

Centennial Salute—Durham County Black Achievements



TRAVELING THRU ARKANSAS, WILL BE HOME SOON, reads the sign on picture post card. From left in the wagon are: W.G. Pearson, A. Goodloe and Dr. S.L. Warren in Hot Springs, Arkansas, about 1938.



A HILLSIDE STUDENT GROUP

By Elva P. DeJaron
Part II — Synopsis

The continuing struggles of the black citizens of Durham for representative "pieces of the pie" as envisioned in our Bill of Rights and Constitution are just as vital today as they were when Durham County, North Carolina was carved out of Wake and Orange Counties February 28, 1881. As we look to the development of black citizens, all people should be well aware that education has been, and will always be, an important facet in black family growth.

It must never be forgotten that it was against the law for black people to be taught to read for the majority knew that with reading capacity and legal development, a race of people could then move ahead as has been the case with many ethnic minorities. However, for blacks, this development has most often been after lengthy legal struggles. For unlike other citizens of this great nation, black people have been denied access to the arena of political, entry, educational development, health, and economic growth primarily because of color.

The first fifty years of the Centennial Salute to black achievements pointed out the cooperative efforts of both blacks and whites in building Durham as tobacco, business, education and health interests were growing in the segregated arena. Most blacks who achieved success, especially economic and business success, succeeded, but had no part in the political growth of Durham County.

This saga continues to point out important black footprints in Durham County development as they came to the city to work at various types of occupations.

It should be noted that during the years of the Great Depression, such businesses as N.C. Mutual, Mechanics and Farmers Bank, Mutual Savings and Loan Association, as well as North Carolina Central University, somehow weathered the severe depression of the early 1930's which affected all people, black and white.



A GROUP OF HILLSIDE STUDENTS

will continue with 1931.

1931 Chamberlin Studio of Music, begun in 1925 by Mrs. Margaret S. Shearin, continued to grow and to offer

1935

J.S. Stewart came to Durham and was affiliated with Mutual Building and Loan Association. He later served as its president.

August 15. Meeting of Durham citizens — C.C. Spaulding, J.E. Shepard, J.T. Taylor, W.D. Hill, R.L. McDougald, L.E. Austin, C.O. Pearson and R.N. Harris, elected to constitute the Executive Committee. The Committee took the initiative in the organization of the N.C. Committee on Negro Affairs. Committee was dedicated to educational, economic, social and political

welfare of Negroes in North Carolina. Hillside Park development was effected after conferences with the then J.L. Morehead and C.R. Woods of Recreation Commission. Hillside Park was developed and many workers were added to City Playgrounds. It is important to note that after one year's service, the Committee recommended that "The Citizens Committee be organized as the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs, offering membership to every Negro in the community and appealing for the cooperation of every member."

"2. That Durham Committee on Negro Affairs dedicates itself to the educational, economic, social and political welfare of Negroes in Durham and a representative would be from every section (five sections) where Negroes lived."

1936

The North Carolina Committee on Negro Affairs was organized in Durham, March 15, 1936. The Executive Committee of this group included C.C. Spaulding, James T. Taylor, R.N. Harris, R.L. McDougald, G.W. Cox, C.O. Pearson, J.E. Shepard and L.E. Austin.

1938

Scarborough Nursery School, under direction of Mrs. Clydie F. Scarborough, became the first State Licensed Day Care Center.

1939

Act of Legislature of N.C. created NCCU Law and Pharmacy Schools.

1940

NCCU Law School opened. Pharmacy school never opened.

Norfle Whitted was radio broadcaster on WDNC. Durham Colored Library became Stanford L. Warren Library in new building located at corner of Fayetteville and Umstead Streets. It was the second oldest library for blacks in the state.

1941

June. Pressure on U.S. Government to open equal opportunities for blacks in national defense. Executive Order 8802, issued by FDR to open up opportunities for blacks in defense areas.

World War II — Many young black men participated in various branches of the armed services — Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Air Force.

Suit filed to train blacks as air pilots. Tuskegee Institute.

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COUNCILMAN R.N. HARRIS SIGNS OATH OF OFFICE

However, certain footprints were still being made by black citizens of Durham. The chronological anecdotes



CAROL WILLIS, JR.

music instruction in piano and other instruments to more and more students. Chamberlin Studio is still open in 1981.

1932

Heart of the Great Depression with United States economy at its lowest ebb.

Franklin D. Roosevelt elected president of USA.

Raymond Hocutt versus UNC - Denial of equal protection of the Law.

N.C. Legislature passed Equalization Act which provided that for courses of study, not offered at state schools, the state would pay the differences in tuition, cost and travel. Many blacks took the opportunity to go out of state to colleges or universities.

1933

January 20, Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivered his famous "one-third of a nation" address. Creation by FDR of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), National Youth Administration (NYA), and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) for high school graduates and dropouts. Employment was at low ebb for all sectors of the population.

Legal action by C.O. Pearson, Durham attorney, resulted in the wide equalization laws of North Carolina which permitted black adults and black youths to get equal shares of such governmental programs as WPA, NYA, CCC. Public education in Durham was also affected by this action which gave equal equipment, supplies and support to Durham's black schools.

Dr. James Taylor served as director of the Youth Division of WPA (NYA). C.O. Pearson worked with WPA. There were many citizens, black and white, who were able to participate in WPA programs in Durham, especially artists and teachers who were unable to secure jobs.

Dr. Y.D. Garrett took over Biltmore Drug Store which had been started by Dr. Clyde Donnell and others in 1927.



NEWLY ELECTED COUNCILMAN — The late R.N. Harris, first black city councilman, reads about his election with his wife, Mrs. Plasse W. Harris.