



# Parker History

## **Parker District School System Rated Among Top 5 in United States**

From Greenville News, Sunday, October 3, 1948

In 1922 the South Carolina Legislature passed an act binding together 14 progressive Greenville suburban communities into what was called Parker District, a move toward a mutual educational and civic announcement.

At that time there was no high school in the area. The various schools in the district had previously carried their pupils only through the seventh or eight grades, leaving them at that stage either to stop or enter any high school that would admit them.

**Today 26 years later, Parker District has a high school and school system that last year was ranked among the top five in the United States.**

Parker District includes nine textile communities, four suburban villages and one rural community. These have their own water and sewer systems, fire protection, police protection, churches and elementary schools.

Parker High School, focal point for many activities carried on in the district, was opened in 1924. Originally it started with one building and 55 pupils. Now the school has grown into an extensive plant which accommodates 1,400 pupils and many adults of the community.

The district was named for the late Lewis W. Parker, a manufacturer who worked in the interests of residents of the district during his lifetime. Since the district was formed, illiteracy in the area has rapidly decreased. Mill communities have been improved as textile executives did their best to make the district one of Greenville's show places.

Probably nowhere does a school district wield as much influence in everyday affairs as does the Parker District schools. Parker High is used not only by school students but also by adults and veterans as well. They can learn trades, they can learn hobbies and beneficial duties for home life at a number of classes, and everyone joins in frequently to make certain projects a great success.

One of the unique points about the district is its educational system. This system has had its ups and downs. It has been called by various names, but despite criticism and other difficulties, it has proved its point and now boys and girls in the district can train themselves through the school programs for certain vocations and for further schooling.

**Being in Greenville's largest textile area, the high school has given those who want to follow textile work a great opportunity to train themselves for their life work. A complete cotton mill is situated in the modern vocational building at the school.**

Regular students, adults and veterans fill the building almost daily throughout the year learning the various jobs that are found in a textile plant. Textile executives in the district and in surrounding areas have seen the value of this program and have been generous in their donations of equipment and materials. As a result, they are getting more and more high school graduates who have been trained for that particular type of work while receiving all the fundamentals that go into a person's education.

But textiles are not the only vocational courses offered. Boys seeking machine shop work find a well-equipped machine shop on the first floor of the vocational building. There are body and fender and automobile painting courses available. Cosmetology is popular among women of the district and again the high school has met these needs with a regular training program for this work.

Drafting and mechanical drawing also have a place in the Parker program. Arts and crafts are available for those inclined in that direction, together with other vocational pursuit.

While a student is learning this work, he also is receiving the basic courses that go along with a high school education, leaving him prepared to take his rightful place in the business world once his education is completed.

For those students whose desires do not reach toward these vocational fields, the high school also has commercial courses and other classes that prepare a student for more schooling or immediate work.

The student is allowed to select the type courses he wants to study. At the beginning of every year the student is allowed to pick an academic course of study that is designed to give him a well-rounded education and prepare him for college work, or he may select the vocational training program that includes the basic educational requirements in addition to the vocational training.

**Years ago few Parker students were able to continue their education in college, but since the late 1930's more and more students have found it possible to continue their**

**education at area colleges. Many of them must work their way through the colleges, but thus far indications are that the Parker students rank high scholastically among those from the various colleges.**

The district school program does not stop here, however, it is so large that it often is hard to comprehend as it stretches to young and old alike. Music plays an important part in the life of residents in the in the district and much emphasis is placed on that phase of education and everyday life.

There is the Maternity Shelter near the high school, which was founded some years ago to provide medical treatment for mothers unable to secure it through ordinary channels. The shelter has resulted in saving of many lives of young babies and mothers.

The district has a summer camp, Camp Parker at Blythe Shoals, which is open to groups throughout the district. The high school's auditorium is used frequently by groups, and the gymnasium is in almost constant use during basketball season.

The Parker Peoples' College has met another great need among district residents. In the last few years it has dealt primarily with arts and crafts subjects with a few speakers who deal with timely subjects interspersed in the overall program. In years past, regular educational courses such as those that are held daily in the regular school programs have been included in the Peoples' College program.

Another feature in years gone by was the science fair in which all grades of the district schools displayed things they made and studies. As one writer said of the fair some years ago, "Everything was there from windmills which actually pump water to tomatoes grown in chemical solution."

An on-the-job training program also is included in the school's plans and citizens of Greenville may often find that clerks in stores and offices and many other job holders in the city are Parker High students working in local establishments while furthering their education.

The schools also cooperate with such programs as Boy Scouts, YMCA and YWCA clubs, and the like. Recreation for everyone is stressed throughout the year and once a year the schools in the district present an extravaganza on the high school athletic field that demonstrates various features of the school programs. This particular project has become one of the best-known, best-liked and most colorful features of the district. Thousands attend it each year.

The Parker program is wide spread. It is unique. There is little doubt that it affects lives of district residents in some way virtually every day

**Much of the credit for the amazing growth of the Parker school system and for its well-rounded program for adults and youngsters alike goes to Lawrence Peter Hollis, a Chester Count native who has spent most of his life in doing all he could for others.**

His influence in district circles is heavy and many attribute the rise of the district schools solely to his work. Actually it's hard to describe the work Mr. Hollis has carried on. In his own modest way, he has never been known to boost himself, but rather to encourage any good program that will tend to better the general welfare of Parker District folks.

Furman University paid him due honor during the 1948 commencement program when they conferred the L.I.D. Degree upon him for his splendid work in the district.

Mr. Hollis doesn't talk much about himself, but his work speaks for itself. Virtually anyone in the area knows of "Pete" Hollis and when his name is mentioned, they immediately think of the fine Parker schools and their able superintendent, Dr. L.P. Hollis.

By Harry Coggins - 1948