

## RECORD OF THE NEGRO RACE IN THE TOWN OF AHOSSKIE

(Continued from Page 1)

The present pastor is Rev. E. M. Lewis.

These churches with their various auxiliaries: Sunday schools, Missionary circles, Sunday school teachers' classes, choirs, and usher boards have proved to be beacon lights in this town in the field of religion. From the Divine service of these churches many ministers were inspired to work in the ministerial field.

Rev. James Sills, a forty-year resident of this town, has done a great work in the field of religion in this and adjoining communities. Being one of the first civic as well as religious leaders of this small community in its early beginning, he was chosen by the town council to supervise laying off the streets in the colored section.

Reverend Sills always looks on the bright side of life and carries sunshine and a word of cheer wherever he goes. Though he is confined on his bed of afflictions, he, like Job of old, is bearing them with patience.

The history of religion would be incomplete without mentioning this pioneer of religion in this community. Even now, during the days of his affliction, he strives hard to carry on his church work.

### FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

In the beginning of fraternal organizations in this town the Love and Charity was the first to dawn upon the scene. The slogan of this organization is "Love to God, True to each other, Mercy to all Mankind." Their meetings are held in the homes of different members. Annual and funeral services were held in churches. The organization built a small slab building on what is now Ahooskie and Coffield road. Later, the Love and Charity, Masons, and Odd Fellows erected the building that is now located on Hayes Avenue and Rhu Street. This building is known as the Love and Charity Hall. Knights of Pythians, and Eastern Star were organized but disbanded. The present organizations are the Love and Charity, United Order of Queens of the Orient, Elks, Masons, and Tents.

The Elks met in the Love and Charity Hall when first organized. They have made much progress and now have a large membership. A few years ago they erected a building, not only for their use but for the community at large.

The Queens of Orient had its origin in Ahooskie. They met in the Love and Charity Hall when they were first organized. The founder, Mary E. Sills, has been a citizen of this town for forty years; serving as teacher in this community and as supervisor of colored schools of Hertford County for one year. The objects of this organization are: to unite the womanhood and manhood, morally, financially, relig-

### A Lifetime In Ahooskie

GRAHAM HOLLOMAN, now past 90 years old, built one of the earliest residences in Ahooskie, on East Church Street, later demolishing the house and constructing a home in the colored area of town. He was here before there was a town and has been here during all of its growth.



ously and otherwise; to promote the health and happiness of its members by teaching true principles and laws of health; to provide for the sick; a respectable burial for the dead, and an endowment for their relatives and orphans.

This organization when started had branch offices in the following towns in North Carolina: Winston-Salem, Tarboro, Cremona, Graham, Wilson, Lewiston, Edenton, Elizabeth City, Powellsville, Jamesville, Washington, Wilmington and Plymouth.

The membership at present, including the branch offices, is about twelve hundred. It has paid eight thousand dollars for claims since it has been organized. The fifteenth anniversary was celebrated in Ahooskie, June, 1938.

### ECONOMIC

In the early history of the town the types of work that the Negroes did were farming, mauling rails, raising livestock, (horses, mules, poultry, cattle, hogs, sheep and goats), shoemaking, shingle-making, housework, grubbing and ditching. The live-at-home idea was well carried out. The people made and raised most of the things that they used. It was very easy to obtain a job mauling rails because at this time rail fences were being used, and it took a large number of rails for a farm fence.

The chief crops were peanuts, cotton and corn. Much of the corn was used for feeding livestock and to make bread for the farmers' families. The greater portion of cotton was woven into homespun and made into clothing for the family by the housewife. The men tanned cowhides to make shoes. In the fall of the year the men were busy getting the hides ready to make shoes for the winter. Rainy days and nights the women were usually found weaving and knitting by light-wood-knot burning in the fireplace.

Jobe Newsome, a slave who lived on Captain Newsome's farm, was the first Negro shoemaker. He made shoes in a very crude way. Being unable to make shoes on right and left last, both shoes could be worn on either foot. The shoes were made with the tops fitting around the ankle.

After the Civil War Jobe Newsome's master gave him a plot of land near Bonner's Bridge. He lived there for a number of years; later he moved to a place along the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, which is now owned by Hawley Jenkins and the widow of the late Thomas White. He lived there and followed the trade until he died. He was famous for making coarse shoes which would fit either foot. The place where he lived is now known as the Jobe Field. There is a path that leads from the Ahooskie-Coffield road to this field, known as the Jobe Path.

A few years later Jack Jernigan the first Negro finished shoe maker, who could make shoes on right and left last, began business in this town. He went North during the Civil War and learned the trade. He worked in his home which was located near the spot where the white Presbyterian Church now stands.

Prog Powell was a wholesale shingler. He operated a commissary for his workers. The commissary was located near the place where the Barnes-Sawyer Grocery Company is now located.

Bond was the first Negro to operate a grocery store. This store was situated on a spot where the Carolina Southern and Atlantic Coast Line Railroad now intersect.

The first and only Negro mail carrier in Ahooskie was John H. Newsome. On April 15, 1905, he was appointed as rural letter carrier on Route No. 1, by the Postmaster-General, Washington, D. C. John H. Lewis was appointed at the same date as assistant. Later, Walter Scott was appointed as his assistant.

John Newsome worked cooperatively with the post office staff, and was polite and friendly with the people on his route both white and colored. He served the people on his route through snowstorms, rain and sleet. No weather was too severe for him to attempt to carry the mail on his route. He died, January 6, 1925, at his home, 319 Catherine Creek Road, Ahooskie, after serving as rural letter carrier for twenty years.

There are five Negro grocery stores, three barber shops, three cafes, one drygoods store, one millinery shop, three hairdressers, three seamstresses, one doctor, one stenographer, two funeral homes, and one garage now in Ahooskie. The Atlantic District Fair Association, owned and operated by Negroes, furnishes economic means in many ways for the citizens of this town. Housework and factory work are still outstanding occupations for the masses of Negroes.

In comparison with the gloomy past, the present economic, religious, fraternal, and educational progress has far surpassed that of Colonial days.

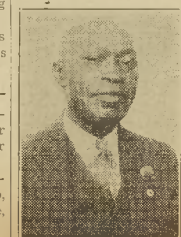
## DR. C. S. BROWN

By C. S. YEATES

CALVIN Scott Brown, the son of Henry and Flora Brown, was born on a farm known as Pou's Plantation in Salisbury, N. C., March 23, 1859. Both parents were of Scottish-Irish extraction.

His early training was at Freedman's Aid Society School, Salisbury, N. C. He secured a first grade teacher's certificate in 1878 and taught two years. In 1880 he entered Shaw University, Raleigh, N. C., from which he graduated from both college and theological departments in 1886, with the degrees of A. B. and A. M., and later merited that of D. D. from the same institution. He worked his way through Shaw University, aided by a Northern church (white).

Through the insistence of Dr. Henry Martin Tupper, the president at that time, the young Calvin S. Brown came to Hertford County the year before his graduation and began pastoral work at Pleasant Plains and the same year, 1885, founded what is now Waters Training School



### AN EDUCATOR WRITES OF AN EDUCATOR

C. S. YEATES, native Hertford County Negro and leader in educational, religious and civic affairs, tells the story of the life of the late Dr. C. S. Brown in the accompanying sketch. Professor Yeates himself is now a member of the faculty of the school founded by Dr. Brown. He is a native of the Harrellville section, but has lived in Ahooskie for a number of years.

under the name of Chowan Academy. He remained the Principal of this school, which was near his heart, until his death.

He served alternately as secretary and president of the Baptist State Convention. The length of service in both positions was approximately fifty years.

For many years he served as Moderator of the West Roanoke Association, and from its organization to his death he was president of the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention. For a number of years he was editor of the Baptist Sentinel, published in Raleigh, N. C.

He was Grand Master of the Odd Fellows for a number of years, Grand Secretary of the Grand Masonic Lodge of North Carolina for about thirty years, then for several years served as Grand Master of that institution.

Although he was offered high and lucrative positions that would have been coveted by many, he chose rather to cast his lot with the rural people of Hertford County which county has been greatly enriched by his entire life's work.

Dr. Brown traveled extensively in the United States, Canada, England, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Africa, Norway, Sweden, and the West Indies.

In coming into contact with him one could readily glean that his life had been enriched by his broad experience for he was as much at ease in the presence of nobility as in that of lowliest serf.

He was a great reader and easily retained whatever he read. He was a most interesting conversationalist for out of his rich experience he could keep one spellbound. He knew vocal and instrumental music



### A Leader of The Negro Race

CALVIN SCOTT BROWN, a native of Salisbury, came to Hertford County while a young man and became the acknowledged leader of his race for all of this section. To his work and influence the Negroes of Hertford County owe the foundations for their advancement in educational and other lines.

and played the piano, organ, and blew a cornet in a local band which he organized.

He served three years as member of the Board of Education of Hertford County. He was appointed to campaign for the buying of Liberty bonds during the World War.

He married at the age of twenty-seven on December 8, 1886, to Miss Amaza Janet Drummond, of Lexington, Virginia. Mrs. Brown who came from one of Virginia's best and oldest families, was a life-long helper of her husband and co-founder of the school. No one can estimate her worth in building and maintaining the school. Her father was considerably wealthy for his day, which wealth she (Mrs. Brown) heartily shared. She poured her money willingly into the making of the school, and so deserves to share whatever honors come to it. She was a woman of pleasing personality and unusual ability. Her ease of social contact and her rare ability as a mixer made her a great asset to the school, aside from the other services rendered.

After a long siege of illness, Dr. Brown passed away September 9, 1936, and his and his wife's remains rest on the campus of the school to which he gave a long life of service.

The school founded by Dr. Brown in 1885 received his closest personal attention and supervision during the fifty-two years he remained its principal. He put nothing ahead of its interests and well-being. Many were the times that he has been known to put his entire month's salary into the running expense of the school. He watched its growth with all the nurturing care that a mother watches the growth of her child.

In the early days of the school he would go North each year and by his convincing personality would secure funds from sympathetic friends there for the running expense of the school.

He delighted in telling how he was successful in interesting Mr. Waters, Mr. Estey, Mr. Morehouse, and Miss Reynolds in his work.

Mr. Waters made one gift of \$1500 and this gave him the first substantial start in building. One donor who was to give him a goodly donation died before the gift was consummated.

During these years of struggle, his wife, the late Mrs. Amaza Brown, taught about twenty years without any compensation whatever.

Because of the fact that Dr. Brown was ahead of the time in which he lived, his people often misunderstood him. This, of course, made progress more or less hard for him.

From his boyhood young Brown possessed such a strong personality as to convince others that he was a born leader. This Dr. Tupper saw in him when he selected him to come to Hertford County to start his active career here. With some reluctance he came at first, but he at once decided that he would live up to the faith his friend had in him.

A tract of fifteen acres was offered him on which to start a school, but he finally settled on the present school site, which was then

### Original Waters Building



This building still serves the Negro youth of Hertford County. It is the original Main Building of the Waters Training School, an institution founded by the late Dr. C. S. Brown and in late years a State high school for the colored, at Winton.

woods. With the aid of interested friends a fair sized two-story frame building was erected. This building served for class rooms and chapel until it was destroyed by fire in 1907. This building was known as the Chowan Academy. In 1893 Reynolds Hall, a three-story frame building was erected. The first floor was used for a kitchen, dining hall, and recitation rooms. The second and third floors were used as a dormitory for girls. An old two-story frame building, erected across the street from the school campus, was used as a dormitory for boys. This was later moved on the school grounds which the present basketball court occupies, from whence it was moved to its present site.

As the years went by, another frame structure was erected to be used as kitchen and dining hall, the rooms formerly used in Reynolds Hall for that purpose being converted into classrooms.

The burning of the old chapel made way for a larger building, constructed of brick. This building is known as Morehouse Hall, which for many years was used for a boys' dormitory on the first and third floors and an auditorium on the first. This building was erected in 1909.

In 1926, the last building, Brown Hall, was put up. This is a brick structure containing six classrooms, principal's office, library, a stage with dressing rooms, and a spacious auditorium.

The money for all these buildings save the last was obtained from the Baptist Home Mission Society, Northern friends, and through an organization known as the Chowan Sunday School Convention and

friends in Hertford County and the adjoining counties by the efforts of Dr. Brown.

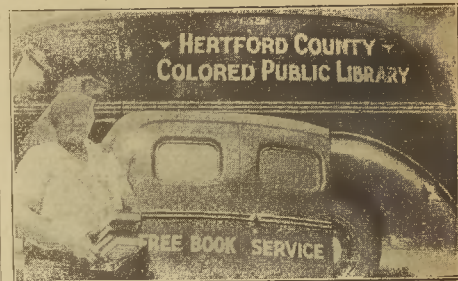
In 1924 the school plant was taken over by the State and so changed from a Church school to a State school which meant the salvation of the school. The name, which had before been changed from Chowan Academy to Waters Normal Institute, was once more changed to Waters Training School, by which it is now known.

Dr. Brown's activities were not confined to the school which he founded, but he played a large part in moulding character in the community. His influence was felt throughout this section.

He was spiritual adviser, business adviser, a general source of information for preacher and layman, a loyal friend, but a combatant to be dreaded. He was authority on matters of church policy and as a preacher, strong, persuasive and convincing. His knowledge of English made both his speeches and his writings rare gems. We are still too close to him to evaluate his real worth.

The appraising of his true worth may be left to later generations when his foibles written on the sand shall be washed away and true worth stands out judged by its merit and not tainted by the likes and dislikes of contemporary critics.

### ONLY ONE OF ITS KIND IN THE U. S.



KATIE MARIE HART is the founder and operator of the only independent public library in the United States. She raised money and purchased the only bookmobile owned by Negroes in the United States. Recently she succeeded in securing cash subscriptions to a fund with which to build a public library, and with other help, a \$3,000 building will be under construction soon.

She was supervisor of Negro schools in Hertford County for 16 years; is a Baptist, and is chairman of the colored division of the Hertford County Red Cross Chapter, which she helped to organize. Her parents, W. D. Askew, and the late Tezard Askew. She has lived in Winton all her life.

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