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### The History of Green Bethel School

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## THE HISTORY OF GREEN BETHEL SCHOOL

The first building, which was used for both School and Church for the Black people of the Community, was located on the southend of Gardner Webb College. The building was on the Jerry Green tract of land. It was a log structure with plank shutters for windows. A large fireplace, for heating the building. A dirt floor and seats made of slabs.

The drinking water was obtained from a large spring, known at that time as the Big Spring. Later it was known as Boiling Spring. The School was named Green for the founder and Bethel for the House of God; thus it was called Green Bethel. The School term was six weeks or less and the only textbook was Websters Blue Back Speller; Recitation was aloud. The sound could be heard at a long distance, AB, ab, EB, eb, IB, ib etc, which would sound pretty strange in todays educational system.

The School and Church combination remained on this tract of land for some time. When the County began erecting free public Schools. The County purchased land on the southeast side of Boiling Springs and the School was moved to its present site. The School retained the name Green Bethel. When the County began erecting free Schools, the Church and School combination was discontinued and the little hut was demolished.

The first building on the present site was a two story masonic building, the first floor was used as classrooms, with no partition between them. This building was torn down and the School was moved a few feet in an old Church, later it was moved to another masonic building made of cement block. The partition to separate the classrooms, was made of bed ticking, which was hung on a rope. AT first the drinking water was obtained at the home of Mr. Andrew Green, the water was pumped by hand, thanks to the Green family. Later the Church dug a well, and the water was drawn from the Church well. Our next building was a Rosenwall building with five rooms, two of which was opened to make an auditorium. When the High School was added, there was only two graduates,

Miss Margaret Mitchel, and Mr. Thomas Wilson Hardy.

Later a school bus was added to transport all children, in this area that had completed seventh grade. The following schools were consolidated with Green Bethel, Mooresboro, Lattimore, Rockcut, Eskridge Grove, Maple Springs, and New House.

Before the High School was added, students brought there lunches in tin buckets which consisted of sweet potatoes, milk, cornbread biscuit, peas, molasses, butter and in winter rabbit and squirrel.

Some of the games played were ring around the rosey, dropping the handkerchief and baseball which was played with a ball made of rags, with a stick or plank for a bat.

If students needed punishing they were to stand in the corner, wash blackboards, cut wood and pine for the next day, and given a whipping if needed.

In High School in addition to the regular required courses the students enjoyed music, athletics, ,dramatics, photography, and Student Council. The School had a very active P.T.O. which as started by the late Miss Violet C. Thomas, who was Supervisor of Cleveland County Negro Schools.

Green Bethel School has grown from a one teacher school to a around twenty two teacher, from a log hut to a building made of brick with all modern conveniences, attractive classrooms, a spacious lunchroom, with hot lunches, a well equipped library, Home Ec Department, Agricultural dept, agymntorium.

In 1969 the name was changed to West Cleveland, our last graduating class consisted of twenty two graduates, three of th graduates were from this area, they are Miss Mary Sue Jolly, Mr. Larry Phillips, and Mr John Hoey. Five of our Teachers completed their Elementary Education at Green Bethel Mrs Myrtle McLean, Mrs Nevada Wilson. Mr .Herbert Gidney, the late Mrs Jessie Costner, the late Mrs Vertie Elder, the late Macie Green.