

A photograph of a large, two-story brick building with a red roof and white trim, identified as the Paint Rock Valley Educational Association. The building has several windows and a central entrance. In the background, there are rolling hills under a clear sky.

Paint Rock Valley Educational Association

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Paint Rock Valley High School

On December 29, 1896, a one room school was purchased and deeded to the school and the Masonic Lodge. The trustees received the deed for the property. The school was called Princeton School. The school served the community well into the 1930's, at which time, the building became overcrowded and aged. Under the leadership of the Principal, Mr. T. Skidmore, local citizens began to sense the need for a new school so that valley students would not have to go away from home to finish school. It was at the height of the depression and money to buy materials and pay labor costs was practically non-existent. Working with school trustees and valley residents, it was decided a building would be constructed of native field stones gathered from every corner of the Paint Rock Valley by the citizens of every community. Land for the new site was purchased, residents donated trees, local saw millers planed the lumber and nearly everybody hauled rocks. WPA was hired to work with Mr. John Stewart, contractor for the project. The finished rock walls measured 18 inches thick.

Although portions of the building were still incomplete, when the fall term of school began in 1935, students and faculty began classes in the new structure. It was decided to rename the school Paint Rock Valley High School, in honor of the people in every community in the valley that had contributed to its erection. Mr. R. M. Martin was the first principal.

It was almost Christmas of that year when work was finally completed. Paint Rock Valley folks will always remember that Christmas. The Alabama Power Company had provided service for the valley in time for Christmas. A huge Christmas tree, complete with electric lights was placed in front of the new school. When the current was turned on, the tree lit up and the valley residents celebrated with a community dinner provided by the PTA. The year 1935 had indeed been a landmark year.

In 1938, the first seniors graduated. In May 1946, a lunchroom was completed from materials salvaged from old consolidated school buildings. The present lunchroom was completed in February 1962.

As years passed, smaller schools in the valley consolidated with Paint Rock Valley High School—Hollytree and Larkin in 1930, Guesses Creek in 1941, Freedom and Francisco in 1948, Gray's Chapel in 1953 and Trenton in 1956. Putman Mt. and Williams' Cove also consolidated with Paint Rock Valley.

(Taken from an article in the Daily Sentinel, April 29, 1971, by Mary Sue Toney, Inez Hall and Louise Putman)