

## SUMNER'S HISTORY

Charles Sumner High School, now located between Goode and Pendleton on Cottage Avenue, in St. Louis, is named for one of the great statesmen of the Civil War period. Charles Sumner was an ardent worker for the enfranchisement of the Negro, and also one of the first to advocate civil service reform.

Sumner High School was established in 1867 as District School Number Three, located at Fifth and Lombard Streets, and later at Tenth and Chambers Streets. Mr. A. C. Clayton served as principal of District School Number Three until 1875, when he became principal of this school, which in the future was to be known as Sumner High School. He remained principal of Sumner until 1879.

In the beginning Sumner was housed in a building at Eleventh and Spruce Streets, and in September, 1896, at Fifteenth and Walnut Streets. During the autumn of 1910, the Board of Education opened the present building for the Negro youth of this city. It was a well-equipped, modern new building, and was the first of its kind west of the Mississippi river. Sumner has always participated with other high schools in worthy civic projects. Among such efforts may be mentioned participation in the Columbian Concert, Relief of the 1896 tornado sufferers, the Preparedness Parade; exhibits at the 1900 Paris World's Fair; and a very extensive exhibit in the Louisiana Purchase World's Fair.

From the resignation of Mr. A. C. Clayton in 1879, until the death of Mr. Oscar Waring in 1908, Sumner was in charge of the latter gentleman. Under his scholarly regime the students received the classical training which high schools of that period afforded. During the years 1908-1929, Sumner was administered by Mr. Frank L. Williams, who rendered excellent service to the school. Since 1929 the school has been under the administration of Mr. George Dennis Brantley, who has always kept

up with the current trends in education, thus serving Sumner with great foresightedness.

A few years after World War II, Sumner's enrollment increased to such an extent that it seemed impossible to house the students, so in January of 1952 Sumner was relieved of some of its overcrowded condition when the Board of Education transferred the Bates School, located at 1912 Prairie Avenue, into a ninth grade center for Sumner High School pupils. The school was known as the Sumner High School Branch. This temporary relief was welcomed. Mr. L. V. Williams, one of the assistant principals, was placed in charge of the building. Mr. Claude H. Harper was made assistant principal at Sumner to take over the duties vacated by Mr. Williams. Mr. John E. Anderson, Sr., assistant principal, continued in his same capacity. Mr. Brantley, in his very efficient manner, supervised both buildings.

The Bond Issue of 1951 made it possible for Sumner to have an addition constructed adjacent to its old building. The ground-breaking occurred during the spring of 1952, the cornerstone laying on May 18, 1954 and its dedication on June 13, 1955. The new addition consists of an auditorium seating 1700, a cafeteria accommodating 1000, gymnasiums and dressing rooms, and a swimming pool. The old auditorium was converted into a spacious library, and the boys' and girls' gymnasium into a commercial center and language center respectively. The old lunchroom was converted into an English center which contains a radio workshop. These changes did much to improve the conditions which previously existed.

Mr. Claude H. Harper retired in 1956 and was replaced by Mr. John A. Nelson in September 1956. Mr. John E. Anderson, Sr., retired in 1957 and was replaced by his son, Mr. John E. Anderson, Jr., in September, 1957. In September of 1959, Mr. John E. Anderson, Jr., was sent to Soldan High School as Assistant Principal and Mr. Frederick P. Blair came to Sumner to serve as Assistant Principal.

Sumner's registration in October, 1959, was 1794. Her total graduates from 1865 to 1929 was 2114, and from 1929 to 1959, 8759, making a grand total of 10,873.

Sumner is proud of the influence she has had in the community by the attainment of her alumni, which include business and professional men and women of national and international fame, and worthy citizens in every walk of life. We hope that each student will aspire to such goals.