

File Petitions

Grant School
Middleburg, Va.

Nov 7, 1944

Mr. O. L. Emerick,
Division Supt.,
Leesburg, Va.

Dear Mr. Emerick

We the parents of
Grant School, Middleburg,
Virginia feel that our
children are too crowded
which creates a problem
for our teachers!

We are also afraid
that an Epidemic might
break out because of
crowded conditions. We
are wondering if it
is possible to get another

room. This is the only
thing that will solve
our problem.

Sincerely,
Secretary (Mrs.) Helvia Reed
Parent Teachers
Meeting.

Mrs Melvina Gale

Miss Lenora Stewart

Mrs. Mary Douglass

Mrs. Hattie Hall

Mrs Sarah Green

Mrs Jane Butler

Mrs. Mary A. Hall

Mrs Hannah B. Perry

Mrs. Laura M. Harris.

Mrs Martha Chinn

Mrs Ella Thomas

Mrs. Anna M. Edmead

Mr. Joseph R. Butler Jr.

Mr. Henry Page

Mr. Robert Thomas

Mrs Eva Stewart

November 7, 1944:

Grant school parents complained of the crowded conditions and asked that an additional room be added in order to avoid the spread of disease. [Grant School 1944 Nov 7](#)

November 16, 1944

On November 16, 1944, famed attorney James. H. Raby wrote to the O.L. Emerick, Superintendent of Schools in Loudoun on busing and on Grant. Raby practiced law in Alexandria from 1941 until he died at the age of 78 in 1981. He was no average lawyer. One of his claims to fame was to win a case for bus integration before the Virginia Supreme Court (James H. Raby, Lawyer Won a Noted Va. Civil Rights Case 1981). See LOTTIE E. TAYLOR v. COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA., 38665 Record No. 3267. Supreme Court of Virginia. March 1, 1948.

In his letter in 1944, Raby said "You have received a letter from a number of the parents in Middleburg complaining of the crowded condition at Grant School. As they stated to you, there were two rooms of which ninety-six children had to be cared for by two teachers. Under these conditions, there is no way that these children can get adequate training. This condition should not exist and there is not any reason for such condition because there is ample space to enlarge the school building.

"As an attorney for these parents, I am requesting that this condition be remedied. It is not our intention to request anything that is not reasonable for the benefit of these children. We are only asking that you would do your duty and that you will provide an adequate building and sufficient teachers to teach the pupils that are enrolled in the school so that they will not become so discouraged that they will leave school at an early age."

January 15, 1945

Memorandum from patrons of Middleburg thanking Superintendent and School Board for agreement to relieve crowded conditions at Grant. [Grant School 15 Jan 1945](#)

January 16, 1945

A fascinating petition of January 16, 1945 to Mr. Emerick, Superintendent highlights the problem sometimes of knowing who has the authority to negotiate a deal. The PTA (Community League) of Middleburg complained that Emerick had struck a deal with Mr. John Wanzer, who was the head of County Wide League when Wanzer didn't have that authority. Instead, they pointed to their attorney James Raby of Alexandria as the only agent representing the PTA. They also found Emerick's resolution condescending. What they wanted was relief for "the deplorable conditions at Grant School," through construction of a fresh structure. While they recognized that resource availability was a problem, nonetheless the need stood. Emerick then responded on January 17 that he didn't want to expand Grant, instead wished to build a new structure; but the complexities of appropriating money and building a design, etc. would take time. He needed cooperation, especially the new building would cost \$85,000. In 2016 currency, that was equivalent to \$1,130,000! These memos are attached to memoranda of February 12, 1945 and February 13, which continued the discussion. [Grant School Petition 1945](#) Location: LCPS Archives: Petition Folder.

A terse memo of February 6, 1946 continued the position that Grant in Middleburg was stressed. From the PTA and Community League of the Grant School offered an ardent argument for avoiding building a new building in Saint Louis; instead to build a school in Middleburg that would service Saint Louis. Middleburg felt that the roads in Saint Louis were unsatisfactory and indeed impassable in winter. They felt Saint Louis was swamps, requiring much drainage. There were also no stores, theatre or denominational churches and in the opinion of the authors a lacking of "Negro leadership and Negro wealth." They also felt that a school's surroundings ought to be able to "offset the decoy of youngsters," and that Saint Louis didn't provide that. They also saw a lack of clinical facilities or a physician who could arrive quickly. Interestingly, they also opined that "in this atomic age," the school would not improve the "panorama of our colored and white citizens." Finally, they felt Saint Louis little opportunity for boarding teachers. Having made those points, they argued for an alternative site, that of William N. Hall at the historically African-American community of [Maxville](#). [Grant School Petition of 1946](#) Location: LCPS Archives, Petitions Folder.

REF TO EXPAND School In Middleburg, Va

07-13-2017

Dave Prebich

Transcribed