

1939: Greeneville College High School Renamed For Clem

By **GEORGIA M. FARNSWORTH**

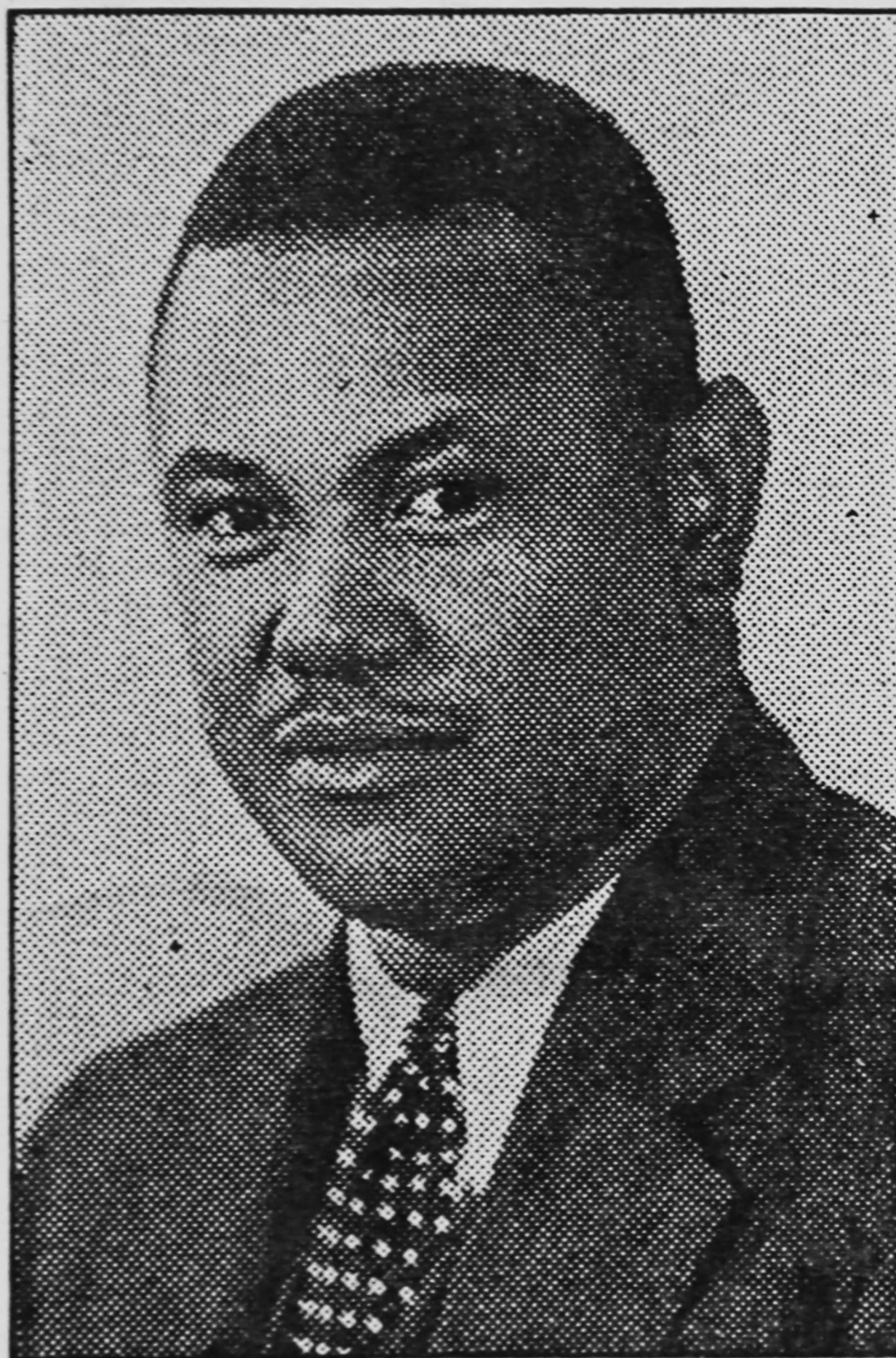
The school known today as the George Clem School had its beginning after the close of the Greeneville College, operated by the General Board of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, under the leadership of Bishop S.W. Jones and the other members of the board. There were in Greeneville at this time two other small schools for blacks: one located on Railroad Street and the other near the current Greeneville Light & Power System building.

During the 1890s, the Greeneville College was located on the land where the George Clem School stands today, and housed boarding students from across the country. It was under the leadership of several highly trained, motivated and enthusiastic individuals. The school was known for academic excellence as well as for its outstanding musical department.

The president who stands out the most was J.W. Younge, who presided as president of Greeneville College from 1915 to 1932. Under his leadership a new block building was erected in 1922.

President Younge left the school in 1932 to become the financial secretary of the A.M.E. Zion Connection. In 1932 not only did we lose Professor Younge, but also the boarding school closed, and the Town of Greeneville established a public school for black students consisting of grades 1-10. The school was then renamed Greeneville College High School, under the principalship of A.M. Gilbert and the direction of the Greeneville Board of Education.

In 1935, George Clem was appointed principal of the Greeneville College High School. In 1937, the transition



G.W. CLEM
Principal, 1935-39

from a two-year to a four-year-type school began under the leadership of Mr. Clem and an enthusiastic staff.

In 1937, the 11th grade was added. Then in 1938 it finally became a four-year accredited high school. Also that year the first senior class was graduated, with 16 members. This was the first graduating class in the history of the school to be comprised entirely of Greeneville residents. It proved to be a proud moment for all who witnessed the event.

In 1939, Mr. Clem served as president of the East Tennessee Black Teachers Association. He died in the spring of 1939 before seeing the second graduating class's commencement. His faithful wife, Dorothy Clem, assumed the role of principal. In that same year, by order of the Greeneville Board of Mayor and Aldermen, they re-named the school The George Clem School.

Later principals were R.C. Martin, the Rev. E.T. Pugh, Otis Peeler, William H. DeLaney, Bill Taylor, the Rev. W.J. Jackson, John J. Jones, and Dr. Robert DeLozier.

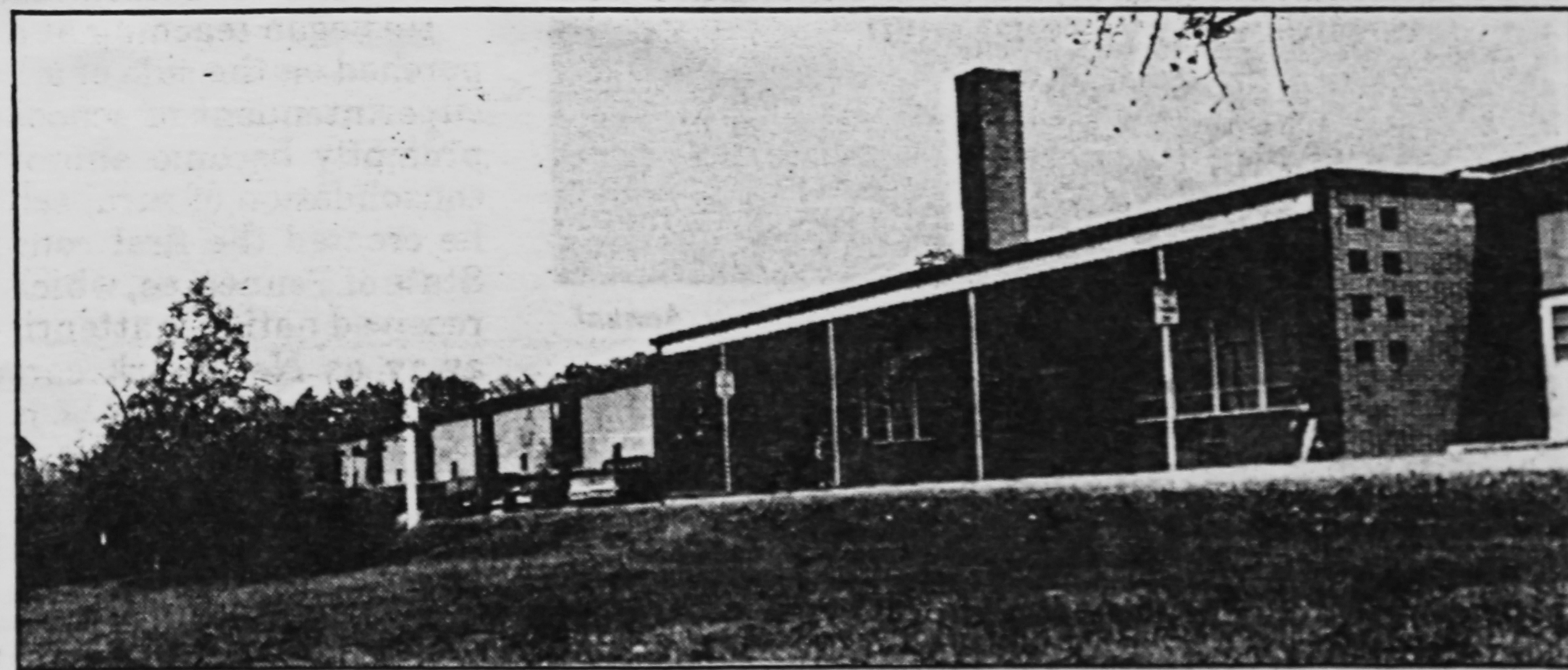
Other faculty members of the school included, among others, Grayce Bradley, Lottie Henry, Fannye Jones, Anna Lee Manuel, Sylvia Manuel, Helen McCoy Brown, Electa Forte, Ruth Peeler, Hazel Rice, Eva White, Mrs. William DeLaney, Claude Bowers, W.E. Blevins, and Georgia Mae Farnsworth.

In 1949, the Town of Greeneville

began building the new George Clem School that was completed in 1950. An inspired staff and students entered this building to embark upon a new beginning. It remained a public school until 1965, when the integration laws took effect.

The George Clem High School currently houses the Greeneville City Board of Education, including the superintendent's office and its many components.

As a former student of Greeneville College and an educator at Greeneville College High School and its successors from 1935 until George Clem School closed when the Greeneville schools were integrated in 1965, I can say that the school continually grew and expanded young minds, sending them forth into fields of excellence, taking with them the same proud and loving feeling of their alma mater.



The "new" George Clem School, Floral Street, was erected in 1950.