

ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY

APRIL 3



Carter G. Woodson, who is known as the "Father of Black History," died in Washington, D. C. on April 3, 1950.

CSO: SS.8.23, ELA.8.1

Investigate the Document: (*Early Negro Education in West Virginia*, Carter G. Woodson, 1921, 370.9757 W898)

1. What information did the questionnaires provide about early negro education in West Virginia?
2. Using your own words, describe the three periods of early negro education in West Virginia.
3. What caused the volunteer teachers to come to West Virginia to teach African Americans after 1865? Were the first teachers of African Americans in West Virginia white or black?
4. In what year was it specified in the West Virginia state constitution that whites and blacks could not attend the same schools?

Think Critically: Using your own words, summarize the readings about early negro education in West Virginia. (50-75 words) Why do you think African Americans were kept in blissful ignorance prior to the conclusion of the Civil War? What was there to fear by allowing African Americans to obtain an education? Who were three pioneers in the education of African Americans in West Virginia? What was their contribution(s)?

570.9754
W898
c. 3

Series 6 No. 3

DECEMBER 1921

Issued Quarterly

THE WEST VIRGINIA COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE BULLETIN

STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE

Departments of History, Economics and Sociology

EARLY NEGRO EDUCATION IN WEST VIRGINIA

BY

CARTER G. WOODSON, Ph. D.

Professor of History in the West Virginia Collegiate Institute

Published by
THE WEST VIRGINIA COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE
Institute, West Virginia

Entered as Second Class Mail Matter January 8, 1914, at the Post Office, Institute, West Virginia, under the Act of August 24, 1912.

71328

PREFACE.

This study was undertaken at the suggestion of President John W. Davis of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute. He appointed the following persons as a committee to collect the facts bearing on the early efforts of teachers among the Negroes in West Virginia: C. G. Woodson, D. A. Lane, Jr., A. A. Taylor, S. H. Guss, C. E. Jones, Mary E. Eubank, J. S. Price, F. A. Parker, and W. F. Savoy. The plan was to study the history of Negro education in this State as far as 1891.

At the first meeting of the committee C. G. Woodson was chosen Chairman, and at his suggestion the following questionnaire was drafted and sent out:

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON NEGRO EDUCATION IN WEST VIRGINIA.

Place

1. When was a Negro school first opened in your district? . . .
2. What was the enrollment? . . .
3. Who was the first teacher? . . .
3. Was he well prepared? . . .
5. How long did he serve? . . .
6. Were his methods up-to-date or antiquated? . . .
7. Did he succeed or fail? . . .
8. Who were the useful patrons supporting the school? . . .
9. What was the method of securing certificates? . . .
10. What was the method of hiring teachers? . . .
11. What was the method of paying teachers; that is, did the school district pay promptly or was it necessary to discount their drafts or wait a long period to be paid? . . .
12. Did the community own the school property or was the school taught in a private home or in a church? . . .
13. What has been the progress or development of the school? . . .
14. What is its present condition? . . .
15. What persons in your community can give additional facts on Negro education? . . .

Name . . .

From the distribution of these questionnaires there were obtained the salient facts of the early history of the pioneer teachers of Negroes in the State. A number of names of other persons in a position to give additional information were returned with the questionnaires. These were promptly used wherever the information needed could not be supplied from any other source. Members of the committee, moreover, visited persons in various parts and interviewed them to obtain facts not otherwise available. Wherever it was possible, the investigators consulted the available records of the State and county. In this way, however, only meager information could be obtained.

The most reliable sources were such books as the annual *Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Schools*, the *History of Education in West Virginia*, (Edition 1904), and the *History of Education in West Virginia*, (Edition 1907). Such local histories as the *Howard School of Piedmont, West Virginia*, and K. J. Anthony's *Storer College*, were also helpful.

At the conclusion of this study the President made the celebration of Founder's Day, May 3, 1921, an occasion for rehearsing the early educational history of the State. Most of the living pioneers in this cause were invited to address this meeting, as they would doubtless, under the inspiration of the occasion, set forth facts which an ordinary interview would not make; and thus it happened.

Of those invited, Mrs. E. M. Dandridge, one of the oldest educators in the State, Mr. S. H. Guss, head of the Secondary Department of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute, and President Emeritus Byrd Prillerman responded with informing addresses. Mrs. Dandridge gave in a very impressive way a brief account of the early efforts in Fayette County. Mr. Guss delivered an informing address on the contribution of the first Negro teachers from Ohio, and President Emeritus Prillerman expressed with emphasis a new thought concerning the

rise of schools in the State and the organization and growth of the West Virginia Teachers' Association. Prof. J. S. Price, of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute, showed by interesting and informing charts the development of the Negro teacher and the Negro school in West Virginia.

At the conclusion of all of these efforts the facts were collected and turned over to C. G. Woodson to be embodied in literary form. Prof. D. A. Lane, Jr., of the Department of English of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute, also a member of the Committee, read the manuscript and suggested some changes. Chapter VII was written by Professor J. S. Price, who made the accompanying diagrams.

CHAPTER I.

THE PIONEER PERIOD.

The early education of the Negro in West Virginia falls in three periods. During the first period, it was largely restricted to such efforts as benevolent whites were disposed to make in behalf of those Negroes who had served them acceptably as slaves. This period, therefore, antedates the emancipation of the Negroes. Because of the scarcity of the slave population of West Virginia, the 13,000 slaves scattered among the mountainous counties came into helpful contact with their masters, among whom the institution never lost its patriarchal aspect. Although it was both unlawful and, in some parts of West Virginia, unpopular to instruct Negroes, these masters, a law unto themselves, undertook to impart to these Negroes some modicum of knowledge. Upon the actual emancipation in 1865, when all restraint in this respect had been removed, benevolent white persons, moved with compassion because of the benighted condition of Negroes, volunteered to instruct them. The first teachers of the Negroes in West Virginia, then, were white persons. The Negroes of Jefferson, Greenbrier, Monroe, Summers, Kanawha, Mason, and Wood Counties still point with pride to these white friends, who, by their indefatigable work as teachers, blazed the way in a field which to them had been forbidden.

During the next period there came into these same parts the Union soldier, followed and sometimes accompanied by the missionary teachers sent out by the Freedmen's Relief Commission of the North and by the Freedmen's Bureau. The efforts of the Union soldier could not be crowned with signal success for the reason that they were sporadic, and the volunteer was not in every

case well prepared for such services. The greatest impetus was given the cause when missionary teachers appeared upon the scene. Having the spirit of sacrifice which characterized the apostles of old, they endured the hardships resulting from social proscription and crude environment. With the funds which they secured from the agencies they represented and which they could raise among the poor freedmen and their few sympathetic white friends, these teachers of the new day built or rented shanty-like school houses in which they proclaimed the power of education as the great leverage by which the recently emancipated race could toil up to a position of recognition in this republic. The educational achievements of this class of teachers were significant, not so much because of the actual instruction given, but rather on account of the inspiration which set the whole body of Negroes throughout the State thinking and working to secure for themselves every facility for education vouchsafed to the most favorite element of our population.

One of the important results of the efforts among the early workers of this State was that of enabling the Negroes to help themselves. Because of the rapid development of this industrial State and the consequent influx of Negroes from other States to it, however, the number of Negro teachers produced on the ground proved inadequate to the demand for instructors among the increasing and expanding Negro population of West Virginia. There went out, then, to the other States the call for help, which was answered largely by workers from Virginia, Maryland, and Ohio. Virginia did not have many workers to spare, but from Baltimore, where because of the liberal attitude of the whites toward the education of Negroes prior to the Civil War, a larger number of Negroes had been trained, came a much larger number of workers. From Ohio, however, came as many as were obtained from both Virginia and Maryland, for the reason that although the Negroes were early permitted

to attend school in Ohio, race prejudice had not sufficiently diminished to permit them to instruct white persons in white schools. Looking out for a new field, their eyes quickly fell on the waiting harvest across the river in West Virginia. These workers from adjacent States, moreover, served the people not only as teachers but also as ministers of the gospel. They were largely instrumental in establishing practically all the Methodist and Baptist churches in the State, and while they taught school during the week, they inspired and edified their congregation on Sunday.

The beginning of the education of the Negroes in West Virginia at public expense was delayed, inasmuch as its first constitution, although it made provisions for free schools, did not extend the facilities of the same to Negroes. In the report of the State Superintendent of Public Schools in 1864, therefore, he complained that the Negroes had been too long and too mercilessly deprived of this privilege. "I regret to report", said he, "that there are not schools for the children of this portion of our citizens; as the law stands I fear they will be compelled to remain in ignorance. I commend them to the favorable notice of the legislature."*

In 1866, therefore, the legislature enacted a law providing for the establishing of public schools for Negroes between the ages of six and twenty-one years. These schools had to maintain an average attendance of sixteen pupils or be closed. As Negro communities were not very large and the number of children were small, many Negro children scattered throughout the State were denied the opportunity to acquire an education.

This law, therefore, was amended in 1867 so as to authorize local boards of education to establish a school whenever there were more than fifteen Negro children between the ages of six and twenty-one. The attitude of the State was that of separation of the two races in the

* Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1864.

10 WEST VIRGINIA COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE BULLETIN

schools, but the first two laws bearing on Negro schools did not make this point clear. Upon revising the constitution in 1872, however, it was specifically provided that whites and blacks should not be taught in the same school.* Thereafter, however, the whites and blacks sometimes used the same school houses. As the school term consisted of only four months of twenty-two days each, the whites would open school in September and vacate by Christmas, when the Negroes would take charge.

No further changes were made in the school law until 1899, when it was further amended to the effect that the trustees in certain districts should establish one or more primary schools for Negroes between the ages of six and twenty-one years and that these officials should establish such Negro schools whenever there were at least ten Negro pupils resident therein, or for a smaller number, if possible.

* See West Virginia Constitution.