

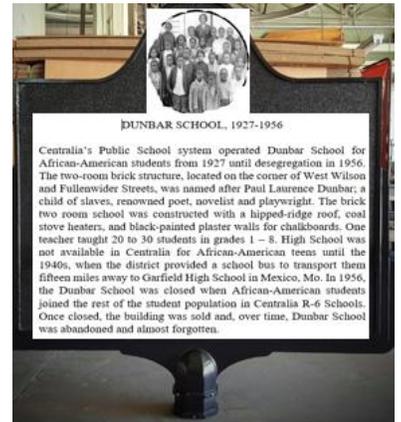
Memorial Marker Project
DUNBAR SCHOOL, 1927-1956

Centralia's Public School system operated Dunbar School for African American students from 1927 until desegregation in 1956.

A group of volunteers proposes placing a memorial marker in the Jaycee Park on North Jefferson to honor the children and their teachers who walked through the doors of Dunbar School.

We need your support! The cost of a suitable historical marker is over \$2900. Centralia Friends of the Park is collecting funds, and Parks and Recreation Department will install it.

The attached mockup (very rough!) of the proposed marker has a sample picture from a Keytesville school: Centralians' pictures are needed!



Can you help with donations of money, stories, or historical pictures for the Dunbar School Memorial Project?

Some information about the Dunbar School:

- The brick two room school was constructed in 1926-27 with a hipped-ridge roof, coal stove heaters, and black-painted plaster walls for chalkboards.
- One dedicated teacher taught 20 to 30 students in grades 1 through 8. Teachers were often from other central Missouri towns and roomed in Centralia to return home for weekends and holidays.
- The two-room brick structure, located on the corner of West Wilson and Fullenwider Streets, is on private property in a deteriorating condition.
- Until they had Dunbar School, African-American schooling in Centralia was in informal settings, such as homes and churches. (The project team would like to learn more about these arrangements for possible future expansion of the memorial project.)
- Centralia's school for African-American students was named after Paul Laurence Dunbar, an Ohio-born child of slaves, poet, novelist and playwright, renowned in the Harlem Renaissance, as were several other segregated schools built in Missouri during the Jim Crow Era. (Note: There is some confusion with an old country school named for a different Dunbar, southwest of Centralia.)
- High School was not available in Centralia for African American teens until the 1940s, when the district provided a school bus to transport them fifteen miles away to Garfield High in Mexico.
- Dunbar School closed in 1956, when African American students joined the rest of the student population in Centralia R-6 Schools.
- Once it closed, the Dunbar School building was sold and, over time, it has been almost forgotten.
- The proposed marker is dedicated to the students of the Dunbar School and their teachers,

Please send donations designated for the Dunbar School Project to Centralia Friends of the Park, at the Parks and Recreation Office, 802 W. Lakeview, Centralia MO 65240.

Please include any information you may have about Dunbar School's history, and pictures, or notify the project team through centraliaparks@yahoo.com .

Thank you!