

SCHOOL STORY

Somerset Primary School has played an important part in the education of the young people of Bermuda since way back in the 1800s. Its first students assembled at "Tin Top", the old wooden building opposite the Allen Temple A.M.E. Church on Sound View Road. Sometime later, the need arose for larger accommodations. With the assistance of funds raised by Mr. Charles Gilbert the school moved to its present location.

The new building contained the three classrooms immediately opposite the Royal Naval Field. Several years later, as enrolment grew, the Sandys Grammar Association purchased a house from Mrs. Graham Ingham which became the site of the present Lagoon Park Preschool (formerly Infant Department). The assembly hall and other classrooms were built much later.

The School's Association had voted to allow the entrance of all five-year-olds in June, 1964. The student body included children from the Royal Naval Base, the United States Base and the Canadian Base. Having children from these various backgrounds made it a very integrated student body.

At first, the school's uniform was green. The uniform was changed to brown out of respect for the students of Sandys Grammar and Boaz Island since Boaz Island School students wore blue.

Our school continues to be a major factor in the success of the community and its people. Many of our students go on to become leaders in their subsequent schools and in the country. For that we are very proud, and we look forward to Somerset Primary's continued successes.

The House at Somerset Primary

Many years ago, before Somerset Primary was called Somerset Primary, there were only three houses. They were Finlay, Patterson and Gilbert. Finlay House was red. It was named after Mr. James Finlay who was the manager of the only store in Somerset that sold meat. That store was on the main road near where the Bank of Bermuda is today. Mr. Finlay was a former chairman of the Sandys Grammar School Board.

Patterson House was blue. It was named after Mr. Julian Patterson who also owned a store in Somerset. He sold house wares such as pots, pans and tools, as well as clothing. Mr. Patterson's store was first on Mangrove Bay Road in the building that now has a lawyer's office. Later, he moved to the building we now call Simm Court today. Mr. Patterson was also a member of the school board.

The third house was Gilbert House, which was yellow. Gilbert House was given its name in honour of Mr. Charles Gilbert. Mr. Gilbert was the manager of the Somerset branch of the Bank of Bermuda, and helped to purchase the property on which the school stands. He lived on the lane which was also given his name, and on which our school is situated, Gilbert Lane.

In the early 1970s the government decided to close one of the three primary schools in Sandys Parish and in 1973 Boaz Island was joined with this school which was called Sandys Grammar School at the time. The new school was named Somerset Primary....That's us now. That is when a fourth house, Richards House, was introduced.

Richards House was green and named after Mrs. Louisa Richards, who was one of Sandys Parish's great educators. She taught at Sandys Secondary School, and then became its Principal. She later became the Preschool Administrator of Boaz Island School.

So as you can tell, there were once four houses at this school. In the nineteen eighties the U.S., Canadian and British military bases all pulled out of Bermuda, taking many students away from the system. This school became smaller, and the decision was made to combine the houses into Finlay-Patterson (red and blue) and Gilbert-Richards (yellow and green).