

Schools in the Town of Potomac

In September 1900, Alexandria County opened the original Mount Vernon School on this property to educate children up to the 8th grade. In spite of continual expansion, crowding was always a problem. By 1932, it was necessary to rent the bank building at 2401 Mount Vernon Ave. for classroom space. In 1935, the Mount Vernon School took over the former George Mason High School building next door and operated both school buildings. In 1968, the former high school was completely renovated and expanded, and the original Mount Vernon School building was demolished to make way for the current playground. The schools were all white, as there were no African Americans in the town in the 1920s. The few blacks in the surrounding areas were sent to Alexandria's African American schools, and the county paid their tuition.

Mount Vernon School is seen here in 1907 from approximately this vantage point. At that time, the faculty consisted of just two teachers. The second floor was a single room and served as a town hall, but the building was extended to the rear and a portico added to the front in 1908. For the 1909-1910 school year, the faculty consisted of principal James Rollins of Laverne Avenue at \$75 per month, and Mazie McFarland, Ella Davies, Gertrude Allan and Margaret Bashford as teachers at \$50 per month. The playground now occupies the original school lot.

Special Collections, Alexandria Library



I missed you very much last night (May 9, 1928) and wish you had been along. Here's hoping you will have some more good times like we have already had together. Fondly yours, Ruth Gary

RUTH GARY
"Be to her virtues very kind
Be to her faults a little blind."
Basketball '26, '27, '28, '29
Glee Club Secretary '29
Senior Literary Society
Letter Club '28, '29
Dramatics '29
Cheer Leader '27, '28, '29

ALMA KEYS
"As pleasing was this happier road
As were the melodies she made."
Class Poet
Pianist of Glee Club
Dramatics '29
School Pianist

As close as we live to each other I don't think we will forget when we are both here in the hope we shall have the same fun times as in the past. Love, Milton Harding

*Remember me as a classmate
J. Milton Harding*

MILTON HARDING
"I like work—it fascinates me,
I can sit and look at it for hours."
Football '28
Baseball '27, '28, '29
Basketball '27, '28, '29
Track '27, '28, '29
Letter Club '27, '28, '29
Cadet Corporal '28
Second Lieutenant '29
Senior Literary Society
Mason Literary Society
Dramatics '29

The George Mason High School class of 1929, consisting of thirteen boys and sixteen girls, was the last before the Town of Potomac schools were absorbed by the City of Alexandria. Ruth Gary, who graduated along with her brother Robert, was born in Del Ray, but the family moved in the 1920s to 2911 Holly Street in Mt. Ida. Alma Keys was the daughter of Owen Keys, a railroad engineer and part-time land investor, and his wife, Sallie, who lived at 207 Clifford Ave. Milton Harding was the son of John Harding, first president of the Bank of Del Ray, and his wife, Annie. The Hardings lived in the impressive house at 2100 Mount Vernon Avenue.

Memories, George Mason High School yearbook, 1929, Private Collection



As seen here, by 1929 Mount Vernon School had expanded considerably. George Mason High School is on the right in the background, by this time staffed by a principal, assistant principal and ten teachers.

Special Collections, Alexandria Library

Since Alexandria County had no high school, parents began agitating for the school board to pay their children's tuition to City of Alexandria high schools in 1915. In 1917, the district school board bought the Richard Lloyd house, about a half-mile west of here, and converted it into the George Mason High School with two teachers and thirty students. In 1925, the Lloyd house was sold to the Episcopal Church for use as St. Agnes' Girls School, and the building in front of you was constructed as the new George Mason High School. Following annexation, the City of Alexandria built George Washington High School (now a middle school) south of here.



1908

TOWN OF POTOMAC

1929

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