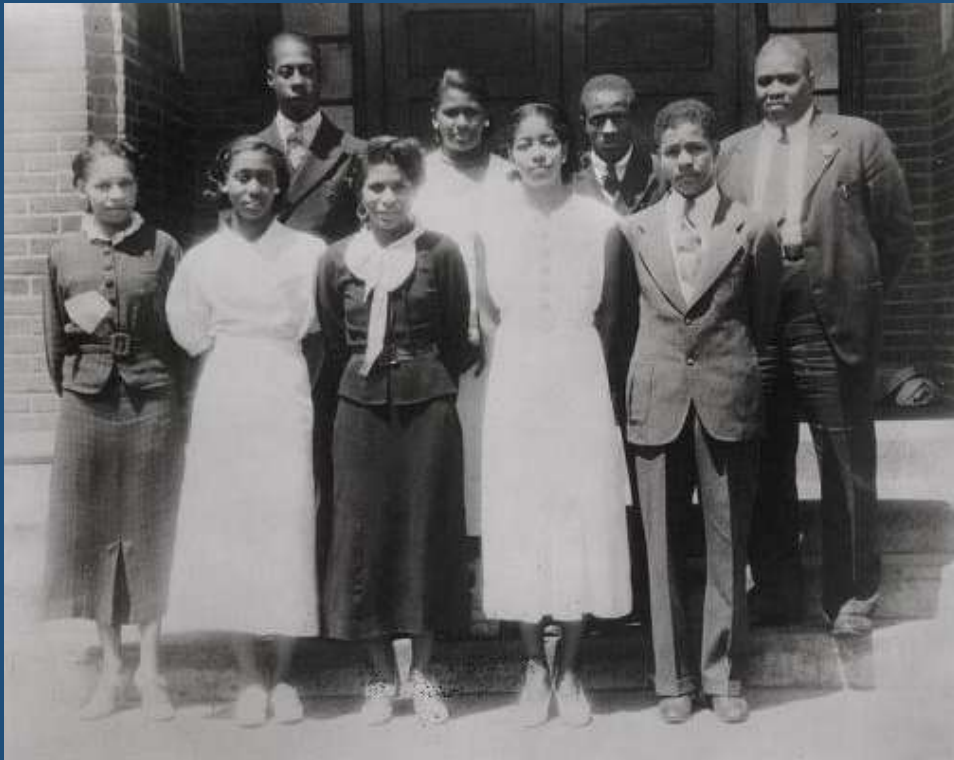


The Parker-Gray Schools



First Parker-Gray High School graduating class, 1936

Elementary

High

Middle

**100th
Anniversary**

1920-2020



*Parker-Gray High School Senior Class, 1965
Last segregated class in Alexandria*



The Parker-Gray Schools: A Brief Timeline

- 1920 – Parker-Gray School opens teaching grades 1-8
- 1932 – Parker-Gray adds high school classes grades 9-11
- 1936 – 1st high school 11th grade graduating class
- 1950 – New high school building dedicated and original school building renamed as Charles Houston Elementary School
- 1953 – Parker-Gray High School added 12th Grade
- 1963 – Dedication of new addition to the high school building
- 1965 – Parker-Gray High School closes
- 1965 – Parker-Gray transfers to a middle school during desegregation
- 1976 – Charles Houston Recreation Center opens on site of original Parker-Gray School
- 1979 – Parker-Gray Middle School closes
- 1983 – Stadium at T. C. Williams High School dedicated as Parker-Gray Memorial Stadium
- 2013 – Alexandria African American Hall of Fame opens at the Charles Houston Recreation Center



Parker-Gray School c.1920



Parker-Gray High School c.1950

Mr. Parker and Miss Gray

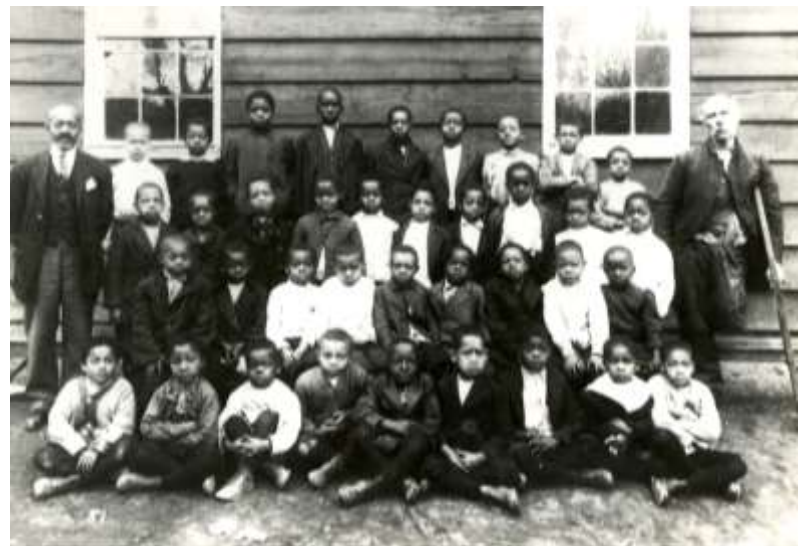
The school's name, Parker-Gray, is an important link to the history of African American education in Alexandria. After the Civil War, and under the auspices of the Freedmen's Bureau, two new schools were opened in Alexandria to serve the City's elementary aged African American children.

Both housed in frame buildings, Snowden School for Boys was in the 600 block of South Pitt Street and Hallowell School for Girls was in the 400 block of North Alfred Street.

Snowden's principal was John F. Parker and Hallowell's principal was Sarah A. Gray; and, it was from these two educators that the new school opened in 1920 took its name.



Hallowell School for Girls, n.d.



Snowden School for Boys, c.1915

A New School

The Snowden and Hallowell schools became overcrowded and the buildings became dilapidated. Community demands for better facilities were led by Rev. S. B. Ross, pastor of Third Baptist Church, Samuel Tucker, Samuel Madden, Mrs. Blanche Parker-Taylor, Henry T. Taylor, the Teachers' Association, and the alumni of the Hallowell and Snowden Schools.

In September 1920, a new school, teaching grades 1 to 8, opened at 901 Wythe Street, with Henry T. White as teacher-principal and nine other teachers: Miss Laura M. Dorsey; Mrs. Susie P. Madden; Mrs. Margaret T. Young; Mrs. Sarah D. Gray; Mrs. Harriet Thornton; Miss Florence Murray; Mr. James E. Howard; Mr. Rozier D. Lyles; and Mrs. Mamie E. Anderson.

The school amenities provided by the City of Alexandria were separate and most definitely unequal. Only the barest necessities were provided but the community and alumni raised approximately \$4,000. With this, they purchased chairs for the auditorium, a stage curtain, waste baskets, desk clocks, coat racks for teachers, \$1,000 worth of equipment for the home economics room, reference books, roller maps and globes, a typewriter, a Victrola and records, a lantern slide with 600 slides and paid half of the cost of window shades for the building.

Under the administration of Principal Wesley Elam, in 1932 another education fight was won, and Parker-Gray expanded to include a three-year high school. It was the first high school for African Americans in Alexandria, who previously had to travel to Washington, D.C. if they wished to continue their education beyond 8th grade. In 1952, Parker-Gray added 12th grade to their high school.



Principal Henry T. White and Parker-Gray Students, c.1920

A New Parker-Gray

Once again following demands from the local African American community, in 1950 a new high school was built to accommodate the growing student body. This high school, built at 1207 Madison Street, took with it the name Parker-Gray. The previous building on Wythe Street was renamed Charles Houston Elementary School.

The next fifteen years are often referred to as the “Golden Age” of Parker-Gray. In 1965, Parker-Gray High School transitioned into Parker-Gray Middle School.

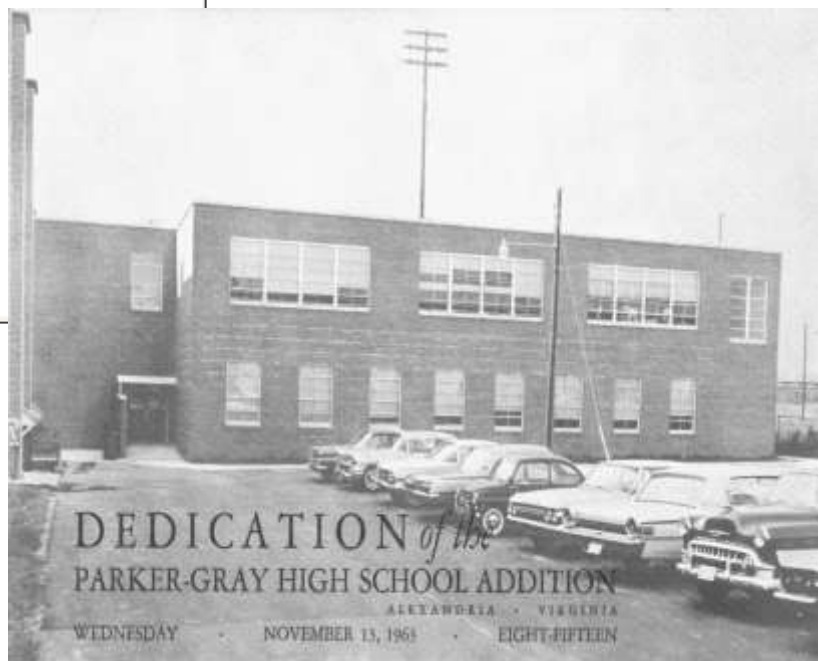


DEDICATION
OF
PARKER-GRAY HIGH SCHOOL

MR. WILLIAM H. PITT, *Principal*
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 1950
4:30 P.M.

Programs for dedication ceremonies for the Parker-Gray High School building in 1950 and the building addition in 1963.



A Desegregated Parker-Gray

In the fall of 1964, desegregation finally came to the City of Alexandria's public schools. In 1965, Parker-Gray High School closed and the students were transferred to other schools in Alexandria. The school was designated a middle school and new school principal, E. L. Patterson, shepherded in this new era in Parker-Gray's history.

This would be the last iteration of a "Parker-Gray School" in Alexandria. In 1979, Parker-Gray Middle School closed its doors.



Parker-Gray Middle School



Students, 1975 Yearbook

Parker-Gray: A Legacy

Although there is no longer a Parker-Gray School in Alexandria, an alumni association for Parker-Gray High School formed in 1975, ensuring that the legacy of “Parker-Gray” would continue to be remembered.

In 1976, a new recreation center opened on the site of the original Parker-Gray School on Wythe Street. The original Parker-Gray/Charles Houston building had burned down in the 1970s.

The Charles Houston Recreation Center now houses the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame. Among the names honored in the Hall of Fame are many Parker-Gray Alumni. The school produced doctors, lawyers, judges, a brigadier general, the first African American NBA player, college and high school coaches, Federal and State government workers, the first African American chairperson of the Alexandria School Board, teachers, scientists, musicians, career military and businessmen and businesswomen. Soon a statue to the class of 1946 graduate and the first African American to play in the NBA, Earl Lloyd, will be erected in the center.



Earl Lloyd and fellow athletes

Class of 1946



The Parker-Gray Bulldogs



B2002.07 Parker-Gray School Banner

Alumni Arthur Dawkins from the class of 1952 wrote the *Parker-Gray Victory Song*:

Fight Bulldogs, For Pee – Gee

Fight for Our Colors, The Dear Old Blue and White

Rah! Rah! Rah!

Yea, Bulldogs, Fight for Pee – Gee

Fight on Zealously,

We Praise Thy Name, Dear Parker-Gray

Fight on to Victory.

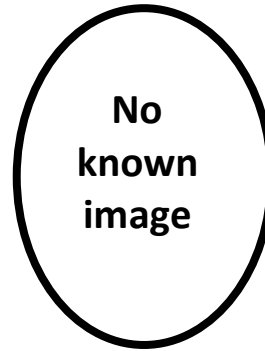


Parker-Gray School Drill Team, c.1952-56

The Principals



Mr. John F. Parker
Snowden School



Miss Sarah A. Gray
Hallowell School



Mr. Henry T. White
Parker-Gray School



Mr. Wesley D. Elam
Parker-Gray School



Mr. William H. Pitts
Parker-Gray High School



Mr. E. L. Patterson
Parker-Gray Middle School



Mr. Gustave A. Yack
Parker-Gray Middle School



6th Grade Students, n.d.



Students, c.1938



Cast of "Aaron Slick from Punkin Crick", 1928



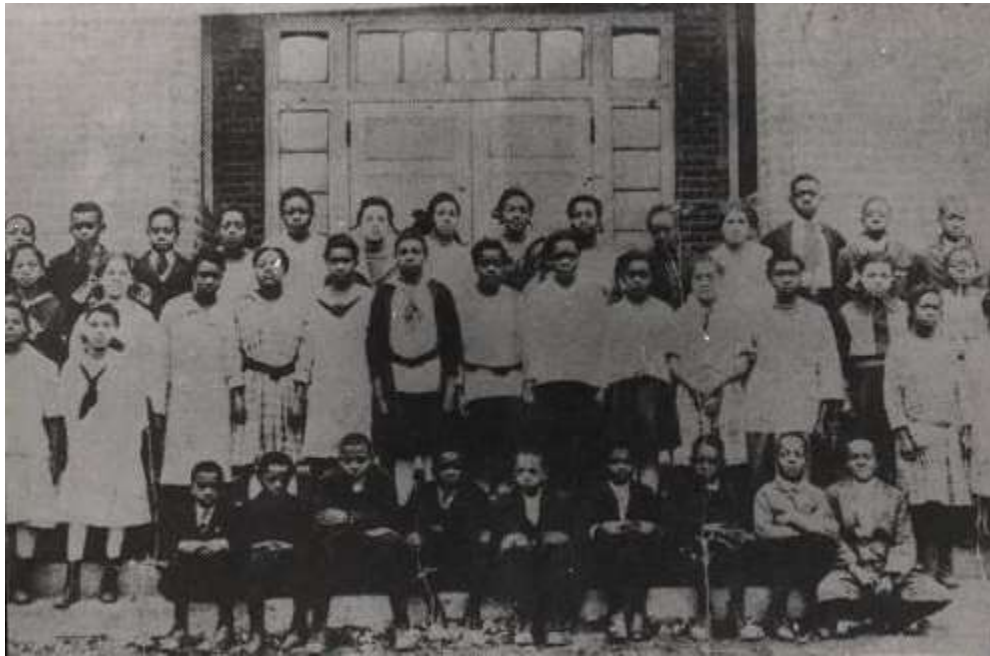
Cast on stage in a theatrical performance, n.d.



Students on the school playground, n.d.



Students with maypole on school playground, 1946.



Parker-Gray staff and students, n.d.



Parker-Gray staff and students, n.d.



Parker-Gray staff and students in costume, n.d.



Parker-Gray staff with principal, Henry White, n.d.



Parker-Gray staff, 1938



Parker-Gray staff with principal, William Pitts, n.d.



Science Class, n.d.



Science Class, n.d.



Home Economics Class, n.d.



Home Economics Class, n.d.



Biology Class, n.d.



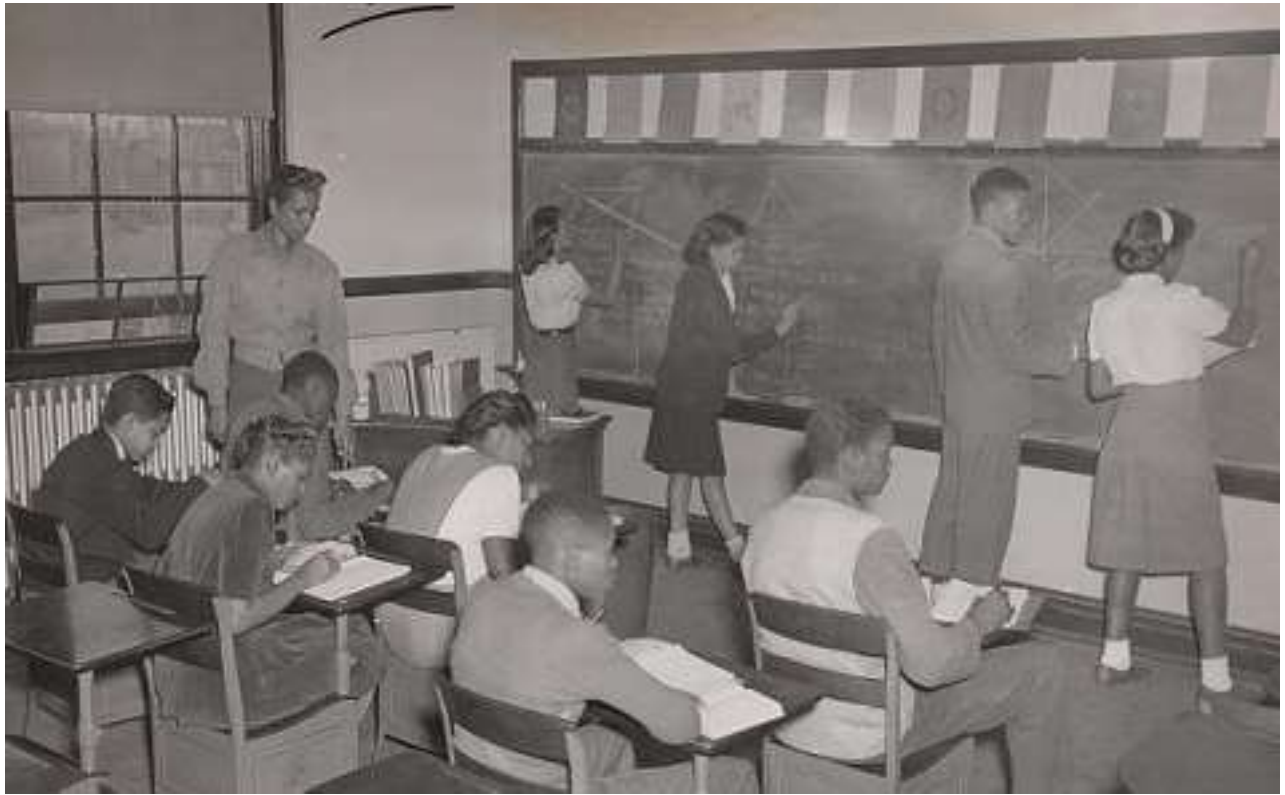
Science Class, n.d.



Science Class, n.d.



Students in Class, n.d.



High School Class, n.d.



Students in Class, n.d.



Shop Class, n.d.



Students in Class, n.d.



Students in Library, 1946.



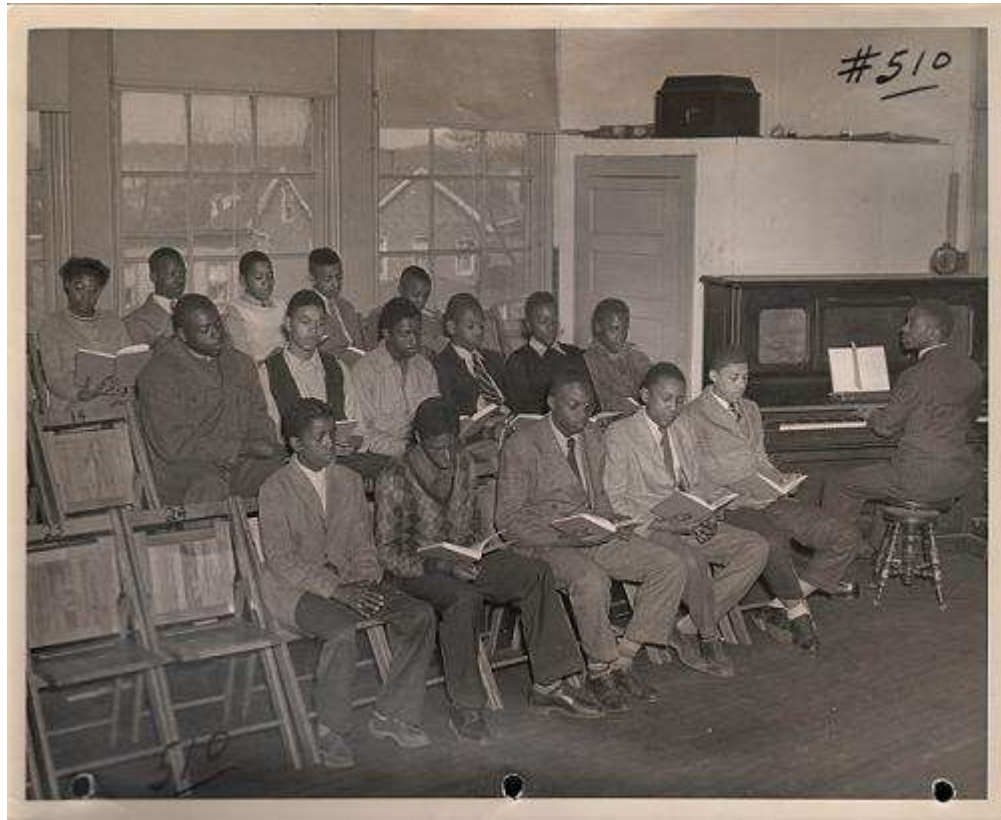
Students in Library, n.d.
Alexandria Black History Museum - 22



Students in Class, n.d.



Students in Class, n.d.



Music Class, n.d.



Music Class, n.d.



Parker-Gray student playing the tuba, 1946



Students playing a xylophone in Music Class, 1947



Parker-Gray High School Marching Band, Spring 1952



Parker-Gray High School Marching Band in a parade, n.d.



Parker-Gray High School baseball team, n.d.



Parker-Gray High School baseball team, 1947



Parker-Gray boys junior varsity baseball team, 1947



Parker-Gray High School varsity basketball team, 1946



Parker-Gray High School football team, 1947



Parker-Gray High School football team riding in the back of a truck, n.d.



Parker-Gray boys' Gym Class, 1947



Parker-Gray students running track, n.d.



Parker-Gray student throwing in field event, n.d.



Parker-Gray student on high bar, n.d.



Parker-Gray girls' inter-mural club, 1947.



Parker-Gray High School girls' Gym Class, 1946



Parker-Gray High School girls field hockey, n.d.



Parker-Gray girls' Gym Class, n.d.



Parker-Gray High School girls' basketball team, n.d.



Parker-Gray girls' basketball game, n.d.



Parker-Gray High School cheerleaders, n.d.



Parker-Gray High School Safety Patrol, n.d.



Debutantes were presented by the Theta Pearls social club, c.1956.



Debutantes were presented by the Theta Pearls social club, n.d.



Parker-Gray Homecoming Queen, 1946.



Parker-Gray High School Homecoming Parade, n.d.



Parker-Gray High School dance, 1947



Parker-Gray High School dance, 1941



Parker-Gray students in roller skating performance, n.d.



Parker-Gray students in performance, n.d.



Parker-Gray students selling Christmas seals, 1946.



Parker-Gray High School graduates, 1954



Parker-Gray Campaigners, n.d.



Parker-Gray Band Boosters, n.d.



Middle School Class, 1977



Parker-Gray Middle School Band, 1978



Parker-Gray Middle School Guitar Group, 1975-76



Parker-Gray Middle School Photography Club, 1974



Parker-Gray Middle School Mini-Bike Club, 1977



Parker-Gray Middle School Math Club, 1974



Parker-Gray Middle School Literary Magazine Staff, 1974



Parker-Gray Middle School Classroom, 1975

Learn More...

The Alexandria Black History Museum has a collection of material related to the Parker-Gray Schools, including a banner, trophies, several yearbooks, and a collection of photographs. Many of the photographs have been digitized and are available to view at:

<https://historicalalexandria.pastperfectonline.com>

Learn more about the Parker-Gray Archive at:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/historic/blackhistory>

Learn more about the history of the Parker-Gray Schools with these “Out of the Attic” articles that appeared in the *Alexandria Gazette* at:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/attic/2020/Attic20200813ParkerGray.pdf>

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/attic/2020/Attic20200820ParkerGray.pdf>

and with the website, “The Other Alexandria” by local historian, Char McCargo Bah at:

<https://theotheralexandria.com/>

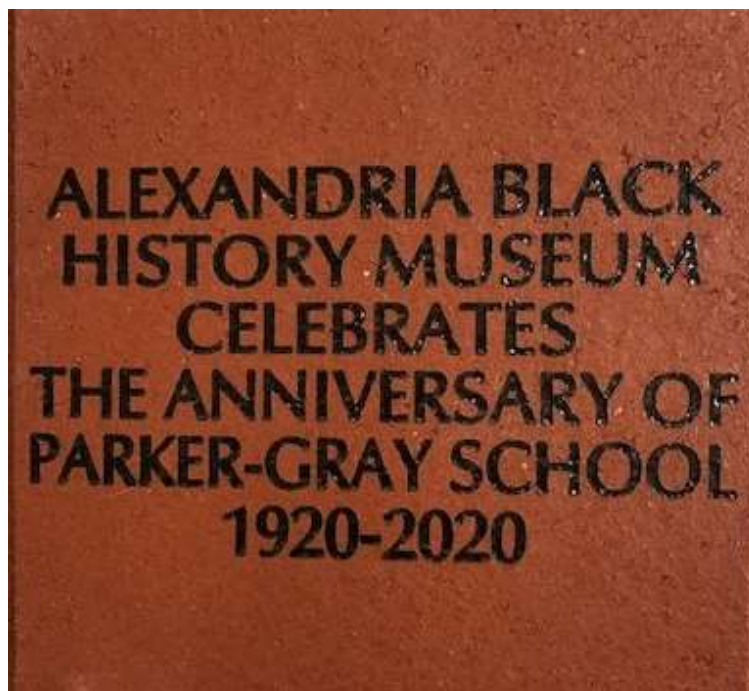
Although the buildings are no longer extant, new historical markers will soon help you to explore the sites of the Parker-Gray Schools on Wythe and Madison Streets.

Learn more about education in Alexandria in Douglas S. Reed’s book, *Building the Federal Schoolhouse: Localism and the American Education State*.



B1993.8.1ab - 1951 Parker-Gray High School class ring, donated to The Alexandria Black History Museum by Eleanor Alexander Johnson

**Congratulations on 100 years
Parker-Gray School
Elementary – High – Middle
1920-2020**



The Alexandria Black History Museum dedicates this program to the students, faculty and staff of the Parker-Gray Schools.

