

A School was born . . . lived . . . grew

The idea was formed for the education of children in the minds of parents long before public education was anything but a dream. Families, who could afford to, had private tutors; those who could not, had no schooling for their children but that given to them by their parents.

People of the community began to realize that some means of educating all the children must be devised. So, Spring Garden Institute was born. Children from neighboring communities attended this institute. Some from the Keeling community walked to and from school each day. Others, not so robust, boarded in the private homes close by the school. Many of the "graduates" from this school furthered their education at Roanoke Female Institute (Averett College) and returned to teach as "public school teachers."

The 1880's marked the beginning of the basis of education in the Spring Garden community as we know it today. For it was sometime during these years that a group of interested parents got together and hired Mrs. Tom Corbin to serve as a private teacher for their children.

A one-room school was built on Mr. Jim Conway's farm, this being the first public school. Mr. Randolph Jones was the first teacher. The trustees of the school were: Mr. Albert Coleman Cox, Rev. George Belk, Mr. Henry Allen, Mr. A.S. Shields, Mr. Tom Corbin, Mr. Jim Conway, and Mr. Taylor Shields.

This school remained in operation for many years. The second teacher was Mr. Arbuckle. Mrs. Annie Blair and Mrs. Eddie Cox, sisters, were also among the teachers at this school. They often spoke of the events of their first years of teaching, the hardships, and the many problems they had.

As the community grew, so the need of a larger school was felt. In 1894 a two-story frame building was erected on the plot of land adjacent to the Spring Garden Church. This land was donated by Mr. Coleman Cox. Pupils attending this school had to continue their education at other places, since only seven grades were taught here. Some subjects, now considered high school subjects, were taught.



The following people are in this picture. Mr. Harper, Principal, Dr. Arthur, Josie Allen, teacher, Charlie Shields, Ola Shields, Ruthe Shields, Ruthe Williams, Virginia Williams, Florine Conway, Ruthe Conway, Helen Conway, Jim Robertson, Henry Robertson, Tom Robertson, Ida Cox, Cordie Cox, Addie Terry, Willie Terry, Jamie Adams, Katie Adams, Hattie Adams, Russie Burnette, Nannie Burnette, Mattie Bryant, Myrtie Bryant, Nettie

Bryant, Jake Arendale, Norman Oakes, Robert Adams, Willie Haile Shields, Henry Shields, Sullie Corbin, Lula Corbin, Percy Thompson, Beatrice Atkinson, Halley Haley, Alonza Woodson, Stonewall Shelton, Randolph Shields, Aaron Motley, Myrtie Dodson, Pearl Shelton, Bessie Woodson, Louise Thompson, Emmett Moon, Oscar Orrell, Edgar Thompson, and Lottie Haley.