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## Central Consolidated School: 1927-1960

The following information was written by Delma Dean and Dudgar Daniel. It was transcribed by RaNae Vaughn from Autrey William Mangum's book *Down Memory Lane—Volume 2: A History of Iuka, Mississippi 1915-1983*.

In the spring of 1927, a vote of the qualified electors and patrons of the Helton, Patrick, and Harmony school districts was taken on the issue of consolidating the three schools, with provisions for other neighboring schools to consolidate later.

Land was acquired from the Ayer and Lord Tie Company, who owned a large tract of land on Highway 25, 4 ½ miles north of Iuka.

Three trustees, one from each of the school districts, were appointed. They were M. E. Hudson, Charlie Grisham, and E. F. Parnell. Much work and responsibility fell on these three men, as there was some stiff opposition to the idea of consolidation. However, negotiations were made, and the Ross Barnett Construction Company of Alcorn County was hired to erect the building, which was ready for use by the latter part of October 1927.

The name, Central Consolidated School, was chosen because of its central location among the three charter school districts.

George Bacon, a graduate of Mississippi Southern, was elected as principal, with Olen Tigner, Mary Harwell, Flora Bell Branson, and Birdie Mae Gray Cutshall as his helpers.

Grades 1 through 10 were taught there the first two years by Mr. Bacon. Due to the depression and short finances, only four- or five-month school terms were held.

By the fall of 1929, high school students were allowed to attend Iuka High School and were transported there by bus during the regular term at Central; but they had to furnish their own transportation and pay tuition the first and last of the nine-month term at Iuka.

School buses were constructed locally—no factory made buses were in Tishomingo County at that time. Only three buses were used at first—many students walked 1-2 miles to school. Due to bad road conditions, some bus drivers used covered wagons to supplement their routes. After the first term, some neighboring schools decided to consolidate—Bethel, Walker Cutoff, and Hubbard Salem.

Mr. O. C. Miller was County Superintendent at this time, and through his efforts and an urgent invitation from the three trustees, the State Superintendent of Education attended the closing day of the first session of school in March 1928. The day was one of dedication; pictures were taken, and a bountiful lunch was spread at the noon hour. The afternoon program consisted of talks by patrons and teachers, followed by an address by the State Superintendent of Education, W. F. Bond.

The following individuals served as Principal of the Central School:

George Bacon  
Ardin Adams  
Rev. J. C. Nelson  
Olen Tigner  
Dewey Locke

R. C. Grisham  
Archie Clark  
Joel Mitchell  
George W. Stricklen  
O. C. Oaks

Zeb Yow  
Hector Bishop  
Perry White  
Cleston Scruggs  
Benny Curtis

The last term of school before being incorporated into the Iuka Separate School District was 1959-1960.