

Times Were Hard Across The State

When the Depression hit North Carolina, blacks as well as whites suffered the crash. Many lost their jobs, their homes and their homes during this time. During the Depression businesses closed, or bankrupt. Thousands of people walked the streets looking for jobs, and those who found jobs found their wages slashed. They could not afford to pay their taxes and many other services in the state were not maintained. Blacks were also affected because they were often the first to be fired. In the early thirties agriculture was still the principal occupation of blacks in North Carolina and many of the black farm laborers

were finding themselves out of work. Many white farmers could not pay their taxes or mortgages on their property which resulted in them losing their farms, and blacks losing one of their chief forms of employment. Industrial workers were also in a plight with their wages steadily declining. Most blacks were the last one hired and their wages were already low to begin with, that a cut in pay made their salaries almost nonexistent. Black women didn't find times as hard as black men. During the 1930-40s many black women found jobs as domestic servants and were able to help support their families. As the country and this

state began to recover from the depression during the middle thirties, blacks found the opportunity to make educational as well as economical gains. Different educational programs were begun during the late 30's to early 40's in North Carolina for blacks. Programs enacted during this time were enrichment curriculum, the adoption of free text books, the adoption of the retirement system, teacher tenure, the 12 year program, the lessening of salary differences and the adoption of equal salaries for equal qualifications. There was also the improvement of training, the expansion of vocational education, the growth of high schools for blacks and the improve-

ment of the status of the higher black institutions. During the depression the salaries for white teachers were reduced 34 per cent and the salary for black teachers were reduced 26 per cent. There was, however, one program that grew out of the depression, that was very beneficial to blacks, that was the Adult Education Enrichment program. The Adult Education program helped to reduce the illiteracy rates among blacks, it helped to improve home and school cooperation, health education of the deaf and the development of home crafts. In 1937 a distributive education program was started. This program in-

involved the training of regular employees in distributive occupations and high schools seniors in fields that they hoped to pursue. The status of black teachers also improved during this time. During the early 30s most black teachers were holding college degrees. Black teachers were also attending summer schools in large numbers and many went to northern schools to acquire graduate degrees. Economically blacks were beginning to find jobs during this time. Many blacks found jobs through governmentally assisted programs. Many blacks worked on gardening projects, which were started over the state on county owned properties. Some

blacks worked on canning projects and some blacks worked in sewing rooms, to make garments for needy families. Other blacks found jobs doing road work, resurfacing and tarring roads and streets. Black performers in the state found work in all black symphonies and choruses, which went around the state performing plantation and jubilee songs. Blacks also made economic gains by founding banks and insurance companies. In the late 30s black insurance company in North Carolina was North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company of Durham which was founded in 1898 and 1941 had about 300,000 policy holders. — Yvette McCullough

Roots of Progress

As the black members of Western Electric's employee force in Winston-Salem have contributed appreciably to the progress of this company and the telecommunications industry, so has the black community of Winston-Salem played important roles in the progress of this city. We applaud the *Winston-Salem Chronicle's* current series on "The Roots of Black Winston-Salem."



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