

Its Old School Holly Hill

Benjamin Mason conveyed parts of two lots near the northwest corner of Daytona Avenue and 6th Street to the school district for \$5.00. The first school was opened at 6th and Daytona in 1885 in a building that is now considered a shed. Will Harris was the first schoolteacher and paid the sum of \$30 a month.

In 1900 the school moved into slightly larger accommodations in an adjacent addition. This building is now a home at 220 6th Street. A wood frame building was constructed shortly thereafter in 1897 but soon the location and building became inadequate. This has now been restored as a residential home. The first schoolhouse stands next door.

A wooden schoolhouse that replaced it was built in 1908 and the school now relocated to Daytona Avenue.

In August 1908, school trustees J. L. Chandler, George F. Crouch, and A. B. Prevatt returned the property to Mason only a month after they had purchased a larger parcel on Daytona Avenue south of 11th Street. The new school campus supported a two-story wood frame building. This building would be moved across the street to where Sica Hall is now when a new school was built in 1918. It became Holly Hill's first municipal building containing city offices, police, and fire dept. Sica Hall now stands in its location. It later became the Boys Club.

It was replaced in 1917 with the red brick schoolhouse located at 1049 Ridgewood Avenue. In 1917 the school board hired DeLand architect J. T. Cairns to draft plans for a new school and in 1918, Volusia County's board of public instruction completed Holly Hill Grammar School on a ridge facing Daytona Avenue between 10th and 11th Streets. County superintendent C.R.M. Sheppard included a photograph of the new school in his report to the state superintendent of public instruction, William N. Sheats. In 1918. Enrollment at the elementary school amounted to eighty-three students and Sheppard explained that increased growth had compelled the construction of the new building, which was part of a larger improvement program that completed new schools at Daytona, DeLand, Lake Helen, New Smyrna, and Seabreeze. The red brick school contained six classrooms. The growth of the area continued and required the school to constantly expand.

Then in 1924 the Mediterranean Revival building facing Ridgewood Avenue was added. The school bell from the belfry is now on display at the current Holly Hill School.

In late 1924 the School Board recognized the need for expanded facilities and commissioned Architect Wm. J. Carpenter AIA to prepare the plans for a major new addition to be integrated into the complex. Mr. Carpenter designed a Mediterranean Revival style two-story stucco over brick building which included six classrooms, an auditorium, a library, offices, and a new front entrance. In 1926, the school board hired Daytona Beach architect Harry Griffin to draft the plans for the two-story Holly Hill Junior High School just to the west of the 1918 one-story school.

The Grahn Construction Company completed the building in 1927. The new building executed in the Mediterranean Revival style was built on 6.2 acres at a cost of \$10,000. The school building now faced Ridgewood Avenue (US1) behind the old school, which became known as the “Red Brick School Building”. The new Holly Hill School, which was stucco over brick, contributed to a campus that had been organized in 1908, expanded in 1917, and then enlarged again in the 1940s and complemented with still more facilities in the 1950s. Two WWII barracks became the first portables in 1947.

When the new City Hall was opened it also included additional classrooms for the school that was just next door.

In 1983 a new school was built on the corner of Center Street and 15th Street and Holly Elementary moved to the new location in October of 1983. The old complex was demolished soon thereafter, with the exception of the cafeteria building to which the Boys and Girls Club moved, and the area is now the site of the Holly Hill YMCA.

Over the years the school was not only Elementary grades but also Junior High grades seven through eleven. The Elementary and Junior High split into two separate entities in 1940 but continued to operate in the same building. In 1983 a new elementary school was built on a twenty-acre site at 1500 Center Street and 15th Street. At the time of its closing the “Red Brick School” was the oldest operating school building still in use in the Volusia County School system.

The buildings were demolished except for the cafeteria. To help accommodate growth, the Volusia County School Board enlarged the Holly Hill school site, adding a two-room class building and a cafeteria.

The underground tunnel that students used still remains under US1. The original school bell was placed at the new school on Center Avenue.

In 1956 a separate middle school was built at 1200 Center Street, between Walker and 11th Street. However, some junior high classes remained at the elementary site until 1966. The school's first athletic teams were formed in 1959 and because of the historic events going on at nearby Cape Canaveral the school's mascot and emblem became the Rocket. In 1966 Central Junior High became known as Holly Hill Junior High. In 1990 it was renamed Holly Hill Middle School. In 2011 the school closed and was moved, ironically, to the Holly Hill Elementary School campus where the students are again on the same campus as it was in 1940. The Middle School was demolished except for the media center and gymnasium.



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