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EARLY NEGRO EDUCATION IN WEST VIRGINIA

The early education of the Negro in West Virginia falls in three periods.¹ During the first period, it was largely re-

¹ This study was undertaken at the suggestion of President John W. Davis, of The West Virginia Collegiate Institute. He appointed a committee to collect the facts bearing on the early efforts of workers among the Negroes in West Virginia. The members of this committee were C. G. Woodson, D. A. Lane, A. A. Taylor, S. H. Guss, C. E. Jones, Mary E. Eubank, J. S. Price, F. A. Parker, and W. F. Savoy.

At the first meeting of the committee, C. G. Woodson was chosen Chairman and at his suggestion the following questionnaire was drawn up and sent out:

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON NEGRO EDUCATION IN WEST VIRGINIA

Place.....

1. When was a Negro school first opened in your district?
2. What was the enrollment?
3. Who was the first teacher?
4. Was he well prepared?
5. How long did he serve?
6. Were his methods up-to-date or antiquated?
7. Did he succeed or fail?
8. Who were the useful patrons supporting the school?
9. What was the method of securing certificates?
10. What was the method of hiring teachers?
11. What was the method of paying teachers, that is, did the school district pay promptly or was it necessary to discount their drafts or wait a long period to be paid?
12. Did the community own the school property or was the school taught in a private home or in a church?
13. What has been the progress or development of the school?
14. What is its present condition?
15. What persons in your community can give additional facts on Negro education?

Name.....

From the distribution of these questionnaires there were obtained the salient facts of the early history of the pioneer education among Negroes in the State. A number of names of other persons in a position to give additional information were returned with the questionnaires. These were promptly used wherever the information needed could not be supplied from any other source. Members of the committee, moreover, visited persons in various parts and interviewed them to obtain facts not otherwise available. Wherever it was possible, the investigators consulted the available records of the State and county. In this way, however, only meager information could be obtained.

stricted to such efforts as benevolent whites were disposed to make in behalf of those Negroes who had served them acceptably as slaves. This period, therefore, antedates the emancipation of the Negroes. Because of the scarcity of the slave population of Western Virginia, the 14,000 slaves scattered among the mountainous counties came into helpful contact with their masters, among whom the institution never lost its patriarchal aspect. Although it was both unlawful and in some parts of West Virginia unpopular to instruct Negroes, these masters, a law unto themselves, undertook to impart to these bondmen some modicum of knowledge. Upon the actual emancipation in 1865, when all restraint in this respect was abrogated, benevolent white persons, moved with compassion because of the benighted condition of Negroes, volunteered to offer them instruction. The first teachers of the Negroes in West Virginia, then, were white persons. The Negroes of Jefferson, Greenbrier,

The most reliable sources were such books as the annual *Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Schools*, the *History of Education in West Virginia* (Edition of 1904), and the *History of Education in West Virginia* (Edition of 1907). Such local histories as the *Howard School of Piedmont, West Virginia*, and K. J. Anthony's *Storer College* were also helpful.

At the conclusion of this study, President John W. Davis made the celebration of Founder's Day, May 3, 1921, a convocation for rehearsing the early educational history of the State. Most of the living pioneers in this cause were invited to address this meeting, as they would doubtless under the inspiration of the occasion, set forth facts which an ordinary interview would not evoke, and thus it happened.

Of those invited Mrs. E. M. Dandridge, one of the oldest educators in the State, Mr. S. H. Guss, head of the Secondary Department of The West Virginia Collegiate Institute, and President Emeritus Byrd Prillerman responded with forceful addresses. Mrs. Dandridge gave in a very impressive way a brief account of education in Fayette County. Mr. Guss delivered an informing address on the contribution of the early teachers from Ohio, and President Emeritus Prillerman expressed with emphasis a new thought in taking up the rise of schools in the State and the organization and growth of the West Virginia Teachers' Association. Prof. J. S. Price, of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute, showed by interesting and informing charts the development of the Negro teacher and the Negro school in West Virginia.

At the conclusion of all of these efforts the facts collected were turned over to C. G. Woodson to be embodied in literary form. Prof. D. A. Lane, of the Department of English of The West Virginia Collegiate Institute, also a member of the committee, read the manuscript and suggested a few changes.

Monroe, Summers, Kanawha, Mason, and Wood counties still point with pride to these white friends, who by their indefatigable work as teachers blazed the way in a field which to Negroes had been forbidden.

During the next period there came into these same parts the Union soldier, followed and sometimes accompanied by the missionary teachers sent out by the Freedmen's Relief Commissions of the North and by the Freedmen's Bureau. The efforts of the Union soldier could not be crowned with signal success for the reason that they were sporadic and this volunteer was not in every case well prepared for such service. The greatest impetus was given the cause when missionary teachers appeared in the State. Having the spirit of sacrifice which characterized the apostles of old, they endured the hardships resulting from social proscription and crude environment. With the funds which they secured from the agencies which they represented and which they could raise among the poor freedmen and their few sympathetic white friends, these teachers of the new day built or rented shanty-like school-houses in which they proclaimed the power of education as the great leverage by which the recently emancipated race could toil up to a position of recognition in this republic. The educational achievements of this class of teachers were significant, not so much because of the actual instruction given, but rather on account of the inspiration which set the whole body of Negroes throughout the State thinking and working to secure to themselves every facility for education vouchsafed to the most highly favored element of our population.

The third period in the early education of Negroes in West Virginia was reached when these pioneer teachers had wrought well enough to enable the Negroes to help themselves. Because of the rapid development of this industrial State and the consequent influx of Negroes from other commonwealths, however, the number of Negro teachers produced on the ground proved inadequate to the demand for instructors among the increasing and expanding Negro

population of West Virginia. There went out to the other States the call for help, which was answered largely by workers from Virginia, Maryland, and Ohio. Virginia did not have many workers to spare, but from Baltimore, where, because of the liberal attitude of the whites toward the education of Negroes prior to the Civil War, a considerable group of Negroes had been trained, came a much larger number of volunteers. From Ohio, however, came as many as were obtained from both Virginia and Maryland, for the reason that, although the Negroes were early permitted to attend school in Ohio, race prejudice had not sufficiently diminished to permit them to instruct white persons in public schools. Looking out for a new field, their eyes quickly fell on the waiting harvest across the Ohio in West Virginia. Some of these workers from adjacent States, moreover, served the people not only as teachers but also as ministers of the gospel. They were largely instrumental in establishing practically all of the Methodist and Baptist churches in the State, and while they taught school during the week, they inspired and edified their congregations on Sunday.

The beginning of the education of the Negroes in West Virginia at public expense was delayed inasmuch as its first constitution, although it made provisions for free schools, did not extend the facilities of the same to the freedmen. In the report of the State Superintendent of Public Schools in 1864, therefore, he complained that the Negroes had been too long and too mercilessly deprived of this privilege. "I regret to report," said he, "that there are not schools for the children of this portion of our citizens; as the law stands I fear they will be compelled to remain in ignorance. I commend them to the favorable notice of the legislature."²

In 1866, therefore, the legislature enacted a law providing for the establishing of public schools for Negroes between the ages of six and twenty-one years. These schools

² Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1864, p. 31.

had to maintain an average attendance of sixteen pupils or be closed. As Negro communities were not very large and the number of such children small, some of them scattered throughout the State were denied the opportunity to acquire an education. This law, therefore, was amended in 1867 so as to authorize local boards of education to establish a school whenever there were more than fifteen Negro children between the ages of six and twenty-one.³

The attitude of the State approved separation of the two races in the schools, but the first two laws bearing on Negro schools did not make this point clear. Upon revising the constitution in 1872, therefore, it was specifically provided that whites and blacks should not be taught in the same school.⁴ Thereafter, however, the whites and blacks sometimes used the same school-houses. As the term consisted of only four months of twenty-two school days each, the whites would open school in September and vacate by Christmas, when the Negroes would take charge.

No further changes were made in the school law until 1899, when it was amended to the effect that the trustees in certain districts should establish one or more primary schools for Negro children between the ages of six and twenty-one years, and that said members of boards of education should establish such Negro schools whenever there were at least ten Negro pupils who resided in their district, and for a smaller number, if it were possible to do so.⁵ This gave impetus to the movement for more intensive education among Negroes throughout their communities. Often Negro children in groups of only four or five were thus trained in the backward districts, where they received sufficient inspiration to come to larger schools for more systematic training.

³ *History of Education in West Virginia* (Edition of 1907), p. 274.

⁴ See West Virginia Constitution.

⁵ *History of Education in West Virginia* (Edition of 1907), p. 274.

THE FIRST EFFORTS IN NORTHERN WEST VIRGINIA

Parkersburg enjoys the distinction of having established in this State the first school for Negroes supported by private funds. Having a desire to provide for their children the facilities of education long since denied to members of their race, a group of progressive Negroes met in Parkersburg in January, 1862, to translate their idea into action. Among these persons were Robert Thomas, Lafayette Wilson, William Sargent, R. W. Simmons, Charles Hicks, William Smith, and Matthew Thomas. They organized a board, which adopted a constitution and by-laws by which they were to be governed in carrying out this plan. They then proceeded to establish a subscription school requiring a tuition fee of one dollar a month of those who were able to pay; but poorer children were admitted free of charge. At this time there was a certain stigma attached to the idea of educating one's children at the expense of others or at the expense of the commonwealth. Persons able to pay for the instruction of their children were, therefore, willing to do so that they might not have a reputation for dependency or delinquency.⁶

The teachers first employed in Parkersburg were Sarah Trotter and Pocahontas Simmons, persons of color and Rev. S. E. Colburn, a white man. The number of pupils enrolled in the first year approached forty. To encourage Negroes in that city to avail themselves of their opportunity for their enlightenment, these teachers moved among the people from time to time, pointing out the necessity for more extensive preparation to discharge the functions of citizenship then devolving upon Negroes in their new State of freedom after the Civil War.⁷

Parkersburg enjoys also the distinction of having established the first free school for Negroes in the South. The work of the school organization of 1862 had been so well done that it was easily possible to interest school of-

⁶ *History of Education in West Virginia* (Edition of 1907), p. 268.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 269.

ficials in the extension of school privileges to Negroes. The Parkersburg *Weekly Times* of June 7, 1866, carried a notice to the effect that the first public free school for the Negro children of the city of Parkersburg, West Virginia, had been opened in the school ward lately removed. "All colored children over six years of age and under twenty-one, as the law directs," continued the editor, "are at liberty to attend and are requested to do so." Rev. S. E. Colburn was the teacher. The private school then came to an end.⁸

It does not appear that the Reverend Mr. Colburn remained for a long time in this school, for at the close of the session in 1866 we have a record of an exhibition in Bank Hall under the charge of T. J. Ferguson. Ferguson was a versatile character among the Negroes at that time, participating extensively in politics during the reconstruction period, and contending for the enlargement of freedom and opportunity for their race. The next man of consequence after Ferguson was J. L. Camp, who served the system for eleven years. He passed among his people as a man of high character, and is remembered today as one of the most successful and inspiring workers to toil among the lowly in West Virginia. The Negro schools could then be turned over to teachers of the race who, having availed themselves of the opportunities for education, had become equipped for service among their own people. With the further organization of the public school system of Parkersburg, the Negro school was brought under the direction of the local superintendent of schools and given the same sort of instruction and inspection as that provided for the white schools. In the course of time the work developed from a primary into an intermediate and then into a grammar school.

Parkersburg is unique again, moreover, in having the first high school for Negroes in the State. This advanced phase of public school work was added in 1885, and the first class was graduated in 1887. For a number of years

⁸ *The Parkersburg Weekly Times*, June 7, 1866.

the Negro schools were housed in a frame building of two rooms, which was somewhat enlarged in 1883. This, moreover, has been followed by the erection of a brick structure with the modern conveniences for public schools, facilitating especially high school instruction, which under former conditions was handicapped. A new building known as the Sumner High School was constructed there in 1886, and A. W. Pegues, a graduate of the Richmond Institute, was made its first principal. He showed himself a studious man of intellectual bearing, but after serving in Parkersburg one year he resigned to accept a chair in Shaw University in North Carolina. He has since been made the head of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum of that State.⁹

Following Professor Pegues came T. D. Scott, who served in this high school five years, reorganizing the work and enlarging the curriculum. When he resigned in 1892 he became an instructor in natural science at Wilberforce University, of which he was an alumnus. Carter Harrison Barnett, a graduate of Dennison University, became principal in 1892 and served one year. Then came John Rupert Jefferson, who took charge of the institution in 1893, a position which he has successfully filled until the present time with the exception of one year when he was supplanted by Mr. B. S. Jackson, an alumnus of Howard University, who at the close of his first year's service gave way to Mr. Jefferson.¹⁰

Clarksburg followed in the wake of Parkersburg and soon bestirred itself in the direction of the education of Negro youth. The first school was established there in 1867, with an enrolment of thirty pupils under the direction of Miss Joe Gee. For her time she was well-prepared woman, using up-to-date methods, and was very successful in the work there for two and one-half years, at the expiration of which she married. Her successful work was due in no small measure to the cooperation of Mrs. Mary Rector, Mrs. Phyllis Henderson, Mr. Fred Siren, Jr., and

⁹ These facts were obtained from local records.

¹⁰ *History of Education in West Virginia* (Edition of 1907), pp. 269-270.

Mrs. Harriet Beckwith. They did not own the school property, but conducted the work in a one-room ramshackled structure. Another group of ambitious Negroes established a school at Glen Falls, in the same county, in 1872, with Noe Johnson as the teacher.

Steps were soon taken to provide better educational facilities for Negroes in Clarksburg. On July 15, 1868, the Board of Education of that city accepted a bid of \$1,147 to erect a one-story brick building to be used as a Negro school-house. This structure was completed and occupied by the end of the school year 1870. After the school had been better housed, the work was professionally organized and thereafter intelligently supervised to standardize instruction.

In the beginning of this new day the schools were successful in having a number of popular principals to serve them efficiently. Among these may be mentioned Charles Ankrum, a pioneer teacher, who was principal of the school from 1870 to 1873, J. A. Riley, a man of the same type serving from 1873-1874, G. F. Jones, a man of little more preparation than that of his predecessors, from 1874 to 1876, W. B. Jones, an honest worker, from 1876-1878, and M. W. Grayson, who served the system well from 1878 to 1889, doing much to lay the foundation upon which others built thereafter.¹¹

The first Negro principal at Clarksburg, with extensive preparation as judged by the standards of today, was J. S. Williams, a graduate of Morgan College, who was the head of this school from 1889 to 1891. Mr. C. W. Boyd, a normal school graduate of Wilberforce University, served the system one year, that is, from 1891 to 1892, after which he became a teacher in the Charleston Negro Public Schools of which he is now the head. Then came Mr. Sherman H. Guss, the first Negro to receive a degree from Ohio State University. He made a special study of the needs of the school, forcefully presented them to the educational author-

¹¹ These facts were obtained from the local records, from Mr. S. H. Guss and from Mr. D. H. Kyle, both of whom served as teachers in Clarksburg.

ities, enlarged the school's facilities, and developed there a high school which ranks today as one of the best in the State. In 1901 Mr. Guss resigned to become instructor in Latin at the West Virginia Colored Institute, where he is still employed. He was followed by J. W. Robinson, a man of liberal and specialized education, who endeavored to maintain a high standard and to extend the influence of the Negro schools, adding much to develop an intellectual atmosphere through the enlargement of the school library and other accessories. After toiling in this city for a number of years he taught at St. Albans. He then accepted the principalship of the high school at Northfork, during his incumbency of which he has served as a member of the Advisory Council to the State Board of Education of West Virginia.

Weston did not lag far behind the other towns in making some provision for the education of Negroes. During the early years immediately following the Civil War, a white man of philanthropic tendency named Benjamin Owens taught a Negro school in an old church located not far from the head of Main Street extended in Weston. A local historian believes also that one Doctor Gordon's daughter taught in the same school. It does not appear that Owens was a man of exceptional intellectual attainment, but he had well mastered the fundamentals of education when working in the printing office of Horace Greeley in New York, where he learned to manifest interest in the man far down, and to make sacrifices for his cause. His work was so successful that the school was later established as a public institution supported by the State.

The next pioneer to lend a helping hand was George Jones who, after serving the Negroes in Weston as a teacher for a number of years, abandoned this field for a much larger work as a minister. Then came Misses Hattie Hood, Grace Rigsby, and Anna Wells, who taught in this school one or two years each. There appeared next W. P. Crump, who is referred to as the first Negro teacher of exceptional

ability to toil in Weston. He did much to develop the school and exerted a beneficent influence upon the people. After serving them as instructor for a few years, he abandoned the work for a more lucrative employment elsewhere. The next teacher of importance was Mr. Frank Jefferson who also toiled successfully in these parts. Inasmuch as the salary at that time was unusually low compared with the compensation offered in other parts, he eventually gave up that work for other service.¹²

About 1898 there came Mr. L. O. Wilson, a man of scholarship, who later became a leader of power and influence throughout the State of West Virginia. He reorganized the school, improved the methods of instruction, and supplied it with a library. He endeared himself to the people here, as he did wherever he was known; and, although he was several times offered higher salaries elsewhere, he preferred to toil among the people of Weston for less compensation. The results which he obtained, while laboring among these people, stand as a monument justifying the sacrifice which he made to serve them.¹³

The next school of importance in this part of the State was that of Piedmont, since then designated as the Howard School. Educational efforts began in this section about six years after the Civil War. Prior to that time the few Negroes coming into Piedmont were too migratory to necessitate any outlay for their education. Some efforts were made to secure their education through private instruction in the fundamentals, and a little progress therein was noted. Years later there came such substantial friends of education as the Barneses, the Masons, the Thomases, the Biases, and the Redmons. There was no organized effort to establish a real public school, however, until the year 1877, when one John Brown, being influential with one Mr. Hyde, then President of the Board of Education, induced him to provide a school-room and hire a teacher for the instruction of the Negroes. The following persons, since known as Mrs.

¹² *History of Education in West Virginia* (Edition of 1907), pp. 273-274.

¹³ These facts were obtained from local records.

Emma Stewart (Mason), Miss Mary Thomas, Mr. John Brown, Jr., Miss Alice Brown, and Mr. Harry Bias, presented themselves as the first students of this school. One Mr. Ross, a white man, was the first instructor. The next teacher of this school was a white man, and he was followed by a member of his own race.

The early history of this school published in 1919 states that the attendance was regular and that after three years of conducting a private school the board of education formally established this as a public school in the year 1880, with Mrs. Steiglar, a white woman, as instructor. The school was still held in the private building which has since been occupied by the Williams, Redmon, and Taylor families of that vicinity. After this school was conducted thus for about ten years, there came a change which marked the epoch of progress in education in Piedmont. This was the time when the white teachers were exchanged for those of Negro blood, who having more interest in their race, and treating the pupils with more sympathy, achieved much greater success than their predecessors. This school has since been much developed under the direction of Mr. H. W. Hopewell and Miss M. Brooks.¹⁴

The early schools of Shepherdstown, Martinsburg, Harper's Ferry, and other places nearby in West Virginia were in the beginning largely private, and even when established as public schools accomplished little more than their predecessors until they received an impetus from without. The first stimulus came from Miss Mann, a niece of the great educator, Horace Mann. She was sent by the Christian Commission to Bolivar, near Haper's Ferry, to open a Negro school, which in spite of militant race prejudice she maintained a year.¹⁵ Then came the establishment of Storer College by that philanthropic worker for the uplift of the Negro race, Rev. Nathan C. Brackett, a graduate of Dartmouth College, who had during the last year of the Civil War been attached to the Christian Mission of Sher-

¹⁴ *History of the Howard School, Piedmont, West Virginia, 1919, passim.*

¹⁵ This fact is stated in a letter of J. E. Robinson.

idan's army in Virginia. Fortunately the agents of the Freedmen's Bureau in charge of the educational work among Negroes designated him as the superintendent of such schools to be established in the Shenandoah Valley. While he was thus organizing and directing the education of the Negroes in this section, Mr. John Storer, of Sanford, Maine, expressed a desire to set aside a fund of ten thousand dollars for the establishment of an institution of education for the freedmen on the condition that an equal amount should be raised by other persons within a specified period. As there was an increasing interest in the uplift of the freedmen throughout the country at this time, it was an easy matter to meet this condition with a similar contribution from another quarter. The additional funds came largely from the Free Baptists, in the principles of which this institution had its setting when established.

The work was begun, by special arrangement with the Federal agents, in dilapidated houses recently abandoned by the Union troops at Harper's Ferry. With the cooperation of friends the buildings were secured through the influence of James A. Garfield, then a member of Congress, and William Fessenden, then United States Senator from Maine. Mr. and Mrs. Brackett opened this school in October, 1867, with nineteen earnest students. Since then it has become a power for good, a factor in the development of actual Christian manhood and womanhood. For a number of years it was the only graded school for Negroes in the State of West Virginia, and had to supply many of the first teachers and ministers in West Virginia and even in the adjacent portions of Maryland and Virginia. The towns nearby caught the spirit of the uplift of the Negro from what was being done for the race in Storer College. This institution, of course, had its opposition; but wherever there was a helpful attitude toward the Negro, the work which it was doing in spite of its difficulties stood out as a shining light.¹⁶

¹⁶ *History of Education in West Virginia* (Edition of 1907), pp. 264-266; and *Storer College, Brief Historical Sketch*, by K. J. Anthony.

Many of the early teachers of Storer College spent a part of their time working among Negroes in nearby communities. Mrs. Annie Dudley, a white woman connected with that institution, taught the first school at Shepherdstown. She had about twenty-five students and conducted a night and a day school. She was a well-educated, sympathetic woman who did much to lay the foundation for the Negro public school which was established there in 1872. The next popular teacher in the Eastern Panhandle was William B. Evans, who successfully taught in Shepherdstown, Keyser, Martinsburg, and Bolivar for forty-two years. His wife, Mrs. M. E. L. Evans, after beginning in Virginia, taught ten years at Storer, Summit Point, Smithfield, and Bolivar. William Arter taught thirty-two years at Kabletown, doing excellent work. The most prominent teacher that Shepherdstown had was John H. Hill. He graded the work of the school and endeavored to standardize instruction. He is still remembered in that community for the efficient work which he did. He was finally succeeded by Alexander Freeman when Mr. Hill became an instructor in the West Virginia Colored Institute, of which he later became principal.

About the same time the influence of Storer College was felt in Charles Town, the county seat of Jefferson County, where there was another settlement of Negroes. The first teacher of whom we have a record was one Enos Wilson, a Negro. He was a man of fair preparation through self-instruction. He had much enthusiasm in his work, exerted an influence for good, and won the respect of his people. In achieving his success he had the cooperation of Mr. William Hill, the grandfather of J. H. Hill. Although not well informed himself, William Hill believed in education and religion, and supported all uplift movements then taking shape among the Negroes.

Following Enos Wilson, who later became an instructor in another field, came L. L. Page, who building upon the foundation made by his predecessors rendered unusually valuable service. Like his predecessor he was a very good

man and an enthusiastic worker. The people waited upon his words, answered his summons to social service, and supported him in his efforts to promote their general welfare. This is evidenced by the fact that he served his community acceptably about twenty-five years. He was succeeded by Phillip Jackson, who found the school sufficiently well developed to necessitate the employment of three teachers.

Not far away from this point Mrs. Emma Hart Brady opened a large school at Kearneysville, in Jefferson County, in 1869. She was a popular teacher for that day, used modern methods, and successfully instructed 80 or 90 students there for two terms. This school today, as it was then, is overcrowded and in need of better facilities.^{16a}

Speaking generally, however, one must say that the education of the Negro in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia today is, after all, much more backward than in other parts. A good example of noble effort in behalf of the Negro was given, and the spirit with which workers should address themselves to the task was furnished by the founders and graduates of Storer College, but they were not supported by public sentiment among the whites of that section. Glancing at the map of West Virginia, one can readily see that the Eastern Panhandle is geographically a part of Maryland and Virginia, states which have not as yet been converted to the wisdom of making appropriations to Negro education equally as large as those providing for the education of the whites. The ardor of the successors of these early enthusiastic workers in that section, therefore, was dampened, and the results which they obtained fell far short of the aspiration of these pioneers to remake these freedmen that they might live as the citizens of a free republic.

A mere glance at the Negro schools in the northern section will show that these beginnings were confined to the Baltimore and Ohio railroad and its branches. There were not many Negroes living in the other northern counties of

^{16a} These facts were obtained from Mrs. Brady's daughter.

the State. In 1878, Moundsville in Marshall County welcomed a Negro woman, of Smithfield, Ohio, who taught its Negro public school. She had a fair preparation and rendered valuable service with the cooperation of such patrons as Mrs. Rollen, William Love, and Thomas McCoy. Because of the small Negro population in this town, however, this school has not rapidly developed, although the work of the teachers employed there has been efficient, as has been evidenced by their well-prepared eighth-grade students who have done excellently in more advanced schools.¹⁷

A little farther north, in Wheeling in Ohio County, Negro education had a better opportunity. Wheeling is geographically a part of Pennsylvania, and its attitude toward education has been determined to a large extent by the impetus given the cause in that progressive commonwealth. The spirit of fairness in dealing with the man far down in urban communities nearby, moreover, has been reflected to a certain extent in the policies of the educational authorities of Wheeling in dealing with the Negro. At an early date the Negroes of Wheeling were provided with elementary schools. Referring to the increasing interest in Negro education in 1866, State Superintendent White said: "An excellent school has been started in Wheeling and a few are reported in other places. The school-house in Wheeling cost about \$2500. The school is conducted by a teacher of their own color and the behavior and scholarship of the pupils are worthy of imitation."

Here, as in the case of most Negro schools near the Ohio River and even in the central portion of the State, their first teachers came from Ohio, where they had the opportunity to attend the high schools and even colleges of high order, although they were not able to over-ride the race prejudice which barred them from the teaching corps in that free State. In Wheeling, moreover, the salaries paid were much more inviting than in many towns of West Virginia, and that city could easily employ the best equipped

¹⁷ Facts obtained from a former teacher at this place, Freida Campbell.

Negro teachers, who in the beginning came largely from Ohio.

The Wheeling school, then, fortunate in having the service of such teachers, developed about as rapidly as possible under the circumstances of a limited Negro population; for Wheeling is not in a Negro section, and the industrial aspect of the city not being inviting to Negro workers, the population of color did not rapidly increase. Because of the small enumeration thereby resulting, more extensive facilities could not be provided even when the board of education was favorably inclined. In 1897, however, when the pupils of all of the grades reached about three hundred, the city established the Lincoln High School, which had its development under the late J. McHenry Jones. He called to his assistance well-equipped teachers and succeeded in offering to the Negroes of that city practically the same course of study taught in the white high school, though at times some classes were too small to justify instruction in certain phases of specialized work.¹⁸

BLAZING THE WAY IN THE CENTRAL COUNTIES

A more extensive movement for the education of the Negroes was taking place during these years in the central part of West Virginia, following the line of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway and the New and Kanawha Rivers. This work did not arouse equal interest in all of the counties along these routes, but in Greenbrier, Monroe, Summers, Fayette, Kanawha, Cabell and Mason Counties, reached a point of development deserving mention. It can be readily observed that this progress in education resulted largely from the early settlements of Negroes in the east-central counties of the State and from the influx of Negro laborers into the New and the Kanawha valleys to work on the salt works, and later from the migration of Negroes to the coal mines opened along the Chesapeake and Ohio and the Kanawha and Michigan Railroads. Negro schools, with

¹⁸ *History of Education in West Virginia* (Edition of 1907), p. 243.

such few exceptions as those at Marshes, in Raleigh County, at Madison and Uneeda in Boone County, at Red Sulphur Springs in Monroe County, and at Fayetteville in Fayette County, were unsuccessful when removed from these important thoroughfares.

The earliest teaching of the Negroes in the east-central counties of the State came as a result of the sympathetic interests of benevolent slaveholders who, living in a part of a State with a natural endowment unfavorable to the institution of slavery, failed as a whole to follow the fortunes of the slaveholders near the Atlantic Coast, and, hoping to see the ultimate extinction of the institution by gradual emancipation, gave the Negroes an opportunity for such preparation as they would need to discharge the functions of citizenship. Immediately after the War, when there was no public opinion proscribing such benevolence, sympathetic white persons privately instructed Negroes here and there. Such was the case at White Sulphur, long since known as a summer resort, attracting from afar persons of aristocratic bearing who, coming into contact with the Negro servants whom the resort required, not only proved helpful to them by way of contact, but gave them assistance in realizing limited educational aspirations. The private school in White Sulphur finally gave place to one established by the district. It had the support of the best white citizens of the community and was maintained largely by the enterprise of progressive Negroes seeking to provide for their children all facilities for education offered elsewhere. About the same time, that is, in 1866, the Freedmen's Bureau had a school in Lewisburg, under the direction of one Miss Woodford. After serving the people well for a year or two, this institution gave place to a public school.¹⁹

In Ronceverte, where the Negro population increased more rapidly and where these persons of color made more economic progress than in the case of White Sulphur, Negro education had a better chance. After passing through the

¹⁹ Facts obtained from local records.

stage of such private instruction as white persons interested in the man far down felt disposed to give, an actual school was opened in the early seventies with an enrolment of thirty pupils. The first teacher was Mr. Robert Keys of Charleston, West Virginia. Mr. Keys was well prepared for that time and served there creditably for two years. Mr. Keys had the support of such well-known families as the Crumps, the Capertons, the Gees, the Petersons, the Eldridges, the Browns, the Eubanks, the Williamses and the Hayneses. There served also Miss Carr of Harrisonburg, Virginia, and Benjamin Perkins of Lewisburg, West Virginia. Mr. Robert D. Riddle was also one of the early instructors. Mr. Riddle retired from teaching several years ago, but is still living in the city of Ronceverte, where he has distinguished himself as a successful truck farmer. Some years later Rev. R. D. W. Meadows, who has for a number of years served as a missionary in West Virginia, labored as a teacher in these parts, leaving a favorable impression on the system. The school was first taught in the small one-room house privately owned. When it increased in later years, it was found necessary to divide it so as to teach a part of the school in the Negro Baptist Church until the larger building could be provided. It is now a well-graded and junior high school with many modern facilities.²⁰

Union, in Monroe County, was not unlike the other large settlements of this section having considerable Negro population. There was at times even as early as 1855 a healthy sentiment in favor of the improvement of the few slaves there, and this was not lost after the Civil War had ended. So general was the interest in behalf of the Negroes that this proved to be a most favorable community. Union was one of the first towns in that section to establish a public school for Negroes. At first there was some difficulty in having well prepared Negro teachers in the county itself; for one John Didell, a white man, was the first teacher of the public school. He had the support of such respectable

²⁰ These facts were obtained from the teachers and oldest citizens of the town, who actually participated in these early efforts.

Negroes as Julius Smalls, Andrew Bailey, Malinda Campbell, Henry Campbell, James Clair, Christopher Whitlock, and Charles Campbell. Two of the products of this school are Miss Charlotte Campbell and Bishop M. W. Clair of the Methodist Episcopal Church.²¹ Among those who came in later to stimulate the first efforts of the teachers were Mrs. Leota Moss Claire, now a resident of Charleston, West Virginia, and J. M. Riddle who, after having taught at Sinks Grove in Monroe county and preached for several years in various parts of West Virginia, engaged in the ministry in Ohio and later went to California, where he is now serving as a State Missionary of the Baptist church.

In Summers County, the large settlement of Negroes was at Hinton. This place had a Negro school of fifteen pupils as early as 1878, with one T. J. Trinkle as instructor. He was a man of limited education, but prepared to help those who had not made advancement in the fundamentals. What he lacked in education he made up in moral influence, and his career is still remembered as a success. The cause of education among Negroes of Hinton was fearlessly supported by E. J. Pack and C. H. Payne, once a teacher in a rural district in this county himself and later a minister and a public servant in this country and abroad. The school in Hinton began in a one-room structure rented for four months, the length of the school term. Teachers were paid at the rate of \$15, \$25 and \$30 a month for third, second, and first grade certificates respectively. It has recently developed into a well-graded school having a junior high school running nine months, with teachers paid at the rate of a combined monthly salary of \$600.

The Negro public school experienced a later development in Fayette County than in the case of the counties nearer to the eastern border of the State or nearer the Ohio River; for, unlike those parts which had a larger number of slaves than the central and northern counties, Fayette County never before the eighties had Negro groups in

²¹ These facts were supplied by Mary Campbell, an old citizen of Union.

sufficiently large numbers to warrant an outlay in education at public expense. The beginning of Negro education in this county was consequent upon the migration of Negroes to the coal fields. Many of them were interested in education and became its best patrons. Among those were Samuel Morgan, A. W. Slaughter, J. H. Shelton, J. D. Shelton, Aaron Chiles, Thomas Chiles, Randal Booker, Thomas Bradley, Oliver Jones, Ballard Rotan, Anderson Rotan, R. J. Perkins, Aaron Calloway, Mat Jordan, Henry Robinson, S. H. Hughes, Wellington Henderson, John Carlington, James Caul, George Moss, and Pleasant Thomas.

The first school established in Fayette County was that at Montgomery, in 1879. It was opened by H. B. Rice, a pioneer teacher in Kanawha Valley who had completed his education at Hampton Institute. For three years Mr. Rice taught in one room of the home of Thomas H. Norman, an intelligent and progressive Negro who, realizing the importance of education as a leverage in the uplift of his people, early made sacrifices for the establishment of this school. The school was then taught in a shanty. Inasmuch as at the end of one year, that is, by 1883, the Negro population had rapidly increased, this uncomfortable building was very much over-crowded and the school had to be divided so that part of it could be taught in the Baptist church nearby, until it secured better quarters. Among the teachers who toiled in this district were Mrs. A. G. Payne, Mrs. Anna Banks, Misses Sadie Howell, Julia Norman, Annie Parker, M. E. Eubank, Mrs. F. D. Railey, Mr. George Cuzzins, Mrs. M. A. W. Thompson, Miss L. O. Hopkins, Miss Lizzie Meadows, Mr. J. W. Scott, Miss Rebecca I. Bullard, Miss Mattie Payne Trent, Mrs. Lola M. Lavender Mack, Miss Nellie M. Lewis, Miss Ida M. King and Mr. H. H. Railey. The last mentioned not only attained distinction as the principal of this school, but so impressed his constituents as to be elected to the West Virginia Legislature.²²

²² *History of Education in West Virginia* (Edition of 1904), *Negro Education in Fayette County*.

The impetus given to education at Montgomery was productive of desirable results in other towns in Fayette County. The second Negro school to be established in Fayette County was that Quinimont in 1880. A storm of protest made the life of the teacher almost intolerable, although he was a white man. The school-house had to be guarded, but Rev. M. S. G. Abbot taught it two years. Then came Mr. R. D. Riddle, mentioned above in connection with the school at Ronceverte.²³

At Eagle, not far from Montgomery, there settled groups of Negroes sufficiently large to necessitate educational facilities for their children. A large one-room school followed and this had not been established very long before it was necessary to employ two teachers. Among the prominent laborers in this field were Mrs. Mary Wilson-Johnson and Mrs. A. G. Payne. This work experienced most extensive growth under the direction of Miss A. L. Norman, Miss M. E. Shelton and Mr. A. C. Page.

There soon followed schools at Fire Creek, Hawk's Nest, Stone Cliff, Nuttallburg, Sewell, Fayetteville, and elsewhere in Fayette County. Prominent among the teachers serving in these towns were D. W. Calloway, A. T. Calloway, Miss L. E. Perry, Mrs. Lizzie Davis, Miss Bertha Morton, Mr. James Washington, Mrs. F. Donnelly Bailey, Mrs. H. C. A. Washington, Mrs. J. B. Jordan-Campbell, C. G. Woodson, and Mrs. E. M. Dandridge. These teachers did not generally serve a long period in any one place, as there was a difference in salary in various districts and the best teachers usually sought the most lucrative positions; and sometimes, in the battle for bread and butter, the rather keen competition in certain districts led to the periodical dismissal of teachers without justifiable cause.

To those mentioned above, however, is due the credit for the development of the Negro schools in Fayette County. This is especially true of Mrs. E. M. Dandridge, who doubtless had a more beneficent influence in Fayette County than any teacher of color who toiled there. She taught for

²³ Facts obtained from old citizens and former teachers.

twenty-five years at Quinnimont, where she was not only a teacher but a moving spirit in all things promoting the social, moral, and religious welfare of the Negroes of her own and adjacent communities. She was fortunate in having a natural endowment superior to that of most persons and enjoyed, moreover, educational advantages considered exceptional for most Negroes of that day. She still lives to continue a noble work well begun and to complete a useful career in the same county where she cast her lot years ago.

For almost a generation earlier than this, Negro education had been launched with much better beginnings in the county of Kanawha. There were no free schools in West Virginia until 1866, but as in the case of several other settlements in the State, private schools were conducted for Negroes immediately after their emancipation. There had come into the county of Kanawha Rev. F. C. James, an Ohio Negro, the father of C. H. James, the wealthy wholesale produce merchant of Charleston. This pioneer was a man of fundamental education and unusual native ability. He opened at Chapel Hollow, or Salines, two and one-half miles from Malden, in 1865, probably the first Negro school in the Kanawha Valley. He thereafter taught elsewhere and later became the founder of the First Baptist Church of Charleston. The following year Miss Lucy James from Gallia County, Ohio, opened the first Negro school in Charleston. Among the first patrons were Matthew Dillon, Lewis Rogers, Alexander Payne, Lewis Jones, Perry Harden, Julius Whiting, and Harvey Morris. Mrs. Landonia Sims had charge of the school one year also. At this time Rev. Charles O. Fisher, a Methodist Episcopal minister of Maryland, had a private and select school which was later merged with the free public school. Between 1866 and 1869 Rev. J. W. Dansberry, another Methodist Episcopal minister from Baltimore, Maryland, belonging as did Mr. Fisher to the Washington Conference, served also as a teacher while preaching in this State. The Simpson M. E. Church, their main charge, was being developed during these years

and was in 1867 housed in a comfortable building on Dickinson and Quarrier Streets. Mr. C. O. Fisher was a well-educated man, but Mr. Dansberry depended largely on natural attainments.

Rev. I. V. Bryant, who has toiled for many years in the Ohio Valley as a Baptist minister, started his public career as a teacher at Baker's Fort school, about two and one-half miles from Charleston. Rev. Harvey Morris, another minister, opened a public school at Sissonsville in 1873, Rev. J. C. Taylor another at Crown Hill in 1882, and not long thereafter this school was attended by such distinguished persons as Mrs. M. A. W. Thompson and Dr. A. Clayton Powell of New York City. This work in Kanawha County was accelerated too by the assistance from the Freedmen's Bureau which sent to this section C. H. Howard, brother of Gen. O. O. Howard, the head of the Freedmen's Bureau, to inspect the field, and later sent one Mr. Sharp to teach in Charleston.²⁴

One of the first schools in Kanawha County was organized at Malden. Immediately after the Civil War this town had a much larger and more promising Negro population than the city of Charleston. Many Negroes had been brought to Kanawha County, and after their freedom many others came to labor in the salt works. This private school at Malden was conducted by Mr. William Davis, the first teacher of Booker T. Washington, who a few years before had come from Halesford, Virginia, to Malden.

Mr. Davis's career is more than interesting. He was born in Columbus, Ohio, November 27, 1848, remained there until his thirteenth year, spending parts of the years 1861, 1862, 1863 in Chillicothe. During these years he mastered the fundamentals of an English education. He moved back to Columbus in the fall of 1863. On December 18th of that year Mr. Davis enlisted in the Union "Light Guard," called "Lincoln's Body Guard," at Columbus. He served in the army eighteen months and was discharged at Camp Todd

²⁴ These facts were obtained from old citizens and from local records. See also J. P. Hale's *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers*, 385.

Barracks, Washington, D. C., June 24, 1865. He then returned to Columbus and after remaining there about a month went to Cincinnati, from which he proceeded to run on a boat from Gallipolis to Charleston for about a month.

About this time the people of Malden, under the wise guidance of Lewis Rice, a beloved pioneer minister, better known among the early Negroes of the State as Father Rice because of his persistent efforts in behalf of religion and education, had decided to establish a school for the education of their children. Mr. William Davis thereupon abandoned his work on the boat and became the teacher of this private school, established at Malden in the home of Father Rice, in 1865. As the school had to be conducted in the very bed-room of this philanthropist, it was necessary for him to take down his bed in the morning and bring in the benches, which would be replaced in the evening by the bed in its turn. The school was next held in the same church thereafter constructed, and finally in the schoolroom provided at public expense, as one of the schools of the county.

About the only white person who seemed to give any encouragement to the education of Negroes at Malden was General Lewis Ruffner. It seems, however, that his interest was not sufficient to provide those facilities necessary to ease the burden of this pioneer teacher. When we think, however, that out of this school came such useful teachers as William T. McKinney, H. B. Rice, and one of the world's greatest educators, Booker T. Washington, we must conclude that it was a success.

Mr. Davis's worth as a teacher rapidly extended through the Kanawha Valley. He was chosen by the authorities of Charleston to take charge of their Negro schools in 1871, when it was just a two-room affair. In this field, however, Mr. Davis had been preceded as mentioned above by noble workers in behalf of the Negroes. Building upon the foundation which other Negroes had laid, he soon had a school of four instead of two rooms, and before he ceased to be principal it had increased to five, with a well-graded system, standardized instruction, and up-to-date methods. His

early assistants in this work were Charles P. Keys, P. B. Burbridge, Harry Payne, James Bullard, and William T. McKinney.

Mr. Davis received some cooperation from a few white persons, the chief one of whom was Mr. Edward Moore of Pennsylvania, the father of Spencer Moore, now a bookseller in the city of Charleston. Mr. Edward Moore taught a select school for Negroes and helped the cause considerably. Mr. Davis served about twenty-four years as principal, although he was a member of the teaching staff for a much longer period, serving altogether forty-seven years.²⁵

Because of the unsettled policy of the Charleston public schools they changed principals every year or two, to the detriment of the system and progress of the student body. Rev. J. W. Dansbury served for a while as principal, and H. B. Rice, who entered the service as an assistant in 1888, became principal some time later and served about four years. Mr. Davis, who had been demoted to a subordinate position, was then reinstated, but not long thereafter came Mr. C. W. Boyd, who had rendered valuable service in Clarksburg and had later found employment in the public schools of Charleston. He succeeded Mr. Davis as principal. At the close of one year, however, Mr. Rice was reinstated and served for a number of years, at the expiration of which Mr. Boyd again became principal and remained in the position long enough to give some stability to the procedure and plans of the system and to secure the confidence of the patrons of the schools. Some of the valuable assistants serving during this period were Mr. William B. Ross, Miss Blanche Jeffries, Mrs. Fannie Cobb Carter and Byrd Prillerman, whose career as a teacher includes a period of short and valuable service in the Charleston public schools.²⁶

At what is now Institute, in Union district, there was established in the fall of 1872 another Negro school, opened

²⁵ This is largely Mr. Davis's own statement verified by several other authorities and by local records.

²⁶ These statements are supported by the records of the Board of Education of Charleston.

on the subscription basis in the home of Mrs. Mollie Berry, née Cabell. Mrs. Berry was the first teacher of this school. The building is occupied at present by a Mr. James and owned now by Mrs. Berry's daughter, Mrs. Cornie Robinson. In the spring of 1873, Mr. William Scott Brown, who had by marriage connected himself with the Cabell family, was elected trustee in the Union district, and by his efforts a Jenny Lind one-room building, small and creditably furnished, was erected on a lot purchased by the board of education from Mrs. Cabell for twenty-five dollars, on the site now occupied by the family of Mr. Solomon Brown of Institute. The trustees chose Mr. Samuel Cabell as the first Negro public school teacher of the district. The method of qualifying as a teacher was purely perfunctory, as a license to teach was easily obtained by nominal examination. The term was four months.²⁷ The line of teachers from 1886 may be traced from records of the board of education of the district. Short tenure of office for a few years seems to have been the rule until the recent years dating from 1918. It is the opinion of Mr. W. A. Brown and others of the old system that the quality of the local school has grown better. The establishment of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute at this point is considered the greatest factor contributing to such development.²⁸

²⁷ In the summer of 1874 there was circulated among the teachers of this school a petition in behalf of Miss Bertha Chapelle, who was chosen to teach the second term of the high school. In this way the last month of the session was taught with but one scholar attending. In the year 1875 Miss Mollie Berry was chosen to teach this school, and she was followed in 1876 by Mr. Frank C. James, who had taught previously the first public school in the county at Kanawha City, in 1866. He was succeeded in 1877 by Mr. Pitt Campbell, who was followed by Mrs. Bettie Cabell in 1878. She was in turn succeeded by Mr. Brack Cabell the following year. In 1880 the school was moved to the site now occupied by the two-room village school, and was called the Piney Road School. Mr. J. B. Cabell was chosen teacher for the first year.

In 1881 Miss Emma Ferguson was selected teacher. Miss Ferguson, now Mrs. Emma Jones, is still an active teacher. In 1882 Miss Addie Wells taught this school. She was followed by Miss Annie Cozzins. In 1884 W. C. Cabell was in charge. He was succeeded in 1885 by Otho Wells and he by Mrs. Julia Brown in 1886.

²⁸ These facts were obtained from old citizens and from local records.

The next school of consequence established on Kanawha River was the Langston School of Point Pleasant, in Mason County. This institution was organized in 1867 by Eli Coleman, its first teacher. He toiled for seven years in the one-room frame structure at the end of Sixth Street. At the very beginning the enrolment was sixty-four, some of the students being adults. The school continued as an ungraded establishment for a number of years, working against many handicaps, until the independent district was established and provided better facilities. This school then had a board of five trustees, three whites and two Negroes, and was incorporated into the city system by the Board of Education and placed under the supervision of the Superintendent of the Point Pleasant Public Schools.

Some of the early teachers following Mr. Coleman were J. H. Rickman, later principal of the colored school in Middleport, Ohio, P. H. Williams, Mrs. Lillie Chambers, Florence Ghee, Fannie Smith and Lida Fitch. In 1885 the school had grown sufficiently to justify the employment of two teachers. These were then L. W. Johnson as principal and Miss Hattie C. Jordan as his assistant. Mr. Johnson served until 1890 when he was succeeded by Miss Lola Freeman as principal with Samuel Jordan as assistant for one year. The Board of Education then secured the services of J. E. Campbell as principal. Under him the school moved into a five-story brick structure vacated by a white school when better quarters for the latter had been provided. The Negro school was then named the Langston Academy in honor of John Mercer Langston, a Negro congressman and public official of wide reputation. Miss Iva Wilson of Gallipolis succeeded Mr. Campbell as principal, with Miss Jordan as assistant. Later there came as principal Mr. F. C. Smith, A. W. Puller, and Ralph W. White, and finally the efficient and scholarly Isaiah L. Scott, a promising youth cut off before he had a chance to manifest his worth to the world.²⁹

²⁹ For a more detailed account, see the History of Education in West Virginia, pp. 272-273.

Somewhat later than this, another group of Negro schools developed in Cabell County, the first and most important being in Guyandotte and Barboursville. These schools followed as a result of employment of Negroes on the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad, terminating in the seventies at the Ohio River, where it gave rise to the city of Huntington, West Virginia, laid out in 1870. Most of these Negroes, prominent among whom were James Woodson, Nelson Barnett, and W. O. James, came from Virginia. The first school established near Huntington was opened in the log house on Cemetery Hill, one and a half miles east of the town and a little west of Guyandotte. The Negro school enumeration was so small that the two towns had to cooperate in maintaining one school.

The teacher first employed was Mrs. Julia Jones, a lady who had most of the rudiments of education. Some old citizens refer to James Liggins as the first teacher in this community. In this precarious status of stunted support the school did not undergo any striking development during the first years. Not until 1882, some years after the school had been removed to Huntington itself, was there any notable change. The first impetus which marked an epoch in the development of this school came with the employment of Mr. and Mrs. W. F. James, products of the Ohio school system. They were for their time well-prepared teachers of foresight, who had the ability to arouse interest and inspire the people. Mr. James at once entered upon the task of the thorough reorganization of the school and by 1886 brought the institution to the rank of that of the grammar school, beginning at the same time some advanced classes commonly taught in the high schools. He was an earnest worker, willing to sacrifice everything for the good of the cause. While thus spending his energy as a sacrifice for many he passed away respected by his pupils and honored by the patrons of the school. His wife continued for a number of years thereafter to render the system the same efficient service as the popular primary teacher upon which

the success of the work of the higher grades largely depended, until she passed away in 1899.

The school then had the services of Mr. Ramsey and Mr. J. B. Cabell who seemingly gave some impetus to the forward movement. Another epoch in the history of the school was reached when W. T. McKinney became principal in 1891. With the cooperation of the leading Negroes of the city he succeeded in inducing the board of education to build on the corner of Sixteenth Street and Eighth Avenue the Douglass High School, which in its first form, prior to the making of certain additions, consisted of a well-built six-room school costing several thousand dollars. Mr. McKinney added the high school course and in the year 1893 graduated the first class of three. Following Mr. McKinney there served the system efficiently as principals C. H. Barnett from 1890 to 1900, C. G. Woodson from 1900 to 1903, and R. P. Sims from 1903 to 1906. J. W. Scott, who succeeded Mr. Sims, is today principal of this school, ranking throughout the State as one of its foremost educators.

Following along the line of Wayne County there soon appeared a school at Ceredo and another at Fort Gay, just across the river from Louisa, Kentucky. Under Mrs. Pogue, a woman of ambition and efficiency, this school accomplished much good and exerted an influence throughout that county. A number of students trained through the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades later attended schools in other parts and made good records because of the thorough training they first received. At Fort Gay in this same county, however, no such desirable results were achieved because of the small Negro population, the inability to secure teachers for the small amount paid, and the tendency on the part of local trustees there to change their teachers. Mrs. Cora Brooks Smith, a graduate of the Ironton High School, who toiled there a number of years, and Miss Susie Woodson, an alumnus of the Douglass High School of Huntington, West Virginia, who also labored in the same field, should be given at least passing mention in any sketch

setting forth the achievements in education among the Negroes in Wayne County.

THE STRIVINGS IN SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA

In southern West Virginia there were at first few schools for Negroes, inasmuch as the small Negro groups here and there did not warrant the outlay. What instruction such Negroes received prior to 1888 was largely private. That year an epoch was marked in the development of the southern portion of the State by the completion of the main line of the Norfolk and Western Railroad, opening up one of the largest coal fields in the United States. As the discontented Negroes of Virginia and North Carolina were eager for industrial opportunities in the mining regions of the Appalachian Mountains, these coal fields attracted them in large numbers. Bluefield, which developed in a few years from a barren field in 1888 to a town of almost ten thousand by 1900, indicates how rapidly the population there increased. Other large centers of industry, like Elkhorn, Northfork, Welch, and Keystone, soon became more than ordinary mining towns.

When these places had worn off the rough edges of frontier settlement and directed their attention to economic and social welfare, they naturally clamored for education. The first school for whites was established in Bluefield in 1889 and one for the Negroes, with Gordon Madson as teacher, followed in 1890. Prominent among the pioneering teachers in Bluefield were Mr. A. J. Smith and Mrs. L. O. McGhee, who began their work in a one-room log building in the suburbs of the town. About the end of the nineties there were Negro schools in most of the important mining towns along the Norfolk and Western Railroad between Bluefield and Williamson.

The Negro school in Bluefield had an interesting history. The school, of course, was poorly equipped and the teachers were not then adequately paid, but they continued their work two sessions of five months each. In the third year

the school was moved to another town called Cooperstown where it was housed in a two-room building more comfortable than the first structure, but not a modern establishment. As it was situated in crowded quarters, the children had no playground. Several years thereafter, the work was continued by Mr. Patterson and Mrs. E. O. Smith. When, however, a large Negro population settled in North Bluefield it was necessary to provide there a two-room building between them. In this school-house taught Mr. P. J. Carter with an enrolment of about thirty pupils. Not long thereafter the building in the suburb of Cooperstown was burned. Two additional rooms were then annexed to that of North Bluefield, but before that could be occupied it was also destroyed in the same way. The Board of Education then opened a school, in a building used first as a bar-room, then as a pool-room, and finally as a court-house. Thereafter an old store-room was used for four years.

There were then four teachers in Bluefield, Mr. H. Smith, Mr. T. P. Wright, Mesdames Lane, and E. C. Smith. In time Mr. Wright and Mr. Smith were replaced by Miss H. W. Booze, Mr. W. A. Saunders and Mr. R. A. McDonald. Mr. Saunders remained for one year and then was followed by Mr. G. W. Hatter who was in his turn succeeded by Mr. R. F. Douglass, who served as principal four years. Mr. Douglass had the board of education appropriate funds for a six-room building and increase the corps of teachers to five. By raising funds in the community through entertainments and the like, the teachers purchased a library of 100 volumes. In later years Mr. Douglas was followed by Mr. E. L. Rand, a graduate of Lincoln University.

At Keystone in 1890 Mr. J. A. Brown opened its first Negro school with an enrolment of about twenty-five. He was a man of fair education, but could not accomplish very much because the term was only three months in length. The school was held in one of the private houses belonging to the coal company and later in the church. In subsequent

years there was very much development in the right direction, which proved the quality of the teachers employed in the school. Among these were Rev. J. Whittico, Mrs. Josephine D. Cannady, Mary A. McSwain, and Maggie Anderson. This school was later combined to form the Keystone-Eckman graded school, and now has an eight months' term and well-qualified teachers.³⁰ A school had been established at Eckman in 1893 by James Knox Smith.

In November, 1892, one Moses Sanders at Northfork opened a school with an enrolment of twenty. He had only a rudimentary education. He served at Northfork for three terms using methods considered fair for that time, and his work, as a whole, was regarded as successful. He had there the support of such a useful person as Henry Glenn, now a member of the board of education.³¹ This school has later developed into a standard elementary graded school and a junior and senior high school of more than one hundred students. It has done well under the reorganization and direction of the efficient J. W. Robinson.

HIGHER EDUCATION OF NEGROES

It did not require much argument to show that the schools could not make much progress without some provision for developing its own teaching force. The State Superintendent was early authorized, therefore, to arrange with some school in the State for the professional training of Negro teachers. For a number of years the State depended largely upon such normal training as could be given at Storer College at Harper's Ferry. The reports of the State Superintendent of Schools carried honorable mention from period to period of the successful work being accomplished there under the direction of Dr. N. C. Brackett, which work was the only effort for secondary education for Negroes in the State at that time. This was given an impetus by a measure introduced in the legislature by Judge

³⁰ These facts were obtained from local records.

³¹ These facts were obtained from J. W. Robinson, the principal of the school.

James H. Ferguson of Charleston, providing for an arrangement with Storer College by which eighteen persons as candidates for teachers in this State should be given free tuition at that institution. As this school was in the extreme northeastern section of the State and was geographically a part of Maryland and Virginia, however, the Negroes of the central and southern portions of Virginia soon began the movement for the establishment of a Negro school providing for normal instruction nearer home. Mr. William Davis and his corps of teachers in Charleston, West Virginia, were among the first in West Virginia to direct attention to this crying need. Impetus was also given the movement by the rapid development of higher grades in Point Pleasant, Saint Albans, Montgomery, Lewisburg and Eckman, necessitating better trained teachers. In the summers of 1890, 1891, and 1892, Byrd Prillerman and H. B. Rice undertook to supply this need by conducting a summer school in the city of Charleston. Still further stimulus came later from the establishment of promising high schools in Parkersburg, Wheeling, Clarksburg, Huntington, and Charleston.

During this same period, however, a systematic effort was being made to interest a larger group in the more efficient training of Negro leaders. The Baptists of the State, led by C. H. Payne, undertook to establish a college in West Virginia. Payne toured the State in behalf of the enterprise, setting forth the urgent need for such an institution and showing how this objective could be attained. Rallying to this call, the people of the State raised a sum adequate to purchase a site, which was soon sought by authority of the Baptists of the State. They selected the abandoned building and grounds of Shelton College, overlooking Saint Albans. Because of race prejudice, however, the people of that town started such a protest that the owners of the property were induced not to sell the site for such an unpopular purpose.

A more successful effort, however, was soon made. Talk-

ing with Superintendent Morgan about the necessity for higher education for the Negroes of West Virginia, Byrd Prillerman obtained from this official the promise to support a movement to supply this need. Superintendent Morgan furthermore directed Prillerman to Governor Fleming to take up with him the same proposal. The Governor was in a receptive mood and informed Prillerman, moreover, that this problem could be more easily solved than he had at first thought, for the reason that such an institution could be so established as to benefit by the Morrill Land Grant Act intended to subsidize, with funds from the proceeds of public lands, institutions largely devoted to instruction in Agriculture. Like the Negro Baptists of the State, Governor Fleming thought of purchasing Shelton College in St. Albans; but inasmuch as that place was not available the State government had to take more serious action. As Governor Fleming said he would give his approval to a bill for the establishment of such an institution, the only problem to be then solved was to find persons to pilot such a measure through the legislature. Superintendent Morgan outlined the plans for this legislation. He showed how necessary it was to secure the support of Mr. C. C. Watts and Judge James H. Ferguson. Byrd Prillerman used his influence in securing the support of Mr. Watts and C. H. Payne induced Judge Ferguson to lend the cause a helping hand. These gentlemen framed the measure which, after some unnecessary debate and unsuccessful opposition from friends of Storer College, they piloted through the legislature in 1891 as a measure establishing the West Virginia Colored Institute.

The first head of this institution was James E. Campbell, a graduate of the Pomeroy High School. After laying the foundation and popularizing the work to some extent in the central portion of the State, Campbell resigned and was succeeded by J. H. Hill, who rendered very efficient service until 1899, when he was succeeded by J. McHenry Jones, under whom the school considerably expanded. Fol-

lowing him came Byrd Prillerman, a man beloved by the people of West Virginia. He had already been a successful teacher of English in this school. He then served the institution as president for ten years, emphasizing the high ideals of Christian character as the essentials in the preparation of youth. In 1915 a collegiate course was established at this institution and its name was changed to that of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute. In 1919 Byrd Prillerman was succeeded by John W. Davis, under whom the institution is progressing with renewed vigor in its new field as a reorganized college furnishing facilities for education not offered elsewhere for the youth of West Virginia.

The influx of Negroes into the southern counties of the State, which necessitated the establishment of many elementary schools, caused at the same time a demand for the extension of the facilities of pedagogic training of the advanced order provided in the West Virginia Colored Institute, which was not at first easily accessible to the people of southern West Virginia. Acting upon the memorials, praying that this need be supplied, the legislature established the Bluefield Colored Institute in 1895. Mr. Hamilton Hatter was made the first principal and upon him devolved the task of organizing this institution. After serving the institution efficiently until 1906 he retired, and was succeeded by Mr. R. P. Sims, who had formerly been an efficient and popular assistant under Mr. Hatter at this institution. Mr. Sims has acceptably filled this position until the present time.

THE WEST VIRGINIA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

To promote education and to encourage interest in their particular work the Negro teachers of the State soon deemed it wise to take steps for more thorough cooperation of the whole teaching corps of West Virginia. White and Negro teachers were then admitted to the same teachers' institutes and in certain parts were encouraged to participate in the general discussions; but believing that they could more successfully cooperate through organizations

of their own, the teachers in Charleston, in 1891, appointed from their own reading circle a committee to organize a State Teachers' Association. This committee was composed of H. B. Rice, P. B. Burbridge and Byrd Prillerman. The meeting was invited by Byrd Prillerman, as secretary, to meet at the Simpson M. E. Church in Charleston. More than fifty teachers and race leaders attended. Inasmuch as H. B. Rice, the chairman of the committee, was absent on account of illness, P. B. Burbridge, whose name was second on the list of the committee, called the meeting to order, and delivered the address of welcome. William T. McKinney of Huntington was elected temporary chairman. The Association was then permanently organized by naming Byrd Prillerman its first president and Mrs. Rhoda Weaver its first secretary. Among the most important addresses was that of C. H. Payne, an influential and educated minister then engaged in religious and editorial work at Montgomery, and that of B. S. Morgan, State Superintendent of Public Schools. Others attending the meeting were Dr. W. T. Merchant, Mrs. E. M. Dandridge, Mrs. M. A. Washington-Thompson, F. C. Smith, and J. R. Jefferson.³²

³² The following resolutions adopted at the meeting of the Teachers' Association in 1891 were suggestive:

1. That all persons of high literary standing, who are not teachers, be admitted as honorary members.
2. That we highly commend the committee of arrangements for their success in bringing together so many teachers and professional persons, and for making the meeting of so much importance and interest.
3. That we recognize in the death of Prof. W. B. Ross, A.M., who died at his post at Greenville, Texas, August 20, 1891, the loss of one of our ripest scholars and most efficient educators.
4. That we tender our thanks to Hon. B. S. Morgan, State Superintendent, for the interest he manifested in the Association and the able address he delivered before us.
5. That the Summer School for Teachers, as has been taught by Professors H. B. Rice and Byrd Prillerman, has been a means of elevating the standard of our teachers, and should be continued.
6. That we indorse the action of the State Legislature in establishing the West Virginia Colored Institute, and that we will do all in our power to make this school a success.
7. That we make *The Pioneer* the official organ of the Association.
8. That we tender our thanks to the Pastor and Congregation for the use of this Church, and also to Mr. I. C. Cabell for his valuable services as organist.

The second meeting of this Association assembled according to arrangement in Parkersburg, West Virginia. The work of the Association had by this time been taken more seriously by the teachers throughout the State. They adopted a constitution with a preamble which stated that the aim of the Association was "to elevate the character and advance the interest of the profession of teaching, and to promote the cause of popular education in the State of West Virginia." An address was delivered by State Superintendent of Schools B. S. Morgan, and papers were read by Mrs. E. M. Dandridge of Quinnimont, Miss Blanche Jeffries of Charleston, Miss Coralie Franklin of Storer College, and Principal J. E. Campbell of the West Virginia Colored Institute. Among the persons attending but not appearing on the program were C. H. Barnett, who had been recently graduated by Dennison University in Ohio; C. H. Payne, then well known in the State of West Virginia; Dr. W. S. Kearney, a graduate of the medical college of Shaw University, then beginning his practice in Huntington; J. R. Jefferson, F. C. Smith and O. A. Wells. Booker T. Washington was at this time made an honorary member. Byrd Prillerman was unanimously elected president.

The third annual meeting of the Association was held at Parkersburg, West Virginia, in 1893. For some reason there were not many teachers present. It was held at the Baptist Church of that city, with President Byrd Prillerman presiding. The address of welcome was delivered by Mr. J. R. Jefferson, to the words of whom Mr. C. W. Boyd of Charleston responded. At this meeting Principal J. E. Campbell of the West Virginia Colored Institute was made president of the Association, with C. W. Boyd, J. R. Jefferson, Miss Mary F. Norman as vice-presidents, Miss Clara Thomas as secretary, Miss E. D. Webster as treasurer, and Mrs. Susie James as historian. Two of the most prominent persons participating in this meeting were J. McHenry Jones, then principal of the high school in Wheel-

The Committee was composed of J. R. Jefferson, Mary M. Brown, Dr. W. T. Merchant, C. H. Payne, Miss Luella Ferguson and Atty. M. H. Jones.

ing, and J. H. Hill, an instructor in the West Virginia Colored Institute.

The fourth annual meeting assembled at Montgomery. J. E. Campbell being absent, Professor C. W. Boyd presided. The meeting to a certain extent was a successful one. A Thanksgiving sermon was preached by Dr. C. H. Payne. Dr. H. F. Gamble read a paper on "Science in Common School Education." The Association took high ground by adopting a resolution urging a compulsory school law. A committee consisting of C. W. Boyd, Rev. G. B. Howard, J. W. Scott, John H. Hill, and Byrd Prillerman, was appointed to urge the State to make an appropriation for the teaching fund of the West Virginia Colored Institute. Byrd Prillerman was again elected President and Miss Fannie Cobb was chosen secretary.

The fifth annual meeting of the Association was held at Hinton. An important feature of the meeting was the method of entertainment, in that the citizens of Hinton gave the teachers a free banquet. Still more significant was the address delivered by Dr. J. E. Jones of the Richmond Theological Seminary. Byrd Prillerman, the President, himself delivered an important address giving valuable facts as to the conditions of the schools of the State, evoking widely extended comment. The most prominent persons attending were J. H. Hill, Principal of the West Virginia Colored Institute, G. B. Howard, Miss Mary Booze, W. T. McKinney, and Miss G. E. Fulks.³³

The sixth annual meeting was held in Charleston in the House of Delegates, November 26-27, 1896. This was the largest and most interesting meeting hitherto held. Welcome addresses were delivered by C. W. Boyd of the Garnet High School, Mr. George L. Laidley, Superintendent of the Charleston Public Schools, and Governor W. A. McCorkle. Responses to the words of welcome were delivered by J. H. Hill, principal of the West Virginia Col-

³³ This account of the early meetings of the West Virginia Teachers' Association is found in the Twelfth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Schools of West Virginia, 1895-1896, pp. 111-113.

ored Institute, Hamilton Hatter, principal of the Bluefield Colored Institute, and C. H. Payne. Other prominent persons who attended the meeting were Honorable V. A. Lewis, P. F. Jones, Colonel B. W. Byrne, Professor A. L. Wade, J. R. Jefferson, Rev. D. W. Shaw, Dr. G. W. Holley, P. B. Burbridge, Dr. H. F. Gamble, Dr. L. B. Washington, Mrs. E. M. Dandridge, Mrs. M. A. W. Thompson and Mrs. Byrd Prillerman. Officers elected were: President, Byrd Prillerman; Vice Presidents, J. R. Jefferson, Mrs. E. M. Dandridge, C. W. Boyd; Secretary, Miss Mary J. Jones; Treasurer, Mrs. M. A. W. Thompson; Historian, Mr. George L. Cuzzins.

After this meeting of such unusual interest and unexpected success, the West Virginia Teachers' Association reached its purely pedagogic setting. It ceased to be the organization concerned with the general social uplift, of all, and thereafter restricted its program largely to educational matters. This was due not so much to any desire on the part of the teachers to discontinue cooperation with the clergy, but rather to direct attention primarily to the problems of education. Ministers, thereafter, figured less conspicuously in the conventions, except so far as their interests were coincident with those of the teaching body.

There have been twenty-eight sessions of the Association held at Charleston, Huntington,³⁴ Parkersburg, Hinton, St. Albans, Bluefield, Institute, Kimball, and Harper's Ferry. The session which was scheduled for Clarksburg in 1900 was called off because of the outbreak of small-pox just before the time for the session to be convened.

Eleven well-known persons have served as president of the Association. Byrd Prillerman served nine terms, C. W. Boyd one, J. R. Jefferson one, J. W. Scott three, H. H. Railey one, Hamilton Hatter one, R. P. Sims two, E. L. Rann two, J. W. Moss two, A. W. Curtis two, John F. J.

³⁴ At the Huntington meeting in 1892 an original poem on Thanksgiving Day was read by Miss Leota Moss. The poem was written by Paul Lawrence Dunbar for this special occasion at the request of Byrd Prillerman, the president. The price paid Dunbar for this service was \$2.00.

Clark two, and H. L. Dickason, the present incumbent, two. Those who have served as secretary are Miss Rhoda E. Weaver, Miss M. Blanche Jeffries, Miss Clara Thomas, Miss Fannie C. Cobb, Miss Mary J. Jones, and Miss C. Ruth Campbell, and Miss H. Pryor.

Among the prominent persons who have addressed the Association are Hon. C. H. Payne, Ex-Governor George W. Atkinson, Ex-Governor William A. McCorkle, and State Superintendents B. S. Morgan, Virgil A. Lewis, James Russell Trotter, and M. P. Shawkey. Among other distinguished persons have been Dr. J. E. Jones, Prof. George William Cook, J. McHenry Jones, Prof. Kelly Miller, Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, Prof. William Pickens, Mr. William A. Joiner, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, Miss Nannie H. Burroughs, John W. Davis, and Dr. J. E. Gregg.³⁵

C. G. WOODSON

³⁵ The more recent record of the West Virginia Teachers' Association was given by Byrd Prillerman, who served that body nine terms as president.