

# Becoming an African American Progressive Educator

NARRATIVES FROM 1940S BLACK PROGRESSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS



Craig Kridel, Editor

*Becoming an African American Progressive Educator*

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Museum of Education  
University of South Carolina

*To the Booker T. Washington High School  
Alumni Association, the Lincoln Center Foundation,  
the Moultrie Ram Roundup Planning Committee,  
and other alumni associations and devoted graduates  
of all of the Secondary School Study programs who  
have fought to ensure that the history and significance  
of their high schools will never be forgotten.*

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and the Daniel Tanner Foundation*

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Front row, l-r: M. L. Bryant; H. M. Adams; G. P. Anderson.  
Back row, l-r: J. H. Abner; G. L. Porter; R. F. Nims; ca. 1940s.  
Courtesy of The Lincoln Room, The Lincoln Neighborhood Service Center

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## Preface

*We will be progressive educators and our schools will be progressive schools if we possess the attitude and the courage of educational experimenters.*

—William A. Robinson, “What Is Progressive Education?” (1937a, p. 26)

The Secondary School Study, sponsored by the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes (ACSSN) and funded by the General Education Board (GEB), was conducted between 1940 and 1946 to encourage teachers at 17 select African American high schools in the American Southeast to further develop their administrative, curricular, and instructional practices. With assistance from the Progressive Education Association’s Eight Year Study, school faculty and staff came together to reconsider the basic purposes of secondary education and to address classroom problems—those curricular, instructional, and cultural issues that so greatly affected the education of black youth. *Becoming an African American Progressive Educator* presents three individual “service reports” from the Secondary School Study—25,000- to 30,000-word monographs: *The Evolution of Susan Prim*, published in 1944 by the faculty of Lincoln High School, Tallahassee, Florida; *Miss Parker: The New Teacher*, published in 1946 by the faculty of Moultrie High School for Negro Youth, Moultrie, Georgia; and *High School Was Like This*, published in 1946 by the faculty of Booker T. Washington High School, Rocky Mount, North Carolina.

This edited collection serves to further the historical scholarship of the Museum of Education’s Secondary School Study research program, which also includes a series of web exhibitions with over 500 images and 750 oral history statements about principals and teachers and curricular, instructional, and civil rights activities ([www.museumofeducation.info/sss.html](http://www.museumofeducation.info/sss.html)) and a 146-page exhibition catalog, *Progressive Education in Black High Schools: The Secondary School Study, 1940–1946*, published in 2015 and available for download at [www.museumofeducation.info/SSS\\_web-2015.pdf](http://www.museumofeducation.info/SSS_web-2015.pdf). The museum’s research efforts have documented school experimentation during the 20th century so that insights from progressive practices may be introduced into contemporary discussions of educational policy and school renewal.

The Secondary School Study, part of what became a group of 1930s and 1940s “cooperative studies” guided by the Progressive Education Association (PEA), distinguished itself among the other national and regional research projects. The study was the only planned program to introduce progressive experimental methods into black secondary education; equally importantly, these three monographs represent a rare in-

stance of research reports prepared as creative nonfiction narratives. Few examples of similar school reports exist in the literature of American education from the early- to mid-20th century, and Secondary School Study staff viewed the stories as “the first comprehensive description of progress and problems in individual Negro Schools” (Brown, 1946). The monographs—*The Evolution of Susan Prim*, *Miss Parker: The New Teacher*, and *High School Was Like This*—are presented in unabridged form. [1.]

Reading *Becoming an African American Progressive Educator* may prove somewhat disconcerting for contemporary educators and, certainly, difficult to place in historical context. Aside from today’s many misconceptions of progressive education and unfamiliarity with its terminology, the school narratives are startlingly free of social justice critiques. Absent of confrontational rhetoric in the quest for equity and civil rights, a tone of accommodation and respectability politics may seem to emerge from stories that do not address cultural, racial, and socioeconomic problems or report teachers’ and students’ many racial humiliations in their communities at this time. [2.] Yet —rightly or wrongly—the texts are not intended to confront racial inequities of the post-Brown / Jim Crow period. As noted in the overall project’s report, *Serving Negro Schools*, “the economic status of Negro schools and the limitations imposed by this status on the curricular offerings of these schools could not be disregarded. However, the Study was not directly concerned with the improvement of the economic status of schools, although some improvement was a necessary outcome of efforts to improve school curricula” (Brown and Robinson, 1946, p. 17). The project directors saw their work as a way to introduce and popularize progressive education practices and to underscore the importance of school experimentation to black educators during this period.

Secondary School Study teachers and staff were, nonetheless, concerned with improving the economic status of schools; however, they took action through the courts and the local and district school board meetings rather than through the publications of this project. They saw the process for improving schools, in the words of William A. Robinson, director of the project, as “a matter calling more for an expenditure of intelligence and understanding than for an expenditure of money” (Robinson, 1940, p. 542). This was especially important to Robinson, who had been bemoaning those few opportunities for black educators to have direct contact with progressive education and to share in its enthusiasm and promise. He attributed the backwardness and rigidity of the black high school curriculum to a mentality of taking “what the white folks take even if it is of little value to the white folks and less to the Negroes” (Robinson, 1940, p. 543). Robinson was calling on African American teachers to possess the attitude and the courage to engage in educational

experimentation, and the Secondary School Study's narratives describe the possibilities of progressive methods and the lived experiences of teachers and staff who were attempting to implement successful activities in the schools.

Much has been written about black education during the late Jim Crow and long civil rights era, yet specific classroom accounts are scarce. These narratives provide today's researchers with a rare opportunity to enter classrooms of the past, albeit through creative nonfiction that describes specific curricular perspectives as coordinated and guided by PEA staff. While the service reports are fictional, they certainly were not based on fantasy. Descriptions of activities have a direct factual link to extant school programs at the individual experimental sites. Further, the narratives become even more significant since their purpose was not merely to describe school events but, also, to portray the decision-making process that led to the practices. We watch Miss Prim's transition from a traditional teacher with a "mule-in-the-middle-of-the-road" attitude toward newfangled teaching ideas" to becoming a progressive educator; we learn of Miss Parker's experiences with pupil-teacher planning as a somewhat fearful first-year teacher and witness her interactions with the curious Maxine and the doubter Mrs. Thomas; and we follow the lives of Sarah and Herbert, graduating seniors who learn of various programs at their school as they prepare text for their commencement speeches.



Funding from the Spencer Foundation and the Daniel Tanner Foundation permitted me to embark upon what has become a 14-year research project, where I have conducted archival and field-based research at over 40 sites and staged over 150 oral history sessions with approximately 250 former students and teachers, community education leaders, and local historians. While exhibitions have been online for over eight years, these websites remain works in progress and represent an "educational research charrette" as additional historical material has been discovered and memories, recollections, and insights come forth by participants and other researchers.

I wish to thank my Museum of Education Secondary School Study associate curators—Alice D. Epperson (Nashville, Tennessee), N. Carolyn Thompson (Americus, Georgia), and Thelma Brown Rush (Vicksburg, Mississippi)—who have inspired me to continue this research. I worked with alumni associations of the Rocky Mount, Tallahassee, and Moultrie schools—Booker T. Washington High School



Alumni Association, the Lincoln Center Foundation, and the Moultrie Ram Roundup Planning Committee, respectively—and I thank them for their willingness to accept modest copyright stipends from the Museum of Education in order to present their schools' publications to contemporary audiences. My efforts to obtain permissions would not have occurred without the assistance of Genevieve Lancaster (Booker T. Washington High School, Rocky Mount, North Carolina), W. Mack Rush (Lincoln High School, Tallahassee, Florida), and Dale Williams (Moultrie High School for Negro Youth, Moultrie, Georgia). Robert Bullough, Daniella Cook, Michelle Fine, KaaVonia Hinton, Avni Gupta-Kagan, Cleveland Sellers, and Alan Wieder provided importance advice and assistance, and I thank the Rockefeller Archive Center for a 2011 Scholar in Residence appointment, where I first discovered these historic publications. James Allen Smith, Michele Hiltzik Beckerman, Erwin Levold, Carol Radovich, and Thomas Rosenbaum of the Rockefeller Archive Center staff provided great assistance. The conceptual foundation for this publication arises from *Stories of the Eight Year Study* (Kridel and Bullough, 2007), and I suspect I would not have initiated this documentary editing project if Louise DeSalvo had not introduced me to the importance of creative nonfiction. I greatly appreciate the efforts of Lyn Bell Rose for design and production and Mary R. Bull, Melissa Meyer, and Valencia Morton for assistance with the preparation of text for this publication.

—Craig Kridel, January 10, 2018

## Prologue

The three of them were sitting, politely waiting, in Sunday dress with one in full crown. None wanted a glass of water. They listened to introductions with stoic and somewhat patronizing smiles, expecting the same questions that they had been asked for years. This time it was different. He showed them materials “from the day” and began asking about certain people—teachers and students—and specific classroom activities. They started asking him questions. Why? Why this and why that?

“And they don’t think there were any black progressives during the 1940s. Humph!” said Miss Prim. There was a pause, as was always the case after she spoke.

Miss Parker added, “We built a democratic community—democratic living—and were concerned about the whole child; guidance was part of everyone’s job. We did more than just teach facts. We brought food and clothes for those children who were in need. We stayed after and worked with the students who wanted to learn other subjects. We didn’t have to tell people what we were. We just did it. What else would we have been?”

Mrs. Lawson knew the drill but stopped. She was still expecting the “desegregation question.” So instead she added, “Many of you young people show up now and ask us questions about civil rights. No one ever asks what we actually did in the classroom. We knew that the system was unfair. We knew what was going to be given to us. We knew what should have been given to us. And we knew what we were not going to get. But we also knew that we were making a difference, and at summer workshops we heard what others were doing in their classrooms: not grand talk, not theory, but actual practices. That’s what we were interested in. Not what people were calling one another.”

— Creative nonfiction dialogue based upon statements teachers made during the Secondary School Study Oral History Project

## Reading the Secondary School Study Narratives

*The task of the Secondary School Study was to find means by which the curricular offerings of Negro high schools could be influenced by sound and accepted educational practices that had enriched other school curricula, but which were practically unknown in most Negro schools.*

—W. H. Brown and W. A. Robinson, *Serving Negro Schools* (1946, p. 17)

While most black secondary educators during the 1930s and 1940s sought to achieve accreditation for their high schools, some believed that teachers were not involved in progressive education's "stream of educational ideas" and, thus, were placing too much emphasis on existing traditional practices (Robinson, 1937b). The Secondary School Study was designed to permit educators to engage in experimentation and to develop further curricular and instructional activities that could serve to better the experiences for students, staff, and themselves. With a belief and faith in democracy, William A. Robinson recognized the potential of progressive methods to help teachers improve secondary school education. "There is a small but growing movement in American secondary education that is not content to create and preserve democracy in American life by a type of schooling which in itself is essentially undemocratic in its conception, its content and its administration. Within this movement democracy is not a vague verbalism but is forthrightly interpreted as a deep and intelligent concern for the rights and well-being of the individual, including the right of participation by the individual in all matters that concern him, and a profound faith in his capacity and desire to participate" (Robinson, 1940, p. 564). Prior to the Secondary School Study, Robinson was principal of the Atlanta University Laboratory School, whose programs compared favorably with the finest progressive schools in the country. He knew that the process for educational change did not consist of vague verbalisms but required a community of committed teachers (and students) who were actively engaged in conversation and experimentation. For a three-year period he campaigned (if not badgered) GEB staff to fund an experimental program for black high schools.

The Secondary School Study represented an example of "implementative research," a now antiquated form of educational change. This method did not intend to design formulaic and predetermined classroom activities that could then be replicated in other settings (much like today's "best practices" approach); nor did the research consist of formulating hypotheses, developing experimental designs for pretest and posttest examinations, or compiling lists of goals and objectives.

Implementive research, as a type of programmatic experimentation, sought to establish the validity of certain methods (e.g., whether a program improves learning) rather than to determine reliability (e.g., whether a set of activities would work elsewhere). Experimentation focused on determining what could prove useful in specific classroom settings, and upon ascertaining and developing such promising practices, teachers would then engage in conversation with others—faculty at their sites as well as teachers from other schools—to further their insights for curricular and instructional development and implementation.

Embedded in this type of inquiry was “cooperative study,” where conversation and the exchange of ideas became a form of professional development for teachers and where “cooperation” became a rudimentary form of social dialogue—a way to transform educational policy, administration, curriculum, and teaching. As will be seen in these narratives, this type of experimentation demanded discussion, and the decision-making process proved as important as educational ideology when teachers began to reconsider what activities could be implemented in their schools. Cooperative studies sought to inform teachers of not just the results of their experimentation—the effectiveness of materials and methodologies for their individual settings—but also the process that led to their decisions.

The term “cooperation” held special meaning during the 1930s and 1940s and meant much more than being agreeable or understanding. Cooperative study maintained that expertise arose from extended open dialogue and repudiated the “expert consultant” telling teachers what to do. Responsibility for school improvement was site-specific and rested with administrators, teachers, and students, who would be assisted by Secondary School Study staff and resource persons. The techniques of “democratic cooperation” were well developed, drawing upon carefully crafted stages of mutual helpfulness, understanding, compromise, bargaining, leadership, and comradeship (Courtis, 1938). This did not mean, however, that “being cooperative” would always result in successful curriculum development. As noted in one of the school narratives, “The Lincoln faculty, like faculties in other schools attempting to make adaptations in their progress through teacher cooperation, faced numerous obstructions to progress which had to be removed or circumvented through clear group thinking. In fact, it was quite some time after the faculty saw clearly the kinds of growth they wanted Lincoln’s pupils to achieve, before opportunities could be created or found which would actually produce this growth” (Lincoln High and Elementary School faculty, 1944, p. 54). Cooperative study proved to be a process for educational change and included many challenges; yet this now forgotten method served to define all aspects of the

Secondary School Study and further integrated the project into the larger progressive legacy of “democracy as a way of life” (Bode, 1937).

In the Eight Year Study, considered by the GEB as the first example of both implementative research and cooperative study (Havighurst and Rhind, 1940, p. 19), participating schools submitted informative, if not somewhat pedantic, statements of documented activities for the final volume of their project report, *Thirty Schools Tell Their Story*. [3.] Secondary School Study teachers decided to compose their individual service reports differently and “seemed to prefer a descriptive and illustrative story of the way in which the school developed and carried out plans for growth” (Brown, 1943, p. 8). (These school monographs are not to be confused with the project’s overall final report, *Serving Negro Schools: A Report on the Secondary School Study* [Brown and Robinson, 1946].) Eight schools originally volunteered to prepare reports in order “to make available to other schools descriptions of the purposes, problems, and the steps which individual member schools considered or took in their effort to make the programs in their schools more effective” (Brown, 1943, p. 8). Changes in administration and the difficulties of completing lengthy narratives deterred school faculties from completing their submissions. In addition, project administrators did not allocate funds for publication and dissemination, nor did the ACSSN create a depository for school materials or a distribution network to its agencies (Brown and Robinson, 1946, p. 20). Some school accounts may have been completed but not preserved. Nonetheless, with guidance from Eight Year Study staff, three illustrative stories were published during the time of the Secondary School Study, all adopting an experimental form of reporting in what now would be considered creative nonfiction narratives.

These stories are not dispositions or treatises on educational theory; such articles and statements appear elsewhere among the Secondary School Study documents. The narratives portray teachers and students as composite characters within their educational settings, attending to everyday problems with thoughtful, practical voices and coming to realize that they could introduce a variety of progressive practices at their schools. Through “cooperation” as a form of guided and never-ending discourse that, ultimately, would forge a shared philosophy of education, teachers experimented with activities that embraced the meaning of schooling in a democracy and examined the nature of learning, as well as the relationships among student, teacher, and society (Bullough and Kridel, 2011).

## Reconsidering Definitions of a Progressive Education

*But answering the question what is “Progressive Education” is not so simple. Progressive education certainly is not the possession of an exact knowledge of what to take from the new or of what of the old to scrap. For most of us it is simply the attitude that makes us unafraid and willing to apply our individual endowment of intelligence, whatever it is, to a persistent and sincere study of the principles upon which the procedure of helping children to grow into effective and beautiful maturity should be based, and further a courageous willingness to examine critically our present procedures with no uncritical reference either for the new or for the old ideas making such changes as conditions allow and intelligence demands.*

—William A. Robinson, “What Is Progressive Education?” (1937a, p. 24)

The monographs encouraged 1940s African American teachers and administrators to draw upon concepts from progressive education by describing the pedagogical lives of Lincoln’s Miss Prim, Moultrie’s Miss Parker, and Booker T. Washington’s faculty and students; however, this all becomes somewhat complicated because, as it turns out, the term “progressive education” does not appear in the narratives. This is similar to the first volume in the Eight Year Study’s final report, *The Story of the Eight Year Study*, in which the term is used only once . . . and merely in reference to a quotation (Aikin, 1942). For Secondary School Study teachers, such identifications were somewhat moot. Within a democratic community of cooperation and experimentation, these teachers explored practices and reconsidered their programs; labels were unnecessary and could have caused difficulties in their communities. As one Secondary School Study teacher mentioned, her school (Staley High School in Americus, Georgia) “was highly segregated and any term that implied the idea of ‘progress’ was dangerous. So we did not use the term ‘progressive education.’ We did not have to—we lived it every day. We provided education for the mind, the body, and the soul and attended to the needs of the whole child—personal interests but also community needs” (Westbrook, 2011). Similarly, another teacher at Booker T. Washington High School (Columbia, South Carolina) stated, “We talked about John Dewey but did not use the term ‘progressive education.’ We were progressives and put the theories into practice without having to say the ideas that would have caused suspicion. We just did it” (Phelps Adams, 2014). These educators, as well as the three school faculties who prepared narratives, conceived and described their curricular and pedagogical activities in the vernacular of 1940s progressive education. They were indeed progressives but not in the

same manner of today's archetypical figures—John Dewey, William H. Kilpatrick, George S. Counts, and others—where the definition has been narrowed.

Educational progressivism never represented a uniform, commonly accepted conception; the term was practical rather than precise and, thus, not as ideologically confining or simplistic as it is perceived today. Further, progressive methods at the elementary level (what is now perceived as the assumed norm and general defining conception) were markedly different from what occurred in high schools. Lawrence Cremin warned against formulating any capsule definition of the term: “None exists, and none ever will; for throughout its history progressive education meant different things to different people, and these differences were only compounded by the remarkable diversity of American education” (Cremin, 1961, p. x). Many varying strands of thought defined educational progressivism, even when the “movement” seemed neatly organized with designations such as child-centered and society-centered educators, pedagogical progressives, project methodists, sentimentalists, social meliorists, and social reconstructionists (Tyack, 1974; Rugg, 1936; Cremin, 1961; Kliebard, 2004; Brameld, 1950). [4.]

Progressive education was constantly evolving as Secondary School Study teachers situated their work within specific settings and reexamined their programs and activities. Their fundamental values were clear with beliefs distinctive from traditional forms of curriculum and instruction. But actions were adapted to circumstances and demands, and by the 1940s, being a progressive school was not holding allegiance to a few slogans or the PEA's founding principles. Eugene Smith, an Eight Year Study administrator and the first president of the PEA, stated that “truly progressive” education must continually be tested by two questions: “Does it keep itself fitted to present day requirements, changing as necessary with changing living conditions and changing needs? Does it keep apace with investigation and discovery in the educational field?” (Smith, 1924, p. 99). The process of becoming a progressive was continuous, further underscored by Robinson, who had written, “I believe that Progressive Education wherever it is found in our schools today can be defined as the attitude of willingness to alter when such an attitude is based upon one's intelligent conviction that some alteration should be made” (Robinson, 1937a, p. 26).

This perspective, however, did not suggest that any random educational practice “fitted to present day requirements” or a “willingness to alter” would constitute progressive methodology. “Eight Year Study progressivism,” as embodied in the Secondary School Study and defined by the PEA's experimental (and primarily public) high schools during the 1930s through 1950s embraced “trust in the ability

of teachers and school administrators to reason through complex issues towards sensible and worthy conclusions; belief in democracy as a guiding social ideal, a basis for a community of investigation and endeavor; and faith in thoughtful inquiry, including school experimentation, to create ways of making education more life-enhancing for students and teachers” (Kridel and Bullough, 2007, p. 12). In light of these fundamental themes, many Eight Year Study and Secondary School Study programs adopted what became a distinctive view of schooling with correlated and fused core curricula, pupil-teacher planning, student assessments and cumulative student records, community building and engagement, summer workshops, and an emphasis upon the role of school philosophy. [5.]

In addition to adopting these defining educational practices, black progressive educators of the Secondary School Study also displayed an ideological pedigree through the company they kept. W. A. Robinson was introduced to educational progressivism at the Ohio State University Laboratory School (designated as one of the more experimental progressive schools in the United States) and at PEA’s summer workshops. He studied with members of the Eight Year Study’s Curriculum Associates, most notably Harold Alberty, whose conceptions of core curricula were drawn upon by many schools in the study. Alberty also served as doctoral advisor for both William H. Brown, the assistant director and subsequent director of the Secondary School Study, and Gilbert Porter, principal of the Lincoln School. Eight Year Study staff members H. Harry Giles and Harold Fawcett were cited regularly within the Secondary School Study materials, and other Eight Year Study staff and teachers—Hilda Taba, Lou LaBrant, and Margaret Willis—visited Secondary School Study schools regularly while participating in the summer workshops and assisting many of the schools in the implementation of progressive methods. LaBrant is also credited as part of the writing team for two of the school narratives.

## 1930s and 1940s Progressive Education Practices

*Teachers had to overcome their fears that children would bring into this changed classroom procedure their old defensive tricks. Children had to discover a new faith in teachers and a new zest for classroom tasks. Both teacher and pupils found this new faith in each other a valuable source of patience and sincere cooperation. With such changes a program has gradually developed that reaches into the heart of community living.*

—Lincoln High and Elementary School faculty, *The Evolution of Susan Prim* (1944, p. 24)



The experimental practices that were implemented at Secondary School Study member schools were well known at the time but have become obscured, as the term “progressive education” has been reduced to a few clichés related to instructional activities in elementary schools. Any high school during the 1940s that had developed correlated and fused core classes, adopted pupil-teacher planning, and implemented a cumulative student records program, as was the case at the Lincoln, Moultrie, and Booker T. Washington high schools, would have been viewed as a progressive school even without the need for its teachers to carry around copies of *The Social Frontier* or Dewey’s *Experience and Education*. These school narratives were to encourage hesitant African American teachers to engage in similar forms of experimentation; however, there would have been great reluctance toward change and, no doubt, apprehensiveness toward some progressive methods. Miss Prim’s invitation to participate in Lincoln School’s efforts was somewhat prophetic when, displaying her obstreperousness for school experimentation, she informed the teaching staff “she would show them that she could be ‘progressive.’” Secondary School Study administrators and member school faculties realized that many black teachers felt they “could be progressive” but did not fully appreciate the value of classroom experimentation or know how to proceed.

### Core Curriculum

*Mrs. Lawson, better than anyone else, knew that the three-year-old core approach in this one class represented one of the most radical changes in the program of the school. In many respects, the approach made in this class was unlike that in other classes. Discovering the merits and disadvantages of the core by planned experimentation had been a hard but a worthwhile experience for Mrs. Lawson and, no doubt, for the students in the core class.*

—Booker T. Washington High School faculty, *High School Was Like This* (1946, p. 42)

Core curriculum programs of the 1930s and 1940s were much different than “common core” and “gen ed” requirements of today. Unlike the current emphasis on standards and the identification of approved content (i.e., the canon), 1930s “core” addressed the structural relationship among school subjects and the experiences of students. This is not to suggest that knowledge was unimportant—the traditional criticism of progressive education. Content was significant to high school progressives, but the subject matter was determined through other means—ascertaining students’ interests, articulating “the conception of needs,” introducing pupil-teaching planning, and defining

the school's educational philosophy. "Core" sought to unify knowledge among the traditional school subjects, recognizing that students were proceeding through a school day of many diverse facts and an academic year of many unrelated topics. The general structure for core programs arose from Harold Alberty's designs, later developed as a comprehensive curricula framework that included five types of core configurations: separate subject, correlated, fusion, broad areas, no preplanned structure (Alberty, 1947).

The three school narratives describe curricula configured in a conventional, separate subject design (type 1) as teachers considered ways to develop correlated and fusion programs (and perhaps even broad areas core too). A correlated core (type 2) continued to use the format of traditional classes, but teachers intentionally sequenced their individual topics to coincide with and emphasize the interrelationships among content in other classrooms. For example, during the Secondary School Study, the Lincoln High School English teacher assigned literature of a certain country while the home economics teacher explored the preparation of foods from the same area. As students were designing clothing from a specific region, its culture would be studied in the history classes. Another common curricular practice for correlated core programs was the staging of school assemblies and dramatizations, mentioned throughout the narratives. Assembly themes would manifest themselves in the activities of various classes and would provide some degree of integration of the subject matter.

A fusion core (type 3) was structured around general themes rather than traditional academic subjects; the *High School Was Like This* core class, taught by Mrs. Lawson, is suggestive of this type. At one Secondary School Study site, Magnolia Avenue High School, the literature class moved toward a fused core as it examined the topics of transportation and crime, drawing upon information from other subjects. Magnolia Avenue's sociology class conducted research on housing and health, with its results used by the city of Vicksburg to file for a federal housing project. Another member school, Staley High School, implemented the common "problems of living" core, where adolescents' issues were examined from different disciplines. In *High School Was Like This*, difficulties of attempting to develop a broad field core (type 4) are described through the example of Mr. Paine and four subject teachers. The fictional account is quite realistic and, while not necessarily dissuading those who would be interested in experimenting with core, certainly displayed the complications of school experimentation.

### **Pupil-Teacher Planning**

*I am still a novice at pupil-teacher planning, but I am fully convinced that there is some value in permitting pupils to contribute their ideas to certain parts of classroom plans. . . . Adapting classroom work to the wide differences in the interests and understandings of pupils, and getting everybody, including myself, to make the necessary compromises, calls for my best in leadership.*

—Moultrie High and Elementary School faculty, *Miss Parker: The New Teacher* (1946, p. 25)

Miss Prim's and Miss Parker's transition to becoming progressive educators revolved around their interest in and ultimate willingness to attempt pupil-teacher planning. Since the three monographs were written to report as well as encourage other schools to consider implementing classroom experimentation, featuring this curricular-instructional methodology suggests the Lincoln and Moultrie faculties' wishes and hopes for others. Clearly, teachers realized that such change was not embarked upon haphazardly.

Instruction did not revert to "let the students do whatever they wish" (i.e., a laissez-faire curricular approach), nor did teachers abdicate their role and responsibilities. Classroom planning, by teachers and students, emerged from the constant reconciliation between students' interests and needs—a primordial philosophical issue of progressive education. Eight Year Study staff provided the leadership; H. H. Giles, who was directly involved with Secondary School Study professional development, had published a primer for this instructional practice that incorporated the themes of democracy, creativity, individualization, socialization, organization, and problem-solving (Giles, 1941). The teaching method proved successful in many venues and is featured at Lincoln School, where Miss Prim notes "nothing has surprised teachers more than the discovery that pupils can make helpful and intelligent contributions to plans for improving many phases of school life. Pupil-teacher planning has uncovered the fact that pupils are eager and willing to assume a large share of responsibility" (Lincoln High and Elementary School faculty, 1944, p. 58).

Pupil-teacher planning did have its critics; even Miss Prim was originally skeptical of the practice, as she noted toward the beginning of *The Evolution of Susan Prim*, "That's about the silliest thing I ever heard of" (Lincoln High and Elementary School faculty, 1944, p. 5). One 1930s anecdote best summarizes the feeling of many critics. Giles was asked a question "by a member of the audience who doubted the wisdom of involving students in planning and distrusted their ability to

make important educational decisions: ‘Mr. Giles, in this ‘Pupil-teacher planning,’ which is more important, the teacher or pupil?’ Mike [Giles] memorably responded, “The Hyphen” (Van Til, 1983, p. 114). While implementing a core program constituted more than merely selecting content, pupil-teacher planning went far beyond teachers and students choosing classroom activities. The hyphen represented a working conception of cooperation and democracy in the classroom.

### **Cumulative Student Records**

*More information of a useful kind about the strengths and weaknesses of class groups and of individual pupils is being passed on with pupils to their new teachers. . . . Teachers believe that with increasing skills in the process of evaluation, they will know more about their pupils and can better help pupils understand themselves.*

—Lincoln High and Elementary School faculty, *The Evolution of Susan Prim* (1944 p. 57)

Student assessment represents one of the most unrecognized areas of implementative research and cooperative study in progressive schools. While progressive educators were (and are) regularly criticized for having no academic standards, Eight Year Study staff designed and developed many forms of student assessment and never sought to eliminate achievement tests from the secondary school programs. Instead, they added other dimensions—social sensitivity, attitudes, beliefs, social problems—in what became a form of student appraisal that merged achievement and aptitude tests with surveys of student views. In fact, one of the most important outcomes of the Eight Year Study was student assessment, and PEA evaluation forms were sold to other districts throughout the United States to help fund the organization after the loss of GEB support. By the late 1930s, 87 appraisal instruments and inventories had been constructed and were used by 285 schools nationwide, also including Secondary School Study sites in the early 1940s.

Testing served as a means for learning about individuals rather than as a way to judge and sort students. For many of the educators in the cooperative studies, student assessment and evaluation became a process by which the values of an enterprise—namely, schooling—were articulated and ascertained. As introduced in the Eight Year Study, “*e-valuating*”—or the drawing out of values—was conceived as a philosophical endeavor, and tests became a way to determine the values of a school as well as to gather information about students and about the effectiveness of practices. Staff coined the term “comprehensive appraisal” for this approach to evaluation, where instruments were

designed to ascertain student development and not merely to determine the acquisition of knowledge and factual learning. The teachers believed in comprehensive appraisal because they knew that better and more fruitful information about students—extensive cumulative records to appraise student progress—would permit more thoughtful educational decisions.

Progressive educators recognized the need for this information. Miss Prim notes “one thing that we are trying to get as a result of this experimental class is a better way to keep up with different kinds of progress which our children make. In most classes we have a folder for each child in which we keep such things as his written work, tests, and reports or little notes written to the pupils or his parents describing strengths or shortcomings which the teacher has seen in the pupil’s work” (Lincoln High and Elementary School faculty, 1944, p. 41). Organized in what now would be called student portfolios, “cumulative student records” included standardized tests, assessments, and samples of student work as a “living document” of individual students’ developing interests, creativity, imagination, intellectual capabilities, emotional responsiveness, and social concern. One Eight Year Study school designed a 47-page record form for each student that recorded information kept cooperatively by teachers, parents, the pupil, and even the pupil’s friends. Moultrie High School, Miss Parker’s “real school,” described its cumulative record as “manila folders, one for each pupil in each class, holding evidences of pupil progress. After certain periods of time, the information in these folders is summarized and recorded on the cumulative record sheets. Pupils participate, to some extent, in the interpretation of the data” (Dennis, 1943, p. 10). The extensiveness of cumulative records varied among schools and among teachers, yet the intent remained: to assist teachers in knowing and better understanding students and their needs so that they may fulfill an instructional role that included guidance and a concern for the whole child. [6.]

### **Cooperative Study Workshops**

*The workshops promoted active and intelligent teacher concerns for the growth of children. One of the strongest evidences of change in attitude among teachers relative to their foundation in the education process is the shift in their conversational interest from “my course” to “our children.” Consultants in the Secondary School Study were constantly alert for this change in attitude, because they felt that efforts to plan with teachers in terms of human growth and development would be futile unless these teachers faced squarely the reality presented by classroom situations involving human beings with educational needs.*

—W. H. Brown and W. A. Robinson, *Serving Negro Schools* (1946, p. 61)

The workshop experience is difficult for educators today to fully appreciate. These programs were far different from the common daylong or weekend professional development workshop consisting primarily of lectures by external experts, time spent waiting for laptops and LCD projectors to become compatible, large sheets of paper hoisted and attached to walls, and even more time spent as teachers sit and wait for the end of the activities. The cooperative study gatherings were not an occasion for participants to merely listen, nor would they be limited to a single weekend. Solutions to large problems called for extended time. A workshop would be a setting for teachers *to work*—to be totally immersed in addressing those issues of schooling that concerned them, and to be part of a democratic community where educators came together in the spirit of cooperation and discussed possible solutions and practices to classroom problems. “The workshops illustrated democratic living and thereby deepened the conviction among teachers that their own schools and classrooms can be operated to advantage on democratic principles. . . . In many cases, adaptation of democratic principles to life in schools gave Negro teachers and pupils their first opportunity to experience democracy” (Brown and Robinson, 1946, p. 58). These settings were built through extensive discourse and extended time—six weeks of total immersion—as participants furthered their professional roles as teachers while also engaging in their own learning.

The opportunity to come together and participate in professional development as well as general education activities proved quite important for not only the schools but also their communities. “The workshops furthered the development of community-consciousness among teachers to the extent that they seemed to give intelligent direction to community planning and community action through their school programs” (Brown and Robinson, 1946, p. 62). The Secondary School Study organized three central workshops: the 1940 Atlanta (Georgia) Workshop, the 1941 Hampton (Virginia) Workshop, and the 1942 Durham (North Carolina) Workshop. Each was six weeks in length, with a total participation of 200 principals and teachers. Educators worked on resolving their problems with the assistance of consultants and other participants. In addition, with GEB support, 124 member school teachers were awarded scholarships during the summers of 1943, 1944, and 1945 to attend specialized summer workshops where they would study with resource persons who had been active with the Eight Year Study. The cooperative study workshops established settings where trust was developed and true discourse—open exchange, arguments, agreements, disagreements, and insights for educational and societal change—could take place. The Secondary School Study popularized this type of professional development at the postsecondary level as well.

Lincoln High School principal Gilbert Porter would later assert that the project “was largely responsible for the development of the workshop movement among Negro colleges in the South. Between 1940 and 1945, the number of workshops for Negro teachers increased from two to approximately 100” (Porter, 1952, p. 39).



**“a fascinating and glorious experience”**

*Present trends in the development of Lincoln reveal, to some extent, the kind of program which Lincoln will have in the future—nothing glamorous or spectacular—just a high school that serves its pupils and its community in the most effective way. One thing they know: it has been a fascinating and glorious experience for the faculty to give the long hours of thinking and planning that have brought them and Lincoln to this stage of development; and the road to the goals ahead looks just as interesting.*

—Lincoln High and Elementary School faculty, *The Evolution of Susan Prim* (1944, p. 59)

The three school narratives were written with great pride but not with hyperbole. As is somewhat common now with blue ribbon schools pronouncing their outstanding, brilliant successes, Lincoln, Moultrie, and Booker T. Washington school faculties knew they were writing to other teachers and would not overstate the ease of educational change. They were drawing from experience and recognized that school experimentation was difficult, time-consuming, and emotionally taxing. Their programs were nothing *glamorous or spectacular*, but the experience was quite profound for those committed educators who were willing to embark on an adventure of experimentation grounded in the faith of thoughtful discourse and cooperation and the strength of fundamental principles and beliefs. From these school documents, insights into various educational practices can be further examined and explored. The narratives offer distinctive and detailed examples of 1940s progressivism—the inner workings—allowing us, perhaps, to break free of today’s generalizations and simplicities about black schools and progressive education and to consider further what lessons can be drawn from the past.

# *The Evolution of Susan Prim*





## The Evolution of Susan Prim *Lincoln High School, Tallahassee, Florida (1944)*

*We must not let young people in America grow up to think they have no responsibility for planning, though too often schools have left the planning to the teachers and not asked children to share. We must have our children practice this kind of democratic living until it is a part of them. They will have to learn that thinking is hard, and that many times it is necessary to read or to examine all sorts of things to find out what has already been done.*

—Lincoln High and Elementary School faculty, *The Evolution of Susan Prim* (1944, p. 39)

The Lincoln School, a combined elementary and six-year high school, enrolled over 450 secondary school students with a teaching staff of 19 high school teachers during the early 1940s. The course of study was primarily college preparatory, and social, economic, health, and recreational activities became the curricular focus for faculty during the Secondary School Study. Located in Tallahassee, Lincoln High School was closely affiliated with Florida A&M College, serving as a student teacher site even though a separate laboratory school was officially connected to the college.

The West Brevard brick building, named Lincoln High School, was built in 1929 and, during the 1940s, consisted of a secondary school, an agriculture shop, and an elementary school. After closing in 1967, the building was remodeled in 1974 and reopened in 1975 as the Lincoln Neighborhood Service Center, providing educational, medical, cultural, and social services for the community. The facility houses the Lincoln High School alumni center, known as The Lincoln Room, with a substantial collection of archival materials.

Special thanks to W. Mack Rush of The Lincoln Room, and great appreciation to Lorraine Footman Barnes, Hazel M. Brown, and Augustus Colson for providing important source materials for the Museum of Education's web exhibition. Archival materials from The Lincoln Room and the Southeastern Regional Black Archives Research Center and Museum at Florida A&M University were used in this research.

*For more information:*

Lincoln High School web exhibition: [www.museumofeducation.info/lincoln.html](http://www.museumofeducation.info/lincoln.html)

Lincoln High School exhibition catalog summary: *Progressive Education in Black High Schools: The Secondary School Study, 1940–1946*, pp. 56–59 ([www.museumofeducation.info/SSS\\_web-2015.pdf](http://www.museumofeducation.info/SSS_web-2015.pdf))

## The Evolution of Susan Prim

*Prepared by the staff of Lincoln High School, Tallahassee, Florida*

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## Foreword

Under the leadership of Principal Gilbert Porter and the faculty of the Lincoln High School, much careful planning has been done with the cooperative of students and patrons to set up an expanded program of education. Under the program all are striving to meet the needs of boys and girls for living successfully in a technological age. The planning is quite comprehensive, and progress has been made in almost every area of a well-ordered and well-integrated program of education. Much remains to be accomplished and many challenges lie ahead to be met successfully before final goals can be reached. Nevertheless, as evidence of an awareness of needs in many areas, the progressive report herein given indicates healthy growth toward the attainment of worthwhile goals. The faculty, the students, the patrons, and the community are to be congratulated upon progress made. May all continue to strive toward meeting more successfully the needs of the students. Good beginnings can continue to successful conclusions through continued planning, cheerful cooperation, and much hard work.

—J. Broward Culpepper, *Supervising Principal*

## Introduction

It had to come sometime. Miss Prim had to realize sooner or later that the program of Lincoln School was not fully satisfying the needs of the pupils and the community served by her school. Even now the program does not fully satisfy these needs, but the faculty believes that considerable progress has been made toward discovering and planning for the inclusion of additional values which our program needs. We still have many problems. Indeed, the number of problems seemed to increase as we worked. We know now that study of apparent needs leads to the discovery of less apparent needs, and the experience of trying to do something about problems has made us more and more sensitive to problems which existed all along in our school.

The Lincoln Elementary and High School faculties have had full responsibility for planning and developing the program of activities in the school and community. Cooperation among hardworking teachers, pupils, and parents has contributed more than any other single factor to any success that has been achieved. Our faculty feels that the happy experience of working together for four years in an intensive effort to improve our school has resulted, also, in professional growth which might increase our usefulness as teachers.

Membership in the Secondary School Study during the four years of intensive effort to study and improve our school has brought to the faculty and students many unusual educational experiences and professional services. These experiences and services have greatly hastened the development of the school. Prior to its membership in the Secondary School Study, there were no local agencies which made available to our school the kinds of opportunities for growth and professional guidance provided by the Study.

The directors of the Study have furthered the growth of our school through continued encouragement, loans of professional books, and helpful visits. They have found opportunities for many members of our faculty to have the advantage of types of summer study needed to further our program. At the request of the faculty, they have made available to the school the services of special consultants in social science, English, arts and crafts, elementary school planning, reading, library organization and management, community studies, and evaluation.

The Leon County Health Unit and the local physicians have given valuable technical assistance in our school-wide and continuing health program. The Florida State Board of Health encouraged the faculty and student body by publishing a description of our efforts toward venereal disease education.

(Florida State Board of Health, *Florida Health Notes*, 36:6, 1943).

From time to time, the school has received encouragement from the state college for Negroes, where practically all of our teachers and most of our graduates received some part of their education.

The history of our school provides an example of determination on the part of the county school board and citizens of Tallahassee to provide increasingly adequate facilities for education of Negroes. Forty-five years ago, the first public school for Tallahassee Negroes was established on Copeland Street. At that time the entire faculty was white. When this building burned in 1871, the Leon County School Board erected Lincoln Academy on Park Avenue. The academy was dedicated to public education by State Superintendent of Education, the Honorable W. W. Hicks. With flags waving, cheering citizens and marching children participated in the great celebration. Twelve years later, the Florida A&M College was born in a three-room building on the campus of Lincoln Academy. Today both of these buildings stand on the campus of the Florida State College for Women as historical landmarks of state and county efforts to provide for the education of Negroes.

Since 1905 the high school has been moved three times. As the high school moved into more and more adequate buildings, the elementary school was housed in the old high school buildings. The last large wooden structure burned in 1935, and afterwards the elementary and high schools were housed in brick buildings on the same site.

The Lincoln School occupies ten acres on West Brevard Street in the extreme northwest section of Tallahassee. Two modern brick buildings house 400 high school and 525 elementary school pupils. The school plant includes a playground, a tennis court, a football field, a park for outdoor activities, and a small wooden building used by classes in vocational agriculture.

Lincoln High, the only public high school for Negroes in Leon County, serves a county population of 31,648 of which 16,106 are Negroes (U.S. Census Report, 1940). In 1940, there were 5,192 Negro children of school age in Leon County. However, only about half of these children were accounted for in the schools. The proportion of Negro rural farmers to non-farmers, two to one, as well as the availability of schools, are important factors which affect school enrollment in Leon County.

The story of progress in the Lincoln School during its membership in the Secondary School Study was undertaken by the faculty as a means of self-evaluation. The faculty has taken its first few steps in a cooperative effort to find a dependable path of progress. The story has helped to focus school-wide attention both on the points of adequacy and those of inadequacy in our program. Perhaps for the first time, the entire faculty saw our whole program and the relation of each area to the other areas. Indeed, as the story was being written, some results of our evaluation

were used immediately. Numerous modifications were made in our program and others were planned for the near future. When the story reaches our readers, we shall have moved considerably farther along the path of progress than is indicated in the story. We expect this to happen and consider it one important outgrowth of the story.

In writing the story, the faculty has made a conscious effort to present the facts concerning its work in an interesting and informative way to the Tallahassee community, to other schools seeking detailed information concerning the first few steps in the process of building a cooperative program, and to colleges and teacher-training institutions which might be interested in the professional competencies teachers consider valuable, and how the Lincoln teachers went about developing these competencies.

In view of the limited writing experience of our faculty, organizing the vast story of information from our files throughout the school presented a real task. The faculty felt that a report of cold facts would not provide sufficient interest content. In order to make our narrative personal, three main characters have been created to present in a composite way the professional growth which took place in the administration through Mr. Pitts, in the elementary school faculty through Mazie Merritt, and in the high school faculty through Susan Prim.

The Lincoln faculty acknowledges with appreciation the helpful criticism and suggestions made by Dr. Lou LaBrant, Dr. N. P. Tillman, and Dr. V. P. Sims. These persons play a very large part in getting the manuscript into final form.

Gilbert L. Porter, *Principal*  
*Lincoln High School*  
*Tallahassee, Florida*

## CHAPTER I

## Susan Prim Makes a Motion

For twenty winters, Susan Prim had waited on the corner of Park and Spruce Streets to be carried to work at Lincoln High School. In all that time she had never been late or absent, an index which begins to give us a peek into Miss Prim's personality.

Now, Miss Prim had a mule-in-the-middle-of-the-road attitude toward newfangled ideas about teaching school. "Humph!" she'd say. "How can students make decisions for themselves? For the most part, they're a bunch of adolescent idiots, and, besides, children have their place."

Today was Wednesday, and as she stood there seeing for the millionth time farm wagons rattling by loaded with produce for market, housewives following in their wake, and clerks and secretaries all milling by, Susan thought silently that her life had followed the same pattern, a humdrum existence with no change.

This morning was different though, for it was spring and the rains had set in, which accounted for the fact that Miss Prim was clad in her gaiters and raincoat.

The bus came, and Susan found a seat in the back and silently surveyed the passengers one by one, making mental comments as she did so. "That girl's raincoat," she commented to herself, "is entirely too short to shield her from the rain. Young people these days have no regard for their health. My goodness. I wonder why that boy has to sit so close to that girl?"

These mental notes were interspersed by an occasional glance out of the window, where she saw again the same sights—the tallest building in town, the state capitol, the stores in Frenchtown, and the bus station. The May Oak, the Governor's Mansion, the Old Spanish Trail, the markers on the land given to Lafayette by the United States, and the burial place of Prince and Princess Murat were not along the route traveled by this bus, but Susan tried to imagine how they would look in place of the sights she saw.

Miss Prim began gathering up her things as the bus approached her stop. She alighted and walked briskly, but not too willingly, toward the day's task.

Arriving at school, she saw on the bulletin board a notice to the effect that a faculty meeting would be held at the close of school. Another of these silly meetings, she thought.

She breezed out of the office with her nose slightly upturned and sailed down the hall to her classroom with a disgusted air. Quite defiantly she called the roll and began asking the questions at the back of the chapter.

Class after class followed with somewhat the same routine and the day passed uneventfully, but all day long Miss Prim seethed and boiled at the thought of a faculty meeting.

The day's work was boring, but three thirty came much too quickly for Miss Prim. She lingered as long as possible in her classroom, rearranging the seats, taking another look to see if the windows were locked, and giving another peek at the dim reflection in the glass panes in her cabinet door to see if her hair was all in place. When she could think of nothing else to do, she gave one last approving look about the room and locked the door.

The faculty meeting was not as usual, however. Mr. Pitts, the principal, described a growing nationwide effort on the part of school faculties to make carefully planned cooperative studies of the services which their schools are rendering to pupils and to communities. Faculties engaging in such studies were discovering that by this process they could make needed improvements much more rapidly and intelligently than by adopting a program which they had had no part in planning. Grants of money were being provided for use in bringing to schools consultant services, professional materials, and educational opportunities to help interested schools become a part of this cooperative movement.

Lincoln High School, along with other schools all over the South, had been invited to participate for three years in such a study. Mr. Pitts asked the faculty to consider three questions: (1) Does our program need to be improved? (2) Are we willing to join a group of schools that are going to study their practices and attempt to improve them? (3) What reply shall I give to this invitation?

Miss Prim was somewhat annoyed by these questions. Why didn't he just decide what he wanted the faculty to do and tell them? This was just another of those assignments that would take up time that she needed for correcting those eternal papers and notebooks. In twenty years she had seen one educational fad after another come and go. Last year all the teachers were asked to write units. Miss Prim had written several units, but there was nowhere to get help with them, and who could say how much good they did? What these children needed was fewer units and more good, hard lessons. If Mr. Pitts was really putting the matter up to the teachers, she knew that what she had to say would decide the question for the others.

For a moment nobody said anything. There was one of those embarrassing silences that so often came when a matter was put to the teachers.

Mr. Pitts spoke again. "It isn't that we don't have a good school. We believe we have. We win contests; our students do well over at the college; we hope soon to get accredited. But there is something challenging to me about this invitation. We were probably selected because we were a good



school already and somebody evidently believes that we want to develop a better school. It will probably mean more work for all of us, and we work hard enough now."

A moan went up from the group and was followed by a chuckle that broke the tension.

"Miss Prim, you can always help us make decisions. As you think about it, are there things you would like the school to do better? What do you think we should do about this invitation?"

Miss Prim stood. She was still annoyed, but after all, she could make an objective reply, and she would show them that she could be "progressive."

"I think, Mr. Pitts, that we should be rather proud that this invitation has come. There are many things I would like to see improved. I would like to see the children more interested in their lessons and more willing to study and do the assigned work. I would like to see them come to school on time and become more respectful to the teachers and to each other. I would like to see . . ." She thought for a moment. Was anything wrong at the school that the teachers could improve? "If this opportunity will give us any help toward getting the children to read better in the high school, we could certainly use it. Will the elementary school be included? We could do our work better in the high school if the children came to us better prepared. I think we could do better work if children weren't allowed to come to high school who just can't do high school work and who are such problems that we have to get rid of them. Some children just don't belong in high school."

There were nods of assent from the other high school teachers. Miss Prim was right.

Then Mrs. Oliver, who had taught the fourth grade for ten years, held up her hand.

"Yes, Mrs. Oliver," said Mr. Pitts.

"Mr. Pitts, I don't think the elementary teachers are to blame for everything that's wrong at Lincoln. When we realize the kinds of homes these children come from, we have to admit that we can't do everything for them in school. If this is a chance for us to get ideas about stimulating the parents to become more interested in the children and how to help them when they come to school, I think we ought to accept it."

Heads nodded all about the room.

"Well," began Mr. Pitts as Mrs. Oliver sat down, "those who have spoken think we ought to accept the invitation. This might be a chance for us to study many of these things that have been mentioned and to see just what our job at Lincoln really is. There is going to be a war evidently. The United States may soon be directly involved in the war, and we may have still more problems. In fact, we are already beginning to recognize them.

Maybe we can find out something that will help us in our work. What shall I do about this invitation?"

Miss Prim made a motion to accept; the others voted for it.

Mr. Pitts smiled with satisfaction. "I'll write and say we will join the study, and at our next meeting we might work out a philosophy for the school. Will all of you be thinking about what Lincoln's philosophy of education ought to be? We should be able to get that much done in about an hour next time."

The meeting closed with a buzz of conversation as the teachers left the room. Miss Phillips, the librarian, stayed behind a minute, as usual, to lock up her candy. She wished it were books the children wanted instead of candy when they came to the library. Oh well. The candy selling was a nuisance, but it did bring children into the library.

Miss Prim left the meeting and took her vigil at the corner to wait for the bus. The bus was late again, so Susan had lots of time to think. She must get together some ideas for a school philosophy. What did that article mean about the teacher's responsibility for the development of the whole child? Maybe that should go into the statement of philosophy. Various children came to her mind. There was Johnnie Eady. Well, she mused, doesn't he always read and keep up with world happenings? He is the best student in the class in civics. Yet Johnnie is disrespectful to everybody. (The very thought of Johnnie's smartness made her bristle.) Every time he speaks out of turn, I correct him. But what do I really know about Johnnie? Do I know why he acts as he does? Do I know anything about his life in his home, his likes and dislikes, or ambitions?

There was obviously only one answer to this, and Susan had to say no.

"Cuddles" Thompson was a proverbial primper. True enough, she did get her lessons between peeps in her mirror, but why did she constantly have to powder? Susan remembered that all she had ever done was to say, "For goodness sake, child, put that compact away." She couldn't remember ever having said another thing.

Suddenly little Jaime Blue's image appeared! The little she knew about him began to race through her mind. He was from a large family who lived in a clean, bare house. The father was dead and the mother tried to support them all by doing any kind of honest work she could find. The children all shared the feeling of insecurity, which depressed the home. These facts Susan had found out from a visit paid at the home after Jaime had fainted in a class one day. She could remember every detail as if it had happened yesterday. He was adjusting the window when suddenly he keeled over, window stick and all. Susan had quite calmly pillowed his head on her coat and let him sniff her smelling salts. She remembered how still and emaciated Jaime had looked, nor could she forget the bluish cast of his eyelids.

That afternoon she visited his home and met his mother, who had a ready answer as to why Jaime had fainted. She said he had not eaten since the afternoon of the day before. It all came back to Miss Prim now as she stood there on the corner.

After that, her thoughts continued, she had always found an excuse to give him an orange, an apple, or some part of her lunch. She even found herself encouraging him to play out in the open in the sunshine. She invented jobs around her home which permitted her to pay him a small sum that he took home to help increase the family income. In class she found that in preparing his seatwork she was careful to give only what she felt him capable of doing physically and mentally.

"Of course, I did this because of my sympathy for the boy." Out of nowhere came one question: Is that the only reason?

"Maybe that is what Mr. Pitts was talking about today when he said, 'Know your children.'"

Miss Prim unconsciously smiled very broadly. Why, she secured this information about two months ago, and Mr. Pitts only mentioned it today. Some of Mr. Pitts' convictions seemed all right, but some things like students helping to decide what they want to study and helping to plan these things—that simply wouldn't work. That's about the silliest thing I ever heard of, she thought.

"Here's the bus at last. It certainly took long enough to get here." Susan put all thoughts of school and its problems away with a shrug and quickly stepped on the bus.

Later that evening as she sat at her desk to jot down her ideas for a philosophy, she kept thinking about the children in her classes. Did she really know them? Was she doing all she could for them? Did a philosophy for Lincoln High mean something about the children? It disturbed her more and more as she tried to write.

What about those notes in that course in education she had to take two summers ago? Susan kept full notes on just about everything. She got them out and looked them over.

Every school should have a statement of its philosophy.

The philosophy should be concerned with (1) democratic living, (2) objectives of the curriculum: general, specific (consistent with the objectives of secondary education), (3) the school plant and equipment, (4) guidance practices, and (5) evaluation practices.

Humph. She had got an A in that course, but the notes seemed very cold now. Maybe she ought to read some of these books in this bibliography again.

She seemed to remember that there were some samples of school philosophies in one book.

Maybe it wasn't going to be so easy after all to write a philosophy for the school.

## CHAPTER II

## Susan Tries a New Tool

Although teachers brought their ideas as they had been requested to do, the next faculty meeting failed to result in a written statement of educational philosophy formulated by the thirty-three elementary and high school teachers on the faculty. However, in the course of the first few efforts to write a philosophy indicating the direction which the faculty wanted the program to take, the value of careful analysis of each expressed purpose was discovered. It became clear that an adequate philosophy should provide not only points of reference which the entire faculty could use in deciding what to teach, but should go far enough to indicate types of classroom organization and evaluation needed in order to ensure the operation of the philosophy throughout the school. Each year since, the faculty has reexamined and redefined its philosophy, and this process has contributed substantially to the development of faculty cooperation in the school.

By June 1940, faculty discussions and other efforts to examine the effectiveness of the program resulted in the identification of a wide range of pressing problems. Some of these the faculty decided to have its three representatives take to the first workshop of the Secondary School Study at Atlanta University. The faculty didn't know what a workshop was, but it knew that significant school problems would be considered in some way.

When the matter of representation at the first workshop in Atlanta was brought up in the faculty meeting, it was not too easy to decide who should be selected to go and work on the problems which the faculty had chosen. It all sounded interesting to Miss Prim, but she had other plans for the summer which could not be altered, and besides, she needed rest. Expenses of travel and board would be provided for persons attending the workshop, but there would be other expenses, and what was saved from a seven hundred dollar salary wouldn't permit a very attractive summer wardrobe. Finally, Mr. Pitts and two men teachers agreed to attend the workshop.

As it turned out, Lincoln's three representatives at the first workshop, besides working on problems selected from the faculty list, developed tentative plans for certain cooperative activities in which the faculty might engage during the following year. Among these were (1) plans for making an investigation of pupils and community needs by means of a rather comprehensive community survey, (2) plans for initiating a more systematic and comprehensive guidance program, and (3) plans for initiating a more functional program in science.

Somewhere among her experiences, Susan had learned the value of note keeping as an important source of factual information. To her, facts should be one important basis for action; and, out of this conviction, had grown her habit of keeping full and factual notes on matters that she considered important.

The success and difficulties experienced by the faculty as it tried to get started on the plans brought back from the workshop may be gleaned from excerpts taken from Susan's diary.

**November 6, 1941**—Everybody was in favor of making a school-community survey in order to find out the really important facts about the health, recreation, religious activities, employment problems and educational status of our pupils and their families. But nobody suspected that the job would require so much time and effort. Now, everybody, including pupils, is working on some part of the survey and the regular work is being neglected. We can't seem to get back to the regular work because some teachers and pupils seem determined to improve certain alarming situations revealed by the survey.

A mathematics class is trying to account for the exceedingly slow progress being made by Negro business in Tallahassee. Evidently, the graphs, charts, and tables which this class made at school were important to the pupils. Now, they are making visits to the businesses in the community, and this is disrupting the schedule of classes.

A committee appointed from the faculty worked out plans for general health examinations. These examinations revealed an alarming number of cases of venereal diseases in the school. Of course, something must be done about this! Our county has the highest rate of V. D. in Florida. We know now that V. D. will be in our school as long as it is prevalent in this community.

According to the English teachers who made the reading survey, a rate of books per home and the scant library collection at school account for much of the poor reading in our school. They insist that all of us must work toward getting suitable reading materials in the homes of our pupils—and in the library—if children are to enjoy more success with reading tasks.

The agriculture classes have taken to the fields leaving behind their daily recitations. Facts from the survey concerning the amount of food produced in the Negro community caused this sudden exodus.

Boys recommended by the agriculture teacher can borrow money from the local bank to buy pigs. The teacher and individual pupils have joint responsibility for raising and marketing the pigs and repaying the loan. Pig projects are claiming the attention of many pupils.

A land owner rented a 20 acre farm to the agriculture classes for just \$20 a year. The boys seem to enjoy farming and poultry raising but this, too, is having its effect on the regular work! Some of us will be glad when this survey is finished because it can lead us almost anywhere.

**November 25, 1941**—"Useful Science" sounded interesting to pupils and teachers when the plans for it were described. Ideas such as repairing electrical appliances, studying and experimenting with cosmetics and other consumer goods, and making cleaning compounds for home use were included in the plans; but these have not been started. The science room is practically bare, and it must be equipped for this kind of study. We need reading materials which will give more information about and directions for doing these things.

Wider reading by students is a live issue throughout the school. In a faculty meeting this week, we agreed on an order for 658 books for the high school and 200 for the elementary school. A librarian on the staff of the Secondary School Study was with us as we made plans for wider use of our library.

**January 11, 1942**—The survey is still in full swing, and we have a large pile of folders holding collected information. There is some talk of assembling this wealth of information and making printed copies available to all classes in the school.

Numerous situations in the school press us to get started on the guidance program. We made a study of the needs and interests of our pupils. A few homeroom teachers have kept interesting individual records of the behavior of their pupils. This information, along with other facts presented in faculty meetings by committees, led us to substitute the word "behavior" for "conduct" and to adopt a slogan: Guidance to Students in Every Way. The terms "democratic," "mental hygiene," and "evaluation" are heard frequently in faculty meetings. In a recent meeting we looked at our report card and decided that it did not tell all we wanted it to tell.

Our children really need guidance and plenty of it. But the teachers need guidance, too. Our faculty seems to be taking on too many new jobs before old jobs are far enough along, but all of the jobs seem urgent.

**January 20, 1942**—The new books have arrived. Never before have we had to decide how to use 658 new and different books. They are very attractive, but not many are about the regular work. We have decided to keep them in the library, and the librarian and several pupil assistants are getting the books ready for circulation. The sale of candy in the library has been discontinued, and the

library is no longer being used as a study hall. The matter of how to use the new books and the library is not altogether clear, but all of us feel that some steps have been taken toward improving the library.

**February 2, 1942**—The election of pupil members of the new school council was not altogether satisfactory. The results of the election indicated that the children needed to know much more about selection of people for responsible positions. The faculty appointed three teachers to represent it in the council. The campaign for increased sale of war bonds, sponsored by the council, was very successful. The effort to establish a large and more attractive lunch room was also well received. But plans for a more balanced social life in the school and for more interesting assemblies met with strong opposition and criticism.

Everybody liked the idea of a school council because it offered opportunities for pupils to understand and perhaps experience for the first time some of the responsibilities of individuals in a democratic society. A school council seemed especially appropriate in view of the vigorous and worldwide fight being carried on by many groups for fuller participation in political, social, and economic life.

The council is plugging along, and teachers as well as pupils are learning to recognize the rights and responsibilities of individuals. The success of the council will depend on our willingness to respect these rights and make necessary adjustments. This isn't going to be any easier in the school than it is in the world.

**March 3, 1942**—Some of us feel that the survey should not influence so many of the activities in the school. Mr. Pitts, however, says the survey, so far, is the best basis we have for choosing the direction of our efforts. We know he is right but we are not sure that the children are getting everything they need. It is impossible to have the same lessons that we have always had and work on community problems, too. We don't want the children to miss anything that they will need.

The Girl Reserves have usually been concerned mainly with social activities but now they, too, have turned their attention to the community. With the help of interested women in the community, they have formed a registered Y.W.C.A. The girls enjoyed collecting magazines for soldiers. A post office operated in the school during the Christmas season and delivered all cards and packages having Red Cross Seals attached.

It was Susan who had recognized the lack of sufficient factual records about some of the matters that had been carried to the first work-

shop. For the next workshop she was determined to have enough really useful notes about Lincoln's progress and difficulties for the group to use as a basis for planning further improvements in Lincoln's program. At nearly every faculty or committee meeting the workshop was mentioned, sometimes with a chuckle and a faraway look, but more often in terms of what some consultant or participant had said or of some book or article which someone had read and which touched the matter under discussion. A workshop sounded very interesting as teachers described it, and its potential value became even more evident as Susan's notes showed how the plans developed in the first workshop were beginning really to operate at Lincoln. Everybody wanted to go this summer, and only three could be selected.

Fully two months before the second workshop, Mr. Pitts asked Susan to begin to organize a list of needs, shortcomings, and problems which ought to be considered by Lincoln's representatives in the workshop. Susan would have the notes all right because she began immediately to supplement her own notes with information and ideas from all areas in the school.

From her bedroom window one rainy afternoon near the close of the school term, Susan could see Mazie Merritt's front door, and suddenly it seemed very important to run over and see Mazie for a minute.

Mazie was busy with her reports, but Susan and Mazie could always talk to each other.

"Nearly through?" asked Susan as she sat down comfortably in Mazie's personal chair.

"Still have my last report cards to do," said Mazie, "but I feel like stopping a while. What's on your mind?"

"Oh, I've just been thinking about all the things we tried to do this year in the high school. Some of them were good, I guess; but we tried to do too much, seems to me. Sometimes I envy you teachers in the elementary department. You're not all excited about so many things as we are. I never heard so much about units and pupil-teacher planning and pupil participation and guidance and evaluation and everything in my whole life before. Meetings, meetings, meetings. And what have we done?"

"Susan, I don't know. Sometimes I envy the high school teachers. We hear what the high school is doing and it sounds pretty interesting. Is that study I hear about just for high schools? Elementary school teachers just don't get anything. You high school teachers get everything. People come here and don't even look in the elementary department. The only person who visited Lincoln this year and spent any time with us was the lady from Fisk, and she wouldn't have gotten to us if the high school teachers hadn't been working with that special Christmas program and were too busy one morning to work with her. She was grand!



She helped me a lot! I asked her all sorts of questions. We talked about so many things: how to choose units, how to get the reading and other subjects into a unit, when to get through with a unit, and what kinds of tests to use. The elementary teachers got so interested that they asked her to meet with them. In the meeting, the first thing they asked was why the study didn't include the elementary school, and why teachers from the elementary school didn't go to the workshops. Nobody pays much attention to us. Even the principal spends most of the time working with the high school."

For a moment Mazie's cup of indignation almost tipped over. She was not the emotional kind, but every now and then she showed that she felt things deeply.

"We have problems too, and some of them are just about the same as yours in the high school. Susan, why don't you suggest that some elementary teachers work with your guidance, reading, and other committees? If we don't have any ideas to give, we could at least learn something."

"Phew," exclaimed Susan. "Is what we are doing that important? Maybe you think more of it than we do."

"You sound the way you did that day at the faculty meeting when the high school teachers were blaming the elementary teachers for the faults of the high school children," replied Mazie.

"You know, when you look back on some of the things we said, they do sound sort of stupid now. We just hadn't begun to see what our responsibilities as high school teachers were. We wouldn't say those things now, I believe. As you look at the things going on in high school, what impresses you most, Mazie?"

"Well"—Mazie thought for a moment—"I like the way the high school students are presiding in assembly programs. I know it took some time to get that fresh Eady boy so he could stand up there and preside without showing off. He handled the situation well when the students started laughing. He just waited. I thought he did well.

"I like what I hear about the student council, too. The students show that they are really interested in having things go smoothly at the school, and it is this interest more than the rules that seem to make things go smoothly. The children all worked in the scrap drive as if they were being paid, and we didn't have any prizes or badges or anything to make them work. Look how they worked to make things around the school look better and what pride they took in keeping the place clean. I wonder sometimes when the teachers do any lesson with the children, they seem so busy about other things. We are so busy with lessons in the elementary school that we don't have time for all the other things."

This wasn't the first time that people had asked Susan if the new

activities in the high school were interfering with classroom work; but it was a slight shock to have Mazie, who taught in the school, raise the question. Susan felt that she was beginning to understand the way these changes in the life of the school had come about, but could she make Mazie understand? It seemed very important to try anyway. Mazie evidently felt, as she once had, that the planning and working activities of children were all connected with the matters outside of the classroom. Perhaps it did look that way to people who didn't come into the classes.

"But, Mazie, a great deal of what you see the children doing grows out of classroom work. That assembly where Johnnie presided was planned as a part of a unit in a civics class. The unit was on civic rights and responsibilities. The children saw that all people had responsibilities as citizens of our school community. At first, some of them felt that it was the business of the janitor to keep things clean; but as they discussed it, they could see that it was their school and that they had the responsibility for a clean school. They compared themselves to people in a city who have the responsibility for a clean city. That assembly was their idea, and I thought they planned it pretty well. They had the officers of the student council to come in and help them plan how the students could help with the problems of keeping a school clean, and they decided that they would have an assembly and bring the matter to the whole school. A committee went to Mr. Pitts and, after explaining what they wanted to do, got his consent. Then they planned the assembly program.

"One good thing about the assembly program was that they wanted to do it very well and that they wanted to be very sure that their facts were correct. They had a hard time selecting the persons for the program, and they discussed the matter of presiding for some time before they selected Johnnie Eady. You can see that the assembly program was a part of the classroom work."

"Do you mean to say that the children did all of that by themselves?" asked Mazie.

"Oh, no! A teacher was working right along with them all the time, but her hardest job was to keep herself from making too many suggestions. I know—I used to do all the planning and haven't yet learned not to do too much. But the children teach us. They really planned the whole unit, with the teacher's help, of course. She used to be so disgusted with trying to get the children to do the papers that she assigned them. She sees now that they will not only plan to write papers but that they will set a time for them and most of them will get their work done by the time set."

"Do you know, Susan, I have been doing something like that with children in the sale of war stamps and in the scrap drive, and they have good ideas. You know, I believe I could try letting the children help to

plan some of the units we have. Sometimes now the children ask if they can take a trip to some place or if they can do something in a different way from which I have planned it. I think I will try letting them help me plan the whole unit. Will it be harder or easier, Susan?"

"In a way, harder, because your own plans for a job, which either you or you and the children decide is worth doing, will have to be made much more carefully before the children begin to plan with you, and you must be ready to suggest things that the children would never think of without your help. One of my hardest jobs has been to help the children find materials. There were materials in the library which I have never discovered, and I had to learn where to write for pamphlets and such things. We have a good start on a classroom library now and the children are helping to keep up with library materials."

"I think I'll try that with my children next year if you will help me. I don't know a thing about it and I haven't seen much for elementary teachers in this thing you all call 'pupil-teacher planning,' but you make it sound as if it might be worth trying."

Susan was a little surprised to have Mazie ask her for help. She had assumed that the elementary school teachers were far ahead of the high school teachers, particularly in teaching procedures. She was surprised also to discover that she could be so convincing in her explanation of the high school work. She didn't realize how much she had changed in her point of view about what was valuable in high school. With a little hesitation she replied, "Well, I don't know much about it either, but if I get the opportunity to attend the workshop this summer, I'll know something when I come back. I want to know how to better units in my own classes. In some classes I have learned to use pupil-teacher planning, but in others I have not been successful. The books I read help a little, but they don't give enough help for me to try it out in all classes."

"There is so much I want to work on. I don't know how to be sure that the children are getting the fundamentals, and I don't quite know how to satisfy myself about marking them. So many of the children read so poorly and so slowly that they can't do all they plan to do, even when they try very hard. There are so many things that I want to help with this summer."

"Oh, Susan, I do hope you get a chance to go to the workshop. I wish I could go too; but if you go, you can help me next year. You keep such good notes about everything."

"Well"—Susan rose to go—"I guess I have rested my eyes enough to get back to those records now. I wonder sometimes why we keep all these records and what becomes of them after we make them. They aren't exactly the kind of records I would like to keep, just between you and me."

## CHAPTER III

## Susan Meets New Friends

Susan was sure now that she was fully capable of planning and working toward the improvement of living in her school and community. In her mind, she had cataloged some very definite problems which she wished to tackle. The statement of school philosophy, for instance, needed to be put down in more adequate language. The faculty in all of its previous efforts had tried to express common beliefs about too many different goals in one statement. Susan had tried to isolate these beliefs and put them into orderly categories. The problem of improving the reading efficiency of pupils needed to get beyond mere assigned reading from "reference" books and taking notes on what they read. The revised report card did not yet really describe the individual student's progress toward the goals which pupils and teachers were consciously seeking. The health program needed to be organized still more around the known health needs of pupils and teachers. Susan felt these problems keenly and had given considerable thought to them. She believed that she could work out plans on any of them, if she could select the one that seemed most important.

During the year, many new professional books and magazines from various sources had been placed in the library, and Miss Prim had discovered that many of her ideas had either been confirmed or altered as she read what other teachers and other schools were doing about their problems. Before that year she had never heard of the professional magazines, and one or two that had been in the library for several years she had just seen no point in reading. She wondered sometimes why her interest in professional reading had developed so suddenly, and she decided that it was because she had begun to discover that other schools had the same problems as Lincoln and were doing something about them.

After careful calculation of her needed living expenses during the summer, when she wouldn't be getting a salary, she had seen how she could invest personally in one or two magazines in her own teaching fields. She had never done this before because it had never before seemed necessary. If she did get selected for the workshop, Miss Prim wanted to be ready to work on one of the problems that she had attempted to analyze in her careful notes. Her heart was set on going to the workshop. She felt that it would give her a chance to get the information and help that she needed for exploring some of the ideas she had developed this year as she had worked. What chance was there that she, out of the

twenty teachers in the high school, would be chosen to go? If she went, what would she work on? There were so many problems in the school that must be considered in the summer planning, and new ones seemed to be constantly arising.

Since Pearl Harbor, Lincoln, like all other schools in the nation, had been attempting to bring the war problems in to the school's classrooms. Both pupils and teachers were trying enthusiastically to contribute to the nation's war effort. Even before Pearl Harbor, the drafting of men under the Selective Service Act had begun to take fathers and older brothers from the families of the pupils. Two of the teachers, who had been very helpful in the new planning activities, had been taken. And the two large army camps which had been established near Tallahassee were providing the school and the community with an entirely new array of problems. Perhaps it was fortunate that the faculty and pupils had begun to recognize and study school and community problems before these new problems had intruded. At least they now had developed ways of accepting problems and felt that doing something about them was a part of the regular work of the school.

An entire high school class had studied first aid during a free period. The pupils felt that their services in connection with minor injuries in the school community might relieve overworked physicians and nurses. Several teachers were qualified to teach first aid and some of them took the responsibility for this group. At the end of the six weeks, the entire class received first aid certificates. First aid stations were set up in different parts of the elementary and high schools. The physical education program had emphasized safety and practical application of first aid in all classes.

Children asked for and helped to plan nutrition classes for themselves and for adults in nearby rural communities. The home economics teachers and pupils had engaged in a study of their own diets and this had led to an examination of meals served in the school cafeteria. Following a study of their own diets, a fourth grade class wrote a play which they presented as an assembly program. In the play they had attempted to show how the "seven basic foods" help to maintain good health.

A total of 22,157 pounds of scrap metal and rubber had been collected by Lincoln's junior commandos and other pupils. Plays, poems, and songs about scrap had been written by pupils. During a unit, Home Defense, a third grade class had been unusually active in gathering scrap. Numerous assembly programs dealing with phases of the war effort and originating in classrooms gave further evidence of a growing school-wide patriotism that had formerly been developed in such passive behavior as flag raising and reciting a pledge.

The teachers joined the principal organizing the community for its contribution to the war effort and in promoting bond drives.

A class in Modern Problems had systematically canvassed the entire Negro community and, in six days, had sold \$5,242 worth of bonds and stamps. A third grade class had sold \$2,674.65 worth of bonds and stamps. In all drives, the school had sold a total of \$24,710.15 worth of bonds and stamps!

The May Day celebration, with the help of pupils, developed into a very different kind of activity. The elementary school presented a pageant, *America's Child*. For this occasion, the Dale Mabry Field had set up on Lincoln's campus an exhibit consisting of Jeeps, all types of shells and guns, cannons, and heavy-duty trucks.

In cooperation with the war rationing program, the Lincoln faculty issued 2,000 sugar books, 5,000 kerosene books, and 3,000 of the number 4 war ration books. Several teachers and pupils had helped to operate an information booth where all Negroes living in Leon County might get information concerning the rationing program of our government.

In the Community War Fund Drive the pupils and teachers donated \$150; and the Negro community, under the direction of Lincoln's principal, donated more than \$5,600 to the fund.

Miss Prim felt that out of these experiences the whole school, as well as the Negro community of Tallahassee, was developing a sense of patriotism that it had not felt before. The teachers at Lincoln had never felt nor taught more than a half-hearted citizenship, but the chance to participate with the whole community in patriotic activities had somehow done more than any history lessons or routine observances of national holidays to arouse among all of them a feeling that they were real citizens in a country that needed and wanted their help. Out of it all for her had come additional insights into unstated purposes of the school.

In a faculty meeting near the end of the year, Mr. Pitts asked, "How can we plan our summer study on college campuses so that such study may contribute to our cooperative effort at Lincoln?"

One member of the group suggested that an appropriate answer to this question must take into consideration the jobs which the faculty felt to be important next steps for the coming year. Another teacher agreed that this was a basic consideration but that other questions regarding teacher turnover, unusual experiences which colleges were planning to provide, and scholarship opportunities were important also.

Mr. Pitts explained, "I know some teachers plan to study toward advanced degrees, which are certainly important in the matter of certification and salary. Other teachers, however, may contemplate summer study directly related to steps which they wish to take as individuals in this school during next year. Perhaps long-term plans are in order now. I

am certain that our annual preschool planning conferences will be concerned with long-term plans. Miss Prim, do you have any ideas which might help us at this point?"

Susan hesitated a moment. She was trying to decide whether she should mention the list of problems which she had put down in her notebook. It could do no harm and might save time. "Mr. Pitts," she began, "this year I have been very much interested in following the growth of our program. I believe we have made considerable progress along some lines but along some other lines we still have much to achieve."

Everyone in the room listened when Miss Prim spoke. She could be clear and convincing because she always had well-organized evidence to support whatever she said. "Would you care to mention some of these other lines, Miss Prim?" Mr. Pitts urged.

"Perhaps I could save time by writing them on the board," Susan suggested.

"Please go right ahead, Miss Prim," Mr. Pitts said, looking first to make certain that there was a crayon, and then at his watch.

From her notebook, and in bold, legible handwriting, Susan quickly copied a list of statements. As soon as she reached the end of each statement there was a buzz of conversation which subsided as she began to write the next statement. When she completed the list and took her seat, there were nods of approval all over the group and a big buzz of conversation in many small groups.

"Mr. Pitts," said Mr. Johnson, "I think Miss Prim put down just the things which all of us have had in our minds. I know she has worded them just as I would have liked to have worded them. I suggest that we make plans to accomplish some of these things."

Mr. Johnson taught shop work and was keenly interested in faculty planning for an improved school program. In fact, some of the visitors, who had seen the boys at work in the shop, had said that the reading activities in the shop were among the best in the school's program.

"Are there any additions or modifications to be made in this list?" Mr. Pitts asked the group.

Mazie added to the list one item involving the elementary school and suggested minor revisions in others to ensure the participation of elementary teachers. The list as it appeared on the blackboard was as follows:

### **Problems at Lincoln Needing Further Study**

1. Restating of elementary and high school goals in simple language.
2. Finding out what to do in all classes toward helping our pupils learn to speak, write, read, and generally communicate and receive better ideas.

3. Making our surroundings more attractive and more conducive to work and study.
4. Planning and putting into operation a more effective guidance program.
5. Planning for practical application in mathematics so that it will mean more to our pupils.
6. Organizing the survey materials in a form suitable for wider distribution and use in our school and community.
7. Developing plans by which science might receive increased emphasis throughout the elementary and high school.
8. Developing plans for closer cooperation among elementary teachers and between the elementary and the high school.
9. Continued effort to promote closer cooperation between the local college and Lincoln High based on a continuous faculty study of the success and failure of our college-going group.

There was already the probability that some of the problems could be carried to workshops as long as the Secondary School Study continued to hold summer workshops. The faculty felt that there might be other opportunities for teachers to study and commissioned Mr. Pitts to investigate such possibilities. Opportunities for going to school would certainly be presented, and teachers who knew about them and wanted to take advantage of them would profit. Why should Lincoln's teachers just wait for chances to turn up? With all the interest now in school development, there was more than a chance for summer study.

Mr. Pitts inwardly wasn't so sure about what he could do, but the enthusiasm was so high that he accepted the task of combing the region for any scholarships and other chances that teachers might take advantage of.

The final result was that over the next four summers, besides the six teachers selected to represent Lincoln in the Hampton and Durham Workshops of the Study, a surprising number of other Study opportunities were opened up to the faculty.

The librarian and a social studies teacher were selected and given an opportunity by the Study to carry the survey materials to Atlanta University, where, with the help of a professor of sociology, they translated them into a form for classroom and community use.

A high school mathematics teacher and an elementary teacher attended the summer workshop at Florida A&M College in which the college and the Study collaborated. Two teachers, one from the elementary school and one from the high school science staff, agreed to attend the newly established Atlanta University Science Workshop in order to plan a school-wide approach to science teaching. The faculty selected a



teacher to take the results of the school-wide study of reading problems to a college campus in order to work out a comprehensive and school-wide reading program. Again, with the Study, this teacher worked an entire summer with reading specialists at Hampton and later participated in the first reading institute in the region at North Carolina College at Durham and contributed to workshop discussions of reading at South Carolina State College and at Alcorn College in Mississippi. The principal attended the workshop in Evaluation along with sixteen other college and high school representatives from the region, and one teacher went to Tuskegee to study the industrial arts program. The experiences with the survey and reading materials were made possible by special arrangements by Atlanta University and Hampton for these Lincoln High teachers within their regular summer program. Many opportunities for summer study on school problems came to the Lincoln faculty through Mr. Pitts' efforts.

Out of the planning at the meeting, Susan was the first person to be selected as one of the three Lincoln representatives for the summer workshop. It was just what she had hoped for but had hardly dared to expect. Susan and her two fellow Lincoln teachers made the most of their opportunity; they worked hard to produce a workable statement on Lincoln's goals and a school-wide program for moving toward them. One of the experienced members of the workshop staff made the following comment on their final results:

"These goals are the soundest I have received from those putting themselves through such an analysis. They have considered the whole person and the things about the whole person and his growing-up that matter. Hours of cooperative discussion are behind these pages and what these hours did for the group can't be put into words."

The analysis of Lincoln's goals brought back by the workshop group as a part of a proposed plan for setting up goals for the whole school organization involving both pupils and teachers looked like this:

### **Goals for the Growth of Pupils and Teachers at Lincoln**

The goals for Lincoln have been set up in three groups:

#### **A. Goals Involving Growth in Personality and Culture**

- (1) For all teachers and pupils, enough opportunities within the program of the school to understand what our society is like and how individuals and groups can work to improve it. (2) For all individuals, the kind of personal consideration in all situations that makes one feel that his ideas and his work are important to the group. (3) For all teachers and pupils, the chance to develop a normal, emotional life. (4) For all, the kind of school experiences which

permit and encourage both individual and group growth. (5) For teachers and pupils, enough chances to become increasingly skillful in arriving at wise judgment based on facts. (6) Sufficient opportunities in the school for each individual to express himself creatively in graphic and photographic art, in classical and modern music, and in literature of all peoples and all times.

#### B. Social and Economic Goals

##### 1. Social

For each individual: (a) an active and developing concern for others; (b) opportunities through the school's program to gain faith in the value of cooperation in all group relationships and to understand how to cooperate; (c) a chance in school to understand how to be a happy and useful member of his family group and how to go about setting up a home of his own; (d) opportunities to broaden his present interests, discover new interests, and enjoy his hobbies.

##### 2. Economic

For each individual: (a) opportunities to understand how his work in each class can increase his chances to get various kinds of jobs, where to look for these jobs, and the requirements for the jobs; (b) help in discovering the kinds of things he can do best and how to prepare to use his skills in making a living; (c) the encouragement and advice he needs in order to plan for the continued improvement of his mind and his skills; (d) a chance to discover and learn to appreciate the social value of his work; (e) opportunity to become an informed consumer and to desire to support actively consumer-producer organizations which aim to raise the standard of living.

#### C. Health and Recreational Goals

For each individual: (a) adequate opportunity to develop appreciation for worthwhile leisure time activities to the extent that he will work to get these in the community now and when he is an adult; (b) adequate opportunity to develop and practice good health habits in regard to his own personal health and the health of others.

Beginning that fall and each year since, the combined Lincoln faculties have met in preschool planning conferences in order to summarize the summer study done by individuals or groups of faculty members and to plan next steps in the development of the program of the school. These conferences have given common direction to classroom efforts, committees of teachers, and weekly faculty meetings.

Inasmuch as the development program in Lincoln began with a study of community life, one would expect the program within the school to be related at numerous points to significant problems in the commu-

nity. These relationships exist now and are clearly identified. However, the faculty discovered early that its efforts to tie up the program of the school with community problems involved certain difficult hurdles.

Both teachers and pupils were used to classroom relationships and activities which were adjusted to a long established concern with lessons assigned from textbooks. Pupils were accustomed to waiting for teachers to tell them exactly what they were to do and how they were to carry out assigned tasks. Those pupils who waited most patiently and inactively for directions and were least inclined to raise questions as they followed directions were usually considered the best pupils. The most disturbing situations were created by pupils who tried to occupy the periods of inactivity with a kind of industry dictated by their own immediate interest. Reading another lesson assignment or a comic book, chatting with a neighbor, toying with some small gadget that frequently was dropped with a disturbing clatter, or arguing over the possession of a pencil or other object may have been natural ways to escape the boredom of moments of undirected activity, but they played havoc sometimes with orderly classroom routine. Teachers knew that the best way to exclude these things was to plan carefully to occupy every moment of class time with some directed activity.

Indeed, the teachers considered most effective were those who managed to keep their classes busy. One couldn't be too much concerned with what else these activities accomplished beyond keeping pupils working steadily. Pupils enjoyed being busy; hence it was easy to rationalize that they were "interested."

Imagine the adjustments which had to be made before teachers and pupils, long conditioned to such classroom procedures, could engage wholeheartedly in a procedure involving considerable pupil-teacher planning! Pupils who had learned to keep quiet and wait for teachers to initiate all assignments and plans had to be convinced that teachers really welcomed their ideas. Pupils then had to acquire skills necessary for engaging effectively in a cooperative talking activity that moved steadily toward purposeful ends. Fortunately for the teachers, some of the children, through awkward activities of their own, had acquired some capacity for initiating ideas and developing plans through discussions. Some of the brighter children, however, had to overcome an unfortunate tendency to monopolize discussions—perhaps, a hangover from a time when the child who said most in a recitation was given the highest mark.

For teachers, one of the first tasks was to develop a new kind of pupil-teacher classroom relationship and to place new values on some types of classroom behavior. It wasn't easy. Former classroom procedures had not permitted teachers to discover that children had real and driving concerns about the world of things and ideas around them

and that children could be convinced that many other ideas were also worth acquiring; that with help from more experienced people, children could design procedures for identifying the most important of these concerns and the most effective plans for working on their problems. Most important of all, teachers had to overcome their fears that children would bring into this changed classroom procedure their old defensive tricks. Children had to discover a new faith in teachers and a new zest for classroom tasks. Both teacher and pupils found this new faith in each other a valuable source of patience and sincere cooperation. With such changes a program has gradually developed that reaches into the heart of community living.

Teachers soon discovered that concern for many community problems will develop interests that go beyond any particular class group and may effectively involve school-wide purposes and activities. Lincoln expects to increase the scope and intensity of these community interests and efforts as rapidly as the faculty can develop adequate plans for community-centered efforts in terms of available material and human resources. Teachers in Lincoln have made full use of their opportunities to gain knowledge and skills which they considered valuable in community efforts. However, they are aware of certain pressing problems in their community which they are not yet able to approach because they have found no opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills which seem necessary to satisfactory analysis of, and effective work on, these problems.

Lincoln High School has found and taken advantage of numerous opportunities to cooperate with schools, churches, clubs, civic organizations, and military units on educational and recreational programs. Efforts to cooperate with these organizations provide learning experiences for teachers and pupils which more than compensate for the time, effort, and services given to these organizations.

Music groups at Lincoln, as they prepared programs for churches, found many satisfying opportunities for study and growth which broadened the scope of the work in the music classes. Frequent requests for such services, as well as participation in school programs by church groups, have promoted a closer relationship between the churches and the school, both of which institutions are important to the people of the community.

Similar programs presented by Lincoln at the local college have strengthened the confidence of the college in the program at Lincoln and have helped to create a more wholesome relationship between the college and the Lincoln school.

On several occasions Lincoln's students have visited rural schools in the county, taking with them a battery-amplified record player and

recordings of several types of music. Not only did the rural people enjoy the music, but pupils had an opportunity to grow as a result of their efforts to help their listeners understand and enjoy the music.

Lincoln received much favorable comment as a result of the successful appearance of the boys' quartet on a program of the local broadcasting company. This appearance was a rare and thrilling experience for the boys and won many new friends for the school. Several persons who apparently had had only a passive interest in the school, to begin with, have since expressed their eagerness to be informed regarding programs on which the quartet is to appear.

As avenues for service continued to reveal themselves, an opportunity to assist the United Service Organizations in its attempt to provide a wholesome, homelike atmosphere for servicemen presented itself. The high school chorus and faculty quartet have been presented several times at the USO Sunday evening vespers services, and the servicemen have received these performances with enthusiasm. The opportunity to converse with the men following the program gave the students a more sympathetic attitude toward the men in the service and an understanding of what was meant by the expression, "Though we are among thousands we are quite often lonely."

The men at an army base located near Tallahassee carried the school's chorus for a thrilling ride over the base in Jeeps following a program presented by the chorus.

The Home Economics department, in supplying cookies for the cookie jar at the USO, gave the girls an opportunity to make cookies for the very satisfying reason of giving pleasure to servicemen.

Prior to the Christmas Seal sale by the local organizations of the State Tuberculosis Association, pupils made a careful study of the purposes behind the effort. The resulting understandings and appreciations had much to do with the enthusiasm with which the children bought seals themselves and sold them to their parents and friends. Participation in the Christmas Seal sale not only provided experience in salesmanship and handling of funds in trust but added to the health consciousness of the children to the extent that they were eager to make use of the county mobile X-ray unit when it visited Tallahassee. Not only the school children but the whole Negro community benefited by a growing understanding of the anti-tuberculosis effort.

The Community Sing, sponsored every third Sunday evening by the school, is well attended by parents, pupils, and community people. The occasion is used as a means of bringing to the community a short talk by a competent speaker on some matter of general interest to the community. The increasing attendance at these programs gives some evidence of the value which the community attaches to them; and the informal

mingling of parents, children, and teachers on these occasions provides an excellent opportunity for the improvement of school-community relations.

When the community has a chance to cooperate in an effort to provide increased school services to the children, the cooperative effort increases community interest in the work of the school. This was clearly evident in the result of a combined effort of the PTA, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and the community in general to provide the school with a complete set of band instruments. Interest became so high that several parents individually bought instruments for their children.

The bandmaster of the local college became so interested that he and the more advanced members of the college band and orchestra gave their cooperation in helping to get the school band started, since the school did not have a person with enough skills and experience to do the job. Someday, community interest in a school band will result in Lincoln High's having a competent bandmaster on its own staff.

## CHAPTER IV

## Susan and Mazie Prepare an Important Assignment

"What time is it?" asked Susan.

"Five thirty, again," replied Mazie, looking up from a pile of folders containing descriptions of activities and evidences of progress in the elementary school. "Let's go home! The lunches in our cafeteria are delicious and help out, but I still have to cook dinner."

"So do I, and today is washday for me. Washdays always seem to come too often."

"And paydays, too slowly."

"We have certainly earned our salt this year," commented Susan as she arranged her folders and closed her notebook.

Susan and Mazie had been getting together often in order to study teachers' reports, samples of pupils' work, and other information regarding the progress of the school toward its goals.

"Is there no end to this process, Susan?" asked Mazie. "Just today, I thought I had a fairly good summary of opportunities being provided in our school for the development of self-direction, but in came a group of reports containing a dozen new and different examples."

"Were the new ones better examples?"

"Indeed so! They go beyond descriptions of opportunities and tell how pupils used the opportunities. Look at this one."

Mazie selected a folder and took from it a report of the student chairman of the lunchroom committee. Susan read it quickly:

The eighth grade selected me as its representative to the student council. I will never forget the opportunity which came to me as a result of this decision by my class. It happened this way: the council wanted to improve our lunchroom, and I was selected as chairman of the lunchroom committee. The duty of this committee was to plan and carry out the services in the lunchroom before and after lunch.

As chairman I selected Hattie, Cleo, and Mary as my regular assistants. However, at different times each member of the eighth grade assisted the committee.

Each member of the committee had a definite responsibility, and we were always ready to serve lunch when the bell rang. Our lunchroom is not large enough to accommodate all of the pupils at the same time, so we serve the junior high pupils from 12:16 to 1:16 and the senior high from 1:18 to 1:48. The senior high school homeroom meets while the junior high school is having lunch. About fifteen minutes before the junior high school pupils come in for their lunch, we get the food and water ready for serving.

Two of the girls wash the dishes while two others serve the food. Sometimes one of us relieves a teacher by taking the lunch tickets. Sometimes two of us have the pleasure of paying the lunchroom bills on Friday.

We worked in the lunchroom from October to January. After this time a group of seventh- and twelfth-grade girls had their turn in the lunchroom and thereby relieved us of what we considered a very interesting and valuable experience.

Louise P. Bryant, Student  
Chairman—Lunchroom Committee

“Hmm, a good piece of writing. Goes to show what pupils can do when their writing is about things which they feel keenly.”

“Let’s go home!” Mazie insisted as she replaced the folder.

As they left the room, Susan said, “Our illustrations are bound to get better as our pupils and teachers grow in experience. I have decided to set up a new file to hold evidences of growth beyond a certain point this year. We’ll be making other composites, you know.”

In the hall they met Mr. Hunter, Lincoln’s custodian. “Good afternoon, Mr. Hunter,” said Mazie and Susan almost in unison.

“Afternoon, Miss Prim and Miss Merritt. Guess I’ll be going pretty soon. I sure do like the way students are helping to keep the building and grounds tidy. Saves me a lot of work.”

At three o’clock the next day, Miss Prim, a little nervously, took a last peek at herself in the glass doors of the bookcase containing the classroom library. Henrietta, the class librarian, kept the glass shining so that everyone might easily see the attractive rows of books. Susan glanced quickly at her desk. She liked the neat bookends which Jesse had made in the shop. Susan and her pupils, working together, were doing a better job of housekeeping than she had ever been able to do alone. The potted plants, pictures, aquarium, and a table for records of progress had been added gradually to the room by pupils as their name for the room changed from “Miss Prim’s room” to “our room.” Just before leaving the room, Susan selected a bulletin board strip bearing a statement of one of the school goals. She arranged it on the board and stepped back to inspect the arrangement. She smiled as she read: “For each individual, increasing cooperative thinking and working in all activities of school, home, and community.”

Mazie poked her head in Susan’s door.

“Come on, Susan. It’s three fifteen and you and I have the main jobs in this faculty meeting.”

“Coming right now,” answered Susan.

A few minutes later, Susan and Mazie entered the room where most



of the faculty had already gathered. The hospitality committee, consisting largely of children, had done a good job of making the room attractive. The children sometimes surprised you with their good taste. The potted plants were lush and well arranged. Mazie had planned with the hospitality committee and had looked in before the meeting just to be sure the room was all right. Susan watched the eager eyes of the glee club as the singers arranged themselves. She caught a smile of satisfaction and pride on Mr. Pitts' face as he shifted his attention from the group of parents with whom he had been conversing to the glee club.

As the glee club sang "Ave Maria," Susan thought of the few opportunities that the Tallahassee Negro community had to satisfy its hunger for music. She knew that scores of jukeboxes continuously bellowed forth their tunes in tight, smelly little rooms to crowds that paid a hundred dollars or more a week for rhythmic enjoyment. As she recalled the few occasions when some really good opera or symphony group went out of its way to include Tallahassee in its itinerary, the few musical instruments in the Negro homes, and the struggling effort to have decent church music, she did not wonder that the occasional musical programs of schools and churches were so well attended. It was an evidence of the community's starvation musical diet. Was the school doing enough to improve this condition? Perhaps this should be included as one of the definite goals of the school. Susan flinched a little at the idea. Where would all this stop? she thought. Lately Susan had a way of looking at situations in terms of what the school could do about them. She even felt guilty sometimes when she decided that the school wasn't trying purposefully to meet some problem. Her thoughts this time brought her some satisfaction. Perhaps the music efforts of the school weren't geared entirely to the music needs of Tallahassee; but the efforts themselves pleased her as she mentally listed them.

In the elementary school the children were learning songs in connection with plans and programs presented in weekly assemblies. Just the other day a fourth grade class had presented a play about people of many lands. They left no doubt as to how much they had enjoyed singing folk songs of the different nationalities portrayed in the play. The season, the holidays, the animals, the flowers, almost everything provided an excuse for a song, and the children loved it.

The high school children were beginning to understand and enjoy the serious as well as the more popular music. Many of them were learning for the first time to appreciate the meaning of the words in the various types and variety of songs. They were learning, too, through part singing the meaning and value of cooperation.

There was noticeable increase in the participation of boys in music activities. The music teacher was assisting boys as they prepared for

music in connection with Boy Scout programs, community singing programs, and memorial programs. Definite improvement in audience behavior was apparent as the children learned how to listen to music and the parts that audiences played in making a program a success.

Some classes in the school were experimenting with a public address system. With this equipment they were playing classroom recordings and learning to present radio plays. The school was planning to get a sound movie projector. The band instruments owned by the school could be used—but there was no band teacher.

Hearty applause from the audience aroused Susan from her thoughts. She looked over in Mazie's direction and saw that Mazie's eyes were fixed on a printed strip above the blackboard which read as follows: "Sufficient opportunities in school for each individual to express himself creatively in photographic art, and to develop an appreciation for classical and modern music, and international literature."

Mr. Pitts stood up and in quiet, positive tones began: "This meeting was planned as one in a series of meetings through which the Lincoln faculty and students seek to review for our community certain phases of our program. We feel that we owe this to ourselves and to our community. Periodically, our community needs to know what we are trying to do, why we are trying to do these things, and how we are trying to achieve our goals. We believe that this information will place parents and friends in a better position to make helpful suggestions and to cooperate more fully with the school. Miss Prim and Miss Merritt, working together, planned this meeting; but all of us—pupils, teachers, and parents—should feel free to question, supplement, or discuss the information which Misses Prim and Merritt present."

Mr. Pitts nodded to Miss Prim, who rose immediately, smiled cordially at the group, and began speaking in her naturally convincing tone:

"Some of you may feel that our program at Lincoln is complicated. We do carry on a large number of different activities, yet very simple ideas are at the bottom of our program. Everything we do is supposed to help teachers and pupils live happy and useful lives, to grow bigger and wiser. We believe that a good school ought to help its pupils understand what needs to be done in order to make life better for them.

"I know none of us are entirely satisfied with the way children and grown folks act. Nobody really wants to be sick and live in unhealthy surroundings. All of us need to know more about making and spending money in order to get more of the things we want for ourselves and for our families. Children and grown folks are always in search of interesting and wholesome play and recreational activities. Since it is necessary for all of us to buy from, marry, and live with others, we need to know how to get along with people. We believe an education should be about

such things as these, so we try to guide our children in the wise use of time, in the getting and spending of money correctly, in living and working with others, in taking their share of any job, in making wise selections, and in understanding and taking an active part in life around them.

"We are not satisfied with merely talking about or reading about how people might live better. We have to live in school, and all these things are around us every day. Together, the children and teachers at Lincoln try to find out what it takes to make life better, and they practice making it better right in the school. When children see that the problems being studied at school are like those which they see at home and in the community, they burst right out with a question which can bring real community problems to the school. Finding the answers to these questions is always interesting to pupils.

"As children plan and carry out work on problems which get into the classrooms, teachers find many opportunities to keep the work pointed toward definite goals. We teachers have these goals clearly in mind as a group of important things we want to happen to all of our boys and girls."

Susan paused as the group read copies of the goals which Mazie had placed on all the tables. Susan watched the facial expressions of different members of the group as they read the statements.

"Miss Prim, I don't know very much about modern schools, but I wonder when and where the children learn to read, write, and figure. Are such things considered incidentals now?"

This question was evidently on the minds of a number of parents because several faces brightened as Mrs. Thomas, a former school teacher, spoke.

"I don't believe that the pupils in Lincoln would agree that these things are incidental," Susan replied as she looked inquiringly from one pupil to another. "We think of reading, writing, figuring, planning, thinking, and speaking as tools which pupils are taught to use better and better in all classes. We try to encourage the use of these tools in connection with situations or problems which really matter to the pupil and which help him to understand the power of such tools. Perhaps one of the pupils can tell exactly how he is learning to use these tools. How about you, Percy?"

Percy was an eleventh grader who had seemed anxious to say something. "I can tell about geometry, my third course in mathematics. Our class is small, just sixteen people, and we can work on individual projects more often than we could in our first two courses. First, we meet as a group and agree on a general topic or unit, such as Geometrical Principles in Machines. Then each pupil selects a problem which is relat-

ed to the general topic. Right now I am working on gears, and Norris is working on pulleys. Some days we work during the whole period on our problems. On other days, we have class discussions or we work together in order to clear up some principle or question in mathematics. Today our discussion was about the geometric significance of circles, rings, and ratios; and tomorrow I will get information on the sector of a circle, since that is the next step in my problem."

"What do you read and write in mathematics?" Susan pressed.

"Oh! We read sections in magazines or reference books in order to get the information needed on our problems. I used references such as school science and mathematics, applied mathematics books, trigonometry books, physics books, and shop mathematics books; but I wish there were more different kinds of books in our library on math."

"And writing, Percy?"

"That's what I want to learn to do next. We write figures and make diagrams and charts nearly every day, but we don't write things out in words often. I'd rather write about math because I like it. In math I am learning to think, plan, and analyze other people's arguments."

Janet, who stood next to Percy, voluntarily raised her hand. "Miss Prim, I'd like to tell something about our work in mathematics."

"Go ahead, Janet," said Miss Prim.

"The first thing we did was to try to make our classroom look like a workroom. We get around the tables for group work. We have cardboard boxes in which we file charts, pamphlets, and other materials which we use. We keep a record of what we do and what we learn so that we can tell what we need to do next. We did a lot of figuring in connection with the community survey. Much of our work is about the community. Earlier this year, we made graphs, using the figures in the Florida Population Study, the *World Almanac*, and *Florida Health Notes*. We got a lot of information and practice in figuring from these. When we worked on owning and operating small businesses, we found out about margins, profit, loss, and percentage. When we studied personal money management, some of us worked on installment buying, some on insurance, and some on banking. I'm going to take algebra next year."

Percy broke in then to say, "I forgot to say that we keep records, too. I guess that gives us some experience in writing."

"I know that many of our pupils enjoy mathematics just as well as Percy and Janet," said Susan. "However, we still have some pupils who do not yet place much value on mathematics. Last year 40 percent of our mathematics pupils failed to make the progress which teachers felt they should make in order to succeed in the next course or in life. But you may be interested to know that only 10 percent of our college-going group failed in freshman mathematics and that these same pupils are

usually those who for some reason or other get into college mathematics, although their high school records indicate that they might do better in more verbalistic courses such as English and social studies.”

“On each table you will find a sample of the work which pupils did during the unit on personal money management that Janet mentioned,” Mazie chimed in. “The samples are all different, because each pupil worked on the expenditure of his family for a period of four weeks.”

The first page of the sample on the table at which Mr. Pitts sat looked like this:

First Week

Feb. 5–11, 1944

### How My Family of Three Uses Its Earnings

Item	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Total	Total % of Income
Rent	2.00							2.00	5.7
Food	5.42	.20	.15	.40	.60	.75	.53	8.05	23.0
Clothing				.35				.35	1.0
Taxes									
Car Fare	.25		.05	.10	.15	.05	.15	.75	2.1
Insurance			2.10					2.10	6.0
Medical Care	.60					.60		1.20	3.4
Amusement		.55						.55	1.5
Heat/Light	2.15							2.15	6.2
Charity	.05	.50						.55	1.5
Misc.	.20					.05		.25	.7
War Stamps						2.75		2.75	7.9
Education	.25					.05		.30	1.0
Savings									40.0
<b>Total</b>								<b>21.00</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Total income \$35.00			Expense \$21.00				Savings \$14.00		

There were three pages similar to this one. However, the expenditures were different. On the fifth page there appeared a summary for the month and several statements regarding comparisons which the class had made using the different sizes of incomes of families represented in class. Finally, there was a list of five outcomes. The list was as follows: (1) The study of the living standards of families made clear the meaning and use of averages. (2) The study afforded much practice with fundamental operations. (3) We can use many of the facts from the study. (4) We know more about how to help our parents spend money wisely. (5)

We should be better able to assume responsibility for planning the use of money when we become heads of families.

Susan's quick, well-trained eyes seemed to be able to tell the minute that the audience finished reading the samples, for at the right minute she said, "The English teachers recognize above all that students are people; as people, they are entitled to all of the happiness and personal satisfaction that good living can bring. Few things can contribute so much to happiness and good living as can a command of the arts of communication." Susan described two activities in English classes in order to illustrate how some of the opportunities which she had mentioned were provided.

"The three English teachers see it that whatever is done in their classes gives every pupil a chance to improve his spelling, to plan his work, to read more, to think clearly, to write correctly, and to say the things he wants to say correctly and convincingly. Attempts are made to work with each child and to help him to do those things which he needs most.

"For example, Evelyn Morris in the eleventh grade English class is trying to write a booklet on the science of making and using cotton goods. She has learned to recognize cotton, linen, rayon, and wool in a piece of cloth, and she has made dyes which she uses in dyeing different kinds of cloth. She understands how the kind of weave contributes to the strength of the cloth, but her greatest weakness just now is in writing an interesting and readable report of her work. If you could look at the different reports in her folder about her work in English, you would see that during her ninth year Evelyn wrote very little and her sentences were always short, but she was very active in the dramatics club, class programs, and in other talking activities. Notes written by her teacher during her tenth year show that Evelyn was still very active in dramatics and assembly programs. She would not act as secretary for her class, but she gladly served as president. In the little writing which she did that year, she had trouble with verbs and her sentences were very confusing.

"Notes like this will tell just what Evelyn needs help in and why she hasn't gotten her booklet written. They also give a direct statement of a pupil's growth, his weaknesses and failures, as well as his successes.

"One eleventh grade English class had need for a wider knowledge of etiquette. The students and teacher chose as a unit *Correct Manners at All Ties*. With a chairman and the teacher conducting and directing the group, pupils read such books as *Love at the Threshold*, *The Right Thing*, *Boys Will Be Men*, *The Correct Thing*, *What Is She Like?*, *The Boy and His Daily Living*, *Manners for Millions*, *Etiquette*, and *New Outline of Knowledge: The Book of Culture*.

"During this time the teachers found any opportunities to assist pupils with their difficulties. They chose these topics: Table Manners,

Manners at School, Manners in the Street, Manners in Public Places, and Manners at Social Gatherings. Each group worked in the library long enough to gather needed information, after which the members of the group made reports to the class.

"Another class of twelfth grade students thought that, since they would soon be finishing high school, they needed to know about vocations. The students and teacher made plans to this effect for a unit of work dealing with vocations but also involving the purposes of English. The students interested were majoring in business, nursing, home economics, teaching, music, architecture, and agriculture. They grouped themselves for work, and under the direction of a chairman and teacher these groups worked continuously in the library until they found all necessary information. When they finished, they brought their material back to the group so that the whole class would learn something about vocations. The knowledge gained probably helped them in making definite choices when they entered college. Aside from that, the unit also gave the students a chance to learn much about using the library.

"On your desk on the pink sheets, you will find several examples of student evaluations of some of the units they had in English," said Susan. The pink sheet looked like this:

Two students tell of the help they received from a speech choir which was begun as a project in one English class:

"I think the speech choir gives me good practice in speaking. It develops poise and a clear speaking voice. It also helps one's enunciation."

"I think that the speech choir is very beneficial because it helps us to learn to talk together, and it also improves our reading." Another student says of a unit on Social Conversation in which her class engaged:

"I have always shunned introductions because I have always been afraid that I would say or do the wrong thing. During our discussion of Social Conversation, I learned how to make an introduction and how to make and enjoy conversation."

"Miss Prim, I am interested in this list that you call the school's Social and Economic Goals." Mr. Evans, who spoke, had for many years collected insurance from house to house among the Tallahassee Negro families. No one in the room was in better positions to know firsthand the intimate and human facts regarding the struggles and privations of a large section of the local Negro population. When mothers told him from time to time why they couldn't pay the small premiums due on the policies they held on the members of the family, they revealed the many financial problems of the Negro community. Many times he was called on to advise a family in a small financial crisis because of illness or temporary loss of employment or taxes or a bad buying judgment. He daily saw the impoverished home life and the desperate struggle to

improve it and still “make ends meet.” “Lord knows our children need to learn how to get along better than we grown folks, when their time comes. They can even help their mothers and fathers now with some of their problems, if the school will teach them how to buy wisely, budget their little money, how to stay out of jail, hold a job, improve their home, and understand about taxes and things like that. I’m all for that kind of teaching in the school. I know we suffer a lot in Tallahassee because we grown folks never learned those things.”

“Mr. Evans, your advice will certainly encourage us to do these things as well as we can. You have expressed, better than we have, some of the important purposes that we should have in the social studies and home economics at Lincoln. That’s why we have made this list. With the help that you have given, perhaps we can improve your list. We are conscious of all such needs of children in practically every class, but we feel that we can reach them more directly and more often in the social studies classes because we think that the social studies should be directly concerned with social problems. At Lincoln we try to use the facts of history, geography, sociology, and other related subjects in trying to work out the real problems of the children and the community as far as we can discover those problems. Our children realize that many of their problems are related to their status as a minority group in this country and in Florida, and they seem to be intensely interested in trying to see how they can meet these problems wisely. There is very little about our problems in the textbooks we use, but we have acquired dozens of books and pamphlets and other materials that help us to see that we are Americans and how we can work to become better Americans. There isn’t time now to tell about some of the things we work on, but you have mentioned some of them. Among other things, we are trying to see how the laws about taxes and other things really work and how they are often abused because of our ignorance.”

As Susan talked, the interest of the people in the room seemed to grow. Quite unconsciously teachers, parents, and children seemed to lean a little forward in their seats. The mere mention of social situations affecting Negroes always caught the attention of the Negro audience. Mazie felt it as she glanced about the room to see how they were taking Susan’s ideas.

“In the elementary school,” continued Susan, “we begin to give attention early to such problems. The houses and stores which the children build may not be very good construction, but they help the children to understand about better manners, better health, more attractive and convenient home furnishings, how to act when the doctor and the insurance man come, how to answer the phone, etc. The classroom storekeeper and his customers learn considerable about reading, use of



numbers and rationing, and a great deal about mutual respect between individuals.”

“Miss Prim!” Mrs. Thomas had waited impatiently for Susan to finish before she raised her questions. “I have serious doubts about letting children discuss some of those issues. I know it sounds good, but when the children talk on the outside about what they are discussing at school, there is a danger that they may involve the school in some embarrassing situations. Then, too, how do we know that they may not try out some of their ideas in the wrong situations?”

Mr. Pitts felt that he should take the responsibility for answering such a question as this, and Miss Prim had a feeling of relief as he stood and began to speak.

“Mrs. Thomas, I think the teachers hope that the children will be able from their reading and their discussions in class to make better judgments in the situations they meet outside of school. In fact, the teachers are trying to find situations outside of school in which the children can be active. Miss Prim didn’t tell how the high school children have made visits to the courts, to the legislature, to talk to city officials and citizens. The children have helped a great deal in making the survey of Tallahassee which has been the basis of much of the work in the school, especially in the social studies.

“An educated person in America, we believe, ought to understand and believe in democracy. We think this is the most important thing a school can teach. This means that every pupil will take his share of responsibilities, will help to think out what ought to be done and the best way of doing it, and then take part in carrying out the plans. Perhaps this will mean that a great deal of reading has to be done before students can understand some particular question. Perhaps each one will read a different book and then report his findings to the others. Whatever needs to be done must be shared. We must not let young people in America grow up to think they have no responsibility for planning, though too often schools have left the planning to the teachers and not asked children to share. We must have our children practice this kind of democratic living until it is a part of them. They will have to learn that thinking is hard, and that many times it is necessary to read or to examine all sorts of things to find out what has already been done. That, for example, is one reason for their studying history.

“We hope we are right in our convictions, and that we cannot be criticized at this point. We do not encourage youngsters to be hateful or violent when they find some injustice, and we do not expect little children to do anything yet about some of the matters which worry those of us who are older. But we want them to practice responsible living every day and to think hard about the world around them, so they can face life

with courage and with ideas.

"In Tallahassee, girls get married early. The wages earned by mothers and fathers are often too low to provide all of the home comforts and other things needed by large families. Many girls drop out of school before completing the ninth grade. They take jobs in order to increase the family earnings. This increased responsibility leads to mature social life and eventually to marriage.

"Before the home economics teachers recognized this situation, marketing and banking for the lunchroom was always done by tenth and eleventh graders. Now as early as the seventh grade, the girls take responsibility for keeping the lunchroom accounts, ordering food supplies by telephone or through visits to town, and for banking the lunchroom funds.

"At first, only one girl was willing to take the responsibility, but she got others interested and taught them. Gradually the number of girls wanting experience in purchasing increased, and finally each class asked for a chance to transact all of the business of the lunchroom for a period of time.

"The home economics teacher welcomed this new opportunity to help girls learn how to plan the spending of money. Now, any girl in home economics classes can place an order by telephone, keep simple accounts, and deal with the downtown bank. Of course, the experience did not stop here. The girls began to try these same things at home and to ask their teachers for help and suggestions.

"The bank teller, the grocer, and the bakers have commented on the courteous and businesslike way in which the girls work. The girls, too, have learned, contrary to their earlier beliefs, that intelligence and courtesy may regulate the responses which they get from businessmen far more than color and age.

"We are certain that the ideas which our pupils are getting from experiences such as this one are operating in their homelife.

"We do not create conditions which cause immature pupils to actively oppose powerful pressure groups. However, we do attempt to make life in our school illustrate the principles of democracy, and we purposely create realistic opportunities in the school for pupils to get practice in making judgment regarding social issues."

There were nods and smiles of satisfaction throughout the group, and Susan felt that the group was in position to consider parts of the social studies program and to relate parts to the whole idea which had been expressed.

Evidently one of the social studies teachers had the same feeling because she said, "Our pupils have worked on units such as Negro Progress, Community Life, How Present-Day Situations Influence Man's Needs,

### Some Important Institutions That Influence Life, and Planning Our Vocations.

"In every case we have begun by having pupils and teachers together discuss problems and see how these questions are related to things in the past. Sometimes in reading history, pupils do not see that the old problems they find there are like things that trouble them now.

"We help them see, for example, that present-day fights for the right to vote in this and other countries is another chapter in an age-old struggle of peoples to have the advantage of this right. We try to help them understand how groups of people in the different ages and countries have made progress toward getting this right. We help them search the histories of political parties in America to find out what each party had done toward increasing or decreasing the changes for all individuals to get an education, earn a living, and enjoy all of the rights which Americans are supposed to enjoy. During these studies pupils make use of our wide variety of pamphlets, maps, charts showing the functions of various branches of state and federal government, newspapers, magazines, textbooks, books of fiction, and radio recordings. As individuals or in groups, pupils and teachers comb source materials for information pertinent to the problems or issues under consideration. During this activity the teacher directs the growth of pupils in such things as evaluation of authority in reading matter, reading for understanding, finding information, spelling, and discussion techniques.

"Group discussions are led by teachers in order to pool collected information, to isolate and state important issues, and to plan next steps in the study. We believe that such discussions contribute substantially in the school's social goals, particularly the development of a philosophy of life.

"After reading, discussing, and sometimes visiting, pupils write poems, essays, and plays in which they state their opinion on some issue and why this position is taken. So far, these pupil-products have been shared through reports to the class or assembly programs, but we want to use these samples of pupil writing as points for beginning our efforts to help pupils with their written expression. An experimental class is already under way, and the teacher of this class is trying to discover effective ways to make a study of social problems.

"One thing that we are trying to get as a result of this experimental class is a better way to keep up with different kinds of progress which our children make. In most classes we have a folder for each child in which we keep such things as this written work, tests, and reports or little notes written to the pupils or his parents describing strengths or shortcomings which the teacher has seen in the pupil's work. Some of these folders are filled in a short time, and it is not always easy to put the

separate pieces together as a picture of the child's growth. We like the folders, but we have not learned all about how to use them."

"Miss Prim," said Mazie, "may I say a word about science in the school? I know we haven't much time left, but I won't take very long."

"I think this group should know that work in science at Lincoln begins in the elementary school just as the social studies do. Every room, including all the first grade rooms, has a science corner that changes in some way almost every day. The children make frequent trips to ponds and fields, and these trips are always followed by brief classroom discussions about the things we see or bring back for our classroom science corners. These discussions would make you laugh sometimes as they bring out some of the things children have been taught to believe. Nearly half of the children in one fifth grade class believed that horsehairs turn to snakes when placed in water and that dimes and bags of strong smelling stuff around their necks would keep germs away. You see, the children are learning from all sorts of sources to believe many things that are not true; and unless we replace these beliefs early with reliable science information, these misinformations will grow into strongly held superstitions. We must help children to give up these notions because later on they have much to do with good, straight, intelligent thinking on such important matters as good health habits, eating, and other living habits; and even in the early stages, sometimes these ideas aren't too easy to uproot."

"None of the elementary teachers has had a chance to do much special study in science; but, since we began to see how important it is for us to be able to use reliable science facts in so many classroom situations, we make use of every possible opportunity to learn simple science facts and plan simple and convincing science experiments that illustrate the simple scientific principles in the children's experiences. It is surprising how a child's understanding can be straightened out by just watching seeds grow, the development of root systems, studying the inside of a bulb, handling a toad, or watching a butterfly or a moth crawl out of a cocoon."

"We have some easy science readers for the children in the lower grades, but we don't have formal science lessons. The children ask plenty of questions, and we teachers provide situations that will stimulate many more questions. And do the children ask them? How do airplanes fly? Where do babies come from? Will a turtle hold on 'til it thunders'? Why do snakes keep moving so long after their heads are cut off? Our job is to be wise enough not to answer but, whenever possible, to help the children plan ways of finding their own answers and more questions by knowing how to search for answers in simple observations."

"In grades four, five, and six, or as early as pupils are able to stick to more extended investigations, group problems dealing with personal

and community welfare are undertaken. At this stage pupils begin to feel the need for wider and deeper reading and for planned and controlled experiments in order to gain satisfying answers to their questions about such matters as food, health, soils, electricity, reproduction, and simple chemistry."

Mazie paused momentarily. She knew that some parents had discovered their children under their houses in search of termites, in the bathroom inspecting the plumbing, or using mold from bread, cheese, or fruit in their "experiments." There was some feeling among parents that the children were wasting time which might be spent in reading lessons to be recited the next day.

She wondered whether this group understood that in most science periods at Lincoln, teachers have steady direction in the efforts of individual pupils to answer their own questions and to grow in reading, to develop use of science manipulative skills, and to improve in the quality of their thinking.

Could she convince them that classroom activities of this kind resulted in more kinds of growth than the kind of activities in which most of them probably believed? Mazie remembered the time when she, too, believed that her job was to make assignments to the class one day and the next day to ask questions which she thought would enable her to find out how well the children had memorized what they read. The children, of course, didn't know what Mazie's questions would be, and their job was to improvise satisfactory answers to Mazie's questions by using any word they could remember from the books or by unsupported opinions collected from various sources. Mazie no longer had faith in that kind of procedure. But could she convince this group that she was right? Mazie became more apprehensive as Mrs. Thomas took advantage of the pause to say, "I have listened carefully to all that has been said, and I have looked at the samples of pupil work on this table. I believe our children ought to have a very clear understanding of many things that school-children don't usually get a chance to know about. When I was teaching, we didn't do things as they are done in Lincoln now, but I guess more worthwhile things are bound to be discovered as teachers study. All of it sounds interesting and worthwhile to me."

Mazie drew a long breath of relief, and Mr. Pitts sat back in his chair. If Mrs. Thomas approved, there were many others in the community who would accept her judgment.

Mr. Pitts called to the attention of the group the heavy teacher-turnover in the science department. This turnover had delayed agreement among teachers regarding the specific contributions which each of the four courses in science, as well as the science club, might make toward a pattern of successive growth of individuals and groups in the science.

"Boys and girls in the high school are eager to understand the causes of constipation, headaches, menstrual periods, indigestion, and many other things that take place in their bodies. They will read almost anything that is likely to give them clearer ideas about why people are different and whether difference in such things as color or size really gives one person any advantage over another.

"The insides of electric irons, clocks, lamps, bells, and other gadgets can hold their attention for weeks. Handling the bottles, tubes, powders, and other stuff in the chemistry room is an ambition of most of our boys and girls. Our science teachers encourage their pupils to look deeply into science for the truth about what goes on in the world. Some of these searches for truth last for weeks. Sometimes the search takes the whole class and the teacher in different directions in order to get full proof that some idea is right or wrong."

"Miss Prim," objected Rufus Williams, "you're leaving out the thing that we really enjoy in science. I mean the chance to talk about and agree on the kinds of experiments which we want to carry on. I think that is the only way to really know what you are doing and why."

Rufus was in tenth grade biology and had slightly shocked his teacher by asking if he might plan an investigation of bedbug control and do some needed experimenting at home.

"Oh yes, Rufus, we must not leave that out. Can't you tell us about the different kinds of investigations which members of your biology class have made?"

"Let's see—we have studied about people, animals, and plants, sometimes separately and sometimes together in order to make comparisons. Simon caught snakes and studied the difference between poisonous and nonpoisonous ones. Many of us take shortcuts through the fields, and we know there are plenty of snakes around here. Nearly all of us wanted to know the truth about pimples and other skin troubles, so Sarah, Vera, and Sallie included these things in their study about abnormal growths. Clara found out and helped us to understand the causes of sterility—that was part of our study of reproduction. Henry studied high blood pressure because the army turned down so many men on account of blood pressure—that was a part of our study of the circulatory system. The whole class studied venereal diseases. We select a big topic like reproduction, keeping things alive, or superstitions, then all of us take some part of the topic. We have general discussions in order to clear up general questions, but most of the time we read and plan experiments. Later, each person or group presents his study to the class in some interesting way. I guess that's all—Oh yes, each person keeps a record of what he reads and what he does."

"Thank you, Rufus. I couldn't have made it that interesting."

The meeting had moved along well, but Susan began to feel the pressure of time. She glanced at her watch. It was four fifteen, and she realized that she must summarize the program quickly.

Briefly she pointed out the daily program of each high school pupil included four different content classes of fifty-eight minutes each, and a fifth daily period devoted to physical education. Florida is one of the states that by legislative enactment requires that all high schools shall offer physical education. This leaves a sixth period which pupils must plan to make use of. This sixth period is used by pupils in various ways. Some go to the library, some schedule conferences with teachers, some attend scheduled club meetings, some go to the shop or to other classrooms in the school where they have tasks yet to complete, some use the time for following out some study plan. Over 50 percent of the pupils are employed before or after school hours, so in some cases pupils arrange to have all their classes in the first five periods of the day and to leave for their jobs at the close of the fifth hour.

Planning for effective use of the daily free hour has emphasized the need to Lincoln of more kinds of opportunities for pupils to grow. Music can be elected by any pupil as a free hour activity, if there is a music activity at the period when the pupil is free. The school has tried to provide opportunities for pupils to engage in such art activities as making models, pictures, or posters in connection with some school or classroom activity. This has not been very satisfactory, but the school is doing the best it can until it is possible to secure a teacher with the training and time to help pupils who have art interests.

"Miss Merritt, I think the elementary teachers are getting some satisfactory results in arts and crafts. Will you take just a moment and say a word about what the elementary teachers are doing?"

"Thank you, Miss Prim. I'll be very brief. Fortunately most of the teachers in the elementary school have had some training in arts and crafts and some have had considerable training. A few have a real talent and interest in arts and crafts and can help those of us who cannot do as well as we would like. All of us use such art training as we have in connection with all of our teaching.

"I would like to explain further that, as you know, each of our fourteen teachers remains with a class for three years consecutively. There are many reasons behind this decision; but, mainly, it gives us a long enough contact with a class to permit us to know each pupil well enough to keep him growing steadily in a way that would be impossible if we passed him on to another teacher at the end of one year.

"You have been hearing this afternoon of the progress in certain phases of the high school work. I feel that the elementary school teachers have shared with the high school teachers in much of their planning.

We have not been fortunate enough to have the kind of help which a full-time supervisor might give, but we have found a fair substitute in frequent planned meetings arranged and carried on by us after school or at other convenient times. The teacher cooperation made possible by these meetings has added significantly to the improvement of our work.”

The brief discussion that followed Mazie’s statement brought out in somewhat more detail the activities of the elementary school—activities designed to stimulate among pupils and parents more concern about care of the teeth, cleanliness, proper diet, concern about care of the eyes, prevention of communicable disease including the common cold. Parents expressed a hope that, somehow, the medical inspection services which the high school had secured through the cooperation of the local doctors and the county health unit might be extended to the elementary school. Brief mention was made of the fifth grade’s unit on foods which resulted in a victory garden and a study of food served in the elementary school lunch program. A fourth grade teacher described briefly a unit on good manners which grew out of a consideration of behavior in theatres and other public places and how the lunch situation had been used as time to practice good manners by being very careful to say “please,” “thank you,” “I beg your pardon,” and other courteous expressions.

A third grade teacher mentioned a unit on airplanes, which had resulted in considerable growth in reading, measurement, manipulation, and planning among third graders. Some of the parents had attended the school assembly sponsored by the third grade when a pilot of the Army Air Forces had discussed his own experiences, the mechanics of flying, and had let the children ask him all sorts of questions.

Someone mentioned the 73 percent overage of the elementary school enrollment and the tendency of many parents to keep their children out of school, sometimes until they were as much as ten years old, and how last year fifty children and their parents spent three months in the bean fields. They were just about to get into some of those difficult discussions of attendance when Susan’s attention was attracted by one of the home economics girls motioning through the glass in the library door. Her flushed face and eager eyes made it easy for Susan to read with relief the words “We are ready,” which the girl formed silently with her lips.

“Friends,” said Susan, “a light lunch has been prepared by the girls in the home economics department, and we can continue our discussion at the table, so I understand.

“Those of you who are especially interested in the work in the shop can sit at the table with Mr. Johnson, and he will tell you about his work. When you finish eating, there will be pupils in all the rooms to tell you how they work and explain the things you will see in the rooms. I hope you will like the changes that have been made in the cafeteria as much as



the children do, and please remember that the children helped with all the work and planning that went into the changes.”

It wasn’t as easy as Susan had thought to get the crowd started to the cafeteria. Little groups formed around some of the teachers who had contributed to the afternoon’s discussions. Susan was calling, “Come on, everybody.”

“Mrs. Thomas,” Susan said, “I wish you were with us now. I have never enjoyed my work as much as I do now. I know you would be a leader in the things we are trying to do. Many of them are things you used to do. I guess we know a little more about children now, and more teachers are writing about the things they are trying to do. It all helps when you really want to do as much as you can for the children.”

“Well, Susan, I admit that many of the things schools are doing now sound good. But how do you know that you are right in making so many changes from the old and tried procedures? You must remember that children go through school only once.”

“I have asked myself that question many times, Mrs. Thomas, and my answer to myself always is that I may as well make mistakes trying to improve as to make the mistake of assuming that my old way of working was the best possible way. It takes a lot to convince an experienced teacher like me, but when I see the children growing in ways that I never before was concerned about, I am both convinced and happy. Oh, hot cocoa! I need some after that meeting. Come on, Mrs. Thomas.”

The cafeteria was a spot of which the whole school, both teachers and pupils, were extremely proud.

For a long time nobody had given a great deal of thought to the school lunch. The home economics department had raised money for some of the equipment it needed by selling such things to the hungry children as jelly buns, cookies, and “pop,” and, sometimes, hamburgers, hotdogs, and fish sandwiches. That was what the children wanted and the easiest to secure, prepare, and sell. But even this procedure became more and more of a problem. Hungry children came in at almost any period of the day and begged to be sold something—anything.

At recess, when the regular lunch sales were made, only a few of the children could find seats in the room. Most of them, whether or not they brought lunches, drifted about the building and on the grounds, dropping their lunch papers wherever they happened to fall.

Finally, the home economics teachers became concerned about the situation. Something, they felt, had to be done about using the lunch needs of the children as a means of teaching proper health and nutrition habits and of preventing the lunch situation from continuing as a disturbing factor to the home economics classes and a source of trash about the school.

One of the first efforts was an attempt to add milk and fruit juices and to include a hot dish in the lunch. For a meal consisting of soup, a

choice of sandwiches, and milk, a charge of 20¢ was made.

As the planning progressed, it was possible the next year to discontinue selling jelly buns, "pop," and fish sandwiches as a part of the plan to make the lunch more wholesome.

The community survey, the health examinations, and personal contacts made in pupils' homes provided still more evidence of a need that the lunch situation be used as a means of educating the children regarding personal nutrition, standards of service and good manners, as well as an opportunity for providing a balanced, wholesome meal. The lunch became a plate with two vegetables, meat, and a starchy food. Fifteen cents for our children was at that time a sizable amount from the small family incomes. It was not without considerable effort that pupils were persuaded to cooperate with the changing lunch program. There were so many complaints at times that the program of education almost seemed a failure and the continuance of the lunch program was in real jeopardy. One very fortunate factor was the beginning of the Federal Surplus Commodities Program, which made it possible to serve wholesome meals at less cost. At present there is an arrangement with the Food Distribution Administration by which an "A" type lunch is served, and the FDA makes a reimbursement of 7¢ per person with supplements made by pupils and teachers. For 15¢ one can buy a well-balanced meal consisting of boiled greens, macaroni, coleslaw, meatloaf, and bread.

The educational program has now gone further even than the lunch itself. The boys and girls eventually gave enthusiastic cooperation in preparing and serving food, making and selling lunch tickets, keeping the room decorated with flowers, and in suggestions regarding menus, etc. A science class agreed to plant and care for a garden that would provide fresh vegetables.

The room toward which the group was being directed was another evidence of the cooperation of the pupils. The boys in shop classes transformed an unsightly room formerly used for the agriculture classes by painting the walls and ceiling in ivory with green trim and the floor in brick red. Some new tables had been built and the old tables resurfaced. All tables were painted white and linoleum tops cemented on. The pupils and teachers in the home economics department, working together, made and hung attractive curtains. Other pupils made dish towels and vases, and a ninth grade group contributed a blackboard border. There was no steam table, but an oil range kept food hot, and a counter for serving had been built. Every child in the school felt a degree of personal ownership in the attractive room and was deeply concerned that it should remain attractive and comfortable.

Today, three practice teachers from the state college had secured special permission to work with the children in preparing and serving the lunch to patrons. It not only permitted them to have an unusual type

of school experience involving relationships with pupils and parents but made it possible for the regular teachers to attend the meeting without concern about the preparing and serving of the lunch.

In the doorway the girls in their neat aprons welcomed the approaching groups and led them to the tables where they wished to be seated.

Mr. Johnson was a little surprised and very much pleased as his table filled up. It frightened him to think of talking, even though he never minded talking to his classes. Miss Prim had put this job on him, so he might as well get it done.

"Friends," he called over the buzz of conversation, "I am a better worker than I am a talker, but I do want you to know something about the shop work in the school. I see that several of you have children who are very much interested in shop work, and I imagine that is why you are interested. Mrs. Freeman, how did you like the bookends that Henry made?"

"I must like them! They are on the living room table. Everybody admires them. Henry is making a magazine stand now, I believe. Will I get to see it today?"

"Did he tell you that he is already planning a coffee table when he finishes the magazine stand? He wants to work with me this summer, too. Our shop boys made most of the tables and cabinets in the cafeteria. How do you like the linoleum tops?" A hum of pleased surprise went up from the group. "We have made some furniture for the white high school also, and maybe you have seen those tables in the reading room of the USO. We made them too, and repaired some of the other furniture so that the USO could use it."

"Mr. Higgins, were you satisfied with the flue that Ralph built for you?"

"Do you know, I was really up against it or I would never have let that boy build that flue. I was never more surprised in my life!" Mr. Higgins in his slow drawl began to tell his story. "That boy figured on materials he would need and the cost and did one fine job. Yes sir, anybody would have thought he was a regular brick mason except that he didn't charge as much. I never would have believed it, and if I could have got a regular man, I never would have let him try it."

"Lots of folks the boys have done jobs for felt just like you, Mr. Higgins; but I wouldn't let any one of them try a job unless I was sure he could do it all right. Sometimes they surprise me. I remember when Lofton decided he could build a house for the family with his daddy's help. I tried to discourage him. He hadn't been working with me but a year and a summer. I knew he was a smart boy because he helped me with some building and roofing that summer, but when he drew his plans and began to figure on material, I was afraid it was too much for him. It's a pretty neat little house, though. I was amused. He employed some of the

other boys for a day or so for part of the job and he kept them busy!

"If you will notice the walk between here and the shop—the boys laid that. It's not as good as some of the other concrete walks around town that boys have laid, but these are new boys. Maybe you won't see the faults, but I can see them and so can the boys now."

"My John says he wishes he could spend more time at the shop. He likes it so much," said Mrs. Hopkins.

Mr. Johnson smiled. "Sometimes I just have to run them out. They want to spend all their free time there, and I know they have other things they ought to be doing.

"I remember that when Henry and Ed were building that boat for Mr. Nelson, they wanted me to give them the keys to the shop so that they could work after I went home."

"They have built several boats, haven't they, Mr. Johnson?" asked Mr. Higgins.

"From time to time, yes, they have. I think Edward learned to read while he was working on that boat. I knew he didn't like to read, but I wouldn't tell him anything when he asked questions. I would show him where he could read to get the answer. That boy knows more about boats than I do. He got so he just read without asking me at all. For that matter, all the boys read a great deal. I never could get around to all their questions if I wanted to do so; and I'd rather they learned to find their own answers. We keep a regular library of our own in the shop. I have a regular *Builders Guide*. It's the second copy I have had in the last three years and it's almost worn out. I'll have to get another. The boys are careful with it, but they just use it so much. The little boys like to read the hobby books and *The Boy Builder* and the *Popular Science* magazine. They keep me busy, but I keep them busy, too. They never let me down, though. When we were changing that old school bus into a truck, the agriculture man needed it right away, and the boys stayed with me every day until we finished it. I have some fine boys."

At one end of the table three of the parents were examining the linoleum covers which were cemented to the tabletops. "This gives me an idea," said Mrs. Kincaid. "I can get a remnant of inlaid linoleum that matches my kitchen floor, and John can cover that old kitchen table of mine. I wouldn't need to use so many table covers. Did John help put these tops on?"

"Yes, he did, and we have a little of the cement left," said Mr. Johnson. As the group of ladies at the table speculated on tabletops and cabinets and new kitchen curtains, Mr. Johnson finished his salad and cocoa.

"If you have finished, some of you may want to go along with me to the shop to see some of the things the boys are working on now."

## CHAPTER V

## Susan Looks Two Ways

In all, the last four years have been good years; and Mr. Pitts, Mazie, and Susan have learned to look alternately backward and forward before they decide on next steps and how these steps may best be taken. And now the children, too, are discovering that progress may be accelerated when the framework for the future progress is established in the light of past successes and failures. Gradually, the Lincoln school and faculty are discovering a path of progress which, to them, seems to lead to definite goals. The school does not expect ever to find the end of this path. It does expect to arrive at points along the path rapidly and as deliberately as possible. Certain well-defined trends have been established as the program at Lincoln has developed. The faculty knows what these trends are and what they imply in further progress. No doubt additional trends will become established as the school makes progress. More than once Susan had occasion to say, "Present trends in the development of our school indicate, at least dimly, what our program may be in the future."

Mr. Pitts has helped to establish and encourage a trend toward professional competency on the part of the faculty. Gradually, each elementary school teacher has earned an academic degree. Through independent study each has continued to grow in ability to identify personal problems and to discover how other elementary school teachers are approaching such problems.

Each high school teacher has become actively concerned about professional growth which will contribute to his or her usefulness in the Lincoln School. Mr. Pitts himself has acquired the habit of taking important problems from Lincoln to some university for summer study.

Small salaries make it necessary for Lincoln's teachers to seek summer employment, but few have let financial needs stand in the way of special summer study opportunities. There can be no better evidence than this of the value which Lincoln teachers attach to professional growth. In the future this trend toward increased professional competency is likely to operate as long as the faculty is challenged by unmet school and community needs and as long as they have the kinds of encouragement which develop well-adjusted teachers. The increased facilities and services being made available by the state and federal government are a source of encouragement to Lincoln's teachers who want to be competent enough to make the best use of facilities already being made available and to be prepared to make maximum use of opportunities which the future seems to promise. Perhaps their efforts may even help to make possible increased cooperation from these sources.

Susan has seen evidences of a trend toward increased cooperation among teachers in classroom efforts to meet certain needs common to large groups of pupils. It has not been easy to establish this kind of cooperation since it involves radical changes in some of the practices in the school. New lines of cooperative effort upon which a faculty must agree usually require modification in the point of view of some of the teachers participating in the effort. Failure on the part of individual faculty members to realize what modification each person must make in his thinking, in order that practice throughout the school shall be consistent with a choice of direction, can present powerful blocks to school progress. Frequently, little or no progress is made in a program because individual faculty members fail to see clearly the contributions which their separate efforts should make to the cooperative venture.

The Lincoln faculty, like faculties in other schools attempting to make adaptations in their progress through teacher cooperation, faced numerous obstructions to progress which had to be removed or circumvented through clear group thinking. In fact, it was quite some time after the faculty saw clearly the kinds of growth they wanted Lincoln's pupils to achieve, before opportunities could be created or found which would actually produce this growth.

In one English class, for example, the teacher and class agreed on problems or topics for study which seemed to lead toward the goals they had set up for English. As the planning proceeded, it became evident that the pupils wanted and needed to understand how political, civic, and economic movements influenced the ideas expressed in novels and other literary works which the class had planned to study.

Custom and tradition have operated to establish with considerable fixity the work which pupils will undertake in certain subjects and lines between subjects.

The important social implications in the study being planned had not previously been considered in English. Some of the materials needed were English materials, but some seemed closely related to—yet were not exactly—materials for the social studies. The problems might have been limited to include just “English,” but this would have disregarded obvious unmet needs among pupils and would have failed to approach many factors in the problems they had set up for study. Lincoln teachers experienced the usual difficulties in deciding how far the work of a class should adhere to fixed course limits. Fortunately, the teachers in such courses as home economics and shop had never been limited by basic texts, and it was customary for them and their students to use considerable freedom in planning classroom activities in terms of any problems which seemed pertinent. Even in biology there was no serious block to letting evident needs of the group decide what should be included

in studies undertaken by a class. As Susan looked back to the troubles teachers had experienced in some of the courses, she decided that in areas involving only one teacher it was easier to go beyond traditional subject limits. It was the experiences of the home economics, shop, and biology teachers at Lincoln which finally pointed the way in other courses. Meeting the need of developing English skills while working on problems in the social studies finally seemed to be quite simple. A two period course which permitted the class to use concurrently materials, skills, and purposes from both social studies and English was organized.

This class, as did the biology, home economics, and shop classes, found that the additional materials which they needed in the way of books and a variety of pamphlets would be more accessible in the classroom than in the library. So there began to accumulate in the classrooms collections of materials which the librarian could assist in developing into classroom libraries. The problem for the librarian was to provide satisfactory arrangement by which these books and pamphlets could be conveniently used in one classroom and still be accessible, if needed, to other teachers and pupils. There was a general request for cabinets, bookshelves, and other facilities for classroom libraries, and that meant new uses for school funds. If it also meant a greater interest in reading in the school, it was worth the effort so far as Mr. Pitts was concerned.

A satisfactory and convenient record of materials circulated from classroom libraries had to be developed. Some materials were needed which the librarian could not supply, and classes sometimes decided to secure these or the classroom libraries. The question had to be decided finally as to what disposition should be made of these materials accumulated by class groups. Some established library rules had to be broken and pupils had to take new responsibilities for a freer and more careful use of borrowed materials.

Susan had many a headache during this period of adjustment and was sometimes tempted to lose her temper. That she can smile about it all now is a tribute to her patience and persistence. Someday library schools will discover these problems, but until they do, aspirin and persistent faculty effort offer some relief for such headaches.

The whole experience of making adaptations in order to meet some important classroom situations was happy and satisfying to both teachers and pupils, and efforts in the future to make similar adaptations were likely to be even more successful than these first awkward attempts.

In the school-wide reading program under way, Miss Prim had seen another kind of evidence of growing cooperation among teachers. Together, teachers had administered, scored, and interpreted reading tests used in the school. Each teacher had checked the results of the tests against her knowledge of the performance of pupils in classrooms. This

done, the teachers had agreed that increasing the reading efficiency of all pupils in the school presented problems which called for a cooperative attack by the whole Lincoln staff, including both elementary and high school teachers.

The chairman of the reading committee, a high school teacher, was chosen to carry all of the faculty's findings to a summer workshop, if one could be found in which there would be an opportunity for developing a reading program that would give the needed direction to the whole staff. The problem was taken up with the Secondary School Study with the result that arrangements were finally made for the selected teacher to carry Lincoln's problem to Hampton Institute, where certain consultants agreed to give special consideration to the problem. The chairman of the reading committee brought back at the end of the summer a plan which was eagerly accepted by the teachers. The very first steps taken in the program brought satisfying results and new proof of the value of cooperative staff planning. It's now Mazie's turn to smile a little when Susan describes her budding efforts as a teacher of reading.

With keen interest Susan and Mazie had watched the trend toward teacher cooperation evidenced in the developing science program at Lincoln. This was a somewhat different type of cooperation which began when two Lincoln teachers, one from the elementary school and one from the high school, attended a science workshop at Atlanta University. These teachers together had brought back a plan for providing science experiences in all grades. However, most of the elementary school teachers had so little science in college that they felt the need for help with the science facts and skills in the proposed plan. The high school science teacher agreed to attend all meetings of the elementary school teachers in which they discussed their classroom approaches to science. Now, the elementary school gets the benefit of this high school teacher's fund of information and skills. Most of the elementary school teachers are convinced that science can contribute a kind of variety to classroom activities which their program needed and which the children eagerly welcomed. The high school teacher profits by knowing and by helping to control the kind of science background elementary pupils bring to the high school.

Already the high school agriculture teacher has begun to assist the teachers as they plan the study of plants in the elementary grades. The same type of cooperation is evident in Lincoln's health program, and teachers are definitely learning the advantages of working together in a growing school program. In their search for situations which afford interesting opportunities for pupils to acquire competence in the use of important learning tools, Lincoln teachers are likely to discover even better ways of making continuous contributions, through their particu-



lar subject areas, toward needs common to all pupils.

Throughout the school there is evidence of a growing sensitivity to the value of collecting pertinent information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of pupils and of different phases of Lincoln's program. Susan, Mazie, and Mr. Pitts believe that the practice of keeping systematic information offers the best possible basis for making sound judgments on matters of program development. At first, Susan was inclined to keep records of almost everything. Gradually she learned to discriminate in her choice of what information to keep. One important guide, she found, was to have in mind some definite use for each type of evidence that went into her files. Still later she decided that certain kinds of growth information could be used immediately in efforts to produce more growth. For example, there was just no need merely to accumulate and save for later use information regarding the study habits of pupils. Susan began to collect such information every day as a part of her classroom work and to use it immediately in the class from which it was being collected. This use of evaluation information was decidedly more economical. Susan showed Mazie how she, too, could save time and unnecessary record keeping.

Of course, there were some types of information which could not be accurately interpreted when isolated from other facts about a pupil, so Mazie, Susan, and Mr. Pitts established office and classroom files for these. It had taken considerable information from many situations to discover why Tom Grant got into so many fights, why Lucy Stone seemed to have so little energy for schoolwork, and why Mabel Spikes seemed to progress so slowly in reading.

The efforts in the Lincoln staff to assemble more useful information about pupils and to develop more useful reports of pupil progress is leading naturally to greater discrimination in the kind of information about pupil growth that promises to be valuable. More information of a useful kind about the strengths and weaknesses of class groups and of individual pupils is being passed on with pupils to their new teachers. Eventually, certain types of growth information will be reserved for parents, for pupils, for colleges, for new teachers, and for employers. Teachers believe that with increasing skills in the process of evaluation, they will know more about their pupils and can better help pupils understand themselves. All of these steps in evaluation represent substantial contributions to the school's guidance program.

Nothing has given Miss Prim greater concern than the obvious need for more skills on the part of Lincoln's students and graduates leading to remunerative employment. The employment opportunities for Negroes in the Tallahassee community are far too limited at present, and so are the opportunities for young people to prepare themselves with the necessary skills.

As the Lincoln teachers have tried to develop a program for improving this situation, they have become confirmed in their belief that effective preparation for earning a decent living is the right of every boy and girl and the only sure way to increase the earning power and the standard of living in the community. There is now in the school a noticeable trend toward discovering and exploring all possible vocational opportunities. At present, Lincoln provides some opportunity for pupils to learn something about photography, carpentry, horticulture, brick masonry, housekeeping, child care, and stenography. There is some probability that, with further planning and additional facilities, the school can broaden this range of opportunities to include operation of small businesses, house wiring, newswriting, salesmanship, printing, designing, and skills associated with other vocations that are or might be open to Negroes in Tallassee and Leon County. The Lincoln teachers have begun to believe, after some exploration, that some of the needed vocational skills can be provided through the academic subjects as they are now organized. The faculty and the students look at every situation in the school as a potential learning situation for dependability and responsibility and are attempting to make full use of them.

Nothing has surprised teachers more than the discovery that pupils can make helpful and intelligent contributions to plans for improving many phases of school life. Teacher-pupil planning has uncovered the fact that pupils are eager and willing to assume a large share of responsibility for scrap drives, bond sales, service contributions to civic organizations, programs for the development of school pride, safety, cafeteria service, and many other situations affecting all the pupils. The school council has demonstrated to both teachers and pupils its value in promoting pupil cooperation for the general good of the school and the community.

The effectiveness of the commencement exercise as a learning experience for pupils and patrons has increased markedly as pupils have been permitted and encouraged to plan and take leading parts in the annual commencement programs.

Pupil contributions to the plans for classroom and homeroom activities have given convincing evidence of the pupil's ability to make and respect sound judgments regarding classroom organizations. Pupil-teacher planning for cooperative action is likely to operate on even broader bases in the future. Increased pupil responsibility for, and experience in, handling school funds, in planning free time activities and programs of school beautification are very definitely in the school's outlook.

The school and community look forward to a time when Florida's compulsory school attendance laws will operate to bring into the Leon County schools more than two thousand Negro children of school age

not now in school. With these additional pupils may come increased school facilities and services including a more adequate cafeteria, classes for adults in homemaking, citizenship, small business financing, and other important kinds of adult education. These classes will permit a broader attack on such community problems as early and hasty marriage, health, and delinquency, which are reflected in the behavior and beliefs of many children in the community.

More adequate provisions for physical education, art, and music in the elementary school, arts and crafts, and more effective use of audio-visual aids in the high school head the list of desirable and additional opportunities which the school needs for use in the immediate future.

Present trends in the development of Lincoln reveal, to some extent, the kind of program which Lincoln will have in the future—nothing glamorous or spectacular—just a high school that serves its pupils and its community in the most effective way. One thing they know: it has been a fascinating and glorious experience for the faculty to give the long hours of thinking and planning that have brought them and Lincoln to this stage of development; and the road to the goals ahead looks just as interesting. Deep in Susan's heart there has sprung up a well of faith in people, in pupils and parents, in her fellow teachers, and, best of all, in herself, and in the usefulness of education as a force in human happiness and improved human living.

Susan, Mazie, and Mr. Pitts are the kind of devoted teachers to whom America must look to build the nation's schools into adventures in human progress. They have proved that they will give their best to the effort. There are goals, however, that are beyond the reach of teachers and pupils alone. Parents, colleges, and boards of education can become increasingly helpful as they see more clearly how they can contribute to the development of important phases of public education. The members of Lincoln's faculty envision a school whose program uses to full advantage the contributions which all the sustaining interests in pupil education can make.



## Miss Parker: The New Teacher *Moultrie High School, Moultrie, Georgia (1946)*

*The process of writing the story was recognized as an effective means by which the program of the school might be evaluated. To the faculty, this was an important discovery which led to a critical examination of purposes, activities, and results in all phases of the program of the school. This effort to examine our program enabled us to identify both strong and weak points in the program. . . . As a matter of fact, when this story is published, the school is likely to be in a developmental stage beyond that described in the story.*  
—Moultrie High and Elementary School faculty, *Miss Parker: The New Teacher* (1946, pp. 5–6)

Moultrie High School for Negro Youth was added to the participating sites in 1942 after the closing of Atlanta University Laboratory School and its withdrawal from the project. Moultrie High School, located in Southwest Georgia, was primarily an agricultural community and represented a rural-town school in the project. The teachers were closely aligned with Albany State College, although Moultrie did not serve as an off-campus laboratory school / student-teaching site and Albany State maintained its own laboratory school. While Moultrie High School for Negro Youth was participating in the Secondary School Study (of African American schools), Moultrie High School (for white youth) was participating in the Southern Study (with 33 participating white high schools), a GEB-funded cooperative research project. Moultrie High School for Negro Youth was a combination elementary and secondary school for grades 1–11 and, during the Secondary School Study, maintained an enrollment of 800 students and employed 20 faculty members, most of whom engaged in some form of program development. The secondary school faculty consisted of eight full-time teachers for a high school enrollment of 165 students.

The Moultrie High School building is thought to have been completed in 1938. In the 1950s, the school's name was changed to William Bryant High School, and with the desegregation of schools in 1965, the structure served as a middle school. The building no longer stands, and the site is now the home of the Frank Ryce Community Center.

Special thanks to Dale Williams of the Moultrie Ram Roundup Planning Committee, and great appreciation to Otis Baker and George Walker for providing important source materials for the Museum of Education's web exhibition. Archival materials from University Archives and the James Pendergrast Memorial Library of Albany State University were used in this research.

*For more information:*

Moultrie High School for Negro Youth web exhibition:

[www.museumofeducation.info/moultrie.html](http://www.museumofeducation.info/moultrie.html)

Moultrie High School for Negro exhibition catalog summary:

*Progressive Education in Black High Schools: The Secondary School Study, 1940–1946*,  
pp. 64–67 ([www.museumofeducation.info/SSS\\_web-2015.pdf](http://www.museumofeducation.info/SSS_web-2015.pdf))

**Miss Parker: The New Teacher**  
*An Account of How a School Took Its First Cooperative Steps  
in Establishing and Maintaining Working Relationships*

**Developed by the Faculty of the Moultrie High and Elementary School  
Moultrie, Georgia**

**In Cooperation with The Secondary School Study of the Association  
of Colleges and Secondary School for Negroes**

**By William H. Dennis and Ruth E. Laramore  
for the Moultrie High and Elementary School Faculties**

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## Foreword

The people of this city and community are deeply grateful to the Secondary School Study and other interested educators in this community, and throughout other sections of the country, for the contributions and encouragement that have been made to the Moultrie High School for Negro Youth.

Without this encouragement from interested laymen and educators at home and abroad, we feel that the accomplishments that have been attained in the school would not have been possible. To those far-seeing and sympathetic people, we wish, therefore, to express our thanks and appreciation for the help they have given us.

To the teaching staff and the children of the school we wish to express our appreciation for the contributions they have made to the school curriculum. This sympathetic approach on the part of the staff and the student body and other interested people has made a functional curriculum possible. "To try to meet the needs of the people" has been the underlying philosophy employed in arriving at the offerings of the school.

—*Moultrie Board of Education, H. V. Welch, Superintendent*



## To Our Readers

*Miss Parker: The New Teacher* is an account of the development of the Moultrie High and Elementary School for Negro Youth during its membership in the Secondary School Study. The Study had been under way for two years when the opportunity for membership in it came to us in the fall of 1942. Yet, five years of cooperation in the Study have had a marked effect on the direction in which our program has moved and the rate at which important steps have been taken by the faculty.

Both the elementary and the high school departments of the Moultrie Negro school are located on the same campus and are supervised by the same principal. This arrangement has led to some types of cooperative planning by the entire elementary and high school staffs in the interest of a better total program in the school. Participation in the Study has led to the discovery of additional ways of using this arrangement to advantage.

When the Moultrie faculty decided to write this story, the idea of explaining to the Moultrie community what the school was trying to accomplish was foremost in our minds. We felt then, as now, that pupils and their parents are rightfully entitled to full information regarding the program of their school. A clear and nontechnical explanation of the steps being taken by the faculty seemed even more important as practices in the school became somewhat different from those to which parents and new teachers were accustomed.

As the writing proceeded, other purposes, perhaps equally important, were set up by the faculty. The process of writing the story was recognized as an effective means by which the program of the school might be evaluated. To the faculty, this was an important discovery which led to a critical examination of purposes, activities, and results in all phases of the program of the school. This effort to examine our program enabled us to identify both strong and weak points in the program. Continuously, the faculty has attempted to take full advantage of the points which seemed strong and to make adjustments in the program to strengthen the weak points. As a matter of fact, when this story is published, the school is likely to be in a developmental stage beyond that described in the story.

The faculty has recognized the possible effects which a persistent high rate of teacher turnover might have on the program of the school. As teachers became more competent and effective as a result of workshop and other professional experiences, it was inevitable that other schools paying better salaries would seek their services. It is probable that the turnover in the staff may continue as better paying jobs and larger opportunities to serve are opened to members of the Moultrie faculty.

The faculty feels that this story may encourage new teachers to retain important values which characterize the program and to plan further improvements in the program.

Schools throughout the state and nation are attempting to render more effective and useful services to their pupils and communities. This is precisely what the Moultrie school wants to do. Hence, the faculty feels that information concerning the successes and failures experienced by the Moultrie school as it has tried to make progress may be valuable to other schools engaged in similar efforts. There has been a conscious effort to include in the account definite steps which the school has taken and where these steps have led. To the Moultrie faculty, these steps represent elements in a developmental process which the Moultrie school is just beginning to discover. Not all of the steps are likely to be consistent with the purposes in other schools, particularly schools where community life and school facilities are unlike those in Moultrie.

This story is based on available factual information regarding the school and community when the story was being written. The story form was adopted by the committee of writers in an effort to make the account interesting and readable. The characters in the story were created by the writers, but Miss Parker, Iris, and all of the other characters are typical of teachers and pupils found in the Moultrie school.

The faculty of the Moultrie school has had full responsibility for the development of the school's program. It has enjoyed almost complete freedom in its choice of steps to be taken toward an improved program. Every effort has been made to be deliberate and wise in our decisions and to seek the help and advice of competent people as each step has been taken.

The Division of Negro Education of the Georgia State Department of Education has been a valuable, continuous, and liberal source of encouragement, advice, and assistance to our school.

The city superintendent and the white schools of Moultrie have made numerous contributions to our developing program. The relationship which has been evident in all of our contacts with local schools and administrators has been educative and inspiring to our teachers and pupils.

From time to time, the school has received encouragement from the Negro colleges in Georgia. Substantial contributions have been made by Atlanta University, Albany State College, and Fort Valley State College. These institutions have all made adaptations in their program in order to serve the Moultrie teachers in terms of the actual problems faced by the school.

The directors of the Secondary School Study have liberally shared with us their ideas, their time, and their experiences during many visits in our school. They have found and made available to our teachers and

pupils valuable resources, many of which we probably could not have found alone.

The opportunity to attend workshops provided by the Secondary School Study, the use of its collection of professional materials, and the services of experienced consultants provided by the staff of the Study have helped immeasurably.

*Miss Parker: The New Teacher* was produced as a cooperative and joint undertaking by the school and the staff of the Secondary School Study. The directors of the Study accepted the responsibility for the overall supervision of the writing job.

We acknowledge with appreciation the advice and technical help given by those persons who served as technical editors for this story. Their suggestions and criticism resulted in substantial improvement of the readability of our story.

We also acknowledge with appreciation the financial assistance given us in connection with the publication and distribution of this story by the Secondary School Study, the Moultrie Board of Education, the State Department of Education, and the Albany State College. Publication and wide distribution of this story would have been impossible without the liberal contributions received from these four agencies.

Our contacts with all of the agencies mentioned above have been pleasant and educative. The Moultrie faculty wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the help and encouragement which it has received from all of these sources.

—*The Moultrie Faculty*

CHAPTER I

## Belonging

1

P. O. Box 614  
Moultrie, GA

July 24, 1944

Dear Miss Parker:

I am Dorothy Mitchell, one of the third grade teachers in the Moultrie High School where you have accepted a teaching position for next year. Perhaps you will be surprised to receive a letter from me since you don't know me. I must explain why I am writing to you.

Each year, some member of our faculty agrees to write letters of welcome to new teachers appointed during the summer so that they will not feel entirely new when they reach our school in the fall. I accepted the responsibility for writing to the three new teachers whom we expect next year. I knew that I would be in Moultrie, my hometown, after attending the first session of summer school at Fort Valley State College, and that I might have more time for correspondence than most of our teachers.

Mr. Jones, our principal, sent me your name and address a few days ago. He is one of the group of seven teachers from our school attending the Southwest Georgia Workshop at Albany State College. He does not plan to be in Moultrie until just a few days before school opens, since the workshop closes late in August.

I guess it is natural for a person to be somewhat inquisitive about a new town or a new job to which he plans to go. I would like my letter to tell some of the things you want to know, yet I don't want to spoil your adventure in Moultrie by telling things which you would like to discover for yourself. I hope you will feel free to write me if you want to know more than my letter tells.

I believe you are going to like our town in Southwest Georgia, its mild climate, sandy streets, and its interesting mixture of rural and urban life. In 1940, there were just 16,000 people here, about a fourth of whom were Negroes. But recent increases in school enrollment, in production of swine, peanuts, and watermelons, as well as increased activity in the cotton mill, the peanut mill, the mattress and furniture factories, the fertilizer plants, and a large meat packing plant are sure signs of a growing town.

The steady increase in school enrollment is a source of many problems. Our classrooms are already filled to capacity, and we hate to think

of the important activities which we must sacrifice in case it becomes necessary to hold classes in our library and assembly rooms. Yet, we cannot afford to turn away a single child, because we want our school to make life richer for every person in the community whom the school can reach. I don't want you to believe that we know all about how to accomplish this job. As a matter of fact, we are just beginning, and though our teachers are cooperative and enthusiastic, I believe all of us have our share of dissatisfaction and frustration.

I am sending you a few snapshots of our buildings and grounds. Some are not sharp or clear enough because I am just learning to develop pictures. A tenth grade girl is teaching me as she learns in science.

You will hear much "school talk" when you get here because we have many meetings, all of which seem necessary but nonetheless tiresome. Around the first of the month another kind of "shop talk" affords a little discussion. Albany, with its many stores, is just forty miles away. You will probably get an eyeful during your layover there.

The afternoon bus from Albany reaches Moultrie about seven. It isn't dark in Moultrie at seven and you won't get lost. Some of us will meet you if you will let us know when to expect you.

Very sincerely yours,  
(Miss) Dorothy Mitchell

## 2

July 28, 1944

Dear Miss Mitchell:

Thank you for your recent letter. I appreciated and enjoyed it very much, but I must confess that it came as a surprise to me because I have never known a faculty to be quite so thoughtful of new teachers. Of course, I don't know the faculties of many schools, since my experience has been confined to the two schools in which I have worked so far. Nevertheless, it was good to receive your letter of welcome.

Perhaps I should wait until I reach Moultrie to learn how things are done there, but I am curious to know how I shall be expected to function as an English teacher. The brief conversation which I had with Mr. Jones and then your letter caused me to feel that your school may be somewhat different from those schools I know about. More than once Mr. Jones mentioned four relationships, special ways of working with people, which he said formed the basis of the Moultrie program. He said I need not think too much about these because they would become clearer during a pre-school planning conference. I know very little about such conferences.

I am hoping that the school will not be too crowded next year and that the library and assembly rooms will serve their usual purposes. The possibility of losing the use of the library must be depressing, to say the least. No teacher relishes the idea of teaching classes in an assembly room, and as a new teacher I would be especially concerned about where my classes are held.

I appreciated the snapshots. The notes on the backs of the pictures were especially interesting. I was particularly impressed by the number and quality of brick buildings erected on the campus by the trades classes.

Mr. Jones did not mention the housing of teachers in Moultrie, but I am assuming that I need not worry about having a place to live when I reach Moultrie.

It is pleasant to anticipate meeting the Moultrie teachers and learning about the Moultrie program.

Very sincerely yours,  
Frances Parker

### 3

August 5, 1944

Dear Miss Parker:

I appreciated your kind reply to my letter. I have read your letter more than once as I tried to decide how to answer it. Apparently, both Mr. Jones and I said either too little or too much about the program at Moultrie. It must have been quite confusing to have empty words like "working relationships" and "pre-school planning" thrust at you. I am afraid that I did not do too good a job of extending welcome.

I certainly don't want you to feel that there is any great difference between our program and those in many other schools. We believe we have made a start at putting into practice a few of the ideas that many faculties merely talk about. These ideas are simple ones to which any good school would subscribe. So far, they have had a much greater effect on the way we do things—the spirit of our work—than on the subject matter we use.

This is how we feel about the relationships which Mr. Jones mentioned.

We see our school as a cooperative venture involving administrators, teachers, pupils, and parents, all working together in order to make life richer for all those concerned. The success of this process of working together, we feel, is regulated by the extent to which certain important working relationships are present in what we do. We believe that skill in using these relationships is acquired through conscious and continuous

efforts to establish and maintain them. We know that some individuals, regardless of age, are more skillful in the use of these relationships than are other individuals, but we believe that skill in working together continues to develop as long as the individual tries to develop the skill. We don't try to teach lessons from books on relationships or have our pupils recite lessons about desirable relationships. We try to make the relationships operate as pupils and teachers plan together, as pupils make reports or solve a problem in mathematics, as parent and teacher discuss the progress of a child or of work on some important community problem, and as the faculty plans to carry out responsibilities in connection with the development of the program of the school—in fact, we try, as well as we know how, to cause the relationships, which we have set up as desirable, to operate in everything that we do. To us, discovering how to do is just as important as knowing what to do. Knowing what to do does not always ensure a rich learning experience, but knowing how leads to a program of action. We have known for a long time what to do about some things. For instance—"Learn to do by doing." We even know why. We have read lots of the books which told us these things. But how to do! We had to explore that for ourselves and, once we got seriously started, it was exciting.

This year we plan to hold a three-day meeting before school opens to discuss additional and natural ways of bringing good pupil-teacher relationships, pupil-pupil relationships, teacher-teacher relationships, and school-community relationships into what we do. A committee is studying this problem in a workshop in order to bring recommendations to the whole faculty.

Visitors in our school usually want to know how we got started in such a program. I have often wondered where we got the courage. There isn't much in books about this kind of program, and at times some members of our faculty have wanted to abandon the idea because it seemed too difficult—and different, too. At such times some things always seemed to happen which renewed our faith in the value of our program. Once it was an enlarged professional library. Once it was a scholarship for a member of our faculty. Once it was a series of offers for better paying jobs, and once it was a salary raise for all teachers. The enthusiasm of our children is one of our continuous sources of encouragement.

Oh yes, I was about to tell how we got started. In the first place, we have been fortunate in having two alert and able principals during the last few years whose ambitions were in the direction of better human relations. The local superintendent and several teachers in the local white high school have given valuable active assistance in the development of our program. Incidentally, there has been no attempt to make our program duplicate their program, but they have sought to assist us in the

development of a program which we felt would be most valuable to the individuals served by our school. Most of the impetus for our program has come as a result of the able leadership which we have enjoyed.

We have had our share of regular faculty meetings designed to result in plans for improving our program. Practically all of these have been held after school, and while most of them were helpful in the long run, not all could be called enjoyable. They were tiring, often irritating, very frequent, and called for unending work between sessions. I think all of us hoped that our first pre-school conference might reduce the number of teachers' meetings held during the school year. On the contrary, we found that more meetings were necessary to carry out our decisions to do very definite things about the sanitary conditions in our school, about the social adjustment of our pupils, about improving life in our community, about the reading efficiency of pupils throughout the school, and about the way we opened school and assigned pupils to classes. The idea of establishing better working relationships was born in our first conference. As a matter of fact, nothing short of our faith in the value of cooperation and responsibility as described by able consultants could have made us stick to such an ambitious program. We found ourselves keeping records of just about everything we did, and we set up files in each room to hold samples of pupil work that seemed to give evidence that pupils were making progress.

This huge mass of records soon became a source of great concern to us because we didn't know enough about how to interpret our records. Fortunately for us and for the program, a large section of the faculty was given an opportunity to work on these materials in a workshop for teachers sponsored jointly by Atlanta University, the State Department of Education, and the Secondary School Study. We are certain, too, that our farsighted but taciturn principal had much to do with making this opportunity available. We suspect, too, that our superintendent had a hand in this matter.

I don't want you to believe that we try to do everything at once. We try to work rapidly and with deliberation, but there is no "madhouse" process under way here.

I am sending you two brief studies of the recreation and vocational opportunities in Moultrie. These were done by last year's social studies class and will give you some idea of certain community problems.

As you think about your work here, you may want to give some consideration to problems on which all of us are working. They are: (1) establishing a lunch program which will meet the nutritional needs of our pupils, particularly in the lower grades, (2) how to make "social promotion" operate in the high school, (3) how to bring more adequate health and medical services to our school and community, and (4) how



to enable our older pupils to begin to earn money while they are still in school and to spend money wisely.

I didn't intend to write such a detailed letter, but these things have a way of stretching out when one begins to write. You write such nice letters. Please write again.

Sincerely yours,  
Dorothy Mitchell

## CHAPTER II

## Cooperation

## 4

On a bright, sunny afternoon in September the National Trailways bus from Albany, Georgia, arrived in Moultrie around six thirty. The hustle and bustle in the terminal as well as the thrill of being in a new town caused Miss Parker to sit on the edge of the back seat which she occupied. She kept her seat while the passengers in front of her were slowly discharged. When the seat in front of her was vacated, she leaned forward a little to take advantage of her first opportunity to see through a window. She scanned the faces of persons in the terminal, for she expected to be met by some teacher in the Moultrie school.

Upon leaving the bus, she went at once to claim her baggage, but she continued to glance momentarily at the faces of people in the terminal. What would she do if no one came to meet her? Miss Parker felt her arm touched lightly as a voice said, "Excuse me, please. Are you Miss Parker?"

The new teacher turned quickly and her heart beat a little faster as she heard her name. Her eyes were met by those of a carefully dressed girl. The teacher smiled a little as she answered, "Yes, I am Miss Parker."

"How do you do, Miss Parker? I am Iris Greene, a senior at the school. I came to meet you."

"Oh, thank you," said the new teacher. "I'm glad to know you, Iris," she added as she extended a hand, which Iris took quickly and warmly.

"Did you have a pleasant trip down?" Iris inquired.

"Bus trips are always tiresome, and my seat over the back wheel and a pipe which popped incessantly was not too comfortable," replied Miss Parker distastefully. "But it's good to be here," she added with a broad smile.

By this time the new teacher had her baggage but, being unable to get a cab to go into the Negro section, Miss Parker and Iris decided to leave most of the baggage in a locker to be sent for later.

"You are to stay at my house for a day or so, Miss Parker," Iris informed her as they were leaving the station. "My mother is expecting you for supper, but since we are walking home I can show you some of our Negro businesses."

As they walked home, Iris pointed out two dry cleaning establishments, two barber shops, two shoe parlors, three cafés, one grocery store, and one undertaking establishment. She told Miss Parker that there were two small cafés, two grocery stores, a drugstore, a pressing club,

and another funeral home, also owned by Negroes, but that they were not on the route to her home.

"How did you happen to meet me, Iris?" Miss Parker asked, as they walked along. Frances was impressed by the girl's good manners and her lack of shyness in talking.

Iris replied quickly, "I'm on the reception committee. Our committee helps in meeting the teachers and in showing visitors around the school. We like it, too. I was selected to meet you when the committee learned you were to stay at our house. Mr. Jones, our principal, asked me to tell you that he would be around to see you after supper."

As they strolled along unpaved streets, Frances kept wondering whether Iris was a fair sample of the pupils in the school. A class of thirty pupils like Iris would be most interesting. They talked about many things before Iris said, "We live in that yellow house."

As they entered the gate, Miss Parker told Iris how much she had enjoyed the walk with her. Iris blushed slightly and said, "I have been admiring your hairdo. I'd like so much to know more about fixing my hair since we don't have a licensed beautician in town."

Frances found herself saying to Iris, "I'll teach you what I know about hairdos, but that will not be much."

"Come right in, Miss Parker," Iris said. "I'll tell Mother you are here."

As Iris went in search of her mother, Frances had a moment to observe that part of the house which she could see from the living room. She thought the colors of the screen which covered the fireplace blended well with the slipcovered chair and sofa, but she wondered why there were so few pictures on the walls. She stood at the window and looked into the garden. Most of these flowers and shrubs, except the roses, were new to her. Perhaps the glossy plant was a camellia. Remembering her own garden, she felt a little homesick for a moment.

"Good evening, Miss Parker."

Miss Parker turned to find a middle-aged woman smiling at her with the same pleasant face and smile that Iris had.

"You are Mrs. Greene, I know, because Iris looks so much like you," Miss Parker said as she extended her hand. "It's nice of you to take me into your home," she added.

"We're mighty glad to have you," Mrs. Greene said warmly. "And I hope we can make you comfortable and happy."

"Thank you," Miss Parker replied. "I have certainly enjoyed talking with Iris. She isn't at all shy, and she acts as if she has known me always. Did she learn to talk this way at school?"

Mrs. Greene accepted the compliment about Iris with thanks. "She doesn't give me any trouble, and she likes school. Iris asks a lot of questions, though."

"Oh, I don't think you should worry too much about that. Most children don't ask enough questions to learn things they ought to know."

"That's what they told me the last time I was out to the school. But Iris is just about like the other children that come here to see her. They talk and ask questions and it sounds like they are fussing sometimes, but the next thing I know they are writing a newspaper, giving a play, or making curtains for a room. They don't fall out with each other."

"Do you visit the school often, Mrs. Greene?"

"I go with Iris sometimes when they have a program. I went last year when the children had a dance because they asked me to be there and help with the punch and have pins and needles handy, if something needed fixing. I didn't get to many of the parents' meetings last year. There's so much to be done around the house. But somebody always tells me what was decided."

"Excuse me," said Iris. "I have the supper on the table." Iris had slipped out quietly while the new teacher was talking with Mrs. Greene.

"Lord, Miss Parker, I know you must be hungry," Mrs. Greene said, remembering that Miss Parker had come some distance. "Let me show you your room so you can get ready for supper."

As Frances was freshening up, she thought of the things Iris and Mrs. Greene had told her about the school and the town. She didn't know the whole story, but she wondered how she would fit into her new job, how the last English teacher had operated, and what problems she had encountered.

Mrs. Greene served an appetizing meal during which there were few pauses in the conversation. Iris talked about the clothes she had made in preparation for school. Mrs. Greene deplored the high cost of living and from time to time asked innocent questions about Miss Parker's hometown, her parents, and her last job. Frances answered all questions cheerfully and attempted at the same time to broaden her own information about life in the school.

"How good this cake is," Frances murmured between mouthfuls.

"I baked it," Iris said.

Frances looked surprised. "Where did you learn?"

"In my homemaking class at school, I learned to sew, too. Mother helped me a lot though," she added quickly.

Frances said that mothers could really help girls.

"I guess you will continue your study of homemaking in college," Frances said.

"I'd like to," Iris said quietly, "but college takes clothes and a lot of money. Not many families here are able to send their children to college."

"What do the boys and girls do after high school?" Frances asked. She was still privately concerned about her own work.

"Get married," Mrs. Greene answered with a slight tinge of disgust.

"And some boys learn enough in the shop to become brick masons, painters, and carpenters," Iris said. "Look at Alvin Hicks. He can build anything and they say he makes money. 'Course the girls have to take any job they can find. That's why many go away and look for jobs."

"But the girls would like to remain here, wouldn't they?" Frances asked.

"There isn't much to do here," Iris replied seriously. "If it wasn't for parties and programs at the school, we just wouldn't have anything to do. People like to have something interesting to do."

Mrs. Greene didn't look at Iris, but she was thoughtfully taking in every word. She usually kept quiet when Iris talked like this because she could think of nothing to say. The new teacher, too, listened and finally said, "It doesn't always take so much money to go to college. A thrifty person can usually get along. My parents made a real sacrifice to send me to college. I guess most parents do."

After supper, Mr. Jones, the principal, came by to greet the new teacher and to tell her that the faculty would meet at ten the next morning.

Frances was tired when she went to bed that night. Her last thought before she fell asleep was that her job in Moultrie might be a little difficult and somewhat different.

Miss Parker was up early enough the next morning to have breakfast with the Greene family. After breakfast she told Mrs. Greene that she would go down and have a look at the school. Iris offered to go with her, but since the school was just around the corner, Frances told Iris that she could find it alone.

"Dinner will be ready whenever you come back, Miss Parker," Mrs. Greene said as the new teacher went out of the gate.

Frances walked along, admiring the flowers in well-kept yards here and there. Her thoughts were on the school and its place in the community. She was conscious of a desire to be able not only to fit into its program but to be a potent help to this faculty that was trying so earnestly to develop a social program that really served the children and the community.

Upon reaching the entrance to the campus, she got a clear view of three buildings, all facing a rectangular plot of white sand. From the snapshots sent her, she recognized the high school building on her left situated along a short side of the rectangular plot. On her right was a long brick building which resembled a third building across the plot. By looking through a glass window into the building nearest her, she decided that this was the primary building which the boys had erected. She thought the one across the campus might be the elementary building.

Continuing her exploration, she saw a fourth building facing the high school building. This looked like the snapshot of the vocational building. She liked the arrangement of the buildings along the sides of the rectangular field. The view irked her because there were no trees and flowers around the buildings like those she had seen in practically every yard on her way to the school. The sandy plot bothered her, too. She thought it was far too small a playground to accommodate the children in a school this large. She didn't like sand, especially on floors, and she was sure that the children would bring it into her room on their feet. The tennis and basketball courts beyond the high school building looked good, but the vacant lot next to the vocational building did not look inviting. The lot was low and damp, and she shivered at the thought of snakes crawling in the weeds which covered the lot.

Miss Parker looked at her watch. It was almost ten, but she had seen no one around, and Mr. Jones had told her which building would be used as the meeting place. She had started toward the high school building when she heard a voice behind her call her name.

"Good morning, Miss Parker." It was Mr. Jones who greeted her. "Both of us are on time today," he said with a smile.

"Good morning, Mr. Jones. I thought I'd come down early and look around a bit."

"I hope you are going to like it here," he said.

"I am sure I shall from all the things I've heard and seen so far."

By this time other members of the faculty had gathered. Yes, Dorothy Mitchell was there. She was just as charming and as interesting as her letters. Frances was impressed by the friendly atmosphere, rapid chatter, and greetings. The teachers seemed to know her already. She was one of them before she realized what had happened.

When introductions and greetings were over, the group assembled in the library. Mr. Jones raised four questions with the group which indicated the purposes of the conference: (1) Where are we today in the development of our school? (2) Where do we want to be at this time next year? (3) How can our summer experiences in college and workshops contribute to the growth of our program? (4) The children will be here on Wednesday. What plans ought we make for working with them?

Frances learned later that essentially these same questions had been raised at the beginning and end of previous preplanning conferences held in the school.

Piece by piece the new teacher got the story of the school's program through expressions from various members of the group. How some members of the local white high school, which had the advantage of participation in a regional study, had offered to share information and experiences with the Negro school. How the Negro school took advan-

tage of the offer and sought to establish congenial work relationships with the white school. How a little progress resulted in a recommendation by the State Agent for Negro Education that the school have an opportunity to send a representative to the Durham Workshop of the Secondary School Study; how the principal, as a result of this contact, arranged the school's first three-day preplanning conference to replace the usual faculty meeting preliminary to the opening of school; and how out of this conference came the first step in formulating a school philosophy, plans for pupil-teacher cooperation in developing many phases of the school's program.

She heard it recalled how the work during the following year probably led to a recommendation that the school be invited to join the Secondary School Study as a member school. Then, it appeared, came the opportunity for a large section of the faculty to attend the Southwest Georgia Workshop. These were the big steps which the school had taken and which had given direction to much of the winter and summer study of teachers as well as to modifications in school and classroom practices. The significant modifications to date were summarized as follows:

#### **Curriculum Practice in 1940**

1. One-day faculty meeting prior to the opening of school consisting largely of announcements. Modifications: Three-day planning conference prior to the opening of school with visiting consultants, principal, superintendent, and teachers
2. Class periods in high school conducted for forty-five minutes. Modifications: Sixty-minute periods for all classes.
3. Extra-class activities, such as club meetings, etc., conducted after school. Modifications: Activities period provided during the school day.
4. Assembly programs planned by teachers and principal around guest speakers. Modifications: Assembly programs conducted by pupils, planned by a teacher-student committee.
5. Assignments made from day to day by teachers. Modifications: Assignments by most teachers made on a long-term basis and planned by teachers and pupils around problems.
6. Pupils evaluated on the basis of examinations and daily recitation. Modifications: Teacher-pupil evaluation through use of folders for individual pupils containing evidences of growth in the various subject matter areas.
7. Emphasis in shop work on the finished product for commercial purposes. Modifications: Emphasis on growth in skills in shop work and masonry.
8. Pupils promoted on the basis of achievement only. Modifications: Pupils promoted on the basis of age. Efforts made to maintain age

groups through special social promotion and adjustment of classwork to needs of individual pupils.

Miss Parker listened and tried to take notes. She liked almost everything she heard, but all of this was new to her, for it was her first experience in an experimental school. Usually she approached what she had to do with assurance, but now she wondered whether she would be able to keep up with the practices in this school. She hoped the discussion would eventually get around to what was supposed to be done in classrooms.

Reports regarding summer study revealed that three elementary teachers had studied at the Fort Valley State College in the interest of improved primary methods, one on the organization of school libraries, and two on improved methods of teaching reading. In the Southwest Georgia Workshop, a group had summarized the information collected during the previous year concerning the steps which the school had taken in promoting the four working relationships cited in the school's philosophy and had made a clearer statement of the school's philosophy.

The preplanning meeting was a new and valuable experience for Frances. The teachers agreed that, during the first few days of school, high school teachers would keep one group of pupils for half a day in order to assist them in planning how they could work during the year toward achievements which they wished to make. Those pupils who were entering high school for the first time would need to learn how to find their way around the building. New students would need help in understanding the way of working in the school. The younger children would need to think about and plan for lunches during the year and to talk about progress which they could try to make as a group and as individuals during the year.

The shop teacher suggested that teachers discuss with pupils the increasing number of windowpanes being broken by persons during the summer months. Rocks found in the rooms told how the windows were broken. These windows had to be repaired by the boys in the shop, and it was not always easy to get enough glass to repair all the windows before the winter months. The shop teacher felt that the children would discourage the practice of breaking windows if they realized that some rooms might be cold in winter and that the boys could not learn new skills in shop as long as there were windows to be repaired. This had never been brought to the attention of the pupils.

It was agreed that the faculty would meet each afternoon in order to pool the information concerning the ambitions of pupils and to plan classroom adaptations in terms of this information. Limitation in the size of the staff and other facilities did not permit many choices by pupils with regard to the names of classes, but teachers could make opportunities for a wide range of choices within a given course.



Improved record forms had also been worked out, including a report card for the elementary school, a cumulative record for the high school, and suggestions for increasing the value of the individual folders used in classrooms to hold evidences of student progress toward group and individual goals. It was quite evident that all of these teachers had worked diligently and had accomplished much during the summer. The workshop group presented for later discussion copies of the analyses which they had worked out for the four relationships, and faculty members raised several questions on the part dealing with pupil-pupil relationships. Miss Parker found that the analysis looked like this:

### **Pupil-Pupil Relations**

#### **Statement of Purposes**

It is the purpose of the school to provide opportunities for collective planning and action in order that pupils may become disposed to consider the effects of their personal actions, as members of a group, upon the welfare of others. (Promotion of this purpose will involve such concepts as fair play, cooperation, mutual respect and responsibility, and the ability to reach fair conclusions.)

### **Opportunities Provided for Promoting Growth in Better Pupil-Pupil Relationships**

#### **1. Activities to promote growth in cooperative planning:**

- (a) planning and participating in assembly programs;
- (b) planning class activities;
- (c) planning school activities.

Indexes to show the direction of growth by pupils and teachers:

- 1.1 the extent to which pupils use sufficient facts in making decisions;
  - 1.2 the extent to which pupils make contributions for the good of the group;
  - 1.3 the extent to which pupils exchange and accept fair criticism;
  - 1.4 the extent to which pupils accept and carry out responsibilities associated with particular group activity;
  - 1.5 the extent to which pupils mature in their ability to plan cooperatively as a result of previous experiences in group planning;
  - 1.6 the extent to which pupils provide a variety of opportunities for each member in the group to assume responsibilities;
  - 1.7 the extent to which pupils accept and use worthwhile suggestions of any group member in making plans;
  - 1.8 the extent to which pupils are able to resolve conflicts in opinion.
- #### **2. Activities providing for pupil planning of recreational activities:**
- (a) supervised lunch;
  - (b) supervised play;

(c) athletics;

2.1 the extent to which different pupils suggest activities for group consideration and undertaking.

## 5

September 15, 1944

Dear Mattie:

My first week in Moultrie has been filled with new and exciting experiences, and work too! So far, the work has been pleasant, and I am learning many things about school organization. The teachers are so helpful and friendly that I feel as though I have known them for years. You must meet Dorothy Mitchell. I am trying to persuade her to come up with me before the year is out. She is full of life and good sense, and she knows how to make people happy. I know her better than I know the other twenty-two teachers here, but she declares that most of the teachers are real people. Most of the teachers are graduates of Georgia colleges, particularly Fort Valley State and Morris Brown Colleges; but the school has teachers from colleges in Alabama, North Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

I miss you and the other teachers there. As a roommate, you were a grand person. You must answer the letters which I know I will write you this year.

Finding a comfortable place to live is a real problem for a teacher in Moultrie. The townspeople are friendly and hospitable, but most of them have their own jobs which keep them away from home and hence they are too busy to take care of teachers. The teachers would like to have an arrangement which would permit a large group of them to live and board at the same place because of the advantages which such an arrangement would offer. At present, they are scattered in homes throughout the community. I have always enjoyed open fireplaces, but now as a result of daily experiences, I understand what fire-making is all about.

At first, it was hard for me to believe that so many children here—even elementary school children—could make really sensible suggestions about good things to do in their classrooms and in the school generally. But I have seen them do so, and I know now that suggestions made by pupils can be helpful. Of course, teachers must encourage pupils to take part in planning those activities which pupils are largely responsible for carrying out. Here, the teachers and pupils use the first few days of the school term to plan big jobs they wish to carry out together during the year and to examine different ways for getting these jobs done. The teachers sometimes have a difficult time trying to get very young children to give sustained attention to planning. The youngsters get tired

after a few minutes of planning, and they will upset the activity entirely if it is continued too long. But the teachers have discovered this and they don't try to have young children plan things that teachers and older pupils ought to plan, and they try to change the activity when the first signs of tiredness appear.

The ninth grade, after getting acquainted with new pupils in the class, was led by its teacher into a discussion of accomplishments that it might try to make as a class. The teacher asked the pupils to look both at the school and at themselves and try to discover that improvements were needed and what steps ninth graders could take toward bringing about these improvements. The new students said very little at first, and a few of the old students seemed bored and they took the attitude that nothing would be done about their suggestions anyway. However, a discussion of the small campus lunchroom aroused the interest of most of the pupils in the class. All of them felt that the small classroom in which lunches had to be prepared and served was entirely too small. There were neither seats nor tables in the room, and on rainy days the line had to be formed outside. A larger lunchroom would require a new building, and the ninth graders couldn't erect one. However, someone suggested that since not more than twenty-five or thirty pupils could get into the room at the same time, it might be possible to put several small windows in the room through which food could be handed to people on the outside. Then the entire room could be used by those preparing the food. A committee agreed to explore this idea further.

Some pupils were tired of the "hot dogs" and hamburgers served every day, but others not only enjoyed this kind of lunch but felt that other kinds of meat served with vegetables and soup might cost too much. The class came out of this discussion with the idea that their work in science, mathematics, and home economics might help them arrive at good recommendations for the lunchroom, based on facts about diets and costs. Many members of this class were strongly in favor of having a jukebox in the lunchroom.

In much the same way other problems were discussed. For instance, since there were no custodians for the buildings, it was customary that each class take the responsibility for cleaning, painting, and decorating its room. Each class made its own plans for sharing this responsibility among its members. The ninth grade felt that the rooms needed something more than cleaning. They wanted to learn how to make their room more attractive.

Somehow, several members of this group had developed what seemed to be an unusually mature interest in what they called the operation of city, state, and national governments. Their main concern centered around discovering how they could begin to get ready to take

some part in these governments. The teacher tried to relate the problems raised in each discussion to something that pupils might do in their different classes.

I am still a novice at pupil-teacher planning, but I am fully convinced that there is some value in permitting pupils to contribute their ideas to certain parts of classroom plans. Yet, I believe there are things such as deciding on the big values in a subject area and planning a discussion that the teacher must plan. Adapting classroom work to the wide differences in the interests and understandings of pupils, and getting everybody, including myself, to make the necessary compromises, calls for my best in leadership. I believe there are reasons for the kind of helpful responses given by children here. The first reason seems to be that most of these children would rather be in school. They enjoy going to school. In the second place, the grown-ups, many of whom have had only a little schooling, have great respect for the judgment of teachers. Parents teach their children to respect and cooperate with teachers. In general, the children seem to be nice, but there may be a few "bad eggs" in the lot.

The eleventh grade discussions were concerned with classroom beautification, opportunities that pupils wanted in order to learn about vocations, and class purposes for the year. From these discussions, the homeroom teacher got considerable information about the ambitions of individuals which she could use in suggesting activities that course teachers might include for the eleventh grade. The children came out with cooperatively developed plans for their homeroom activities and an organization for carrying out these plans. This class, too, has already made its room more attractive.

Other high school and elementary classes worked in about the same way. The younger children were enthusiastic about planning things to do and places to go, but they showed little concern for their growth. Teachers had to give considerably more direction to activities and plans of the younger children, in order to focus their attention on gains which they might expect to result from different kinds of activities.

Making a schedule of high school classes is a different and nerve-racking problem which high school teachers work on together. It takes hours of work after school, and the results seem never entirely satisfactory. The high school courses are English, science, mathematics, social studies, home economics, shop, and trades. There are just seven teachers, and although they try hard to plan a schedule permitting each teacher to have a conference period, this is not always possible. In view of the number of teachers available, it is difficult to schedule the variety of extra-class activities that the teachers and pupils want. More teachers are needed, but there are not enough classrooms for all the teachers now. Together the teachers made the best schedule they could and tried

to plan their classwork to include the activities that pupils wanted. For example, a summary of the suggestions for English which I received from homerooms showed that children wanted activities that would help them express their ideas forcibly, write interesting letters, speak without getting excited, and read better. They felt that debating might help them think clearly in everyday situations so that other people could not take unfair advantage of them. My hardest job right now is in making plans which will permit pupils to do all of the different things that they want and need to do, and at the same time maintain a satisfactory amount of unity in classroom activities. I am reading everything I can find on this problem.

I am encouraged by my recent success in helping my homeroom plan to make our room more attractive. We decided to paint the walls under the direction of the trades teachers, and the home economics teacher helped us select cloth and make our curtains. The children brought pictures from home, and we decided which ones to use and where to place them. They brought to school potted plants that we must keep alive and attractive. I was doubtful at first about our ability to improve the room, but when the plans were completed, all of us donned work clothes and started the job. Now, all of us believe our room looks better. We talked about many things as we worked, and before we were through, we knew each other better and had started a working relationship that is already making classwork move on happily.

We had a grand time at the USO last Friday night. The building is small. In fact, it was once a lodge hall, and the partitions were knocked out in order to make it large enough for dancing and indoor games. The USO is about all we have in the way of recreational facilities. We have a place set aside in one of the downtown theatres, but I haven't been there yet.

Please say "hello" to my friends at Carver High—and write!

Sincerely,  
Frances Parker

## CHAPTER III

## Responsibility

## 6

"Excuse me, Miss Parker. Can we bring your lunch from the lunchroom today?"

"Oh! Hello, Iris. And how are you, June?" said Miss Parker, looking up from the copy of the minutes of the Student Activities Association, which she was correcting for Sadie, the secretary of the Association. "I thought you were Sadie. She said she'd come by to go over the minutes of the Student Association with me."

"That's right. The Association met today," said June, "and the minutes should be on the bulletin board before school is out. I am anxious to know whether recommendations will be made about beautifying the grounds."

"And about the lunchroom, too," added Iris.

"What do they have for lunch today?" Miss Parker inquired.

"About the same as yesterday—potato chips, 'pop,' peanuts, cakes, milk, candy, and sandwiches," replied June.

"And the sandwiches are fish and hamburger today," Iris added.

"I believe a bottle of milk is all that I want from the list," Miss Parker informed them as she walked toward the window with the girls. "I brought an apple and a juicy meat sandwich to school today. Will you get the milk for me?"

"Oh yes, we'll get it," replied Iris. "Mother sent you some vegetable salad, Miss Parker. I left it in the home economics room. Shall I bring that, too?"

"My! How nice!" exclaimed Miss Parker as she put an arm around each of the girls. "Maybe both of you will come back and eat lunch with me?"

Iris and June looked out of the window and then exchanged glances. Miss Parker's quick eye, too, took in the situation. Across the campus, beyond a fourth grade game of "Squirrel in the Cage" where the teacher happened to be the squirrel for the moment, she saw Joel and Sam with their box cameras, waiting for June and Iris, no doubt.

"It's all off, girls. I had forgotten that Sadie will be coming in very soon to talk about her minutes. Oh, let's wait until another day when we can have a delicious lunch and invite Sam and Joel. I'll just take the milk and salad through the window. Run along now and get your sunshine vitamins." There was no time for protest, for she had escorted the girls to the door.

Frances Parker had learned many things about her pupils and the program of the school during these four months in Moultrie. Even now, as she stood by the window, she could see a primary grade taking its turn in going to the small lunchroom. The next grade was anxiously waiting for its turn in the washup corner, tables would be set, grace would be sung, and lunch would get under way. The teacher would eat with the pupils and keep a pleasant conversation going. Almost everyone in the school and community looked forward to a time when the children might have more adequate lunches. A science class had some evidence that many pupils in the school were undernourished.

There were situations, however, of which the elementary teachers were proud. The weekly elementary assemblies, in which childlike and spontaneous activities went on as outgrowths of carefully planned classroom activities, were enjoyed by both pupils and teachers. Yet it was not merely a time for entertainment but an opportunity to establish group consciousness and mutual helpfulness. Simple plays, rhythm bands, group singing, musicals, games, original playlets, and skits in which a whole grade participated had tended to make some gains in such things as poise, better speech, assurance, responsibility, and many other traits which the elementary teachers had clearly in mind as they directed assembly programs.

The decision on the part of the faculty to permit pupils to assist in selecting books for the growing library collection had encouraged interest in reading. Such decisions had far-reaching effects upon life in the school, and they had not been made accidentally. The decisions had grown out of summer study which teachers had undertaken with the idea of improving specific situations in the school and out of continuous efforts to make faculty meetings result in significant cooperative steps toward an improved school.

Miss Parker had seen the effects of a growing relationship between the white and Negro schools which stemmed from a mutual desire to render the best possible educational service to the Moultrie community. She knew about the sincere efforts which both groups of teachers made to advance the programs in the separate schools: occasional opportunities which small groups of pupils or teachers in one school found to make contacts with groups in the other school in connection with some school or classroom project, such as community housing or health, which could not be adequately studied without some consideration of factors extending beyond a single school or racial group. Occasionally, jobs under way in one school led to the sharing of certain facilities. All these gave evidence of an admirable school relationship. Nobody discussed this growing relationship. Frances Parker, and perhaps many others, flinched at the thought of a demagogue who might snuff out

the unfledged relationship and destroy the potent force which could lead eventually to an increasingly peaceful, intelligent, and respectable community.

Boys who could present a recommendation from their principal, vouching for their dependability, had been given part-time employment in a local industry where they received a relatively high rate of pay. Many boys understood for the first time the value of good personality traits, and they worked earnestly to establish such records.

In its efforts to take well-considered steps in the development of its program, the school had established helpful contacts with more experienced teachers in other places. A reading consultant from a northern university had spent several days in the school during which he had administered reading tests and assisted teachers generally in the collection and interpretation of facts regarding the reading abilities of two high school classes. A group of elementary school teachers from a local white school, following an experience which they had had in a reading workshop, had come to the school and had generously shared with Negro teachers useful information and techniques gained in their workshop. An English teacher from Atlanta University had spent three days in the school, working as a consultant, and a reading specialist from the State Department of Education had worked with the teachers. The first few steps toward organizing a school-wide program for the improvement of reading had grown out of these contacts.

In much the same way, the school had gained the advantage of contacts with consultants in science, elementary education, evaluation, school administration, home economics, health, and vocational trades.

Because teachers and pupils recognized the value of such contacts in promoting school growth, they were alert for opportunities to share with other schools whatever insights and information they gained. The principal and several teachers had found some opportunity to render consultative service to other schools. Some pupils, under the direction of their teachers, wrote letters to other schools requesting or giving specific information about some particular practice.

"I hope you enjoy the salad," Iris called pleasantly, as she handed the food through the window and joined June for a stroll across the campus toward the game of "Squirrel in the Cage."

"I know I shall. Thank you," Miss Parker called back.

Sadie came in just as Miss Parker was finishing her lunch. Sadie was a very businesslike secretary, and she wanted her minutes to be clearly stated.

The Association was not a year old yet, but the sponsor and the pupils were learning to operate it in a way that contributed to the common welfare of the school. The Association had been organized in a regular



assembly following homeroom discussions pertaining to possible services which the organization might render.

The pupils agreed that they could profit by opportunities to have a part in the business of the school, and even now the purpose of the organization is simply stated: "To give students an opportunity to gain some experience in carrying on the business of the school." The students elected officers who they felt were capable of working in a businesslike way, and it was decided that eight other organizations or clubs in the school would send regularly to the association meetings one of its members who could attend to business promptly and thoughtfully.

In the brief conference between Sadie and Miss Parker, the teacher explained the corrections which she had made and encouraged Sadie to try making her next set of minutes interesting by leaving out unnecessary details such as where the association met, and by concentrating on how and why the group arrived at the recommendation which it made. The minutes which were finally posted looked like this:

October 1, 1944

Thirty-five members of the Waycross team will be in our school on October 5. The association feels that it is the business of our school to see that visitors and guests are comfortable and happy while they are in our school.

We are proposing that our guests be served refreshments when they arrive and that a party be given at the school after the game. Evelyn Jones has been asked to assemble a guest list, since the size of the room used for parties limits the number of people who can attend.

Jeannette Jackson was appointed to assist with the sale of tickets at the stadium and help count and check the gate receipts.

The cost of the football equipment which we were authorized to purchase was three hundred and sixty-eight dollars.

At our next meeting we plan to consider the lunchroom problem. We would appreciate written suggestions from individuals and groups.

Sadie Murphy, Secretary

## 7

Frances Parker felt that she could not afford to miss a single weekly high school assembly. Sometimes a member of the community was invited to bring information to the school on some important subject. On these occasions Miss Parker found opportunities to discover what positions leaders took on certain local or world situations and their ambitions for the school and community. Sometimes a local minister was invited to participate, if the assembly was a religious nature. Frances thought it was important to know the kinds of ideas which the different

ministers contributed to the philosophy of life which pupils were bound to be developing as a result of their contacts with people, including ministers.

Generally, the assemblies consisted of programs planned in the different high school classes with a view toward sharing with the entire school some important information or experience gained as a class worked on some unit, topic, or problem. For Miss Parker, these high school assemblies were a source of continuous information concerning the speech and communication skills of the large number of pupils participating in the programs. Many of the suggestions which she made as her English classes planned classroom activities were based on observations made in assemblies.

Today a program, *Good Manners as a Part of Good Citizenship*, was being presented by the tenth grade social studies class. Over and over again, the high school pupils had expressed in various ways a strong interest in learning to make themselves more acceptable socially through the use of interesting and appropriate conversation. They wanted to be able to select interesting things to talk about to different people and to know how to talk about these things in a convincing way. No doubt the class had considered this point in deciding what the assembly would be about today.

The mistress of ceremonies stood up, and Frances drew a breath of relief when the audience came to order. The effort in all classrooms to reason with pupils rather than fuss with them about learning appropriate audience behavior in classes, assemblies, games, and other places was beginning to bear fruit. Eventually, the audience behavior in many community gatherings of which the pupils were a part would improve also.

The volume with which the pupils sang "America" gave evidence of their strong desire to sing. Frances Parker wished at that moment for the skill, knowledge—and time—to make music a more significant part of the program in the high school. There was no full-time music teacher. One teacher, who could play the piano, worked with a small glee club. Frances flinched whenever she thought of the haphazard way in which the musical tastes of the community were developing. Seldom did any professional music groups come to Moultrie. Frances made a mental note that she must look into the radio listening habits of her pupils.

Alice Thomas, the mistress of ceremonies, seemed a bit excited as she began to tell the purpose of the assembly, but this was her first opportunity to speak from notes to a large audience.

"Do you know what to say when you are introduced to someone? Do you know how to introduce one person to another?" Alice began. "Our class understands much about introductions, since we studied about making and accepting them. We studied introductions because we

realized that we were awkward and confused when we tried to introduce people. We noticed, too, that many townspeople and pupils in our school were unable to make a good impression when they were caught in a spot where they had to make an introduction. We thought this was a part of an important social problem, and we included it in a unit of citizenship."

Alice explained that committees in her class had looked into every reference or fiction book that they could find in the main library and classroom libraries which was likely to contain information about introductions. Then each committee had dramatized different kinds of introductions in the classroom. The class had enjoyed this study, and someone had suggested that the whole school might be interested in learning more about introductions.

"Through dramatizations, five members of our class will show how different kinds of introductions should be made and why they should be made in the ways illustrated. We have begun to use these forms of introductions, and we hope you will find use for them at home and at school," Alice continued.

Following the dramatizations and explanations, the audience was given a chance to participate through a sort of quiz program in which they either asked or answered questions about introductions.

At the close of the assembly, the principal commended the class and the audience, as he always did, on their contributions to the program.

Through her own pupils, as well as through conversations with the social studies teacher, Miss Parker had learned that "social studies" implied something more than correct manners. A social studies class had made a study, "Presidential Elections and Political Parties in 1944," when the whole country was talking about the forthcoming election. The pupils wanted to know how voters became qualified, how to get registered, and how presidents were nominated and elected. One pupil said, "I think we ought to know everything about all elections because we might have a chance to take part in more of them, and we ought not to have to let carpetbaggers tell us how to vote."

The social studies offered in the school consisted of two separate classes for tenth and eleventh grades. The two groups worked in much the same way, but the topics for study in the tenth grade were concerned largely with civic responsibilities, while the eleventh grade work emphasized the economic and social aspects of world and local problems. In both classes the studies usually began with some situation or problem in the community and gradually broadened as pupils related the facts of history to the problems in the situation chosen for study.

The teacher usually initiated the social studies unit through discussion periods during which the questions or topics for study were listed and plans made for work periods which were to follow. The teacher tried

to conduct the discussion in a manner that would help pupils understand how discussions can result in fruitful plans and ideas. Later, when committees went to work, the quality of the discussions carried on by the groups made a difference in the progress which the group made. Still later, when a committee made its report to the class, relevant discussion was important. The activities of individual committee members furthered the growth of individuals in such things as finding information, getting a point of view which is adequately supported by facts, reading for information, and analyzing propaganda. Like many other teachers in the school, the social studies teacher was attempting to find a more satisfactory way to keep track of the progress which individual pupils make in the direction of each of the goals of activities in social studies.

## 8

"That was a sharp assembly program," James Harris said with enthusiasm to Miss Parker as she entered the English room.

"It was enjoyable and very informative," the teacher replied.

James was feeding coal to the huge stove in the corner, but the momentary shift of his eyes from the open stove to Miss Parker and the very slight movement of his lips told the teacher that he had noticed the two words which she had suggested. Miss Parker glanced at the small bulletin board made of green burlap, which she had inherited from the teacher occupying the room last year. She had never felt that the bulletin board was adequate. The room needed a larger and more attractive board on which the vivid and colorful pictures brought in by pupils might be displayed. Perhaps talking about the ideas illustrated in interesting pictures might provide additional opportunities for pupils to acquire or use new words. She could put off the matter of a bulletin board no longer. This was her vacant period, and she would go immediately to the shop and see what Mr. Davis could do.

Miss Parker followed the new cement walk across the campus toward the trades building. She stopped momentarily to observe a group of third graders and their teacher playing "Blind Man's Bluff." The cement walk ended a short distance beyond the game, so Frances stepped cautiously from the walk into the deep white sand. Yes, there were Mr. Davis and a group of boys pouring a batch of cement, which would complete another section of the 360-foot walk.

Mr. Davis knew that the walk should be made well so that it would not need to be repaired. He knew, also, that hundreds of children would ride and skate on this walk—even children who were not in school—and it must stand up under rough treatment. So, as he directed the boys, he was careful to check with them every step to ensure a strong walk. The boys took much pride in this part of their beautification project and

worked earnestly for its completion.

James Thomas and David Wright were pouring cement while Earnest Brown and Otis Smith leveled it with floats. Robert Jones and Paul White, the finishers, skillfully used their trowels and levels to make the walk 2½ inches thick and slightly elevated on one side so that it would drain properly. Then Clarence Black marked the finished work into blocks that were 3 feet wide and 3½ feet long.

It would take weeks—perhaps months—to finish the whole walk, but the boys were determined and Mr. Davis knew that good cement finishers, as well as a serviceable walk, would result.

At the moment, Frances' bulletin board seemed to her a very insignificant item, compared with a walk which the entire school would use. She watched the pouring process for a while, but she couldn't make up her mind to stop Mr. Davis, who didn't see her. She was about to go back to her room when she heard someone say that Mr. Smith, the other shop teacher, was in the shop. She decided to see him about her bulletin board.

The inside of the shop was humming with activity. Four tenth grade girls were quietly talking as they wove cane bottoms and refinished old chairs. Three boys were removing the old varnish from an antique desk which Frances had seen in the superintendent's office. A group of third grade boys were fitting a small metal sink into the bottom of a sand table while they talked excitedly about the "crawfish," minnows, plants, and live things which the new table would hold. They had enjoyed their sand table projects, but now they were ready for something different. A sixth grade boy was sweating profusely over the "scooter" he was making from an old skate and several pieces of wood. Two boys were cleaning and oiling the lathe and joiner which they had turned off, while Mr. Smith was completing a planning period with a large group of boys.

"Well, boys, you see now how much paint it will take to do the house," Mr. Smith was saying as he stood up, "and you have agreed on what each person must do in order to finish the house as we have planned it. Are you all set?" he asked.

"All except appointing a foreman," Charles reminded him.

"You don't need me to help with that, do you? Just select a good one and go ahead."

Turning from the group, Mr. Smith saw Miss Parker as he gave the boys at the power machines a signal to start again.

"Oh, hello, Miss Parker. I didn't know you were here. I'm sorry if I've kept you waiting long," he apologized.

"That's quite all right, Mr. Smith. I've been watching the boys and girls at work here and marveling at the way in which they go about it apparently with so little direction."

"But they get directions," he assured her. "Those who come from

classrooms have talked the jobs over with their teachers, and they know exactly what they want to do. I help them understand how it can be done, and I don't leave them until I am sure they understand how to go on safely and alone."

"What are those wooden frames, with nails in them, that I see on the table there, Mr. Smith?"

"They are looms. I'm sure you have seen them around. The girls in the home economics department are making pillow tops and handbags on them. Here in the shop we encourage the boys and girls to learn skills which they can use in doing things for themselves, the school, and the community.

"For instance, Thomas Perry, along with his brother, planned and built, under my supervision, the cement block house you see up there on the hill. The experience that Thomas got here, in drawing and masonry work, enabled him to build this house for his parents.

"A group of boys contracted for the job, planned the work, and painted, under Mr. Davis' supervision, the inside of a four-room apartment and the inside and outside of an eight-room dwelling house.

"Sometimes both teachers work together with the boys on a community project, as we did in relining the pews of the First Baptist Church. Here in the shop a group of boys made four ladder-back chairs, and now we are making plans for a pulpit set we have contracted to make. The dinette set you see over there is an individual project. Any number of boys have made magazine racks, end tables, and chairs for school and home.

"The boys, under our supervision, do many kinds of jobs here in the school, as you may have noticed. They replace broken windowpanes, repair broken water pipes, 'do over' rooms when necessary, and other things that need to be done."

The wall chart marked "Record Progress" caught Miss Parker's eye just as she was about to ask how the shop teachers kept up with the growth which pupils made in connection with the many different projects. "This chart is interesting, and I guess you find it quite useful," Frances said somewhat inquiringly.

"Oh yes, the boys helped in working out that chart when all of us saw that some kind of record was needed. We mark the chart together near the end of each job. The boys get a kick out of looking back for one to two years to see how they have grown."

On the chart Miss Parker saw a record of big jobs completed over a period of years by the shop pupils. There was also a record of individual achievement. The name of each shop student and his grade were on the chart, as well as the type of work completed, the tools used in completing the work, the time required for completion, and the quality of the completed job, expressed as a master craftsman's or an apprentice's job.

Looking at the chart, Miss Parker exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Smith, this reminds me! I really came to see you about a bulletin board for my room, but I got interested in the workings of the shop and forgot it. I know you are busy, but is there a possible chance for me to get a bulletin board?" she asked wistfully.

"Oh yes," smiled Mr. Smith, "we have just the material you need for a bulletin board. Send over two boys who know exactly what you want as to height, width, and color, and we will have a bulletin board over there before you know it."

As Miss Parker left the shop, she thought of the numerous services it tendered to both individuals and groups and wished the building were large enough to serve more pupils as well as community folk who had expressed interest in learning practical skills in the school's shop.

## 9

Occasionally Frances would defer the classroom work during the English period and just talk with her pupils about achievements which she and they might try to make together. Once, after having looked at a list of the subjects for their compositions, the tenth grade decided that subjects such as *He Saved My Life*, *How to Be a Good Citizen*, *My Vacation*, and *Good Home Training* did not seem to result in interesting writing. Miss Parker had said, "Interesting writing is usually produced when the writer tells about something which he feels keenly and which he knows about; an achievement or other incident which brought him great joy and satisfaction; a situation which disgusted him, made him sad or happy; or an incident which made him laugh until he almost 'cracked his sides.'"

Sarah had said that she could write about how it felt to pick up a live mouse for the first time. She had done this in science.

"And I could write about the time when a salesman was discourteous to my mother. I am still choking with anger about it," Tom chimed in.

"And, Miss Parker," said Sally, "I have finished a story that described a girl's first kiss so that it seemed real—what I mean is that some of the girls might write about their boyfriends, if they were not afraid of being teased."

Frances had said that this, too, would be all right, if the girls felt that she could be trusted with their personal affairs. So writing got started in the tenth grade, and Frances found more and more chances to help pupils with punctuation, clear sentences, new words, and the same grammar which children had found very dull when they studied it out of relationship to something important which they were doing. The pupils read books and short stories. Individual pupils examined, with Frances, successive samples of their writing in order to make a list of the improvements which they made. Someday Frances hoped to get enough samples of interesting and correct writing to mimeograph an attractive booklet

of which her children would be the authors.

During another fireside chat, the ninth grade pupils got concerned, for the first time, about their growth in reading. Only one of them had read a whole book during his entire school experience up to that point. However, all of them had done “loads” of reference reading to get answers to questions assigned them.

“You know, I’d just never thought about reading a whole book,” Curtis admitted. “I’ve always had so many others things to read—like textbooks, newspapers, and pamphlets.”

“Of course, that kind of reading is all right,” Miss Parker said quickly, “but look what the results of your reading tests for last year show; nearly all of you read slowly—perhaps that is the way reference reading should be done in order to get every word, but what will you do when you have to read a long passage quickly and yet get the meaning?”

“That sounds like the kind of reading Mrs. Simon says we will find in college—long assignments,” Lula said.

“Not just in college,” Herbert objected. “My father has never been to college, but you oughta see how much he has to read about prices, laws, and all kinds of things about storekeeping.”

“Eventually, everybody who wants to be certain about what he is doing will have to read well,” Miss Parker offered. “Not many of you can get implied meanings from a passage like an editorial on politics. You are likely to accept at face value anything that you read in the newspaper.”

“How could we learn to do that kind of thing?” Julia asked.

“Well, first, you set yourself to do it even if it takes a long time—even more than a year, perhaps. Then you must read enough different kinds of materials to see that they are written for different purposes. Finally, you must have some way to keep up with your growth in reading so that you can continue your growth without having a teacher check on you,” Miss Parker advised quickly.

“Why don’t we do that then?” asked Charles. “We could start now and once a week we could tell each other what we have found out about reading different kinds of books and the like in the library.”

There were nods of approval, and the group was ready to begin an intensive reading project which Miss Parker hoped each pupil would be willing to continue.

Dramatizations got into the English classroom in much the same way. The dramatics club was overrun with pupils who wanted to say things forcibly and act the part of some character. Frances had suggested in a fireside chat that any class might dramatize interesting situations right in the classroom, and the dramatizations could be either short or long—one word even. The pupils had learned to say “no” with many different inflections and facial expressions. They could say “I’m sorry” so that the



listener could feel it. Careful choices of reading modern and classical literature enabled many pupils to gain clearer ideas about human relationships and problems of mothers, fathers, ministers, and people in all kinds of social situations.

Frances learned to assist the pupils in her five classes during the class period. In fact, after a long time, plans were made with her classes so that each person knew what to do, and she was free to help pupils with reading, writing, grammar, speaking, and other things right in the classroom. Occasionally there was a discussion in which pupils shared their experiences or in which Frances cleared up some difficulty which many pupils had.

Miss Parker worked hard with the children, but seldom did she have to spend her nights and weekends correcting scores of papers and notebooks. Neither she nor they had to do two days' work in one day. They did a good day's work together at school.

## 10

Each day Frances Parker had passed the science room on her way out of the building. She had looked into the room on just two occasions. Once she had bobbed her head into the room to remind Mrs. Dale of a faculty meeting which was about to begin. Everybody knew that pupils were always doing something in the science room after school and that Alice Dale would forget about the time when she got busy with her pupils. On another occasion Frances and Alice had agreed to shop together after school, and Frances stuck her head into the room to tell Alice that she was ready.

As a matter of fact, the dry course in science which Miss Parker took in college had just about killed any interest which she had in science. However, Iris Greene had aroused her interest a little when she snapped a picture of Miss Parker and a few of her pupils as they planted a flower bed. Iris showed the picture to Miss Parker and told her how she had processed the picture in the science room. Charles Harris nearly killed this interest one day when he produced a white mouse from his coat pocket with the explanation that he was using it to study nutrition in science.

School had been out for about ten minutes when Frances Parker peered cautiously into the science room. Quickly, her searching eyes scanned the floor before she crossed the threshold. The idea of mice scampering across the floor sent little waves of shivers up her back. And she knew from papers which pupils in her English class had written about experiences in science that somewhere in the room were white mice, guinea pigs, live fish, snakes, bugs, and other live animals. She had decided to see some of these things because she thought such an experience would be valuable to her as she assisted her pupils with their writings.

Once inside of the room and fairly certain that there were no animals

on the floor, she raised her eyes and glanced around the room. It was small, and many things seemed to be neatly crowded into it. In one corner she saw the plywood structure which she rightly assumed was the darkroom. In another corner she saw several improvised but neat files. There must have been several hundred science pamphlets filed under the different subjects. There was a neat shelf under one of the side windows holding a fairly large classroom library. Frances' eyes lingered on the aquarium containing submerged green plants and a bright-colored fish.

"Why, Miss Parker, come on in," Mrs. Dale invited as she left the demonstration table where a boy was peering into a microscope and moved toward Miss Parker. There were several children in the room, for the science room was usually the last room to be cleaned and closed every day; and some of these pupils would stay until Mrs. Dale practically put them out.

"Oh, excuse me, Alice," Frances said quietly when Mrs. Dale was close to her. "I just dropped in to look around. I didn't expect to find so many pupils here after school. Are they getting ready for an exhibit?"

"Why, no, Frances. This goes on all day every day. They are just trying to finish some experiment or other job which they started. Cora, over here, is finishing a letter requesting an eye chart, which her class plans to use in testing the eyes of all of the children in the school. They want to get the testing started as soon as possible. Charles, over there, is trying to adjust a water bottle which he made to furnish water for our mice and pigs at all times without wetting the cage. He's crazy about those animals. Henry's using those pamphlets to get out notes about controlling ants, bedbugs, roaches, and lice. He says he wants to mimeograph some kind of sheet which will tell people in town exactly what to do about these pests, but I suspect he is finding some use at home for the information about pests and the vials of carbon disulphide and other chemicals."

Suddenly a peal of laughter came from the direction of the darkroom and three girls rushed out with a picture of the basketball team. Several other pupils crowded around to see and identify each player in the picture.

"Are you almost through, Naomi?" Mrs. Dale asked of the girl who seemed to be the leader of the group.

"We want to make one more print before we clean up. Is that all right?"

"Hurry," advised Mrs. Dale. "It's almost four o'clock."

Alice and Frances chatted quietly as they looked at things about the room. Alice explained that she and an elementary school teacher had attended a science workshop at Atlanta University during the summer and had worked out plans for a functional science program beginning in the first grade and extending through the high school. Following the

workshop, two staff members in the workshop had visited the school and had helped to get the program started. Frances learned that science in the primary grades consisted largely of directed observation of such things as growing plants and animals, changes in the weather, and pond and field life.

"The teachers are trying to curtail misconceptions and unscientific habits of thinking which they know will develop if inadequate attention is given to the science situations which young pupils meet," Alice said.

Frances understood that individuals or groups, as early as possible, were encouraged to plan and carry on investigations leading to the collection and use of science facts and generalizations. At first the investigations were simple and of short duration. For example, younger pupils might discover that turtles, unlike terrapins, have webbed feet. Later, as pupils grow in interest, reading, and planning ability, the investigations are more thorough and provide increasing opportunity for the acquisition and use of a wider range of science skills.

"I try to have the pupils think of the science room as a place where they can come at almost any time to find the key to science situations which they feel are important. Once they get started, I find and try to take advantage of numerous opportunities to work in the values which I believe should grow out of science experience," said Alice.

"Do you mean that each pupil in each of your four classes works on something different? How in the world do you manage such a situation?" Frances asked.

"It isn't that bad," Alice contended. "That would be a ten-ring circus. The whole group is always working on some large problem or investigation, and each person or, more often, each group agrees to work out some part of the job. Many of our investigations have been pointed primarily toward getting a more healthy school and community because that seems to be a pressing problem in Moultrie. It is difficult for Negroes in Moultrie to obtain adequate medical services. We don't have a dentist at all! The best we can do at present is try to prevent sickness and keep looking at the situation to see whether it improves. Quite often an individual pupil gets interested in carrying some investigation further than was originally planned by the class. As long as this work seems likely to make the pupil more skillful or to contribute new science information, I encourage him to go on. Of course, none of us knows all about how to do these things, but the results that we are getting with our limited science facilities are certainly encouraging. Just wait until we get a really good laboratory."

"Results always interest me," Frances confessed. "What are these results like?"

"You see how these pupils are planning and carrying on their work?

Well, they have not always done so. Before I became aware of the values in allowing pupils to contribute to the plans for our science work, I used to work myself to death trying to tell them what to do and how to do it. Girl, I don't have to do that anymore. Oh, I still work hard, but we seem to get somewhere now. I think pupils as well as teachers should be skillful in finding and organizing information for some definite purpose, so I help them rather than do it all myself. The books and pamphlets in the classroom library, which we are continuously enlarging, are a godsend. The school librarian says that the science books in the main library are well used, too. I'd like to show you some different kinds of results, if you have a few minutes. They're right here in the file."

Frances really wanted to see this file because she, like many other teachers in the school, was trying very hard to organize her own file so that it would show what progress her pupils were making. Alice had worked on this problem in a workshop and was pretty clear on this matter of evidence of progress. As they started toward the file, Charles yelled, "I've got it! Look at that, will you?"

Miss Parker looked over Mrs. Dale's shoulder into the cage to which Charles had attached his water bottle. She saw a mouse climb up and take a drink from the end of a tube. Surely enough, Charles had the device adjusted so that another drop of water would form on the end of the glass tube immediately after the first drop was removed.

"He is a cunning thing," Frances said with a trace of apprehensiveness still in her voice as her eyes followed the mouse.

"Well, I'll go home, but I'll make one for cod liver oil or milk tomorrow. I've got the hang of this kind of siphon now," Charles bragged.

Cora and Henry were ready to go, too. Cora wanted Mrs. Dale to see for the last time the letter which she would send and the copy which she would put into her growth folder. Miss Parker, too, read the letter over Mrs. Dale's shoulder and said that it ought to bring a favorable reply. Henry asked for a little sodium fluoride to take home. "I collected some roaches and I want to be sure that it really works," he explained.

When the pupils left, Frances and Alice looked into the file marked "Our Growth in Science." There were sections for each of Mrs. Dale's classes and a folder for each pupil. "Look at the teacher's folder first," Alice advised as she pulled out a folder bearing her name. "As a member of each class, I keep a folder, too," she smiled.

Frances read quickly the first report in the folder:

"I opened a discussion in the 10-11 grade science class and presented figures showing that an average of 15 percent of the pupils enrolled in the school were absent every day and that illness was given as the reason for an overwhelming number of these absences. The class decided to plan a study which would determine the nature of illnesses prevalent among

pupils in the school. Ultimately, they expected to know how to take steps themselves and encourage others to take steps which would result in improved health in the school and community.

"Committees from the class collected pertinent information regarding the health of each pupil in grades 1-11. The information included weights, ages, foods eaten at home and at school, play activities, bedtime hours, pupils who habitually miss breakfast, number employed at night, pupils sleeping with more than two other people, pupils suffering from constipation, eye difficulties, and colds, and other information which could be collected by pupils without professional help.

"As the study proceeded, the class or individuals read about and discussed contagious diseases, dietary needs, and other health topics which they needed in order to get full meaning from the information which they were collecting. They carried on a variety of experiments to check certain conclusions which they formulated or found in their reading.

"Some of the most significant findings of the study were:

70 percent of the second grade, more than any other class, seemed undernourished, and the symptoms of undernourishment seemed most prevalent in the lower grades.

40 percent of the first graders and an average of about 20 percent of the total school enrollment ate no breakfast.

The bedtime hour most frequently stated was 10 p.m., though the pupils in the first three grades seemed to go to bed around 9 p.m.

16 percent of all pupils were employed after school or at night; 70 percent of the ninth grade were employed.

The younger children complained most about constipation.

About a fourth of the pupils had never consulted a doctor and about half of them had never visited a dentist.

"The school-wide eye testing program and study to improve lighting in school and homes were a direct outgrowth of this investigation. Other outgrowths included sending requests to parents asking them to include fruit and fruit juices in the diet of their children. The class screened the lunchroom, painted and decorated the room, and made recommendations regarding the menus served in the lunchroom. The whole school willingly cooperated with the county health board in a program to immunize all pupils against typhoid and smallpox. Each week, fifteen pupils went voluntarily to the health department for blood tests; pupils began to dispose of garbage wisely at school and at home; the rate of illness in the school seemed somewhat reduced; many parents became actively concerned about the health status of their children; and milk sales in the lunchroom increased.

"The health situation is intimately tied up with the economic and social situation in the town, but the pupils felt that they ought to continue

their efforts to improve some aspects of the situation.”

“Um, I’ll say these are results,” commented Frances as she finished reading the report.

“There are others, too,” Alice advised. “I have not brought the report up to date. Through the Young Men’s Progressive Club, a civic organization, the community has acquired a plot of land which will become a playground for Negro children. I know my pupils will want some part in this undertaking. But look at the folders of some of the pupils. In them you will see evidences of individual growth. The ninth grade class is the only specialized class I have. All of their work is in biology. The eighth, tenth, and eleventh grade courses are just science, and we make it whatever we think it ought to be each year.”

“I think I’ll look at Charles’ folder. He works hard when he shows off, but you can’t put your finger on anything really wrong with him. He is courteous and reasonably cooperative,” Frances said.

“He works very hard in science,” Alice remarked. “He shows off his ideas in science, but he always has a good project or reasons to back up what he says or does. His reports are usually interesting to the pupils because he finds spectacular ways of presenting them. Here’s his folder.”

Frances saw in the folder a copy of the plans which Charles made early in the year. He wanted to do a number of experiments. Stuffing a skin, keeping some animal alive, distilling turpentine, repairing household electrical appliances, and photography were included in his plan. Frances saw that later in the year he had written in some other things such as “reading faster so that I can get more information for my experiments, learning to use chemistry symbols, organizing reports so that people will enjoy them, and working with other people without bossing them so much.” Following the general plan were other more detailed plans for specific jobs, such as studying the diets of mice, stuffing a moleskin, turpentine from pine sap, and “how I will test the eyes of the seventh grade.” Attached to each plan was a report which Charles had written in connection with each task. Frances saw brief notes which Mrs. Dale had written to Charles congratulating him on his success and advising him to try to grow in certain other ways. There was a list of references which Charles had used during the year and the purpose for which he used them. There was a list of laboratory skills which he felt he had mastered in connection with various projects.

Alice told Frances that near the end of the year Charles would summarize his growth using the material in his folder. Using this summary, he would make a plan for his next year in science. Frances chatted with Alice a few minutes about the way in which she had her pupils use the file. Then she glanced through another folder which Alice pulled out. This one contained descriptions of science activities in the elementary school.

"I like to know what kind of background in science my pupils are getting, and the elementary school teachers have agreed to cooperate with me by sending descriptions of science activities completed in each grade."

Frances saw descriptions of a first grade enterprise centered around personal health and plant life; a second grade had studied health and building materials; a third grade had studied how to take care of their bodies; a fourth grade had studied animals and plants which they had collected; a sixth grade class had made a study of weather; and a seventh grade had made a study of petroleum, since 442 families represented in the school used fuel oil.

"I don't want to make you late for dinner, Alice," Frances said. "This has been very interesting. I have decided to reorganize my files using some of your ideas, and I'll be coming for your help."

"I'll be glad to do anything I can," replied Alice. "Only, remember that I'm just learning. I don't have any really good way yet to know what beliefs about science my pupils are acquiring."

Frances and Alice talked about hats, ration stamps for shoes, and high prices as they walked down sandy streets on their way home.

## 11

Moultrie, Georgia

March 19, 1945

My Dear Jane:

It has been so long since I've written you that I feel as though I'm breaking the "silence of a century." You'll pardon my delay, I'm sure, when you finish reading this letter and realize how I must budget my time in order to get in correspondence, my first hobby.

Do you feel less tense now that Victory in the European Theatre seems assured? I'll be one of the first to welcome the return of nylons, good cheese, better shoes—and the boys, of course. We miss the fellows in Moultrie. They add so much to life in a beautiful and progressive town. However, you would like the school and the fine community spirit here. Excursions? Gee! We make some enjoyable trips to nearby towns. Visits? Yes, we visit homes—on invitation—and the contacts give us valuable slants on the backgrounds of our pupils.

Our mutual friend, Catherine Land, teaches homemaking here. She and her children have been working on home beautification. I think their study is unique in that the children are learning to improve their own homes through better landscaping. Their work around homes generated interest among the grown folk, and now an adult homemaking club is getting started. The children plan to do something about their dull and

drab classroom. They have already had discussions about color schemes they might use in painting the room, redecorating the furniture, and budgeting for these jobs. In their home, just as in school, making over things is the best bet for getting many things that are needed. But the children like it and are anxious to do whatever is necessary. I know you are interested in home economics, and that is just why I'm sticking to that subject.

The girls solicited canned fruit and vegetables for our suffering friends in Europe. When they were faced with the problem of getting all the cans to one place for packing, the men's Civic Club offered the use of their cars. We want our pupils to believe in sharing what they have with others and to encourage more of the adults in the community to catch the spirit.

Just last week I visited a homemaking class for a few minutes. I saw folders for each girl, containing pictures illustrating becoming hairstyles, types of clothing suitable for different occasions, cosmetics to use and when to use them, and colors which blend with eyes and hair. There were suggestions about how to care for clothes, and the girls had practiced laundering and cleaning, folding and hanging, and care of shoes. In each folder were suggestions about caring for the body and notes written by the girls about suggestions which they had used. Wouldn't it be grand if more people could learn about things such as these? I believe you mentioned this idea once.

Catherine told me about a study of child care on which another class was working. Girls really marry early here, and even before they marry they have to help with their younger sisters and brothers while parents are at work. At school the girls learn to select and prepare food for children, bathe and dress children properly, and make pretty but serviceable clothes for young children. Catherine said that the girls did these things for real children. I'm so glad that they don't have to make-believe by using dolls.

Mrs. McCoy, a fine and practical-minded woman who lives in my neighborhood, talks over the fence with me about her daughter, Anne. Anne is a ninth grader. Mrs. McCoy lets Anne do most of the menu planning and has practically turned the kitchen over to her. She brags about the birthday party which Anne gave for her. Anne had prepared a breakfast which she served to eight of her mother's friends.

I must mention the elaborate banquet which the Business and Professional Men's Club had a few weeks ago. Yes, I was there to enjoy the five courses prepared by a group of girls in the homemaking class. The affair was held at the school, and Catherine and her girls planned everything for the club. The girls get a good bit of practice in preparing and serving food, but the affairs are not always elaborate. They help out with small



club parties given by the Tri-Hi-Y and the Boy Scouts.

There is a corner in Catherine's room in which the different classes exhibit samples of their work. The teachers here drop into Catherine's room whenever they hear that the exhibit has been changed. You know Catherine. She likes a room full of people, and I believe she enjoys changing the exhibit so that the teachers will drop in after school for a chat. Sometimes the exhibit is artwork, knitting, tufted rugs, or stenciled things. Once it was useful and practical garments made of feed sacks with an extra touch of lace, ricrac, or bias tape.

When I begin housekeeping—now don't get excited; I don't have any definite plans yet. Anyway, I shall have many new ideas, and I'll have to have plenty of them in order to make ends meet. Did you get raises in your system this year?

Please write soon.

Fondly yours,  
Frances

## CHAPTER IV

## Sharing

## 12

The seniors stood outside of the assembly room and looked in through the glasses in the doors. Any other day they would have walked boldly in, but today they were visitors at their own assembly room, and they had to wait to be ushered to their seats like any other visitors. This was an unusual way to spend an English period, perhaps, but the seniors had asked Miss Parker to take them to at least one elementary school assembly.

It happened this way. Miss Parker wanted to find out what the seniors wanted most to do for themselves through English, and it hadn't been so easy to get them to express themselves on the matter until John had said that one of the things he wanted was to learn how to express himself better when he tried to say something. No, it wasn't big words he wanted. It wasn't oratory.

"It's just like now when I am trying to say this; I can't say just what I mean, but you know, Miss Parker."

"Seems to me you can talk too much sometimes," Miss Parker said jokingly, "but I think I know what you mean. Does anyone else here feel the way John does?"

Hands went up all over the room.

"I know what John means, and I feel that way, too," said Clara. "I'm always afraid that what I have to say isn't just right, and I just sit still and say nothing. I've done that all through school."

A smile played around Miss Parker's eyes, and several children laughed aloud.

"Oh, I know I talk sometimes when I shouldn't, but that's easy kind of talk. I want to learn how to talk before a crowd of people and before strangers and say what is inside me without being scared to death."

"I know many grown-up people who would like to be able to talk as you want to talk," Miss Parker advised. "I guess everybody wants to be forceful and convincing. I have heard the teachers in our elementary school say that the elementary assemblies were started so that the younger children might have more chances to learn how to talk."

"What I want to know is how people learn to talk better." It was Oscar who challenged the group.

"Clara, how do you think people learn to talk with ease and skill?" asked Miss Parker.

"I wish I knew," replied Clara. "Can you tell us? You can talk the way

I mean I would like to talk.”

Miss Parker hesitated, but all eyes were on her. The answer to this question was important to every pupil in the room.

“Someday, all of you must do much better than I. I believe there are two big things to think hard about as you talk. First, one must have something to tell that he knows about and can be responsible for after it has been said. Then he can feel sure of himself, because he knows what he is talking about. Of course, he ought to feel that what he is saying needs to be said. The same idea can be applied to questions that you want to ask, for that is talking, too. One should ask questions after he has thought about what he wants to know. Knowing what one wants to tell is very important.

“In the second place, one must think about how the audience is understanding what he is saying. He can know this by watching the faces of those to whom he is talking or by listening to what they say when they have a chance to discuss or ask questions about what he has said. Usually, he can be convincing, if he simply believes and knows what he is saying. Usually, the natural inflection of one’s voice conveys the true meaning of what he says, but sometimes inflections become artificial and the speaker loses his point because the attention of the audience shifts from what he is saying to how he is saying it. It is a good idea to listen carefully to people who are able to talk or write clearly.

“Now, if you really want to learn to talk, it’s not too late to do something about it this year, but I can’t do it by myself. You must all help me. How many of you really think this is important enough to work on very hard for the rest of this year?”

Every hand went up. Even shy little Millie Stewart’s. And from that moment, learning to talk had been one of the goals of the seniors.

So today they were to see one way in which the school was trying to work with the little children toward the same goal—learning to express ideas clearly.

“Whew! I didn’t know we had that many elementary children. Our assembly room holds five hundred and it’s nearly full. I wonder where we can sit?”

The seniors didn’t have to wonder long. A little girl pushed open the door.

“We saved seats for y’all.” She pointed to the left front section, and the seniors went quietly to their seats next to a few second grade parents who had come to see their children perform.

It was very different in some ways from a high school assembly. Teachers were sitting with their children and using the situation to teach proper audience behavior through appeals to the pupils’ sense of fair play.

"Sit down, Julia, so Tom can see." "Sam, it isn't fair to take Elizabeth's seat." "Sarah, the rest of us won't be able to hear if you and Barbara Jean talk too loud."

Everybody was excited, and there was much twisting about in the seats until the maroon velvet stage curtains began to open jerkily and a little girl came forward and said in a loud voice, "Please sing 'America' and then say the Lord's Prayer."

Seats clattered as the children stood, and five hundred little voices, directed by the little girl on the stage, lustily began, "My countree, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liber-tee."

Following the prayer, another little girl read two verses from the Bible, after which she requested, "Let's all sing 'Try, Try Again'." It was evident from the smiles and the sudden outburst of murmuring that this was a favorite selection. After the song, a washed and brushed little boy came from the wings and in a frightened breathlessness announced, "The second grade presents a playlet called 'Mavis Learns to Be Polite'."

Through a succession of brief scenes enacted by groups of children, the playlet, with exaggerated action, ridiculed undesirable behavior in various school situations. The audience laughed heartily as the actors showed how gum chewing looked and how it affected people near the chewer, how it looked and sounded to talk while eating, the danger of pushing in the lunchroom line, and how it helped to say "Excuse me," "Please," and "Thank you." The children had planned and rehearsed the playlet, but there was some evidence of spontaneous additions by the realistic young actors. Everything was howlingly funny to the highly appreciative audience, which in its enthusiasm almost joined in the actions on the stage. Occasionally, a child would break out with, "Lookit ole Tom," which invited much "shushing" from outraged friends.

At the close of the playlet, a din of hand clapping and excited cries filled the room. The tumult subsided as the principal stood up and complimented both actors and audience on their participation in the assembly, and closed by saying, "I believe all of us learned more today about being polite."

Back in the English room the next day, the seniors talked about the way in which little second graders presented their playlet. Clara said, "Now that's what we should have had a chance to do when we were that size. Why did they have a play about politeness, Miss Parker?"

Before Miss Parker answered, Mary said, "I think I can answer that. Once when I was substituting for a teacher who was out sick, I heard Miss Sims say that her class assembly program grew out of her regular classroom work, so the second grade 'A' must be studying about politeness."

"All I can say," said John, "is that the high school kids could stand

some of that same thing. Some of them aren't polite a'tall."

At that moment Miss Sims stepped into the room, and Miss Parker rose to greet her.

"I asked Miss Sims to come in and tell you about yesterday's assembly. I thought you might have some questions that I couldn't answer. Miss Sims, I know you can't stay long; will you just start right in and tell us first why the assembly was on politeness?"

"Perhaps I should explain first why the elementary grades have assemblies and how we plan for them. When some of you boys and girls were in the elementary school, we had no elementary assemblies, but all the elementary pupils attended the high school assembly. You could see yesterday that the elementary school children just about filled the assembly room. Our enrollment gradually grew so large that we couldn't crowd both the high school and the elementary school into the assembly room. That was a good thing for us. We didn't take any part in the high school assemblies anyway, and the smaller children would get very restless because much of what went on was outside of their interest and beyond their understanding. For a time the elementary school stopped attending the high school assemblies, and we had no assembly of our own, but the elementary school teachers still wanted their children to have more experiences in talking before an audience than they could have in their classrooms. They wanted classes to culminate classroom activities by sharing what had been done with children in other classes. The teachers decided that these purposes could be achieved through an elementary assembly, and they put it into the schedule. Since that time we have found additional purposes for these assemblies. For instance, the children seem to go at writing, talking, reading, and planning more eagerly when we do these things in preparation for an assembly. Through assemblies, the children learn things about other children in the school that they could not get through contacts on the playground or through other activities.

"The children enjoy the assemblies, both from the stage and from the seats. For the teachers, the assemblies are valuable and indispensable teaching situations. So you can see that the assemblies grow out of what we are doing in classrooms, and they sometimes suggest things that we need to do. Have you still some questions that I haven't answered?"

"How do the classes select their times to have assemblies?" someone asked.

"At first the elementary teachers appointed a committee to assign certain dates to each grade. We soon found that this wouldn't work because assigned dates didn't always fit the time when classes were ready for assemblies. Frequently, a class had to prepare something just to have its assembly at the appointed time. Now the committee tries to

accommodate the dates to the plans of the teachers and children in a room. Sometimes no grade is ready and the weekly assembly is used for group singing or listening to records. Some of the grades ask for special seasonal dates. Sometimes several grades or the whole elementary school will plan together for an assembly. We hope someday to have symphony records and radio recordings and give amateur radio plays with sound effects from the wings or from behind the curtain. But these things cost money, and we have very little of that. The committee tries to keep up with what other schools are doing so that our school can have the advantage of new ideas. For instance, we know now that five hundred pupils is too large a group for a good assembly, and we are thinking about beginning separate assemblies for the primary and elementary grades.

"We are sure of several results that assemblies have brought. Children do more planning and better planning. They express themselves much better, read more, and write more than ever before in classrooms. There are more activities of a purposeful nature, and children are more interested in classroom activities."

At this point the seniors began to ask questions about what the elementary pupils studied and how they worked in classrooms.

"I'm glad you are so interested in what we do," said Miss Sims. "You can answer most of these questions for yourselves, if you can plan to attend our open house program next week. The things we have made and the work we have done will be on display in the rooms. I am inviting your whole class."

The seniors applauded as Miss Sims left the room. Miss Sims may not have realized it, but she had started something when she invited the seniors to visit the elementary open house.

Early on Open House Day, the whole class began making the rounds of the classrooms in the two buildings that housed the elementary school. With Miss Parker they had tried to decide what they would look for, but nobody really knew very much about the elementary school or had thought much about it since coming to high school. Miss Parker suggested that the group look for ways in which ideas were expressed in the different rooms.

"Oh, look," said Mary as they entered a first grade classroom. "It's a playhouse."

The other high school pupils crowded around the table on which was erected a little cardboard house of three rooms, evidently a living room, a bedroom, and a combined kitchen and dining room very much like so many of the homes of Moultrie Negroes. Through the four windows and the door could be seen a stove, tables and chairs, and other furniture made by the children from bits of pasteboard. Everything, including the house, was neatly painted.

"It isn't big enough for you to play in," John complained.

"It's Dolly Dimple's house," the little guide explained, pointing to a large dolly sitting in one of the living room chairs.

The playhouse had grown out of a study of home life, the strong interest which the children had in their homes, and the desire of the teacher to find something in the experiences of the children that could furnish a basis for word study, reading, numbers, art, music, health, and safety.

There were reading charts which told about the house, health habits, and the work done on the house by the pupils. The individual reading booklets, written by the children, were duplicates of the charts, and the dictionaries were made up of words the pupils had encountered during the study of the playhouse.

As the group signed the visitors' list, the guides proudly sang songs they had learned about home, helpers of the home, and good health. Outside the room, John again complained about the size of the house.

"I like everything in the room okay. It was pretty and full of things for children. But that little house didn't express my idea of a real house."

Myrtis, one of John's classmates, had noticed that almost everything in the room had been bought or made by the teacher. She caught John's arm and said, "Big houses, John, and big anything cost money, and you heard what Miss Sims said last week."

In the second grade room the high school pupils saw a collection of war pictures of soldiers, marines, nurses, WACS, WAVES, and a large picture of the president.

They were particularly impressed by several pictures of Negro soldiers scattered through the collection. Some of them were photographs of older brothers and other relatives of the pupils. The label above the complete collection of pictures indicated that the second grade had used the pictures in a study, "Good American Citizens."

A small group of pupils dramatized a little ceremony of "Dimes for Defense," which they used when money was brought for stamps. They sang songs telling why one should love his country. There was a colorful display of reading and spelling booklets made by the children. Number booklets contained problems about the records of money which pupils brought for war stamps and lunches. The teacher mentioned an assembly program on "Good Americans" which the children had presented.

"Yes, that's our farm," answered a little boy acting as room guide in the third grade room.

"Will you tell us about your farm, Richard?" asked Mary, who had once helped when the teacher of the room was absent.

"Me and six other boys made the house, the barn, and the garage from pasteboard boxes," he answered seriously.

"Did you paint them, too?" asked another member of the group.

"No, some other boys and girls painted them." He looked around as if he wanted to point out the painters.

Mrs. Walker came over to greet the group and explained that many children had spent the summer in the country. The farm life unit represented an effort to share observations made by the children on different farms.

They had talked about life on a farm and had compared farm life with the home life in Moultrie. All about the room were posters which they made about farm animals that provide food. There were reading charts about the value of farm animals, and charts comparing farm life with city life. The animal scrapbooks contained pictures of the various farm animals and original stories about these animals, written by the children. In one corner there was a set of small scales which the children used to weigh farm products sold by the pound, and on the table were measures from a half pint to a gallon. The number books contained simple problems about the buying and selling of farm products. Words learned during this study were found in the individual spelling pads, and in folders were sentences, made by the children, using these words.

Before the activity was completed, the whole class spent a day together on a nearby farm, and through this study they learned the interdependence of farm people and city people.

The seniors and Miss Parker left the primary building with the feeling that neatness, color, and activity were fairly well expressed through the things in the primary rooms. The rooms in the elementary and high school buildings did not express these ideas with the same degree of success. Some rooms seemed to be dull and drab, no matter what was done by teachers and pupils to improve their appearance. Frances knew that the almost complete absence of color in these rooms could be traced to a need in the school for skills and materials in arts and crafts. Finger painting, puppet making, carving, water coloring, colorful bulletin boards, flowers, shades, curtains, and other things which might give a pleasant room atmosphere were just not there. The teachers wanted these things, and the children's tablets were filled with unguided and crude efforts to express ideas through drawing.

The faculty had discussed this problem many times but had found no way to get rich art experiences into the school. Study opportunities for teachers in this area were practically nonexistent.

Teachers saw the study of arts and crafts as an almost insignificant sideshow in the colleges. In fact, college classrooms almost always seemed drab and uninteresting. These discussions had probably led to the provision of brooms and buckets as standard equipment for each room. The rooms could be clean now. Perhaps they could be made beautiful later.

"Miss B. K. Thomas / 4th Grade A / Life Related Enterprise / Caring for Useful Living Things." Tom read this sign over the door of the room



which the seniors were about to enter.

"Oh, look!" cried Mary as she pointed to two large terrapins walking with unusual speed in a sandbox. The names Mac and Min were painted on the animals' backs. The visitors saw the big jar of tadpoles and water plants in a shady window, the small cage containing a pair of white mice in a corner out of drafts, the two toads in a cage filled with moist soil and plants, the house plants in a well-lighted corner, and the small aquarium.

Miss Parker tried to listen to the barrage of questions which the seniors asked Miss Thomas and the room guides. Things that lived or moved seemed to stimulate questions among old and young.

The questions came so fast that Miss Thomas called the group to order and with the help of the guides explained briefly what the study was about.

"This is not exactly a menagerie," she said laughingly. "We set out to do a unit which would contain considerable science. We are trying to get more science activities into the elementary school so that the children can learn the truth about things. Children need to know the difference between what is true and what is fable. Fables are useful in teaching little children, and they really enjoy fictitious stories; but they must not be allowed to base their beliefs and their actions on myths."

In response to questions asked by Miss Thomas, the guides told how the fourth grade had decided that this enterprise would be a good one because they could get all the things they needed and could learn some of the things that they wanted to know.

"It was fun, too," Jennie assured the seniors.

Marcus explained that the class made a list of living things which might be collected and kept. They made homes for the animals, and through reading, they found out how to care for the animals and plants when all was ready. The class made a trip to the woods and brought back the things that they had made plans to keep alive.

They had given each animal a name and had kept records in story form of how they behaved at different times. They had brought to school insects, meat, fruit, or whatever was needed to keep the things alive and happy.

Pearl told about the differences between the claws, mouths, and ears of the animals and how such things affected the way in which the animal lived. Miss Parker had to urge the group to move on to the next room. On the way out Carrie said, "I see more clearly now, Miss Parker, how having something to say helps a person learn to talk."

"Remember," warned Miss Parker, "that isn't all—just the first step."

"I want to get to the seventh grade room," said Jack. "My little sister is in there. She had bought enough stamps for one war bond and soon will get

another one. You should hear her talk about what's going on in the world."

"Well, here you are, Jack," said Mary. "This is the seventh grade room."

The center of interest in the room was a red-white-and-blue booth. Over the counter in the booth were the words "Helping Our Country and Our Allies." Under the counter were the words "War Stamps and Bonds Sold Here."

Near the opening of school, the pupils had discussed their summer experiences, which included jobs and vacations. Practically all of the seventh grade pupils had earned some money during their summer vacations. Through discussions it was found that all the pupils were interested in making money, but very few of them knew how to spend it wisely. The unit Good Things to Do with Money had been planned and carried through.

In this room there were newspaper and magazine racks, made by the boys of the class, and a collection of pamphlets on war saving which the pupils had collected by writing the U.S. Treasury Department. The bulletin board was used also to promote the bonds-for-defense idea. Of special interest to the group was an original poem written by a girl in the class. The class had written and presented a playlet on the subject of the unit. There was a chart of new words gathered from their reading, arithmetic, language, daily conversations, and writings.

Miss Sims, who had been talking to a group of parents, came over to the arts and crafts table where the seniors were gathered.

"Hello," she said, recognizing the group and her suggestion about visiting the elementary school. "Are you getting any answers?"

"Oh yes," said Mary, speaking for the group. "We see everything clearly now, and we are enjoying our visit. Thanks for suggesting it to us."

"Oh, look, Mary," said Jane. "Bookends, candleholders, and ashtrays," she said, touching the objects as she spoke. "They feel hard and smooth. What are they made of, Miss Sims?"

"Clay," was the reply. "Clay from one of our streets, molded, painted, and shellacked. We are learning to use what we can get and to take care of what we have in these times of shortages."

"My goodness, how the time passes! We have spent the morning over here and didn't realize it," said Mary, looking at her watch. "Let's go get some lunch. I'm hungry."

### 13

Moultrie, Georgia

March 25, 1945

Dear Mattie:

Your letter came several days ago, but I waited until our first semester ended before answering. I have many things to tell you about my plans for next summer. I know you would enjoy hearing about J. C.'s recent visit to Moultrie, but these things will have to wait until I see you on the Easter weekend.

Our first semester was closed in a novel and practical way. School went on, but not as usual. Yes, we handed in marks, but each subject or grade teacher will have her same pupils for the rest of the year. I don't want to confuse you when I say that nothing really ended, but that's the truth. Many things were begun or carried forward.

Here is what happened. Quite some time before the closing date for the semester, our principal asked the faculty to consider the value of holding an extended planning period with homerooms near the middle of the school year. All of us felt that it might be a good idea to find out how much progress the different groups had made on plans set up at the beginning of the year. Many of us felt that these plans might need to be revised on the basis of progress which groups and individuals had made. We made a list of worthwhile activities which might be carried on with the different homerooms. This list included such things as summarizing the growth information found in the pupils' individual folders, seeing exactly what had been accomplished by the group, what the library records showed about the reading being done, how the groups had progressed in written expression, seeing what working relationships had become better established, what the health records told about groups, and planning next steps in the light of this information.

We decided that a three-day period would be needed to do all that we wanted to do, and committees were set up to organize certain information which all groups would need. I am enclosing copies of the brief but informative reports made by some of the committees.

The discussions engaged in by pupils and teachers during the morning and by the faculty during the afternoons resulted in clear-cut plans for the rest of the year. Better working relationships were established among teachers and pupils because opinions regarding progress on plans could be examined in the light of collected facts. We are off now to a good start on our plans for the present semester.

What do you think of this practice?

The senior class has already begun to make plans for commencement. A student committee, with the help of a teacher, selects a theme for the commencement speeches. A unit of work, planned around this theme, is carried out in one or more school subjects. All pupils are encouraged to prepare papers on some topic related to the theme. The class hears these papers and decides which ones would be best for commencement. My job this year is to coach one or more of the speakers. For the past three

years the committees have considered graduation an opportune time to emphasize victory and peace. The commencement is carried out entirely by pupils. After all, it is their commencement.

As ever,  
Frances

P.S. The first workshop for English teachers is being held at Atlanta University this summer. I am thinking seriously of attending. I hear that the state is going to pay a part of the tuition and that other scholarship aid might be available. I get sick when I look at what I have been able to save out of my \$76.00 a month salary. Twenty dollars a month goes for a place to stay. A budget doesn't help much, but I still try to make one because of the peculiar feeling that I have when I direct my classes in a study of how to earn a living. Education is costly when you are getting it, but—oh well, everything has to prove its value.

Before sealing Mattie's letter, Frances examined the enclosures which she was sending to Mattie.

### **Summary of Health Records of the Senior Class**

#### **1. Age, Weight, and Height**

Age range: 14–17 (average 16 years); weight range: 89–162; height range: 5'–5'8"

Some plan is needed by which changes in weight and height of all classes can be determined. Growing children gain weight. Mathematics or science classes might consider this problem.

2. Eyes: The eyes of three pupils still need attention

3. Ears: All OK

4. Throat: The tonsils of two pupils still need attention

5. Teeth: Generally OK; four pupils are rated fair

6. Heart: All OK

Can this class have perfect health status before leaving high school?

The entire class has been immunized against typhoid and smallpox.

All have had blood tests and voluntary follow-ups. Tests showed a 1 percent venereal infection in the entire high school but none in this class.

The boys' toilet is not well kept. The city is laying sewage pipes in the last Negro section. What differences ought this make in the health of this class?

### **Our Free Hour**

Can we find a more satisfactory arrangement for using the free period which each pupil has every day? All teachers have classes every period in the day. We have no extra rooms, so classes have been spending the free hour in the library. The library is full of free hour people at

every period, but their study activities are largely confined to the use of dictionaries and encyclopedias. Some pupils don't seem to have anything to do. What does your class think of each of the following arrangements as a means of learning to use free time wisely?

1. Make better plans for free time as a part of classwork.
2. Make an appointment with some teacher a day ahead to return to that room and work on something which you have started and which you can do alone without disturbing the class already in the room.
3. Go to the library only when you plan to use the books there.
4. Putting the dictionaries in classroom libraries and doing dictionary assignments during your regular class period.
5. Using the free hour sometimes for recreation such as playing basketball, playing horseshoes, etc.
6. Getting a teacher of art and holding classes in the assembly room or sometimes outside.
7. Getting a teacher of music and holding classes in the assembly room or sometimes outside.
8. A class plan for keeping a record of the way in which that class uses its free time.

### **Progress Report for the Ninth Grade**

A review of the undertaking of the ninth grade class gives some ideas of the kinds of opportunities which it has had for growth and how it has taken advantage of these opportunities. The class worked in English, mathematics, science, shop, and homemaking.

In English three big jobs were undertaken. The class engaged in creative writing activities in order to improve in ability to express original ideas in clear, correct, and interesting language. A second big activity was making and filing of bibliographies based on reading done by the class. The third big activity was the projection of a Good Speech Campaign.

The letters, compositions, and reports on recreational reading written by the class emphasized further the need in this class for additional directed writing experience.

The members of the class seem to get facts well, and the talking activities show that they have good ideas, a new experience for this class. Many members of the class are learning to read carefully what they write and then try to write an improved second draft. Samples of the writing show that there is room for considerable improvement in sentence structure, spelling, and choice of subjects.

The reading in English was largely reference reading, but a few pupils read some books from cover to cover. Many of the ninth graders were reading below sixth grade level at the beginning of the year.

In English, this group showed considerable skill in planning, working together, and discussing.

The fact that a large proportion of the class are the children of sharecroppers regulated the kind of mathematics problems undertaken. The class asked for practical "math" which could be used in connection with farm life. The plans developed by the teacher and pupils included measuring a tract of land and finding the acreage, simple banking, installment buying, and a study of rationing. Considerable use was made of graphs. Reference reading was done willingly by the group as it collected needed facts. The group did not have much success in efforts to express ideas in writing.

In science the class preserved animal skins, made a survey of the health conditions in the community as a part of a study of health problems, presented a health assembly, made a study of a variety of animals and plants collected by the class, entertained the new pupils and teachers with a back-to-school party, and sponsored a parent-pupil banquet.

The writing done by the class in science was of good quality and about things they had observed. The class did much reference reading from pamphlets and books, and a few whole books were read for pleasure.

In science the class worked and planned together skillfully.

The ninth grade shop class took a share of the beautification project. They drew the plans for the cement walk and wired the elementary building so that this building might be properly lighted. Reference reading was done in order to collect facts. Discussions were held to plan work and to talk about difficulties met. Many of the boys developed an interest in electricity.

Are there old goals toward which this class needs to work? Are there new goals which this class might set up?

### **Individual Growth Folders**

#### **What They Tell Now**

Individual folders are provided for each pupil in each high school subject and in each elementary grade. The folders contain individual plans, practice papers in written expression, examination papers, notes from teachers about important achievements or needs of individuals, notes from parents telling about changes which they have noticed in their children, self-appraisals, drawings or sketches, spelling papers, and pictures or news clippings collected by the pupil. The contents of folders are different for different classes. The amount of work in a folder often tells whether the pupil has been busy. Some classes separate the work into piles in order to see what kinds of growth have been sought by individuals.

#### **What They Might Tell**

Individual plans, kept together and in order, might carry brief notes telling the improvements one plan has made over previous plans. Read-

ing records might show the different kinds of reading done by the pupil.

Samples of writing, when kept together and in order, might show how one sample compares in length, organization, choice of words, quality of spelling, and interest over previous samples.

At the end of the year, all work might be taken out except final samples carrying brief notes which tell where the pupil is in his growth toward the different goals. These folders could be passed onto the next teacher.

What arrangements can we make to have the folders tell as many really important things as possible?

## 14

Language Arts Workshop  
Atlanta University  
Atlanta, Georgia

August 20, 1945

Dear Miss Andrews:

I am Frances Parker, a teacher in the Moultrie School where you have accepted work for next year. Of course you don't know me, and you may feel just as surprised as I felt last summer when I received a letter of welcome from a member of the Moultrie faculty. We always write letters to the new teachers during the summer so that they will not feel entirely new when they reach the school. We will have five new teachers this year to replace teachers who have either married or found better paying jobs.

Mr. Jones, our principal, is directing a workshop for one of the state colleges this summer, but last week he was invited to visit a health workshop in Atlanta and to describe the start which our school has made on a health program. While in Atlanta, Mr. Jones told me about you and asked me to write to you.

Now you know who I am and why I am writing to you. Last year, I wanted to know many things about the school so I could begin to make plans for my work, and I suppose you are wondering what you will do in Moultrie. Don't worry too much about making detailed plans this summer, because during our pre-school planning conference you will be able to plan rapidly and with more certainty.

All of us are studying this summer in order to get ideas for making education more useful to our pupils and our community. Seven of us are at Atlanta University. The science workshop claims four teachers from our school. Four of us are at Albany State College, four at Tuskegee, and four at Fort Valley State College. One of those at Fort Valley is on the summer school faculty. Our librarian is attending North Carolina College Library School. All of us, including the children, will be anxious to work with you.

V-J Day brought hope and encouragement to the entire Moultrie community. I believe you will want to know about our hopes, because you will soon be sharing them with us, and I am certain that these hopes will affect many of the decisions which we will make during next year. We are expecting new and attractive buildings as soon as materials are available. With pride, we have anticipated the erection of a cafeteria, a gymnasium, and more classrooms for our growing school population. With parents and pupils we have planned and dreamed about well-lighted rooms, good drinking water, and all of the assets that make school-work attractive and convenient. We believe that all of these facilities and better salaries will be provided.

Boys and girls who have been in the army or in industry will be returning to the school or community. A visiting teacher has already been employed to help get all children of school age in school. We have known for some time that schoolwork as it has been offered will not challenge boys and girls in the post-war period, and we have plans in our minds for rendering greater service to our pupils and our community. The white schools are thinking along these same lines. They have invited us to join in a citywide and cooperatively planned effort to improve reading, and we will accept the invitation because working with them is always pleasant and educative.

I know you are going to enjoy your work in Moultrie. There, all of us believe that working and thinking together is the best way to produce real and permanent school growth and community service. This conviction has led our faculty to study and often to explore techniques that we have heard about, read about, or thought about which offered promise of increasingly valuable cooperation by all persons and agencies interested in or responsible for public education.

We are sure that this effort is steadily making our school and its program better. We are equally certain that the zeal, enthusiasm, planning, and professional study which all of us put into the development of our school can result only in successes. As a teacher in Moultrie, you, too, will regard the production of successful and cooperative living in homes, on the street, in school, and in the world as the greatest contribution to democracy which all American teachers can make.

The afternoon bus from Albany reaches Moultrie about seven. You won't get lost because one of us will meet you, if you let us know when to expect you.

Sincerely yours,  
Frances Parker







## High School Was Like This

*Booker T. Washington High School, Rocky Mount,  
North Carolina (1946)*

*During a second summer workshop, the teachers came to believe that through a core type approach they might unify and enrich the experiment which they had begun. . . . There was a core teacher for each class who worked for three consecutive hours each day in an effort to relate materials from social studies, English, and science to problems agreed on through pupil-teacher planning. The core classes studied mathematics with the regular class. The two core teachers met at least twice each week to discuss plans, problems, and difficulties related to the individual classes. Once a month the two classes met together to discuss problems common to both groups.*

—Booker T. Washington High School faculty, *High School Was Like This* (1946, p. 43)

With 600 students in grades 8–11 and a faculty of 17 teachers (including a full-time librarian), Booker T. Washington High School represented a rural-town high school in the Secondary School Study. Located in the central-northeastern area of North Carolina, Rocky Mount was a farming and mill town. The school faculty developed core curricula and established free reading and “nature of proof” (mathematics) programs. The significance of student responsibility for social dialogue was one specific theme that ran through all academic programs.

The Booker T. Washington High School building was constructed in 1927 and served the community until its closing in 1969. The structure is currently the home of the Opportunities Industrialization Center, an affiliate of a national nonprofit organization that provides comprehensive employment, training, business, and health services for local communities.

Special thanks to Genevieve Lancaster of the Booker T. Washington High School Alumni Association, and great appreciation to the Alumni Association’s Resource Center for providing important source materials for the Museum of Education’s web exhibition.

*For more information:*

Booker T. Washington High School web exhibition:  
[www.museumofeducation.info/btw-rm.html](http://www.museumofeducation.info/btw-rm.html)

Booker T. Washington High School exhibition catalog summary:  
*Progressive Education in Black High Schools: The Secondary School Study, 1940–1946*, pp. 27–30 ([www.museumofeducation.info/SSS\\_web-2015.pdf](http://www.museumofeducation.info/SSS_web-2015.pdf))

**High School Was Like This**  
*Developed by the Booker T. Washington High School faculty*  
*Rocky Mount, North Carolina*

**In cooperation with the staff of the Secondary School Study of the  
Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes**

Copyright, 1946 by the Faculty of Booker T. Washington High School  
Rocky Mount, North Carolina

The North Carolina State College for Negroes, Durham, N.C., and the  
North Carolina State Department of Education, Division of Negro Education,  
Raleigh, N.C., are cooperating with the authors of this story by serving as  
distributors for the publication.

*Dedicated to our principal, Mr. O. R. Pope, whose career has been devoted to the  
education of youth. Through unselfishness matched with efficiency and finer qualities of  
mind and heart he has gained the confidence, admiration, and love of every boy and girl  
in Rocky Mount. He is a symbol of those ideals for which our school strives.*

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## Foreword

The citizens of Rocky Mount have for many years been deeply concerned about their public school system and its continued improvement. Somehow they have come to believe that the growth and progress of citizens can be greatly influenced by the number and quality of educational opportunities available in the public schools. Hence, they have been willing to take their share of the responsibility for continuous development of their schools. All of us have been gratified by the results of vigorous and steady efforts to expand the services of Rocky Mount schools and thereby make them more useful to the youth and adults in our community.

The Negro Civic Forum congratulates the Booker T. Washington faculty on its efforts to develop an increasingly effective program of instruction and commends the faculty and students for their effort to inform others through a story about the activities in the school and the purposes behind these activities, for Forum members are fully aware of the time, effort, and courage this undertaking must have required.

—Dr. J. E. Pitman for the Negro Civic Forum

## Introduction

The development of Booker T. Washington High School has been a gradual process. Indeed, it has not just happened. Two related factors operating constantly have influenced whatever growth the school has achieved.

Expanded physical facilities, the first of these factors, have been a responsibility assumed largely by the local school board. The second factor, professional growth needed in order to plan and project a forward-looking instructional program, has been the responsibility of the faculty. Undoubtedly, some growth in professional insight and skill would have occurred merely through the natural alertness of the faculty. However, the rate of this growth has been greatly accelerated by certain professional experiences that came to teachers as a result of the school's membership in the Secondary School Study and as a result of a variety of other professional experiences which came at times when teachers needed them in order to develop plans for forward steps in the program of the school. The faculty knows now that academic summer courses, six different workshops, professional reading, cooperative in-service study, purposeful observation in other schools, and helpful contacts with consultants and supervisors have had a marked effect on the development of the program at Booker T.

Members of the Secondary School Study staff have given invaluable cooperation to our faculty in the development of a school program to serve better the needs of our pupils and community. Mr. W. A. Robinson, director of the Study and his associate, Mr. W. H. Brown, through their personal enthusiasm and sustained interest have created countless opportunities for our faculty, either as individuals or as a group, to have unusual professional experiences.

The faculty has engaged in a continuous and critical study of professional experiences for two reasons. It wanted to know to what extent various kinds of professional experiences for teachers could result in increased opportunities in the school for important pupil growth. It wanted, also, to be in a position to make wise choices of professional experiences whenever further opportunities for choices were presented. Members of the faculty have listed unusually significant experiences, both in and out of the Study, and have summarized briefly the direct influences which these experiences have had on the development of the school.

Five workshops conducted or sponsored by the Study were attended by seven members of the faculty, who worked on problems dealing with (1) discovering the needs and interests of secondary school students, (2) the reorganization of classes throughout the school to meet these needs and interests, (3) the organization and development of core courses, (4) analysis and improvement of student council and homeroom organiza-

tion, (5) development of a program of evaluation, and (6) improving the guidance services available in the school. Other teachers, with these same areas of improvement in mind, have taken regular academic courses with the primary objective of acquiring specific skills and points of view for enriching the classroom techniques and pupil-teacher relationships.

Through continuous correspondence during each school year, the directors of the Secondary School Study were informed on the steps taken in the development of the program of the school. As a result, the Study staff has been able to provide suggestions and help when and where such services were most needed. Useful books, pamphlets, magazines, and articles were sent us from the Study office. Consultants in various fields were contacted by the directors of the Study and sent to the school where the faculty expressed a need for special assistance and advice. As various members of our faculty worked on problems in the school program, the Study provided opportunities for them to visit other schools and to attend conferences where they could get useful firsthand information on or see certain theories in action.

In the fall semester of the school year 1943-44, an extension course, "Problems in American Education," was offered in our school by Columbia University. Individuals and groups of teachers working with the instructor planned the content of this course in terms of problems in our instructional program. The instructor visited various classes and activities in the school and related what was done in the extension course to needs and problems discovered through his observations in classes.

As a result of close cooperation with all agencies sharing our interests in furthering the program at Booker T., several steps have been taken in the school's developmental program during the six-year-period faculty study. This does not mean that the school staff is complacent and satisfied with the present status of the program. The school's long-term plans include further development in all the areas mentioned below and several additional areas in which work has not yet begun. Formal reports on the school's program, including long-term plans for further development, have been made to the director of the Secondary School Study, to the State Department of Education, to the Commission on Secondary Schools, and to the regional accrediting agency.

As this story is being produced, the members of the faculty feel, as a group, they are consciously and more cooperatively working toward (1) continuous professional improvement of the staff, (2) more democratic living in the school, (3) more purposeful adaptation of subject matter, (4) improved guidance services, (5) more contributions to the improvement of community life, and (6) continuous appraisal of objectives which are being reclassified and redefined as teachers gain more insight.

This book is an attempt to tell in a more readable and less technical

way what the current program is like to Booker T. Washington High School and to indicate, to some extent, how it came to be as it is. In writing the story, we wanted to convey a message to teachers and students in our own and other schools, to our community, and to those teacher-training institutions and state and regional agencies interested in gaining additional information about the problems and needs of teachers.

For our present faculty, the story already has served to give a more complete picture of the school's program and has enabled each teacher to see a little more clearly how his contribution fits into the pattern of contributions made by others. During the three-year period required to produce this story, the faculty became more conscious of certain weak, as well as certain strong, points in the school. In cases where it was possible to strengthen weaknesses immediately, we did so and mentioned the improvement in the story. In other cases, where changes must come about more gradually, we have included desired improvements in our long-term plans. In times such as these when a high rate of teacher turnover seems inevitable, the story may give new teachers in the system a simple yet fairly complete picture of the program and may encourage them to make further contributions to the development of the school. Through this story we hope to share with other schools our determined efforts toward developing pupils who can accept increasing responsibility in a wide range of situations in and out of school. It is our hope that this book will put the school's program before the community so that pupils, parents, and patrons will have a truer conception of and, perhaps, more confidence in what the school is trying to accomplish.

*High School Was Like This* is an effort to describe a school in which children are the greatest reality.

Pupils and teachers collaborated on the sections about the student council and the commencement speeches. Pupils have assisted in checking other sections and have made valuable suggestions for the improvement of the story.

We acknowledge with deep appreciation the help and encouragement we have received from Dr. N. C. Newbold, State Director, Division of Negro Education; Dr. H. L. Trig and Dr. A. E. Manley, former Supervisors of Negro High Schools of North Carolina; the North Carolina State Board of Education; Mr. R. M. Wilson, Superintendent of Rocky Mount City Schools; the Rocky Mount School Board; and the group of individuals who are kind enough to assist with the technical aspects of the publication. These individuals and agencies have shown sympathetic interest during the six years of the school's participation in the Study. It is, to a large extent, because of their encouragement that we have attempted to write about the activities in our school.

—The Faculty



## CHAPTER I

## Planning to Get Somewhere

## 1

"Say, Herbert, what about your commencement speech? How's it going?"

"Not so hot, Sarah. I haven't got even the first line yet. How in the world can we tell what four years in high school's like in twenty-minute speeches? I've thought of some things to say, but they won't do because they're about me and not exactly about the school. It's okay to tell about the school at our commencement because people want to know what's going on in Booker T., but the class could have picked somebody better'n me to speak. I could learn a speech and say it or I could just get up and say what I think, but writing is for people like you. Say! Maybe I could get some ideas from what you have written."

"I haven't started yet either, Herbert. At first, I thought it would be easy to write a speech about school, but I'm worried now because I've never written anything like this before, and I've never thought much about what school does for people. I'll tell you the truth: I don't know what to do, so I've done nothing yet. This is going to be a hard job."

"You're telling me. And look at all the other things we have to do in our classes! Lessons get awful hard in the spring, too. But we've gotta do something. The class is depending on us, y'know."

"Look! Let's ask Miss Jackson to help us get started. She's been here a long time, and you know she's always ready to help anybody."

"I think you've got something, Sarah. I remember the good talk she made on how to choose a college. Okay, let's go now."

A few moments later the two students stood in the doorway to Miss Jackson's room. Miss Jackson was gathering up the papers and books on her desk and thinking of her afternoon chores at home. Keeping house and teaching school at the same time certainly has its drawbacks. She couldn't escape the eternal problems such as deciding what to cook; when to get around to washing the bundle of clothes; what to do about her problem pupils, James and Helen, who seemed to be making no progress in school; finding time to complete all the different kinds of required school records before due dates; getting in some kind of recreation that would not invite criticism from the community . . . She looked up when she heard a slight shuffling of feet and audible whispers. Sarah was trying to get Herbert to lead the way into the room, but Herbert, sensing the responsibility of the leader to open the conference, was hanging back and insisting, "Ladies first."

"Why, it's Sarah and Herbert. Come on in if you want to see me," Miss Jackson said pleasantly as she pointed toward two chairs near her desk. Sarah and Herbert exchanged greetings with Miss Jackson as they sat down.

"Miss Jackson," said Herbert, coming straight to the point, "we are supposed to make the speeches for our class at commencement this year, but we don't know what to say in this kind of speech except we've enjoyed our years in high school. It's going to be tough deciding what needs to be said and how say it. We thought you might help us get started."

Miss Jackson listened to Herbert with great interest. Who would have thought that the mischievous Herbert Booker, who four years ago had the distinction of being called privately "Nuisance No. 1," would have changed so much? And Sarah Jones has grown up at seventeen. She had always finished whatever she started. No doubt the senior class had considered the capabilities of these two people as they chose their commencement speakers. Miss Jackson thought the seniors had made wise selections.

"I'll be glad to work with you, and it's good that you are making an early beginning," replied Miss Jackson. "I suppose your homeroom teacher told you that I had agreed to help you plan the speeches."

"I'm sure Mrs. Baker hasn't had a chance to tell us," Sarah said quickly. "She has been busy helping our class plan all the things we have to do. Herbert and I agreed to work on the speeches, but we didn't tell her we were starting right away. We are glad you're going to help us, and we sure do need help."

"Don't worry too much about the speeches themselves right now, because any speech seems difficult until you decide what you want to tell. Once you decide that a thing is important and needs to be said, you need not worry about how to say it. Just say it naturally. Right now, I think you need to find something that you feel needs to be said."

"That's our trouble all right," Herbert declared.

"Suppose we begin by deciding what you've found most important since you've been in high school. Tell me what you've found useful, Sarah."

"I'll tell you the truth, Miss Jackson. I get disgusted sometimes, but I don't remember anything that I really dislike," Sarah said. "I think homemaking and music classes are swell. I like the way we do things in some of the other classes, too," she added.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean the way we choose the work, make plans, and help make decisions."

"What about you, Herbert? What do you consider important?" the

teacher prompted.

"Well, physical ed. and the student council are 'tops' with me. They give a fellow a chance to express himself—more so than some classes."

"Has anything else struck you as important enough to mention particularly?"

"Let's include something about our War Activities Committee and what we did to push the war effort," suggested Herbert. "And I can remember when some of the classwork was much duller than it is now and when the library didn't have some of the good books it has now. But maybe I'm the one that's changed and not the school."

Miss Jackson, too, remembered when the children in most classes recited lessons assigned from day to day by teachers. Then, teachers dared not leave their rooms for a minute because the children, having plans for nothing else, would get into all kinds of mischief. But not many rooms were like that now, especially since most classes were trying to plan their activities for several days in advance and since pupils were learning to lead discussion, work on individual or small group plans, and take responsibility for certain of the classroom activities. "Herbert, I'm sure you are right about the school's being changed a little," Miss Jackson declared. "And maybe you have changed some as you grew up. Anyway, before the speeches are finished, we will know more about all of these things."

Herbert smiled his approval, and Sarah's eyes widened as she sat up straighter on her seat.

"What's on your mind, Sarah?" asked Miss Jackson.

"Well, I could ask Mother to suggest something to add to the list."

Herbert cocked his head to one side and looked at the girl in wonder. "What in the world are you going to ask your mother for, Sarah? How would she know anything about the school? I thought we were supposed to tell the parents what school is like."

"You know how she is, Herbert. She says I'm crazy about this school and if it should burn down or I couldn't come over here, she thinks I'd die. Besides, she asks me so many questions about it and reads the school news as much as I do." Sara paused, then went on haltingly, "You see, she knew me better than anyone else before I came to high school, and she knows me better now, so—so." The girl stopped completely and broke into a little embarrassed laugh. "I don't know how to say it."

"You're saying it very well, my dear," Miss Jackson assured Sarah.

"You mean your mother can show you how the school has helped you to grow since you've been here."

Herbert sat up straighter as he considered the thought advanced by Sara. "Say, that's not a bad idea! Maybe all our parents could help, too. Mr. Dent is always saying in class that we're the citizens of tomorrow. If

that's so, the school is not just helping students. It's helping the town."

"Now that you have mentioned several ideas that you think ought to be included, perhaps these should be put down as general guides. I believe you mentioned chances to learn how to choose, to plan, to get enjoyment out of school—and no doubt you will think of others. You have mentioned some places where you might find more specific illustrations to include in your speeches. I believe you might look into any written materials already in the school. You might consider activities in the different classes and people who know things about the school. It seems to me that you have quite enough ideas for beginning," the teacher advised. "You shouldn't have any more trouble on that score."

"But, Miss Jackson, how are we going to write it up?" Sarah was trying to see the practical side of writing speeches. "What I mean is that we don't have enough information of our own, and I don't think we will be able to remember all that has gone on since we've been in school."

"Why not first try to collect and write out a number of brief examples of how this school helps its students with the things you have in your list. Later, we can get the speech organized, using some of these examples."

"Oh, I see," said Herbert. "You mean we can talk about students in general rather than just ourselves. I like that idea—but that means finding out what other students think about school."

"Why don't you talk with the council present and some of the students from those classes you like the best?"

"Yes, and we can use the school's war activities scrapbook. I'm sure Mrs. Bronson will be glad to let us borrow it," added Herbert.

"I'm one of the office girls, you know," said Sarah with a little tinge of pride, "and I've seen a row of the file cases in the record room that might help us. Maybe Mr. Paine will tell us about the records."

"I'm sure he will," replied the teacher, "and not only the principal, but all the other members of the faculty will be glad to help you gather material."

"Miss Jackson, I think I see what to do, but I don't quite see when we will have a chance to see the people we need to see," Sarah said.

"You and Herbert could afford to miss a class now and then, especially since your speeches will enable you to learn some new and important things. Your teachers understand that you need some time to work on your speeches. However, you should take up the matter of missing classes with Mr. Paine, and if he agrees to your plan, you should always tell your teachers when you plan to be out of class and you should make appointments with the people whom you wish to see."

"There's just one more thing. We've got to find some way to be sure that Herbert and I don't say the same things in our speeches. That would

bore the audience,” Sarah advised.

“You’re quite right, Sarah,” said Miss Jackson. She picked up a sheet on which she had been jotting down notes during the discussion. “To avoid the danger of repetition, let’s classify the information you want and then divide the work to be done between you. How do you like that idea?”

Both students showed quick approval.

“This is the way I have classified the suggestions you have made,” she continued. “They seem to come under three big headings. First, you will need to get information that will help you decide in what ways students are helped in the regular courses.”

“That’s it,” Sarah approved.

“Second, you want to get all the information you can about the value of activities outside the straight course of study, such as the council, dramatics, war activities, the glee club, and other clubs.”

“That should be second because it’s almost as important as the regular classwork,” commented Herbert.

“Third, you want to find out from your parents and from other citizens how the school serves the community.”

“The whole thing sounds good now. I hope we will be able to work it out,” Herbert said thoughtfully.

“Now let’s divide the work,” continued Miss Jackson.

“I’ll take the straight courses,” offered Sarah. “Then I’ll get firsthand information from teachers and students about what’s helpful in those classes.”

“And I’ll work with the extra activities,” said Herbert. “You know I’ll like that.”

“Good,” Miss Jackson said. “Then you’ll both be working on something you like. And I suggest that you work together on the last area—the one about the service to the community.”

“When do we start?” asked Sarah.

“The sooner, the better,” answered Miss Jackson. “Why not go to Mr. Paine tomorrow with the outline of our plan and then you can begin to arrange for conferences with students and teachers. Of course, I will help you collect information, and we can talk things over as the work proceeds.”

The two students thanked Miss Jackson, chatted a few moments about school in general, and left.

Again, Miss Jackson began preparing to go home. She glanced at her watch. It was four thirty. School had been out an hour, but how quickly the time had passed. She had enjoyed every minute of the conference, but her list of chores was certainly no shorter. With quick steps she left the room.

## 2

Mr. Paine, the principal, looked up as the two young people entered the office for a 9:30 appointment with him. He had seen both of them grow from adolescence into the beginning of a serious maturity. To him, they represented some justification for all the efforts he and the teachers had made to develop a school in which adolescents might find many opportunities for steady growth. He felt reasonably certain that Herbert and Sarah were ready to tackle important jobs beyond high school.

"Good morning, Sarah and Herbert. I've heard about the plans that your class has for commencement this year, and I like the idea because I think the speeches might answer some of the questions that people, including local citizens, have asked about our program," said the principal warmly as he met the pupils between the door and his desk. "Come! Sit down and tell me how I can help you."

"Thank you, Mr. Paine," Herbert replied. "We have a plan to work by, but we want you to see it and okay the changes it calls for in our schedules. It's going to take a lot of time to see people in the school and find out what the school is for, how the teachers get together on big things to be done, and . . ."

Sarah took advantage of the pause. "We want to be sure that we understand what the school is trying to do for us, and you can help with that."

"We know, too," Herbert chimed in, "that students in the lower high school grades are doing things we didn't do in the ninth and tenth grades. Some of them even beat us on the achievement tests this year. If these pupils have any advantages, we think the commencement audience should know what they are."

"You have undertaken a big job," the principal warned as he glanced quickly at the plans, "but you seem to know what you are trying to do, and I think you will do a good job. These changes in your schedules are all right with me, if Miss Jackson thinks they are necessary. I believe I can help you understand what we think school is for."

From one of his desk drawers Mr. Paine produced a statement which he explained had been drawn up by the faculty.

"There are two points about our program on which the faculty has agreed," he said as he ran his finger down a page of the statement in search of the points.

He read the two points slowly and accented certain words.

School should afford our students *guided* practice in making wise decisions about things that affect *them* and in accepting *responsibility* for these decision.

School should give students *practice* in solving real problems and should bring to children the kind of *satisfaction* and recognition that they deserve.

"In these few words there are many big ideas and important beliefs that we think regulate life in this school," Mr. Paine said.

"I had a hard time learning to make decisions," Sarah admitted. "I just expected to be told what to do, and if the teacher didn't tell us, I felt cross and fussy. I caught on after a while, but I can understand now how some children feel when teachers ask them to help decide something. Sometimes we think our minds are made up to one thing, then we talk and talk and finally change our decision. Please say a little more about making decisions and then changing them, Mr. Paine."

Mr. Paine understood what Sarah had in mind, for he had encountered this same problem many times as the faculty had tried to agree on something. Apparently, Sarah had seen the difference between making wise decisions and merely making decisions. But when was a decision wise?

"It is not always easy for a group to make wise decisions," Mr. Paine explained. "Getting a group to agree, even when each member of the group thinks an agreement should be reached, is a time-consuming and sometimes unpleasant task. For example, every member of our faculty believes that school should help boys and girls grow up to be as useful and as intelligent as they can possibly be. All of us believe that useful people don't have to be told always what to do and when to do it. So, we try not to do too much of this kind of telling. Instead, we find or create in the school many kinds of situations in which pupils can face problems that are very real to them and that they want very much to solve. But a teacher can't know all the angles to every problem and doesn't pretend to know all the answers."

"I think it's bad, too, for a student to pretend to know all the answers," said Herbert. "Coach Arnold tells us to believe enough in a football play that he suggests, or that some member of the team works out, to give it a fair trial in a game, but not to feel that any play is good until we have found that it works. I guess it's not as easy as that in regular classes."

Mr. Paine agreed with Herbert. "But have you found that in regular classes, teachers help pupils prove the value of ideas?"

"Yes," Sarah reflected, "I could give examples from many classes, when the teacher helped us find the information we needed in order to make a good decision and, just as in sports, we tried out our plan by actually putting it into action. Then all of us, including the teacher, could see whether or not we had come to a good decision. We do this in regular subjects like English and science, and in social activities such as assemblies and school council."

"And even in commencements," added Mr. Paine with a smile.

"I have a question about the second point you said the teachers had agreed on," Herbert said. "I have had a chance in high school to work on

what I'd call real problems. I fixed a lot of electrical devices around home when I took general science, and in mathematics I measured everything from the diameter of a hair to the height of the large chimney and flagpole out on the campus. I got a lot out of the discussion of marriage and problems of running a home. Sometimes I wonder why we didn't go further with problems like getting civil rights for all people, cleaning up the slums, and stopping the black market."

"Those are indeed real problems, Herbert," said the principal, "and all of us need to think hard about them. But you see, in school, we try not to put children into situations that require problem-solving skills that are too difficult for them in their present stage of growth. These problems are for older and more experienced people to solve. Difficult problems like these arise in school as well as at home and in civic life. For example, there are some things about this school that the faculty must explain, because it has made these things as they are. You must be careful that your speeches do not include or attempt to explain practices and policies that teachers accept responsibility for. But you must accept full responsibility for everything you say.

"We believe that successful living is simply getting intelligent and satisfactory solutions to the problems in life, and we try to see that our pupils have ample experience in solving real problems while they are in school."

"Say, Mr. Paine, that's the kind of idea I want to include in my paper. That's just what I have felt about the school, but I know I can't say it like you said it," said Herbert.

"Get the idea, and if you feel it deeply enough, you can say it just as well in your own words," Mr. Paine advised.

"Excuse me, Mr. Paine, for asking this question, but I really want to know the answer," chimed in Sarah. "Do all those file drawers contain decisions that we have made? . . . I mean, what are the things in there good for?"

Mr. Paine smiled because he understood exactly what Sarah wanted to know.

"Oh, yes. I didn't tell you that the principal and teachers have to make decisions, too. All of us are learning to be more useful, and these files contain the information that we refer to sometimes in deciding what kinds of opportunities for learning should be offered in the school. There is a folder for each of the six hundred students, and we keep . . . well, let's look at one of the folders."

"I'd like to see what's in mine," said Herbert.

Mr. Paine found Herbert's folder, and the little group huddled around the principal's desk. There were marks from both the elementary school and the high school, a fairly complete record of his physical



growth, including the dates of immunization for various diseases, a record of social growth as observed by teachers from year to year, and all the standard tests and checklists Herbert had used. Herbert's eyes lingered on statements and checks about his social growth while Sarah was looking at a questionnaire on activities in the school.

"That questionnaire," said Mr. Paine, "gave us valuable information about the assembly, library, clubs, and other activities, and we are still using it. For instance, many students felt that the same boys and girls always got the chances to do big school jobs such as appearing on assembly programs and representing the school on public programs. We have tried since to give more people a chance. I think it is important to mention that the replies made by the pupils caused us to change our whole idea about school parties."

"I believe all of the children noticed the improvements made in the lunchroom and in many other places after we filled out that questionnaire," Sarah said, "and we were glad to know that what we said made a difference." Sarah wrote a short sentence in her notebook: *People try hard to make suggestions when they have seen their suggestions put into practice.*

Herbert had picked up a checklist dealing with the problems which worried high school pupils. "I remember this because all of us talked for days about the questions on this sheet: money problems, how we got along with teachers, girlfriends, and worries that people usually don't talk about. After this checklist was handed in, nobody said much to me about the problems I checked, but in nearly all of my classes teachers seemed to drop an idea or suggestion that helped me. That's the kind of help a fellow likes to get." Herbert jotted down a few words in his notebook: *High school helps us work out our personal worries.*

"Committees of teachers collect this information about children's needs and problems and bring it to faculty meetings, where we try to decide how to use it," said Mr. Paine. "Then it's put in these files so that any teacher can get it for more careful study. Keeping these files up to date without a school clerk is a tremendous job for the teachers, but they try to do so, because they believe good decisions require up-to-date information."

Herbert and Sarah had often wondered what those file cabinets in the office contained. Sarah hadn't ever been "sent" to the office, but in years past, Herbert had sat there many times waiting to see what would happen to him after some smart trick had got him into trouble. Never before had he realized that those files had such a friendly purpose.

When they left Mr. Paine, promising to come back if they needed to, Sarah said, "He really has the 'dope' on everybody in the school."

"You're telling me!" Herbert replied. "That's why I've been so careful lately. But I haven't had to worry so much about going to the office; I'm

knocking on wood though.” Herbert tapped his head. “When I was a kid I went there often enough. Remember, Sarah?”

“Yes, but what do you think you are now—a man?”

“Well, Uncle Sam thinks so and it won’t be long now before I receive my greetings.”

“Oh, Herbert, will you? I hate to see you boys go.” They didn’t speak for a moment, then Sarah said, “Well, I think we got something from our talk with Mr. Paine. To the three big points we had on our list—learning to choose, and learning to play and to enjoy—I added the one Mr. Paine talked so much about: learning to take responsibility. Maybe we can write about these four big things without seeing so many people. That ought not be so hard.”

“Sounds good to me but not too easy,” assured Herbert, “but I think we ought to talk with Miss Jackson again before we change our plans.”

Back in the office, Mr. Paine slowly placed the folders in his files. Showing the folders to the children had made him realize how his files of information had grown in the last few years. Six years ago, he wouldn’t have had so much to show. But then, six years ago, children in school would not have been writing commencement papers about the school.

Four years ago, the children had their first opportunity to take significant part in the commencement. That commencement was a dramatization called “Thirty-five Years of Progress.” Indeed the success of this commencement encouraged the teachers to try a second theme, “The Weight of Evidence,” in which the children told how the school was growing. Later, a commencement theme, “Youth Tells Its Story,” was used. Now the children were planning to tell the community how the school helped them to “grow up.”

Steps which the school had taken over the years on different phases of its program were vivid in Mr. Paine’s mind. He thought of many summers during which he and his teachers had invested much of the small salaries in study at the best universities. These summers have yielded a wealth of valuable ideas about school development, so Mr. Paine and his teachers were ready to take full advantage of the opportunity, provided in the Atlanta workshop of the Secondary School Study, to formulate plans for getting more of their ideas to open in Booker T. Washington High. As a member of the State Education Planning Committee on the Twelve Year Course of Study and of the Committee on Equalization of Educational Opportunities, the principal had been able to share the best thinking of these committees with teachers. He recalled the first investment he and his teachers had made in professional books and the teachers’ organizations they had joined in order to get professional magazines.

The professional experiences of individual faculty members had been

pooled to bring about such gains as had been made by the school. Even those teachers who had moved on to other jobs, after a year in the school, had left something valuable, either in the program or in the children. And there were still many more gains to be made in the endless task of improving the school. Each new development in the program led to ideas about other things which needed to be done. The teachers were still going away to study during the summers, and they always came back with greater enthusiasm and more ideas. Mr. Paine didn't want this process to end; yet he wondered where it would lead the faculty and the school. It was true that some of the teachers were developing into "specialists," but demands were already being made for their services by other schools. What would this mean, eventually, to the teachers and to the school?

## CHAPTER II

## Getting What It Takes

## 3

Herbert met Sarah at the door of their homeroom. It was Tuesday, and homerooms were meeting as usual during the activities period.

"Got anything new on your speech, Sarah?" asked Herbert as they entered the room.

"Not exactly, but I'll have something about English soon," Sarah responded.

"Well, I'm still plugging away, too," Herbert laughed. "I've been talking to the boys and getting their ideas about school. I'll tell you school means different things to different people."

The class was getting settled for an important homeroom meeting. The president called for order and minutes of the last meeting. Herbert, like most of the seniors, listened to every word in the minutes. Today each homeroom would hear the reports of their student council representatives, and matters in these reports would affect everybody in the school. Each pupil would have a chance to agree with, question, or suggest changes in the recommendations which the council had made. As one of the council representatives, Herbert would prepare and take back to the council a statement of how his class felt about recommendations or other matters which the council had asked homerooms to consider.

The new business for today was to decide whether the annual Spring Festival should be undertaken this year. The council had recommended a festival and had suggested a date. Everybody in the senior class was in favor of having a school-wide festival. The president opened the discussion by asking what the senior class would do in connection with the festival.

"Mr. President, I suggest that we have a one-act play," offered Gladys. There were several nods of approval.

"Mr. President!" came almost explosively from a boy near the back of the room.

"Yes, David."

"Mr. President, I think we should consider something else this year. We've given plays for three years straight. We're getting in a rut! Other types of programs can be just as interesting. Why don't we choose something else?"

"But the students always enjoy our plays," objected Christine.

"That's right." "They certainly do." "You said it!" came a chorus of agreements.

"Sure, they enjoy our plays," David agreed. "We don't give anything but good plays, so they've got to enjoy them."

There was general laughter at this expression of class conceit. Little groups of two or three pupils began to talk and argue among themselves about what was best to do until the president called for order.

"I *still* say," continued David, "that we should make a change. We can make them enjoy some other kind of program just like they enjoyed our plays."

Herbert rose. "Mr. President," he said, "I believe David has something. Let's have him make some suggestions."

"Well, we've studied intercultural relations this year. We could have an open forum on it. The council's quiz program was very interesting. Everybody enjoyed it. We could have a different kind of quiz program. Those are just two suggestions, but I saw two books in the library that can be very helpful if we want some more ideas."

David's enthusiasm began to spread to other members of the class, and several them added to the list of suggestions. The president appointed a committee (with David as chairman) to work out details for the program and make a report at a call meeting of the class.

In other homerooms, similar meetings were being conducted. While the lower classes were not so adept at conducting business, they were learning the fundamentals of parliamentary procedure and were developing the skills of planning together and reaching workable conclusions. In the discussions they were learning to express themselves and to listen while others gave opinions, presented facts, or made suggestions. All homerooms used a part of the period for receiving reports from and formulating suggestions for representatives on the council.

Herbert took a few minutes to jot down an idea for his speech.  
*Everybody in the world ought to know how to have his say and help carry on the business of a group. In our homeroom we have many chances to learn this. Examples—planning and getting ready for assemblies or homeroom parties; talking about what we can do after we finish high school and how to get ready; talking about jobs and deciding whether we could get them; continuing open forums started in assembly; talking about etiquette and treating girls right; discussing our courses for next year; saying what's good and what's bad about assemblies, activity programs, classes, and the whole school, and deciding what we can do to make things better.*

#### 4

Sarah opened the door to Miss Jackson's room. It was the teacher's conference period.

"Good morning, Sarah," Miss Jackson said pleasantly. "Come in and tell me what's on your mind."

"I hate to bother you again so soon," Sarah apologized, "but I want you to look at what I've done before I go on with my speech." Sarah fumbled inside her notebook as she selected several pages of notes."

"I'm glad you came, Sarah. Are you having any trouble?"

"Trouble?" Miss Jackson, this is harder than anything I've ever tried to do," answered Sarah through a deep frown. "When I talk with you, everything looks easy; but then I try to go on by myself, I get lost. Then we are having long assignments in almost every class, and I don't feel right going to class without these assignments."

"Let's see what you have," said the teacher.

Sarah explained the notes as she handed them, page by page, to Miss Jackson. "These are the big points we listed during our last conference. After our talk with Mr. Paine, we added the last point: How the school helps us become responsible. I understand these points, but I don't know what to do with this long list of courses and activities I got from class schedules. Do I have to say something about all of these?"

Miss Jackson found that Sarah's list of courses and activities looked like this:

### **Credit Courses**

Language Arts: (1) Basic English I, II, III, IV; (2) Literature, I, II, III, IV; (3) Journalism and Creative Writing; (4) Speech; (5) Dramatics;

Social Studies: (6) Citizenship; (7) American History; (8) World History; (9) Modern History; (10) Sociology; (11) Economics; (12) Negro History; (13) Problems in American Democracy; (14) Occupational Guidance;

Mathematics: (15) General Mathematics I & II; (16) Algebra I & II; (17) Basic Mathematics; (18) Business Arithmetic; (19) Plane Geometry; (20) Solid Geometry; (21) Trigonometry;

Natural Science: (22) General Science; (23) Biology; (24) Chemistry; (25) Economic Geography; (26) Social Geography; (27) Physical Geography;

Home Making: (28) Nutrition; (29) Infant Care; (30) Handicrafts; (31) Home Nursing; (32) Personal and Social Development; (33) Home and Family Living; (34) Home Management; (35) Nursery School Education; (36) Consumer Economics; (37) Home Decoration [or Interior Decoration]; (38) Grooming;

Vocational Education: (39) Woodworking; (40) Sheet Metal; (41) Brick Laying; (42) Carpentry; (43) Auto-Mechanics; (44) Architectural Drawing; (45) Blue Print Reading; (46) Machine Shop; (47) Welding;

Foreign Language: (48) French I & II; (49) Latin I & II;

Health and Physical Education: (50) Calisthenics; (51) Marching Tactics; (52) Tumbling; (53) Individual & Group Stunts; (54) Pyramids; (55) Games, Relays; (56) Control of Communicable Disease; (57) School

and Community Sanitation; (58) Health Requirements, Health and Safety Hazards in High School

### **Non-Credit Activities**

(1) Student Council; (2) Dramatic Club [Jr. & Sr.]; (3) Glee Club [Jr. & Sr.]; (4) Boys' Chorus; (5) Girls' Ensemble; (6) National Honor Society; (7) Girl Reserves [Jr. & Sr.]; (8) Science Club; (9) Negro History Club; (10) Library Club; (11) Football Teams; (12) Basketball Teams; (13) Track Teams; (14) Softball Teams; (15) Games Club; (16) Junior Red Cross; (17) Home Economics Club; (18) First Aid Training Groups; (19) Victory Corps; (20) Camera Club; (21) Library Assistants; (22) Band; (23) All School Committee [except Guidance]; (24) Guides; (25) Plays; (26) Cafeteria Assistants; (27) Office Assistants; (28) Debating; (29) Literary Club; (30) Managing motion picture and sound system machines; (31) Advertising and public relations; (32) Painting, Drawing, Lettering; (33) Auditing; (34) Library Reading Groups; (35) Programs and Shows; (36) Flag Bearing; (37) Cheer Leaders' Club; (38) Repair Work; (39) Ushers; (40) Varsity Club; (41) Le Cercle Français; (42) Baseball Team

"I see what you mean" was the teacher's comment as she examined the list. "We have had all of these in the school during the last four years all right, but I don't think you should try to find out how every course helps those taking part in it. Just see what the big subject areas—such as English, mathematics, social studies, and home economics—seem to do for boys and girls every day. You shouldn't have to look too hard for the really important contributions of these subjects because these things usually stand out in the life around the school and in the minds of teachers and students. Herbert might select from the list a few of the activities that involve many students."

"Let's take English, Miss Jackson, because that's where I want to begin. I know what we did in the courses I took and I think English has helped me, but I don't know exactly how."

"Don't look so woebegone," laughed Miss Jackson. "It's not as bad as that. As plans for the job improve, the job will become easier. For example, you might plan to get a statement from each English teacher that would tell the big things pupils and teachers are trying to accomplish and how they go about it in different English classes."

"I'll do that, Miss Jackson, if you think that will tell what we really get. But couldn't you just get me started by telling me about some of those big things? Do you mean a thing like reading regularly in order to keep up with what's happening in the world?"

"Why, yes, that is one thing. That is why we feel we can never have too many books, newspapers, and magazines in the school." Miss Jackson explained that all of the different English classes were trying to

accomplish just about the same things but that not all worked in exactly the same way. "Everything we do in English," she said, "is expected to help with the big job of communicating ideas, and that means getting ideas from others as well as being sure that one's own ideas get over to others. One must think in order to produce good ideas, and this is why English classes work for better and better discussions and not just talk."

"Oh! I see," said Sarah. "That's why the teachers don't make all of us read the same books anymore. In English classes we have talked a lot about how to select the books we read, and I know this has helped me to find good books and to read more. Sometimes all of us have agreed to read the same book so that it could be discussed by the whole class, but most of the time each person reads books he has chosen for some reason. Even in the ninth grade we kept a list of everything we read, and Mrs. Baker used to talk to us about wide but deep reading."

"We hope students are doing more than just reading books," the teacher said. "We want every student to know how to use a library and to enjoy books so that he will want to have them around him. We want their talking and writing to reflect clear thinking. And most of all, we want them to learn, through reading, what life is all about. Other subjects help us with these same things as the main jobs in these subjects are being done, but in English these are the main jobs."

Miss Jackson explained that through teachers' meetings and summer study, the teachers were learning how to help pupils see good things to do, plan interesting ways to do these things, and assume leadership in carrying out plans that they made. "This seems to make people more useful. They can help themselves and each other, and they work harder and go farther. As far as possible, each teacher works with the same class for at least two years. This gives the teacher a better chance to know the pupils and usually results in more steady growth."

"Humph. I must be mighty dumb not to have recognized some of these things before; you've made it so plain! I've liked English all the time, but it's more interesting to me now than it was in the ninth grade. I hope I'll be able to make all of this clear in my speech," Sarah declared as she jotted down ideas in her notebook.

"Of course you will," encouraged Miss Jackson.

"That's a pretty pin you're wearing," complimented Sarah as she touched the pin lightly.

Miss Jackson smiled her thanks. She knew this was Sarah's way of showing appreciation for the help she'd received.

"I believe I can pick out plenty to say about journalism," Sarah continued. "That's English too, and I'm a member of the class."

The teacher turned several pages in a report she had on her desk. "Here is an interesting description of work done by a typical eleventh



grade class. They've worked with Miss Townes for two years, and they particularly like approaching their study through group work. They've divided themselves into six groups with interest areas: Life in Various Ways, Sports, Love and Romance, Second World War, Negroes in World War II, and Negro Actors and Actresses."

A new alertness came into Sarah's eyes.

"Those sound like they might be useful. Will you let me read them tonight?"

"Certainly you may," replied Miss Jackson. "And here is a report from another class. They've formed a Better Speech Club for the purpose of setting a standard in speech for the class. They impose penalties on themselves when they do not write or speak correctly."

"Oh, I understand now," said Sarah. "That's what Alice Dean meant last week when she spoke about some club that had made her English course more interesting. She likes music, and in the club she has a chance to make talks or write about music. I think all of us enjoy the discussions we have in some of our English classes."

"Yes," agreed Miss Jackson. "Discussions help some students to develop correct speech and at the same time stress the importance of sound thinking. The question of compulsory military training is a live one for the boys, and I have heard six of the veterans do a fine job of backing up their arguments. Before James Bonner spent three years in the service, he was quite reticent about joining in class discussions and expressing his opinion. But the other day, he led the discussion and did such a fine job that the class unanimously elected him chairman of discussion group. You see, we are not only trying to write, speak, and read well, but we want to be sure we are doing some real thinking and sound reasoning."

"I guess you're right," Sarah laughed. "Our class has adopted a slogan from the title of an article we read in the *Reader's Digest*—Take Time to Think."

"Now, let's see where we stand. You have a summary of the English courses throughout the school, a detailed description of a typical eleventh grade class, and you can easily get firsthand information in your journalism class."

"Everything seems much clearer now," Sarah smiled, greatly relieved. "There's another thing," Miss Jackson continued. "The English-social studies core class in the tenth grade should be interesting."

"I've heard a lot of talk about that class, but I still don't know what it's all about."

"Why not visit the class?" Miss Jackson asked.

A hesitant look came into Sarah's eyes. "But what would I do?" she stammered. "Are there any special questions I should ask the teacher or pupils?"

"Not particularly. Just sit in the class and see what it is like," Miss Jackson reassured her. "You need not feel uneasy. I think you will find it a pleasant experience."

"But will I have to ask the teacher and pupils questions?" Sarah asked, still uncertain.

"As you observe the group, some questions probably will come to you. I'm sure the class will be glad to answer any you may have. You need not have any definite set of questions prepared, however. Just remember that you are gathering information on how the school is helping pupils to become more useful," advised Miss Jackson.

"Thanks. I believe I can do that," answered Sarah. "I'll try to visit the core class right away, and then I think I ought to begin an outline for my speech."

"Good. Come back and let me know how you get along," said Miss Jackson as Sarah reached the door.

"Thank you, Miss Jackson. I will," the girl replied.

Sarah went to her journalism class with much clearer ideas about the purposes of that class than she had had before talking with Miss Jackson. The job of getting out regular issues of the *Booker T. Washington Journal* made journalism a live course in the school, but getting out the paper was just another opportunity for students to make gains in reading, thinking, and writing. Even the discussions of the personality sketch had been directed toward these same purposes, for the class had read and discussed examples in the textbook, had clipped additional samples from the local papers, and finally each person had tried to write a personality sketch. Viola had written about the president of the council, and Joe had written about Leo, who had served as the M.C. for the canteen show. Some of the sketches would appear in the *Journal*. In somewhat the same way, the class studied the history of journalism and all forms of new writing as it did laboratory work on the *Journal*.

Today the class, working as small groups, was organizing an issue of the school's paper. At the moment, Mrs. Lawson was helping a group decide which of several poems written by members of the class, or submitted by other students in the school, might be included in the issue of the paper being developed. "Is this just a jingle or does it have a clear and important message?" Mrs. Lawson was asking.

William Wilson, the executive editor and chairman of the class, moved from group to group. After a brief conference with each group chairman, he would make a list on the board of jobs each group would try to complete during the period. A brief discussion of the list would be held in order to clear up questions. The executive editor was responsible for keeping the organization in operation as a unit. Earlier in the year, the class with Mrs. Lawson's help had discussed ways of getting others to cooperate.

Marvin, the business manager, and six other students, were busy with figures and receipts. This group was trying to complete a financial report on the last issue of the *Journal*. The sales and advertisements had to pay for the paper, and a financial report on each issue had to be made to the student body. This group had made numerous contacts with businessmen as they sought ads, and at times they discussed with the class the approaches they had used in efforts to sell space advertisements.

Isabel, the managing editor, was checking with the other editors in her department. Copy for all news stories, class news, club news, and sports articles would be completed today. "We can be ready for the printer by Friday," said Isabel to the executive editor, "if the make-up gives no extra trouble."

Mrs. Lawson moved over to the make-up department, where Christine, Ester, and Curtis were working on a dummy. Christine explained that they had counted the lines in copy passed to them but that the streamer for the front page would not fit the space.

It had taken Sarah only a few minutes to see how the activities in journalism helped this group of students make gains in reading, writing, thinking, talking, and taking responsibility.

She joined the editorial group as Betty said, "Come on, Sarah! We promised to finish the editorial page today."

## 5

Several days later, Herbert stretched his legs when he and Sarah got into the hall outside their second period economics class. The basketball tournament had left him stiff and sleepy.

"The council meets today and I'm going to ask the secretary to let me see the record book. I believe I can get more information from it and understand it better than I would if I just asked the advisor some questions," Herbert said to Sarah.

"Sounds good to me," Sarah agreed. "I heard Judy say the council saves its records from year to year, so you shouldn't have any trouble finding what's there."

The council met each Friday at the third period. It was "tops" in activities with Herbert because, as he so often said, "It gives a fellow a chance to express himself." He had been in the council the year before and appreciated the chance to be a member again this year. Seldom did a student get the opportunity to serve on the council for two consecutive years.

At the meeting that day, after the secretary had finished the roll call, reports from the homerooms were called for and Herbert made his report. After all the reports were given, Herbert took a moment to put down the following notes for his speech:

*In council and homeroom a student can hardly help learning how to express himself on questions that aren't in the books. When things get hot he either talks or bursts. It's always what he thinks and he does his best, because others seem to know when an idea is well thought out.*

After the meeting adjourned, Herbert gathered up his books and walked over to Judy, the council secretary, who was putting the record book in the locker where it was kept.

"Judy," he said, "may I see the record book? I want to read over the minutes of the past meetings."

Judy looked up in surprise. "Why, a copy of last week's minutes is on the council's bulletin board in the hall. Copies of the minutes for the preceding week are put out there each Monday morning. You know that, Herbert."

"You misunderstood me, Judy. It's not last week's minutes that I want," the boy said. "It's the whole book—the records of minutes for all this year and last year, too."

Judy looked puzzled until Herbert explained why he wanted the record.

"Sure, you may use it," replied the girl, "if it's all right with Mrs. Lawson."

At that moment Mrs. Lawson, the council advisor, came into the room. Judy told her about Herbert's request.

"Why, certainly, let Herbert use the book," Mrs. Lawson advised. "Any student in the school may see the records. We keep them so they can be used for reference. But, Herbert, I think you ought to give Judy an IOU for each book."

He carried the books home with him that afternoon. He worked at Smith's Drug Store from four o'clock to seven o'clock, but by eight o'clock he had reached the little four-room cottage in which he lived with his parents and brother. He had eaten supper and settled down to a table with record books.

"Let's see what the council did last year," he murmured to himself. He made the following notes from the minutes.

*October 6, 1944—The council made plans for the school year. These included:*

- 1. Council installation services*
- 2. Seating arrangements of students in the auditorium*
- 3. Organization of traffic squad*
- 4. Celebration of Mr. Paine's birthday*
- 5. Beautification of school grounds*
- 6. Open forums of interested topics to student body*
- 7. Other assembly programs*
- 8. School socials*

9. *Campaigns for charity—Red Cross, Tuberculosis Fund, Community Fund, etc.*

*The beautification project and the topics for open forums were discussed.*

*The council president appointed committees to develop details on the broad plans outlined.*

*October 13, 1944—Most of the committees named the week before had met and were ready to make at least partial reports. The program committee gave a detailed picture of the impressive installation program which was to be on Friday, October 27.*

*The school hostess outlines the social committee's plans. These included (1) a party for a visiting football team in November, (2) a tea during the celebration of Mr. Paine's birthday, (3) a Christmas party, (4) two parties for visiting basketball teams, (5) a Valentine party, (6) a spring dance, and (7) various classes' and clubs' parties.*

*The building and grounds committee included in its report: (1) getting shrubbery and (2) laying out walks.*

*The assembly committee presented its schedule of assembly programs for the first semester.*

*March 23, 1945—The grounds committee made a long report. The proposed lawns had been marked off, plowed, raked, leveled, and seeded. Members of the council assisted by other students had worked at this for over a week. The Committee planned to spend the next week planting shrubbery and putting up "Don't walk on the grass" signs.*

As Herbert scanned the pages in the book, he recalled many other activities of the council. He recalled special programs like the impressive memorial service for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the council's annual gift to the school. Herbert remembered vividly the gifts presented during his first three years—a United States flag, a school flag, and a state flag—all for the auditorium. This year, the council was having some shop boys make a trophy case for the annual presentation. He remembered annual reports on council activities and finance for the year, and the annual spring campaign and election of officers for the following year. The campaigns were usually vigorous, on account of much debating by the candidate and their boosters. Registration days and election days are high spots in student activity in the spring. Herbert found a mimeographed sheet pasted in the back of the book. It was a copy of the standards set up by the council for the student body to consider when voting for candidates. Each year the council circulated copies of the standards to homerooms through the homeroom presidents.

Although Herbert had read the standards many times before casting his vote in elections, now, for the first time he sensed an entirely new purpose served by the standards. Certainly he, and perhaps many other students, almost unconsciously decided how they wanted to act as they

read the standards. Then the school must be helping people to become the kind of person described in these standards. Right here were enough points for many speeches. Herbert read every one of the standards again.

*The Student for Whom I Vote*

1. In the Classroom: Makes friends with classmates. Does not complain. Sometimes shares materials with those who need them. Consults with his teacher occasionally. Is alert to perform needed service.
2. In the Homeroom: Makes friends with all. Takes part in class elections. Offers his service to work with the group. Volunteers service to work sometimes. Supports homeroom projects and encourages others to do the same.
3. In Games, Plays and Projects: Works with the team. Works or plays wherever he is placed. Respects the leader's opinion. Never "cuts" rehearsals without a good excuse. Spends extra time to complete a project.
4. School Programs and Public Programs: Takes correction and criticism kindly. Takes part in the singing. Does not attract attention by unnecessary noise.
5. In Clubs, Athletic Programs, etc.: Does not "show off" in group performances. Does not grumble at the seat in which he is placed. Does not laugh aloud at mistakes of the entertainer.
6. In Dependability: Is regular in attendance and is seldom tardy. Always pays back what he has borrowed. Sticks to his work until it is completed.
7. In Leadership: His group will listen to what he says. His group will seek his advice sometimes. He is willing to take advice and council from others.
8. Self-control: Keeps his head "cool" when others are losing theirs. Refrains from meddling in the affairs of others. Does not tattle or cheat. Is courteous to everybody.
9. As a Member of the School: Allows others the same freedom he takes for himself. Does not criticize those who disagree with him. Does not belong to a "ring" or school clique. Is careful of conduct out of school. Makes a good appearance in public. Keeps good company. Is always neat but not "loud" in his clothes. Is a good student in his subjects. Upholds the standards of the school. Recognizes authority, whether teacher or pupil is in charge. Is generally agreeable, fair-minded, honest, clean in words and deeds.

## 6

Eventually Sarah got around to visiting the core class. She paused outside the door and wondered what was happening inside the room

and how the class would feel about an interruption at this time. Like other rooms in the school, the core room had no glass in the door through which one could look before entering. Almost any other door in the building would have a wedge of paper stuffed between the door and its case to serve as a temporary means of keeping the door closed while carpenters and hardware were unavailable. But the door to the core room was in good repair, and Sarah slowly turned the doorknob and quietly opened the door just wide enough to peep into the room. Sam Moreland, who stood by a long table near the center of the room, was saying, "If there are no more questions, I want to thank the class for listening to my report." Sarah saw a vacant seat near the door and slipped quietly into the room as Sam took his seat opposite the door.

Sarah felt that the core room was somewhat different. Perhaps the draperies, the potted plants, and the glass bowls containing water and marine plants gave the room a pleasant coolness. Perhaps the two large and clean United States flags arranged above the blackboard in the middle of the long wall opposite the windows, the touch of color in the posters about the room, and the semicircle of occupied chairs gave the room a friendly atmosphere.

Sarah saw what appeared to be the teacher's desk in one corner of the room. However, the rows of books on, as well as above, the desk and the box holding library cards caused her to decide that this was a room library. But where was Mrs. Lawson? Sarah glanced around the second row in the semicircle. There was Mrs. Lawson beckoning to her. Sarah tiptoed around to where Mrs. Lawson sat.

"Excuse me," she whispered. "I just want to make an appointment with you. I'd like to get some information about the core class for my commencement speech."

"Of course," Mrs. Lawson said softly and with a reassuring smile. "I'll be glad to talk with you later. Can you stay until this next report is finished?"

"I'd like to," Sarah replied.

Chester, who was sitting beside Mrs. Lawson, offered Sarah his desk chair and moved to another.

Mary Freeman, after writing some names on the blackboard, stood before the class at the long table near the center of the room. She carried with her a small notebook, a library book, some large pictures, and two charts. Mary described the development of early railroads. When she came to the names of the early inventors, she pointed to the names she had written on the board. Most of the students took notes as Mary talked. She opened the library book and showed the class page-size pictures illustrating several things about which she spoke. She passed several large individual pictures around to the class as she discussed the "Puff-

ing Billies.” With the charts, she showed how railways had grown since the nineteenth century. She used the little notebook for reference as she talked. At the close of her report, Mary asked if there were any questions or comments.

Sarah listened to the comments and questions offered by members of the class and by Mrs. Lawson. It was apparent that the class accepted without question the colorful story of the early railroads related by Mary, but the charts containing information regarding certain aspects of the growth of railroads started an avalanche of questions. Someone asked whether the cost of travel became cheaper as railroads grew. There were questions and comments about the wages paid by railroads to workers for different kinds of jobs. Someone asked whether Negroes were permitted to ride on the early trains and when segregated travel began.

Mary didn’t try to answer all the questions. She shared with the group such facts as she had, but it was Mrs. Lawson who helped the group see that some questions could not be answered without additional facts and that maybe some could not be accurately answered at all.

She helped the group see which of their statements were facts and which were opinions. Mrs. Lawson knew that behind these questions were much deeper questions growing out of the everyday travel experiences of these children. She knew, too, that some of the children’s questions might have grown out of conversations they had heard at home.

“Some of your questions center around big problems that young people ought to think about and study while older people are trying to find good ways to attack these problems,” Mrs. Lawson advised.

“Since we’ve been sitting still all morning, let’s take a few minutes to relax,” said the teacher after the hall bell sounded.

“You don’t always go out when the bell rings?” asked Sarah.

“No” was the reply. “The core class runs two hours. When we move about the room during the time, we usually work right through the two hours without leaving the room. But when we sit still most of the time, we take time out between the end of the first and beginning of the second period for relaxation.”

As the teacher spoke, Sarah looked around the room.

“But some students didn’t go out,” she commented.

A few were looking at the bulletin board or writing in notebooks, and still others were conversing in small groups.

“No, some prefer to continue their work,” replied the teacher, “while others quietly relax in the room.”

Sarah noticed that Christine, who was sitting near her, was busily writing in a large notebook. Sarah leaned over a little to see what Christine was writing in the large book.

“Is that something about core work you’re putting in that big notebook?”



"Yes," replied Christine. "I'm the secretary this week and this is the minute book. Want to see it?"

Sarah said, "Thanks," and looked at the page on which Christine had been working. "Sure looks neat," she said.

"Take it from me, Christine. It's good to know how to take notes. We didn't have to do much note taking in my classes, and I'm having to learn now as I work on my speech. What made you want to learn how to take notes?"

"One thing," answered Christine, "it helps when we are getting ready for tests. All of us make reports to the class on what we have done, and good notes are better than trying to remember all the important things in each person's report."

"How do you decide what the class and small groups will work on?" Sarah asked.

Christine turned quickly to a mimeographed sheet in the front of the secretary's book. "This is a class report worked out by Mrs. Lawson and a small committee. I was on the committee. The class refers to this summary as it makes plans."

The page looked like this:

*Standard Achievement Test*

<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>
<i>Grade Equiv.</i>	<i>Grade Equiv.</i>
<i>Class Range</i>	6.1-11.5    8.2-12.6
<i>Average Total Score</i>	9.6    10.5

*Strong and weak points listed by the class based on tests and other information:*

*Only three members of the class were able to finish the achievement test in the allotted time. Since our reading rates were low, according to a reading test, we felt that this might explain some of our trouble. Some members of the class felt that the questions in some parts of the test were about things we had not studied. Mrs. Lawson said this was to be expected, since the test was made for pupils as high as grade 13 or first year college.*

*Most of us have been willing to write and keep records of our reports and other experiences. In our folders and notebooks, we average about four written reports on each problem. Many of us have more, but some have less. We could improve in our note taking. We are not satisfied with the quality of our writing. Many of us are not able to express ourselves on paper as we would like to do. We can talk better than we can write. Mrs. Lawson says our vocabulary is not large enough and we need to be more careful about revising our work. Some of us don't spell well enough, and some have good ideas but express them incorrectly.*

*This is our third year of planning and working together. We think we do this much better now than when we started. Mrs. Lawson says we participate*

*better in our activities because we have developed a sense of belonging. Nearly all of us make suggestions and do our share of the work without special encouragement from the chairman or the teachers. One or two of us are still a little self-conscious about this.*

*We think we did a good job in planning our study of Choosing a Vocation, and we worked together well. During the study when we considered our individual qualifications for certain vocations, we learned a great deal about working together to reach conclusions and expressing our ideas tactfully. Mrs. Lawson helped us to see that each person's special interests and abilities are important.*

*Our discussion early in the year of the true meaning of democracy has helped us to realize better the importance of accepting greater responsibility as we receive more freedom. We believe this is helping us to improve in our group work when we sometimes have to work without the teacher. A few of us have not learned to take this responsibility, but we believe we are making progress.*

*Most of the members of the class like to read. We were very pleased with our free reading record until we took our survey in September of our summer reading. Mrs. Lawson pointed out that too many of us were getting "into a rut" in our reading. Of over 350 books read by the various members during vacation, 90% were novels and 50% of those were written by Grace Livingston Hill. Of the 31 books of poetry reported, 18 were the works of Dunbar. Mrs. Lawson showed us that while our reading record was good, we should try sampling other authors and other types of literature. She and Mrs. Whetstone, the librarian, helped us along this line, and many of us are beginning to enjoy a variety of new authors and types of books.*

*The class voted to work at these big jobs this year: (1) Make definite steps toward better note taking and written reports, with special care in revision. (2) Take advantage of every opportunity to enlarge our vocabularies. (3) Continue to improve in planning and working together and in taking more responsibility. (4) Improve our free reading record by including a wider variety of authors and types of literature. (5) Make a definite effort to improve our speed as well as comprehension in reading.*

"Gee, that's interesting," Sarah said as she finished the page. "Are you getting anywhere with those big jobs?"

"We think so," replied Christine. "You see how much better our spring test results are. When we finish our work on this unit, we're going to make a spring report like this one for the fall."

"I certainly want to see it."

The younger girl promised to show Sarah the spring report after completion.

"In the fall," Christine said, "my score wasn't as high as I wanted it to be, and I found out that my biggest trouble was that I didn't get to all the questions. I knew some of the answers, but I couldn't get them done

before the time was up. Mrs. Lawson showed me how to practice reading faster and how to leave out some of the sentences and words that I did not need to put in what I wrote. Well, in the spring I did much better on the test, so I'm still practicing. Most of us have something that we are trying to do better."

"I always get nervous when I have to take a test," admitted Sarah. "Maybe I need to do some of the things your core class is doing."

Ella Simmons passed behind Sarah's chair and whispered, "Going to write us up in the paper?"

"Hello, Ella," said Sarah. "Worse than that, kid, I'm going to talk about you to a crowd of people, maybe." Sarah explained why she was visiting the class.

"Your class had a good assembly program last week, Ella. I think everybody enjoyed it."

"Did you like it, honest? We had a good time getting ready for that assembly. We wondered if the older kids in the senior class would enjoy what we were doing. We have been working on that unit a long time—about six weeks—and that program was just one of the things we have planned."

"I saw your name down as student director. Ahem! Ole important you! I can see now how that assembly program fits into what you are doing in class today."

"Yes, Transportation and Communication. We haven't completed our study of communication yet, but they're both sort of mixed together. Did your class have a unit like this?"

"Oh, we didn't have a core when I was a sophomore. I think I would have liked it, too. Do you really learn anything much that way?"

"Do we? We decide what we want to know and what we are going to do before we start to work, and then everybody knows what his job is and how he can help his group do what has been planned. We put everything down that we decide so we can tell what we have to do."

"Does Mrs. Lawson leave all that to you to decide?" asked Sarah.

"Oh no! She gives ideas like the rest of us and argues for them when we are deciding what to do. We argue for our ideas, too. Why shouldn't we? She doesn't mind."

"After you get everything down, what do you do?"

"Well, everybody has planned what he is going to do and all the groups know what parts they are responsible for, and then we go to work on our plans. Mrs. Lawson has to keep behind some of us as the work gets hard."

"Chester, for instance, is crazy about aviation. Says he's going to Tuskegee someday. He did most of the work on air transportation, the way it got started, and what must still be done, and what can happen in air transportation in the future."

"I don't know whether I would like some of the things about the core. I'd be afraid I'd miss something important, if I worked on something that was not too much like what the rest of the class was doing."

"We get into an awful mess sometimes when plans don't work out just right. Mrs. Lawson gets us out of it without a fuss, usually, but she takes a lot from some people to get along. Group reports keep the class together."

"Besides having reports," added Christine, "sometimes we make trips, see and discuss motion pictures, or read stories which give the entire class information it may need."

"Yes," continued Ella, "we're going to read the story about Buffalo Bill and the Pony Express when the group comes back together this morning."

"Do you have any grammar work?"

"Oh yes," laughed Ella. "The only difference is we don't just study grammar. We study it when we need it to do something. Take last week for instance. When we were making reports, we got some of our verbs all mixed up and nobody in the class was sure about what was correct. Mrs. Lawson showed us how to use grammar to find out what was correct. We corrected our mistakes and made up sentences using the rules. Well, that was our grammar."

"Grammar is hard," added Christine, "but it helps us know when we are right."

"Where did Mary get all those pictures she used in her report?"

"We ordered them. We get a lot of free booklets, pictures, and pamphlets by writing to places for them. All of us look for things to bring for our classroom library."

"I've heard around the school that everybody in the core gets a passing mark. Is that true?" Sarah asked.

"I don't know about other people's marks," Christine replied. "I've made some low ones and some high ones. I don't think the marks have anything to do with our staying in this group, because this same group has been together for three years. We have some people who don't get much done, but I don't know how Mrs. Lawson marks them."

#### *Christine's Report of Progress*

I think I have made much progress this year. I used to think I wanted to be a nurse, because my favorite aunt is one. After our work on Choosing a Vocation, I realized that I lack many of the qualifications that one needs to become a good nurse. I've finally decided that I want to work in the field of fashion designing. I feel that I really have some aptitude for this work, and both Mrs. Lawson and the class agree with me.

I have become more conscious of the importance of careful buying this year. Our study of various consumer buying guides has given me a

new slant on how to choose the goods I buy. I really enjoyed the study because while I learned a great deal, I also found it interesting to analyze the true purpose behind the advertisements which I used to “swallow hook, line, and sinker.”

I was chairman of a group which worked on consumer toilet articles, and everyone in the class seemed to be amazed by the information in our report about many highly advertised articles. Being chairman of a group helped me. I’m not as self-conscious as I was before. This year I can give myself a better grade on our personal development sheet.

I’ve learned to get along a little better with people who don’t always agree with what I say. I still get angry with them, but not as quickly as I did last year.

I’ve read several books recently. Most of them were based on some special vocation. I’ve improved in using the library. I can find information quicker, and I understand better how to take advantage of cross-references. I’ve also learned the value of periodical literature and how to take advantage of it through the *Reader’s Guide*. I still need to improve my written work.

Sarah hardly realized that Mrs. Lawson had slipped out of the small group, leaving her to find out from the students what the core was all about. When she heard Mrs. Lawson say that the room was getting too noisy, she looked around and saw small groups break up and move to their seats. It was time to read the story Ella had mentioned.

The teacher asked Sarah whether her brief chats with members of the class had been helpful. Sarah said that she thought so but that she wanted to try to put down some ways in which work in the core helped students. She also stated that she hoped Mrs. Lawson would read their notes. The teacher handed Sarah a brief report on the development of the core class in Washington High and suggested that Sarah read it before organizing her notes. Sarah decided to read the report and arrange her notes while the core class worked on literature.

Mrs. Lawson, better than anyone else, knew that the three-year-old core approach in this one class represented one of the most radical changes in the program of the school. In many respects, the approach made in this class was unlike that in other classes. Discovering the merits and disadvantages of the core by planned experimentation had been a hard but a worthwhile experience for Mrs. Lawson and, no doubt, for the students in the core class. Perhaps the rest of the school would never undertake a core approach as such, but Mrs. Lawson knew that larger units were being worked on in some of the other classes, and that eventually, more of the subject matter in these classes would be related to the problems and needs of students. She knew all about the disappointments as well as the successes which had accompanied the effort to

get a core approach established throughout the school.

In a summer workshop, Mr. Paine and four teachers, representing English, social studies, mathematics, and science, had worked together on a broad field curriculum approach. These teachers and thirty-five eighth grade pupils set up class problems, and each teacher attempted to approach the problems through his particular subject field. In spite of constant and careful planning, there was considerable overlapping in classroom work, and in some cases important subject matter was omitted because each teacher felt that some other teacher was covering the material.

During a second summer workshop, the teachers came to believe that through a core type approach they might unify and enrich the experiment which they had begun. The following year, two eighth grade classes of thirty-five pupils each were organized. There was a core teacher for each class who worked for three consecutive hours each day in an effort to relate materials from social studies, English, and science to problems agreed on through pupil-teacher planning. The core classes studied mathematics with the regular class. The two core teachers met at least twice each week to discuss plans, problems, and difficulties related to the individual classes. Once a month the two classes met together to discuss problems common to both groups. Occasional meetings were held with parents in order to keep them informed and to enlist their aid.

A year later one core group continued in the ninth grade, but the other was forced to return to the regular curriculum because no teacher could be found to continue the work of the second core teacher, who was called to the army.

During the third year the remaining core group continued in the tenth grade with a two-hour core, including English and social studies. Science was dropped from the core because at this point individual pupils were ready to enter the more specialized science courses. Other pupils had developed plans which called for branching out into occupational guidance, advanced home economics, Latin, and mathematics. Arrangements were made for a wide variety of electives for core pupils and the teachers of the elective courses. Even in these classes the core pupils worked in terms of their individual plans and ambitions.

After the core class had finished reading and discussing the exploits of Buffalo Bill, Sarah thanked Mrs. Lawson for letting her work in the room.

In her notebook Sarah listed certain advantages which she felt core pupils enjoyed. She asked Mrs. Lawson to look at the notes.

The teacher made a few suggestions about works which might make some of the ideas clearer. She explained that core work had serious disadvantages which should be mentioned. It had to be limited to units that

one teacher could handle. A single core teacher and core class in a school were sometimes ostracized because they seemed different. Records were a continuous source of worry because they were sometimes contradictory and did not fit into the regular school pattern. There was no place to send students who failed to make satisfactory progress in the core group.

Mrs. Lawson was very much interested in the impressions which children and grown-ups got through their observations of activities in the core class. She read with interest the notes in Sarah's notebook:

*Advantages Enjoyed by the Core Class*

1. Everybody has something important to do all by himself because there are many different things to be done.
2. Everybody knows why this job is important to him and to the group.
3. Talking and discussion in the core class is on some definite question that everybody wants answered. The discussion gets somewhere fast, and it's easier to stay on the subject.
4. The core students like what they do, and they put a lot of feeling into what they do. They fuss, but they get along. Everybody wants to do what is best, but somebody must prove that an idea is good before the group will accept it. If more than one idea seems good, each group can choose the idea that it likes best.
5. The core students try hard to be good friends. People ought to have good friends.

7

"Colds are a nuisance," Sarah thought as she lay in bed with a running red nose; dry, parched mouth; blistered lips; and a nerve-wracking headache. Sarah's third cold during that year was downright embarrassing, so she stayed home and took the orange juice, medicines, and rest ordered by the doctor. She hated the nose drops that her mother seemed to administer at all too frequent intervals.

She missed her friends at school and chats about dresses, boyfriends, basketball games, teachers, and other interesting subjects. She even missed the spacious assembly room, where, during vacant periods, almost everybody held a book in readiness to be offered as evidence of study, but where almost everybody chatted away and made small talk about almost everything. The glee club, chorus, or boys' ensemble practicing on the stage or the health class meeting in the front of the auditorium made a good background for low chatting, but as long as nobody got boisterous, it was a happy and sociable situation. In fact, it was a sort of marketplace where one could pick up information about everything or anyone in or out of school.

"Two ten," said Sarah's mother out of force of habit as the mellow

horn sounded on the diesel-powered Number 42.

"Time for science again," Sarah thought as she recalled hearing this same horn at school during the discussions in her science class. They had engaged in many discussions of practical questions proposed by the teacher or some student. Only occasionally did groups gather around the dilapidated tables for an experiment. There was no doubt that the uninviting room and the lack of variety of science activities steadily generated an aversion for science. The chemistry class had worked on formulas and equations and were enthusiastic about the possibility of experimenting with cosmetics and other consumer goods. Science, however, was mostly discussions of health topics, though Sarah remembered a few other discussions, such as, Do the actions of animals show that they use intelligence? Are insects more harmful than helpful? How do animals and plants reproduce? Can babies be "marked" before they are born because the mother is shocked by something she sees? Sarah usually enjoyed the discussions, but she, like many other students, lived in mortal fear of the science examinations, since science claimed more failures than any other subject in the school.

In three years Sarah had had three different science teachers, and her science was different every year. In biology, for example, the main activity had been the collection and preservation of all kinds of animals and plants. Students had embalmed snakes and other fleshy animals, stuffed fur-bearing animals, pressed leaves and flowers, stuck pins through insects as they arranged insect collections in cigar boxes, and had written about all of these things as they had tried to establish a classroom museum.

In general science, however, Sarah's class had kept live animals. Sarah had enjoyed keeping things alive, and she, like many of her classmates, had never forgotten the challenge made by the teacher when he said, "There is too much killing on the street, in pictures and plays, in the world, and in the minds of little children as they initiate cowboys and gangsters. Why don't we begin a campaign to keep everything alive, ourselves—tiny, helpless living things, big living things? Let's make life more precious!" This was why the class had kept things alive and why, at the beginning of the next year, several days passed before the new teacher could get Sarah's class to make bottles for killing insects.

Mr. Paine had recognized the problems created in science as a result of continuous turnover in the science teaching staff. He hoped that Mr. Carter, now the teacher of science, would be encouraged by his experience in a science workshop to organize a useful science program.

With a slight start, Sarah aroused herself as her mother said, "Darling, it's time for your nose drops, and I think you'll like the soup I made for you."



## 8

Sarah's cold had no permanent effect on her appetite, for when she returned to school she could hardly wait for the lunch period.

"The line always moves slowly when the soup smells good," said Herbert to Sarah as they stood in the hall outside the foods laboratory in which there was an improvised lunch counter.

"Don't those spicy buns baked up here this morning smell good? I'm going to have vegetable soup, a hamburger, milk, and a bun. That takes a quarter's worth of lunch tickets."

"I want a he-man's lunch today," declared Herbert as he felt his pocket to make certain that his money was still there. "Let's see—soup, two sandwiches, ice cream, and cookies."

"What a combination!" laughed Sarah. "You won't be a he-man long unless you balance your lunch better than that. You should take the vegetable plate instead of the sandwiches. It's cheaper, too."

By that time the two pupils had followed the U-shaped line twenty-five feet across the room and were turning the curve around a chair which put them in reach of the food. The line which started in the hall usually moved in and out of the room with little friction, although one door served both as the entrance and exit. However, a teacher or some older student, stationed near the door, handled occasional disputes which tended to start whenever pupils got jammed in the door. A cafeteria manager, assisted by a crew of pupils, prepared and served the food. Occasionally, the home economics teachers worked with the students at the sales counter, mainly to study the lunches purchased by pupils with a view toward improving the food choices made by pupils.

The cafeteria sales usually brought an annual profit of about four hundred dollars, which was set aside as a sinking fund for which additional equipment was purchased. The school hoped that the fund would eventually permit the equipment of a modern cafeteria.

As Sarah and Herbert carried their lunch trays down the hall in search of a room in which they might eat, Herbert wished he could have helped Sarah carry her tray. He had read about and seen pictures of cafeterias and snacks bars for teenage pupils in which this might have been possible. Finally, they found two unoccupied desk chairs in a social studies room. When they were seated, Herbert said to Sarah, "Look, Sarah, I've been thinking about the way we are getting our speeches together. You know, students keep the noncredit activities going. I mean—if the activity is no good, nobody takes part. So it's easy to find out how these activities help students in Booker T. You just find out what keeps them going. But I know it's not 'sop' to find out what keeps all the classes on your list going, especially the dull ones. You oughta let me help you get through with your part."

Sarah's tray nearly tipped over as she grabbed Herbert's arm and exclaimed, "Sure 'nough! Would you really?"

"Sure, I will," Herbert replied, "if you'll tell me what to do."

"Herbert, you know I don't mind going on as we started, but it's slow because I have to talk to teachers and students. You sure could help me find out what help students get in home economics and shop. I wouldn't know a thing about the shop. There are boys in home economics, and I'm not sure that I could find out what they are after."

Promptly after the ringing of the sixth period bell, the two students entered the foods laboratory. Miss Mann and Mrs. Dawes, who were seated at a table near the front of the room, invited Sarah and Herbert to sit with them.

"Herbert came with me," Sarah explained, "because we have decided to work out our points on home economics together."

"That's quite all right," replied Mrs. Dawes. "Boys are not uncommon in home economics now."

"There are a number of boys taking home economics, aren't there?" asked Herbert.

"Yes, many more than the two or three we had when you entered high school," laughed Mrs. Dawes. "Twenty-four are enrolled in the different classes this year."

"Gee! That many?" Herbert said. Suddenly it dawned on him that perhaps he's really missing something by not enrolling in one of the classes.

Mrs. Dawes was explaining that most of the boys who entered at first had done so simply because of their interest in certain vocations. They wanted to learn more about cooking, waiting on tables, and sewing so they could get jobs in restaurants, tailor shops, and pressing establishments. Three boys in the occupational guidance class planned to become chefs.

"But as plans were being made for their work," continued Mrs. Dawes, "we found that their health needs, vocational interests, and problems of personal and social adjustment and of family living were not unlike those of the girls. So the boys and girls worked out many of their problems together in the same classes, and they still follow this plan."

Sarah had known this all the time. But Herbert was getting his first clear ideas about home economics for boys.

"Of course, some boys and girls in the ninth grade classes enter home economics courses out of sheer curiosity," declared Mrs. Dawes. "Having had no type of home economics training in the elementary school, they are anxious to see what the course is like."

"I would have been one of the curious people if I had taken home economics," Herbert commented.

"You were such a 'he-man' you didn't have time to bother with it,"

teased Sarah.

"But I didn't know then what boys could do in home economics," Herbert defended.

"It's almost time for the period to begin," Mrs. Dawes said. "Would you like to stay and see a class of boys and girls at work?"

"Yes," Herbert answered quickly. He was anxious to see the boys at work.

"Why don't you divide your work," advised Miss Mann. "During the next period, one of you visit the foods class and one, the clothing class."

"Okay, I'll take foods," offered Herbert, "and, Sarah, you take clothing."

Sarah smiled her satisfaction.

"Come with me, then, Sarah." Miss Mann rose from her place at the table. "We'll see you later."

Before the class arrived, Mrs. Dawes showed Herbert some of the things in the room.

The boys taking part in art and handicraft activities had refinished all the cabinets, chairs, and bookcases snowy white to match the gas and electric stoves and the refrigerator. They had painted the inside of the cabinets a different color from the outside so the dishes would show up better. They had helped to rearrange the furniture in order to make the room more attractive and more convenient for its dual use as a lunch-room and a classroom.

One of the classes had selected the curtains, flower vases, and ivy pots for the room during its study of room arrangement. One of the girls had crocheted the runners on the dining table, and other members of the class handmade luncheon mats from old discarded window draperies. Under a battery of windows was a set of shelves laden with books and pamphlets.

"I see you have a little library up here," Herbert commented.

"Yes," Mrs. Dawes answered. "We find it quite helpful. The librarian lends us books. We get other books through the state rental system, and we order pamphlets from various companies."

She went to a pamphlet file on a side table. "Here are other materials which we find very helpful," she continued. "Here are pamphlets which the librarian helped us file, and there are pupil folders containing information on personal and group problems and records of progress in various undertakings."

Mrs. Dawes was very well pleased with the newly established classroom library and record file. Herbert thought it was all right, too, but he wanted to know more about what boys did in home economics and exactly how it helped them. His interest perked up considerably when Mrs. Dawes explained that ninth grade pupils seemed most interested in preparing food and looking into health problems. She declared that during planning periods they talked about what they should eat to keep well, the kind of

school lunches to buy, what they could do to reduce or gain weight, and how they could improve their eating habits. She told how they used teaching aids such as movies, radio, magazines, and pamphlets.

During the first semester, the ninth grade had worked on the problem of getting along with others. Mrs. Dawes took a sheet from one of the folders. "Here is a list of topics which this year's ninth grade class included in its study of how to get along with others."

As Herbert looked at the list, his eyes lingered on topics such as Improving My Personality, How to Be a Good Mixer, How Men Differ, Making Good Conversation, Establishing Right Relationships, and Helping at Home with Housekeeping Responsibilities.

"The nutritional interest of older boys and girls in the tenth and eleventh grades is broader and usually extends to the entire family group. They plan meals for the family and diets for children and invalids in the home. Most of the marketing for the foods department is done by this group of boys and girls. Since in many cases both parents in the family work away from home, a large number of these pupils have the responsibility of getting the evening meals. Plans for these are worked out in class, and the results of their preparation at home are discussed in class.

"Pupils from this group also assist in preparing and serving the cafeteria lunches. They prepare and serve meals to guests who visit the school. They often have opportunities to do catering for clubs, parties, and receptions in the city."

"All those things are worth knowing," Herbert said as he tried hard to jot down the activities that Mrs. Dawes had mentioned.

"Do you remember the 'Drink Milk' campaign one of the classes sponsored three years ago?" Mrs. Dawes asked.

"Yes," laughed Herbert. "That's when I got converted on drinking milk."

"It was a very successful campaign," rejoined Mrs. Dawes. "Very few students drank milk then. Now, nearly all the students include it in their daily lunches."

She picked up another folder. "Here is a record of the Nutrition Cooking School conducted for a week by a tenth grade class last year."

"I remember the school, but I don't know how it was done," said Herbert.

Mrs. Dawes explained that the project had started when the class became interested in the nutritional deficiencies among children in the school. The city health officer, the food consultant from the local A&P store, and the dietitian from the NYA center had been invited to participate. They and the pupils demonstrated each night to a large audience of students and parents ways of reducing malnutrition. The demonstrations had included such things as how to prepare and serve adequate low-cost family meals, proper methods of cooking vegetables to conserve

their food value, and correct diets for malnourished children.

"No wonder boys like it up here," Herbert remarked. "I'll never forget that assembly play one of your classes gave last month. The boys were funny, but they got over some good ideas about keeping health."

"Oh, you mean *Where Is Jerry?*?" laughed Mrs. Dawes. "It was written by members of a tenth grade class after they had studied problems in the school and had had a discussion with Miss Douglas from the state's health-coordinating service."

Herbert learned that an eleventh grade class had worked on the problem of improving relationships within their families. They had given a tea one evening and had invited their parents. After a lively discussion, the pupils with their parents had chosen topics on family living for the pupils to continue to study in class.

Herbert took down the topics which seemed to suggest a way in which the students were getting help. His list included Marriage, Personal and Family Finances, Getting Along with Younger Sisters and Brothers, Having Parties at Home, Laws Related to Family Life, the Effect of War on the Family, and Children in the Home.

"Some of the papers they wrote at the close of the study might also be revealing," suggested Mrs. Dawes as she took several folders from a file. "You may get some ideas of what home economics does for girls and boys from the subjects of these papers."

Later, as Herbert looked through several folders, he found papers on subjects such as How I Spend My Summer Money, When I Choose a Girl to Marry, A Different Outlook on Housekeeping Duties, Getting Along Better with My Family, Improving My Social Habits, How I Have Changed Some of My Bad Habits to Good Ones, My Responsibility to My Family, and Being a Better Consumer.

The bell rang, and a ninth grade class came into the room. Herbert saw the boys and girls divide themselves into groups. In each group there were four students who worked together in a kitchen unit with a stove, a cabinet, a sink, and a worktable. One group in the back kitchen unit shared their stove with students who had prepared lunch for the cafeteria.

As he moved around from one group to another, Herbert discovered that the class had used their time of day before as a planning period and that today they are preparing lunch.

Matthew, one of the members of group two, asked Herbert, "How do these deviled eggs look, ole boy?"

"Swell," Herbert laughed.

"And they taste good, too," Matthew declared. "I've always wanted to learn to fix them so that I could have them anytime. Want to sample them?"

As Herbert nodded eagerly, Matthew handed him some in a spoon.

"Mm-mm," said Herbert. "This is good."

"The other groups are preparing potato salad, cheese straws, and cocoa," Matthew explained.

Mrs. Dawes moved about from group to group, advising and making suggestions as to how to make dishes more attractive. Herbert noticed that each student in every group was contributing something to the preparation of the lunch. One group of boys seemed particularly interested in seeing that the table was correctly set.

Mrs. Dawes came over to Group Two. "How are those eggs, Matthew?" she asked.

"Herbert says they're good," Matthew laughed, "and I'm just dying to taste three or four."

Mrs. Dawes turned to one of the girls in the group. "Is our celery almost ready, Mary?" she asked.

"Yes, Mrs. Dawes," Mary answered, "and I'm trying out this arrangement we discussed yesterday."

"Oh, you did that well," the teacher said.

Mary beamed with pleasure. "This is going to be a pretty luncheon, isn't it?"

"And it's going to be very nutritious, too," chimed in Alice.

Mrs. Dawes smiled her agreement to both statements. She knew that Alice was deeply concerned about her scrawny limbs and mottled skin, and that while Mary was well fed, she wanted more beauty in her home.

As the period closed, Herbert saw that the pupils took full advantage of the classroom library. Many of them checked out books for overnight use.

He glanced through his copious notes and the papers Mrs. Dawes had lent him.

"Gosh!" he thought. "There ought to be enough information here for a whole speech."

When Sarah and Miss Mann crossed the hall, they entered the clothing laboratory, consisting of one large room and two small adjoining rooms. One of the small rooms was used as a girls' test station. The main room was furnished with dark oak sewing tables and chairs, six machines, and several steel cabinets in which the students' work was kept. Draperies hung at the windows and a bulletin board near the door held a display on child care.

"This room has never suited me," Miss Mann said disgustedly. "My eleventh grade class is trying to add a little more life and color to it."

Once Sarah had been a member of a group which had undertaken the job of making this same room more attractive. Miss Mann, a practice teacher then, had directed the group.

"Yes," said Sarah, "I've always wanted to paint brighter colors over

everything in here. All of the girls hope you will teach here long enough to make the room really attractive.”

About twenty girls and boys came in and began working on spring garments.

A hum of quiet talking filled the room. Some pupils were cutting cloth on the long table, some were basting at the sewing tables, and others were stitching at the machines.

Sarah knew all of these pupils by name, so she chatted with individuals or small groups. She always got around to asking the question, “How is the work in here helping you?”

Practically every person she talked with mentioned the usefulness of the discussions on personal grooming. “It’s worth something to know how to look your best,” Maude said.

“And smell your best,” whispered Alice, who was in on the two girls’ conversation. “We talk about makeup, hairstyling, color combinations, and everything; and we do many of these things right here in the class. We have books and pamphlets in the classroom library which tell us about things that we can’t talk about easily.”

Henry Ellis felt that personal grooming helped the boys in the selection of good color combinations, good haircuts, and durable clothes. He mentioned the value of knowing how to clean ties, sew on buttons, and remove spots. Julia and Corine were among those who wanted to become dressmakers. They mentioned the fact that Miss Mann permitted them to go as far as they could into pattern study and designing. Curtis Wallace and Henrietta Wilson were making over old clothing. Sarah gathered that large families and the high cost of living made this skill worthwhile. When Sara asked Curtis whether he knew anything about sewing before he joined the clothing class, he replied, “Golly no. When I began three years ago, I was about like all the other ninth grade boys—and most of the girls in our class. Couldn’t thread a needle and couldn’t make a stitch.”

“Do you really like it up here?” Sarah inquired of Curtis.

“Sure,” he replied. “The boys up here don’t make girls’ things, you know. We stick to robes, pajamas, sport shirts, ties, and stuff like that. I got a little afternoon job down at Brown’s because I knew how to fix clothes.”

At the close of the period, Sarah thanked Miss Mann for the chance to talk to her students. “It’s easy to see how work like this can help boys and girls,” Sarah said. “Everything they’re doing is either for themselves or their families.”

“Yes,” replied Miss Mann, “but sometimes we put aside personal work and make bed jackets, gowns, sweaters, and the like for the Red Cross. The students enjoy this very much. Now and then a group of girls work

on a layette for a new baby in the community. The boys have had lively discussions about the responsibilities which a man should take in homes where there are babies.”

## 9

Miss Jackson felt a little out of place as she sat among the mathematics teachers in Miss Williams’ room, but she had promised to help Sarah decide what to say about mathematics in her speech, and it turned out that the meeting of the mathematics teachers might yield some ideas.

While only one course in math was required for high school graduation, those students showing unusual aptitude for the subject were encouraged to elect courses beyond general mathematics. Sarah, however, had stuck to literary courses after completing the required course in the ninth grade. Miss Jackson, herself, didn’t know too much about the mathematics activities in Booker T. Washington High, so she has asked Miss White, the chairman of the math group, to suggest how Sarah might be advised to look for information about how mathematics helped students in Booker T. Miss White had explained that the four math teachers were trying to find some effective way to relate the math courses offered in the school, one to the other, so that students and teachers might have a few very definite but far-reaching common goals toward which all classes might work. “Then it will be possible to tell at any time the stage of progress of any student,” Miss White had declared. Miss Jackson was especially interested in learning that the teachers felt that they had found a group of big ideas that gave promise of a unified program of mathematics.

“Now, we aren’t sure that we have what we want, but we are really trying hard to find out,” Miss White had said. “In our next meeting we are planning to discuss our new approaches. Perhaps you could come to our meeting. I don’t mind telling you that we are not quite ready to have students in this kind of meeting, because we are just feeling our way, and we are not too sure about how to do what we are trying to do. We discovered some time ago that none of us was entirely clear on how our courses, as taught, were related, and that was why we started our search for unifying concepts. If Sarah looked around the school, she might get a long list of activities carried on in our math classes, but I don’t believe she could make heads or tails out of the list without using concepts like those we are considering.”

Miss Jackson had accepted the invitation with the hope that she might see more clearly how to direct Sarah.

The meeting opened with a brief discussion of a magazine article about meeting the social needs of students through activities in math classes. One member of the group had agreed to review the article at



this meeting. "This article confirms our belief that students grow in cooperation, responsibility, and other social aspects of living as a result of real experiences in living rather than as a result of lessons from books about how to live. To me, that means we must try to make the activities in our classrooms real experiences in living, and I think we need to work out more different kinds of living experiences than we have now. Sitting, reciting, going to the board, and making occasional field trips are not enough," the teacher said, following her review of the article.

The librarian had come to the meeting and had brought along copies of new math books and pamphlets that were ready for circulation. She asked whether the new materials might be more useful in classroom libraries than in the central library. As the question was discussed, Miss Jackson got the feeling that classroom libraries in mathematics are not yet well established. One teacher declared, "I guess these books are all right for some students, but my classes need to spend most of their time on fundamentals." Miss Jackson wasn't at all ready to accept the idea she got from this statement, and she had to suppress a strong urge to ask what the teacher considered fundamental, why these things were considered fundamental, and why reading materials didn't have a more important place in her mathematics classes. However, she was relieved when the chairman said, "Sometime very soon, we ought to get around to clearing up this whole matter of what is useful to math students in this school, why these things are useful, and how we, as teachers, can be sure that our students get what is useful. Discussions like the one planned for today should help us clear up these questions. The question before us now is, What are the possibilities that the scheme we have been trying out in our classes can serve to unify mathematics in this school?"

Miss White passed her copy of the general scheme to Miss Jackson and offered as apology for not having additional copies that the scheme was still in process of being refined. Miss Jackson read quickly:

*A Proposed Scheme for Unifying Mathematics in the Booker T. Washington High School*

[Harold] Fawcett and his students have proposed a schedule by which the mathematics experiences provided for learners in all elementary, high school, and college grades might be unified. He proposed that all mathematics be directed toward having students gain an ever-widening and ever-deepening understanding of and skill in using six concepts fundamental to successful application of mathematical facts and principles to any mathematics situation. The proposed concepts are Number, Measurement, Proof, Relationships, Operations, and Symbolism.

The math teachers in Booker T. Washington believe that this idea is sound and have set out to discover how they can promote the growth of students using these concepts as bases for work in all classes. We

do not expect to break down immediately the long-established subject matter courses existing in the school. Yet, we are committed to the idea of examining our courses in order to discover the range of opportunities provided for students and to get and use the proposed concepts. At the same time we want to discover how to convince students that these concepts can be valuable keys to mathematics. Eventually, we want to have in each math room individual folders for each student holding organized samples of his work on each concept and dated reports of progress which describe gains made by each class and perhaps each individual in understanding and using basic math concepts.

"You will remember that we gave achievement tests in the fall and again in the spring in order to have whatever information they could give us about where our students are in their understanding of mathematics. Now that we have the scores from the spring tests, we might look for a few moments at the gains revealed," one of the teachers suggested.

Miss Jackson was particularly interested in the comparisons which the teachers made between the results of the two tests, for the class averages indicated a definite advance beyond the six months' difference in the two administrations of the test. From the discussion, Miss Jackson gathered that the fall tests had revealed a general weakness among students in use of mathematics vocabulary. The students seemed to manipulate figures very well, but often they had difficulty in solving programs which required reading. All of the teachers had discussed the results of the fall tests with their classes. It appeared that each teacher, in his own way, had tried to help students get more meaning from word problems.

One teacher, in reporting how he had approached the problem, said, "I have tried to help my general math class see why it is important to find out what is given in a problem and what needs to be figured. We have given some attention to the reading of selected articles in magazines, newspapers, and pamphlets, in an effort to see how mathematics is used to put over important ideas. Most of our work this year has attempted to relate mathematics to things that students and their parents are doing every day. We haven't covered the chapters in the textbook that my classes usually cover, but the students have read more and they seem to enjoy math a little more than other classes I have taught. As a whole, my classes made much better scores in the spring on the reading and reasoning sections of the test than they did in the fall, but I'm not satisfied with the gains in operation that they made."

Another teacher had confined the work in her class largely to problems in the textbook and had included much drill on the reading of problems before computing the answers. These pupils had made considerable gains in operation, but there was very little change in their reading and reasoning scores.

Little by little, as individuals, the teachers were discovering which experiences could produce gains in reasoning and which could produce gains in operation.

"I have tried to relate the different activities in my classes to the six concepts in our scheme," Mrs. Burwell advised. "In Number, we have worked for a deeper and clearer understanding of our counting system: how it has developed, and how numbers simplify living, thinking, and business transactions. We have done units on Public Utilities, Insurance, and Areas. In these units we have had many activities involving Number, Operations, and Measurement, and I see definite gains by students in understanding these concepts. We have done only a little with Symbols and Relationships and practically nothing with Proof."

"That is where my geometry and trigonometry classes come in," offered Miss White. "Of course we have had to work with Number and Operations, because there were new things to learn, and the children had forgotten some of the old things, too. Yet, we have centered our attention on Symbolism, Measurement, Relationships, and Proof. In geometry, for example, we have tried to understand how to measure more things quickly and accurately, using appropriate instruments. The children enjoy using the new instruments we made. We have tried to understand when something has been proved and have examined the assumptions and reasons in editorials and advertisements as well as in mathematics problems. The children are enjoying their work, and I am sure they are learning to think better, but I'll have to try this a little longer to make sure that they aren't missing something important. They will not finish the book this year, I know, and we are skipping about in the book because our lessons are not always in the order that we would like them."

Mrs. Simpson's class had concentrated on Relationships, Number, and Operations in algebra as they studied train fares, weights and ages of students, costs of living, volumes, and as she put it, "other important things in the world that don't make sense until we understand the actors that control them."

"Our job now, as I see it, is to keep studying the children, the work in their folders, and the kind and variety of experiences they have with each of these concepts. Sooner or later we ought to reach the point of passing on to the next teacher brief reports which tell how and in what classes gains seem to be made," Mrs. Burwell said.

Miss Jackson decided to try to encourage Sarah to tell, in her speech, how this new approach might cause more students to be attracted to mathematics.

## 10

Real objects, color, action, and trips along interesting paths have a way of absorbing the interest and attention of groups of people. Perhaps this was why annual exhibits and demonstrations carried on by the trades, home economics, and dramatics groups at Booker T. had become so well established and why the recently established social studies exhibit, as well as an annual music festival, had been undertaken.

It was Friday and the social studies classes had prepared a spring exhibition. Room 211 was not very large, but the social studies classes thought it might accommodate visitors from the community as well as a few students, if chairs were taken out so that a stream of visitors might move in, around, and then out of the room. The guides, ninth grade girls wearing the yellow sweaters and blue skirts they liked to wear on occasions when school colors were to be shown, chatted excitedly as they waited for the visitors to arrive at two thirty. Mrs. Harris and Miss Colbert, social studies teachers, were giving last minute directions and making certain that posters were hung straight, that marionettes were in working order, and that exhibits were arranged as planned. George Mann and Frank Billings, who had peeped into the room more than once since the lunch hour, were waiting impatiently in the hall. They were not members of the class. But hadn't they built the frames for the booths under the direction of the shop teacher? They had done some of the painting too, and had moved most of the heavy furniture in preparation for the open house. They would try to be among the first to see the finished exhibit, and they hoped Clara and Betty would be their guides. The home economics teacher had left her sixth period class for a few minutes in order to make a last minute inspection of the curtains, the flowers, and the work done under her supervision by the room beautification committee.

At two thirty, Mr. Paine and four visitors entered the room. George and Frank were next. Luckily, George was grouped with Mr. Paine and two of the visitors, and Betty was the guide. Clara was the guide for Frank's group. Parents, students, teachers, and friends arrived and the open house got under way. At first, two of the guides talked too loud and too much, but after Jane, a ninth grader, whispered something to the overexcited guides, they calmed down, giving the visitors a better chance to read the posters.

All exhibits were related to the theme "Living Together Peaceably." Four large posters, mounted above the blackboard, told with pictures and a few words about life in the home, at school, in the church, and in the community. These were the big areas studied by ninth and tenth grade history classes during the year. In one corner, dolls made by the class and dressed in costumes that identified them with different nations

and races were arranged around a small conference table. Posters nearby presented questions or facts that might be considered at such a conference.

Inside a small one-room house, set up in another corner, three marionettes jumped, walked, or swung jerkily about. Three students concealed behind a paper screen operated the marionettes and carried on a dialogue. They had written the dialogue following their study of life in the home.

The Reverend Jones, a local minister, looked closely at the exhibit concerning life in the church. His guide explained that the pin-studded map of the city showed the location of Rocky Mount's thirty Negro churches. "And did your class discuss religious beliefs?" the minister asked.

"We discussed religion as we saw it expressed in music, art, literature, and everyday living," the guide replied. "Our plan didn't include a study of the different religious faiths, but we invited two preachers to come in and discuss religion in everyday living with us, and we had a devotional assembly for the school."

A group of posters calling attention to local civic problems related to health, poverty, recreation, the homicide rate, race relations, education, housing, and employment attracted many visitors. The guides explained that the classes had not tried to learn all about these problems but that they had tried to find out where these problems were in civic life and what was being done about them. In the display there was a poster carrying an oath expressing the responsibility that students wanted to take in connection with city government. Guides explained that this oath, which follows, had been developed as a part of the preparation for a meeting of the Rocky Mount civic forum where voting and public office holding were discussed:

#### *Oath*

*We will try to bring no disgrace to our city, school, or home. We will try to be honest and fair in all of our dealings with others and, through our behavior, encourage others to be honest and fair. As far as we are able, we will take part in civic affairs that can bring due credit to our city and public officers. We will try to do at least one thing to make living in Rocky Mount better for all people.*

Sarah looked carefully at the exhibit, and just as Miss Jackson had advised, she lingered in the room and tried to catch points for her speech from the statements made by the guides, visitors, and the teachers. She tried not to get too far from the section of the room where the "Wishing Well" was set up, because informative as well as amusing things continued to happen around the "Well." The "Well" was just a cigar box in which a slot had been made so that a note could be dropped in. The box was one of many colors, and wise and witty sayings had been placed on the wall around it. Anybody in the social studies classes, including the teachers, could drop in an unsigned wish about the classroom, the teach-

er, lessons, books, people, or anything that could be influenced by the class. Students, particularly, crowded around the “Well” and not only read the wishes on display but made wishes out loud as they discussed the different courses in the school.

Sarah left the exhibit with a considerable amount of information about social studies. At home that night she discovered that a statement prepared and distributed by the guides during the exhibition might be extremely valuable as she wrote her speech. She found that her copy looked like this:

*What Social Studies Is about in Our School and Why We Teach It*

No matter what a child does during or after high school, he cannot escape his citizenship responsibilities. We try to plan the social studies in Booker T. Washington so that our children get continuous help in understanding the social obligations of young and old citizens. We try, as far as we know how, to help them as they read about, think about, and talk about social obligations. Then we try to help them find chances to actually carry out social obligations that children can safely carry out. This is why we encourage all students to read and react to ideas expressed in newspapers and in radio broadcasts. In fact, this is why we teach history, for history tells the story of man’s successes and failures. As we direct students in their studies of great events, personalities, important trends, and movements, we try to help them understand why some events were successful, why others were unsuccessful, and how this information can be used in solving current problems in our society.

We think there is an ever-present need for closer cooperation between individuals, homes, schools, and churches, so we try to have our students learn how to establish good human relationships. We begin right in our classrooms by having our children think hard about their relationships with the corner store keeper, the druggist, the chain store operator. Relationships are considered as groups work on simple investigations of such things as social security, accidents, labor, recreation, health, poverty, and family living. We take them on visits to courts after they have studied the laws covering some conditions in the community. We do this because we want them to understand the conflicts that people have about their rights so that they can avoid such conflicts.

We believe improvements in the governments of our school, city, and nation can be effected most rapidly and for the good of all through intelligent participation by all people. This is why we begin early to teach our children to vote intelligently, to pay taxes, and to assume the responsibilities of citizenship as rapidly as possible.

We will appreciate any help parents can give in connection with these things we are trying to do.

## 11

Herbert moved toward the front of the auditorium after Mr. Arnold dismissed the class in physical education. Herbert's effort to look more closely at the school in order to develop a commencement speech about the value of noncredit courses to students had caused him to wonder why some courses which he considered extremely valuable carried so little credit. Physical education was one of these. He had decided to ask Mr. Arnold about this. Talking with Mr. Arnold would be easy. As coach and dean of boys, he was close to nearly all of the boys and he talked with them about many things. Herbert, a first-string halfback and a star forward for two years, knew Mr. Arnold as a teacher, a sort of big brother, and a confidential friend.

"Straighten up, old man," laughed Mr. Arnold as he punched playfully at Herbert's shoulders. "Does writing a speech have to make your chest hollow? You'll be a sight commencement night if you stand up like a 'softie.' How's the speech going, sure enough?"

"It's in the bag, Coach. Got enough for a book—much more than anybody could say in twenty minutes—got to be careful what you say and how you say it, though."

Herbert hitched at his trousers, which seemed high enough already. Mr. Arnold smiled secretly as he remembered the "bell-bottom" trousers which had been the joy of every boy when he had been a student in this same school. Boys at Herbert's age simply get pleasure out of extreme styles.

"You know, Coach," Herbert was saying, "I've learned a lot about this school since I've been getting ready for commencement, but I still want to know something else about physical ed."

"What do you mean?" asked the instructor.

"I think it's one of the most important courses in the school."

"You're quite right," agreed the teacher.

"Then why don't we get more credit for it?" asked Herbert, a puzzled frown creasing his forehead.

"I'm glad you asked that. It's an important question." Mr. Arnold began his explanation.

"Before the war, a school in this state couldn't give credit for physical ed if it didn't have a gym, showers, lockers, and other things that the state required. Our Board of Education had money set aside for all of these things when the war started, but restrictions on building materials made it impossible to get the things we needed until after the war. In the meantime, we decided that the physical development of our students could not be neglected. We did what we could with the things we had. During the war, the state required all high school graduates to have physical ed and permitted any school to give credit for what it did in

physical ed. Our classes take up calisthenics, individual and group stunts, games, marching, or whatever the weather or season of the year permits out there on the grounds. On rainy days we held discussions of health problems such as avoiding colds, bathing, first aid, and avoiding diseases. If it doesn't rain, I try to hold these discussions about twice a week."

"All these vaccinations, blood tests, and X-rays are a part of the physical ed program, aren't they?" asked Herbert.

"Yes, we call the whole course Health and Physical Education. The doctors out in town and the City Health Department help us with the health program. The local doctors examine the boys and girls on my teams and never charge us a dime. The Health Department tests the blood, lungs, ears, and eyes of every pupil in the school. It inspects the lunchroom, drinking fountains, and toilets and tells us what needs to be done about these."

"That's why we got the new style drinking fountains," said Herbert.

"And some of the conveniences in the cafeteria kitchen, too. Boy, when we get our new gym and cafeteria, things will hum the year round. The spring intramural games which we have now and think are good will be sandlot stuff."

Herbert smiled ruefully. "The new gym will come too late for me—but I'm glad it's coming up. My kid brother will have a fit over it when he gets to high school."

Mr. Arnold rushed on to his next class, and Herbert made the following notes in his book.

*Helps us keep healthy—sometimes before we know how to help ourselves. Gets us in the habit of using doctors without being afraid. Makes us lively and happy.*

## 12

Sarah sat at her favorite table near a window in the library. The light was good and she liked to feel the warm sun as she worked. She glanced occasionally at the pictures, the colorful books corners, and the plants, lush and green. Such corners and such views were rare in the school, and so were spacious, smooth-topped tables, the variety of easily accessible books, and the eager assistance of a librarian and student helpers. When she had time, she enjoyed browsing through the stacks of novels, the picture and pamphlet files, and the large collection of books by and about the Negro. All of these things were usually conducive to satisfying study. But today this favorite spot had a different effect on her. She felt pleasantly warm; her eyes wandered from the page on which she was writing. She didn't try to snap herself back to work but, instead, sank into a languid contentment from which pictures of the past were conjured in rapid succession.



She saw boys and girls as they spoke with pride of their school library. A returned soldier compared the present library with the one he left in 1940. Then it was small, always crowded, accommodating only about one-tenth of the school population. As the school developed and as more classes undertook studies of problems requiring many different books instead of day-to-day assignments from one textbook, the wall between the library and the adjoining room had been taken out in order to provide more space. Large folding doors had been set between the two rooms, which now could set comfortably a hundred students (about a fifth of the student body).

In many rooms, classroom libraries had been established. These were branches of the main library containing special books and other materials used frequently and almost exclusively in certain classes.

Another picture appeared. The library was lighted, for it was evening. She was introducing her mother to the school librarian and explaining that her mother wanted to write a paper to be presented in the Matrons Club and that they had come to the library for materials. She saw again the look of satisfaction that appeared on her mother's face when they found just what was needed in the adult section of the school's library. She saw her mother returning to the library at night or on Saturdays when the library was open especially for adults.

Bits of conversation she recalled reminded her that the library's books, magazines, and newspapers had not been selected by the librarian alone but in cooperation with students, teachers, and adult readers. Hadn't she, herself, carried to the teachers the sheet which requested them to make note of books and magazines they would like to have in the library? Yes, and that was why *Glamour*, the style magazine, was there now. Miss Mann had put the choice of magazines up to the clothing class and Jannie had said, "I wish we could have every issue of *Glamour* for our clothing group. Don't you, Miss Mann?"

She recalled joining the Library Club, in which she had learned things about the library that were not generally known by most students. She knew, for instance, that in one year the number of newspapers, magazines, and professional periodicals had increased from forty to sixty. She recalled how proud everybody was when four club members actually became library science majors in college. She remembered how accomplished she felt when she had assisted with routine work in the library and when the club gave plays, made posters, conducted contests and quizzes to gratify the keen school and community interest in the library.

Sarah recalled the conferences between the teachers, the student representatives, the principal, and the librarian to discover means of improving the service to the school and its many groups. She saw herself laboring over notes she had taken in the conference last year. She felt

again the pleasurable relief which was hers when Mrs. Whetstone smilingly said, "That's good." Before her, just for a second, she saw the page on which she had written:

February 5, 1946

*The English teachers and four students met with the principal and the librarian in the library at the fourth period for a conference. The librarian had called the meeting in order to get the suggestions of those attending on ways to improve the services of the library to English teachers and students. After a lively discussion the conferees agreed upon the following proposals: (1) The teachers be requested to inform the librarian of the problems on which their classes are working and their probable reading needs. (2) That books requested by teachers for class use be purchased at least in duplicate. (3) That the books in the list submitted by the English teachers and their students be purchased as rapidly as possible. (4) That library records of pupil reading be made available to teachers so that they may know what their pupils are reading.*

*Phoebe Whetstone, Chairman*

*Sarah Jones, Secretary*

Four loud raps on a table suddenly aroused Sarah, causing her pictures of the past to vanish. A student-librarian was rapping for a more quiet room. Sarah thought of her speech. She'd be glad when it was finished and delivered. Opening her notebook, she checked her carefully arranged notes. Foreign language was next on her list of things to do. Where could she turn for information on Latin, which had been discontinued this year?

Upon recalling a program presented in assembly by the Latin classes, she went to the library files and took out an issue of the *Booker T. Washington Journal*. In it she found and read again the description of the Latin assembly program:

*Latin Program Presented*

Under the direction of Misses Baker and Tyler, the combined ninth and tenth Latin classes presented a program in the March 4th assembly. The program opened with the Pater Noster (The Lord's Prayer). Chauncy Green read the scripture in Latin, after which Ella Brown sang "Ave Maria," "Mica, Mica" (Twinkle, Twinkle) was recited in Latin by Beula Jeffres, and Louise Taylor gave the English translation.

Two short plays were acted in pantomime while a speaker read the story. The first playlet, "Pampa Mala" (Rotten Apples), was told in Latin by Doris Cox and in English by Alfred Collins. Those participating in the pantomime were Alex Vine, Blanche Williams, Joseph Hines, Grover Harris, Sarah Brown, Gladys Olwood, and Eugene Williams.

The second playlet, "Discipuli et Magistri" (Pupils and Teachers),

was told in the Latin by Alfred Clanton and translated in English by Chauncey Smith.

“Sententia” (Mottoes), which concluded the program, were given by another group from the two classes. The mottoes were first given in Latin and then repeated in English. Those students who gave the Latin versions were Fatina Joyner, Clara Parker, Mattie Williams, Bettie Harrison, Athalene Davis, Eula Evans, and Merdin Kingston. The English translations were given by Christine Pittman, Geraldine Corbett, Marion Brown, Mary Lane, Marion Lloyd, Elizabeth Worsley, and Chester Harris. The program aroused keen interest on the part of the audience.

As Sarah finished reading the article, she thought of Janie, her younger sister, whose main talk at home last year had been about first-year Latin, her favorite subject. This year, more than one student regretted the fact that there was no Latin teacher in the school. When Sarah entered high school, students steered her away from Latin by saying that it was dead and uninteresting. “But I couldn’t take everything,” she reflected.

When the two thirty bell rang, Sarah left the building, for it was time for her French class. Mme. Twain greeted the class with “*Bonjour mes élèves.*” There was a chorus of “*Bonjour, Mme. Twain.*” Each student responded with *present* or *ici* when the roll was called. The students were anxious to begin class and complete the assigned lesson for the day. Had not Mme. Twain promised to use the last ten minutes of the period to teach them another new song? For several days “Alouette” had been flashed on the screen in a local theatre, and the audience, including practically every student in the French class, had enjoyed singing it. Yesterday when “Alouette” had been sung in class, before they realized it the students had learned the French words and their meanings. Indeed, students not enrolled in French classes were learning the songs from the French students. The class wanted to learn to sing other songs in French, so Madame Twain suggested “Frere Jacques,” the round that they knew at “Brother John,” “God Bless America,” and “Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup,” featured by the Charioteers on the hit parade. The class would learn one of these songs today.

Sarah opened her notebook to the passage to be read in class today. Glancing through the paragraphs, she saw many French words that resembled English words. Sarah recalled an earlier lesson in which the class had learned about certain English words derived from French or from Latin through French. In connection with this lesson, Sarah and perhaps other students had discovered how to use a dictionary to find the language from which English words come.

After the class had read the passage silently, Madame Twain asked questions in French and they responded in French. On some days the

questions were asked and answered in English. Madame Twain's questions usually called attention to differences between ideas expressed in English and the same ideas expressed in French: "How go you" instead of "How are you," or "How do you call yourself" instead of "What is your name." Madame called attention to these differences so that the class would soon be able to begin corresponding through the Red Cross with students in France.

Just before Madame Twain started the song, Sarah consulted a French calendar, dated the crossword puzzle she had just completed using irregular verbs, and placed it on the bulletin board next to Jacqueline's puzzle. She would have no trouble deciding what to say about French in her speech.

### 13

Herbert stopped at the hall bulletin board to look at a financial statement which had just been posted. Jane Eyre had been a good play. The senior class had sold three hundred seventy-five dollars' worth of tickets and had allocated the sum as payment on a new piano for the school. Herbert was glad that his class had decided to replace the old piano, for it was beyond repair.

"Hey, Herbert! The Court of Honor is just two weeks off. We've got to get the cabin ready for inspection." Joe Thomas was tugging at Herbert's arm as he talked.

"I've just been waiting for you to say the word," replied Herbert. "Where do you keep yourself?"

"Oh, around. I don't see anybody after lunch 'cept the other thirteen fellows and four girls in the shop with me."

Herbert could understand this because the vocational classes were now being held in a building formerly used by the NYA. This building was about five minutes' walk from the main school campus.

"Boy! We've really got a shop now with all kinds of machines, plenty of elbow room, light 'n' everything. It's . . . say, I've got to be going to class. If you don't have a class this period, how 'bout walking over to the shop with me and looking at some of the things we've made. You ought to see the bookcase I'm making. Made a chest of drawers last week. Material cost me \$1.31, and I sold it for \$6.00. How's that for making change? And then the lady got it cheaper than she could buy it downtown."

"Swell," grinned Herbert as he tried to get a word in. "Look, Joe, I promised Sarah I'd find out some things about the shop for her. You could help me out if you have the time to tell me exactly how you feel about it. You've had almost four years of shop work, and you've had experience working after school and in the summer doing repair work and

building for different people.”

“I’m due in the shop now,” Joe answered. “Come on. I can show you better’n I can tell you.”

The two boys had started across the field toward a group of white wooden buildings about three blocks away. “Wait, Herb. We oughta go down the street and then ’cross to the shop, as we can stop at the brick house the boys built. That’s our masterpiece, you know. We really went to town on it. We drew the plans, made the blueprints, figured out the bill of materials, and everything.”

In a few minutes the boys were at the house, and Joe was ringing the bell.

“It’s solid brick, not veneer,” Joe informed Herbert as he patted the bricks near the door.

Mrs. Perry, who occupied the house, knew Joe as a skillful and dependable student who had worked late afternoons and Saturdays in order to make things about the house just right. She told the boys to look around as much as they wished and to take some of the cookies they would find cooling in the kitchen. Herbert saw a cozy living room with three windows, a vestibule, a pretty bathroom which he wished he could give his mother, two bedrooms, a kitchen, and plenty of closets. He asked Joe how the house was heated, as he didn’t see any stoves.

“Come on. I’ll show you,” Joe replied. The two boys went down into the basement. There stood a hot-air furnace.

“Who put the furnace in?” asked Herbert.

“Man, we did all this, including wiring and plumbing. We know our stuff, don’t we?” Joe said proudly.

“You sure do,” Herbert agreed admiringly. “When I took vocational training, my class worked with a class of white boys from the Central High School on the foundation and frame of a house. That’s as far as we got. We never worked up to doing the job. But I took shop only one year.”

As the boys left the house, Joe explained, “Bricklaying’s one of my specialties. I laid a lot of bricks in that house, especially on the right front corner. Guess I’ll get a job laying brick again this summer at a dollar ’n’ a quarter an hour. A little more practice and I can get a dollar ’n’ sixty-eight like the older men. You don’t see many of the old fellows who can read blueprints. If they could, they’d make more. I can read them good as funny books.”

They were close to the shop now, and the hum of machinery was evidence enough for Herbert that things were happening inside. Joe quickened his step as he neared the building. Machine shop noise was music to his ears. Besides, he never liked to be late, because he was afraid he’d miss some preliminary explanations.

Mr. Perry, the instructor, saw Joe and Herbert as they came in. He

had missed Joe when he checked the roll, but he knew Joe would not miss shop work unless matters of great importance detained him.

Joe showed Herbert around the shop, naming all the sixteen machines, and showed what each would do. After a routine explanation of the machines and tool room, they came to the upper end of the shop, where there were six drawing tables and a huge drawing desk for drawing and laying out large patterns. Several boys and two girls were sitting at the tables figuring out the bill of materials and costs for projects they were about to begin.

"I see you've got some girls in here," Herbert commented. "That's something new. We didn't have any in our class."

"Yes, and you know, Herb, I was disgusted when they first came over, but I've changed my mind. They're pretty good, for girls. They make swell cabinets, whatnots, little tables, and things."

Herbert chuckled, "I guess Sarah will say they're paying us boys back for the way we've taken to home economics."

The two boys went into the finishing room, where two more girls and several boys were staining, shellacking, and varnishing the objects they had made.

Herbert asked one of the boys, "Did you make the drop-leaf table, Ben?"

Ben told him that he had made it for his mother. After Herbert had admired the fine workmanship, Ben said he planned to take cabinetmaking in college. He wanted to make a career of it and have a shop of his own.

"You think many of the fellows will study this in college or in trade school?" Herbert asked.

"Sure, some will," Joe answered. "Fellows like Ben and Dave could do the hard stuff in college, too. It takes plenty of money to go to college though. 'Course the girls and some of the fellows just want to make good ordinary things and fix little things 'round the house. I'm getting all I can now so I can work next year. Mr. Perry would let me drop in any time I got stuck or needed any of the books. Don't think I'd like college, Herb."

Mr. Perry walked over to see what the discussion was about. "Is Joe explaining everything you want to know, Herbert?"

"Oh yes. Thank you," Herbert replied. He looked at his watch. "Gosh! It's almost time for my next class. The time sure did fly. Guess I'd better get going. See you later, Joe. Thanks for showing me around, and thanks, Mr. Perry, for letting him."

"So long," Joe called as Herbert hurried toward the door. "Meet me at the cabin Saturday morning."

And Herbert would be there. Joe was getting something a little different in high school. He would tell Sarah about it, and maybe they could put it down.

## CHAPTER III

## Letting Others Know

## 14

It was eight o'clock and the commencement exercises would not begin until eight thirty. The auditorium was already about two-thirds full. Everybody knew from experience that if you were not on time for the program in the Booker T. auditorium, you would not get a seat. Then, too, this wasn't just another commencement. For a long time "Booker T" commencements had been "different." Parents came for other reasons than just to see another class graduated. It took a long time to prepare supper and get ready to attend commencement after a full day's work, and most of these parents work all day.

The ushers were from the tenth and eleventh grades. It would be their commencement next year. What was a year or two years at Booker T? This year they were working for the seniors and they were serious about it, just as serious as they wanted tenth- and eleventh-grade ushers to be next year. The ushers had talked over what they would wear and what doors they would take and when to close and open the doors. Just about every problem of a large audience had been anticipated. They had done all this before many times and tonight knew how to operate as smoothly as a well-oiled machine.

For a large audience with a long time to sit, the crowd was not noisy. Seats squeaked and creaked, but that would stop when the curtains opened and people stopped looking around to see who was there. By then, too, they would have read the printed programs which were crackling all over the room. It is a good sound—a "Booker T" commencement sound of a happy and expectant audience.

The theme of the program was "High School Was Like This." It sounded interesting. A brief note on the program stated: "The material for this play was gathered from actual experiences of the class of 1946. The speakers are either talking about themselves or other members of the class."

Backstage there was a different kind of excitement. Commencement dresses were being seen and admired, the president of the class nervously urged each senior to get in place, and the class sponsors gave last-minute advice to certain members of the cast.

Promptly at eight thirty, soft strains of "Perfect Day" brought the audience to attention. The curtain rose on a scene depicting a last meeting of the senior class. A succession of small groups of seniors appeared from the wings. There was laughter and light chatter about marks, classroom

incidents, parties, and other school happenings. When all of the seniors were on the stage, a voice was heard over the chatter: "Hi Walter. Let's get down to business. I've a million things to do before the graduating exercises. I don't want to miss that precious little scroll tomorrow night. Come on, fellow! Let's get this over!"

Walter responded with the first line of Sarah's speech that he had heard during a rehearsal: "We have crossed the bay and the ocean lies before us."

"And you're going to drown in the ocean, too, if you're not careful," another senior jeered.

"That's all right, old killjoy; just be sure you don't drown," Walter responded.

"Listen!" a loud voice advised. "The End of a Perfect Day." Let's all sing!"

"Fifty-six seniors, some sitting and some standing, joined in and sang through the words of Carrie Jacobs-Bond's nostalgic lyric. As the song ended, the class president rapped for order and began somewhat soberly: "As you know, this is our last meeting of the year, and I want to express my sincere appreciation for the opportunity you have given me to serve as president of the best class in the history of Booker T."

Over the applause that followed, a voice said, "And the best president of the best class."

The commencement audience was witnessing a brief business meeting being carried through by the class.

The president continued, "This last meeting is being held for the benefit of our parents and friends whom we have invited. We want to describe for them some of our most outstanding experiences in high school. I entered school back in '42. So most of my high school days have been war days. Nobody knew what was going to happen. Everybody thought the war would last a long time, and the papers and the radio didn't always sound too good.

"All the big boys in the school were being drafted, and some even put their ages up so they could enlist. You heard in school and everywhere else you went about the Army and the Navy and the Marines. We were studying mathematics and physics and chemistry and everything else to get ready to fight. Negroes were even being taken into the Marines and some were training to be pilots. It was a thrill just to think about someday wearing a uniform and having the girls crying when you went away to the war. But—all we could do was to help in the "war effort." And did we work! There were scrap drives where we brought all the scrap to school, and bond and stamp rallies, and poster contests, and ration books to give out. It seemed to me that everything at school was about the war. We certainly did our part! Yes sir, if old Booker T. hadn't



snapped into the war effort, some of our boys might not be here tonight. High School Was Like That to Me.”

A hand went up and the president recognized Elaine.

“I did all I could about the war, like everybody else, but the war was never the most important thing to me in high school. When I try to think about the experiences that meant the most to me, it’s something that might seem funny to some of you, knowing me as you do.

“I like Booker T. most because it has given me a chance to take part in discussions.” Laughter broke out among the seniors and even in the audience. There are some who knew Elaine and her intentions of someday becoming a lawyer. As the laughter died down, Elaine continued:

“I don’t mean that we have just talked all the time and the teachers have kept quiet. I don’t mean that we haven’t studied our textbooks and had our lessons.”

There was some nodding and smiling and groaning from the seniors.

“But you all must admit that all of our teachers have encouraged us to say what we felt and backed up our ideas with honest facts. Nobody would let us talk long just to be talking. I know lots of grown-up people who think high school kids are too young to have any ideas worth listening to, but it’s been different here. Practically all the teachers have treated us as if we were old enough to have some sense and know what we wanted to say even if we didn’t always say it so well.”

“You’re right,” said Henry, who was a “vet” and talked it. “They never pulled their rank on us—almost never.”

“Well, that’s what I mean. I never was afraid to say what I wanted to say, though sometimes the teachers got me about the way I said it. I never tried to be fresh, but sometimes I guess I sounded like it. High school was like that to me.”

A wave of chuckles passed over the audience. They were in the spirit of the evening now. Elaine’s parents may not have felt that the career of a lawyer was a proper ambition for a Negro girl, but the audience was not so sure that Elaine had not made a good choice after all.

Some of the teachers at Booker T. still felt that the boys and girls were given too much consideration, but as in most high schools, where the staff generally takes the attitude that children are also people, much of what observers like about the school, and much of the growth of boys and girls, results from the security that children feel with their teachers.

“Mr. President.” This time it was Irene who spoke up. “To me the most important thing I got out of high school was learning how to get along with other people. I mean, getting along with everybody. It was one of the hardest things I’ve had to learn. I can remember that I used to get mad easily about almost anything. I couldn’t even help with the lunch line at first because I was too hotheaded.”

The audience laughed when Henry said, "When did you stop being hotheaded? I haven't noticed the sudden change."

"Well, anyway, I am better. I know it. It was my experience in clubs and working with committees for programs and things like that, that really improved my disposition." The audience laughed. "I think a lot of us have better dispositions, even including you."

Henry and Irene had been friends almost all through high school. That was no secret to anybody who knew Booker T. social news. "We may not all have made high marks in all our subjects," Irene continued, "but in other things we could all make As if we wanted to. I mean, such things as controlling our feelings, learning not to show off for other people or to laugh at other people, and learning how to be willing to take as much as we gave in games or in discussions. High school really taught me to respect other people's opinions, Henry—even yours."

By now the audience was thoroughly a part of the little drama on the stage.

"Mr. President!" It was time for Charles to say something. Charles was listed in the honor group on the commencement program. The class had a way of listening when Charles talked.

"So far we have talked mostly about citizenship. I know that is very important, but we won't get diplomas at graduation because we can get along with people or keep our tempers. If we do graduate, it will be because we passed examinations in English and math and science and other things like that, and that means that we had to learn to study and do assignments. When I get to college this fall, I may find out differently, but I really think I learned how to study. That is some progress since the days when most of my study time was used by sharpening my pencil and getting my books together and laying out my papers. That just didn't go in Miss Jackson's work periods in ninth grade English or in any of our classes where we work in the classroom. Whatever success I may have in college, I know I will owe most of it to Miss Jackson's determination."

"What can you say about high school, Gladys?" the president asked.

A lovely girl rose and began to talk in a clear, confident manner.

"It isn't hard for me to decide the question. I think all of you know that I liked the assembly programs and the clubs and the programs. It was the thrill of my life when I presided at assembly and introduced Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune to the student body. I can remember that I was scared to death the first time I had to preside at assembly, but here the boys and girls have lots of opportunity to preside at club meetings and in classroom activities, and we just get used to talking before an audience," she declared.

"Gosh, I never will. I just can't do it somehow!" Maxine declared.

"Oh yes, you can, Maxine. You just won't try hard enough. Maybe

you will get chances in college to do things the way we kids do them at Booker T. You can't blame high school if you didn't learn to talk to an audience. Here at Booker T. everybody really can get a chance if he will take it. That's the way I feel about high school, Mr. President. Thank you." Gladys spoke with the poise and assurance that comes from experiences of careful and deliberate talking before groups. Teachers at Booker T. who knew her when she entered high school were proud of her tonight. Not all the graduates could talk as well and as effectively as Gladys, but Gladys was justification for the efforts of the faculty to use all possible situations in the school as opportunities to develop the communication skills of the children rather than those of the staff members.

Several children on the stage pushed a girl out to the front. "We want Maxine," they said.

"Oh, all right," Maxine agreed. "But what can I say, Mr. President?"

"Anything you wish," the president replied.

"I do appreciate this Good Sportsmanship medal that the class gave me, but all of us are good sports, if you ask me. Why, wouldn't we be trying so hard to make friends with the girls opposing us on other teams? We picked them up when they fell and ignored awful remarks made at us sometimes by girls on other teams. I was pulled out so many times for being a bad sport that I finally got the idea. We won a game from Vanceburg once after their captain became angry and threw the ball down and I snapped it right down the floor to Mary for the winning point. I still like to win, all right, but I can lose lots better than I used to. Booker T. taught me that."

"What's the matter with Maxine? She's all right. Who says so? Booker T.! Booker T.!"

As Maxine returned to her place, the cheers of the class died down, but the audience continued to applaud until her classmates called her up for a bow.

"Haven't some of you girls something to say for home economics?" the president asked. He didn't have to wait long before, not a girl, but a big husky boy stepped forward. "Before the girls speak, I would like a chance to say something about home economics."

The audience laughed and James laughed with them.

"When Booker T. opened home economics to boys, I thought it would just be fun to go in the course with the girls, but I found that I really liked it and was getting lots more than fun out of the course, so I stayed in home economics three years. I have learned to make some of my own clothes, including underwear and even a dress shirt. That comes in pretty handy right now. I can plan and cook as good a meal as anybody.

"I am doing so well now serving parties that I had a hard time deciding to enter college this fall. But I think even a caterer ought to have a

college education. I have my trade now, but I want to go to school later and learn more of the fancy touches—wedding cakes and party foods. Of course, I wouldn't have learned so much from just a high school course if Mrs. Davies hadn't taken a special interest in my work. After she found out how interested I was, she just let me stay on in the course two more years, but I guess I kept some of the girls out who ought to have been in there. I enjoyed the unit on marriage and family life; I think that's what we called it. It gave me a lot of new ideas about things I needed to know, and I even discussed them with Mom and Dad. I think I got as much out of high school as anybody. I'll never forget old Booker T."

James appeared surprised at the prolonged applause as he stepped back to his seat. The class had urged James to speak for home economics because he was considered the best practical example of what could be done toward making a career out of what one learns in high school. The class was proud of James. They knew he would have a hard time in college, if he got through at all; but, college or no college, James had already proved that he could earn a living.

Frances asked for a chance to speak.

"Go right on, Frances," the president said.

"It is true that a few boys are taking home economics and doing well in it, but girls—not boys—will always be homemakers. Some girls will go to college and become home economics teachers, but most girls take home economics because they expect to have husbands and well-kept homes. I took home economics to learn how to keep house three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, and like it. What I mean is that home economics is still mainly for girls, for they will wash most of the dishes, plan and prepare most of the meals, and make most of the homes comfortable and enjoyable."

The applause from the women in the audience indicated that Frances had carried her point.

"Does anyone want to mention the shops?" The president looked around as if he didn't know Eddie had his speech about the shops all ready. He had it rehearsed anyway. As Eddie stepped forward, the class was a little nervous. Eddie was the best shop boy in the class, but they knew he might forget his speech tonight. Eddie didn't care much about making speeches.

"Speaking about vocational courses," Eddie began nervously, "I know my shop courses were the best experiences I had in high school."

What was this? In rehearsal Eddie had said "my most valuable experiences." Was he going to forget after all? But as he went on, Eddie surprised them. The written speech, that Eddie never said quite well, became just talk, and Eddie seemed to be more at ease than he ever was at the practices.

"I also learned enough in high school to begin making my own money. Two summers straight I got a job as a carpenter on the new buildings they were putting up at Mendel's and I got more than some of the men. I mean, some of the men couldn't do what I could do. If it hadn't been for what I learned in the shops at school, I couldn't have done that kind of work. What my older brother, Frank, learned in brickwork at Booker T. has helped him to make almost as much as Dad. He is working now as a skilled mason during the day and making cement blocks after work hours. He also has a job teaching masonry to veterans three hours a night. Our family owes a lot to high school. I don't think I can go to college, but I would like to find someplace to go to learn more about the trade I expect to follow. I haven't found the kind of place I want to go to yet because they don't have places where Negroes can go, but maybe I can find a place sometime, and if I don't, I can just learn on the job, I guess."

It wasn't said as Eddie had practiced it, but Eddie never did so well at the practices anyway. The speech he made came out of his heart and went straight to the hearts of the audience, and they showed it by the loud applause they gave him as he sat down.

"Betty, will you say something about our student activities?" The president knew Betty's speech so well he could have almost said it himself.

"Mr. President and classmates, this program will not be complete unless our parents and friends hear about our student council and some of the things it has done for us. I think our student council is the organization that has taught us most about democracy, as it is the best example of democracy in the whole school. We have all appreciated the honor of the chance to help plan good things for our school. As president of the student council this year, I have felt that all the students at Booker T. want to help our school to be the most attractive and the best high school in the county, and we have tried in every way to see that. We did all we could to help the principal and teachers to make it the best. The boys and girls elect the best people in the school to be members of the student council, not always the smartest but the hardest workers, and we try to live up to our responsibility. Then there is also our local chapter, number 2886 of the National Honor Society. The cardinal principles of this society are character, scholarship, leadership, and service. Being selected as a member is one of the greatest honors that can come to a high school student. I would like all members of the honor society to stand so that we can all see who they are and give them a big hand."

A number of the seniors on the stage stood and so did a few juniors in the audience. Three of the ushers held their hands up as people looked around the room and the audience gave a quick and hearty applause.

"Thank you," said Betty as they all sat again. "We have other clubs,

too, as you have heard mentioned already, and we seniors think that they have meant as much to us as our regular classes.” There was more applause as Betty took her seat.

“Mr. President, may I say something at this point?”

“Certainly, Ruth. What is on your mind?”

Ruth spoke quietly and soberly.

“I was in the band as long as we had a band. Those two years in the band meant more to me than anything else in school. I was sorry when we had to give up the band. I think the band put something in our school that was lost when the band was discontinued. I hope someday we can have it again. There are some children in the school who could be in the big bands someday if they had a chance. Everybody in Rocky Mount is proud of Kay Kyser. He is famous all over the country, and some of our boys could be Kay Kysers someday, perhaps, if we could have a band again.” Betty took her seat, but nobody in the audience seemed to know whether or not to applaud. There were a few scattering claps and finally the whole audience applauded loudly.

“What are you trying to say, Elaine?” The president had a better cue than he had expected for the last number on his program. “We would all like to hear what you are telling Mary,” he prompted.

“Well, er-er,” Elaine stammered.

“Go ahead. Say whatever you want to,” the president urged.

“All the things that have been mentioned by all of you are fine. I have already said how proud I am of Booker T., but Ruth’s speech has set me to thinking. I can’t help thinking about some things here at Booker T. We didn’t have them, but maybe some of the other classes can have them.

“I got mighty tired of carrying my books and coat and hat and, sometimes, my rubbers around all day for four years or running the risk of having my hat mashed up or losing my rubbers. I must say we didn’t lose things often, but it was an awful mess. I think Booker T. ought to have some lockers in the halls where the kids can lock their things up.”

The audience had got very still as Elaine began to talk, but now they broke into spontaneous applause.

“I always wanted a business course too, and I couldn’t get it here. I will need to be able to type when I begin to study law. Lots of kids, I know, wanted to learn typing and shorthand so they could get jobs as office clerks. Even in college some kids make enough to cover almost all of their expenses. Then, too, we are too crowded. We need more classrooms. The home economics department is fine, but you know we don’t have enough room in there. We almost run over each other in there, and some kids couldn’t even take home economics because the teachers just couldn’t take any more in their classes. If it was good for James, think what it might have meant to the others who wanted home economics

and couldn't take it because there wasn't enough room. I think just about all the kids should be able to get some home economics while they are in high school. Next year, I hear, the kids will have a real cafeteria. I guess we are just graduating too soon to get a chance at all the things we might have enjoyed in high school."

By now Elaine's audience was listening carefully to every word, and as she paused, the applause was almost boisterous for the first time during the evening.

"Mr. President, I think Elaine is right." It was Frank who spoke up this time. The seniors' program was going according to plan and beyond their hopes. "We need lots of things that I hope the next classes that come along will get. I wanted more music, too. In some high schools the students learn to play musical instruments and really do get good enough to play in bands. I think our parents could at least ask for some of these things. Rocky Mount isn't a poor city. Some people just don't know that we want these things at Booker T., and we don't get them."

Elaine paused a moment for the applause that followed Frank's speech and then continued:

"Well, maybe our children will get some of these things when they come to Booker T."

Through high school Elaine had always been the one who said what she felt. The others knew it and had put her on committees to talk up for something that needed some hard arguing. Elaine had learned to make good, calm arguments even when she was persistent. She knew when it was useless to keep an argument going, but she never gave in too easily and more than once had been able to prove her point in a doubtful situation.

"Well," continued Elaine, "we all agree that there are some things Booker T. needs, but that doesn't change the fact that we have all had four glorious years here and we are grateful to our principal, our teachers, and our parents for these years and what they mean to us."

There was applause, but the audience was evidently somewhat more sober than at any previous time during the evening. The little skit composed by the children had had its effect. It was a thoughtful audience that settled back into its chairs to hear the rest of the commencement program.

The class president waited until the room was quiet again before he said, "And now, Herbert and Sarah have prepared two speeches on the subject which we have been discussing. Let's close our class meeting by listening to them."

Sarah was the first to take the floor. You could hear a pin fall as she delivered the speech which she had prepared with so much care:

"Mr. President, classmates, and friends:

"We have crossed the bay; the ocean lies before us. Yes, the vast ocean of life's problem is before us. Tonight, we take a backward glance, and pictures of our high school lives unfold before us. The pictures are not entirely the same for all of us, but in them there are interesting common tones and highlights.

"All of us have studied English for four years, and math, history, foreign language, and vocational education for at least one year. In addition to these, our school has offered a choice of forty different regular courses! What did we gain from our experiences in the regular courses? Can life be any richer for us because we attended high school? I must try to answer these questions.

"If life's problems can be partially solved through understanding and weighing ideas expressed by other people in conversation and writing and if people are better off because they are able to communicate useful and sometimes beautiful ideas to others, then we have not wasted our time in English. If letter writing, saying things clearly, and a desire for good books give people any advantages in life, we ought to have some of these advantages, for this is what our work in English has been about. The five thousand books in our attractive library are bound to have influenced our reading in many ways.

"If the world needs people who can use the right numbers and operations to answer questions about costs, sizes, numerical proofs, and people who can get important ideas expressed by numbers, those of us who have taken part in math activities afforded by vocational as well as math classes can look forward to successful achievements in places where numbers are used. Mathematics can make people think straighter on life's problems when it is learned for this purpose.

"If the facts of history can be used to attack problems in present-day society, such as cultivating mutual friendships, establishing good government, and getting comfortable and happy homes for everybody, if practice in solving those social problems found in school life provided a method of attacking life's problems, and if hard thinking about the larger problems in adult life can arouse our interest in doing something about these problems when the chance presents itself, then history and social studies have certainly helped all of us.

"If science can further one's understanding and control of the natural things around us and results in better health, better homes and gardens, fewer superstitions, and more sincere appreciation for the worth of animals, plants, and above all, of people that are unlike ourselves, then the study of science has been worthwhile.



"If the study of French or Latin can give people keener insights into things such as the nature and use of language, the meaning and power of custom in determining what people think and do and the good in different cultures and races, we go forth with our share of these things.

"If the world is really a world of work in which all productive labor is dignified, those of us who can sew, cook, decorate, build or repair homes or furniture, and create useful articles from raw materials will find acceptance and satisfaction in the adult world.

"To me, high school has been the beginning of a career that I must plan and shape from now on with the information and tools that I have and others that I can get. I can make it beautiful and profitable—and I shall certainly try—or I can make it dull and unprofitable. All of us are in better position to exercise intelligent control over our lives from now on. Good planning learned in high school can become better planning as we take our next step. English, science, math, and all of the other subjects that we have tried out can become our powerful servants if we continue to use them. We have peeped into a vast storehouse of knowledge whose door is heavy, hard to open, and even harder to keep open. What is successful living other than using knowledge for our own advancement and for the good of others?

"We have crossed the bay; the ocean lies before us."

The audience sat in stunned silence, but when they came to, the applause was deafening.

It was now Herbert's time to say his speech. Clearing his throat, which seemed drier than usual, he began:

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"Mr. President, members of the class, and visitors:

"My classmate has given you a summary of what the so-called academic work in high school was like. I dare not question the importance of those regular classes, for without them we could not graduate tonight. But as many of you have said, without the noncredit or extracurricular activities to add flavor to school and teach us many things that we would not ordinarily learn from books, I'd hate to think what high school would have been like. Tonight as we stand looking toward the future, we must not overlook or misjudge the value of our experiences outside the academic courses. Here, through noncredit activities we have had an opportunity to learn to do hundreds of things which are not included in the credit courses.

"These activities have helped us become better all-around citizens, stronger, wiser, and sometimes wealthier. They have prepared us to be better leaders, better followers, and better participants in the various organizations, our homes, our churches, and other institutions in our

communities and in our country.

"From every one of our extra activities we got some particular quality or qualities, whether the activity requires extra physical fitness or mental ability. All of our activities require some of each.

"Through our homeroom and student council organization we are prepared for active life in a democracy. We have learned to accept the responsibility which goes with more freedom. Logical thinking and self-expression have been developed. The importance of each person in a democracy has been highlighted, and at the same time, the great value of cooperation in group activities has been stressed.

"We know what it means to be citizens of the school. We have not been subjects or slaves, but citizens with rights and privileges as well as duties and obligations.

"Through our group and individual conferences with our teachers in homerooms, we have received invaluable guidance in solving the many problems which have faced us in our journey through high school. Complete answers to these problems can be found nowhere in a textbook.

"We have had numerous opportunities to develop and further special interests and talents through our clubs. This group of organizations includes the glee club, the dramatic club, the Girl's Reserves, the honor society, the science club, the Negro History Club, Le Cercle Francais, the cheerleaders' club, the traffic squad, the varsity club, athletics, and many others. All of us regret that because of the difficulty in finding an instructor, we no longer have a band, and we hope this situation will very soon be remedied.

"In addition to our clubs, there are other activities which, while not so definitely organized, are of great interest and importance to us because they offer the same opportunities for the development of certain qualities and abilities as are found in the clubs.

"Many of us have acted as ushers; guides; operators of motion picture and sound machinery; office, library, and cafeteria assistants; repair workers; and members of any school committee except the guidance committee. These are only a few examples of the many activities in which we have been encouraged to participate—activities which, while they do not count for units or credit, are just as important to us in satisfying our needs and interests.

"If we had not engaged in extracurricular activities, I doubt we would be on this stage tonight. Why? Because we would not know how to carry on a program like this.

"Nearly all of our assemblies are conducted by students through some noncredit activity—the homeroom, a club, or the student council. In this way every student in our school has several opportunities to appear before a large audience during this high school career.

“As we hold this last class meeting, before we say farewell, we are actually engaging in an extracurricular activity. Surely this is the final proof of the importance of such training.”



## Epilogue

*Today we are in a welter of confusion over what to keep and what to cast aside. We can not realize the full value of our revolutionary new ideas because we can imagine them only as decorations upon an old design. We have already enough knowledge about curriculum construction to redirect in a single generation the approach of the American people to their social problems, but we refuse to think of teaching in our American schools anything that has not been reduced to subject matter and printed in text books.*

—William A. Robinson, “What Is Progressive Education?”

(1937a, p. 23–24)

Miss Parker looked at Miss Prim and Mrs. Lawson after he left. “We should talk,” she said. They met a week later and laughed about how others had described their interviews. He was not what they had expected, but at this point in their lives, they really had no expectations . . . other than the unfairness of government and the cowardice of schools. They had brought their portraits, never thinking that he would send two 8” x 10” glossy photos to each of them as well as photocopies of the monographs. After all of the passing youngsters who came through asking questions and were never heard from again, the three women were surprised and pleased that he had sent prints and a letter of thanks (as well as a transcript and copyright release form). But their session was complicated and brought back a flood of feelings.

Mrs. Lawson said that she sat through her entire interview waiting for the desegregation question. She admitted she was somewhat relieved that the topic was never broached and added, “Where did he get those pamphlets? I read them. We were part of a real community where we could make decisions that were helpful to our students and to us.”

“The schools needed to be changed,” said Miss Prim, “and need to be changed today, getting rid of the old design—the old ways of doing things that really never should have been done. All this testing; all these silly rules that hurt rather than help. And there is no sense of cooperation. There is no talk about the real problems. Just chatter about lack of money and test results.”

Miss Parker had not said much. Teary-eyed, she looked at the two women, thinking of their narratives—what he called creative nonfiction. “We were respected and we cared . . . and we spoke for a common good. What we did was important, and we told it our way. I just hope there are groups of teachers around the country today who are writing their stories.”

—Creative nonfiction dialogue based upon statements teachers made during the Secondary School Study Oral History Project

## Member Schools of the Secondary School Study



Atlanta University Laboratory School, Atlanta, Georgia  
 Booker T. Washington High School, Rocky Mount, North Carolina  
 Booker T. Washington High School, Columbia, South Carolina  
 D. Webster Davis Laboratory School, Ettrick, Virginia  
 Drewry Practice High School, Talladega, Alabama  
 Dudley High School, Greensboro, North Carolina  
 Huntington High School, Newport News, Virginia  
 I. M. Terrell High School, Fort Worth, Texas  
 Lincoln High School, Tallahassee, Florida  
 Magnolia Avenue High School, Vicksburg, Mississippi  
 Moultrie High School for Negro Youth, Moultrie, Georgia  
 Natchitoches Parish Training School, Natchitoches, Louisiana  
 Pearl High School, Nashville, Tennessee  
 Southern University A&M College Demonstration School, Scotlandville, Louisiana  
 Staley High School, Americus, Georgia  
 State Teachers College Laboratory School, Montgomery, Alabama  
 William Grant High School, Covington, Kentucky

## Notes

1) No content has been deleted from the original monographs; however, the text has undergone modest editing in order to standardize punctuation, bibliographic entries, and word usage. Other examples do exist of creative nonfiction reports that were submitted by 1940s cooperative study schools. In the Southern Study (of white schools), the counterpart to the Secondary School Study, the Holtville High School faculty submitted a somewhat similar final report. The narrative consisted of an account of four visitors—Mr. White, Mr. Brown, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Smith—as they learned of the various activities and practices of the school.

2) This is not to suggest that the faculty at these schools were apolitical. Various acts of pedagogical defiance and cultural disobedience and cries for civil rights and equity are described in the Museum of Education's web exhibitions.

3) The Eight Year Study was an experimental project conducted between 1930 and 1942 by the Progressive Education Association. In this project, 30 high schools redesigned their curriculum while initiating innovative methods in evaluation and assessment, guidance, curricular and instructional design, and professional development. Seeking to address the needs of non-college-bound students while also providing better coordination among high schools and colleges for those students who continued their postsecondary education, the PEA initiated in 1930 the first of three Eight Year Study commissions, the Commission on the Relation of School and College (the Aikin Commission). The Commission on Secondary School Curriculum (the Thayer Commission) was formed in 1932, and the Commission on Human Relations (the Keliher Commission) was formed in 1935.

4) Discussions go askew when the fundamental conceptions of progressive education are unclear: Are progressive educators defined by a set of beliefs, or are they determined by historical fiat? In other words, are progressives defined by a specific ideology or identified as those educators who lived through a specific time period? Most contemporary historians of education determine progressives by the latter, as did Cremin and Tyack, who saw progressive education as an outgrowth of America's progressive era. From this perspective, the movement comes to fruition in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, beginning with Francis W. Parker's school in Quincy, Massachusetts, continuing with the writings of John Dewey, William H. Kilpatrick, and Ellwood P. Cubberley and displayed by practices at the Gary, Lincoln, Winnetka, and Dalton schools.

In contrast, many curriculum historians see the 1930s and 1940s as the “golden decades” for progressive thought, with the ideology of progressivism defined during the PEA’s cooperative projects and through relations with the New World Fellowship, the international progressive education association.

5) As is the case in any type of regional or national educational project, some schools participated more than others. The Eight Year Study staff officially identified five “least experimental schools” and noted that other well-known member schools engaged in little experimentation. Similarly, internal Secondary School Study correspondence includes comments from staff asking why certain schools were part of the study and wondering whether one of the schools was aware of the project. When reference is made to the experimental work of Eight Year Study and Secondary School Study progressive schools, it is understood that a specific group of schools within each cooperative study were actively engaged.

6) See the discussion of “tough kindness” in the Secondary School Study exhibition catalog, *Progressive Education in Black High School: The Secondary School Study, 1940–1946*.

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# *Becoming an African American Progressive Educator*

NARRATIVES FROM 1940S BLACK PROGRESSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

*Becoming an African American Progressive Educator* presents a rarely documented, behind-the-scenes view of classroom life in black, Southern progressive high schools during the mid-twentieth century and offers insights for understanding educational change at segregated schools during the Jim Crow era. This edited collection of 1940s creative nonfiction narratives—*The Evolution of Susan Prim, Mrs. Parker: The New Teacher*, and *High School Was Like This*—allows us to break free of today's generalizations and simplicities about black schools and progressive education and to consider further what lessons can be drawn from the past.

“Resurrecting significant and lost voices of educators Miss Prim, Miss Parker, Mrs. Thomas, and graduating seniors Sarah and Herbert, this edited collection of rich narratives and creative nonfiction portrays elegantly what it meant to ‘become’ an African American progressive educator in the South in the 1940s and 1950s, animated by educators committed at once to equity, excellence, building character, and preparing students immersed in life journeys littered with racism. While much has been written on Jim Crow schools, segregation, the politics of white resistance, and the struggle for desegregation, this volume fills a haunting gap in our knowledge of black education in the mid-20th century South. A gift to students, teachers, and researchers, Craig Kridel catalogues in exquisite detail the thoughtful curricular decisions, pedagogical practices, and the deep culturally rich relationships engaged, in classrooms, by African American educators working with African American youth, from within the dangerous, damaging, and violent limits of white supremacy, a decade prior to *Brown v. Board of Education*, as they dedicated themselves full-body, mind and soul, to carving spaces for building skills, confidence, character, and dreams.”

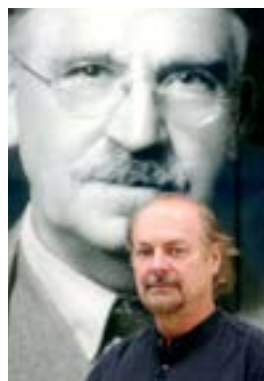
—Michelle Fine, Distinguished Professor of Critical Psychology, Women's Studies, American Studies and Urban Education at the Graduate Center, City University of New York

“In a time when discussions of education—particularly those concerning African American students—often center on school choice, academic achievement gaps, and the detriments of re-segregation, this volume adds insight and perspective on the forward-thinking teaching and techniques from an era that has been overlooked and unfortunately widely unsung in historical studies. Growing out of nearly a decade and a half of research that focused on some of the South's many influential schools, students, and teachers of the 1940s, Craig Kridel captures the voice of these black educators, administrators, and community members and raises awareness about the strides, barriers, and curricular innovations of black schools, thereby enriching the narrative of what it meant to be a black educator and scholar in the years before the litigation of *Brown v. Board of Education*.”

—Cleveland L. Sellers, Jr., President Emeritus, Voorhees College, and former Director of the African American Studies Program at the University of South Carolina

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The editor in front of the John Dewey wall portrait at the Museum of Education, University of South Carolina, 2014.