The Modern Expansion

The decade 1914-1924 stands out as a distinct period in the history of public instruction in Duval County, and really embraces the complete history of the school work that advanced the County's position to the foremost rank. Three causes contributed to it, namely, the exceptional ability of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the position, the constructive cooperation of the School Boards, and the increasing interest of the people in the work of the public schools.

The awakening came in 1914, when the program for the modern expansion was drawn up. This led to a favorable vote of the people in 1915, for a bond issue of $1,000,000 to start the work. Then, one by one, most of the old wooden relics gave away to modern buildings, the small, brick units then in existence, were reinforced and greatly enlarged, and new school buildings erected in growing community centers. Two subsequent bond issues, $325,000 August 1, 1919, and $1,000,000 April 19, 1922, permitted the continuance of the program. There are, in and near the city, 24 schools for white children; all are brick and practically fireproof structures, fully equipped in a modern way. There are five first-class brick schools for colored children in or near the city, Stanton school being perhaps the finest negro school in the State; these schools are likewise fully equipped. Other schools have been built in the outlying settlements of the county.

Ten years ago the visitor to Jacksonville was driven six blocks out of the way to keep him from seeing our school buildings. Today he is driven ten blocks out of the way in order that he may see them. Duval County has a right to point with pride to the accomplishments in school development.

A program for further expansion to include high schools for Riverside, Springfield, and South Jacksonville, has been prepared by Professor Hathaway and accepted by the School Board.

In 1877, public instruction became an educational rather than a political matter; the list of Superintendents of Public Instruction for Duval County since that time follows:

A. J. Russell, 1877 to February, 1884; W. B. Clarkson (temporarily), 1884; W. H. Babcock, 1885 to October, 1888