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Closing Program At Bannaker School

The final school closing of Bannaker Elementary school, Parkville, and a reunion of all classes, 1881 to 1959, is to be held on Saturday, May 23.

On that date, the red brick school on the hill at 1100 West street will see the end of its use as a school for the west side community of Parkville. Since the 1880's, Negro boys and girls have entered its door to learn the 3 R's.

The school was first located in a building at 307 West 6th street, that is now the home of Mrs. Emma Williams. The McAfee's, early founders of Park College, took an active interest in the school and the children who attended.

In the early years of 1900 a new structure was built at 1100 West St. by the late banker and contractor, Patrick Breen. The building has two rooms and for many decades two teachers taught as many as 75 pupils within its walls.

As the Negro population left Parkville for better work opportunities, the school enrollment has decreased until this year, Mrs. Laura Mae Merritt, present teacher, has only 16 pupils. Integration started in 1956 on the high school level. Total integration becomes effective in September, 1959.

An all-classes reunion program and picnic is planned for Saturday, May 23, from 12 noon to 7 p.m. A program at 2 o'clock will include numbers by the present students, talks by former teachers and music from the alumni. A covered dish dinner will be served from 4 to 7.

Arrangements are being made by the school PTA and the community. Mrs. Clifford Pearl is chairman of the PTA.

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