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Trenholm High School*

Trenholm High School was the end result of a long history of public education of African American children in Tuscumbia. This history began during Reconstruction when the Freeman School started in 1870 and was headed by Mr. Judge Mingo and his daughter in church at a place called Delony Hill. By the summer of 1877, the African American community had established their own school, named the Osborne Colored Academy for Sandy Osborne, a local African American man who was a barber, grocer, and trustee. A decade later, the Tuscumbia Colored School was opened. Mr. Pleas Barton, a former trustee of Osborne Academy, was made principal.

Tuscumbia Colored School was moved to 11th Street between High and Washington streets in Southeast Tuscumbia in 1905. It was this institution and location that was named Trenholm High School in honor of the third principal of the school – Dr. George Washington Trenholm. The historical marker in front of the school’s former site states that the school’s name was changed in 1921, however, a Sanborn Fire Insurance

(Top) Excerpt of 1867 Alabama Voter Registration Showing Sandy Osborne (Alabama 1867 Voter Registration Records Database. Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama via Ancestry.com) **(Above)** 1880 Federal Census Excerpt Showing Pleas Barton as a “Retail Grocer” (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com)

map from that year labels the school “Tuscumbia Colored College” – yet another name for the school.

Like other large African American high schools, Trenholm expanded beyond classroom education to provide a well-rounded curriculum. The school supported various clubs, contests, plays, and competitions. The athletics program included basketball, football, and track. Trenholm High School’s athletes were the Wildcats and they often competed against Sterling High School in Sheffield, Burrell-Slater in Florence, and Trinity High in Athens. Some of the school’s athletic trophies and jerseys are preserved at Alabama A&M including the 1955 North Alabama High School Athletics Association championship football trophy, a couple of basketball jerseys, and a football jersey.

The school and its facilities were essential to the community which it supported and

(Below) (Left) Trenholm High School Basketball Jersey #30, 1960s (Alabama A&M University, University Archives and Special Collections, Trenholm High School) **(Middle)** Trenholm High School North Alabama High School Athletics Association Football Championship, 1955 (Alabama A&M University, University Archives and Special Collections, Trenholm High School) **(Right)** Trenholm High School Football Jersey #38, 1960s (Alabama A&M University, University Archives and Special Collections, Trenholm High School)



KEY

- COMMUNITIES
- CEMETERIES
- CHURCHES
- PLANTATIONS
- SCHOOLS
- OTHER

* Indicates a Historical - Non-Extant Resource