

Focus

SCHOOL'S HISTORY TRACED St. Joseph's in Kent educated African-American boys

By JAMES MERRIWEATHER
Dover Bureau reporter

The old St. Joseph's Industrial School was memorialized Monday as an educational haven for thousands of African-American boys who had few other options for schooling and job training.

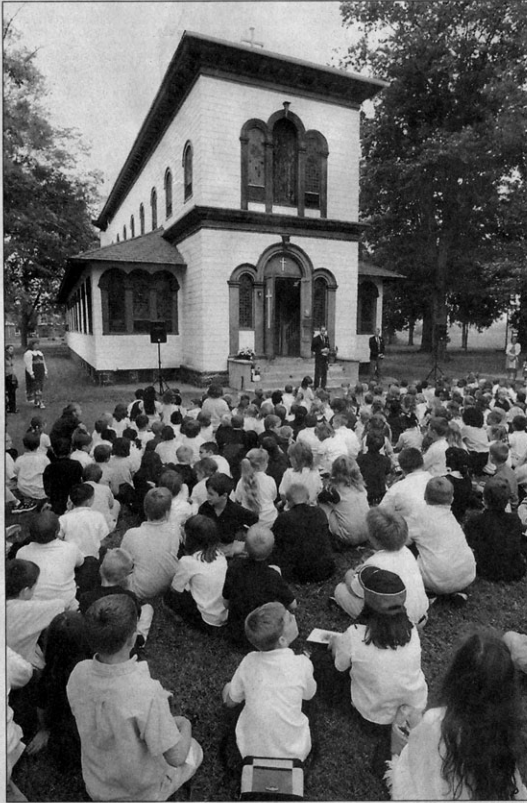
The school, located in six buildings on 28 1/2 acres on Duck Creek Road just outside Clayton, was built in 1896 and hosted students from as far away as Texas before its doors were closed in 1972. About 750 people marked the facility's induction into the National Register of Historic Places Monday, including most of 664 pupils of Providence Creek Academy, a year-old charter school that now occupies the site.

Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., the keynote speaker, said the school's history spanned decades when women were not allowed to vote and black people were barred from most restaurants and other public facilities. He implored the students, in kindergarten through seventh grade, to take proud note of social change since the school was founded 107 years ago.

"This is a special day for you and a special day for Delaware," Carper said.

The school was financed by Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People, led by Katharine Drexel, a philanthropist's daughter who was canonized in 2000. Drexel turned the school over to the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart in Baltimore, which educated about 7,000 black pupils before the school was closed in 1972.

The property was vacant until 1999, when the non-profit St. Joseph's Project Foundation bought it and renamed it as St. Joseph's at Providence Creek. The six-building complex now houses 30 classrooms. James G. Gilliland, the organization's executive director, said ground will be broken next month for a seventh building.



Sen. Tom Carper told the crowd to take proud note of social change since St. Joseph's Industrial School was founded 107 years ago.

The News Journal/SCOTT NATHAN

Jury hears arguments in fraud case 2 accused home buyers

By MAF
Staff

A federal jury heard arguments Monday against two accused of consumer fraud in several bank companies of \$500,000.

Robert K. Newark and J. 31, of Florida, charges, including bank fraud and report of property fraud. The chairman penalty prison and months in fines.

Both main innocent.

Prosecutors stole loan cheques on loan of people who had grown money without telling indictment filed U.S. District Court lists 68 ditto residents of Pennsylvania and 1998 to February more than \$5 million.

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ground will be broken next month for a seventh building that would add 12 more classrooms.

Elder Samuel Simmons, 68, a black man and lifelong Clayton resident, told the audience that his observation during the 1950s and 1960s was that the surrounding community was "kind of frightened" by the school's students, many from Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and other urban areas. He said that, any time they left the school, the students marched in lines, with a Josephite father at each end, and were "as isolated from the community as people with leprosy."

"Now we see diversity,"

Industrial School was founded 107 years ago.

Simmons said of the charter school's multiracial student body, "and we thank God for that."

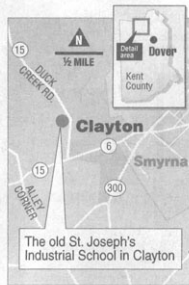
Simmons heads a 20-member church called the Holy Spirit Mission, which meets each Sunday in the chapel at St. Joseph's. The chapel's architecture - described as a rare, sophisticated example of an "Italianate style, basilica-form church, expressed in wood" - figured in St. Joseph's national register recognition.

Gilliland said the purchase and renovation of the school was paid for with \$1 million in private and foundation contributions and

about \$5 million in construction financing from Wilmington Trust Co. He said the foundation's activities, including the charter school, would pay for the repayment of the loans.

This fall, the society will create a Founding Members Garden in front of the chapel, which will feature engraved caps on a brick wall to honor those who contribute at least \$500. The garden is part of a campaign to create an endowment to finance programs run by St. Joseph's at Providence Creek, including a scholarship fund.

Reach James Merriweather at 678-4273 or merriweather@delawareonline.com.



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