



PHOTO BY RICHARD HOWELL

The old Sampson County High School cafeteria. Attachment at the back is what was used as a vocational/agricultural building. The Sampson High School Alumni Association now owns the property.

Tracing the roots

■ *Remaining portion of old Sampson School turned over to alumni group*

By **L.E. BROWN JR.**
Staff Writer

Someone has said that the historical development of Sampson County Training School is difficult to trace, and that appears to be so. Therefore, the following is admittedly incomplete, but is being done primarily because recently the Clinton City Board of Education deeded the remaining portion of the old campus to the Sampson High School Alumni Association, and it seemed to

be an appropriate time to put together at least a brief history of the school.

For several years, the Alumni Association has owned part of the old school campus property. The acquisition of the remainder is, in some ways, a closure of sorts.

To begin with, it needs to be said that the word "training" in the original name of the school in no way meant that the school was a place where truants or delinquents were sent. It was a regular

high school, whose name was changed, according to one source, to Sampson High School (SHS) in the 1950s.

In 1914-15 there were 46 Negro schools in Sampson County, 43 of which were one-teacher, two were two-teacher, and one was a four-teacher school. The four-teacher school is apparently the one from which Sampson County Training School evolved.

By 1919-20 this four-



PHOTO BY RICHARD HOWELL

The Sampson High School Alumni Association uses the main building of the old Sampson High School as its headquarters. Originally known as the Sampson County Training School, the building was apparently built in 1924.

Portion of old Sampson High School turned over to local alumni group

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teacher school, located in the vicinity of the 400 block of Stetson Street, had grown to a six-teacher school. Its students came from Garland, Roseboro, Newton Grove, Faison, Harrells and Turkey. The school was the site of the only library located in a black school, and contained 14 books.

The seventh grade was the highest level taught at that time, with the length of the school year ranging from two to six months. Many teacher certificates were awarded based on having completed the seventh grade.

Reportedly, the school was

ill-equipped, had no central heat or sufficient lighting. Basic textbooks were the only source of information.

In 1924 Sampson County Training School was built on a parcel of land at McKoy and Williams streets. For a time it was the only high school for blacks in Sampson County. It was accredited by the state of North Carolina in 1926, and approved as to eligibility for state funds. Approval consisted of a physical check of the buildings and counting the number of students, teachers, books, classrooms, etc.

Sampson County Training School turned out its first graduates in 1926, a class of

two students, Estells Sampson and Agnus Crumpler.

During the period of 1922-26 the Clinton City Administrative Unit (school system) was established and Sampson Training School became a part of it, instead of the county system.

In the 1940s a twelfth grade was added, and the school was afforded the use of public school buses for the first time.

After World War II, a veteran's program and night school began at the school. Veterans were taught carpentry, masonry, electricity and recordkeeping. Veterans constructed the first cafeteria and vocational/agricultural shop and assist-

ed with the construction of an annex.

In the early 1950s a new gymnasium and band room were added to the existing structures.

In 1966 area schools were integrated and Sampson High School was merged with Clinton High School, with Sampson High School becoming Sampson Junior High School, for sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

In 1976 the physical plant was closed, with students moving to the former Clinton High School on Fayetteville Street, now the site of Sampson Middle School.

L.E. Brown Jr. can be reached at 910-592-8137, ext. 20, or email slicity@intrstar.net.