

300
REVIEW

Vol. II, No. 2

Little Rock, Ark.

June, 1954

PEABODY SCHOOL HOLDS FAREWELL OPEN HOUSE

On Friday evening, May 14, alumni of the George W. Peabody elementary school were honored guests at an open house, the last social event in the 87-year-old history of the school.

The party, sponsored by the P-T.A., was well attended. Mrs. Blanche C. Junkin, who taught at Peabody from 1919 until 1946, was in charge of a large and interesting collection of scrapbooks, pictures, old records and personal mementoes.

Many familiar names were written in the large guest book, including that of Mrs. Antoine Bohlinger, formerly Miss Bessie Peay, who at the age of 91 is the oldest living alumnus.

The first school building on the Peabody site was a one-room brick building, built in 1867, and later enlarged to four rooms. The main portion of the present structure dates back to 1890, and the large annex was built in 1908. The annex was named for Mrs. B. B. Sterling, who began teaching at Peabody school in 1872, when it was a four-room brick building. She was still there 55 years later, and was assistant principal. The high school was moved to Peabody in 1890, and for the next fifteen years it was a combination elementary and high school. In 1905, the high school was moved from Peabody to what is now East Side Junior High school.

The Little Rock School Board voted last year to abandon Peabody school at the close of the 1954 school term. The district has become almost entirely commercial, and enrollment at Peabody has fallen off from its peak of 1,000 to the present 294, making it impractical to continue use of the location as a school. The school board plans to sell the property to finance the construction of a new school building at another location. The estimated value of the property is between four and five hundred thousand dollars. But a lawsuit now pending in Chancery Court may change the plans of the School Board. The suit was filed by the heirs of Roswell Beebe and Chester Ashley, donors of the property. The heirs contest the right of the city to convey title to the land. The deed to the property specified that the land was donated for public use, and if it should be put to any other use, it would revert to the original heirs.