

Maryville City Schools History

The public school system was established in 1900 with the purchase by the City of Maryville of the Quaker School on the Pride Mansion property. Pride Mansion stood at the present site of Maryville Municipal Building. A special school district was set up for the 9th and 19th districts one mile from the courthouse (which stood where First Tennessee Bank is now). County funds were to be allotted to the district based on the average daily attendance.

Maryville ran a public school in the old Pride Mansion and the adjoining dormitory buildings until a bond issue of 1909 provided money to build West Side School on the Pride Mansion grounds and East Side School on the David Jones property in east Maryville. Both schools, three story structures, were built in 1911. The schools were operated by principals under the supervision of school directors.

In 1913, Maryville established the first high school in Blount County. The high school was on the East Side (now Fort Craig) campus. In 1919 the first class graduated from Maryville High and the same year, it was accepted as a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. In a 1965 edition of The Daily Times, this was described as " an almost unheard of procedure, to reach membership so quickly."

In 1927, the high school was moved to the present campus and a junior high was soon established at the same site. The campus contained approximately 10 acres. East Side was renamed Fort Craig in 1928, in honor of Craig's Fort which stood two blocks northwest in the 1700's and was the fort where settlers lived while establishing Maryville.

W. J. Hale School located on McGhee Street was built in the early 1930s with Rosenwald and Carnegie Fund money. Part of the labor was furnished by WPA and PWA, two federal relief agencies during depression years. The Hale School replaced the T. B. Lillard School, built about 1910 on what is now Harper Avenue.

In 1938, the old Maryville High Building, that had been first Freedman's Institute, then Maryville Polytechnic and last Maryville High, was razed and a new building built on the opposite side of the

campus. A new gymnasium was built in the 50s and a science wing was added in 1964.

Sam Houston Elementary School, built on Melrose Street, replaced West Side in 1953. Fort Craig School was re-built in 1954 on its original location. Maryville Junior High School moved to Montvale Station Road in 1956 and became Maryville Middle School in the early 1980s. Hale School and Maryville High School combined in 1966. In response to growth in the city, John Sevier Elementary School was opened in 1968 and Foothills Elementary in 1995.

Although much of the character of the Maryville's school buildings has been retained, extensive additions and renovations have enlarged and improved the middle school, high school, Fort Craig and Sam Houston over the years. Through a strategic planning process initiated in 1988, the Maryville City Board of Education developed a long-term technology plan. The Maryville City Council established technology as a city priority in 1991 through the establishment of a special technology fund supported by a three-percent property tax allocation. Since then, technology has become an integral part of the system through the combined support of the board of education, the city council, the Maryville City Schools Foundation and community support of school fund-raising efforts. The Maryville City Schools Foundation was initiated by the Board of Education in 1991 and is now operated by a Board of Directors consisting of parents and other community leaders.

Through all the changes some things in Maryville City Schools are constant. Larry Brown concluded in his history of Maryville High School: "Throughout the history of our city, concerned citizens have insisted on the betterment of education in Maryville, and, thus, an outstanding learning program was established, and Maryville students became leaders in the state in test scores, contests, classroom performance and athletic programs."

This is the source of our pride in Maryville today, and our challenge for its future.

"Today's educational pursuit of excellence in the City of Maryville is an offspring of diligent labor, dedicated officials, and public support. From its beginnings in Maryville at the turn of this century with a handful of teachers and students to the present, the cultivation of knowledge and potential has been top priority in Maryville." - Larry Brown, Class of 1985.