

## THE MINERAL SPRINGS SCHOOL

The Mineral Springs School is a three-room, frame structure, situated on 30 acres of hilly land. It was built years ago with the aid of the Rosenwald Fund. The building has two cloak rooms. Two of the rooms can be converted into an assembly room by raising the sectioned partitions. Behind the school building is the room which was built primarily for teaching home economics, and the shop. The shop houses the grist mill, where most of the community corn is ground and meal sacked. The building was repainted about two years ago.

At the time of my first visit, several window panes were missing from windows in each room, sash cords were broken in nearly all the windows, the transoms over each of the doors were broken, and the knobs on two of the doors were missing. The parish supt. refused to make repairs.

A little over two bales of cotton were raised on the school farm last year. It netted \$118.15, \$27.60 of which was spent for cotton tags, \$20 on piano, \$3.00 paid to one of the trustees for hauling cotton to gin, \$1.50 to Mr. Emmanuel for gas, \$3.06 for cotton picking, and \$14.60 for window panes, oil for floors, and sash cords. There is a balance of \$48.42. Raising this cotton was a school project in vocational agriculture.

School opened with three teachers and an enrollment of 110. Another teacher was added the fifth week of school. Their preparation is as follows: Principal, degree of Bachelor of Science in vocational agriculture from Southern; one teacher, degree of Bachelor of Science in home economics from Southern; primary teacher, 2 years at Southern; another teacher, degree of Bachelor of Arts degree from Talladega. The principal and home economics teacher are entering their second year of teaching, the primary teacher, her fourth, and the latter, five years, some of this in Tillotson College, Austin, Texas.

The school owns one of the old Rosenwald libraries. The teacher in charge says it is not used by the pupils very much. An upright, second-hand piano was bargained for in the Fall. It cost \$165. \$25 has been paid on it to date. The piano is out of tune, several keys are dead, in general, it looks like a very bad bargain for that amount.... There are attractive posters on the walls of each room. The teachers purchase the materials for same with the hope that they can raise their money at the closing exercises of the school. Snuff advertisements, bearing a thermometer, were seen on the walls of each room. At our first faculty meeting I asked if the posters were supposed to be a source of inspiration, in fact if all material on the school room walls was not supposed to represent something to which they desired the pupils to aspire. When they answered in the affirmative, I asked if they were encouraging the dipping of snuff. Three of the teachers removed the ads from their walls, the primary teacher changed hers to a nature study placard by covering the letters in the advertisement.... Coal oil lamps are used in the school for lighting.... Box wood heaters are in all the rooms.... The blackboards are badly worn, almost white in places. On my first visit in the principal's room newspaper was being used as erasers.

Several clubs are organized in connection with the school: The CFAIA (Colored Farmers Agricultural Improvement Association), and the New Farmers of Louisiana, under the Vocational Agriculture Department, and the 4H Club, under the Extension Department. The school has less than 20 boys whose ages and grades give them eligibility to these clubs. As interpreted to me by the principal, there is scarcely a shade of difference between the functions of these clubs.

The boys are given a 90 minute period in vocational agriculture daily while the girls are given the same amount of time in home economics.



her express regrets that she (Mrs. Ammon) was not feeling well. Later, when I was ready for breakfast, my hostess told me that Mrs. Ammon had called to say she was not feeling well and would not be for me until the afternoon. Mrs. Ammon had mentioned that I probably needed to rest during the morning anyway. I assured my hostess that I was quite comfortable and she proceeded with the breakfast preparations. After prayer and Bible verses (by the way, they were waiting for me to lead off with the verses and I was waiting to see what they were waiting for, and had to be told to recite a Bible verse. To add to my embarrassment all the others recited whole passages of Scripture after I had given a two-line verse) we began to eat. The breakfast consisted of sausage and eggs, hot biscuit, fried potatoes, grits, and preserves. The host told me that the hostess was about the best cook in town. He needed no argument to convince me. The food was worthy of the highest praise.

After breakfast I heard my hostess rushing the other members of the household lest they be late for Sunday School. She registered surprise when I asked if I might accompany them to Sunday School. She apologetically explained that she had not invited me because she feared I would have no desire to go to "our little old Sunday School. I know its nothing like you have in the North." I reminded her that I was from Texas and she fairly gleamed and welcomed me to worship with them. She was intent on arriving on time but fell short of her intentions by some half hour or more. When we reached the church the teaching of the Sunday School lesson had reached such a height that the voices were clearly heard before one entered the building. This seemed to have disturbed my hostess a great deal. We rushed in the building and I saw no less than 100 people divided into about five groups, with a teacher facing each. Each seemed to have been contesting to see who could talk the loudest. I was ushered to the class for young women. Unless most of the members of this class possessed youthful minds I cannot see what claim they had for being thus classified as most of them were middle aged women. My hostess told the teacher I was "from the Rosenwald Fund" and she continued with her teaching but directed every thing she had to say to me. After the lesson was reviewed the superintendent began introducing visitors, asking each to say something to the group. Fortunately for me, the first two men who were introduced consumed all of the time and I only had to rise in response to my presentation. Then came the singing. The young people from several of the classes formed a group in the choir stand and a girl about 16 years of age walked across the pulpit in a cocksure manner, sat down on the piano stool and began playing a tune which had elements of both the spiritual and jazz. At the proper time the group, having caught the spirit and rhythm, began to sing, "I Want to be Like Jesus". Rhythm grew contagious, members of the congregation joined in by rocking their feet in heel-and-toe fashion, nodding their heads and clapping their hands. I was really moved by the enthusiasm and beauty of the whole thing. They sang all of the verses then repeated the chorus several times. It was obvious that all were reluctant to stop. I have never seen a Sunday School with as much enthusiasm. The superintendent announced young peoples' church would follow Sunday School.

During the intermission I was introduced to a host of people, several of whom are teachers. Each told me that Mrs. Ammon had told them another supervisor was coming. My hostess explained that on Sundays, other than regular pastoral day, it was their custom to have a one hour service for the young people and that most often one of the young men



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The children come to school fairly-~~well~~-clean. Many of the children in the primary grades have bad colds and coughs. A check on their health habits is planned...The favorite games seem to be basketball (boys and girls) and football with the boys. One of the teachers teaches the younger children play-ground games during some of the recess periods and plays with them almost every day.

When advocating faculty meetings I suggested that they be regular and planned: to discuss problems; for stimulation; and to measure progress. The teachers took the suggestions kindly and agreed to have faculty meeting once a week at the school. At the first meeting it was agreed that a good teacher needs must know her pupils. This involves knowledge of the home, health, etc, so each teacher made home visits on children from their rooms and reported on same at subsequent faculty meetings. Mr. and Mrs. Simon happened to be present at one of these meetings when there was discussion of some of the problem children. An exchange of reading material has been encouraged.

The following are jottings as made when observing teaching at Mineral Springs School: "Visit with Mr. Emmanuel--Oct. 18. Pupils march in, boys keeping on their hats long after they enter..Roll call..Class in arithmetic called: 6 boys & 4 girls.

Teacher: 'What was the assignment?'

Pupils: 'Problems on page 23 and 14.' (No mention or emphasis on type) Without waiting to see what pupils can do, teacher taking lead in working problems on board for students--little need for students to study..group response to most questions asked.

T: ' $\frac{1}{2}$  is  $\frac{1}{2}$  of what?' (Asked and answered by teacher)

T: 'What do have to know to divide a fraction?' (There were a few guesses--answer supplied by teacher) Two girls in back seat not interested, apparently. Looking in candy box..Class given busy work at seats..individual coaching of a girl who continues to give the wrong answer...Papers are collected from class..Assignment given: Tomorrow we will recite table on fractional parts of a dollar; we'll have more drill on addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of fractions. Work problems under each of these headings. You work as many as you like and bring me three under each heading and we'll have some black-board drills.' Class was excused. The period was 15 minutes long.

Flies are swarming..all windows open..everything seems sticky..snuff advertisements on wall.

Plane Geometry Class Called---

'What is the meaning of hypothesis?'

'A superstition made in an argument' (Three other pupils gave wrong answers..principal explained that first girl meant 'proposition' instead of 'superstition!')

'What is a suare?' (The response was so poor teacher admonished the class and gave them ten minutes of the class time to study assignment given on the previous day. After ten minutes expired, no quiz of material studied....3 students sent to put propositions on board..one has 'To'triangles, instead of 'two'. Teacher does not seem to notice. 45 minutes was given to geometry..only one pupil put a proposition on the board in full. When he attempted to explain it was easy to see he had committed the material to memory and had no concept of its meaning.

9:55-History--'What is your assignment for today?' This question was asked by the teacher four times before 'Questions on page--' was given as reply.

'Mary, you tell us about Magellan's voyage.'

'Magellan's voyage was--he took 300 mens', she stood awhile, then sat down without completing her statement.



Curtis stood-"Columbus"--looked around, fumbled with his pencil, sat down.

K. C.: "Don't know".

Fanny: "Magellan sailed directly around the world".

Lesson based on questions in book, pupils guessing at answers Mary, trying to recall book statement failed, sat down.

K. C. called to read, did not know place. Pupils told to check questions they could not answer.

"Turn to the next chapter. European Beginnings of Our History

Aim: 1. To learn why Europe plays a part in the beginning of our history.

2. To study the introduction and learn how the people of Europe made America what it is today.

3. Why did the Europeans take a part in developing America?

4. Study questions under part 1 and 2. Class excused".

#### 10:18 Biology

Pupils had been asked to bring material for making bag for catching insects. Two of the boys had their part. Two sent to yard to find stick.

Discussion of the bee. "Is he a friend or foe of man?" Sufficient answers were given to conclude that he is a friend of man.

Discussion of the fly. Answers show that pupils have good conception of the harm the fly can do. Teacher asked how many had screens at their homes. Not a home of a single child present is screened. Life cycle of the fly was not discussed.

Discussion of the butterfly. Good response. Net for catching insects made in class. Assignment: "Field trip for tomorrow. Select and catch insects of the groups we have studied."

#### 10:55 Commercial Geography

2 boys in class, one seems backward. One is asked to read from the book. Stumbles along, mispronouncing many common words. He attempted to tell what he had read, was scarcely able to do so. These students need fundamentals on breaking words into syllables. Discussion of mountains and valleys for farming. Good response. Assignment: "Find out how mountains compare with lowlands in crop production. Where would you prefer living? Give some advantages of living in either section. Work out problems on page 28. Class excused".

#### 11:25 General History

Ancient Egypt-questions on page 20. Response good. Discussing age of man as review. Simon has a good understanding. So much of this lesson could be gotten from a discussion of 'Go Down Moses' Pharoah discussed by teacher as name of ruler, rather than title. Good thought-provoking questions asked. Corrections of English usage made throughout.

Assignment: "Finish chapter and be able to answer questions. Read the side topics."

#### 12:00 Assembly

Primary teacher playing one or two chords of a march repeatedly. All children march into principal's room. Song books distributed by one of the boys.

After assembly the principal went to St. John to meet vocation-

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al group. Boys in his room are working in the school garden. He must have 30 in the group to meet the vocational agriculture requirement, so he is having to conduct classes in three communities to reach this number.

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## OBSERVATIONS IN OUACHITA PARISH

By

Estelle Massey-Riddle

NRS

SIMON STUDY

Saturday, October 6, 1934

Explains - Riddle - Rpts

Arrived in Monroe at 10:20 P. M. There was such a crowd of loud talking, jubilant people getting off at this station I stood back and let them precede me in getting off the train. Then I lugged my bags to the door ( train porter won't notice me because I had ignored his attempts at a flirtation earlier in the day) and one of the male passengers assisted me in alighting. As soon as I stepped on the landing I heard someone call my name. I knew this was Mrs. Ammon, the Jeanes teacher, as Mr. Lewis had arranged for her to meet me. We greeted each other and she told me she guessed who I was because I had on a coat with a fur collar, when it was much too warm for such a coat in this section at that time, and had some magazines on my arm. I was introduced to her husband and he took my checks to the baggage room for the rest of my luggage, while she and I went directly to her car, which was parked in front of the station. As soon as we were seated she told me that she was not taking me to her home that night because her guest room was occupied but that she was taking me to a very nice home where most of the intellectuals stay when visiting in Monroe. She continued: "Mr. Lewis told me that you smoke. I think it best that you not let these people see you smoke as they might get the wrong impression and do a lot of talk." I assured her that while I have no scruples about women smoking, smoking is not a habit with me, and that I usually conform to local standards of respectability when entering both homes and communities that are new to me. She said, "Oh, I told my husband that Mr. Lewis ought to know that if the Rosenwald people selected you to come down here you must know how to get along with people. He was so funny when he came over to see me about your coming. He's never been to my house before! He told me some one was coming down to help me with my work and he said 'She's a high-stepper, too. I don't know how she's going to fit in but I want you to take her around.' She's got to have a car and I hope you'll help her select one." She then mentioned what a teaser Mr. Lewis is and while she seemed convinced that he was joking when he told her he was having me come here because her work was so poor, she did not seem equally convinced that I was not the "high stepper from New York" and kept me at a distance. When Mr. Ammon returned with luggage she suggested that I leave all of my luggage, other than the bag I would need for the night, with them as she was coming for me the next morning and I would stay at her house until ready to move to the country. This was agreeable with me. They took me to the place where I was to stay, introduced me to the host and hostess and departed, assuring me they would be over for me the next morning. I retired immediately.

Sunday, October 7th

I had a good night's rest and was wide awake at 6:30. I lay abed thinking--wondering what the people were like in this community, what interests, how I'd get along, etc, etc, etc. About 7:30 the telephone rang and I heard my hostess assuring someone, whom I knew to be Mrs. Ammon, that she would look after me as long as I cared to stay there. I heard



of the community did the preaching. We went back in the church and the service got under way. There were two mournful songs and one of the stereotyped prayers, all led by teen age boys. Some of the lively music was then furnished by the choir of about 50 voices, all of whom seemed to be in their teens. My hostess told me they were all school children. Then the young minister preached his sermon. He is uneducated and seemed to be bending backward to assume all the mannerisms and trite expressions of the older clergy of his calibre. He was brief and the service was over one hour after it started. I really enjoyed the music and was amazed at the large number of school children who were taking such active parts in church activities. The minister, as is so often the case, was the glaring weakness.

After dinner I got my bag ready for transfer to Mrs. Ammon. She called a little later and explained that she was not feeling well so I assured her that I was very comfortable and did not want her to worry about me. She assured me that she would see me on Monday. I whiled the afternoon away reading and writing letters. I was interrupted by my host several times as he thought of bits of information about the school or teachers which he thought might interest me. My hostess had gone to her Mission meeting. She returned about 5:00 P. M. and invited me to accompany her to B.Y.P.U. I accepted and we went to the same church in which we had worshipped in the morning. Discussion was lively no matter how far it missed the point. My hostess had been quite disturbed because I did not get to speak at Sunday School, so she saw to it that I was called on at this meeting. The principal of the high school was present and spoke in behalf of the Young People's Congress which is to hold its meeting at that church later in the Fall. I was introduced to him later and he urged me to come over to his school and make a similar talk to the high school students. We remained for evening services and the same young man preached. An attractive girl, about 15, joined the church and told them she "had been born again and wanted to connect with the Church so she could do her Christian duty".

On our way home from church we stopped at the ice-cream parlor and took home a quart of the best egg-nog ice cream I have ever tasted. I was informed that the ice-cream parlor was owned by a young Negro man, who was employed by one of the best catering establishments in the South for a number of years. He learned all their recipes and opened a business in partnership with another Negro. They advertised their business in the paper and his boss learned of it and fired him. He is not doing so well in business, my hostess informed me, because the quality of products he turns out costs more than the average person wants to pay. While we were eating the ice-cream the telephone rang. The party answering joyously announced, "It's Dean Jones." At this my hostess jumped up with delight and ran to the telephone and there was a most congenial exchange of greetings concluded with "You all hurry on out." In the meantime I was told that two of the "State men" in the field of education were en route to this house, and that both of them were very fine men. In the meantime, the teacher who lives with my hostess asked me to let her introduce me as her sister. I was in for it. When the two men arrived they proved to be as congenial as they had been represented. They refused to accept me as the sister of the young lady and created a lot of fun



in their efforts to establish my identity. They finally gave them the proper introduction to me and they expressed their interest in hearing what I was to do. I tried to explain that my work would consist of observation, with participation whenever and wherever advisable and necessary. They, in turn, gave me as vague an idea of their work. When we parted that night I at least knew that Mr. Jordon was the "State 4H Club man" and that he was trying to build some kind of a camp and had said, "I sure can use you, child. They sent you here at the right time." This gave me some hope of being "accepted" by some one who felt I could be useful. I knew that Dean Jones, as he is affectionately called throughout the State, is now supervising classes under ERA, and that he was at one time the dean at Southern University. Mr. Jordon had invited me to accompany him on a trip to the camp site on Monday. I told him of my appointment with Mrs. Ammon and he said "That's alright. I'll take you by there. I want her to go to the camp with me anyway." With this invitation I felt much better since I had some one to give me a start in the direction of my work should Mrs. Ammon still feel unable to pilot me about. To bed about 12:30.

Monday, October 8th

I was out of bed at 6:30. Heard Mr. Jordon, in a subdued tone, telling someone over the telephone that he had met me and that I was fine. He gave me a good boost. We had a jolly good time at breakfast and I set out immediately afterward with Mr. Jordon for Mrs. Ammon's residence, but left my bag where I had been staying. On the way to West Monroe Mr. Jordon gave me directions for getting to important places in the community. He stopped at a gas station on the West Monroe side, purchased some gas, introduced me to the owner of the station (white) as Mrs. Riddle, "who has been sent here by one of the big Foundations interested in Negro education. She is going to buy a car and I've told her you will do the square thing by her in taking care of her car." The man was cordial enough. Mr. Jordon told him of some of his needs, in the line of lumber and cement, for the 4H camp and asked him to suggest some places that might donate something along this line, or sell at reduced rates. He studied for a moment and then pointed to a lumber yard and told him who to ask for there and instructed Mr. Jordon to tell him that he (the garage man) sent him. When we drove away Mr. Jordon told me that that man came from a family of reputed "nigger haters" who lived out in the parish where he taught his first school. He said this man at the filling station was a boy when he first went to the community and passed his school daily en route to the white school. Inasmuch as he always rode and went to the post-office daily for his family's mail, Mr. Jordon said he ventured to ask him to bring his mail which saved Jordon the four mile walk. The boy said he would have to ask his mother. Within the next few days he ran into the mother of the boy and she asked if he was the one desiring that her son bring mail. He answered in a very polite affirmative, and she readily consented to have her son bring his mail. The boy began to visit around the school sometime when he would stop to leave the mail and after a number of years he and Mr. Jordon grew to be good friends as they appear today. "If approached properly" he will help out with most anything I am trying to achieve"



We reached Mrs. Ammon's residence. She was quite formal and directed most of her conversation to Mr. Jordon. She began to thaw out when she saw I took no offence at the wise-cracks Mr. Jordon was hurling at me. She assured me that she was glad to have me work UNDER her. She told me that the Parish Superintendent of Schools has vested her with the power to function for him in the Negro schools and that it would not be necessary for me to go to see him unless I had something special to see him for. She said she had told him that I was coming and that was all that was necessary. All this was given out in a kindly, but rather formal tone. When she asked what my plans were I told her I wanted to observe for sometime, after which I could better judge when and where I might be able to participate. She seemed well pleased with this reply and re-enforced it with "I think that is the best thing to do. So many people come in and want to jump right in doing something before they really know what the people are trying to do or the problems they are confronted with." I agreed with her and assured her 'I am different from the rest.' Met Mr. Facin, local vocational agent, who was principal of Mineral Springs School 10 years. He took Mrs. Ammon, Mr. Jordon and me out to the camp site in his car. On the way out conversation centered on impersonal things: the beauty of the trees, the names of trees, improvement of roads, the "false notion that many people have about the South." They seemed agreeably surprised when I said, "Isn't that a pretty Poland China hog! Mr. Jordon said, "You sure have lived in the country." Jokes and conversation flowed with more ease.

We reached the camp site--a beautiful place in the pines. A hill conceals it from view until one is right upon it. Several acres have been cleared and make a flat which is ideal for recreational purposes. A creek runs around the place and will be utilized for swimming. Above the flat on the slightly sloping hillside will be built the large mess hall, with small dining rooms on each side. The mess hall will be but a few feet from the spring. All will be shaded by the pines. It is to be a State camp and men from the various parishes had been asked to come today to begin the log house. When we arrived there were 15 men present, some working, others looking on. Mr. Facin got out and began skinning logs right along with the men; the other two local agents assumed the role of overseers. Mr. Facin registered his dissatisfaction with the attitude of the other agents and some of the men of the parish who had promised to bring logs, but had failed to do so. The site for the camp was donated by two brothers (Negroes) who reside in the community. (Their family history will be covered later) Each parish will be asked to build its own hut on the camp ground.

After about two hours at camp, Mr. Facin took Mrs. Ammon and me to Mineral Springs, a distance of about two miles from the camp. I met the three teachers who were busy enrolling the students and distributing books. 111 enrolled..two or more in each seat..school garden is nice..project tied up with class work conducted by the principal..canning furnace nearby where Mrs. Ammon says a deal of the community canning is done...Mrs. Ammon and the principal are anxious to build a teachers' home...showed me the site for same. Seeing a large unfinished building nearby I asked its history and was told it belongs to the Masons and that they are unable to complete it but won't dispose of it for love nor money..Must see if I can't cultivate some friendship with the



Masons. This building might be converted into a teachers' cottage without a great deal of expense, I think. Men and boys of the community are tearing down an old church building across the road from the school ... Was told they are going to build another and must have this one torn down ere the next visit of the minister, which is this or next Sunday... Mrs. Ammon did not want to wait for Mr. Facin so asked the principal to take us to town during the noon recess. This trip served a double purpose as she gave him the books he needed for his pupils. On the way in she advised him to work hard to keep his attendance large. The principal expressed his delight at having me come to work with them. He said, "We are mighty glad to have you. You are welcome to do anything you see you want to do. I'm always glad to have suggestions so don't think you will hurt my feelings by giving any suggestions you think will help." I thanked him and told him that I was in the community to learn and welcomed suggestions also... Mrs. Ammon acted so much more friendly and invited me to have lunch with her after we reached her home. After lunch she asked if I brought my other bag from the place where I had been staying. I told her that I did not because I did not want to trouble her inasmuch as she was not so well. She insisted that I get my bag and come back and make her home my headquarters until I was established in the country. She said, "You know I don't have time to treat anyone like company and now that I see you are the type to fit right in (I had insisted that we eat right in the kitchen as I could tell the dining room was not used every day) you are more than welcome to share anything we have here. I'm not at all fussy about housekeeping, I keep things clean and we have just about what we need to be comfortable and I don't bother. I don't bother about going around in society. I could if I wanted to, but it amounts to so little around here that I just use my time for my work and in helping the people in the community in any way that I can.... Mr. Lewis had us thinking you were the type who would come here with a lot of New York airs and I had said to myself I wasn't going to be so bothered." She laughed heartily. "I was so tickled about him telling me that you smoke when I can't get along without my cigarettes. You can smoke here anytime you want to. Of course there are a lot of the people whom I never let know that I smoke. When Tom comes I'll have him take you over to get your bag and you just come on here and be at home as long as you are in the parish." I, then, began to understand why she had found so many excuses for her failure to call for me on Sunday as she promised. It is so nice to have her thaw out that I shall not worry about the bad start. When Mr. Jordon came along I went back with him for my bag. The Facins invited me to accompany them to a PTA meeting but I thought it more profitable to talk with Mr. Jordon since he plans to leave tomorrow. He was rather disappointed at the little response he got from the men in working on the 4H camp. He had hoped to get the foundation laid, but they got no further than skinning the few logs that were brought. We discussed the activities that might be included in the camp program: community singing, folk dancing, swimming, dramatics, base-ball, basket ball, etc. I asked who would take the lead in sponsoring such activities. He said he hoped to have each of the local vocational agents be responsible for a certain number of such activities, getting some one to sponsor those things which they are not prepared to lead themselves. Tomorrow is the big barbecue at the camp site. He hopes to get a lot done. A



splendid opportunity for me to meet the community people. The Facins picked me up at 9:40...reached Mrs. Ammon about 10 with my thoughts lingering on the possibilities of the 4H camp. Mrs. Ammon ushered me into her guest room and did everything to assure me comfort during the night.

Tuesday, October 9th

Out of bed at 7:00. Went in the kitchen to assist with breakfast, but Mrs. Ammon would let me do no more than put the plates on the front of the built-in cabinet where we eat in the kitchen. She keeps assuring me that I am so welcome I need not take up residence in the country, but can remain at her house and drive to and fro. I thanked her as often as she made the suggestion, which was quite often, but told her it was to my advantage, from the work point of view, to live and be a part of the community I am to study...She called a salesman she knows and told him of my need for a used car. He told her he has a 1933 Chevrolet that came in last night and will bring it out or come for me this afternoon after I return from the barbecue. It is raining so hard I wonder if they'll be able to have the barbecue. Anyway I am enjoying my stay with Mrs. Ammon. Her telephone began ringing at 6:30 this morning. She told me it was her father and that he calls at that hour every morning to inquire of her health. Teachers are calling to know when their schools will open...A man came for assistance in preparing an insurance claim...A woman to make inquiry about sending her blind boy away to school...Teachers are calling for books...People calling to intercede for their relatives who have applied for teaching positions. After one woman had used all the tears she could muster up she tried to force a \$5 bill on Mrs. Ammon. Mrs. A. told me that the girl in question was a very poor teacher but that she put up with her and tried to help her for a number of years and the girl married. Her pregnancy gave Mrs. A. a good chance to oust her and now her baby is just 1 year old and she wants to get back in. Mrs. A. responded to all these people, and many more I have not listed, in a kind, sympathetic manner.

In spite of the downpour of rain Mr. Jordon came by en route to the camp site. "I just came by to see how you are. I think it is too bad for you to go out. What do you think?"...."If the car can get there I can, too. I am going in the car," was my reply. At that the two of us set out. On the way out he asked me how I liked Mrs. A. I raved. He told me that she was a very plain spoken woman, very strong on her likes and dislikes, but that she was very, very, fine and that he thought she and I would get along splendidly. I was beginning to feel the same way myself, but this was rather blessed assurance. In the course of conversation I discovered that he knows a first cousin of mine who is in charge of extension work at Prairie View. Mr. Jordon turned suddenly and looked at me with amazement, "Do you mean you come from the Estelle family?" Having heard that there were some pretty big rascals in the Estelle family as well as a few who achieved some degree of success as teachers and farmers, I was almost afraid to answer. I finally got out a very timid "Yes", and my stock rose rapidly, much to my surprise. In introducing me to people throughout the day he never failed to mention that he knew my family down in Texas and this seemed to help a lot in putting them at ease with me. The amusing thing is the fact that I doubt if I would be able to recognize any of these illustrious cousins on whose reputation I am riding.



Rain continued and work on the camp had to be suspended. There were 179 people present, some having come a distance of 80 miles. Their disappointment was keen. I talked with a large number of them and found that few were from Ouachita Parish. By inviting some of the women to sit in the car out of the rain I could get their ideas about the camp, etc. The first five who sought shelter with me were relatives from a community about 75 miles away. They had hired a white man to bring them over in his truck and he had gotten lost on the way. One said, "I told that bastard to turn back there to the left, but he so smart, think nobody don't know nuthin but white folks. I'll put my foot in the road and walk nex time 'fore I ride wid one of them." All of the others laughed. They expressed their likes for the camp site. I asked if they had ever camped out and they told me of camping at the "So-sa-shun". They were very anxious to see the spring. I thought I could keep them from walking in the rain by supplying the necessary information about the spring. I pointed it out and told them it had not been cleaned out as the men were to have done it on yesterday but the number was so few they didn't get it done. I later gleaned that they thought it was the spring from which the Mineral Springs community gets its name. I told them where the Mineral Spring is and one expressed a desire to go and see it. In a few minutes they got out and, in spite of the hard rain, walked over and looked at the spring. Later they walked around and spoke to people and wound up under the trees where most of the men were sitting....An old man came up to the car and introduced himself. I invited him to get in but he refused graciously. In response to my questions he told me he was from one of the neighboring parishes and "I come over here to work but look lak these people ain't out fer no work." I asked if it was not raining too hard. In reply he squinted his eyes, looked at me a few seconds as he smiled, and said, "You know some folks always looking fer some excuse fer not working. It ain't been raining this hard all morning and some ain't hit a tap. Look at that boy, yer think he come dressed like that ter work. Most uv em just come here ter have a good time. I don't mind work, been workin all my life and now I got somethin ter show fer it. I could've been better off if I hadner been such a bull head when I wuz young. I got ---acres (forgot exact number) of good farm land, but by nature I ain't no farmer. I makes my money from carpentering....Yes, there's good money in carpentering right now, pends on who you working fer tho. But I gits from \$3.50 to \$5.00 a day anytime I gits a job."

"Have you had many jobs this year?"

"Yes, ma'am, las year I built right smart houses and I made over \$300 cash money. I jes farm more or less cause I has the lan but I could get along without farming. Taint no money in farming no mo".

"Seems as if there would always be money in farming. People always have to have the clothes and food the farmer supplies. What's wrong?"

"Fust thing farming depends on the good graces of the Lord. If He say fer it to be dry, its dry; if He say fer it to freeze at the wrong time, its gwy freeze; Well, you done put your money and your labor out but you don't know ef you'll make a red cent or not..I don't like to fool with it myself unless I got somethin else I can be sure of. Altho I guess I ain't got no right to kick I'se always made good crops, so to speak, I allus made 5or 6 bales of cotton, but now the Guvment won't let you raise but a little, but that will help the price, so I don't guess we'se losing anything. I know I ain't." In response to questions about his family he told me he had had 3 wives and 22 children, 12 of whom died either in in-



ing the huts floorless.

One of the donors of the camp land lives at the entrance to the camp. From the exterior, the house looks extremely delapidated. It is an unpainted structure of about 4 rooms, with wooden shutters. There must be a big spirit of hospitality within the shabby house because all of the 176 guests who came to the barbecue were invited to come in. At Mr. Facin's suggestion, the barbecue and soft drinks were served from the porch and the people enjoyed themselves, apparently, in spite of the rain.

The car salesman had called ere I returned to Mrs. A. She told him to communicate with me the next morning. Mrs. A. seemed glad to hear me say I enjoyed meeting the people at the barbecue. She chastised Mr. J. in a friendly way for keeping me out there so long in the disagreeable weather. We talked until bed-time.

Wednesday, October 10th

Car salesman was out shortly after breakfast. I was surprised that he was colored. He was driving the car he had to sell, a lovely 1933 Chevrolet coupe. I went for a ride with him. Of course I liked the car, but the price was too much, \$525. He had the usual high-powered sales talk and told me he was employed as a regular salesman by this white car company. I explained that I needed a car for use in the rural areas and that it need not be so smart if it had a good engine and good tires. Was introduced to one of the managers and he pointed out a Dodge for which they wanted \$295. It looked so bad they could only harp on the excellent motor it had and promised to cover up the faults of the upholstering with new seat covers. The rest of the day was spent visiting used car places. Mr. and Mrs. A. accompanied me. Back to Mrs. A., helped with the dinner. Was introduced to the many people who keep an almost steady stream at her door. Went out in the garage where she keeps the school books stacked neatly on the shelves and assisted her in assembling books for distribution. Mrs. A. kept telling me not to feel discouraged because I could not find a suitable car and assured me that she would go with me again the next day. I retired early.

Thursday, October 11th

Mr Facin accompanied us on our search for a car. Finally decided on a 1930 Chevrolet Coupe, \$195. I gave the man a \$50 check I had received from the Fund and told him to hold the car until I could wire for the other money. By the way, he came down on his price when I told him it would be a cash purchase. The original was \$225. Several of the salesmen stood around as I was closing the deal. "Girl, you've got a dandy buy. That's sho a good car." I wired Mr. Simon for the money and in about two hours took him the telegram Mr. Simon sent requesting that they send the bill directly to him. "Oh, they wouldn't let you handle all this money. Well, we'll give you your fifty dollars back and collect the full amount from them. What are you gonna do down here?" I told him we were making a study of rural education. He looked blank and asked if I thought he could sell the Fund anymore cars. I raised his hopes by saying, "You never can tell. They may send some more workers in here, I do not know." He promised to repair the wires leading to the horn and lights and to



fancy or early childhood. He could give no specific causes for their deaths other than his wives had no luck with children. It seems that the second wife couldn't "raise no girl Chillun. A feller told me to git her some Lydy Pinkams an I did and it sho hep her, She had 4 girls after that. Me and her just couldn't get along tho. You know what a man thinks, his wife ought to think sose they could git along....But that woman would argue wid me no matter how much I tell her to shet up. She'd make me hit her then she say I wuz mean....If she just sit quiet when I lose my head I soon git over it and then I feel shame and go buy her somethin nice to make up, but when a woman argy and argy wid me I cud knock her haid off and never git sorry....This wife I got now she like the fust one, she jes look at me lak I'se a fool when I gits to rarin too much an I soon heshes up.... I don't know where all my boys is. They didn't lak no farmin an I didn't blame em so I lets em go when they wants to. They's got to be men some day so they got to learn how to do what a man has to do. Two uv my girls died from consumption and I heerd that one uv my boys whats at Bastrop has got it but I ain't been down to see him. They gits it from running aroun. I ain't sickly and they Ma ain't bothered with nuthin but childbirth." He rambled on and on as if he had been looking for someone to whom he could pour out his experiences. With little prompting he told me of his courtship days when he was the Beau Brummel among the ladies and his white employer offered to sell him some valuable land at a small figure if he would marry the girl he was then going with. "I liked the girl alright, but I jest want ready to marry. One day she sed to me 'I don't want nobody else and I don't bleive you wants any body else, whyn't us come on an git married?' I told her I was just too young to git married, an she sed, 'The reason I ast you, they's another feller what wants ter marry me but I don't want to marry him unless you don't want me.!!...He laughed heartily and continued, "So I told her to go ahead unless she wanted to wait two mo years on me, cause I wuz too young to marry. I didn't think she was gonna marry that other feller, but a few days later somebody says ter me, he say 'Do you know ----- done married -----? I coulda dropped dead in my tracks. I wuz never so mad in all my life. I took my gun and started down the road, gonna kill her husband, now mind you, but on the way down there somethin say to me, 'Fool, don't you go git into no trouble, She tole you she wanted to marry an you tole her you wasn't ready and fer her to go ahead' so I set the gun behind the tree and went on up an spoke to her jest like I wasn't mad, but it sho did hurt. I never did git over that an my boss often tole me I'd really been worth somethin if I hadda married that gul, an he sho wuz tellin the truth."

A white engineer had been sent out to advise the men. He told Mr. Jordon that he thought a smaller mess hall than they had planned would be adequate for their needs, and that he thought they should not put floors in the huts. Mr. J. accepted these suggestions without a word of dissension. When we were en route home he told me he thought this engineer feared the Negro camp would look better than the white one. "I know better than he, about the number of people we will have to accomodate at this camp Neither the land nor the logs is costing us anything so why shouldn't we build it as large as we want it. For my part I don't want any floorless cabins either. Our parents had enough of that for me." I talked with several other people about the huts and they, too, were opposed to hav-



deliver the car to "Gertrude's address." Later that afternoon the car came. Mrs. A. told me of garages where she gets service and spoke of the proprietors as being "very white". She kept suggesting that if I needed money she would be glad to let me have some and told me that the garages she had recommended would gladly extend me credit. I supposed that in my efforts to live down the reputation of a "high-stepper" I had impressed her as being hard-up. I later learned that so many teachers and other people, whites included, come to her to borrow money that she couldn't see me sitting around without thinking I, too, needed a loan.

More and more teachers coming to Mrs. A's. Some come in and wash dishes after they transact their business, others volunteer to do various chores around the house. More than once I heard, "I can't ever do too much for Mrs. A. She's so nice to us. She gave me a job when I really needed it."

Friday, October 12th

Up early this morning. Mrs. A. insists that I relax instead of assisting with the little housework there is to be done. She said she would rather have me do some typing for her. I readily consented and got some of the information I can use in my work....She called insurance agent. He came out immediately. I offered him a seat on the porch. He asked me the nature of my work. After I told him he asked me why they were sending me to Mineral Springs. "Facin has been out there and that community is getting along fine, I thought. Gertrude is surely a fine woman. I think as much of her as I do any white person. She has surely done a lot for her people and everybody thinks the world and all of her, white and black!" Now that he knew my business he could go on with his. I gave him my car contract after he had explained his types and terms of insurance. He copied all the data he needed, including my full name, and when he addressed me he called me "Mrs. Riddle." I asked him to make a bill for me to send the Fund in order that his money could be sent directly to him. I went by for the letter and his secretary was very courteous. I noted that the letter was addressed to "Mrs. Riddle."

I accepted an invitation to go out into the parish with Mr. Facin. We went to Mineral Springs and I met a number of the community folk. (The family histories of these people will come later) We went over to the church ground. The building has been completely demolished. The road men, white, were leveling the site for the new church. I asked the head trustee how they managed to get them to do it and he said, "They ain't no trouble to get. We just tell the constable what we need done and he sends 'em here to do it." About a dozen men and boys were sitting around the spot. The Head trustee told me that the Bishop had agreed to help them build a church and had instructed him to have the work start before he (trustee) came to the district conference. "All the men was so busy with they crops we couldn't get it tore down fore the conference, so on the day I was leaving for the conference I come by an tore a board off so I wouldn't be lying when I tole the Bishop I done start tearing down the Church." He laughed long and loud, and shot a tobacco stream about 4 feet over the sand.

On our way back to town Mr. Facin told me there was a lot of speculating among the men on the church ground as to my mission in the community.

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Most of them felt pretty sure I was sent by the government. Mr. Facin said he made no attempt to enlighten them as he considered it a huge joke that they were so much interested in the nature of my work.

Mrs. A. gave me an outline for the meeting we are to attend at Grambling tomorrow. It is to be regional teachers meeting, called by Mr. Lewis. I notice one item on the agenda is "How To Teach Citizenship." I wonder if he really wants to teach Negro boys and girls citizenship or if he wants them to acquire the technique for living in the South. I saw Mr. Facin grow hot this morning when a poor white boy called, "Say Boy, let me ride." I shall be interested to hear this discussed tomorrow. When I complimented the agenda Mrs. A. said, "It doesn't mean anything."

Went to town alone this afternoon. Mrs. A. marveled that I could get around in these four blocks they call a town alone. Anyway her anxiety makes me think that she is interested in my welfare.

Saturday, October 13th

We were up early making preparation for our trip to Grambling. Mrs. A. said she thought I looked especially well in my plaid sport dress and that she hoped I would wear it as she wanted me to look very nice when I met the teachers. I wore the plaid dress. We went with Mr. and Mrs. Facin, but Mrs. A. had instructed her husband to come for us at noon. "I don't feel so well and these meetings never amount to much. Mr. L. makes out a program like this every year and they never cover it, sometime they don't even discuss a thing on it. I know I'll be sick of it by noon. They really don't accomplish as much as me and my poor little teachers at our Saturday conferences. I sure want you to meet my group."

When we reached Grambling the conference was just getting under way. I was so pleased to see Dr. Shrieke. He stood and shook hands with me. This brought stares from many, especially the other whites on the rostrum where Mrs. A. and I were ushered. Mr. Lewis was presiding. Practically all of the morning session was devoted to a discussion on whether or not algebra should be taken out of the course of study. There were those who argued that it remain on the basis of the old mental discipline theory, some wanted it to remain for the benefit of children who must have it to enter college and there were those who felt that no one would be harmed if it were taken out completely. Finally, Mr. L. said "I just wanted to hear what you had to say, I'm going to do what I want to do anyway." This was followed by lots of laughter. A little time was given to a discussion of including Negro history in the schools. It was finally decided that history of the Negro might be introduced with any subject in which he had played a part, but that a special course in Negro history was not advisable....The school president announced that lunch would be served all teachers in the dining hall, but I was in the group invited to eat at the president's house....Just before adjourning for lunch Mr. Lewis introduced Dr. Shrieke, Mr. Rogers and me to the group I think Mr. Lewis put Dr. Shrieke in a rather embarrassing position by asking him a question, the answer to which required more intimate acquaintance with this particular section than Dr. Shrieke, in his explanation, said he possessed. I do not recall the exact wording of the question now so will not attempt to quote....Mr. L. got away with some good jokes when introducing Mr. Rogers....When introducing me, Mr. L. said, "I don't know just what Mrs. Riddle is to do, but she is a nurse and is interesting."



and is interested in the health programs." He told of the money the Fund was planning to invest in the field of rural education, hence the study.

On our way to dinner Mrs. A. was held up by teachers wanting to talk about various things. She suggested that I proceed to the president's home and she would join me in time for dinner. As I approached the house I noticed the whites were assembled on one of the porch and the colored on the other. Needless to say I joined the colored group. I found conversation was flowing over the artificial barriers rather freely, but I made no attempt to do anything but listen attentively. After a short time Mr. L. asked me how I was getting along. In telling him of the interesting experiences I am having, I said, "Mr. Jordon took me over to the camp site." He looked puzzled and asked, "Who?" I repeated, "Mr. Jordon, the State 4H Club director." Several others were trying to help me explain who he is when Mr. L. said, "Oh, are you talking about Jurdon?" Under her breath the principal's wife said, "You were perfectly right. His name is spelled J-O-R-D-O-N. They want everybody to talk like these old flat Southerners."

We went in to lunch. A table was spread in one of the front rooms for the white guests and one on the sun-parlor for the colored. I think we were served the same fare. Anyway I was satisfied with what I got. During lunch a very loquacious lady was defending Huey Long's educational background and tactics. She spoke with the confidence of undisputed authority. I don't think he needs to hand out any currency to her, she's Long gone already....Noticing that no one was paying any particular attention to me, one of the learned gentlemen, sitting near, asked if Mr. L. said I was a nurse. When I answered, he said, "Didn't it make you sick to see all that blood when people were operated on?" He didn't look convinced when I told him it did not. I asked him something of the history of Grambling lest he stray too far into the sick room at the table. His question led to whispered comments some distance down the table. Later Mrs. A. told me it was difficult for some of the teachers to understand what a nurse (according to their conception of a nurse) would do in a study of rural education. I don't know if I should say 'Poor Nurses! or Poor Teachers! Perhaps a broader interpretation of a public welfare program, with the school a part of it, might serve to acquaint these workers with other community workers and the relationships of each to each.

We left the conference immediately after dinner. Mrs. A. told me Mr. Facin was insulted because he was not invited to eat at the president's. "Mr. Adams didn't mean to ignore him, but I doubt if Mr. Adams really knows Facin. He wants to be big too quick. When he's better known people will recognize him, but he can't make them do it until they are ready.... I told you that meeting wasn't going to be much. Did you notice how sarcastic Mr. L. was with Foster?(principal of Monroe High School) He says Foster has nothing but a mess over there; teachers with no certificates, just holding on because some of their people have worked around influential white people; some of them have never been to a summer school until Mr. L. began to get behind them. Yet, they have the nerve to think they are superior to teachers working in the rurals. When Mr. L. began to check on them some of them paid my rural teachers to teach them how to make lesson plans, etc, etc, etc. My teachers had been using them 4 or 5 years. I do try to give my teachers the things that will help them improve, but they don't even have faculty meetings over at Fosters unless something very unusual happens."



## THE MINERAL SPRINGS COMMUNITY--OUACHITA PARISH

As Observed By

Estelle Massey Riddle

Mineral Springs is an all Negro community, 19 miles west of Monroe, in Ouachita Parish, Louisiana. 14 miles of the distance from Monroe is paved (Highway #80 to Shreveport) and the remaining portion is dirt road, difficult to travel after rain. It is about 5 miles south of Calhoun, a small cross-roads town, through which the I. C. railroad runs. Mail is delivered daily, with the exception of Sunday and holidays, from the post-office at Calhoun, to the people of Mineral Springs by the rural letter carrier. (Each Christmas Eve the carrier leaves one orange in the letter box where there is a small family, and two oranges where the family is large.)

There are, approximately, 65 families in this community, the majority of whom are land owners. Apparently, they are quite interested in the activities designed to improve the community. A good spirit of cooperation exists between the school and the church. Several of the men are trustees of both the school and the church. The community is almost over-organized in the light of population numbers and resources. The types and functions of organizations will be discussed under church and school activities.

While most of the people seem proud to be the possessors of land, they take no pride in beautification of the home and surroundings. Not a house in the community is painted, few have flowers or shrubbery in their yards, and still fewer have screens and sanitary toilets. Pride in personal appearance is lacking, especially in the men. Most of them come to church on Sunday and to entertainments in the overalls in which they have been working for several days. They will remove their hats when they come to the school building for church service, but keep them on during entertainments in the same building.

Comments that have been made about this community to me:

Mr. Brown, Supt. of Parish Schools: "That community is pretty good now. It used to be one of the toughest places in the parish. Why, every time they used to have an entertainment or a school closing some nigger would kill another one. I recollect one time two niggers were killed out there at a school closing....A fellow named Facin worked out there about ten years and he did a lot to break up all that sort of carrying on. I don't believe I've heard of any killing out there since Facin went out there."

Mrs. Ammon: "The people at Mineral Springs used to have a great deal of race pride. Before the depression was so long drawn out they used to pride themselves on the fact that no one in their community had to go outside for aid. The depression has lasted so long that some of their best families have had to come to town for relief and now some of those people just scheme to see how much relief they can get."

One of the church trustees: "I'm sho you'll like our community. When you starts to drinking this good spring water you ain't goin to want to leave. This is sho a healthy place, we don't have no sickness much, just a little malaria and sometime some typhoid, but we don't



## Mineral Springs Community, Con't.

have as much typhoid as we used to, so many of the people take the shots."

White Insurance Dealer: "Why are they sending you out there? Facin has been out there and that community is getting along fine, I thought."

Colored Schbol Teacher: "The people at Mineral Springs are <sup>not</sup> nearly as progressive as they are in Britton or St. John communities. Miss        said that was one of the reasons she didn't want to go back there this year, the children come to school looking so bad and ugly."

Although this community is all Negro and rather isolated, the dominance of the white group is felt in many business and social relationships, especially is this true in the settlement of difficulties arising among the Mineral Springs community folk. The following statements illustrate the point:

Mr. Facin: "When I first came out here to work some of these people tried to bully me. The family there (pointing to a house we were passing) really tried me. They are related to old man Britton and they think every one has to cater to them. Mrs. Facin whipped one of the boys around the legs with a little switch at school one day and he came down to the school and really raised sand with me about it. I just told him flat that as long as those children came to school and needed punishment we were going to give it to them. He took his children out of this school and sent them to Britton School. This causes those children to walk 3 or 4 miles farther than they did when inschool here. After that I began to receive threatening, anonymous notes. I thought they were sending them but I wouldn't mention receiving the notes to anyone. When I'd see any of them I'd be just as friendly as if nothing had happened. One day I ran across a note this woman had sent me when her children were in our school and the handwriting was identical. I took the notes and showed them to the mail rider. He is one mean white man and if he likes you, you don't need to worry, he'll cuss anybody out about you. So I told him what had happened and he said you don't need to worry and I guarantee you they won't be bothering you any more. Mrs. Riddle, I haven't heard another word about that mess from ~~this~~ day until this."

A school boy was intoxicated at the Halloween school party. The principal left the party and drove to Calhoun to get the white deputy to arrest the boy. When asked why he did not settle the matter himself inasmuch as the lad was ~~nothing~~ <sup>only</sup> but a school boy, the principal said: "I mean to really break up this disorderly conduct at school affairs. I pleaded with them all last year and this is our first affair for the school year and they are starting out. They won't listen to me but they'll listen to the white man." Opinion among the community men was divided as to whether the boy should have been arrested. This difference of opinion led to a very serious quarrel in which one man drew a knife to cut the other. The threatened man ran in the house for his gun but his wife hid it. When telling me of the incident early the next morning, my landlord said: "Butler knowed he ought to never drawed no knife on Simon Johnson cause he knows Simon would have killed him dead if he hadda got his gun."

"Do you really think he would have killed him?", I asked

"Would he? He wouldna missed it. Butler knowed Mr. Johnson done killed two men and his son shot up a fellow and neither one of them ain't



## Mineral Springs Community, con't

served no time. You see Mr. Johnson don't bother nobody. He likes his likker and his women, but he don't never try to pick no fuss or nuthin. Mr. Butler he overbearing and the white folks know it. They done told two or three folks what told them things Mr. Butler done to kill him and they'd see to it they don't spend a day in jail."

"Do you think that's why Mr. Johnson didn't serve any time when he killed those men?"

"Yesum, I'm most sho cause the men he killed was spose to be bad guys and they kept up disturbance in the community all the time and the white folks knowed it. Tell you the truth I think these white folks is scared of Mr. Johnson. Once they wuz some white foks come through here in a car and they stopped down at the school trying to start some disturbance. Smehow Mr. Johnson come along and he drew his gun and marched them slap outa this community and dared em to come back."

"The white foks have a pretty good idea, then, about who is peaceful and who is a trouble maker in the community."

"They sho does." In completing his narrative he told me that these colored men pay large fines, \$200 and \$300, for their misdemeanors, but seldom have to go to court.

When talking to two farmers about their crops, I asked, "What did the farmers in this section think of the Bankhead Bill?"

"They wuz in favor. I don't know ez I heard more'n 3 folks speak agin it 'mongst all the folks I know. One wuz a white man and one wuz one of the niggers on his place, and one a colored man what allus wants to do as he pleases." He smiled and spit.

"Do you think the colored tenant you mentioned really did not want the Bankhead Bill, or was there a chance of him being swayed by his boss?"

Both eagerly spoke at once: "Yasum, he wuz doin whut his boss wanted him to do. I tells you the Guvment has sho made it better for the share croppers. Mr.----- wouldn't let em get him in the middle. When the white owners wanted him to give them the checks fer they share-croppers, ter keep hissself clear he just sunt dem checks right on back to Washington and had them to send ever man his own check. Then nobody couldn't take, and use your check lessen you signed up for them to be your observator."

"Do you think many of the Negro share-croppers signed up?"

"Some wuz fool enuff to let em, but most uv em didn't. Cose some uv de white mens tried to bully de niggers into giving them they checks. His uncle (pointing to the other man) works fer a man an he's mad now cause he (share-cropper) wouldn't sign up fer him ter cash his check. But all us tole him not ter do it cause de Guvment is behind him an taint nothin this man can do.... They's a lot we could tell a lot uv our folks ter hep em, but (shaking his head) you has ter be so careful; they'll go right back and tell the white folks and that puts you in bad."

One of the men who is school and church trustee: "We pay our taxes but they won't half work our roads. They want to keep us away from the highway."

A colored woman, living on the outskirts of the community, is reputed to be the paramour of a white man in Calhoun. He disapproves of any intimacies on her part with colored men. She is 'not accepted' by the community folk. I think on the part of the men their refusal is based on fear moreso than morality.



## Mineral Springs Community, Con't.

I think the one person who has done most to improve the community is a Mr. A. G. Facin. I am told he held the medal for being "the Master Teacher of Louisiana Colored Teachers" several years. He has been advanced to the position of local vocational teacher and has moved to Monroe. He is credited with ~~doing~~ the following: Principal of the school for 10 consecutive years; developed agricultural interests and projects: demonstration farming, poultry raising, and sanitary toilets in this and two other neighboring communities; concreted the spring, built farm shop for repair of vehicles, bought grist mill, where community corn was ground and meal sacked, built school with aid of Rosenwald Fund, leveled site for same, built home economics room adjacent to school building, terraced all farms in the community for both white and colored, member of church in the community, ardent church worker, built his own home within short distance of school, built most of the furniture for this house, especially interested community in growing fruit trees, organized canning clubs, taught every housewife the process of canning, initiated school farm with proceeds from products going to the school for improvement, and in general, made popular the Live At Home Program. The school ~~shop~~ makes farm implements, such as handles for plows, hatchet and axe handles, single trees, etc. From the force of example community folk began to plant flowers in their yards and to screen their houses. I am told that two adjoining communities have felt the influence of his work. Mr. Facin is a graduate of Tuskegee and has studied at Southern University.

Mrs. Ammon, who was supervising the school when Mr. Facin was principal, supplied the above information. She states that the classroom work was woefully neglected during this time. This tends to show, I think, that the dual program of classroom teacher and vocational teacher is too much for one person to do adequately. This will be discussed in greater detail under school activities.

The following gives a reaction to the Live At Home Program introduced by Mr. Facin: "What crops do you raise in this section?"

"Peas, peanuts, 'taters, soy beans, corn, sorghum en cane."

"Did you always raise as many things, or was Cotton King?"

A nice, guilty smile, then he said, "No, ma'am, we'se jest been doin this for a few years now. If we hadda done as Fesser Facin told us when he fust come here to the school, we'd be so much better off." With double emphasis he repeated himself. "I know we'd be better off. But no, we had ter wait till the Guvment ~~sotta~~ forced us to do it. You know how 'tis, we gits sot in our ways and its kinder hard to change. We'd see what Fess was talkin bout, but when we'd go ter plant we'd just go right on back and sow most uv the lan in cotton, an as you say Cotton was King."

At a beef canning I asked the man "How long have you been canning beef?"

"This is my second year. I was lucky last year, I canned 199 cans and didn't lose a one. Today we'se canned 132," he said proudly.

The can sealer, sausage mill and steam cooker used for canning are the property of the Canning Club. I was told that one of the Brittons owns his own, at least he and 2 or 3 of his neighbors bought one for their exclusive use. Mr. Simon Johnson uses Mr. Facin's frequently, but the rest of the people depend on the Club property. The following excerpt from the PTA minutes, May 20, 1933, gives additional information on this point: "It was moved and seconded that the sum of \$4.85 be paid on the indebtedness of the canner and etc. Still leaving owing Mrs. Stevie



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Johnson a small amount on the cloth and thread which was bought for the quilt. Mrs. Gladys Johnson paid .80 cent and Octavie Harris paid 50 on the canner which made them have a full share in the canning department."

From the minutes of the PTA meeting held July 19, 1934, comes the following: "It was then discussed about getting delegates for the Farmer's State Meeting to be held at Southern University July 26 to 27, 1934. Sisters Ruth M. Woods, Octavie Harris-Temple Smith & Everlee Green were selected as delegates for the meeting. We then went in discussion about the E. R. A. cans & jars. Sister Ruth Woods was called to act Sec't. and took the names of the E. R. A. members."

From the PTA minutes for November 20, 1934, comes the following: "The report for gardening was called which was fair. On canning 593 cans. Report on dress making 9 dresses reported. On chickens 156. On finance no report." The following comes from the December 4, 1934 minutes: "Report on gardening 1 garden was reported eaten up. Report on chickens 135 was reported. Canning report 102. Dressmaking 5 dress 1 blouse. Sick committee no report." At the October 20th meeting practically all the women were complaining that the insects were about to destroy their gardens. Mr. Emmanuel, principal, gave them specific information for their individual problems. At the meeting where the garden was reported eaten up by insects it was interesting to hear some of the women testify to the value of the information they had received from Mr. Emmanuel for destroying insects. At the October 20th meeting the Chairman of the Canning Committee said that she had not visited all the homes but already she had counted as many as 2800 cans of fruit and vegetables canned by women of the community during the summer.

While social activities are rather limited in scope, all functions that require an assembled group take on some forms of a social gathering. If there is a canning requiring about six conscientious workers, there is every possibility of having all the way from twelve to twenty assemble before it is over. Some come with no intention of assisting, but join in or create the fun. Food is rather plentiful when, is canning and this is another drawing factor. Several times the principal had come to me at school asking that I teach for him as he had to go to a canning. I was under the impression that these people were canning well before he came here to work, so grew interested to know what part he played at a canning that was so important he had to leave school. My curiosity led me to a canning at his boarding place. When we arrived there were 9 adults in the yard and 6 in the house. Several children were playing about the yard. The distribution of labor was as follows: 1 man was feeding and turning the sausage mill at one end of the table, a woman was cutting up meat for sausage, a man was filling and sealing the cans of souse which a woman had just finished making (she didn't do another thing but laugh and talk after that) A big fat, jolly man was supposed to keep the fire going under a big wash pot in the yard. When someone suggested that he was getting good practice for a job he is likely to have in his next world, he retaliated with, "Yeah, if I go down there you wimmen folks sho had better look out cause everytime I look up and see one of you coming I'm going to pitch on more wood and make the flames jump higher." Loud, free laughter followed this. His jokes were so good that the others kept the fire going in his stead. In the house two women were cooking steaks on the kitchen stove and a man was responsible for the steam cooker full of ribs cooking on the heater in the bed-room. All the rest, including the principal, were extras. One or two performed minor tasks when the ribs and steak were ready for the



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cans, but the rest did the thing they came to do: eat and have fun. Once I heard the principal ask, in an official manner, "Brother Young, do you have everything you need now." "Naw Sir, Fess, we ain't got enough cans but I done sent Simon (his son who stayed home from school because of the canning) after the mule so he can go over to Brer----- to borrow me enough. He's got a whole box and he ain't planning to can fore next week. I'm sho he'll let me have them. I won't need but, about 57." Mr. Emmanuel was busy eating and did not respond. A few minutes, <sup>later</sup> he asked Mrs. Young if she needed anything from town. "I've got to go get some cans." She said, "I was gonna let Simon get some more pepper at Calhoun, but you can get it in town if you want to." Mr. Young gave Mr. Emmanuel the money and he was off to town about 12:30. When Simon came with the mule his father told him he didn't have to go. He seemed quite glad as he would have missed some of the fun had he gone. He joined the youngsters and played around the place the whole time I was there. Mr. Emmanuel returned about 2½ hours later and said Mrs. Ammon had seemed displeased at seeing him in town during school hours, but that he told her he came by for my kodak and she didn't seem to mind so much. Before school time he had asked to borrow my kodak and I had told him I left at Mrs. Ammon. I suggested that he go by for it if he went to town ere I did, but was thinking of the trips he usually makes after school hours, and I guess he was thinking of a good excuse to get to town during school hours.

Special days to work on the church, school or camp bring such a social group, most of whom are primarily interested in eating and having fun. The planned social affairs seem not to be nearly so enjoyable.

Church services, Church and school "seppers", and an occasional concert are about the only forms of recreation in the community. Playing cards and dancing are taboo. Until the church building is completed the school building is the only place for school, church and all social gatherings. The church is directly in front of the school on the other side of the road. To the left of the school building is an unfinished two-story Masonic Hall. Membership in this particular branch of the lodge has dwindled to four members, only two of whom are in the state. The representative in this community says they are going to finish the building. "You see when we planned it there was several orders in the community and they all was going to pay us rent to use our hall. But the depression has dissolved all of the lodges that was in here and we are the only ones left.... I don't think those boards <sup>lodge</sup> were stand being tore off of there and used to build a teachers cottage. Fess Manuel had spoke to me about it and I told him I didn't think that lumber would be thick enough. I was thinking that if the school had any use for the first floor they could help us finish the building and wouldn't have to pay no rent to use it any time they wanted to. It wouldn't cost so much to finish it then."

The first Saturday night I lived in the community I was invited to attend a "banquet" at the school. It was given to raise "mission money." (This mission money goes to conference and is used to aid churches where the community is too small or impoverished to support the church.) The night was clear and warm, and the moon shone brightly. When we were ready to go my landlady blew out the lamps and picked up one of them to take with us. "One of them will have to clean the chimney. I'm funishing the lamp." Upon reaching school we saw a bunch of men and women sitting on the campus in the moonlight. There was no light in the building. We went directly inside, lighted the lamp we brought and the one school lamp and helped arrange things for the affair. These two lamps dispelled



mentability of the group.

in line eagerly and marched with  
at the older ones thawed out and  
has ended the "banquet" about 11:30.  
time had by all.

in race relations are fairly good.  
two groups in recent years, I am

two groups in recent years, I am

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told. Apparently, the Negroes know their places, according to the local white man's interpretation, and remain in them most of the time. When a young white man, near Calhoun, asked one of the Negro men of the community "Who is that nigger winch that drives that green Chivvie?" he told him "She's fum up Norf and was sent hyeah to help out in our schools", without any show of resentment. The man who told me about it said that he resented the remark very much "but he (the white man) wuzn't talking to me and I didn't want it to look like I was looking fer trouble." The other man to whom the remark was made seemed embarrassed when his friend told me of the incident and said, "He ain't nuthin but a little ole hot headed youngster and I don't tach no importance ter nuthin he says. I knows all his folks an his daddy is jest as nice a man as you ever wants to know. He jest thought he was saying somehin smart an I jest passed it up to keep him from thinkin he wuz that important." I assured him that I had no ill feeling toward him about the matter.

The Man in the community "what ain't 'fraid uv nobody" asked me if my work took me on the highway at regular scheduled hours. When I said it did not he said he was going to suggest that I not travel the same road each day 'cause some of these mischeivous boys might gang up to throw rocks at your car if they know what time you come along. Course nothin like that ain't happened in here, but I do know some of em hates so bad to see a cullud person look decent an not bowin an scrapin to them. But if anybody ever bother you, you jest let me know."

Mr. Facin: "Mr. Bateman told us today that 'some of you agents are just blowing away your jobs when you go speeding along the highway and pass up the taxpayers in their old Fords and wagons and blow your dust in their faces. Better slow down."

I was en route to Monroe one day when a car entered the highway ahead of me from a side road. It slowed me down to about 18 miles per hour. I trailed along until I reached a good place to pass, blew and speeded up to pass. Just as I pulled up beside the other car the driver swerved his car out suddenly in an attempt to force my car off the highway. Fortunately, there was enough space for me to avoid the car and the ditch.

I went to the post-office in Calhoun one afternoon and as I was alighting from my car the school bus was passing. A grand chorus of hisses and boos were directed at me from the bus. Some one attempted to spit on me. I missed the greater portion of it, but the moisture fell in my face.

While stranded in the woods one morning, due to a broken axle, I saw a white man in an old Ford roadster coming in my direction. My car was in the middle of the road, with little space on either side for passing. Fearing the worst, I blew my horn, warning him to slow down, and got out of the car. When he reached me he stopped and inquired of my trouble. I told him as nearly as I could. He jumped out, went over and looked my car over and told me I had a broken axle and would have to be towed in. By this time he saw some colored men approaching in a wagon. "I'll get them to pull you over," he said, but after talking with them I could tell they were not thinking of having their mules pull a car, so I asked if they would send a man over from Calhoun for me. They agreed to do this and were on their way. The white man then told me that he was going over to Mineral Springs and would be back in a few minutes and that he would pull me ~~me~~ back to Calhoun. I asked him to tell the teacher, who was walking for aid, to return to the car. This he did. In



less than 25 minutes he was back, accompanied by our own PTA president, who informed us that she was going over to help his wife out for the day. He pulled off his coat and prepared his car for the extra task of pulling my car, then took his chain and tied to my car and started off. When we were but about 10 feet from the top of the hill his car refused to pull anymore. He detached the cars and assured me that he would have a man over for me in a very short time. While he was working, the PTA lady came back to my car to talk. She told us he was Mr. Calhoun and that they "sho is good white folks. They's nice to everbody. When I goes up there to work they treats me jest like I'se one in the family." She drew a little closer, braced her head in a boastful manner and said, "Why I drinks right out of the same dipper they does, I sho does now," and gave us a long, straight look as if to beylooking for any trace of doubt in our faces. In about 45 minutes Mr. Calhoun returned with the two garage men and assisted them in getting the car to Calhoun. When I thanked him for his interest he told me that he had had to pull the garage man's car to get them started. As we sat in the garage I got a better understanding of the monotony of rural life, I should say of the reactions or effects of the monotony of rural life. Almost every white man who had seen the car towed in, came to the garage to see what it was all about. Each attempted to diagnose the trouble and this led to betting. "I'll bet you foe-bits its a broken axle." "Let Jim hold the money." They were enjoying themselves so much I felt the garage man should pay me for providing so much amusement, instead of me paying him. While we were standing in the filling station waiting room, one of the white men came in, spread some newspaper on a bench and said, "Yawl can sit hyeah. You gonna have a long wait." We thanked him and sat down....Two other white boys came in, strided the other bench and began to shoot dice. They only kept this up about fifteen minutes....After waiting two hours the mechanic came in and told me I had a broken axle and a worn out clutch and that he would have to go to Monroe for the parts, which would make it about 5 hours more before the car would be ready.... After debating with ourselves for a few minutes we asked if he would take us in to Monroe with him as he went for the parts. "I sho will" was his reply. When he was ready he placed our luggage in the car and held the door to the back-seat open for us to enter. He and his friend occupied the front seat. Not a word was exchanged between the two seats until we were nearing West Monroe, when he asked where we wanted to get out. We told him. When we reached the business district they parked and got out of the car hurriedly, and walked away without a backward glance at us, for which we were thankful.

One of the community boys who quit school last year was accompanying me on a trip to town. I stopped at a gas station for fuel. The woman attendant asked me several questions. I answered her with "Yes." She became indignant because I did not say "Yes, Ma'am." I had my fuel so just drove off as if I didn't hear her. To my surprise the boy said, "What she think this is, slavery? They gets me sick with that foolishness. I got a cousin that lives in Chicago. She came home the other year and she would say "yes and No" to white folks and somebody told my papa to tell her she'd better hurry and go on back up north, but we told her to stay as long as she wanted to and we'd a fixed anybody what would a bothered her, too. Niggers used to bow to all that mess but they don't take it now. They don't care nothin about dyin'.



Mrs. E. M. Riddles' Report

I am living with a Mr. & Mrs. Phillip Myles. I first heard of them when Mrs. Ammon told me of the arrangements she had made for me to live in Mineral Springs community. "They are both very young, in fact, both of them should be in school right now. I know they can't give you all the comforts you are accustomed to, but I went out there myself and told them how important it is to have things clean, no matter how simple. They live in the house that Mr. Facin built when he was principal of the school. The place is still Facin's although I think Phillip is supposed to be buying it...You will be near the school, and I think they will try hard to please you." ....The first Sunday I was with Mrs. Ammon (my 2nd in this section, however) Dr. Schrieke and Mr. Lewis were coming to visit Mineral Springs. Mrs. Ammon had arranged that we go out in Mr. Facin's car. The question of food for the visitors and ourselves arose in the event we chose to stay all day. Mrs. A. suggested that we purchase something that could be easily prepared at Mrs. Myles' and served there. She agreed to purchase a chicken if Mrs. Facin would cook it on Saturday night. Mrs. Facin agreed so the chicken and all the fixings were purchased and prepared. The next morning the ingredients for biscuits, etc. were gotten together, ice, milk, etc. for ice cream, the Facins brought along their freezer. "Do you suppose they have enough dishes?" was asked by Mrs. A. "We'd better take along a few. Safety first," chimed in Mr. Facin. This was done ....While we were at Sunday School with the visitors, Mrs. Facin was at Mrs. Myles' "putting the big pot in the little one" for the visitors, her greatest concern being the anticipation of a satisfactory meal for the white guests .... When Sunday School was over, we visited the 4H Camp site and Mr. Lewis and the Schrieke's bid us adieu. Then I rose to the rank of 'guest supreme' ... I met Mrs. Myles, a 'mere slip of a girl' when we went to her house to dine. She assured me of a hearty welcome to her home. I told her I would be moving out in a few days. She and Mrs. Ammon showed