

# Early History of the Crescent City Schools

*Part 5, Compiled by Cherie Nelson Register, Edited by B.J. Laurie*

The P.T.A. was first organized in 1925 by Mrs. Charles Hale as president. Its first service project centered on a school cafeteria. Mrs. Gersha Shiver was the second president with Mrs. W.H.S. Johnson succeeding her. It was in 1927, that through the efforts of the P.T.A., enough books were purchased for the school library to place the elementary school on the accredited list.

Mr. John F. Houck held this position for eight years. During this time, basketball was introduced into the school. In 1931, the Crescent City team won the Third District Consolation trophy given by the St. Augustine Lions Club and again in 1935.

Succeeding Mr. Houck, Mr. Hand was principal for eight years. During this period the boys Basketball team won the 1939 Championship Trophy for the St. Johns Conference and Sportsmanship Trophy in 1940. The girls' team also won the Sportsmanship trophy in 1942.

Alicia Meacham, a favorite teacher who came in 1939, wrote our beloved Alma Mater, "On the Shores of Old Lake Crescent."

*On the shores of old Lake Crescent stands the school we love,  
With the mossy oaks around it, and blue skies above  
C.C. we will ever love you, always will be true,  
For the high ideals you've taught us, C.C. here's to you.*

*Sons and daughters of old C.C. ever will belong,  
With the finest and the strongest, never with the wrong.  
C.C. stands for truth and beauty, gives a hope anew;  
Makes us heed the call to duty, C.C. here's to you.*

*Happy memories we will treasure, through the coming years;  
We'll recall our friends with pleasure; all their joys and fears.  
C.C. ever will remind us, of the days we knew,  
In her noble halls of knowledge, C.C. here's to you!*

The worst tragedy in Crescent City school history took place on December 14, 1933 when bus driver, Dennis R. Niles was on Putnam County School Bus Route Number One. Which went 15 miles out and back to the Crescent City Junction, bringing a group of students in for school. His bus was a standard, mid 20's truck chassis with a homebuilt wooden body that he built himself. The children sat on wooden benches on either side of a narrow aisle. Instead of glass, the bus windows were covered in coarse screening called hardware cloth; roll-up canvas curtains provided some protection from rain and cold. On that Thursday morning the fog was thick and most or all of the canvas curtains were lowered. The bus was crossing the railroad tracks in this dense fog and was hit by a train resulting in the death of 11 children. The children were Elsie Gordon – age 15, Hilda Hardy – age 5, Henrietta King – age 14, Eddie McGrady – age 10, Hazel McGrady – age 11, William Owens – age 10, Evelyn Smith – age 10, Fred Smith – age 15, Merle Smith – age 17, William Smith – age 12 and Troy Tipton – age 15.

(Continued next time)