School, |         |        |          | La.     |  |
|-------------------------|---------|--------|----------|---------|--|
| Webster Parish          |         |        |          | 2272    |  |
| Four-teacher type       |         |        |          |         |  |
| Built under             | Tuskes  | ee     |          |         |  |
| Total cost              | . 4     | 3,850  |          |         |  |
| Negroes                 | \$1,850 |        |          |         |  |
| Whites                  | 500     |        |          |         |  |
| Public                  | 1,000   |        |          |         |  |
| Rosenwald               | 500     | (\$250 | under C. | U. B. ) |  |



Floristene Green Johnson

It wasn't until 2016 that I first heard of a man named Julius Rosenwald when *The Links Incorporated* asked its members to attend several showings of The Rosenwald Documentary in four cities around the country. Houston, Texas was one. I was curious so I looked to see who this man was and why a documentary was done about him. The Rosenwald documentary tells the incredible story of Julius Rosenwald, who rose to become the President of Sears. Influenced by the writings of Booker T.



Washington, he joined forces with African American Communities to build over 5,300 schools for children of color.

Minden District School.

The official records of Rosenwald Schools are in the *John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library* database at Fisk University. This first school above was funded in part by the Rosenwald fund along with the community and the School

Board. No date is placed on these documents that are retrieved but from the account written by Mr. D.E. Abney, it was the first building who was one of the "Rosenwald" schools. The Supervisor of the Jeanes funds suggested that the name be changed to a Training School. Then the second building (Below) that we remember was constructed and



bore the name

| P   | arish Train | ning School  | ,        |       | La.         |
|-----|-------------|--------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| 1   | Webster Par | ish          |          |       | 1216        |
| 3   | Thirteen ac | res of land  |          |       | 14          |
| 30  | Bight-teach | er type + 4. | Porus =  | 12 Tu | when + 2R=  |
| 1   | Built under |              |          |       | 297 1930-31 |
| 9:  | Application |              |          |       |             |
| gr  | Total cost  |              |          |       |             |
| 10  | Negroes     | \$2,000      | + 1400 = | 3400- | +400 = 3800 |
| 27  | Whites      |              | + 0 =    |       | -           |
| 3 4 | Public      |              |          |       | +18361150   |
| ##  | Rosenwald   | 1,500        | t 600 =  | 2100  | からのこともの     |

Webster High School Training School for Colored People.

Much should always be said about *Julius Rosenwald* and his extraordinary friendship with Booker T. Washington that led to the development of schools for Black children in the south. Webster Training School was one of those schools and our history is a great result. Let's make sure we capture it and preserve it for years to come.

1921-1922 – Minden "Rosenwald" District school Fall 1922 – Webster Training School 1941 – Webster High School

## The Principals

Webster High School was fortunate to have had four exceptional men to lead it to higher heights in every area of education.





September 10, 1910

After the loss of

Robert T. Tobin

born in Lucky,

in

as

year.

Haves

served

another



Mr. W. Leon Hayes 1948 - 1969



Mr. Robert T. Tobin 1969 - 1970



Mr. O. D. Mims 1970 - 1974

Mr. J. L. Jones and Mr. W. Leon Hayes have been described in earlier issues and now Mr. Robert Terry Tobin and Ora D. Mims will be remembered.

History does record the first Principal of the Minden Rosenwald School which is the name that the Rosenwald database probably gave to the Minden District building as evidenced by the funding chart shown on the previous page. The history of Webster from the observation of several of the early teachers calls it the Minden Union High School located at Spann and Talton Streets in Warsaw. Nevertheless, the principal of the Minden Rosenwald school was Mr. J.S. Johnson. The Society is searching hard for information on this principal and his descendants.

Mr. Robert Terry Tobin\*



September 13, 2007

Mr. W. Leon October 1969, Mr. took the reins and Principal for Mr. Tobin was Louisiana to \*Nat

and \*Jane Patterson Tobin. They moved to Arcadia, Louisiana where he attended Arcadia Training School along with Mr. Milton (Therah) Duty and Mrs. Polly Davis Green, mother of Curtis, Laurie, Ada and Floristene Green, all Webster graduates.

In Arcadia, Mr. Tobin met Thelma McCoy. They became



friends and sweethearts. They were married in 1931 for 76 years. Mr. Tobin graduated from Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and graduated with a major in Science and a minor in Mathematics. His career began as principal and teacher at

\* Thelma McCoy Tobin Castor Elementary in Castor, LA (Bienville) parish. When the schools in Castor were consolidated, the principal of Webster High School, Mr. W. Leon Hayes, asked him to come to Webster High School, Minden, LA. There Mr. Tobin worked as a classroom teacher, Assistant Principal and later became the Webster High School Principal. He was a much beloved Biology and Science teacher. Mr. Tobin attended Stanford University in Palo Alto, California and earned a master's degree in Science and

Supervision. He later did further studies in the Doctoral Program there.

In 1970, Mr. Tobin decided to retire from the teaching profession. He spent much time fishing and traveling and decided to build his own home. It took one entire year for him to build his home on East Street in Minden, LA. For so many years, Mr. Tobin would stay in Minden for the week and return to his home on Highway LA 4 in Lucky, LA where he and Mrs. Tobin would often go fishing. He was a faithful member of New Prosperity Baptist Church in Lucky, LA where he also taught Sunday School.

After completing the building of his home on East Street in Minden, LA, He decided to become involved in politics. In 1978, Mr. Tobin announced his intentions to seek the city council seat for District A. He won, and was re-elected for two terms, unopposed. He was later appointed *Mayor of Minden*.

He was a member of many civic and professional organizations including Webster Association of Retired Teachers, Louisiana Association of Educators, National Association of Educators, Phi Delta Kappa, Kiwanis Club, and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He was Veteran of the 78th Signal Corps of the United States Army, where he received an Honorable

Discharge of Sergeant. member of Foreign Mr. Tobin, member of Church, Deacon, Teacher, various

Technical
He was also a life
the Veterans of
Wars.
was an active
Saint Rest Baptist
serving as

holding the rank

serving as
Sunday School
and member of
committees of the

church. You could find him in church every Sunday.

## The Principals

The fourth Principal to lead Webster High School was Mr. Ora D. Mims.





Mr. O. D. Mims 1970 - 1974

Mr. Ora D. Mims was born in 1920. He grew up in Minden And graduated from Webster High School

Mr. Mims in 1942 and 1945serving Sergeant. He Claiborne in his time in the Victory Citation.

The Movement



entered the service was discharged in as a Technical trained at Camp Louisiana. During service, he earned Award and Unit

Rosenwald started in 1924

with schools, Bailey, Coleman, Mt. Nebo, Tillman combining to establish one school, The Central Consolidated Rosenwald School. Mr. Barney Edward Mullen was

hired as
He retired
Beginning
school
Mims,
principal.
Mr. Mims
principal
in 1970
retirement
Tobin.



the principal. in May of 1962. with the 1962-63 session, Mr. O.D. became the new

became the 4<sup>th</sup> of Webster High after the of Mr. Robert T.

Mr. B. E. Mullen



Mr. Mims with the Cheerleaders.

He served until the closing of the school in 1974 and then served at Webster Jr. High.

Mr. Ora D. Mims was married to Geraldine Akers. She grew up in Grambling, Louisiana and was educated in Grambling public schools. She was a member of the charter graduating class of Grambling College now (Grambling State University.) She earned a master's degree at Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas. She moved to Minden and became a faithful member of Mt. Zion CME Temple. There she served as the Sunday School Superintendent for many years. She married Mr. Ora D. Mims on October 1, 1946 in Los Angeles, California. She served as an English teacher and guidance counselor in Webster Parish schools until her retirement in 1968. She was a member of the

January 1998



Mrs. Mims (r.) & the Last 7th Graders at J. L. Jones Elementary

Minden Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

The Mims had one daughter, \*Brenda Faye, (Class of 1965) and a special nephew, Samuel Mims, Jr. (Class of 1964.)



Brenda Faye Mims



Sam Mims, Jr.

Deceased

(All pictures used by permission throughout the newsletter)

## The Warsaw Community!

What makes a neighborhood? When there is a close feeling of family and brotherhood in a defined section of town lived in by people sharing many common bonds, you have your "hood." q These residents/neighbors share a common sense of rules and behavior as well as schools, churches, stores and businesses geared to their needs. Such is the case in the Warsaw Community in Minden, Louisiana.

According to John Agan, Webster Parish Historian, "Warsaw, in fact, might be thought of as the first "suburb" of Minden. It was a community just southeast of the original settlement of Minden that was annexed into Minden in 1854. Today the old area of Warsaw runs along East Union Street from Fincher Road west to roughly Abney Street. The origin of that name has always been difficult to explain. While many residents of Minden in the 1840s and 1850s had roots in Eastern Europe, the name Warsaw precedes the arrival of any but Anglo-Saxons and their African slaves. The most logical explanation is that Warsaw is the corruption of an Indian name, perhaps related to the Wausau name/tribe of Wisconsin."

Most importantly, The Warsaw community was directly adjacent to Webster High School to the northwest. Many students walked down East Union street to J. L. Jones Elementary, J. A Phillips Junior High and Webster High School. Two churches cornered this community, Mt. Zion



CME Temple on the far west near Abney Street and St. Rest Baptist church just to the east on East Union.

Mt. Zion has been on that property since their founding in 1870.

You can also describe a





St, Rest Baptist Church

*Virginia Jefferson* Class of 1959, recalls "Evergreen trees of the pine family, with hard, woody cones and bundles of five needle-shaped leaves, running vines, wild plum trees and big oak trees on the streets of Warsaw."

She said Cooley Creek was in walking distance. That sense of brotherhood was felt when Virginia remembers that every now and then Mr. Theo Thompson and his sons Arthur and Luther would walk through the community and gather up a few of the boys, Don Bickham, Henry Hatter, Johnny Ray Harris, Orelius Harris, Louis "Buddy Boy" Bell and Veronica **Ross and Ronnie Johnson** for a cool swim in Cooley and also fish a little. *Michael Allen* learned fishing with his Dad, *Mr*. Walter Allen of Allen Photography. The churches and the schools united the Community. The schools provided the focus of community activity. There were wonderful benefits to residing in Warsaw. They had access to Webster High School' campus year-round. During the summer months the old white gym was opened for basketball, boxing, table tennis, dancing, and sometimes movies were shown. They learned to ride their bikes and skate. Some remember the monkey bars to swing on.

There were many rules that all Warsaw-ites knew. "According to *Patricia Kennon Mouton*, *Delois Allen Hall*, and *Jean Cotton Davis*, "we had to speak to everyone, and any

parent/neighbor could and would correct us and report our action. We had to be home before the street light came on." Whether the children were members or not, most attended bible school and other activities at both churches in their neighborhood. Many of their teachers were members of both churches.

The Mt. Zion parsonage was also located off East Union on what is called Sunset Lane now. They were always delighted to have new friends to play with when a new Pastor of Mt. Zion would come to town." One pastor was *Rev. James T. Johnson*. His wife *Dayse Johnson* taught French at Webster High for several years and their children *Rose A*. and *James Jr.* attended J.L. Jones Elementary and JA Phillips Jr. High.



The Johnson Family: James T. Jr., \*Mrs. Dayse & \*Rev. James T. Johnson, Rose A Johnson.

One of the fondest memories of Mt. Zion was the annual *Easter Cantata* where Mr. W.L. Hayes was the Choir Director. *The Messiah* by George F. Handel was a treat for all. Ms. Grace Landry was the organist. Many teachers and student teachers were also members of the choir.

John C. Walker (class of 1962) and family lived at 16 Walnut Street. John C. was a star basketball player as was his brother Dr. Jesse Earl Horner, Class of 1967. He has siblings, Annie Faye Horner, class of 1969, brothers \*Leon "Bammer" Horner,1970, \*Lester Drew Horner, Class of 1970, and Cherry Sue Horner, 1972. Both Gary L and Catherine Denise Horner graduated from Minden High. John C. remembers the guys like Wilbert Frazier\* playing games in the "patch" an empty lot next door to Patricia Kennon and Ronald Little. John C. remembers going past Mr. White's neighborhood store on the way to school. He said they ate at all neighbors' homes.

Mittie Frazier remembers walking to the Dairy Queen for the best ice cream down the street on East Union past Mt. Zion CME Temple. Dogens Service Station was across the street from the Fraziers. Hub Benton's Garage was two doors down. She remembers going to the Cozy Theater in old Miller Quarters.

\*deceased

The Fraziers phone number was Franklin 7- 1472. *Would anyone know how to dial that now? Wilbert* was a star basketball player at Webster High and Grambling College now Grambling State University. He later played for the American Basketball Association.

*Jean Taylor Rabb*, class of 1962, was the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Atkin Taylor, the owners of the Atkin Hotel.



Her comments include, "Living in Warsaw gave me the opportunity to meet a few famous people of the time, namely the late Sam Cooke, a gospel singer with the Soul Stirrers, the late Brother Joe May, Sister Rosetta Thorpe, Pop Staples and his daughters, the Percy Mayfield Band, the original Harlem Globetrotters with Reese Goose Tatum, and the Harlen Ren's one arm player, Boyd Bowie. The *Atkins Hotel* on Talton Street was the campaign Headquarters for \**Mrs. Mary G. Thompson* when she ran for the Webster Parish School Board Seat. In Jean's opinion, Warsaw was the most advanced area for our people. We had the \*Hub Benton's Mechanic Shop, Photographers, \*Walter Allen, \*Mr. Mitchell and \*B.B. Rhode and Hill Brothers Plumbing Company."

Golphia Jean Kelly-Moore, Class of 1963 lived at 109 Fort Street with her two brothers \* David Lincoln, Class of 1964 sisters \* Dorothy Lanell Kelly, class of 1964 and \*Barbara Patrice Kelly, Minden High School class of 1976. She remembers Bible School every summer in June when all the kids in the neighborhood would go across Highway 80 to St. Rest Baptist Church and were escorted by the Police. We would have food at the church.

Jean Cotton-Davis, class of 1957, shared how she looks back on Warsaw. "Many loving, wonderful things were taken for granted. For instance, we were able to walk to school safely. There were thriving Black-owned businesses like Walter Allen Photography Studio, Hill Brothers Plumbing, still standing today, Mr. Clarence Watts' Barber Shop (where the men hung out on the porch), \*Dr. C. W. Sims' Dental Office, the Atkins Hotel and beauty shops galore. We also had "saloons. The Silver Moon and, of course \*Harry Gamble's Club although we were not allowed to go. We had two wellstocked and friendly grocery stores; Michaels on one corner and Mourad on the other. The Mourad's property and our property joined at each of our back yards. My mother and \*Mrs. Mourad were very good friends. My father, \*Mr. B.D. Cotton and Mr. Mourad were away in military service much of the same time and those two women raised their children. I had two brothers (\*Gerald, class of 1962 and \*Raymond, Class of 1954) and I was the only girl. They all protected me and loved me. Mrs. Lurlene (Grandma Lene) baked and sent me T-cakes when I was away in college. Mrs. O.R. Jones insisted that my parents send me to Talladega College so that I could become more lady like. Mrs. Pinky Winzer gave me my first office job in the summer at Dr. Phillips Clinic. Walking to the clinic I had to pass Mr. Jack Leary's Store. He always sat out front of the store and as I passed, he would say each time, "Even the Pretty Has To Work." Every adult had "access to our behinds." They could and would discipline us when they saw a need to do so. The entire community was family oriented. Little did I know then that growing up in Warsaw was such a blessing.

**Bobbie Harper Theus**, class of 1957 shared "My most fond and memorable memories of living in Warsaw include living next door to *Mr. and Mrs. Harry Gamble*. They owned a club and bootlegged in the back of their house. It was the place to go for adults. I could sit on my front porch and see every car and person that was going in there. I could lay in my bed at night and listen to every song that was played on the jukebox. It lasted until the early hours of the morning. They laughed, danced and had fun all night long.

I lived down the street from Hill Brothers Plumbing, and Owens Beauty School and Shop. Around the corner was Mt. Zion CME Church, Mr. CW Sims Dental Office and Mr. Clarence Watts Barber Shop. Those really were the Good Old Days.

Hall Street was full of kids. We had lots of fun playing and walking to school and on Sunday evenings walking to the Malt Shop in Shiney.

From Vernadia Taylor Smith, Class of 1960 and Herbert Taylor, Jr. Class of 1962. They remembered the playground behind St. Rest Church, Fleeks Grocery Store, the Silver Moon Café (adults) and Dogens' Service station. There were three seamstresses, Ms. Flossie Jones, Ms. Nunley and Ms., Carrie Swafford. There were three boys, Joe Webster, Tom Hill and Floyd Whitfield who left school and served in the military. They returned home and later graduated from Webster.

Bobbie Jean Wright class of 1964 lived between Walnut, East Union and Lynn Streets (In the Alley). "I remember Hayes Kindergarten and joining St. Rest Baptist Church. I would pull pomegranates from Miss Tennessee's tree that lived nearby. The kids would lure chickens out of Ms. Boston's yard with grains of corn (They made great meals) We had Heaven and Hell parties and wiener roasts in the field (maybe the Patch.) Parents in every house disciplined you without any comeback from your parents. I had three brothers Walter, class of 1968, Larry, class of 1969, and Charles class of 1970.

Patricia A. Kennon-Mouton, class of 1963 and Ronald E. Little, class of 1962 lived at 511 Walnut Street with their grandmother \*Ms. Sadie Anderson. Ms. Anderson cooked in the J.L. Jones Cafeteria for many years. Patricia remembers walking to church and to School. I used to visit the old teachers' dormitory. In the summer, we would ride our bikes.

<sup>\*</sup>deceased

All who lived in the neighborhood called "Warsaw" would agree it was a great place to grow up and it was the place where Webster Training/High School began. Spann and Talton streets are a part of the history of this neighborhood and Webster High School, many Black Businesses and memories galore!

## A Picturesque View



Mrs. Mary G. Thompson \* 110 Fort Street



Walter Allen\*



Patricia Kennon Mouton class of 1963 Lead Storyteller – 511 Walnut



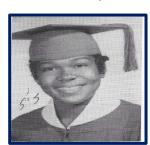
The Fraziers – 103 Gymnasium



Allen home left -Allen Studio right 118 North Talton Street



Bobbie Wright Class of 1964 In the Alley



Mittie Frazier - class 1962



Michael 'Jee' Allen 1972

Hill Brothers Plumbing - Today



Herbert Taylor – Class of 1962 130 Church Street



\*Wilbert Frazier - Class of 1961



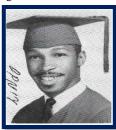
Dogens Service Station today



Virginia B. Jefferson– Class of '59 305 Hall Street



Delois Allen Hall Class of 1965



Ronald Little Class of 1962



Jean Taylor Rabb Class of 1962 Atkin Hotel

\*deceased

# Celebrating Sixty-Five Years - Webster High School - Class of 1957

Story Tellers:









Gloria Jean Cotton-Davis

Gloria Rabb Hampton

Herrise Kimble Rawls

**Bobbie Harper Theus** 

If you ask anyone what was the most significant event that occurred in 1957, most will probably say the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Central High School gained national attention on September 3, 1957, when Governor Orval Faubus mobilized the Arkansas National Guard in an effort to prevent nine African American students from integrating the high school. After several failed attempts to negotiate with Faubus, President Dwight D. Eisenhower took action against the defiant governor by simultaneously federalizing the Arkansas National Guard, removing the Guard from Faubus' control, and ordering one thousand troops from the United States



Army 101st Airborne Division in Ft. Campbell, Kentucky to oversee the integration. On September 25, 1957

the students, now known as the Little Rock Nine, entered Central High School.

By this time The WHS Class of 1957 was on their future way since their graduation was May of that year when their most significant event occurred, their graduation from Webster High School in Minden, Louisiana.

They have many wonderful memories of their days at Dear Old Webster. The single event that several wrote in their 40th anniversary memory book as their favorite memory was the night of the Senior Prom.

So many described how they were forbidden to go to Harry Gamble's place after the prom. Of course, several of them went anyway. According to one classmate "*Flutie* told on us, and Mr. Hayes immediately expelled all of us that defied his instruction. We could not return to school without our parents coming to school and meeting with Mr. Hayes in order to graduate."

Leon Mills wrote " I was walking down the hallway by Mr. Hayes' office. Coach Johnson (sitting in a chair) said Mills, where

are you going? He answered, Coach. I have a pass. Coach Johnson replied, If you don't get off this hall, I'll take the "P" off pass and whip what's left."

So many just remember all the lasting friendships made and how all the wonderful neighbors looked out for them and wished them well.

Many participated in the LIALO Rallies and disciplines of the principals. This class remembered Mr. J. L. Jones and Mr. Hayes. If Mr. Jones said "NO" he meant "NO." And a memory so many share is how Mr. W. L. Hayes would tell you "If you don't like the way I run my school, get you a school. "

There were three Glorias, Rabb, Cotton and Chatman. One of Mr. Tobin's often repeated stories is about the year he went to the State Science Fair and won, First, Second, Third and Fourth places. All four students were in the class of 1957. They were



Gloria Hampton, Mr. Tobin, Gloria Chatman \*, Jean Cotton Davis
Robert Wilson\* was the lone boy.

The Class Valedictorian was *Bobbie Lyons* and the Salutatorian was Imogene Kirk.







Imogene Kirk, Salutatorian

Congratulations to the Webster High School Class of 1957

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# Celebrating Sixty-Five Years - Webster High School - Class of 1957



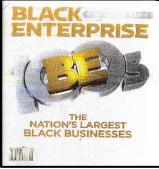




Miss Bobbie Jeanne Lyons – Miss Webster 1957

The Class of 1957 went in many directions after graduation including colleges such as Grambling College (now State University), Southern University, Butler College, Bishop College, University of Wisconsin, Louisiana Tech, Lincoln University, and Wiley College.







Gloria Jean Cotton Davis was the president and CEO of UNIBAR Services, Inc, in Ann Arbor, Michigan with a staff of 1400. She had a staff of 1400 employees in several states. INIBAR is a Utility Support Service Provider. It us one of this country's largest woman-owned business. The company has been listed in Black Enterprise for several years as one of our LT. Colonel Jerry Davis, Jr. moved to Washington, DC where she owned and operated Launch Coast Services, inc. Her only son Ro now works with this company since Jean has returned to Minden and lives n the home where she grew up.

Class 1957 members now live as far west as Seattle, Washington and as far north as Washington, DC. They never miss getting together often. They are a close knit class. Here are a few pictures of their many reunions.

No Matter where they roam, Webster will be their high-school home. Webster, they Love You."



Overall WHS Reunion - 1990



Detroit 2003



Fort Worth, Texas - 2004