

History of Baskin School

The first records of education in the Baskin area reveal classes were held in churches or one room schools throughout the area. The first community school was held in the shed of Cummings' cotton gin. Thirteen pupils used the uncomfortable desk, made by nailing shelves to the wall and placing rough boards over blocks. Schoolmaster W. F. Freeman instructed the pupils for a three-month period each year. The opening and closing of school was determined by the planting and harvesting time of the cotton crop and the need there was at home for the pupils.

By 1895, a two-room school was located on the Jim Reagan property. Freeman was still principal and teacher, but was given an assistant, Almena Caldwell, a graduate of University of Tennessee and Wellsby College. Seven grades were taught and algebra and geography were added to the curriculum.

By 1900 the increased number of pupils made the small building inadequate, so the Woodman Hall was remodeled and converted into a school. Twenty-one year old Freeman still continued his duties as instructor, assisted by Miss Caldwell.

Twenty years later, in 1915, a brick building was constructed with adequate space for the increasing number of pupils. The building was completed in 1916 for \$16,000.00. The Parish Superintendent at that time was John L. McDuff, who gave every possible aid to the new school. The first principal in the new building was Harry Woodridge. The average enrollment for that year was 300 pupils.

In 1922, Baskin Junior High was changed to Baskin High School. The qualifications of teachers were raised. Each teacher was required to have two years of college training. Before that, teachers had to pass a general test given by the superintendent after completing high school education.

In the fall of 1926, the building now occupied by the high school department was ready for occupancy, with all modern conveniences – auditorium, home economics department, and a library. In 1938, the gymnasium and commerce building were added. The agriculture building and shop were added in 1948-1949. The cafeteria opened in 1950 and in 1958, the locker and shower rooms were enlarged in the gym.

The first brick two-story building was damaged by a tornado in 1956. The old building was demolished when the new modern structure was completed. The new structure, which is the elementary building, was ready in 1957.

Voters in the district passed a bond issue to construct a 25,293 square feet one-story building. In 1977, the new building was ready for occupancy. The gym was also renovated that same year.

In 1981, the old Baskin High School Building was accepted for the National Register of Historical Places.

In 1997, the last senior class graduated from Baskin High School. The school was changed to Baskin Middle School with high school students going to Crowville High School and eventually Franklin Parish High School.

During the school year 2008-2009, bathrooms were updated in the elementary and middle buildings. Beginning the summer of 2009 the school began an extensive renovation with new flooring, painting, wiring, and doors throughout the elementary and middle school buildings. The gym also received extensive renovation. The boys and girls locker rooms were remodeled. New bathrooms for the public were constructed, and a new concession room was added. New painting of Ram heads were placed at center court.