



Prior to the second Vatican Council in 1962, it was a serious moral requirement that Catholic children be given a Catholic education in a Catholic school, not just faith formation classes. To achieve this, many parishes throughout the USA went into heavy debt to fulfill this obligation. Around 1926 the newly formed Diocese of Raleigh (1924) and the Parish of St. Lawrence felt this obligation.

In the early 1900s there was a population explosion in the Asheville area, brought on by the expansion of the railroads to the Asheville Valley. This resulted in a change from being a sanitarium city for tuberculosis patients to becoming an industrialized and tourist area. So why wasn't the school built in Asheville near the Church? Properties there were scarce and expensive; besides the population was increasing west of the French Broad River in the area known as West Asheville. This was supported by real estate land developers' offerings and the area known as Sulphur Springs was becoming a tourist attraction.

West Asheville became part of Asheville in 1917 with nearly 6,000 residents. At that time the local trolley line ran up to 797 Haywood Road. Rutherford P. Hayes, son of President Rutherford B. Hayes, had bought a 1,200 acre farm, part of which became the Hayes Subdivision. In 1927, this subdivision on Haywood Road, included Lots # 3, # 4 and # 5, beginning at Blue Ridge Avenue and running west. These lots were purchased by Mrs. Frances Gardner, and the 12 room Gardner house was eventually converted into the St. Joan of Arc Chapel and School. The school opened with 75 pupils and 3 Sisters of R.C.E. It consisted of 7 years of grammar school and 4 years of high school.

The first part of the brick building was constructed in 1950. Four more classrooms were added in 1963, along with a gymnasium and cafeteria. In 1980 the school merged with St. Eugene's School and was renamed Asheville Catholic Community School.

Additional information can be found in previously published parish directories, the recent directory of parish ministries and the 1993 65th Year Celebration Book by the Historical Commission.



*10 Year Anniversary Celebration Info p 2, May 14, 2017*

