In September 1900, Alexandria County opened the original Mount Vernon School on this property to educate children up to the 8th grade. In spite of continual expansion, crowding was always a problem. By 1932, it was necessary to rent the bank building at 2401 Mount Vernon Ave. for classroom space. In 1935, the Mount Vernon School took over the former George Mason High School building next door and operated both school buildings. In 1968, the former high school was completely renovated and expanded, and the original Mount Vernon School building was demolished to make way for the current playground. The schools were all white, as there were no African Americans in the town in the 1920s. The few blacks in the surrounding areas were sent to Alexandria’s African American schools, and the county paid their tuition.

Mount Vernon School is seen here in 1907 from approximately this vantage point. At that time, the faculty consisted of just two teachers. The second floor was a single room and served as a snow hall, but the building was extended to the rear and a portion added to the front in 1900. For the 1900-1910 school year, the faculty consisted of principal James Rollins of Laverty Avenue at $75 per month, and Marie McFarland, Ella Davies, Gertrude Allen and Margaret Beckford as teachers at $50 per month. The playground now occupies the original school lot.

Special Collections, Alexandria Library

Since Alexandria County had no high school, parents began agitating for the school board to pay their children’s tuition to City of Alexandria high schools in 1915. In 1917, the district school board bought the Richard Lloyd house, about a half-mile west of here, and converted it into the George Mason High School with two teachers and thirty students. In 1925, the Lloyd house was sold to the Episcopal Church for use as St. Agnes’ Girls School, and the building in front of you was constructed as the new George Mason High School. Following annexation, the City of Alexandria built George Washington High School (now a middle school) south of here.