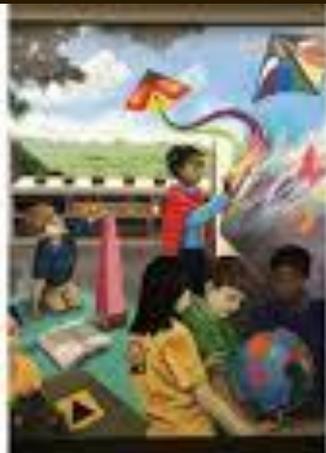


History of Murray-LaSaine

MURRAY LASAINE ELEMENTARY 2017-18





Cut Bridge Elementary

The wood-frame building known as Cut Bridge Elementary School was located on Riverland Drive on James Island and served the 2,500 black residents of the island. The school was moved down the road, rebuilt, and renamed Murray-LaSaine Elementary School in the 1960s in honor of Principal Albertha J. Murray and Dr. M. Alice LaSaine, supervisor of black schools in Charleston County.



Along with Three Trees and Society Corner, Cut Bridge was one of James Island's first public schools for African Americans following the Civil War. Thanks to the efforts of African American politicians during Reconstruction, South Carolina began establishing free public schools for all of the state's children, both Black and White.

However, segregation and discrimination during the Jim Crow era would create profound inequities in education and much more, yet generations of Black students attended Cut Bridge, at times crossing through floodwaters or high tide.

In 1927, Albertha Johnston Murray was hired as principal of the five-room school, a post she would hold for nearly 30 years.

ALBERTHA JOHNSTON MURRAY



Civic organizing reinforced such approaches and further refined activists' sensibilities about how to get things done. "Women in public life must learn to listen to everybody's opinion," Albertha Johnston Murray, an elementary school teacher, PSTA member, clubwoman, and contemporary of Clark's, advised. "They must never be prejudiced or dogmatic, they must keep an open mind, and when they have listened and know what they think themselves, they must have the courage to stand by that."⁹⁵ Becoming a clubwoman im-

ALBERTHA JOHNSTON MURRAY

- Born on October 26, 1889 in Charleston
- She was educated at Claflin High School and attended Claflin University as a Normal school student, graduating in 1909.
- In 1949, Murray received her B.S. in Education from the State Agricultural and Mechanical College, Orangeburg, SC.
- She married Richard Gailliard Murray and had one daughter, Hazel Stewart.
- Murray taught at numerous private and public schools in Charleston County.
- In 1927, Murray was hired as principal at Cut Bridge Elementary School on James Island, remaining there for thirty two years.
- Murray's insistence prompted the renovation and expansion of the original five room school.
- In 1955, a new school was built named Murray-LaSaine Elementary School, which bore her name and Dr. Mary Alice LaSaine's, former supervisor of black schools in Charleston County.
- In 1959, she retired from the teaching profession.
- Murray remained active in numerous educational, social, and humanitarian organizations.



Murray-LaSaine Elementary

In 1955, due to Murray's insistence during the School Equalization Program, an attempt on the part of Whites to better equip Black schools yet keep them segregated, Murray-LaSaine Elementary School was opened nearby. It continues to bear the name of Albertha Johnston Murray as well as Dr. Mary Alice LaSaine, former supervisor of Negro Schools in Charleston County.

DR. MARY ALICE LASAINE



DR. MARY ALICE LASAINE

- Born September 22nd 1886 (probably 1883) as Mary Alice Person
- She's listed as a teacher on the 1900 census in Weldon at only 17 years of age
- Earned a scholarship to Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia; graduating in 1904.
- Mary Alice Person taught at Penn School on Saint Helena Island in South Carolina
- Worked as a county education supervisor in Gloucester County Schools in Virginia.
- She married Thomas LaSaine and had two boys; Herman and Thomas Jr.
- After moving to Charleston in 1917, Mary Alice LaSaine soon become appointed the first black superintendent of black schools in Charleston, South Carolina.
- She held that position for 39 years.
- Under her watch, she helped reorganize the district and helped to develop a transportation system for children to get to school.
- In 1955, Mary Alice LaSaine was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Humanities
from Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina.
- Her headstone reads: "The End And The Reward Of Toil, Is Rest."



Transitioning to Montessori

circa 2015

Traditional to Montessori

- In 2013, CCSD began to transition Murray-LaSaine from a traditional school to a public Montessori school.
- Renovations began on the building and staff and students conducted classes at the swing space on the Stiles Point Elementary campus.
- The existing Murray LaSaine Elementary School was built in 1956. Due to the aging building and infrastructure, the school was slated to be renovated to meet current 21st-century learning environment and to support the conversion of the school into a Montessori program.
- Renovations included a full interior remodel, new roof, windows, and entry. Whole systems were upgraded throughout the building including a new HVAC system to allow for individual controls for every classroom. The design for the facility encompassed incorporating Montessori's deep reverence for the natural world by the use of wood, natural light, and earth-toned color pallet
- In 2015, Murray-LaSaine ran dual tracks, with traditional classrooms for Kindergarten-fifth grade and Montessori Primary, Lower Elementary, and Upper Elementary classrooms.
- In 2020, Murray-LaSaine became full Montessori and was officially renamed "Murray-LaSaine Montessori" reflecting our new model and age span of 3K through grade 8.



Murray-LaSaine Montessori

MLMS 2025+

- Today, Murray-LaSaine Montessori serves nearly 350 students ranging in age from 3 to 15, or grades 3K through 8.
 - Primary: 3K, 4K, Kindergarten
 - Lower Elementary: Grades 1, 2, 3
 - Upper Elementary: Grades 4, 5, 6
 - Adolescent: Grades 7 & 8
- Our teachers hold both state certification and Montessori credentials
- We are partners in the work of public Montessori with five other CCSD schools:
 - Montessori Community (West Ashley)
 - Frierson (Johns Island)
 - Hursey (North Charleston)
 - James Simons (Downtown Charleston)
 - East Cooper Montessori (Mt. Pleasant)