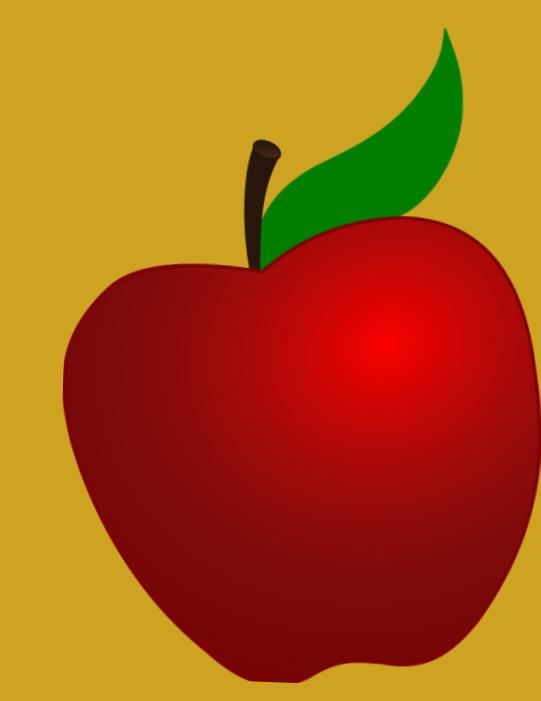


Historic Schools ^{of} Bluemont

»» A Tale of Two Centuries »»

1872 - 1922



Mountain Shadow

After the Civil War, Virginia was required by federal law to rewrite its state constitution before it could be readmitted to the United States. The resulting Virginia Constitution of 1869 called on the General Assembly to create a statewide system of free public schools for all children. The Loudoun County Public School administration was established for the 1870-1871 school year. Superintendent John Wildman oversaw the operations of 55 schools – 46 for White children and 9 for Black children. Attendance was not compulsory. The county's population was 21,000.



Mountain Shadow School, 1887 – the "P" designates Bluemont resident Henry Plaster's father, Dr. Henry G. Plaster

In 1872, Loudoun County Public Schools built the Mountain Shadow School on what was then called the "Snicker's Gap Turnpike" in Snickersville, to replace the Snickersville Academy as the school for the White children of the village. Black children went to the Bluemont "Colored" School.



Mountain Shadow School, undated photo

There was a bell tower at the top of the school. Each school day, one of the older students would ring a warning bell at 8:45 am, and a teacher would ring the 9:00 am bell as the final signal that the school day was beginning.

Mountain Shadow School hosted grades 1 through 7. Older students who had their own transportation (horses or pony carts) and wanted to continue their education went on to high school in Round Hill.

A note about high school: Unlike grade schools, high schools at this time were not free. In Loudoun County, the standard monthly tuition was \$1.50 to \$2 – equivalent to what most workers earned in one or two days. In the fall of 1923, all county high schools became free, though students still had to buy their own textbooks. The Round Hill High School closed in 1941.

In 1922, Loudoun County Public Schools replaced the Mountain Shadow School with the new Bluemont School. The Mountain Shadow School building is still standing, though several additions have been added through the years. It is now a private residence.



Mountain Shadow School, undated photo



Mountain Shadow today – viewed from an angle similar to photo on the left, although an addition now fronts Snickersville Turnpike