

### HERTFORD COUNTY NEGRO RURAL EDUCATION

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taught at Waters Institute. She served successfully as supervisor for three years. Most of the rural schools were one-teacher schools at that time so Miss Hall started a building program. At the close of three years she resigned and Mrs. Mary E. Sils, prominent business woman of Ahoskie, was appointed. She served one year and during that time rendered excellent service.

In 1917 Mrs. Mary Haywood was appointed supervisor. She remained in the work three years and also rendered excellent service.

She was not a native of Hertford County but came to us from Virginia. During those years the supervisor dealt with the industrial work of the school only.

For three years Hertford County was without a Jeanes teacher, then Mrs. Katie M. Hart was recommended to the County Board of Education by Supt. N. W. Britton as being the best colored teacher in the county and asked to have her appointed as supervisor of schools. This was done in 1922. Superintendent Britton asked her not to do industrial work but to observe how the teachers were teaching. On visiting the schools, the supervisor counted 90 to 95 pupils crowded in one class room on uncomfortable seats. Realizing that very little good teaching could be done under such conditions, a building and improvement program was launched immediately. Consolidation for Negro schools at that time was not encouraged.

There were at that time in the county fourteen one-teacher schools,

fifteen two-teacher schools, three three-teacher schools, one five-teacher school, and one high school. At the close of 1938 there were three one-teacher schools, eight two-teacher schools, six three-teacher schools, three four-teacher schools, one seven-teacher school, and two high schools.

During those years a number of school houses and one teachers' home were built. Several schools were improved and much equipment bought. Colored citizens were able to secure busses to transport their children to school. The bus movement had its origin in Ahoskie under the leadership of Prof. C. S. Yeates, successful principal of the Ahoskie school at that time. Other communities did likewise. Rev. G. T. Rouson, who brought his school from three to seven teachers, aided in getting a bus for Murfreesboro. Through Dr. C. S. Brown, Rosenwald and State help were secured. All high school and some elementary pupils are transported to school without cost to the patrons now,

but prior to that the following communities transported their children: Ahoskie, St. Johns Township, Murfreesboro, Pleasant Plains and Co-field.

With Prof. H. D. Cooper's leadership, Ahoskie school has grown to a high school with at least 19 teachers. Two new buildings have been erected. Prof. H. C. Freeland is principal of Waters Training School and is putting forth every effort to make the work a success. Recent financial campaigns in both schools netted nearly a thousand dollars each to aid in standardizing.

In the sixteen years that Mrs. Katie M. Hart served as supervisor of schools and under her leadership, Negroes of this county raised \$33,975 for rural education. A bookmobile, which is the only one owned by Negroes in the United States, was purchased and is being operated and the only independent registered Negro Public Library in the United States has been organized and is being operated in this county. A county Red Cross Chapter was organized with 108 members.

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