THE HISTORY OF THE EDUCATION OF BLACK CITIZENS IN HALIFAX COUNTY: 1866 — 1969

EDWARDS • ROYSTER • BATES

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W. C. EDWARDS
1900–1979

A MEMORIAL

William Charles Edwards was born in Pensacola, Florida, on December 14, 1900. He was the first of three children born to Willie H. Edwards and Elodia Birch.

Mr. Edwards received his elementary and secondary education in the Pensacola Public Schools. He later married the former Willie Gertrude Alexander and to this union three children were born, Clarence Emanuel, Viola Juanita, and Cecil Earl I.

At an early age he accepted the Seventh Day Adventist doctrine which later impelled him to attend Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, where he received a junior college degree in Theology. The realization of this goal was made possible by the finances he acquired as a craftsman while matriculating at Oakwood.

Mr. Edwards later attended Virginia State College* in Petersburg, Virginia, where he continued to work to obtain financial aid and pursue a degree in secondary education. He later completed the requirements for a Master's Degree in Supervision and Administration from Hampton Institute. He did post-graduate studies at Morgan State College, Emanuel College, and the University of Michigan.

Mr. Edwards began his education career as a teacher in Baltimore. Following that, he taught school in Powhatan County, Virginia. Later, he moved to Halifax, Virginia, where he met and married the former Laura Bethel Carr. She gave birth to two daughters, Elodia Pannell, and Yvonne Alzada.

In 1934, he began his career as principal of Halifax County Training School, later renamed Mary M. Bethune High School, and remained as principal until 1966.

*Currently named Virginia State University

Perhaps his greatest accomplishments as principal were (1) the development of a comprehensive high school from about seventeen course offerings to approximately sixty courses and (2) an expansion of the building program.

Mr. Edwards was dedicated to the task of providing optimal educational opportunities to all students. Generally, he was appreciated for his sincerity, ambition and versatility. His faculty and staff respected him for his strength of character, progressive ideas, and impartiality. But, foremost, he was a man of truth and a person in whom others could always place their trust.

From 1966 to 1967, Mr. Edwards served as general supervisor of schools in Halifax County and the city of South Boston. His ambition and dedication toward educational excellence led to his appointment in 1972 as the first Black person to serve on the Halifax County School Board. He served in this capacity until his untimely death on April 10, 1979. As a school board member, his primary concern was providing equality in education and employment.

Mr. Edwards was a most faithful and concerned family man. In the opinion of his family, he was the epitome of dual parenthood. He served as a mother and father of his two youngest children after the death of his wife. They admired him most for his qualities of dependability, truthfulness, and his devotion to and love for family solidarity.

He attempted to instill positive attitudes in his children by providing them with cultural and educational experiences. Some of these included visits to Knoxville College, Tuskegee Institute, Oakwood College, Hampton Institute, Norfolk State University, Virginia State University, and Florida A&M University. He also took them to

historical attractions within these areas and attended musical concerts featuring Camilla Williams and other well known artists.

In addition to executing his responsibilities as a high school principal, he found time to fulfill his dual parent role by providing his children with musical instructions for playing the piano, trumpet, violin and flute and also instructions in writing musical and grammatical compositions. During his children's college careers, he maintained a weekly writing schedule to both daughters with no deviation and insisted on reciprocal action on the part of both.

Among his idiosyncracies were the accumulation of factual and historical materials such as magazines, newspapers and books and adherence to a strict time schedule. Upon entering his office or study, an outsider may have made the assumption that his desk was untidy or disorganized, but, to the contrary, he was most organized and efficient. In fact, he could give specific directions for locating any material he wanted or needed, or he himself could locate this same material without any natural or artificial light.

Mr. Edwards' secret ambition was to become a medical doctor but financial circumstances prevented this. However, his second ambition to become a successful high school principal speaks for itself. His educational inspiration continued right up to the time of his death. One of his last wishes was that the younger authors complete the writing of the book and that any profits should be donated to the Mary M. Bethune Alumni and Associates for scholarships.

DEDICATION

In recognition of a long and faithful life of service to the cause of Black Education in Halifax County, Virginia, this work is sincerely dedicated to Mrs. Willie A. Sykes, a teacher in the county schools from 1919 to 1933 and supervisor of black elementary schools from 1933 to 1966. Many lives have been shaped through her dedication and personal sacrifices in the cause of education for Black children.

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The authors have done an excellent job in tracing the history of the education of Black residents in Halifax County. They described quite vividly the trials and tribulations of Black persons who struggled untiredly for equality of education and, who, regardless of the adverse conditions under which they had to receive this education, became successful citizens. The success story of the Black citizens in Halifax County should serve as an incentive to other Black persons throughout the Nation to obtain high standards and a good education.

In reading about the history of the education of those individuals in Halifax County, one cannot help but become aware of the scarcity of information available on the education of Black citizens in America. It is hoped, therefore, that this book will motivate other educators and alumni groups to embark upon similar projects nationally.

Gwendolyn H. Austin, Ed.D.
U.S. Office of Education

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

This book was conceived when Emmett O. Green visited Halifax County Senior High School following integration and discovered that the many trophies, awards, certificates and other honors won by Black students at Mary M. Bethune High were not on display. Their absence caused him to question whether much or most of the other history of Black students in the county was being lost. His vision of how to best attack these problems was to establish an alumni association which would support efforts to deal with these and other problems. Thus, the idea of writing of the education of Black students was conceived.

During, or just prior to, the alumni association's first reunion in June, 1974, the Association asked W. C. Edwards to conduct the research and write this history. Mr. Edwards agreed and solicited Lazarus Bates to assist him in this endeavor; thus, the birth of the Edwards and Bates Project, as Mr. Edwards called it.

Mr. Edwards was approached to do the writing for several reasons: The first is that he had served as Principal of Halifax Training School and Mary M. Bethune High School from 1934 to 1966 when he retired. The second was the fact that he was retired, had a great deal of time he could devote to the task, and was extremely interested in the assignment.

Mr. Bates, who replaced Mr. Edwards as principal of Halifax Training School, was probably the next most knowledgeable person in the county about the education for Black people. Following integration in 1969, Mr. Bates served as Principal of the Halifax County Junior High School until his retirement in 1978. During his six years of researching and fact finding, W. C. Edwards' health began to deteriorate. Consequently, the Association asked Preston M. Royster to take the lead in completing the

research and to write the book. He was approached because of his active involvement with the Association, and because he was a former student of Halifax Training School. The Book is based on facts found in several places:

1. Halifax County School Board records were carefully reviewed.
2. Books, periodicals, newspapers and other documents were reviewed.
3. South Boston City Council records were scrutinized.
4. Several libraries in Richmond, Va. were visited to follow leads and gather additional data.
5. Numerous interviews were conducted with older residents and previous residents of the County.

The oral history provided by citizens who had good, accurate memories of facts passed on to them by parents, neighbors, friends and relatives was extremely helpful. Gathering data orally was at least the most intriguing, if not the most valuable, approach to gathering the needed facts. One factor that made most of these interviews so exciting was the number of times that a story told by one person was repeated by another person across town.

This book is basically a straight-forward presentation of facts without opinion or slant. The reader will note with interest, however, that on occasion, the writers' feelings about a situation, or an event, or a circumstance seeped through. For example, it is stated as an allegation that the absence of records for considerable periods of time was an indication that school officials were not interested in education for Black children. The absence of these records is indeed an important part of the story of the education of Black children in Halifax County.

The success of Halifax County's Black children and parents is illustrated in the last three chapters. These chapters show the ever increasing number of Black children who were graduated; they show the full array of degreed and certified teachers who taught these children, and they display a healthy number of graduates and their success as measured by the normal american criteria for achievement.

Even though the title of this book reads "1866 - 1969", the earliest record of public schooling for Black children indicates that public schools were not started for them until nearly 1900.

Chapter 1

1

HISTORY OF HALIFAX COUNTY

Vital Characteristics

Halifax County, situated in the south central part of Virginia, lies entirely within the Piedmont Plateau and joins North Carolina. It ranges from approximately 300 to 700 feet above sea level. It is roughly triangular in shape, having its southern and western boundaries formed by straight lines and the northern and eastern boundaries formed by streams. The territory consists of 814 square miles, or 520,960 acres.[1] Among all the counties in Virginia, Halifax ranks fourth in area and second in farm acreage.[2] Seasonal temperatures vary considerably with wide differences in the mean summer and winter temperatures. The winters are comparatively short and sufficiently mild to permit outdoor activities most of the time. The average frost free period is 210 days.[3]

The county is a lineal descendant of the Isle of Wight, one of the eight original "shires" into which the Colony of Virginia was divided in 1643. Halifax County was formed from Lunenburg County in 1752 which had been created from Surry, and Surry from the original Isle of Wight.[4] At the time Halifax County was divided from it, Lunenburg included all the territory that is now Pittsylvania, Henry, Franklin and Patrick Counties.

Initially, Halifax County was settled by people of English descent. While the population of white people increased, there was a correlating growth in the Black population until, by 1920, nearly half the population, 48.5%, was Black. At that time the total population was 41,365. By 1970, the population had decreased somewhat to 36,965 with a slight shift to 40% Black, 59% white, and 1% other.[5] The population of the city and towns range from 8,000 in South Boston to about 250 in Clover.

The county seat is the incorporated town of Halifax. It had been known as Houston prior to 1920 and as Banister prior to 1890. Other major centers in the county include one city, South Boston, four other incorporated towns, and several unincorporated communities. The larger communities are Alton, Clarkton, Cluster Springs, Crystal Hill, Denniston, Engram, Harmony, Leda, Lennig, Meadville, Nathalie, News Ferry, Omega, Paces, Republican Grove, Riverdale, and Turbeville. In addition to Halifax, the towns are Clover, Scottsburg, and Virgilina. Virgilina is located in the southwestern part of the county on the boundary between Virginia and North Carolina, hence the derivation.

Virgilina is known for copper mining, and until the late 1940's, gold in relatively small quantities was mined nearby as well. However, throughout the county, agriculture is the principal industry. Most activities center around the production and marketing of tobacco. The county ranked *second* in the United States in the production of tobacco as early as 1850 and currently maintains a high ranking in the production of this crop. Many of the Black residents who farm are sharecroppers. This results in rather low annual incomes. This, in addition to the fact that few non-farm jobs existed

until very recently, has led many young Black people to relocate in northern cities where opportunities are greater. Those Black people who remain in the county are engaged in medicine, dentistry, teaching, preaching, business, and industry, in addition to farming.

The Revolutionary Era

Halifax County found a place of importance and prominence in America's development before the Revolution. The Dan River, which flows west-to-east just south of the center of Halifax County, was a very important traffic artery in days when roads were few and poor.[6] Because of the Dan River, South Boston became a major tobacco market since tobacco was hauled by boat to market on this easily navigable stream.[7]

During the revolution, Halifax again became a place of importance and recognition. Even though no battles were fought on the county's soil during the war, it is believed that the military retreat by the Continental Army south into Halifax County and across the Dan River was an important maneuver in the Revolutionary War. Spurgeon Compton wrote that Cornwallis burned and depleted his supplies in an effort to overtake General Nathaniel Green of the Continental Army as Green was retreating to gather more troops and to prepare for eventual battle.[8] Even with the load of General Cornwallis' forces lightened, General Green crossed the Dan at Boyd's Ferry and left Cornwallis humiliated. Scholars believe "the successful retreat across the Dan was the turning point in the revolution and that the war was won at Boyd's Ferry."[9] The retreat to the Dan was a "masterful maneuver . . . that led from King's

Mountain to Yorktown - - and victory!"[10]

Additionally, Halifax County contributed to the development of the nation by providing 800 recruits.[11] Major General Wade Hampton,[12] of the Continental Army, and Nathaniel Terry,[13] who served in the Convention of 1776 that framed the Constitution of Virginia, were also from Halifax County.

Civil War, Race Relations and Leadership

Even though Halifax County was the site of a significant maneuver of the Revolutionary War, it had little blood spilled on its soil and mighty few scars inflicted on its landscape during the Civil War. In fact, it hosted only one Civil War battle, which took place along the Staunton River near U. S. Route 360.[14]

The mention of Black people up to this point is conspicuous in its absence. Before the Civil War, Black people were slaves and were not considered to be citizens. They were not allowed to participate in the war, and, by law, they were not allowed to be educated.

Leadership and Racial Policies

In spite of the above fact, some Black residents of the area were learned and influential, and the County provided Black and White leadership to the State and Federal governments. For example, Reverend Henderson, a Black man, was the first postmaster of South Boston, according to history passed on to Ms. Dolly Ragland, a retired teacher turned Historian. The Post Office that he supervised was located at the southwest juncture of the Dan River and U. S. Route 501 approximately where Boyd's

Fruit Stand is presently located.

William "Bill" Tuck was born near Virgilina on Buckshoals Farm. Later he served as a state legislator from 1924 - 1932, as the Governor of Virginia from 1946 - 1950, and as a U. S. Representative from 1952 - 1969. Governor Tuck, as did many other white leaders from Halifax County and the South, developed and carried out policies that mitigated against growth and opportunity for Black citizens as will be noted in the following sections.

Asa Coleman, who was born a slave in North Carolina in 1845, came to Halifax County in 1868. In 1871 he was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates, and served until 1873. In addition to serving with distinction in the House, it is well known that he made great contributions to Halifax County. He was a successful farmer and reared several children who became well-educated leaders in local political and economic affairs.

Dr. Luther P. Foster, who was born and reared in Clover, served as Treasurer and President of Virginia Normal Institute (Virginia State University) from 1937 to 1949.

While Halifax County made contributions to the revolutionary effort before the Civil War, it became one of the largest slave-holding counties in the state of Virginia.[15] This fact basically sets the tenor for understanding the niche in which racial conditions, treatment, and practices were shaped and the degree of resistance from which educational advancement and Black progress have grown. It seems quite safe to say that devastating conditions for the freedmen in Halifax County were much the same as for freedmen in any other southern community. For example, Mrs. Ross Chandler

told with pride of the success of her son Willie in escaping from a white mob that had tied, bound and placed the rope to lynch him in the mid-thirties. The lynching mob was in search of a man who had raped a white woman. The group apparently made the assumption that the attacker was Black. Willie, being the first Black person spotted by the lynchmen, was apprehended and prepared for the noose. It was discovered later that the woman who reported the assault had married the white man who had sexually abused her.

Constitutional Amendment

Almost as soon as the County, and the State of Virginia, raised concerns about the possibility of educating both Black and white children in the same classroom, moves were made to prevent such possibilities. Evidence of these feelings had their impact in 1901 and 1902. The Constitutional Convention called to change the State's constitution, ratified Section 140 which provided that "whites and colored children shall not be taught in the same school."[16] The same attitudes surprisingly prevailed in 1968 when the Federal Circuit Court ruled that the schools must integrate during the 1969 - school year (see Appendix B). Segregationist groups formed which again advocated perpetrating the objectives of the 1901 - 02 Constitutional Convention. In fact, they voted 304,161 to 146,164 to make tuition grants available to students so they could select segregated schools at will.[17]

Policies to establish and maintain segregation were not sporadic or limited to education. They were thorough and consistent and intended to legislate over all areas of society including housing and employment.

Housing Ordinance

In 1910, the South Boston Town Council was petitioned to establish requirements for separate housing policies. R. E. Jordon, a town leader and realtor, requested on behalf of the School Board and the patrons of the public schools as well as himself, "that the Council take the necessary action to put a stop to the building of homes by colored people nearby and around the white public buildings in the town."[18] R. A. Penick moved and the entire Council seconded a segregation ordinance and also a new building ordinance with instructions to the Ordinance Committee to "proceed at once to establish the necessary lines" to implement the ordinance.

Sex Bias

Discrimination existed not only against Black people but also against white women in Halifax County. The County school board "resolved that after this school year (1939 - 1940) no white women shall be employed as a teacher in any of the white schools of the County."[19] One can speculate that this rule was established because the board was made up of men only.

Police Service

The discriminatory nature of the police service from the early 1930's to the late 1960's was apparent in two ways: (1) police service provided to largely Black groups was conspicuously inefficient or absent, and (2) there were no regularly employed Black policemen. The discrepancy in service became particularly noticeable at Black high school events and at sizeable Black gatherings. The authors can recall

numerous times when the Sheriff was requested to provide deputies at high school events. The reaction to the request was affirmative, but service was often very disappointing. The Sheriff usually resorted to excuses for his failure to provide patrol and security services at basketball games or at other events. Excuses often were as follows: "An unanticipated fight, break-in, etc., occurred in Clover or Scottsburg which required all of our deputies."

After numerous attempts to provide escort, patrol and security at Black events failed, Black leaders decided to find a Black resident who was discreet enough and capable of performing security duties and to recommend that he be deputized to serve at Black functions. In the mid-thirties "Top" Harris was selected and deputized and supplied with weapon, bullets, badge, uniform and handcuffs. Mr. Harris was given full authority to make arrest of any citizen, including whites, who broke the law or exhibited misconduct on the premises he was patroling.

Mr. Harris served at the conventions of the Banister Baptist Association, Sunnyside Baptist Association, and the Staunton River Baptist Association, and at other events in the County. He served with a clear understanding that he would receive no pay for his duties. As a result, groups served by him would "pass the hat" to raise monies to compensate him. Following Mr. Harris, there was no other Black law enforcement official in the County until Charlie Reed Hill was hired as a patrolman in South Boston around 1959 or 1960.

Salaries

The principle of "equal pay for equal work" was not practiced when determining the compensation of Black and white school personnel. A. M. Richardson said "the differential between the salaries of Negroes and white was based on race alone."[20] A member of the South Boston School Board declared that, "it did not cost as much for a Negro to live as it did for a white person."[21]

The policies governing pay for personnel were not only unequal for Black and white but were also lower than surrounding counties according to the comparison of neighboring counties as presented in the following figures.

A. V. Richardson

Figure 1

HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' SALARIES - 1934 - 35[22]

Average Annual Salary

	WHITE		BLACK	
COUNTIES	Male	Female	Male	Female
Charlotte	$1,280	$800	$600	-----
Halifax	1,822		720	
Henry	1,612		626	
Patrick	976	640		
Pittsylvania	1,356	848	380	

Figure 2

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' SALARIES - 1938 - 39[23]

Maximum Salary

	WHITE		BLACK	
COUNTIES	Male	Female	Male	Female
Charlotte	$2,000	$1,229	$1,080	$520
Halifax	1,125	900	675	585
Henry	1,237	740	480	
Patrick	920	720		
Pittsylvania	2,455	1,150	336	336

Minimum Salary

Charlotte	720	640	600	520
Halifax	900	823	495	450
Henry	684	684	480	480
Patrick	800	680		
Pittsylvania	688	688	336	336

Counties in these figures are Virginia Counties in the Fifth District

The salaries for Black and white elementary supervisors were also unequal. In the 1941 - 42 school year the white supervisor received a salary of $1,800 and $450 for travel costs, but the Black supervisor, Mrs. Willie A. Sykes, received only $1,250 salary and $250 for travel costs.[24] These discrepancies existed even though the number of students served by Black educators was much larger than the number served by white ones.

The discrepancies in pay continued until 1946, when the School Board directed the Superintendent "to see that all teachers are paid the same based on training and experience."[25]

Unequal pay, along with other humiliating treatment, undoubtedly affected the education provided to Black students. Low and unequal salaries likely caused many of the better-prepared teachers to seek employment where pay conditions were better, thus increasing attrition and reducing continuity in instruction.

Student Expenditure

In 1937 - 38, " the cost for educating a white child was $58.00 per year, and $31.90 for Black children."[26]

Similarly, in 1946 the County paid disproportionate amounts for the education of Black and white children.

In 1946, Morris Markey of *McCalls* indicated that:

> The annual cost for the high school education of a white child is $82.73 (higher than the appropriation in some areas of New York State) while only $41.67 per student is spent upon the Negroes. But do not jump to the conclusion that this difference is by mali-

> cious intent, he hastily reminds the reader. Two factors are responsible for it, he adds. First, the large Central High School for Negroes is much more economical to operate than the several small high schools for white children . . . . . The Negro teacher, he concluded, is at the bottom of the economic scale in the profession - though she receives only slightly less than the white teacher in Halifax - and so the profession is not attractive. As a consequence, classes in the Negro schools are markedly larger than in the white schools with a corresponding (though undesired) reduction in teacher cost to the schools as a whole.[27]

Desegregation

From the end of the Civil War to 1969, when the schools were finally desegregated, County leadership was consistent in its policies of maintaining a separate society and separate schools for the races. The practices used might have changed, but in many ways these new practices made the fight more difficult for Black citizens. The tactics changed from those that were violent and openly hostile to those that were legal and economic. Court costs and lawyers' fees to fight these injustices were prohibitive.

Legally, the desegregation process began in Halifax County with a sweeping edict in the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision in 1954. Opposition from high level political leadership was just as sweeping and clear. For example, within days WHLF radio quoted U. S. Representative William M. Tuck as making statements against schooling Black and white children together. During ensuing months several school districts in Virginia closed their schools to avoid mixing the races in classrooms. These

were some of the "massive resistance" tactics which were led by Virginia. They included Prince Edward County, Norfolk and others. Following the initial shock and resistance, efforts to integrate schools in Halifax County took place in bargaining sessions between NAACP and County officials, in the hallowed chambers of the School Board, County Supervisors and the Courts.

Except for the bewilderment and continual wondering about when and how schools would integrate in accordance with the law, outward expressions were rather low-keyed until Judge Robert R. Merhige, Jr., United States District Court, ordered the schools to desegregate mid-year 1969 - 70 (see appendices A and B).

Following the above decision, there were expressions of both calm and resistance. Earlier remarks of J. Lindsay Almond, Governor of Virginia, for example, were republished: "The highest court in the land has spoken. I trust that Virginia will approach the question realistically and endeavor to work out some rational adjustment."[28] In spite of the Governor's expressions of compliance and calm, Representative Tuck spoke again: "If they (localities) don't stand with us then I say make 'em. We cannot compromise. . . . . If you ever let them integrate anywhere, the whole state will be integrated in a short time."[29]

Like it or not, by this time the struggle in Halifax County was about over. Earlier statements by the leading politicians seemed to have lost their impact. This includes the vigorous efforts and expressions that follow: "State Senator J. D. Hagood of Clover and Delegate Howard P. Anderson joined in the barrage of telegrams to the Governor's office. . . . " "Other messages went fron Walter L. Grant of the *Danville Register and Bee*, and Lynn Shelton of the *Halifax Gazette*, Post 325 Commander of

the Danville American Legion, James Patty, Wyatt Hall and Nathan Lantor of South Boston, Ira L. Harding of Halifax and numerous others of the county." The partial text of Senator Hagood's telegram follows: "I cannot overemphasize the importance of maintaining segregation of the races in our school system. . . ."[30] The Judge's decision withstood further appeals and the final chapter of segregated education in Halifax County came to a close.

In summary, the reader has been fed an adequate dose of demography, social history and the leadership that shaped the educational practices and programs in Halifax County and South Boston to appreciate the aspirations and advancements of Black residents. One should have noticed the degree to which economic opportunities were systematically denied and that separate and unequal schooling was fostered, preserved and energetically protected. Certainly the reader must appreciate, as never before, and respect the desires and abilities of Black citizens to achieve and advance, not because of the circumstances, but in spite of them. This advancement was due to the fact "they are, taken as a whole, an industrious, affectionate race, with an eager desire for instruction. . . ."[31] as stated by Reverend Wellington E. Webb in his 1888 report.

The status and advancement of Black residents in this county are noble examples of oppressed, humiliated and denied people pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps. They not only pulled themselves up by their bootstraps, first, they had to make their boots.

Footnotes

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16. *Richmond Times Dispatch*, January 9, 1956, p. 1.
17. Ibid., p. 3.
18. South Boston Council Minutes, January 1910, p. 232 - 233.
19. Halifax County School Board minutes, July 14, 1939, p. 56.

20. A. M. Richardson, "The Development of Negro Education in Virginia", Phi Delta *Kappan*, 1976, p. 67.

21. South Boston School Board Minutes, 19__, p. 67.

22. State Superintendent's Report, 1934 - 35.

23. Halifax County Superintendent's Report, 1938 - 39.

24. Halifax County School Board Minutes, April 28, 1941, p. 92 - 93.

25. Ibid., March 26, 1945, p. 213.

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27. Morris Markey, "Our High Schools: Where America Comes From", *McCalls*, New York, N. Y., May 1946, p. 98.

28. *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Richmond, Va., August 28, 1958, p. 1A.

29. Ibid., p. 3.

30. *Halifax Gazette*, South Boston, Va., August 28, 1958, p. 1A.

31. Wellington E. Webb (Reverend), "Antrim Church and Mission School for Colored People", December 1888. (A Report to the Antrim Parish of the Episcopal Church.)

Chapter 2

2

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The idea of self help was not a local concern only, it permeated the south. Its account is seen in the fact that most schools originated under Church sponsorship. Today many of these schools are still in existence. For example, Virginia Seminary and College at Lynchburg; St. Paul's College, Lawrenceville, Virginia; Virginia Union University at Richmond and countless others of religious origin can be named throughout the South.

So, it was the Church Associations in Halifax County which gave birth and impetus to education in the County for Black residents. The neighborhood schools were established first. There was no type of public transportation; therefore, neighborhood schools were built where people could raise a little money in joint effort. Some neighborhoods used old houses which were not occupied by the owners. Sometimes preachers, teachers or just interested persons united the neighborhood around an education effort that resulted in a new school site. Landowners usually gave land to the effort; others allowed these schools to be built on a promise that land belonged to the building so long as the school existed in the neighborhood. Afterwards the land and the building would be left to the landowner when the school discontinued by moving of people or for whatever the reason.

The influence of the church had a carry-over value. In addition to giving impetus to education for Negro residents, these students often were encouraged to pursue studies at a high school, usually a boarding, out-of-county school. As a result, a high percentage of the better educated Black students were trained in private institutions which provided a strong religious indoctrination. This is particularly true of the earliest schools for Black students in Halifax County. There is evidence that schooling was provided for Black persons about ten years after the emancipation.

Antrim Church and Mission School

The Antrim Church and Mission School for newly freed slaves had its beginning prior to 1877.[1] A report by Wellington E. Webb on this school, dated 1888, states that the Commission of Home Missions to Colored People was charged with directing school activities prior to 1877.[2] No doubt this represents the earliest formal schooling for Black residents in Halifax County, Virginia. The school provided education that was "free to all."[3] It covered grades as high as was required for any student. It was built largely from donations made by local people, and Rev. W. E. Webb, head, David Webb, teacher, and an occasional part-time person operated the Church and school at an annual cost that did not exceed eight hundred dollars.[4] The report indicates that the cross-shaped school had one-hundred and fifty (150) scholars in attendance in 1887.

The Antrim Church and Mission School was operated by the Antrim Parish of the Episcopal Church. At the time, the Parish was coterminous with Halifax County which consisted of the territories of Lunenburg, Pittsylvania, Henry, Franklin and

Patrick counties. It was located just South of the Halifax Country Club, east on the first road off of Route 501. The area was called Ivy Cliff. Freedmen constituted a majority of the population of the County during that time. The Halifax Training School Chapter of the New Farmers of America (NFA) was later named for David A. Webb, who, according to Pocahontas Wight Edmonds, a local county writer-historian, later served on the board of the Halifax Normal Institute.

According to Ms. Dolly Ragland of South Boston, who is a retired teacher turned historian, the foundation of this structure still exists. The scant and incomplete records do not indicate when this Church and school ceased to operate but its operation is not recalled after 1900.

Various negative and degrading views have been expressed about freed slaves and Negroes in later times. It has been said that they were lazy, shiftless, undependable and incapable of learning. The Webb report to the Antrim Parish which was commenting on Negroes just out of slavery and severe suppression was contrarily complimentary of those in attendance at the Mission School. Reverend Webb stated that:

> they are, taken as a whole, an industrious, affectionate race, with an eager desire for instruction; yet too poor in many instances to avail themselves properly of the advantages offered. . . . Poverty and suffering to the extent these people have had to endure them, are well calculated to chill those genial feelings which, by common consent, are a part of the African character. Nevertheless, they are still there. And as for complaints of incapacity, immorality and dishonesty, while they are not without some foundation in fact, these defects of character are not as general, or in great a degree as the outside world supposes. They (those views) would certainly be materially modified, if those who make them could have experience with the ignorance and incompetency of the serving class of other countries.[5]

McKinley Institute

The McKinley Institute, largely remembered as the Meadville School, was founded by Professor Caleb G. Robinson who was born in Jamaica in August, 1864.[6] After studying at Calabar College, Kingston, from 1887 - 1889 he moved to Richmond and attended Virginia Union University. Later he settled at Meadville (Halifax County) where he formed the school in 1893. It was attended mostly by girls, and, at one point, by one hundred and ninety-four girls who were taught by teachers brought in from the North.[7] It was a boarding school, but the scant records do not reveal what fee was charged. Numerous citizens do recall, however, that "monies to maintain this institute were personal donations solicited by Professor Robinson." The curriculum consisted of reading, writing, art and industrial arts according to Mrs. Susie Hall Royster, a life long resident of the County. Even though this school was not founded by a religious order, the religious influence was present because Professor Robinson was a man of great religious faith. He was a legend around the county and throughout Virginia. His favorite passage of scripture was: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."[8] The school was quite successful until it was accidentally destroyed by fire by a woman boiling some clothes. Because of his advanced age, Professor Robinson's effort to rebuild the school was largely unsuccessful. However, portions of the school that he did reconstruct still stand. According to the dedication program of October 10, 1978:

> He also stood tall physically and intellectually among men of his time. When the professor passed away he was laid to rest on the same spot of land of the Institute, but before he died he called together some of the

> leaders of Halifax County; namely Rev. Baird, Reverend E. G. Williams, and others and stated to them that he wished to donate 11 acres of land to Halifax-Pittsylvania counties for the sole purpose that an Educational and Recreational building be erected on the site and that they be instrumental in this dream of his coming true. His wish was fulfilled October 10, 1978 when the center built on land he donated was dedicated. This was his last request.[10]

Williams Normal and Industrial Institute

Williams Normal, as it was commonly called, had its beginning prior to 1900 as an elementary school. It was founded and supported by the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church apparently as the South Boston (Virginia) Institute, according to Mrs. Dolly Ragland.

The church records provide no indication of the exact date for the beginning of the school, but it seems clear that, from its beginning up to about 1912 it was an elementary school including kindergarten. Several surviving county residents recall that the school experienced financial difficulties about 1911 or 1912. Because of these difficulties, the school sought support of the Bishop. The bishop at that time was Reverend R. S. Williams. Bishop Williams provided the leadership to obtain increased support for the school. One result of his assuming greater support for the Institute was that the South Boston (Virginia) Institute was given the name Williams Normal and Industrial Institute. The expansion and change of name was dedicated in 1913.[11] In addition, high school classes, which extended to the ninth grade, were added to the school's offerings.

Williams Normal was operated by Mrs. Sallie Wood, the wife of Dr. Henry

G. Wood, a prominent physician. Mrs. Wood was well known, and as a consequence, many people referred to the school as Mrs. Wood's School. The school was located at the corner of Main Street and Meadow Drive in a three-story wooden building.

The school's curriculum, in addition to basic elementary courses, included English, mathematics, social studies, industrial skill courses and science. None of the people who attended this school seem certain of the length of the school year, but they agree that school lasted only 6 - 7 months. This, they believe, was largely because most students were farmers and were needed to work on the farm during the warmer months.

Mrs. Dolly Ragland and Carlton H. Royster suggested that the school must have been strong academically because many students continued on to college and became teachers, doctors, lawyers and skilled technicians. It was also a seminary and prepared ministers who served in churches throughout the state. In addition, the school provided night classes for adults who wished to improve their literary and basic skills.

Since it was a church school and one of the few schools in the area, students came to study from surrounding counties. They boarded with families throughout South Boston. Many roomed in Dr. and Mrs. Wood's home, which is still an elegant brick house occupied by Attorney Douglas Suggs and his family.

Williams Normal operated successfully even though the Halifax Normal Institute was operated just six miles away in the town of Halifax. Halifax Normal was also a boarding school with no public transportation which, it is speculated, is the reason many students continued as Williams Normal. The cost and convenience may well have

equalized the advantages of Halifax Normal. For whatever reason, however, Williams Normal succumbed in about 1930. The public school, Booker T. Washington High, had its beginning that same year which likely was the cause for the demise of Williams Normal. At this time, only one story of the three story building remains and is used as a residential building.

Halifax Normal Institute

What was the Halifax County Junior High School until the 1979 - 80 school year was on the site of the Halifax Institute or Banner Institute as it was sometimes called. Banister was associated with the name of the school because it was the Banister Baptist Association that built and operated it. The following is probably the best and most concise history of the Institute:

> In 1872 the association set up a Board of eleven men, composed of ministers, professional workers, businessmen and parents. These men were delegated the work of getting a school built and operating.
>
> Land was purchased from Mayor Edmondson of South Boston, the land is located in Halifax, the same parcel on which the Junior High School stands now.
>
> In 1897 and 1898 the school opened. The first principal was James R. Eubanks of Pulaski. His second term was interrupted after a few months of work. J. C. Carter a prominent teacher and lawyer was appointed to fill the vacancy. He worked two years and was followed by B. J. Hundley who served about six or seven years. Professor B. W. Terrell followed Mr. Hundley and served until 1918. Terrell was educated in Germany. He was very different but very outstanding in knowledge and discipline.

> In 1919 Dr. James F. Chafin was the last principal for the associational school. Many of the graduates of the old Halifax Institute furthered their education in other schools and colleges and served the county and state in useful positions such as teachers, nurses, ministers and social workers. Ms. N. E. Jennings and Ms. Pamela Foy Jackson are two known graduates of the Institute.
>
> In the early twenties the old Halifax Institute closed its doors and the building was purchased by the County School Board to operate as a public school for the town of Halifax.
>
> With a note of sadness mixed with joy the board members signed the papers of release. The last member to sign for the release was the Rev. P. L. Barksdale.[12]

The original buildings of the Institute formed a campus of four or five wooden buildings. The administration building was just in front of the "H" shaped brick building at the old Junior High School. Another building just East of it was used for industrial arts and other classes. At the Southwest corner of this building stood additional classrooms. This building was later used as classrooms and a cafeteria for the Halifax Training School. The fourth one was due East of this one. It was used as a dormitory for girls for both the Institute and the Training School. Around 1918 and 1919, the last years of its operation as the Halifax Normal Institute, the school had a well-qualified, but small staff. According to William G. Sykes, in a February 17, 1976 letter to Lazarus Bates, his father came to Halifax County in 1917 or 1918 to join the faculty, and his mother Willie Lee Anderson Sykes came to the County to teach in the school in 1919. He stated that:

> The school was run under private auspices and had nine teachers. Included were Mrs. Rebecca Floyd, Miss Marian McCown, Mrs. Eddie Martin, Mrs. Louise Ward Jeffress, Mrs. Marion Coleman, Miss Willie Lee Anderson and H. S. Sykes. If memory serves Mother correctly, students included Mrs. Grace Ewell Harris, Harry Jeffress, Wade Wicks, John Owens and one or more of the Harris family (Molly Harris Spraggins, Alice Harris, Ida Bell Harris).

In 1934 and 1935 the Principal W. C. Edwards of the Training School resided in this building. Following that, it was used for home economics classes until the current home economics classrooms were built.

The highest grade was nine and the curriculum of the Institute consisted of courses in English, history, social studies, math, science and apparently a foreign language. The total number of units required for graduation was less than sixteen and the school year was approximately six months.

Mizpah Elementary School

Mizpah was a school offering courses for grades one through seven. It was organized and operated by the Mizpah Presbyterian Church in South Boston, Virginia. The exact dates of its operation could not be determined but Ms. Hattie L. Ragland has a picture of it dated 1912. Its location was at the present site of the church on Ragland Street. Presumably it served just children, unless out-of-towners stayed in private homes, in South Boston. There is no recollection of dormitories, but it seems clear that tuition was charged for children in attendance.

School in the Backyard

Dolly Kent Ragland remembers clearly being informed that Rev. Parham B. Ragland started and taught at a one room school in his backyard. This story was collaborated by J. S. Carrington. Dolly Ragland was the wife of Dr. Leon V. Ragland (deceased) who was the son of Rev. Ragland. She stated that Rev. Ragland was persistent and successful in gaining some financial support from the town of South Boston, which may indicate the first public support of education for Black citizens in Halifax County. Nonetheless, this school is being considered a private one since it was operated and largely supported from private sources.

The importance of this one room school and its meager town support may, however, have great significance. The course of events indicate rather clearly that this momentum led directly to the establishment of the first truly public school for Black residents in South Boston and Halifax County. From all indications, South Boston moved quickly to establish a Grammar School in Bloodfield (Mayfield). This school was eventually named the M. H. Coleman Grammar School.

Footnotes

1. Wellington E. Webb (Reverend), "Antrim Church and Mission School for Colored People", December, 1888. (A Report to the Antrim Parish of the Episcopal Church).
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. Dedication Program of the Halifax County-Pittsylvania County Community Center, Sunday, September 10, 1978, 4:00 P. M.
7. Ibid
8. Ibid
9. Ibid
10. Ibid
11. Church Bulletin of the Abenezer Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, North Main Street, South Boston, Virginia, February, 1978.
12. Dedication Program, op. cit., 1978.

Chapter 3

3

PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Formalized education for Black people, as stated earlier can be traced back to approximately ten years after the Emancipation. Minutes of the Fortieth Annual Session of the Banister Baptist Association held at the New Zion Baptist Church, Meadville, recognized their effort to support education in the county.[1] The earliest year that formal education was provided for Black citizens is given as approximately 1875.[2] Even though formal, this education was essentially private. However, there was some evidence of public education for Black residents. The South Boston Board of Education "agreed to run their own colored school the coming session and not join the Banister Association efforts."[3] But, they delayed appointing teachers until the next meeting. Even though there was some level of formal education for Black residents, and education that was clearly public in 1895, free public schools were established much earlier, in 1870, for white people.[4]

The Mayfield Grammar School (Bloodfield School) which later bacame the M. H. Coleman Grammar School was one of the early public schools for Black children in South Boston. During the late thirties, it was damaged by fire. While it was closed for repair, the South Boston School Board rented space in a building which had previously been the Williams Normal School. Following the completion of the repairs the

M. H. Coleman School was reopened and was operated on Webster Street until it moved into the building of the former Booker T. Washington High School. At that time, 1948, Booker T. was merged into the Halifax Training School.

Early Formal Education

Nearly all of the early public grammar schools were started by the self-help concept which was not unique to Halifax County; it permeated the South. Its account is seen in the fact that most schools originated under church sponsorship and individual initiative.

Most schools were small and poorly equipped. The "one room school" got its name from this period in history. The one room school had one teacher who also doubled as principal or head teacher. In addition to teaching academics, this teacher looked after maintenance chores - - supervising children while sweeping the floors, applying oil on the floor to keep the dust settled, and cutting wood or shoveling coal to keep the school warm.

Private Support

It was largely the church association in Halifax County which gave birth and impetus to elementary education in the County for Black citizens. The neighborhood schools were established first because there was no type of public transportation. Neighborhood schools were built where the people could raise a little money in joint effort. Some neighborhoods used old houses which were not occupied by the owners. Often an industrious teacher united the neighborhood around education-centered

efforts which resulted in a new school building. Landowners often gave the land to the effort; others allowed these schools to be build on a promise that the land would belong to the building so long as the school existed in the neighborhood. Afterwards, the land and the building would be left to the landowner when the school discontinued because of a decline in enrollment or whatever the reason. Consolidation of elementary schools did away with all of these one, two, three, and four teacher schools. This elimination of small schools was accomplished during the years 1960 - 1967 which was just prior to integration.

The number of Black grammar schools was far larger than the number that now serve both Black and White children. Basically, Halifax County grammar schools were started by Black residents as described in the previous paragraph, and it was the dedicated teachers in many instances who saw many of these neighborhood schools come into existance. Counted among such pioneers in Halifax County, Virginia, are Reverend Ellis Ragland, Mr. Asa Coleman, Reverend Caleb Robinson, Mrs. Elaine Crawley and Mrs. Gertrude Rogers, Mr. Tommie Crawley, Reverend George Owen, all of the county, and Mr. Matthew Coleman of South Boston. The schools had a very humble beginning but they were great assets.

Public Support

The greatest support from the local government was the meager salaries paid to the teachers and supplemented by the community in which the school was located. It was not uncommon to find teachers whose salary range was from $25 - $40 per month. A salary range between $50 - $60 per month was tops. Few, if any, went

beyond this point. Usually supplements in salary were in kind. The in kind supplements usually consisted of food at holidays and other special occasions. Teachers looked forward to these occasions at the close of the four, five, and six months school sessions. Few, if any, went beyond this point. Teachers and pupils often gave in kind gifts to school supervisors also. Seldom was anybody overlooked, for it was of benefit to the old, lonely, retired teachers as well as those currently employed.

These small neighborhood schools were the center of attraction for social outlets. Sponsored plays and parties arranged by the teacher and her pupils were always anticipated. Parents looked forward to these events with much enthusiasm. Baseball games between two communities were common. It was an opportunity for the school to make sales of refreshments to raise money for the little projects at school. The teacher was the leader and the responsible person in the community. She was held in high esteem and was highly respected. In some cases the teacher lived among the parents, eliminating a regular boarding place and fee. Housing, feeding and transportation for the teachers was a joint community responsibility. In this way, the teacher got to know the student's parents well.

Maintenance Of Schools

Beyond the meager salaries paid the teacher, the greatest local support was in the form of a few basic supplies, janitorial in nature. Many schools received no supplies at all, but for those that did, the amount was dependent upon the size of the school and the enrollment. The supplies usually were these: One or two brooms, one or two water pails, one or two boxes of chalk, two or three gallons of oil used to keep

down the dust when the floor was swept, and occasionally a half-ton or ton of coal for fuel. In some cases, the School Board would furnish material, and the job of repairs was done by someone in the neighborhood who had some knowledge and skill in carpentry. It would be this person and the teacher who decided the best way the job was to be done. No question was ever raised by a School Board member or the Superintendent.

Early Curriculum

The curriculum dealt only with need. Being able to read, write, spell and do arithmetic (the 3 R's) were the main objectives. This stemmed from the idea that people who hired others were sometimes found to be dishonest. To be able to read and write prevented exposing one's business to the wrong person. To be able to determine fractional parts of cost was in every student's mind and this was an arithmetical study. Problems which required thought and reasoning were spiced throughout any arithmetic beyond the fifth grade. Memorizing poems, ballads, riddles, and verses from the Bible was expected of every student. The 1st Psalm and the 23rd Psalm were the most common. Spelling was largely memory work without proper word study. Later word study became an important phase in the learning process. Many large words could be spelled by students but their meaning was not known. Mastery in spelling was usually climaxed by grade spelling match. Word meaning and understanding came with age. The older students became, the greater were their concerns with correct word usage.

School Organization

The early grammar schools were either under the auspices of the Black church or a school board that was all white. These white members were the very same citizens who under slavery had determined that it was an offense against the law to educate Black people or slaves. Naturally, they did not give a very high priority to education for those same individuals who had just been freed. For this reason, and the fact that few Black persons had high literacy skills, teachers were whites of the abolitionist mentality or Black people with the limited skills that could be attained under repressive, servile circumstances. Some white people in Halifax supported schools for Black students from the very beginning, and even today some are counted among many Boards of Black Colleges throughout the South.

Teacher Qualifications

Teachers in the grammar schools, particularly at the very beginning of schooling, had limited qualifications. The very first ones had only the education that white overseers provided in secrecy to favored house servants. In short order, however, students had acquired educational skills beyond those of their teachers. They gained the advanced skills by self help and from Northern "carpetbaggers." Some Black people had attended school in the North after escaping to freedom and returned to the South following the emancipation to give assistance. Soon there was a cadre of teachers who had completed elementary school, high school (normal), and a few who had attended or completed college. The number of teachers who completed elementary school and the normal school were predominant. For those who had completed the normal

schools, it was common for them to teach for years (10 - 20) before attaining the baccalaureate degree. Many of them attended college summer after summer, first obtaining the normal collegiate certificate, and eventually many earned the bachelor's degree.

One interesting phenomenon took place during the development of schools for Black people. It probably was natural. Even though elementary schools started earlier, large numbers of the most highly qualified teachers were in the high schools whether private or public. This was probably true because high school teaching required a higher level of mastery in specific subject areas. These statements about the formal level of training possessed by these elementary or grammar school teachers is not to demean their skills. In fact, they were very good teachers. What they missed in formal training they compensated for with diligence, persistence, self-discipline, self study and deep interest in their students.

Attendance

The attendance at these early grammar schools was precarious. Since transportation was very limited - very few Black residents even owned automobiles - the schools were and had to be community schools with walk-in attendance. Walk-in did not mean a stroll of two or three blocks as was referred to commonly in efforts to resist integration (1954 - 1979). A neighborhood school to which small children, ages 6, 7, 8, 9, etc., walked daily required a travel of 3 or 4 miles or more. Black children were not provided free, public transportation. A few Black parents provided transportation to the high school. Other interested citizens provided "make-shift" buses with students

paying one dollar weekly. Many years passed before any public transportation was provided for elementary pupils. Actually, it was not provided until about 1950. There was always something to look forward to; during the long walk to school, Black children would be passed by yellow buses transporting white elementary students.

Because of distance, farming, and weather, absenteeism was high. It is amazing that any of these students ever finished these distant grammar schools because they often spent half of the school day with their feet wet from walking through the mud and snow. Even on dry days, students spent entire days sitting in poorly heated classrooms. Keeping fairly comfortable was a major chore. Learning under these conditions was the ultimate struggle. Some of these children had no real motivation for finishing grammar school or high school. High schools were expensive boarding schools; their parents were too poor to afford the room, board and tuition, and too involved in share-cropping or in mere survival and too uneducated to provide much motivation or encouragement for their children. Hardship and bare survival often were the only basis for a parent to encourage a child to become prepared to live better than his parents.

The attendance problem was compounded by the fact that, except in the town of Halifax and South Boston, children were needed for farm work which added to the number of days they had to miss school.

Schools of 1948 - 50

Even though public schools were established in 1870 for White children, they were started for Black children nearly 30 years later. These schools were not very

stable. They came into existence or disappeared with shifts of the population. The degree to which the grammar schools were "neighborhood Schools" is evident when considering the number of schools that existed throughout the county for Black people alone during these years. These schools and staffs are listed for the 1948 - 50 school years. Those with four teachers had four rooms; those with three teachers had three rooms, etc. There was one nine-room school, two four-room schools, five three-room schools, twenty-two two-room schools and thirty-three one-room schools. These schools are:

M. H. Coleman Elementary School

S. A. Barksdale, Principal
Bessie C. Barksdale
Juanita Bates
Doris Cunningham
Georgia H. Chambers
Alberta Mangana
Kate R. Owens
Blanche Ragland
Charlie L. Ragland
Louis G. Stanfield

News Ferry School

Edith K. Sugg, Principal
Mary W. Carter
Alberta G. West

Alton School

Alma S. Link, Principal
Cornell Faulkner

Bold Springs School

Mollie Spraggins, Principal
Lucille Harris

Meadville School

Sarah H. Easley, Principal
Leathia Canada
Lilueth A. Washington

Mt. Laurel School

Rev. H. L. Brooks, Principal
Nannie Gilmore
Lottie L. Penick

Riverdale School

Lizzie Lawrence, Principal
Lucille Ragland
Dolly Ragland

White Oak School

Claude N. Paige, Principal
Hallie L. Goode
Virginia N. Williams

Andrew Farmer School

John B. Coleman, Principal
Fannie Walker

Republican Grove School

Vivian Hardy

Scottsburg School

Antoinette Harrison

Sutherlin School

Annie K. Beard

Washington City School

Laura D. Carson

White Oak Fork School

Nannie F. Burton

Zion Hill School

Louise S. Obie
Maxine E. Lawrence

Sinai School

Corine Johnson, Principal
Marie B. Leigh
Geneva Lewis
Rosa Tucker

Ridgeway School

Bettye A. Coleman

Staunton River School

Harriet J. Bailey

Terrible Creek School

Maggie C. Collins

West School

Alice C. Jennings

Winn Creek School

Annie O. Wright

Clover School

Mary J. Coleman, Principal
Mary W. Coleman
Annie J. Davis
Henrietta Smith

This list is not inclusive of all the elementary (grammar) schools that existed. The full number is not known, but it has been mentioned earlier that elementary schooling was provided on the Training School campus until the 1948 - 49 school year. The elementary children were then transferred to Sinai Elementary.

Records of the education of Black children were inaccurate and often missing. The following event amplifies the carelessness and inaccuracy of the records. Coleman

Brandon, who attended White Oak Fork School, went on to attend and graduate from Halifax Training School. After graduation he was drafted into the Army and served for many years. Following his discharge from the Army, he decided to attend college, but the college insisted on having a transcript of his elementary school records. The School Board office could not locate them. But, it is interesting to note that according to Coleman, R. L. Lacy, Superintendent of Schools, was not much disturbed. He merely sent the former student to a teacher who had taught the young man at White Oak Fork School with instructions that she should create a record for him.

Footnotes

1. Minutes, Fortieth Annual Session, Banister Baptist Association, July 20 and 21, 1911, P. 4.

2. *Gazette-Virginian*, June 14, 1978, Vol. 6, P. 1.

3. South Boston Board of Education Minutes, August 4, 1894.

4. Roby S. Hager, "An Evaluation Report", State Department of Education, Richmond, Virginia, May 1972, P. 1.

Chapter 4

4

PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

Public high school education for Black students began in 1920 which was fifty years after the County started to provide free public education for white students. There were two such schools. One was the Booker T. Washington High School in South Boston. The other was the Halifax Training School. Its original buildings and facilities were purchased from the Banister Baptist Association which, up to that time, operated the Halifax Normal Institute. At the time, the County operated eight high schools for white students.

Booker T. Washington High School, 1930 - 1948

Booker T. Washington High served only children from the town of South Boston. Consequently, it was very similar to the small high schools scattered throughout the county for white residents. It was a fine facility with well-qualified staff, and because of its size, was limited in its curricular offerings. It was felt by many that this limitation justified dissolving it and transferring the students to Halifax Training School, thus creating one consolidated high school for Black students. The consolidation was implemented in the 1948 - 49 school year.

In preparation for this expansion at Halifax Training School, the county bor-

rowed fifty thousand dollars to construct eight additional classrooms and to expand the bathroom facilities for both boys and girls.

Booker T. Washington High School had five principals during its existence. They were George Coleman, Richard Armstead, William Brinkley, Curtis C. Crocker, and Matthew H. Colman, who served until the school was merged into Halifax Training School. At that time, he became principal of Washington-Coleman Elementary School, a position he held until retirement.

Halifax Training School, 1920 - 1956

Halifax Training School had its beginning when the County School Board purchased the existing facilities from the Banister Baptist Association in 1920. Later, as explained previously, it became the consolidated school to serve all Black children in Halifax County. In the 50's, it was "the state's largest rural Negro high school."[1] In the 1920's the school year was five months beginning about October, and salaries were $25.30 per month.

It had five principals during its period of existence. Mr. Herman Sykes was the first principal. Following his tenure as high school principal, he served as an elementary principal and as head of the agriculture program when it was introduced. Mr. Louis Anderson became principal in 1932 and served for one year. Miss Marian McCown followed and served until William C. Edwards came in 1934. W. C. Edwards served until his retirement in 1966 and was followed by Lazarus Bates who was principal until integration took place in 1969. Following integration, Mr. Bates served as principal until he retired, in the same building of the integrated junior high school.

From the time it became public until desegregation, the Training School was the focal point of Black people for educational and social events. In its early days, it was largely a boarding school.

County records are basically void of student enrollments and faculty at the school from 1920 to approximately 1934 (co-author Edwards became principal at that time). It is known, however, from Jewel Carrington and William Kent, local community leaders, that well-qualified teachers were hired and numerous extra-curricular activities were started.

William Kent, funeral director and vice Mayor of South Boston, attended the Training School and recalled that the modern brick ("H" shaped building) was opened in 1930. When the building first opened, it was "T" shaped. The other wing was added later. He also remembered distinctly that, while construction was in progress, school was held in several churches including Banister Hill Baptist and other buildings in the town of Halifax.

Mary M. Bethune High School, 1956 - 1969

The name of the high school for Black children was changed in 1956. On January 15, 1956, the plant was officially dedicated as Mary M. Bethune High School of Halifax County.

The effort to change the name was started in 1951. Following an evaluation of the school and its program, the principal (Edwards) requested permission from the Board to change the name of the school and was instructed to make the plans for such

change. The preparation including informing all of the Black citizens and soliciting their support and approval. At least ten names, some of them local persons, were originally proposed. But, in the final stages of the planning only two survived-- Doctor Charles D. Drew and Mary M. Bethune. In a meeting of Black representatives these two names were voted on. The vote was a tie, 6 - 6. The principal broke the tie when he voted for Mary M. Bethune. With the tie broken, Dr. Leon V. Ragland moved that this name be submitted to the Board as a unanimous choice. Following this time, expansion was rapid and continual.

Impediments to Equal Education

In addition to generally different treatment, expenditures, and facilities, there were several other serious issues. Pressing teacher loads were continual, and sanitation was questionable. County School Board minutes provide numerous instances. For example, the School Board asked the county government for permission to make a loan to expand the training facilities to accomodate the transfer of the students from Booker T. Washington from South Boston. The Board said:

> "The purpose of said loan is to construct eight additional classrooms at the Halifax Training School together with extension of toilet facilities for both boys and girls to relieve pressing teacher loads resulting from existing enrollment and to provide classrooms to absorb the Booker T. Washington High School from South Boston, Virginia, effective session 1948 - 49."[2]

This was the addition of the South Wing of the existing "H" shaped building. The economic tragedy was that Black residents had to raise a matching fund for the

erection or expansion of facilities for their children's education. As poor as most of them were, it made expansion nearly impossible or, at least, always in doubt. In a letter to Lazarus Bates dated February 17, 1976, William Sykes, son of the first principal, illustrates this fact. He stated that:

> "You also stated that I try to get some information about the committee that raised the $3,000 to construct the south wing of the school. As best she (mother) can recall, the chairman of the committee was Rev. Harry Bailey who lived in the Dryburg/Scottsburg area. Other members including Mr. Robert Walton, Rev. Ewell (Grace Ewell Harris' father), Mr. Jessee Hendricks (who lived in the Millstone area) and both of my parents. Mr. W. J. Bailey (Mrs. Bailey Leigh's father) may have been on the committee.
>
> It is Mother's recollection that the fund-raising effort was quite difficult and that it was not a project which was enthusiastically supported by all of the county's Black population. Many still saw education as a luxury which they either could not afford or did not wish to avail themselves of. Leadership roles were taken by those Black citizens who had some education themselves and who wished better educational opportunities for their children."[3]

Transportation

The County provided transportation for White children beginning with the 1928 - 1929 school year by establishing a ten cents county levy, but it was not provided for Black children until the 1936 - 1937 session.[4] White children paid $1.00 per month for transportation. It was collected by the bus driver. When transportation was started for Black children, it was provided by private owners who were paid $100 to $115 per month. Some drivers depended purely on patrons for pay. It ap-

pears that there were only four or five routes to serve the entire County. Mr. J. J. DeJarnette, E. L. Dance, Chappell Woody, Timothy Younger, Robert Williams and Mr. Burton were among the early Black drivers to operate school buses.

The lack of transportation posed particularly acute problems in Halifax County because it is one of the larger counties in the state. The highly rural and agricultural nature of the county added to the difficulty created by the lack of transportation. In some instances, the lack of transportation limited or curtailed the school's ability to provide certain activities. Morris Markey of *McCall's Magazine* illustrates this point quite clearly. He suggested that:

> "It is in the nature of things that Halifax schools cannot undertake the elaborate extracurricular activities areas. They do not even have athletic teams for inter-scholastic sports. The reason is one which applies to virtually all rural school systems: when the last bell of the day rings, the busses are waiting outside. Distances home are long. Students simply cannot afford to miss the bus, no matter how attractive the meeting or the game that might be scheduled."[5]

He made his point quite well except that Halifax Training School had organized basketball which dated back to the late 20's. But the fact was that all of the players were from South Boston and the town of Halifax. The first students from the distant rural area to play basketball were Jerry Wilson and Clarence Hill of the 1952 and 1954 classes.

Schooling Cost

Prior to the time that transportation was provided county-wide, most Black

children could attend high school only if they boarded at the school. A few were able to stay with relatives near the school, and some children from South Boston rode to school with teachers, and the parents of a few carpooled children to Halifax. The boarding fee was $200 per year which was a prohibitive fee for most Black parents.

For others, the bus transportation fee precluded their attendance. The fact that parents were required to raise matching funds, as mentioned earlier, was an additional impediment to quality education for Black youngsters.

While the high cost to parents impacted on education of Black children, there was also the impact caused by the low expenditure of the School Board. Imagine how much science laboratory equipment could be purchased for the following amounts in relation to the amount needed to serve 231 high school students. In the 1934 - 35 school year, only $25 was spent on laboratory equipment for physics, $45 for chemistry, $50 for general science, $115 for agriculture, $135 for biology. No money was spent for home economics and industrial arts.[6]

Compare the above figures with the value of equipment available for the 1944 - 45 school year with the number of high school students increased to 626. No money was spent on laboratory equipment for physics, $190 for chemistry, $25 for general science, $25 for home economics, $730 for agriculture and industrial arts combined, and $50 for biology. Think of this limited equipment along with the fact that in 1944 there was no running water in the science lab.[7]

Quality by Chance

The fact that Halifax Training School and Mary M. Bethune High School pro-

vided good educational programs was as much by accident as it was by plan. There are essentially three reasons that the quality was good. One of them was the consolidated school which grew haphazardly. Another was the consolidated curriculum that was possible or required because of the larger school, and the other reason was the extraordinary interest and dedication of the teachers.

It was by chance also that many were able to say with some assurance that Halifax Training School was better than the White schools. Morris Markey, writing for *McCall's* in 1946, found that:

> For the Negro high school, at the county seat, is in many respects superior to any of the scattered white high schools.
>
> This is not due to deliberate intent. It is largely because of the newness of education for Negroes at the high school level in this community.[8]

While this claim is impressive and might be true, one must keep in mind an assessment made by the State Department of Education. Roby S. Hager, Supervisor for Evaluation and Planning, noted that:

> Prior to the 1969 - 70 session there were two high schools with students in grades 8 to 12. Both were accredited by the State Department of Education and Halifax County High was (also) accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Mary Bethune was in the process of a self-study as a requisite for membership in the SACS.[9]

Regardless of which statement has the greatest weight, it indicates rather convincingly that, by chance or not, schooling was rather good for Black children.

Markey further found remarkably that, ". . . from the last graduating class of 67 students, 23 girls and 4 boys went off to college - - a very much larger proportion than the 20 percent which is the average for American high schools as a whole."[10] This is good, but perspective must be kept. If schooling were fully accessible to all Black children in the county, then how many more would have been able to advance to college?

Consolidated School Building

Consolidated schooling began in 1948 in Halifax County when Booker T. Washington High School of South Boston was merged into the Halifax Training School in the town of Halifax. This merger and other expansion at the Training School site was influenced by Dr. Fred M. Alexander, State Supervisor of Negro Education, State Department of Education, and Dr. Sidney B. Ball, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. In 1938 Dr. Ball introduced the "trend in the consolidation of high schools"[11] to the School Board. Dr. Alexander was appointed to head a study committee to recommend the growth pattern of schools in the county for Negroes. The 1947 report recommended consolidation features that were reflected in consolidation and expansion that ensued at Halifax Training and Bethune High.[12]

As a result of these recommendations, expansion of the Training School was begun and it was continuous. First came the addition to the "T" - shaped building in 1948 to accomodate the children from Booker T. High School. Next came the two story building just south of the "H" - shaped building in 1950. Then came the Voca-

tional and Agriculture Building about 1953. A number of years later, in 1955, the two story building (mentioned above) was completed. It gave Black children their first official cafeteria, a gymnasium, expansive library, fully equipped science laboratory and authentic home economics class space.

It should be noted that the push for breaking down the "separate but equal" principle which resulted in the Brown vs. Board of Education decision of 1954 may have been a motivating force in developing improved educational facilities in Halifax County. However, because of the opposition to desegregation as expressed earlier by U. S. Representative Tuck and other high level administrators, it appears that by providing a new, well-equipped school for Black children, the county leadership demonstrated further commitment to maintaining the "separate but equal" principle. In any case, educational facilities and equipment for Black students in Halifax County were better than ever before.

Consolidated Curriculum

Times were hard in the early days and those students who could graduate in the academics were strongly desirous of advancing to college. This desire for attending college was a pressing one with an aim of improving the family's living status. This was the aim of many graudates. The real emphasis was on the basic studies. To be capable of holding a worthwhile job, one needed to master the basics plus possess good study habits to succeed in college. To be sure, for Black children from rural, Southern schools to meet college entrance requirements back then was by no means

automatic. Surely it was possible for some. In this regard, Markey remarked in 1946 that, "the boy or girl who wants to learn enough to pass college entrance examinations can do it, you may be sure. But that will require special attention from a most particularly devoted group of teachers."[13] And that was the calibre of teachers at Halifax Training School as evidenced by the 40% college-bound graduates.

The first year of high school began in the eighth grade and completion, the eleventh grade. Studying in a course for thirty six weeks meeting five periods weekly of fifty minutes plus test and final examinations fulfilled requirements for one unit towards graduation (four units annually through the eleventh grade). Sixteen units meant completing the requirements for graduation. Four subjects annually were necessary to complete high school in four years.

Curriculum expansion was consistent. In 1936, home economics, Negro history, and high school geography were added. By 1954, business courses, Spanish, French and fine arts had been added, and before the schools were integrated, numerous other courses, including driver education, were available. The figure which follows illustrates course offerings in 1934 beginning with the 8th grade. One can compare this program with the curriculum as it developed by 1954.

Figure 3

PROGRAM of STUDY - 1934[14]

Course of Study	No. Pds./ Week	No. Wks./ Course	Minutes in Period	Textbooks Used
1st Year				
English	5	36	50	*The Highway to English* - Clark & Others
Mathematics	5	36	50	*Junior Math* - Strayer
Science	5	36	50	*Our Surroundings* - Clements & Others
Social Studies	5	36	50	*Our World of Work* - Early European History
Physical and Health Education	2	36	50	No Adopted Textbook
2nd Year				
English	5	36	50	*The Highway to English* -(Book II) - Junior Lit.
Mathematics	5	36	50	*New High School Algebra* - Wells & Hart
Science	5	36	50	
Social Studies	10	36	50	*High School Geography* - Dryer; *Early European History; Modern European History* - Webster

Course of Study	No. Pds./ Week	No. Wks./ Course	Minutes in Period	Textbooks Used
Physical and Health Education	2	36	50	No Adopted Textbook
Agriculture	2	36	50	No Adopted Textbook
3rd Year				
English	5	36	50	*Eng. Lit.* - Metcalf; *Lit. & Life* - Book IV
Mathematics	5	36	50	*Plane Geometry* - Wells & Hart
Science	3	36	50	*Biology & Human Welfare* - Peabody & Hunt
Laboratory	2	36	100	
Social Studies	5	36	50	*Modern European; American History* - Muzzey
French	5	36	50	*New Complete French Grammar* - Fraser
Physical and Health Education	2	36	50	No Adopted Textbook
Agriculture	5	36	100	No Adopted Textbook
Music	3	36	50	

4th Year				
English	5	36	50	
Science - Rec.	3	36	50	*Practical Chemistry* - Black
- Lab.	2	36	100	*Laboratory Experiments* - Black
Social Studies	10	36	50	*U. S. Gov't* - Smith & Others *American History Negro History* - Woodson
French	5	36	50	*New Complete French Grammar* - Fraser
Physical and Health Education	2	36	50	No Adopted Textbook
Agriculture	3	36	50	No Adopted Textbook
Music	3	36	50	

The above chart represents an accurate account of the curriculum offerings in 1934 at what was then called the Halifax County Training School. These courses were essentially all that were offered. Therefore, courses of study provided little or no choice.

Unfortunately, there is no record of students, teachers or course offerings from 1920 (the beginning of the Training School) to 1934 (the beginning of W. C. Edwards' tenure as principal). So, it is not possible to compare the offerings of 1934 with earlier ones. It is evident to all of those who worked with and attended the Training School and Bethune High that the curriculum offerings grew rapidly from 1934 to 1969. It expanded to include several languages, agriculture, higher mathematics and science, music and nearly all other courses found in any modern school system. In fact, by the time the schools integrated in 1969, approximately sixty courses were offered at Bethune High.

In 1934, sixteen units were required for graduation. The number had increased to seventeen and one-half by the 1944 - 45 school year and to twenty before 1969.

From 1934 to desegregation, the school situation in all aspects improved drastically and especially during and following World War II. Illiteracy was found to be common among segments of the population during the war. Increased emphasis on education became a priority. The Federal government stepped in to help remedy the situation. Appropriations were made on all levels, local, state and national. The orbital flight by the Russians caused increased spending and study in the sciences. It must be acknowledged here that the school system progressed steadily but at times events of worldwide significance stepped up the emphasis in education. Black people, however, will always feel they experienced an unnecessary period of denial and oppression by those in authority. No reader could overlook this experience in the development of education for Black children not only in Halifax County, Virginia, but through out the South.

Agriculture for High School Students

In 1934, and before, agriculture was the way of life in Halifax County, and it is still the predominant way of sustaining life by its people. For this reason, agriculture has been a subject of much study in the schools. Even though finance has not been available for instructional purposes, it has always been a subject taught and a subject of concern in the schools. In spite of all phases of industrial growth in Halifax County, agriculture is still the largest industry. More people are engaged in growing tobacco than any other industry.

Agriculture in the schools was designed to teach the boys and girls how to do the job better. Since farming was and still is, the life-blood of the nation, and with an ever-increasing population in the world, agriculture had to keep up with demands.

Soil conservation was a great concern. Cattle breeding for stock improvement, transportation, record keeping, use of insecticides to control pests, foresting and planting trees were, and still are, subjects of great concern in teaching agriculture.

Clearly, the vocational schools are heavily slanted to an emphasis or relationship to agriculture. In fact, "Vocational training in Halifax," according to Mr. Markey, "is naturally agricultural rather than industrial." He pointed out that:

> "In addition to his classwork and book learning in agriculture, each student must undertake some project of his own at home: an acre of tobacco or corn, a pen of hogs, a flock of blooded chickens. This home project must pass the inspection of the teacher before the student can win his diploma, and the agriculture teachers spend nearly all their free time going about from farm to farm, giving advice and even lending a helping hand when heavy work is to be done.

> An important part of this course is the Farm Shop, where boys are not only taught to keep their own tools and equipment in repair but required also to help farmers who come in with damaged machinery. In the heavy seasons, the yard before the school shop is crowded with plows and tractors, with harness rigs and even mowing combines. Farmers themselves have the run of the shop, with its tools and welding equipment and forge.
>
> In common with all the other high schools of the country, great and small, Halifax has strong courses in the domestic arts."[15]

Agriculture Program for Veterans

When the United States entered World War II, the pursuits of many Americans were interrupted, and farming was perhaps one of the pursuits hardest hit. When the young men were taken away to the armed services, a drastic manpower shortage was created domestically. This meant that many people, particularly Black people, who had never been able to obtain good paying jobs were employed in the factories. Even women were provided opportunities that they had been systematically denied prior to the war. As the war came to an end, there was again a surplus of able-bodied workers. In order to alleviate the disappointments of the veterans and to take care of the newly created national need for post-war productivity and the need for food and health supplies internationally, Halifax County and other towns and counties throughout the country were provided an expanded opportunity to participate in new training and educational endeavors to increase farm output.

Industry was unable to absorb all the returning veterans even though many of them felt that they could make more money by entering work in the industries than they could by returning to the farm. The government initiated various programs to assist farm veterans in getting readjusted to civilian life. Many of the soldiers had married earlier, and many others were married as soon as they were discharged from active military duty.

Special farm programs were started in Halifax Training School to provide veterans with improved farm skills so they could take care of their newly created responsibilities. The classes were usually held at night in the regular school buildings to give veterans knowledge of better farm practices.

The veterans were paid their earned benefits as long as they were enrolled in class and were carrying out specified farm practices. For these programs, special agriculture teachers were employed to instruct the veteran farmers. This program was under the supervision of the principal and the state supervisor. In addition to veteran income allowances, the veterans were given financial assistance to purchase farms and farm equipment.

Classes for these veterans included conservation practices, crop rotation and machine repair as well. Hay production, breeding, forestry, fruit production, farm record keeping and insecticide usage were also among the subjects emphasized.

Since America was called on to feed a large portion of the world following the war, Halifax County once again had the opportunity to directly participate in helping America meet its goals.

Library

The State of Virginia requires that every public school provide a library to supplement the learning expected of each child and to broaden the information base available on subjects taught in various classes. In addition, in 1946, "the State of Virginia requires that each high school library subscribe to at least five newspapers and at least 20 magazines. . . . The library at Halifax Training School had subscriptions for the New York, Richmond and Philadelphia papers and they are read eagerly every day, the magazines are well worn."[16]

A comparison of library services offered in 1934 and 1944 will help the reader not only understand the long existance of library services for Black children, but also grasp the expansion of such services.

In 1934, the Training School had a library that was supervised by a part-time librarian. By 1944, there was a full-time librarian and two student assistants. In 1934 the library was open three and a half hours daily and six hours daily in 1944. In 1934, 610 books were classified but not catalogued, and in 1944, 1,890 books were all catalogued. In 1934, there were five magazines and two newspaper subscriptions, while there were 55 magazine and one newspaper subscription in 1944. In 1954, there were 31 subscriptions and 5,305 books.[17] These data are not known for the Booker T. Washington High School in South Boston. In fact, it appears that no records on library services currently exist for that school.

Public education is not perceived as being restricted narrowly to the public school building. Consequently, the public library service is considered to be a part of the

educational resources available to children in any community. For this reason, a brief mention of the access Black children had to educational materials in the Halifax County Public Library is valuable. It had a Negro reading room on the main floor. W. B. Barbour relates that, "in the latter room are kept books for use of Negro children and a special collection of Negro materials."[18]

Teachers

There are no records on teachers who taught at the Training School prior to the 1934 - 35 school year. Only the names are known of those who were there when the Institute became Halifax Training School. Therefore, it is not possible to state what their qualifications were. Good records are available that describe the training and certifications of teachers from 1934 to 1969 when the schools were integrated. (These teachers' names and other vital data will be presented in another section.) These teachers were dedicated, without question. One needs only to consider the low pay and inadequate facilities and equipment to know that dedication and concern were the reasons for the outcome of their students. They were credited earlier as being an important ingredient in helping graduates qualify for and enter college and most of them for being well-qualified with degrees from Eastern colleges. They deserve a salute for their spectacular success in spite of adverse conditions and circumstances.

Athletics

From the late 1920's to September, 1954, basketball was the only organized

sport in which Halifax Training School participated. There are several reasons for this. The first is that there was simply no appropriate space for practice. The open field at the back of the school building was red clay and was not graded for any organized activity. It was too small for a baseball or football field, and the county would not appropriate funds to prepare it for a track. The only football played at the school prior to 1954 was touch which was played on the front lawn of the school. Another reason was that a basketball was the only piece of equipment that could and did serve the entire school community.

Basketball was practiced practically anywhere that half adequate space could be found. Initially, the auditorium was used both for practice and for some games. The ceiling was low and the floors were not suitable. Occasionally it would be warm until mid-October. When this was the case, practice, and occasionally a game, was held on the clay field. In order to keep the dust down and to create a solid surface for dribbling the ball, the surface of the court was saturated with oil. The trick was to oil the court just at the right time so the oil would not be standing on the surface at the time of the game, or to be sure that enough remained to maintain a solid surface without dust. As transportation increased in availability, more and more practice sessions and games were held at Vaughn's Armory in South Boston.

In spite of these very unfavorable conditions and circumstances, basketball was a real success. "Cousin" Charlie Cage, English and social studies teacher was the coach for many years. He was joined by William D. Yancey, biology teacher, about 1951. During those days Halifax Training School was a power in its conference and the

state. Halifax competed against such teams as Langston in Danville, Wyatt in Greenville County, West End and East End in Mecklenburg County, Luther Foster of Lunenburg County and several others including one or more schools in North Carolina.

The Halifax Training School team won its conference title regularly and the state title once or twice. Players on these teams won trophies for practically every category in which they were given. Irving Johnson (deceased), for example, won high school All American guard on the same team with Oscar Robinson - - the Big "O." Trent Harris (deceased) was a magnificent player. In 1956, he won a scholarship to Maryland State College where he was a star. The pros did not draft him because, at the time, only a few of the very best Black players played professional basketball - Bill Russell, Earl Lloyd and Wilt "the Stilt" Chamberlain. Charles Irving, the great set-shot artist, won a scholarship to West Virginia State College. Others won scholarships also.

Warren Davis went on to play in the American Basketball Association with the Los Angeles Stars and the Memphis Pros.

Football

Football had its beginning in the 1954 - 55 school year under Benjamin Hairston. This sport, like basketball, had much success. Numerous players received trophies, awards, and college scholarships. Wilfred Stanfield played at Winston Salem State University. Richard Wilkerson plays professional football with the Denver Broncos.

Track

Earl Foster introduced track to Halifax Training School in 1954. He was superb as a coach and his teams were very good. Many of his track stars won trophies, awards and scholarships to college. The teams won many district and state meets. Robert Ballou was one of the outstanding track stars. He won All-State and All-Armed Forces.

Baseball

Baseball was never introduced as an organized sport at the Training School. Even so, several students made the professional ranks. Johnnie Sadler played for a semi-professional team in Chicago and Moses Williams played semi-professional ball in North Carolina.

Boxing

The Training School never had a boxing team. G. Benjamin Hairston, a teacher was an exceptionally good boxer. Therefore, under his guidance several students developed into good boxers. Asa Dance was good and flashy with the "Sugar Ray" Robinson style. James Dance and Wilson Medley were very good heavyweights. At least one student became a professional prize fighter. Douglas Jones of the 1956 class gained the number one heavyweight rating. According to Emmett Green, he defeated Muhammed Ali in an amateur fight.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Unlike many Black schools in the South, Halifax Training and Bethune High had many extra-curricular activities. Except for academic courses, many Southern Black schools had practically no activities to build leadership and interpersonal skills; however, in addition to athletics, these schools had a choir, public speaking, drama, Hi-Y, and Tri-Hi-Y, New Farmers of America (NFA) and New Homemakers of America (NHA). They even had an honor roll. In many districts, an honor roll for Black students was a strict taboo. Some White educators considered an honor roll for Black students to be cruel punishment. They thought it was unfair to put challenges before Black students that they could not hope to meet; they would be frustrated. However, students at Bethune High considered it a stimulating challenge as evidenced by achievement records.

Choir

A choir can be considered either a curriculum course or as extra-curricular. Since the choir functioned external of the school on such a high percentage of the time, and because so many of its participants were not enrolled in music at all, it is considered here to be extra-curricular.

At any rate, the choir was excellent. It had outstanding directors, Mary C. Wilson, Arthur Boulding, Andrew O. Carr, and Mr. Oliver J. Bell. The choir traveled throughout Virginia and participated in county and state competitions on numerous occasions. The state competition was usually at Virginia State University. The Training School emerged from state and regional competition with first, second and third

honors numerous times. Often when the choir would falter, Mr. Carr would win first for his performance at the piano. He was a very excellent, progressive musician.

In addition to the choir, many students emerged as soloists of very fine quality. Bobby Farmer, now in Atlantic City, New Jersey, was an outstanding baritone singer. Joseph "Joe" Rogers had the golden bass voice that captured the attention and emotion of nearly everyone. Charlie Reed Hill, currently a South Boston policeman, had and still has the mellow tenor voice. Rosa Hubbard, too, was exceptional.

Rose Marie Crawley, of the 1952 class, performed at the level of a professional throughout her high school days. Upon graduation she received honors from many sources along with scholarships to attend Virginia State University from which she was graduated.

Aldora Green Turner of the 1957 - 58 class was surpassed by no one. She received many scholarship offers. Following her graduation from college she attended one of the finest music conservatories in New England. While there, she also performed with the Boston Pop Opera Choir. She performs regularly at special occasions such as concerts, weddings and receptions.

Barbara Jean Martin is a professional blues and rock 'n roll singer in Washington, D. C.

Hi-Y and Tri-Hi-Y

These clubs of boys and girls respectively patrolled on the school buses and at all assemblies at the school. In addition to being taught and practicing safety rules

and skills, the participants were students with not only high gradepoint averages but also with interpersonal, group and leadership skills.

Drama Club

The Drama Club did several performances per year. Often the plays they presented were taken to churches and other places in the county. Participants developed confidence, voice projection and voice control and quality.

New Farmers of America

The NFA was the leadership activity for students in the agriculture program. Students participated in public speaking, parliamentary procedures, farm demonstration, and singing. Participants in the Training School were particularly successful at winning public speaking contests and exhibits of agriculture products and practices at the Halifax County Fair. Samuel Wilborne won the State title in 1955 and 1956. Members usually were required to carry out a farm project which was supervised by the agriculture teacher.

One of the highlights of the NFA Club was singing. In 1951 and 1952, they had a quartet with Ruthard Dixon, Franklin Dixon, James Linder Royster and Caleb Womack. The director and pianist was Andrew Carr, music teacher. They sang popular and spiritual songs. They were truly exceptional. They performed in churches throughout the county and in local and state contests. Needless to say, they won most of the time.

New Homemakers of America

The NHA, led at various times by Ms. F. E. Penn, Ms. Margaret V. Clark and

Mrs. Mildred Kilby Yancey, was a leadership club also. Girls learned leadership skills in addition to skills in sewing, cooking, canning and housekeeping. Usually the members had to choose a project to carry on at home. The home economics teacher supervised the students' projects by visiting their homes several times a year.

Public Speaking Club

The public speaking club focused on developing skills in speech, delivery, and poise before audiences and persuasive delivery of one's point of view. Competition was between clubs from other schools and teams within the Training School. Several participants were particularly astute speakers. Among them were Paul R. Williams, Floyd L. Gravitt and Sam Wilborne.

The Crusaders

The Crusaders were a group of male students that organized to publish the first year book for Black students in the county. The participants were taught many other valuable literary skills such as editing, art directing, script writing and sales techniques.

Publication Club

The Publication Club produced a school newspaper and news letters that were distributed to the student body. Participating students learned script writing and other writing skills.

Dance Group

The Dance Group was made up of young women who studied and performed classical, ballet and modern dances. They performed before the student body and on other occasions such as Activity Night. Dancing helped these young ladies develop grace, poise, confidence and self control.

Summary

Like any other institution, the Training School grew from simple to complex. It served a worthwhile purpose as it developed. It experienced many adverse circumstances, socially, politically and financially. Change in attitudes on the part of authorities greatly enhanced the school's growth and development. The provision of transportation was an influencing factor.

The curriculum in the earlier years served its purpose, and as time passed, the course offerings increased making it possible for graduates to enter colleges of their choice. From the beginning, Black teachers gave good account of themselves because they were trained and highly dedicated. Girls went off to college in much larger number than boys.

The consolidated school idea was a great asset in the development of the school for the offerings that could be expanded with less cost to a greater number of students. The competitive school spirit manifested itself within and among other schools.

Agriculture is still the greatest part of the economic life in Halifax County; home economics has been a school subject of much concern over the years. Even today provision is lacking for all pupils who desire this course. Consequently, many students cannot get such courses during their high school career.

Athletically, Halifax County Training School, from its beginning, was recognized to be a great competitor in all sports which it engaged. It was under the Western Athletic District until desegregation in 1969.

Footnotes

1. W. A. Barbour, *Halifacts*, J. T. Townes Printing Company, Inc., Danville, Va., 1941, p. 253.
2. Halifax County School Board Minutes, October 14, 1945, p. 243.
3. Letter to Lazarus Bates in 1976.
4. W. B. Barbour, D. P. Cit., p. 13.
5. Morris Markey, "Our Schools: What are they Worth?" *McCall's*, New York, June 1946, p. 60.
6. County School Board Records, September 13, 1934.
7. Ibid., 1944.
8. Markey, op, cit., p. 58.
9. Roby S. Hager, "An Evaluation Report, " State Department of Education, Richmond, Va., May 1972, p. 16.
10. Markey, op. cit., p. 58.
11. Halifax County, op. cit., 1938.
12. Halifax County, Ibid, 1945.
13. Markey, op. cit., p. 27.
14. County School Board Records, 1934.
15. Markey, op. cit., p. 58.
16. Markey, op. Ibid, p. 27.
17. County School Board Records, September 13, 1934.
18. W. A. Barbour, op. cit., p. 243.

Chapter 5

5

EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

All of the public schools in Halifax County have always been under the general supervision of a white superintendent. The Superintendent carries out general supervision over these schools. There has always been the question of whether he gave adequate attention to the schools for Black students. According to Markey, "The White Superintendent, R. L. Lacy, visits the school only rarely."[1] One might assume from this statement that little attention was given the schools for Black residents. He was quick, however, to give assurance or the appearance that he had much knowledge of what was going on in these schools. When questioned about the quality of schooling being provided, he responded that "they're doing fine. They're turning out good students, and that is the main requirement. I never interfere with a school that is running well."[2] With such a statement, the hands-off approach was justified.

Even though schools for Black pupils were under the direction of the White superintendent, Markey found that, the "administration and teaching in the Halifax Negro Schools are entirely in the hands of Colored men and women. . . ."[3] This was the situation during nearly all of the existence of segregated schools for Black children in the county.

The High School Principal

Since the hands-off policy was the general practice, the principal of the Black high school had a great deal of power. In fact the Principal was, in many ways, the "superintendent" for secondary education. He recruited faculty, hired faculty, disciplined faculty and basically determined the discipline a student would receive for misconduct. In addition, curriculum offerings were determined by the Black principal. If he wanted an advanced, comprehensive curriculum it was practically assured. Of course, the School Board and Superintendent had to give formal approval. Because of these powers, the principal was both feared and highly respected throughout the community. Parents knew well that the influence they had with the principal could determine the attention and support their children received.

The Elementary Principals

In many ways the word principal at the elementary school was a misnomer. In most cases the head of a one, two or three room elementary school was a full-time teacher who doubled as head teacher with no extra pay. She (usually this was a woman) set the standards for the school, determined program and activity policies, and curriculum along with disciplinary codes. She also had the responsibility for school maintenance. Often this included setting and collecting fees from parents to get repairs done and to buy school supplies.. Because contact with officials from the superintendent's office was limited, she relied heavily on the advice of the elementary supervisor regarding curriculum matters. However, since "hands-off" was the general rule,

this head teacher was influential not only in regard to educational programs but also within the community as well, boarding with parents, attending the community's church, and becoming a regular community resident.

Demonstration Agent and Supervisor

Often the value and importance of education supervisors was overlooked or not fully realized. They were important positions which aided the education programs immensely. New concepts, educational theories and instructional practices were introduced to the schools, teachers were provided knowledge of such theories and developments, and skills were developed to deliver them to students.

The supervisor had more contact with the principal or head teacher than any other official in the school system. As a result, she was very valuable to the success of the teachers and students. Because of the head teacher's isolation, the supervisor became more than an advisor who delivered inservice instruction. She, in fact, became an authority over the personnel in the small, remote schools. After all, she had more frequent and more ready contact with the superintent's office. Consequently, she was the equivalent of superintendent for Black elementary schools.

It is not completely clear what relationship the Home Demonstration Agent had to education in the public schools. There was clearly some relationship. At any rate, it is important to indicate that the first "Negro Home Demonstration Agent was employed in 1921, but the first Negro Farm Agent was not employed until 1938."[4]

There were three supervisors of county-wide education programs. The first was Mary Mitchell as jean supervisor. This position was one of general supervisor of county education programs according to Author Bates. Mrs. Marion Sydnor served many years as Home Demonstration Agent, presumably for elementary school students only and Mrs. Willie Anderson Sykes served as Elementary Supervisor from 1933 to 1966.

Mrs. Sykes was truly an outstanding educator and individual. She probably had impact on the education of every Black person currently in the county who attended county schools, and even unknowingly on White students as well. She was an English teacher for many years. Following her teaching career, she served as Supervisor of Elementary Education in Halifax County. Mrs. Sykes supervised all elementary schools for Black children for the entire county. Today, there are many supervisors for all subject areas plus special assistance in most program areas from the State Department. This indicates the magnitude of Mrs. Sykes' job as supervisor.

Footnotes

1. Morris Markey, "Our Schools: What are they Worth?", *McCall's*, New York, June 1946, p. 27.
2. Ibid, p. 27.
3. Ibid, p. 27.
4. W. A. Barbour, *Halifacts*, J. T. Townes Printing Company, Inc., Danville, Va., 1941, p. 84.

Chapter 6

6

THE GRADUATES

One of the best ways to view the education of Black children in Halifax County is to look at the graduating classes of the public schools. Insights gained from such records provide motives of the school system and of the children and their parents.

The first observation of the graduation classes reveals that the Board of Education possibly was not consistently concerned about the schooling of Black children. The absence of student records from 1920 (the first year of public education for Black children) to 1934 (the year W. C. Edwards became principal of Halifax Training School) is one such example. Limited records are available for graduates from Booker T. Washington High School. Because records were not kept for those years only the graduating classes for 1935 through 1969 are presented. The reader will notice that certain data are missing pertaining to some of those classes. Class officers, class themes and class mottos are among the data missing for some classes.

The graduation class of the 1948 - 49 school year was the smallest for any year for which there are records. The reason is that the twelfth grade was added to the curriculum requirements for graduation from high school. There should have been no graduates for this school year. But, there were because a few students had either missed some time, needed to repeat a course or various other factors.

A review of the various classes reveals several other interesting and meaningful facts. The one that is consistent from 1935 to 1969 is that girls outnumbered boys in every class. The reasons for this are many. Most of the students were from farm families. There was a clear pattern in this and other agricultural areas of fewer boys finishing elementary schools than girls. The completion of elementary school was essentially an absolute requirement for attending high school. No equivalent of the graduate equivalent diploma (GED) existed at the elementary school level. Boys were important manpower in farm areas. They were crucial to the survival and advancement of the entire household. Since the crop season and the school term overlapped, many farm boys missed so many days that they couldn't be promoted regardless of their academic performance. It was common for farm boys to miss a solid month or more in succession. Less common was the situtation in which boys missed a complete half-year or a full-year of school. When this happened, sometimes the boy returned to school, but quite often he did not. Boys who lived in the towns, and others whose parents did not farm, had better and longer attendance records.

Another reason that more Southern girls attended and graduated from high school, and more often went on to college, was basically racial. During slavery, and up to modern times, a large number of Black women who worked had been employed as domestics. In those domestic jobs, they were often subject to sexual exploitation of white men. Consequently, many Black parents placed an exceedingly high priority on providing their daughters with professional skills. Once educated, their daughters would not have to take jobs in the homes of white people.

The consequences of these practices were both good and bad. They were good

because the educated daughters usually met and married professional men and reared their children in good middle income circumstances. This rapidly produced a Black middle class and created channels out of poverty for others. Additionally, Black leadership was rapidly developed.

Those practices were bad because the sons often never learned anything than farm skills. This meant that many of them were relegated to sharecropping and the whims of the white "master." Sharecropping mostly produced poverty living standards. Consequently, they reared their children in poverty and hopeless conditions.

The lack of transportation was another reason that more girls graduated than boys. Since the early high schools in Halifax County were boarding schools, mostly girls could attend. This was true because the family would have experienced severe hardships if the boys had not been home every day to carry on farm chores. Also, there would have been no money to pay the tuition and fees for attendance at the high school if the sons did not help the father with the crops.

Overall the list of graduates is impressive. The long parade of graduation classes follow with the first year of record, 1935 - 36.

CLASS of 1935 - 36

John C. Williams, President
Cedric Malone, Vice President
Vera Bowman, Secretary
Mary F. Buster, Asst. Secretary
Joseph Mitchell, Treasurer
Edna R. Coleman, Valedictorian
Vera L. Bowman, Salutatorian

Class Roll

Name of Boys	*Name of Girls*
*Carter, James Leon	Ballou, Mary Esther
Malone, Cedric	*Barksdale, Bessie Lee
Mitchell, Joseph Jefferson	*Bouldin, Sallie Henry
Williams, John Caswell	Bowman, Alice Clarine
	Bowman, Vera Louise
	Buster, Mary Frances
	*Clarke, Frances
	*Coleman, Martha Marion
	Coleman, Edna Rebecca
	Coleman, Alma Ruth
	Coleman, Martha Laura
	Evans, Pearl Marie
	Hill, Elsie Lenora
	Jackson, Irene
	*Morton, Annie Pearl
	Murphy, Alberta Lee
	Owens, Wyllie Rowena
	Palmer, Alice Elizabeth
	Palmer, Ruth Ellen
	Ray, Fannie Ophelia
	Scott, Grace Jacqueline
	Smith, Louise Virginia
	Thompson, Ruby Cardell
	*Walker, Florence Helen
	Wood, Florence Hallie
	Younger, Vanessa Mozelle

Class Motto: We Finish to Begin.

*Certificate of Attendance

CLASS of 1936 - 37

_____, President
_____, Vice President
_____, Secretary
_____, Asst. Secretary
_____, Treasurer
_____, Chaplain
_____, Parliamentarian

Class Roll

Name of Boys	*Name of Girls*
Bates, Lazarus	Brandon, Vernice Elizabeth
Daniel, James Walter	Carter, Edna Gertrude
Garland, Jospeh Oscar	Claiborne, Fannie Irene
Hamilton, William Stover	Coleman, Ruth Earline
Hudson, Dubois Edward	Duncan, Queen Elizabeth
Jenkins, John Lewis	Evans, Gladys Mae
Lanier, Marshall Lee	Hill, Pearl
Nunally, Louis Raymond	Jones, Aileen
Richardson, Willie Myron	Jordan, Cora Anne
Spraggins, Igal Elam	Jordan, Lois Velma
	Lacye, Mary Lizzie
	Marable, Lillian Jacob
	Nash, Evelyn Nelson
	Palmer, Mary Susie
	Williams, Frankie Geneva Eliz.
	Williams, Mattie Evelyn

CLASS of 1937 - 38

, President
, Vice President
, Secretary
, Asst. Secretary
Alice E. Hudson, Valedictorian
Grant S. Williams, Salutatorian

Class Roll

Name of Boys	*Name of Girls*
Atkins, James Alexander	Britton, Bernice Eliza
Cage, Charlie Henry	Brown, Sue Bettie
Coleman, Joseph	Carr, Bessie
Coleman, Ryall James	Carter, Harriett Gordon
Crawley, John Luther	Coleman, Elizabeth Louise
Duncan, Edgar	Harris, Daisy
Jordon, John Isaac	Harris, Lois Vivian
Lanier, Robert Woodrow	Hendricks, Irene Maybelle
Morton, Thomas Willie	Hudson, Alice Elizabeth

Sydnor, Claude Bernard
Taylor, Joseph, Jr.
Terry, Samuel Otis
Torian, John Baptist
Traynham, Aaron Melvin
Venable, John Broadus
Waller, James Albert
White, Richard Samuel
Williams, Rudolph Caswell
Williams, Samuel Edward
Yancey, James William

Owen, Tessie Lee
Paniel, Mary Ruth
Penick, Cora Earnestine
Person, Jean Jerone
Reid, Berneal
Reid, Cynthia Lorene
Robertson, Kate Frances
Rudd, Hattie Grace
Sanford, Carolyn Ann
Shorts, Charleta Francenia
Shorts, Elnora Delois
Smith, Shirley Evonne
Smith, Virginia Anne
Staten, Rosa Ann
Stephens, Juanita Velma
Terry, Ernestine Elaine
Terry, Sue Alice
Traynham, Mary Queen
Tucker, Ellen
Tucker, Orbie Della
Tucker, Thelma
Walker, Barbara Ann
Waller, Betty Lou
Waller, Elma Louise

CLASS of 1965 - 66

_____, President
_____, Vice President
_____, Secretary
_____, Asst. Secretary
_____, Treasurer
_____, Chaplain
_____, Parliamentarian

Class Roll

Name of Boys

Bailey, Morris Carden
Black, George Anderson
Brandon, James Walter
Burns, Williams Bernard

Name of Girls

Adams, Bettie Jean
Adams, Brenda Lee
Adams, Emma Sue
Adams, Eva Deloris

Canada, Floyd Junior
Canada, Willie Gordan
Cardwell, Jerry Walter
Carrington, Major Thomas
Carrington, Edward
Claiborne, Andrew Jackson
Coleman, Branch Delano
Crawley, Joseph Traynham
Crawley, Sylvester
Cunningham, Joel Cawthon
Davis, James Robert
Dixon, Elmer Lee
Edmondson, Howard Leon
Edmondson, Otis Carl
Edmunds, Calvin
Edwards, Lawrence Fredrick
Furges, Otis Junior
Garland, Alfred Wayne
Garner, Jessie Carol
Gee, Ronald Darnell
Hall, Edwin Garfield
Hill, Roger Lee
Jennings, John T.
Johnson, Charlie Walter
Johnson, Donald Frank
Johnson, Ronald James
Jones, George Edward
King, Larry Sherman
Lee, Mathew Douglass
Lewis, Arthur Wilburt
Logan, Alexander
Marable, Joseph McLemare
Marshall, James Louise
Martin, Louis Edward
Mitchell, Roy Clement
Mitchell, John Henry
Moorefield, Arthur Lee
Morgan, Richard
Owen, Carol Jefferson
Pannell, Lloyd Dean
Pointer, Carl Edward
Powell, James
Pyles, Harvey Lee
Pyles, Steve
Ragland, David Wendell
Richardson, James Emanuel

Adams, Frances
Allen, Bettie Carol
Anderson, Doris Gwendolyn
Arnold, Erma Anetta
Barley, Carol Jean
Bates, Myrna Faye
Brandon, Nancy Carolyn
Brame, Veronica
Bostick, Yvonne
Brooks, Clara
Brooks, Juanita
Brown, Bettie Mae
Burns, Evelyn Ollie
Cage, Loretta
Canada, Barbara Ann
Carden, Elizabeth
Carden, Lena Diann
Carden, Regina Vernell
Carr, Joyce Rebecca
Carrington, Charlesnetta
Carrington, Elizabeth Ann
Chandler, Gayle Wanda
Chavious, Vernisa
Cheek, Evelyn Yvone
Cheek, Janice Odella
Claiborne, Rosa Lee
Clark, Millie Ann
Cole, Frances Esther
Coleman, Eileen Doris
Coleman, Evelyn Maretta
Coleman, Madeline
Coleman, Remona Lee
Coleman, Ruth Elizabeth
Coles, Blanche Virginia
Cooks, Vera Alexander
Crawley, Mary Magdaline
Crawley, Melba Henri
Crawley, Susie Mariah
Cross, Irveta Alicia
Crowder, Irene Virginia
Davis, Annie Pearl
Davis, Rogenia Mae
Davis, Martha Lee
Easley, Bettie Jean
Easley, Nyoming
Easley, Ruby Allin

Ross, Walter Lee
Slayton, Calvin Coolidge
Slayton, Louis McArthur
Standfield, Hollie Vincent Laville
Staten, Emmet Nathaniel
Stephens, Kenneth Leon
Sutphin, Vance Cornell
Trent, John David
Tucker, Freddie McKelly
Tucker, William James
Vass, Ernest Eugene
Vaughan, Arnold Fletcher
Wade, Willie Lenear
White, Willie Stewart
Wilborne, Fred George
Wimbush, Eddie Gammon
Wood, Jimmy Edward
Wood, Percy James
Word, Lee Arthur

Edmunds, Linda Loretta
Edmunds, Marion Annett
Edwards, Carolyn Vella
Ewell, Ernestine Virginia
Faulkner, Lucille
Hall, Carolyn Marie
Harris, Jannie Carolyn
Harris, Gloria Jean
Hendricks, Gleenylean
Hester, Theresa LaVerne
Hill, Sherideane Elizabeth
Hubbard, Elen Marie
Hudson, Annie Mae
Hunter, Katie Mirian
Jackson, Mandy Mae
Jennings, Mary Alice
Jennings, Reva Jane
Jones, Catherine
Jones, Mary Ellen
Jones, Sarah Jane
Jordan, Cornell Walter
Jordan, Shernita Ann
LaParade, Rebecca Lucille
Lawson, Barbara Ann
Lewis, Lemma Kate
Lewis, Maggie Jean
Lewis, Verbena
Link, Barbara Ann
Logan,.Deloris
Lovelace, Juanita
Lovelace, Hattie Jean
Lovelace, Sarah Green
Lovelace, Willie Cathy
Martin, Nellie Gray
Mayo, Brenda Ulanda
McElroy, Nellie Louise
McNear, Mable Ann
Miller, Regina
Miller, Kay Frances
Mitchell, June Thelma
Mitchell, Martha Dalephine
Moorefield, Henrietta C.
Olds, Ruby Eline
Oliver, Margaret
Owen, Irma Jean
Ragland, Vicentia Ma

Ragsdale, Julia Frances
Rice, Emma Jean
Robertson, Cora Lee
Robertson, Frances Louise
Robertson, Gladys Gazel
Ross, Margaret Ann
Simon, Sylvester Florine
Slayron, Ollie Darnell
Staten, Mable Jean
Stephens, Esther Marie
Stephens, Ethel
Stephens, Madella
Stewart, Signora Minnie
Sutphin, Ann Marie
Sutphin, Margaret Hazel
Sydnor, Patricia Carlena
Talley, Barbara Jean
Taylor, Jeanetta
Terry, Altena
Terry, Florence Elaine
Tucker, Janie Mae
Tucker, Mattie Lillian
Turberville, Ida Fleman
Vass, Dorothy Louise
Wade, Marian Agnes
Wade, Mattie Agnes
Waller, Sally Josephine
Walton, Gail Jeanette
Walton, Joyce Ann
Williams, Jean Elizabeth
Williams, Eva Oria
Williams, Lillie Gale
Wilson, Wanda
Wilson, Joyce Regina
Womack, Louise Marie
Wood, Elizabeth Carletta
Younger, Vivian Ann

CLASS of 1966 - 67

_____, President
_____, Vice President
_____, Secretary
_____, Asst. Secretary

Watts, Abigail Cynthia
Wilkerson, Cynthia Verrie
White, Ruby Ann
Williams, Brenda Dorothy
Williams, Linda Marie
Willis, Gail Patricia
Wimbish, Brenda Doreatha
Womack, Carolyn Lee
Wyatt, Mary Lee
Yancey, Linda Jean

Class Motto: Not unless we fill our existence with an aim do we make it life.

After viewing the long list of graduates, the reader probably noticed a gradual but continual increase in the number who attained the high school diploma. The general improvements in transportation, employment and economic conditions are likely contributors to this impressive increase. Equally important, it appears, is the increased educational level of the parents of each generation which provided more motivation and greater incentive.

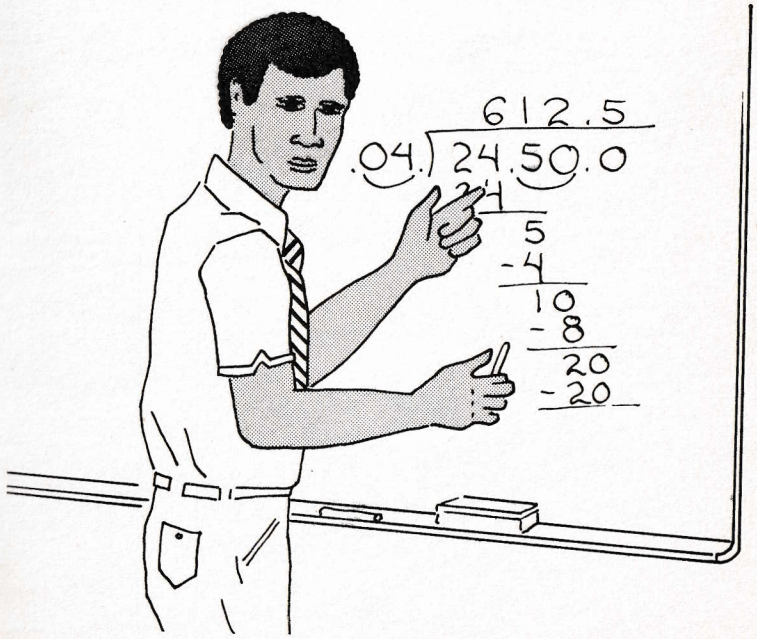
The increase is important also because the larger the number of high school graduates the greater the number attaining higher levels of education, professional and technical skills. Many of these graduates attended college and returned to the County, with purpose, to carry on the up-lifting of their friends, neighbors and relatives. Others went on to other towns and states to serve the country and humanity.

Chapter 7

7

SCHOOL PERSONNEL

A good way to determine the quality of instruction provided to students in Halifax County is to assess the training and qualifications of the teachers and supervisory personnel employed in the school system. The competence of the teaching staff also serves as a good barometer by which one may anticipate the success and advancement of students. The instruction provided Black children in the County Schools has been good, because the faculty has been well qualified for many years. Beginning with the 1934-1935 and 1935-1936 school years, nearly all of the teachers held college degrees and Collegiate Professional Certificate.



Black High School Educators in Halifax County, Virginia

Faculties

Name	Certificate or Degree	School Attended	Authorized Subjects	Subjects Taught	Period of Employment	Comments or Remarks
Sudie M. Joyner (Montague; 1935)	B.S. C.P.	Va. State College	Math English German Physics Soc. Science All Elementary Subjects	Math	1932-1936	Changed positions 1936
W. H. Wicks	B.S. C.P., P.G.P. M.A., 1953	A & T College	English German, History Social Science, All Elementary Subjects	English History	1934-196_	Taught at Catawba Elementary school prior to 1934. Deceased.
H. S. Sykes	N.P.	Va. State College	All Elementary	Agriculture	1918-1946	Principal under Halifax Institute Principal when school was transferred to County in 1920; Principal of Elementary School
				Elementary	1948-1965	

Black High School Educators in Halifax County, Virginia

Faculties

1934-1935 Session

Name	Certificate or Degree	School Attended	Authorized Subjects	Subjects Taught	Period of Employment	Comments or Remarks
W. C. Edwards	B.S., C.P. M.A., 1941 P.G.P.	Va. State College Hampton Institute Adv. Study Univ. of Michigan	English History Soc. Sc. Math All Elementary Subjects	English Soc. Science Math	1934-1967	Gen Sup. 1966-1967; County's First Gen. Sup; Member of County School Board - 1972-1979
R. D. Tynes	B.S.	Va. State College	English Music, Phy. Ed. Soc. Science All Elementary Subjects	English Music Phy. Ed. History	1932-1936	Changed positions 1936 Directed Choral Society
E. H. Edmondson	B. S. C.P.	Shaw University	Science English French Math All Elementary Subjects	Chem. Gen. Science Biology Math French	1934-1959	Taught New Arbor School prior to 1934. Deceased 1967

N.P. - Normal Profession Certificate
C. - Collegiate Certificate
C.P. - Collegiate Professional Certificate
P.G.P. - Post Graduate Professional
( ) - Married Name; Session on Educational Directory
* - Elementary grades were transferred to Sinai Elementary School in 1948

Black High School Educators in Halifax County, Virginia

Faculties

Name	*Certificate or Degree*	*School Attended*	*Authorized Subjects*	*Subjects Taught*	*Period of Employment*	*Comments or Remarks*
Wade N. Powell	C.P. B.A.	N. C. College	History Social Science		1968-1970	HCJHS, 1968 - 1970
Thomas E. Pryor	C.P. B.S.	Frederick College	Biology, Chemistry		1968-1970	HCJHS, 1968 - 1970
Charles G. Smith	C.P. B.S.	Johnson C. Smith University	Math	Math	1968-1973	Changed positions in 1973

Black High School Educators in Halifax County, Virginia

Faculties

Name	*Certificate or Degree*	*School Attended*	*Authorized Subjects*	*Subjects Taught*	*Period of Employment*	*Comments or Remarks*
William R. Carr	C.P. B.A.	Knoxville College	General Science French, Chemistry		1968-1970	
Harding A. Cross, Jr.	C.P. B.S.	A & T State University	Health, Phy. Ed.		1968-1970	
Essie J. Green (Richardson)	C.P. B.S.	Benedict College	Math General Science		1968-present	
Jacqueline Humphrey	C.P. B.S.	A & T State University	History Social Science		1968-present	
Abraham Kennedy	N.P. A.B.	Morris College	Art		1968-1970	
William C. Moore	C.P. B.S.	Richmond Professional Institute	Economics Basic Business ICT		1968-1969	HCSHS, 1970
Paul O'Farrell	C.P. B.S.	East Tennessee State University	History Social Science General Science		1968-1970	HCJHS, 1968 - 1970

The reader could not avoid noticing the lack of data pertaining to some teachers and for all the years between 1920 and 1934. These are additional reflections of laxity and imperfection in the School Board's record keeping.

The staff was consistently well qualified. The array of colleges and universities attended by them broadened as the years passed. This trend is one that developed as universities altered and liberalized their racial policies with regard to the admission of Black students. Many of those who studied under these teachers reflect the teachers' strong will and dedication.

Chapter 8

8

SUCCESS STORIES

The true reflection and test of the competence, motivation and diligence of instructional staff is seen in the actual accomplishments of students who were taught by that staff.

Students who were graduated from Halifax Training School, Booker T. Washington High School, and Mary M. Bethune High School have varied levels of success and accomplishment. The successes of some are measured by the way they prepared their children to cope and advance in this complex society. The successes of others may be measured by their craftiness, which enabled them to survive and prosper economically and socially even though they may have been unable to pursue and attain high levels of education, professional skill and "polish". Still others are determined to be successful because they studied in the great colleges and universities, gained higher levels of reasoning and analysis, and developed sophisticated leadership, political and literary skills.

All of these are realistic ways to measure the success of Black people of Halifax County. This is particularly true when one flashes back to recapture the racial attitudes and treatment that shaped the motives and aspirations of Black people, not just in Halifax County, but throughout Virginia and America. For many Black residents it was truly a success to merely rear a child whose ego and spirit were not totally warped and crushed.

The following is a limited listing of Halifax Training and Bethune High School graduates. Many others are not included because they either could not be contacted or did not submit information about their training and experiences.

Agriculture

Poindexter, William - Nathalie; Halifax Training School, 1954; Farmer

Royster, Carlton H. - Buffalo Junction; Williams Normal and Industrial Institute; Farmer, Factory Worker; Deacon, White Oak Fork Baptist Church

Business

Coleman, Richard - Riverdale; Halifax Training School, 1952; Temple University; President, Oakland Ford Dealership; Presidential Award for Business Achievement

Edmondson, William E. - Halifax; Halifax Training School, 1947; B.S. Hampton Institute; Further Study, Pennsylvania State University, Trenton State College; High School Teacher, Dinwiddie County; Supervisor, Employee Relations; Omega Psi Phi 25 Year Service Award; Member, New Jersey Chamber of Commerce; NAACP

Jefferson, Hazel Hall - Omega; Omega Elementary School; Temple University; Philadelphia Community College; Beaver College; Personnel Manager, United Parcel Service

Logan, Lena Bradley - Meadville; Halifax Training School; Management Training by the American Film Institute; Small Business Administration Management Seminar; Manager, Sinai West Drive-In Theater

Poindexter, Agnes Pringle - Volens; Mary M. Bethune High School, 1959; Virginia Union University; Strayer College; Chief Accountant for multi-funded non profit organization

Robinson, Signora Crawford - Halifax; Halifax Training School, 1952; Virginia State University; Restaurant Manager

Sadler, Johnnie G. - Halifax; Mary M. Bethune High School, 1957; Manager/Owner, Grocery Store

Sadler, Lola Edmondson - Halifax; Mary M. Bethune High School, 1958; Hampton Institute; Bank Teller

Williams, Arthur L. - News Ferry; Mary M. Bethune High School, 1957; B.A. Hampton Institute; M.A. North Western University; Coordinator Personnel Planning; Manager of Salaried Personnel Department, General Services, Ford Motor Company

Chauffeur

Judkin, Frank - Town of Halifax; Halifax Training School; RCA Institute; Bus operator, Electronic Circuit Tester; National Safety Council Award, Transit Authority Courtesy Award

Williams, Clarence Edwin - Centerville; Sinai Elementary School; Halifax County Senior High; Chauffeur, Trailways Company

Williams, Rudolph - Centerville; Sinai Elementary School; Halifax County Senior High; Chauffeur, D.C. Transit

Clerical

Brandon, Hattie - Halifax Training School, 1954; Certificate, Smith-Madden Secretarial School; Secretary

Bryant, Barbara Coleman - Owen's Grove; Mary M. Bethune High School, 1965; Virginia State University; Secretary, Westinghouse Electric

Rhone, Nannie Rudd - Nathalie; Mary M. Bethune High School, 1962; Berean Business School; Philadelphia Community College; Secretary

Costello, Sheila Williams - Centerville; Sinai Elementary School; Halifax County Senior High School, Certificate, Philips Business School, Lynchburg; Secretary, US Department of Energy

Parker, Mary Crawley - Woodsgrove; Mary M. Bethune High School, 1966; Secretary, National Park Service, US Department of Interior

Appendices

APPENDIX A

In The United States District Court
For The Western District of Virginia
Danville Division

BRENDA LEE TRAYNHAM, ETC, *et al.* :

v. CIVIL ACTION NO. 68-C-61-D

COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD OF HALIFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA, *et al.* :

ORDER

It appearing to the Court that the defendents herein have, pursuant to the Court's order of May 6, 1969, filed a report containing such information as required by the Court, and it further appearing that no exceptions to the defendent's proposed plan for the operation of the public schools of Halifax County have been filed, and deeming it proper so to do,

It is ADJUDGED and ORDERED as follows:

1. The plan of desegregation submitted by the defendents pursuant to the Court's order of April 5, 1969, be, and the same is hereby, approved insofar as it refers to the elementary schools.

2. Defendents' contemplated plan for the operation of the secondary schools for the semester commencing in September 1969 be, and the same is hereby, approved.

3. The defendents are directed, as soon as practicable, to advise the Court as to such zones as have been established as contemplated by their report to the Court under date of May 15, 1969.

4. The defendents are directed to report to the Court, as soon as practicable, the racial composition of the student population of each of the schools in the Halifax County school system, as well as the racial composition of the faculties of each of said schools commencing with the school term beginning in September 1969.

5. The defendents are directed to report to the Court by no later than April 1, 1970, regarding the progress made in reference to the construction of the secondary schools contemplated to be constructed under the defendents' present intentions.

All other motions are continued in this cause.

Robert R. Merhige, Jr.
United States District Judge

June 5, 1969

A TRUE COPY, TESTE:

Leigh B. Hanes, Jr., Clerk

By Barbara H. Gibson

Deputy Clerk

APPENDIX B

In The United States District Court
For The Western District Of Virginia
Danville Division

BRENDA LEE TRAYNHAM, *et al.* :

v. CIVIL ACTION NO. 68-C-61-D

COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD OF HALIFAX :
COUNTY, VIRGINIA, *et al.*

MEMORANDUM

This matter came before the Court on December 15, 1969, pursuant to the mandate of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit issued December 2, 1969.

Pursuant to said mandate and in compliance therewith, the defendant school board has filed a plan for the integration of the secondary schools in Halifax County, Virginia, to be effective as of the end of the present school semester which terminates on January 30, 1970. A copy of said plan is attached to these findings.

Plaintiffs have filed a response in which they state they did not, as of the date of the filing of said response, i.e., December 12, 1969, perceive any objection to the submitted plan for the residue of the current school year.

The Court adopts as part of its findings those findings heretofore enunciated from the bench on April 5, 1969.

The Court finds that the defendants' proposed plan for the integration of the secondary schools in Halifax County, Virginia, entails the use of pairing. There are now operated in the county two secondary schools, one the Mary Bethune High School, the student population of which is all of the Negro race, and the other school known as the Halifax County High School, the student population of which is predominantly white. It is contemplated that the Mary Bethune High School will become the Halifax County Junior High School, with all 8th and 9th grade students attending the public schools in Halifax County to attend that school. The present Halifax County High School shall be known as the Halifax County Senior High School, with all 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students attending same.

It is contemplated that the faculty of each school will be assigned to the end that in the junior high school approximately 40% of the faculty will be of the Negro race and 60% of the white race, and the same situation is contemplated for the senior high school. The Court finds this to be the approximate ratio of Negro and white faculty members which now exists throughout the secondary system. It is contemplated that in the junior high school there will be 56 white faculty members and 37 Negro, and that there will be 847 white students and 897 Negro students. In the senior high schools it is contemplated there will be 57 white faculty members and 40 of the Negro race, and that there will be 1,069 students of the white race and 838 students of the Negro race. In addition, there will be one principal of the white race and one of the Negro race.

While the plaintiffs have offered no objection to the proposed plan, the Court finds both from the plan and from the evidence taken before the Court that it is contemplated as to each of the schools in the secondary system that the classes shall be reorganized without regard to the race of the students involved with the exception of those classes presently being taught which do not terminate at the conclusion of the present semester and which require continuity of instruction. The Court finds that certain of the classes can undoubtedly be and will be reorganized.

Without intending to limit, but as an example, it is contemplated that the 8th grade science and vocational subjects can be reorganized without detriment to the scholastic standings of the students. Those subjects which do not terminate at mid-semester are generally English, Math, and certain science courses such as Chemistry and Physics. On the other hand, there are certain courses which will be given in the second semester in which there will be no difficulty organizing the classes in such a way as to result in not only an integrated school but integrated classes as well. Among those subjects are the vocational subjects, certain of the sciences, Economics and Physical Education and Music. The foregoing are simply examples and are not to be construed as limitations as to what classes will in fact be integrated. As to those subjects which do not terminate at the mid-semester break, among which as the Court has previously stated are English, Math, and certain of the sciences, it is apparent that in many instances the failure to reorganize the class will result as a practical matter in either an all-white or an all-Negro section.

The Court finds that teaching in a particular subject is frequently conducted by the respective teachers at a different rate of progress. There is no uniformity as to the manner of presentation in many instances.

The Court finds that it has been the practice of the school administration at the commencement of school in the fall term to give the students certain tests, in some instances I.Q. tests but generally school and college ability tests, from which the students are generally classified both on the basis of their test scores and their teachers' views after consultation with those teachers in the Guidance Department.

The Court finds that there are now given certain remedial classes, and this seems to be particularly true in 8th and 9th grade English.

It is apparent that any attempt to carte blanche reorganize all classes would, from the evidence before the Court, be harmful to the student's scholastic achievements and, in addition, would require the expenditure of time, all of which would result in the schools' not being able to commence their second semester on February 5, 1970 as contemplated, and which would in effect extend the closing of the second semester term beyond the date on which the teachers' contracts bind them, i.e., June 30, 1970.

The Court sees no alternative to certain of the contemplated classes being kept intact by reason of the necessity of continuity of instruction, even though as a consequence thereof as a practical matter it will result in certain segregated classes. If any such plan were contemplated beyond the ensuing semester, the Court would not approve it. It is to be noted, however, that the defendants intend where possible to

reorganize certain of the classes in order to minimize any non-integrated sections, and in addition the plan contemplates that after this school year the organization of every class within the school system will be accomplished without regard to the race of the students involved.

The Court finds that all other facets of the plan contemplate totally integrated schools. It is the Court's intention, therefore, to enter an appropriate order approving the plan.

Counsel have advised the Court that they have agreed that plaintiffs' counsel are entitled to the sum of Four Thousand ($4,000.00) Dollars for their services, which the Court considers to be reasonable. In addition, of course, counsel will receive, pursuant to the mandate of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, their out of pocket expenses and taxable costs. It is represented that said expenses, excluding taxable costs in the District Court, amount to $192.14. An order in conformity with this memorandum and with the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals mandate will be entered.

United States District Judge

December 17, 1969

APPENDIX C

In The United States District Court
For The Western District Of Virginia
Danville Division

BRENDA LEE TRAYNHAM, *et al.* :

v. CIVIL ACTION NO. 68-C-61-D

COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD OF HALIFAX :
COUNTY, VIRGINIA, *et al.*

ORDER

Upon consideration of the mandate of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit entered December 2, 1969, and for the reasons assigned in the memorandum this day filed, and deeming it proper so to do, it is ADJUDGED and ORDERED:

1. That the order of this Court entered nunc pro tunc April 5, 1969, and the Court's order of May 6, 1969, be and the same is hereby, vacated, except that portion of the order of April 5, 1969, which denied defendants' motion to dismiss.

2. That the defendants herein, their successors, agents, and employees, be and they are hereby, mandatorily enjoined, permanently, to operate the public schools in the County of Halifax, Virginia, under a unitary system, the components of which are not identifiable with either "white" or "Negro" schools.

3. The School Board of Halifax County, Virginia, and Udy C. Wood, Division Superintendent of Schools for the County of Halifax, Virginia, shall pay to consel for the plaintiffs allowed counsel fees in the sum of $192.14 as and for travel expenses and the printing of brief in the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, as well as their taxable costs incurred in the District Court.

4. Defendant's plan submitted pursuant to the mandate of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, a copy of which is attached to the memorandum this day filed, as and for the operation of the public schools of Halifax County, Virginia, commencing on the 5th day of February, 1970, including the anticipated assignment of faculty as reflected therein, be, and the same is hereby, approved.

5. On or before the 9th day of February, 1970, the defendants shall report to this Court the number of sections and the racial composition of each such section which has not been reorganized as sections and the racial composition of each of such classes as were reorganized in accordance with the last sentence of Paragraph Number 4 of the plan heretofore submitted.

6. On or before the 1st day of August, 1970, there shall be filed with this Court a report showing the anticipated racial composition of the student body and faculty of each public school to be operated by the defendants or their successors for the term commencing in September 1970.

Let the Clerk send copies of this decree and the memorandum filed herewith to all counsel of records, and transmit to the Clerk's Office of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ten copies of the following papers:

a. The School Board's plan for the integration of the secondary schools in Halifax County, Virginia;

b. This order;

It is further ORDERED that copies of this order be served by the United States Marshal on each of the defendants herein.

United States District Judge

December 17, 1969

APPENDIX D

Desegration Plan
Elementary Schools

The elementary schools of Halifax County will be paired as follows for the 1969-1970 session, to-wit:

Jennings and Volens Schools will be paired, with grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 attending Jennings School, and grades 5, 6, and 7 attending Volens School.

Rosa and Meadville Schools will be paired, with grades 1 and 2 attending Rosa School, and grades 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 attending Meadville School.

Clays Mill and Scottsburg Schools will be paired, with grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 attending Clays Mill School, and grades 5, 6, and 7 attending Scottsburg School.

Halifax and Sinai Schools will be paired, with grades 1, 2, and 3 attending Halifax School and grades 4, 5, 6, and 7 attending Sinai School.

South of Dan and Cluster Springs Schools will be paired with grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 attending South of Dan School, and grades 5, 6, and 7 attending Cluster Springs School.

Wilson Memorial, Turbeville, Virgilina and Clover Schools will not be paired, but will be individually zoned.

Zones will be established for attendance at the aforesaid paired schools and for the aforesaid schools that are not paired as well, the lines of which zones will be drawn

so as to achieve, to such extent as is practical, for each school, racial proportions similar to those which exist in the overall elementary system as set forth in the original plan filed with the court herein. The School Board may make specific assignments of students to particular schools only in those instances where such is practical and only where such assignments will bring the racial ratio at the schools to which said students are assigned nearer to the over-all countywide ratio for the whole school system.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The following factual basis for the statement in the original plan that "two new junior high schools will be built, etc.," is hereby submitted, to-wit:

1. A resolution in furtherance of said purpose was passed by this board on February 25, 1969, a copy of which has been heretofore filed in this suit.

2. A resolution approving the action of the School Board and adopting its plan as a tentative plan of the Board of Supervisors of Halifax County was passed by said board on March 12, 1969, a copy of which resolution has been heretofore filed in this suit.

3. A resolution carrying the plan for the construction of two new junior high schools further into effect and authorizing acquisition of school sites, preparation of plans and the borrowing of funds was passed by this School Board on April 30, 1969, a copy of which resolution is hereto attached marked "Exhibit A".

4. A resolution approving the School Board's action of April 30, 1969 and specifically authorizing the acquisition of sites, the preparation of plans, and the

borrowing of funds from the Virginia Supplemental Retirement System was passed by said Board of Supervisors on May 5, 1969, a copy of which resolution is hereto attached marked "Exhibit B".

5. The Commonwealth of Virginia has made available the first million dollars required for the contemplated school construction from the Virginia Supplemental Retirement System, as will appear from a copy of a letter from its Treasurer to Udy C. Wood, Superintendent of Schools, dated April 17, 1969, a copy of which is hereto attached marked "Exhibit C". Under the procedure provided by state regulations, said funds must be obtained.

6. Said Superintendent of Schools is now negotiating with the Assistant Treasurer of Virginia for the actual obtaining of the needed funds for said construction, as will appear from an exchange of letters between the Assistant Treasurer of Virginia and said Superintendent of Schools, both dated May 8, 1969, copies of which are together filed herewith and marked "Exhibit D".

7. Efforts are now in progress to secure both of the sites needed for the construction of said schools at locations as indicated in Exhibit A. More than one suitable location has been found for each school and while contacts have already been made with landowners, deeds or options have not yet been acquired. However, suitable sites are believed to be available for said schools.

8. Said School Board has authorized the employment of an architect to prepare plans and such employment will be made forthwith.

In view of the foregoing, the defendants assume that nothing more is required of them at this time.

Respectfully,

Halifax County School Board
And Committee for Control of
The Halifax County High
School

by: _____
Clerk

APPENDIX E

ALMA MATER

"Dear B.H.S." (H.T.S.)

Just beyond the Halifax County Seat,

Stands our school of lofty heights.

And each day within her walls we meet,

To drink knowledge, and for wisdom seek.

(Chorus)

Dear B.H.S., (H.T.S.) dear Orange and Blue,

Our love for thee grows more and more each day.

As life we see, we'll cherish thee

As we journey along life's way. (Repeat)

Reports, Inc., Wilmington, DE