

# The Dalton School

For almost 50 years, Dalton was home to the Dalton Vocational School, originally the Bartlett Agriculture and Industrial School. Often referred to as the "Tuskegee of the Midwest," Nathaniel Bruce founded the school in 1907. As a student and disciple of Booker T. Washington, Bruce believed that African American youth would be best served by earning a practical education. Therefore, the school emphasized vocational and agricultural training. Because of segregation laws, students came in on busses from miles away, to study industrial arts, home economics, and agriculture.

The first permanent building was built in 1909, but in 1923 the school received state legislature funds for expansion, and grew to include a model farm home, trade shop, and hog and poultry houses. In its final years, the school had grown to over 120 acres in size.

In 1924 the University of Missouri College of Agriculture was put in charge of the school. Some five years later the administrative rights were turned over to the all-black Lincoln University in Jefferson City. In 1954, the US Supreme Court ruled all schools must become integrated, forcing the Dalton Vocational School to close its doors in 1956. The campus's buildings and property were later sold at auction and today nothing remains of the school.



*Dalton Vocational School chapter of the New Farmers of America*

## A BRIEF HISTORY

In June 1804, Lewis and Clark camped at the site of the Cut-Off Lake, with a note in their journal describing the Dalton Cut-Off as connected to the Missouri River by a creek.

More than sixty years after the Lewis and Clark Expedition passed through the area, and after the end of the Civil War, Dalton village was founded. Born out of necessity with the construction of a railroad depot for the *St. Louis & Pacific* line, William Dalton donated some 40 acres of land to formalize a community.

In the early 1900s Dalton became well known for its vocational school for African American youth. Students came long distances to study and earn a practical education. Eventually, the school was shut down after the US Supreme Court passed laws for the integration of schools.

Over time, the village of Dalton has declined in size, due in part to the rural economy and the years of flooding. In 1993, a severe flood reduced much of Dalton to fields, leaving only a few buildings. Still, each year the small community celebrates its heritage with the annual Dalton Days Festival.



*A view of Cut-Off Lake*

## DALTON

### The Small Village with the Big Past



With a history of flooding, the village of Dalton is today surrounded by fertile soil and lush green farm fields. Many city dwellers, who have family ties to the area and enjoy returning to the country to escape the hectic city pace, seek Dalton as a peaceful weekend getaway.

### Chariton County Heritage Tours, Inc.

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## Dalton Community Center



Formerly the Dalton Village school, the building remains today as a gathering place for the community.

413 S. Walnut Street

## Dalton Elevator



Each morning local farmers gather at the Dalton Elevator to prepare for the day. Many who frequent the elevator's offices include multiple generations of family members who continue the community tradition of farming.

111 West Railroad St • 660-544-2551

## Dalton Bottoms



Dalton Bottoms Access offers a quiet spot for visitors to fish, camp, picnic, and enjoy the scenery. Maintained by the Missouri Conservation Department, the Bottoms sit on almost 55 acres of land. This old-fields area provides access to the Missouri River, with a concrete ramp for launching boats. Comprised of wetland, grassland, and forest, the Dalton Bottoms is home to a variety of plants and animals.

Find out more at:  
<http://mdc.mo.gov>

Or call: 660-646-6122

## Dalton's Famous Faces

### **General Sterling Price**

Lawyer and planter who served as the 11th Governor of Missouri. Served as a United States Army Brigadier General in the Mexican-American War and a Confederate Army Major General in the American Civil War.

### **Nathaniel C. Bruce**

Founder of the Bartlett Agriculture and Industrial School, later renamed the Dalton Vocational School.

### **Rod Skillman**

Walk-on player for the University of Missouri Football Team, later played professionally for the New Jersey Generals and the Hamilton Tiger-Cats.

### **Joel M. Vance**

Author of seven books, who served as a writer with the Missouri Conservation Department for over 20 years.

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## Did you know?

Many of the water scenes from the 1973 film *Tom Sawyer* were filmed at Dalton's Cut-Off Lake, particularly scenes that featured Huck and Tom's adventures on the Missouri River.

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## Dalton Days Festival!

Saturday of  
Memorial Day Weekend