

FLORENCE CITY SCHOOLS

TIMELINE

Florence was founded as a town in 1818. Florence City Schools, as an official school district, began in 1890. However, in the intervening years between 1818 and 1890, the citizens of Florence found ways to educate their children. Here is a brief history of education in those years:

1. 1820 – Coffee Family Plantation (near the intersection of today's Cox Creek Parkway and Cloverdale Road) – James Lorance, Teacher
2. 1825 – South Cedar Street – Rev. Wall (Episcopal minister), Teacher
3. 1830 – Intersection of Seminary and Tennessee Streets – Prof. Tinnon, Teacher
4. 1833 – Log cabin on South Pine Street (near the present City Hall auditorium) – Prof. Oliver, Teacher

1833 – Locust Dell Academy (site of Willingham Hall on UNA campus) – Caroline and Nicholas Hentz, Teacher

5. 1835 – Prepdom/Florence Male Academy, West Tombigbee Street
6. 1837 – Intersection of Pine Street/West Mobile Street – Miss James from Philadelphia, Teacher

1837 – Northeast corner of Wilson Park – Mrs. Henderson from Scotland, Teacher

7. 1847 – Small brick building on lot dedicated by Cypress Land Company (future home of Patton School), College Street between Cherry and Chestnut Streets
8. 1861 – Sixth Ward School (later, Brandon School) – East of the present Brandon Ministries Center building site
9. 1866 – Freedman's Public School (for African American children), Church Springs M.E. Church (later, St. Paul AME Church) – Oscar Waring, Teacher
10. 1868 – High school opened in Wesleyan Hall on UNA campus (lasted 5 years) – Prof. W. D. Willis, Organizer
11. 1870 – Pine Street – Ann Stevens from Ireland, Teacher
12. 1871 – North end of Court Street – Miss Mattie Ray, Teacher
13. 1872 – Home on North Wood Avenue (later the home of J. J. Mitchell) – Mrs. Susan Leigh (matron of Female Synodical College), Teacher
14. 1876 – Congregationalists of New York open a school for African-American students; known as the Carpenter School.
15. 1882 – Small building on site where Patton School was later built – Mrs. Bettie Waters, Teacher
16. 1890 – City Hall building (now a parking lot on Short Court Street) – Florence Classical, Business and Military Academy (boys only), Prof. Alex S. Paxton, Teacher/ Principal
17. 1897 – An African-American school under the auspices of the American Missionary

Society – Miss Mary Corpier, Teacher – located in Canaan subdivision of southwest Florence

18. 1898 – Alabama’s first free public Kindergarten in East Florence – Miss Maud Lindsay and Miss Blanche Moore, Teachers
19. c.1900 – John F. Slater Elementary School (elementary African-American students; funded by the City of Florence), Court Street
20. 1904 – Burrell Normal School (funded by the American Missionary Association for grades 1-12), West College Street

In 1890, Florence City Schools began, with Prof. J. W. Morgan as the first Superintendent.

1. 1891 – October opening of Patton School (named for Gov. Robert M. Patton who owned the Sweetwater Plantation) – College Street between Cherry and Chestnut Streets

1891 – Fifth Ward School/Seven Points School – T. J. Bond, Teacher 1891

– Sixth Ward School (East Florence) – T. B. Scruggs, Teacher

1891 – Colored Public Free School (Court Street) – Young A. Wallace,

Principal

2. 1899 – Brandon Elementary School (named for industrialist Charles M. Brandon)
 3. 1901 – A night school for working children located in the Sunday School rooms at East Florence Baptist Church
 4. 1903 – Seven Points School (elementary students) – Miss Olive Bencham, Teacher
 5. 1914 – Florence High School, North Pine Street just north of West Tuscaloosa Street intersection (the founding of the high school department of Florence City Schools)
 6. 1917 – Coffee High School (named for Captain Alexander Donelson Coffee and wife, Camilla Madding Coffee) – Jackson Highway (now Hermitage Drive)
 7. 1921 – “Red building” (a two-room frame structure) moved from Patton School to Coffee High School 1921 – Gilbert Elementary School (named for former Superintendent H. C. Gilbert)
- c. 1921 – Pine Ridge School (elementary African-American students), intersection of Veterans Drive and Kirkman Street
8. 1936 – Florence Junior High School building added to Coffee High School campus
 9. 1937 – Burrell High School (formerly Burrell Normal) becomes part of Florence City Schools
 10. 1947 – Second gymnasium added to Coffee High School campus

11. 1951 – New location of Coffee High School, North Cherry Street
1951 – Former Coffee High School building renamed F. T. Appleby School in honor of former Superintendent

1951 – Weeden Elementary School (named for John D. Weeden, owner of adjacent Sweetwater Plantation), North Franklin Street (present location of Broadway Recreation Center) annexed from Lauderdale County Schools

1951 – W. C. Handy Elementary School, West Irvine Avenue
12. 1952 – Burrell High School renamed Burrell-Slater
13. 1954 – New location of Weeden School, Baldwin Street
14. 1955 – Harlan Elementary School (named for Samuel Clay Harlan, former member of Board of Education and local industrialist), Norwood Boulevard
15. 1959 – Powell Elementary School (named for J. W. Powell, former Superintendent of Education), Tune Avenue
16. 1961 – New location of Burrell-Slater High School, Cherokee Street 1961 – Richards Elementary School, Riverview Drive
17. 1963 – Forest Hills Elementary School, Stovall Drive
18. 1966 – Bradshaw High School (named for Henry A. Bradshaw, former member of Board of Education), Bruin Drive (currently, Bradshaw Drive)
19. 1980 – Hibbett School (named for Rufus G. Hibbett, former Superintendent of Education), Appleby Boulevard
20. 2004 – Florence High School (consolidation of Bradshaw High and Coffee High; located on Bradshaw High campus)