Third District Agricultural School
1909-1925

Introduction

The Third District Agricultural School at Magnolia was one of four schools of Agriculture established by authorization of Act 100 of 1909. A committee of Magnolia citizens headed by W. R. Cross, Chairman, W. H. Warnock, Secretary, and J. D. Hutcheson, Treasurer, secured the school for Magnolia in competition with Hope, Mena, Prescott, Bingen, Stephens, and Camden with a bid of $35,000 cash and 330 acres of land valued at $10,000. The committee obtained an additional 80 acres of land which was paid for by the school.

The institution served from January 3, 1911, to June 30, 1925, as a high school for boys and girls living in Southwest Arkansas in school districts without four year high school programs. In 1925 the State Legislature authorized the school to add two years of college work to its curriculum and to change its name to Agricultural and Mechanical College, Third District. The Agricultural and Mechanical College, Third District carried both high school and junior college courses until 1937 at which time it dropped the high school program. [Editorial note: Later research has revealed that the first junior college courses were offered in 1923 and accepted for transfer at the University of Arkansas.] In the fall of 1949 the Board of Trustees of the Agricultural and Mechanical College, Third District made the college a four year degree granting institution. The third year college courses began in the fall semester of 1950. In January 1951 the State Legislature changed the name of the college to Southern State College. The fourth year college courses were added in the fall semester of 1951 and the first bachelor degrees were awarded in June, 1952. Southern State College added the masters degree program at the beginning of the first summer term of 1975. The name of the institution was changed to Southern Arkansas University in the fall of 1976.

The information included in this report has been taken from the early records kept by the institution through its Board minutes, catalog, year books, Arkansas Statutes, newspapers and other sources available in 1976. The earlier records are not as complete as would be desirable. Hence this report for the period 1909-1925 lacks some basic information which is given for the following years. Furthermore, some of the records for the period 1925-1950 are incomplete or missing.

The purpose of this report is to make accessible from these old records some basic information concerning the institution’s personnel including faculty, staff, and students, physical facilities, and financial affairs. Most of the information has been organized in tabular form for easy reference and comparisons helpful to the understanding of the growth and development of the institution. The information in this
The report is arranged by the three periods the institution operated under the names of Third District Agricultural School, Agricultural and Mechanical College, Third District, and Southern State College.

I sincerely appreciate the help given me in the preparation of this report by members of the faculty, staff, and student typists of Southern Arkansas University. My special thanks go to Dr. and Mrs. Robert Walz. Dr. Walz provided the pictures of the buildings and Mrs. Walz assisted in arranging the final copy.

Imon E. Bruce

President Emeritus, S.A.U.

[Editorial note: President Bruce prepared this after his retirement in 1976.]