

The History of Bay Minette Elementary School

Present-day students at Bay Minette Elementary School enjoy the modern conveniences of electricity, indoor plumbing, school buses, air conditioning and computers. The early days of education in north Baldwin County were fascinating, and quite different, by our standards.

The very first students of our area were taught in homes around stagecoach lines. Children of wealthy families were educated in a rough log cabin using a recitation method called a "blab" school. The first public school in Bay Minette was a one-room schoolhouse built on the old Daphne Road. Children were taught here until the turn of the century.

After Bay Minette became the county seat, the school was moved to a new two-story building at what is now the Community Kids Park (Lee Smith Park). It contained six classrooms, a belfry room and a large auditorium. The massive bell in the cupola high above the building was reported to have taken twenty-five horses to lift into position, and many boasted that it could be heard for more than three miles on a clear day. Students began classes at this site in early 1903. School transportation began in 1924 when an eighth-grader drove a load of students in a Model-T Ford.

The present site of Bay Minette Elementary School (originally Bay Minette Grammar School), located on Blackburn Avenue, was opened September 11, 1929. It was built on the north end of the property where Baldwin County High School had been built in 1921. The new building had fourteen classrooms, an auditorium and a cafeteria. The classrooms were designed to accommodate 600 students in grades one through six. An article in the *Baldwin Times* (September 12, 1929) praised the opening of the new school: "This fine brick structure erected and equipped at a cost of approximately a hundred thousand dollars is a thing of pride, sincere and rightful pride, to all the people of this section. It is a magnificent edifice, wisely planned and well constructed, equal to the demands of the day and sufficient for the demands for several years to come."

Principals include R. L. Harris, P. M. Mason, Julian Newman, C. V. Daniels, W. R. "Pinky" Williams, O'Neal Messick, Grady Patrick, A. R. Rieben, Andy Schottgen, Beverly Faulkner, Steve Thomas and current principal Scott Langham.

Additions to the current site occurred in 1970, 1980 and 1984. The addition of kindergarten classes took place in 1981. In 1992 fourth and fifth grade classes were moved to the Bay Minette Intermediate School campus. Bay Minette Elementary School now serves kindergarten through third grade students with fifty classrooms, one media center, two computer labs, two cafeterias and an auditorium.

The rich and diverse history of Bay Minette Elementary School has created a tradition of providing a sound and meaningful foundation for young, eager minds. Our school has indeed been "sufficient for the demands for several years to come."

Compiled by Pam Hartner, March 19, 2001

Acknowledgements:

Many thanks to Ms. Shirley Matthews and Dr. Delores Cooper for their contributions to the history of our school.

six-room wing and annex. Once reopened, the facility expanded to 10 new classrooms, a library, modern cafeteria, gym and office space. Eight additional classes were recently created to better serve the 400 K-8 children attending the elementary and middle school site.

NORTH BALDWIN CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY

Situated in the hub of Bay Minette, the North Baldwin Center for Technology offers a broad range of technical education courses. Located at 505 W. Hurricane Road, the Vocational Center opened in the fall of 1971 with Mr. Byron M. Nall as its first administrator and counselor. At that time, students could choose from Power and Diesel Mechanics; Air Conditioning and Refrigeration; Radio-TV Electronics; and Horticulture and Floriculture, to name a few.

The Vocational Center was fortunate to have qualified faculty proficient in designing blueprints, as well as supervising the construction of several campus buildings. In 1981, Marketing/Distributive Education was added to the curriculum.

After 12 years as administrator, Mr. Nall retired in 1983. Upon his retirement, Mr. Thomas B. Rhodes, III, became the administrator and served until he was appointed Director of Vocational Education in 1991. Following many personnel changes, Mr. Clovise Parker stepped in as administrator in 1998. The center also employs a secretary, bookkeeper, 13 teachers, two aides and three maintenance personnel.

The Technical Center currently offers certification in 11 courses: Child Care and Elder Services; Marketing Education; Health Care Services Computer Electronics; Masonry; Building Construction; Manufacturing Technology; Automotive Technology; Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration; Cosmetology; and Landscape Technology.

Career Academics helps the career-bound student to strengthen their studies and overall learning experience. Impact Program, a non-traditional approach to earning a high school diploma, assists students in meeting the core requirements.

During 1998-99, "Vocational Education" was changed to "Career Technical Education."

BAY MINETTE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

As a response to accommodate the growing attendance of Bay Minette Elementary School, the county's Board of Education members went forward with plans to create a sister facility. Established November 1991, Bay Minette Intermediate School provides instruction to the area's 4 and 5 classes. Its elementary pioneer continues as a K through 3 site.

A year after the board split the schools, the Intermediate facility was relocated to its current location on Shedrick Hardy Parkway, once the site of the reintegration Douglasville High School and late Bay Minette Middle School. The new Intermediate serves students from three North Baldwin community elementary schools – Bay Minette, Pine Grove and Vaughn.

STAPLETON SCHOOL

Located about 10 miles south of its Bay Minette neighbor, Stapleton is a growing rural community. County Highway 59 (State Highway 31) divides the community into two sections.

Because Stapleton was developed as a farming and timberland community, homes were spread out over a large area.

Many of the timberland estates were recently subdivided and sold to small-business markets, with the remaining parcels being purchased by families. This phenomenon prompted a growth trend in the Stapleton community. Two subdivisions are presently in the construction.

Opportunities for daycare/preschool in Stapleton are limited. However, a small home daycare recently opened. Most working parents must transport their children to other areas if a relative is unable to care for them. Because of the distance, many children entering school have no prior preschool experience.

Stapleton School is situated on Baldwin Avenue just two blocks east of County Road 59. The campus is bordered on three sides by the Methodist Church, Baptist Church and Community Park.

The first school in Stapleton was established in 1892. During its lifetime, it had been moved four times. The last time it was relocated to a more central location. Land was donated and the community raised \$434.10 to construct a painted-white, wooden two-room school. Originating in 1912, the present school is located on the same campus. A wooden cafeteria now serves as the library.

In the 1940's, a brick building with two classrooms and indoor restrooms, was added. Later, the campus was expanded by an additional brick structure, consisting of six classrooms, an office and restrooms. Also at this time, the original brick building was renovated and became the present cafeteria. The latest addition took place in 1997 with the addition of six classrooms and a gym. This included additional office space and expanded cafeteria seating.

Stapleton School presently serves 164 K-6 grade students. The facility's grounds contain 10 classrooms, two resource rooms, a library, computer lab, gym and cafeteria.

BAY MINETTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The residents who settled the areas of north Baldwin County during the late 1800's did not forget to plant the seeds of education. Roots of the area's public school system were first sprung amid a surrounding wilderness. The physical site was often sparse, and children were generally taught in homes that bordered stagecoach lines.

A single-room schoolhouse established along Old Daphne Road became the area's first public school, where children received lessons until the turn-of-the-century when Bay Minette became the County Seat. The education center was then moved to a two-story building, now the site of Community Kids' Park (Lee Smith Park).

In 1903, students began attending classes in the six-room facility, which also contained a belfry and large auditorium. The massive bell in the cupola high above the building was reported to have taken 25 horses to lift into position, and many boasted that it could be heard for more than three miles on a clear day. School transportation began in 1924 when an 8th-grader drove a load of students to class in a Model-T Ford.

The present site of Bay Minette Elementary School (originally Bay Minette Grammar School), located on Blackburn Avenue, was opened September 11, 1929. Built on the north end of the grounds where the former Baldwin County High School had operated eight years earlier, the new site consist-

March 22, 1973

Fourth Grade Students Tour Faulkner State College



Miss Autry's Fourth Grade Class

Shown are members of Miss Autry's class at James H. Faulkner State Junior College; l. to r. front row: Wanda S. Carter, Monica J. Langham, O'Dell Caldwell, Angela K. Morgan. Second row: Eric Weeks, Marvin Hamilton, Margaret Bishop, Wanda Stevens. Third row: Arthur Williams, John B. Hastings, Robert McMillian, Mary E. Whiddon, David James. Fourth row: Tammy Thompson, Karen White,

Jonathan M. Thompson, Terry Boyington, Margarette Dickens. Fifth row: Lisha Palmer, Beverly M. Clepton, Pamela Burgan, Barbara Jackson, Ricky Adams, David B. Plato. Sixth row: Lori Benton, Alan McDonald, Floyd T. Middleton, Greg Long. Seventh row: Mrs. Sally Thompson, Miss K. V. Autry, and Mrs. Ruby McDonald. Not shown are Tony Wright and Betty J. Jenkins.

Two classes of Bay Minette Elementary School students enjoyed a tour of Faulkner State Junior College recently, led by their teachers, Mrs. Sue Owen and Miss Kisiah V. Autry, along with three parents, Mrs. Ruby McDonald, Mrs. Sally Thompson, and Mrs. Faye Scarborough.

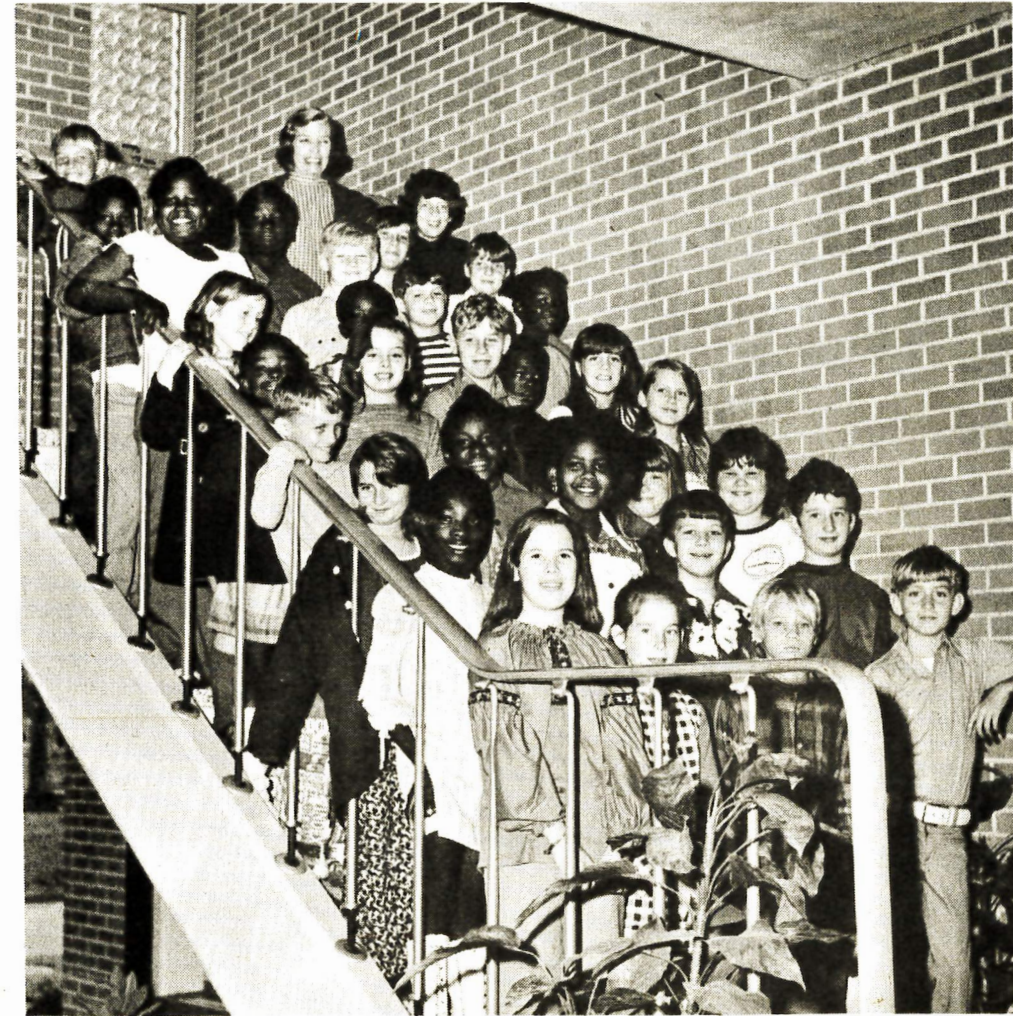
The class had recently completed a study of rocks, minerals and Alabama History.

The children were warmly greeted by Mrs. Charlotte James as they arrived by bus. Serving as guides were Mrs. Charlotte James and Miss Jane Riggs. After going through the administration building, they were taken to the college cafeteria and served punch.

From there they went to the library, where they had a chance to see many varieties of rocks and minerals, the old Baldwin County Court House, from 1901-1911 and one copy of the old Baldwin Times, and many other historical sites.

The children were greatly inspired from this tour to do a better job in their subject matter and several stated after returning to school that they would like to attend James H. Faulkner State Junior College.

The teachers and students would like to express their appreciation to Dr. Sibert and staff for furnishing transportation to and from the college, and for making the tour a success.



Mrs. Owens Fourth Graders

Shown above, left to right: First row: Rene Lyles, Donald Hicks, Thomas Long; Second row: Brenda Biggs, Ben Tidwell, Danny Ellis; Third row: Mittie Johnson, Donna Stevenson, Rita Diedtrick, Carol Roberts; Fourth row: Natalie Scarborough, Bobby Williams, Yvonne Bush, Lisa Howell; Fifth row: Kenneth Sprinkle, Julia Paul, Tim Bankster, Alonzo Tate, Peggy Burt;

Sixth row: Deborah Robbins, Curtis Wright, Jeff Plato, Mary Cooks; Seventh row: Sharon Trawick, Charles Bramlett, Michael Akins, Rex Howell; Eighth row: Bernadette Moore, Greg Williams, Keith McDonald; Ninth row: Allen Jackson; Tenth row: Rodney James, Mrs. Owen.

BAY MINETTE MIDDLE SCHOOL

1000 Track Street
Bay Minette, Alabama 36507

August 26, 1981

Dear Fellow Educators,

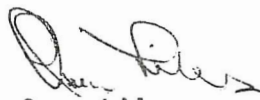
On the morning of February 10, 1981, a tornado struck the Bay Minette Middle School. It caused extensive damage and numerous injuries though only two children were hurt seriously. The storm struck so suddenly, no warning was given to teachers or students. Prior training and instinctive reactions as well as God Almighty prevented any deaths. Later everyone was amazed that many were not killed due to the extensive collapsed walls and roofs where 600 of the 900 enrolled were housed. Wings of the building housing 300 students were lightly damaged.

Two days later at the first faculty meeting all teachers were asked to write his/her personal account of the storm. Later other staff members and students accounts of the tornado were added. People in each area of this 15 acre campus had different experiences. Except for lights going out, some hardly realized a storm had occurred. Central coordination ceased to exist for a time and mass confusion appeared to reign amid virtual total destruction. Yet many good things were happening. People helping people.

Two of the teachers and I have taken excerpts from each story and connected all into a continuous narrative of the events of that morning. The story is a jumbled mass of thoughts and observations apparently with no beginning and no ending. This is the way that day was, and the story written in that manner accurately reflects the situation then.

I hope your school will never experience a disaster of any kind. Be assured, however, the best of all peoples character surfaces in times when the need is greatest. We thank you for your many acts of support in our time of need. Best of luck for a good school year.

Sincerely,



Owen Liles

TORNADO

February 10, 1981 wasn't just an ordinary school day. The weather was bad....

Rain slashed against the windows...this cold, dark winter day...coming down now in torrents...a terrific roaring, children screaming, the roof falling, cement blocks crashing...utter darkness...the lights had fallen on a student...near hysteria...minutes crawled like snakes...a fireman...ambulances...go to buses...in the back...leave all possessions...go immediately...warmer on the buses.... "Where are we going?" ...shivering with damp and cold, the students plodded down the long corridors of the high school...knowing that death had been very close...a quiet spot in the hall...high school students and faculty members gazed...with shock and compassion. With the taste of dirt in her mouth, hair streaming in her face and tears blinding her eyes, this teacher...taken home...the kindness of a friend.

Before I could make one step to close it, the door flew off just as if a supernatural force had done it. My arms were just not big enough to hold all the children...by that time the room was coming apart...the lights went out...Even now I can hear the voice of Melissa N____ close by my desk, calling my name as the wind raged around us. I told them to let go of me so I could look out of the window to see how things were. They wouldn't so we all went over to see what had happened.

As soon as things stopped falling students began creeping out from beneath their desks...sirens began to scream. When the rescue workers came to our room we discovered we were barricaded in...screaming parents were dashing across the campus searching for their children.

I said "Hit the floor." Where did they hit the floor? Behind my desk, under the table and along the inside wall under and all around me. Believe it or not they were calm and quiet for the moment. I crawled to the door and peeked out the small window. I was horrified at the scene I saw. We all went down on our knees and covered our heads with our hands. I felt weak and had to concentrate on controlling tears...I felt so inadequate...the lights went out. My son was in a room that had been destroyed. This room is located directly across from mine. He watched and waited for my classroom door to open. He said that he was so afraid that my door could never open.

Because of the bad weather my reading class got off to a slow start. The students were restless—and so was I. Being in new surroundings, I was desperately trying to remember if there was a tree near our room that was bound to....

At about this time a wooden block flew through one of our windows....The horrendous roaring had ceased and we could hear the wind and the rain.

Jean made the comment that it looked like tornado weather and we discussed where to take the students if we had one. We also tried to tell S _____ B _____ where she would be safest if one hit.

About that time the sky turned a sickly shade of green and I strongly stated, "Move NOW." They came across the desks and got against the wall behind me. They pulled each other down and across desks but all were down and protected when the blow came...and the lights went out.... They checked on themselves and each other.

One of my students who had left with his father ran back to ask me to please not get into my car since there was a power line on top of it. Also that it was now totally without windows!.....

...glanced out my classroom door and saw a cloud in the west that was as black as night and the wind began to pick up and limbs were flying across the roof making terrible noises....crouched down around me. They wanted to be touching me...the lights went out...

I saw Mr. K____ coming up the hall followed by children crying, limping, bleeding and wet.

...pressure in my ears caused them to pain me and the lights went out.... At this point the roof of the building started to lift off until about 14 or 16 feet had been torn off. The walls and the floor of the room were trembling and everything was over....at that moment I knew a tornado was coming. I didn't see it or hear a train roaring...I just knew. I remember telling the students.... "Hit the floor!"

...the worst time for me was when I knew I had to see if everyone was still alive. As we stood there with it raining on us one student asked, "Do we have to pay for our books?"

...three of my homeroom students came running to me in their P.E. clothes, barefoot, wet and shivering from the rain. They told me that many of the students were lying under bricks in the gym.

The first warning we had was when our cafeteria roof ripped off with concrete slabs, glass, water, rocks and tar falling all over us...we got under tables...lying in water and glass. Our school looked like several bombs had dropped on it.

The complete blackness was as frightening as the wind....

The parents started to run into the school looking for their children. One of the students held a flashlight for me while we checked schedule cards to tell parents what rooms their children were in when the storm hit.

One man hyperventilated when he was unable to find his son...we thought he was having a heart attack...upset...difficult to tell whether they were seriously injured...cooperated in helping load ambulances and later in loading uninjured students onto buses.

...weather had gotten increasingly inclement...pulled down shades to keep from seeing it...reminded students what to do in case of a tornado... even walked through the procedure of going to the wall away from the

windows and crouching...heard the roar...shouted...run to the wall... stayed there...eternity...as I looked up to pull him down the ceiling and roof were being blown away...concrete was falling in the room...I didn't sleep that night.

...saw the sky getting unusually black...five minutes later the lights went out...felt a strange sort of pressure.

Shortly after the last substitute teacher had been hired for the day I began receiving calls from parents and students wanting to know if school would operate as usual. One of the callers was from the radio station... learned that my blase, "Of course, why not?" answer had been broadcast. Weather department...conditions favorable for tornados...nine buses late. Announced...homeroom later in the day when more accurate count could be made...mistake...last buses around 8:30...returned to office...come check the weather...hurried to intercom to sound the alert...lights went out...covered my head...on floor...building shuddering, glass breaking...seemed to stop...looked at gym.... H_____ to call fire department and ambulances...ran to gym...scene was fearsome. T_____ J_____ lying on floor...a large pool of blood...carotid artery...alive...account for all students...working on pile of rubble at south wall...Fred _____ ...hurt...having convulsion...met incoming ambulances...get the two boys... returned to office...try to bring order out of chaos...remove all students to high school...phone was working...calls arrived from TV station...still concerned...someone trapped...systematic search...S_____ H_____...discovered ...back injury...left campus in wrecked truck...hospital check on injured ...orderly confusion...returned to school...began...long 40 hours... combating rumors...making plans for reopening school...Thank God...no deaths.

...students...very restless...pulled the window shades...got very dark... objects began moving...the lights went out...midst of a storm...get under desks and tables...so many students already there I had no room...raised one window shade...see broken tree limbs...downed wires...opened door... realized we were in real trouble...tree limbs in library door...moving down corridor toward office...Mrs. L_____ came stumbling down the corridor saying she needed help in her room...saw condition...felt sick...students crying and comforting each other. Many students..bleeding..some hurt arms and legs...no roof on room...decided to move students to V's room... helped one another as we stumbled through the debris...applied paper towels ...anything else we could get...load buses to high school.

...the roof started to come off...get down...unable to get out of the room because the door was blocked...then I saw my car...knew we were blessed to be alive...took us home...worried all day about the other students.

...turned what should have been a day of celebration...our daughter's 14th birthday...into a nightmare...the lights went out....

...the arrival of parents, friends, family members, policemen, ambulances and news reporters added to...pandemonium...haunt many of us every time the lights go out....

...said "Today would be a good day to know about tornado drills." ...feel the tension in the air...knew this was the dreaded tornado...the belly crawl trying to get under the desk...children crying and moaning...nails in their feet and glass in their hair...one look at the gym...felt my heart sink...ran to see...never felt so helpless...my arms weren't big enough to hold all the children...asked me if I was scared...there just wasn't time...got home...a complete basket case.

He was reaching for the intercom when the tornado hit and glass started coming in from all the windows...I remember that one foot was sticking out and I drew it under the desk thinking that steel beams might fall from overhead and break my foot...saw Mr. L. running for the front door...yelled...our gym...call the fire department...looked for my glasses ...read me the fire department number...called...then police...Coach C. came running in...get all the ambulances...called the Board of Education ...send some help.... By this time...students bleeding and hurt filling the office...first aid the best we could...got R. P. to apply pressure to his head for me...the most welcome sight in my life...three Bay Minette police cars...Mr. V. was bringing students who were hurt into the office...he was carrying them in his arms...pass the word for all students not hurt...walk carefully...bus parking lot...get on buses ...looked for school megaphone...couldn't find it...started the word...parents...she used a flashlight...gave room numbers and directions to parents. Mr. C. brought money from canteen...asked for umbrella to hold over Sarah H. until the ambulance could get her...raincoat...locked money in safe...without help except each other for 15 minutes. I know now tornado drills are helpful. Another thing...remember...before buses left...phones out and yet a call got through from a New York newspaper and TV station...after the tornado...men from Weather Bureau came to school ...told us...tornado never showed up on Mobile radar nor on National Weather radar...New Orleans...our tornado born right here...no way they could have warned us....

...accounted for every student except one...ten minutes of searching...found...he had escaped to girls dressing room...safe.

...I drive a school bus...working in the little school store...so bad decided to turn on radio...so much static...about that time I saw it...ran to open the door...flew open and knocked me back...didn't know anything for a while...came to myself...the top was gone...hear the children crying...began to pray....

...8:20 A.M. getting to the gym to open the doors...noticed the weather was getting worse...heard loud noise...looked toward roof...yelled at the children to run...ran into me and knocked me down...looking over my right shoulder...the wall ballooning in...one boy hurt with another pulling at him...not to move him...another child hurt...not to be moved either...check on injuries in dressing room...the canteen...found Mrs. H. lying on the floor...my raincoat...to check for injuries in the classroom...people arriving from everywhere...for someone to go through one of these and not believe...is unthinkable.

...Tuesday morning, February 10, 1981...raining so hard...thought about waiting in the car...slackened...make a run for it...brilliant decision...bell rang...excited...students drifted in...excitement turned to apprehension...eyebrows raised and eyes...widened...no one said a word...shades pulled...grew darker and darker...like night...the lights went out...get under desk...cover heads...by this time things were falling in around us...prayer...things stopped falling...shock...began reliving with each other what they had just experienced...sirens...barricaded in...cement slabs against our door...cleared a path to our door...doorknob blown out...searched frantically...located half the doorknob...were led outside...our first good look at the destruction...students began to cry...some of our friends injured...no one killed...surveyed teachers parking area...not a window unshattered...every car.

...I felt the coolness on my back...looked around...the wall had been blown out...ceiling began to fall...the wind shifted my desk and chair...ran to storage room...ceiling fell in front of me...looking at tin and tree limbs flying...roof caved in...insulation fell over me...could not see...glasses had fogged up...calm until I saw W _____ D _____ ...using the phone holding a bloody towel to his head.

One student came to school just because her mother told her not to. She was in here calling her mother to come out in this awful weather to pick her up...the phone rang...a lady from Stockton wanting to know if we were going to let school out...the phone...popping and cracking...the windows...began to break...it is over... Andrea jumped up and ran to room 6...couldn't get into room...debris piled against the door...looked into window...students standing together...they were okay. I called Andrea's name and she answered me...we started trying to piece our school back together...started going to the rooms looking for roll books and registers...stayed and worked and answered questions all afternoon...soaking wet...chilled...finally got a ride home.

...we have some macabre memories of the tornado. ...for a few seconds, which seemed like hours...

...our parents came and got us. The ordeal was over.

...I kept on feeling that something bad was going to happen.

...I was blown across the gym lobby...the pressure blew me....

...he had blood all over him...a nightmare that will haunt me forever.

The weather was strange...it was unusually hot...I noticed it was getting darker...I saw the flag on the wall start to shake, I didn't have time to run. ...the next thing I knew I was picking myself up off the floor.

...there was a warm kinda hot wind blowing...it was dark outside. ...the sky was dark...it was real dark. ...you can't explain the noise.

...a piece of a tree flew in from behind and fell on top of my head and I pushed it off with my hands. ...rescue men were searching...trying to find everybody.

...I know it was God who kept us safe and not luck. ...the wind was sucking her out the door...still have nightmares. ...I was all right, just scared.

...my ears started popping...I knew something destructive was happening. ...the basketball goal flying through the air. ...in a time like that it is good to have close friends!

...the wind knocked me down... The wind was so strong it was pushing me out across the gym floor. ...it hit...the wall started coming toward us...I just stood there, watching...I was just standing there...I saw that thing... tornado. I was relieved to see my mother, father, and sister.

...we were piled up like a stack of books...I thought, my God, this can't be happening...bloody towels were under a student. ...it was darker than usual...the lights went out.

...buses took us to the high school to wait for our parents...of all places to put us they put us in the gym. The gym now!

...it was dark...I saw a white wind coming toward our room...glass shattered and the roof was moving.

It was my turn to do something, when my ears started popping. We all heard a rumbling sound from the end of the gym where the flag was. I was froze not knowing what to do, or what was happening.... I remember praying that the Lord would save us all from this horrible nightmare. There was a tree in front of her door.... "She was hit on the head with one of the big bricks that was in the ceiling."

I slipped down on my back and a flying brick hit me in the leg.

Everyone started running, screaming, and crying. I thought it was the end of the world. ...looking at our demolished school which would never be the same because of the memories there.

Well, the lockers started to shake but at first we did not pay any attention to it. The second time it did it Ms. M jumped out of her chair and said "Oh, God" and ran out of the office to tell the girls to get out of there. ...the gym wall was rolling down toward us, every one was hollering, crying, praying, and screaming for Mama and Daddy.

When my mother found me she was crying and glad to see me.

I then crawled in between the bleachers and waited for what seemed an eternity and I kept saying "this has to be a nightmare" ...when it was over I realized I had lost my glasses. ...we never have found them. It has been a couple of months since then but I can still remember the day as clearly right now as then, and it haunts me in every storm that comes.

Mrs. R picked us up. She seemed very afraid. I looked up the basketball goal and flag was shaking. Then I heard a loud sound like a bomb exploding.

It was a dreary day in February... The weather was so bad they held some buses at high school and kept us in our homeroom's for several minutes longer. I remember looking up and seeing the big flag on the wall moving... My Aunt took me to the Bay Minette Infirmary and it was full of students like me with cuts, bruises, and some in shock. After they X-rayed me they put me in a room and I saw one of my closest friends Paul Everitt. It was good to know he was alright. I will never forget this terrible experience on Tuesday, February 10, 1981.

Earl O _____ had two blocks on his leg... The tornado had blown the doorknob clear out.

When it was over, I thought it had only hit the gym but we looked out and it had hit the whole school.

...the wall began to breathe in and out like someone sucking it in and out...the flag started waving, everybody started to stare and no one could move...just stare, then the flag fell and bricks started to pop out of the wall...wall collapsed.

There were two boys who were badly injured...fence up in trees and on top of Mrs. W _____ room. Now today, I still think about that day when there is bad weather.

Bay Minette High School

The old Daphne Road was the first location of Bay Minette High School, now prosperous for over 100 years. Before the site was built, the only form of education to be found in the Bay Minette area was located out of a private home on Railroad Street. The first public school building was a simple one-room schoolhouse that burned down only a year after opening. Soon a two-room building, that quickly became three, was built on the same land to replace the previous school.

Bay Minette High School moved once again to where the town park is presently located in the spring of 1902. Mr. J.D. Hand provided the land and the building for the new school. This seemingly immaculate building contained six classrooms, a belfry room, and a large auditorium. The belfry room eventually became a useful music room. The population of the school was rather small and some of the community wondered whether the large building was actually necessary.

The first graduating class of this facility, also known as the "Pioneers of 1904," consisted of only three members. This was common for the next several years since dropping out of school was so easy to do at the time.

The school population did eventually outgrow even this facility and was moved to the corner of Blackburn Avenue and Fifth Street in 1921, where it is still currently located. At the time of the move, the school had eight classrooms and an auditorium to accommodate its enrollment of 132 pupils, out of which the graduating class was sixteen.

The classroom area of the facility had doubled by 1929, allowing for the seventh and eighth grades to enjoy the larger school as well. Therefore, the intermediate school was less crowded and the need for additions to the building was met.

In 1924, Bay Minette saw the need for a transportation system. Unfortunately, the school could not properly start one up at the time. The school transportation organization began with an eighth grade girl driving a model-T Ford from Red Hill each day and bringing with her a load of students. Fortunately, this mode of carpooling only lasted one year and the next the county provided and operated a small home-made bus that drove to the elementary school from around the community. This system was followed for many years although the number of buses has been steadily increasing ever since. In 1953, there were thirteen buses transporting about 772 students from the northern part of the county to and from the elementary school as well as the high school.

The auditorium has been used since 1953 as a high school study hall to keep up with the enrollment of 1,430 students. Bay Minette High School has adjusted well to the quickly growing population of the area. The school has continued providing for the pupils within its community since the early days of Bay Minette and will go on providing for the educational needs of the students in Bay Minette neighborhoods.