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NOTES FROM A GEORGIA DIARY

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Notes from explorers are building up a detailed knowledge of various samples of the southern rural scene. The great mass of this reporting is being studied and analyzed by Charles S. Johnson and Lloyd Warner, who are preparing digests which begin to present a sociological picture both intimate and accurate.

This bulletin consists of excerpts from the notes of one pair of explorers, Mrs. Cannon and Mrs. Duncan, who are teaching in Central Georgia. As contrasted with the careful patterning of southern rural sociology which is emerging from the studies as a whole, this running account of people and happenings - being direct excerpts from the diaries of the explorers - is presented for its bright illumination of a sample community and for its human interest.

THE RED OAK SCHOOL
Stockbridge, Georgia

I. Introduction:

A. Location

The Red Oak School is situated twenty-four miles from Atlanta, Georgia, in Henry County. The community is largely Negro.

B. School Plant

The building is a two-teacher type, with two classrooms, one industrial room and two cloak rooms, on a two-acre plot of ground. (This ground was donated by a wealthy white woman of the community, Mrs. Rosa Smith, who, from all indications, is a very thrifty person, generally interested in community welfare, and well thought of by all colored people who live at Red Oak.) The building is nine years old--rather poorly constructed by men of the community, from rough, green lumber.

The ceiling and walls, with the exception of a four-foot wainscoting, are of beaver board. These boards are dilapidated and falling--because of the leaky roof and sides.

The seats were the old rural school type, handmade of heavy wooden boards, top heavy and with many projecting nails. Spelman College had many desks that were used in their elementary school some years ago, and we were able to secure enough of these to accommodate all of the children. There are two stoves, unjacketed, which do not begin adequately to heat the classrooms during very cold days.

There are two unsanitary privies.

When school began, weeds were high, as would be expected after any summer vacation, but when cut, there were evidences of beautification by the former teachers. Out of respect for the work of the other teachers and pupils and patrons, we shall not change the plan of beautification until there is good reason for doing so.

As to teaching equipment, there were six erasers and a water cooler.

Immediately to the right of the school building is the cemetery. To the right of the cemetery is the M. E. Church. Just back of the cemetery is the lodge hall. This hall is very old and is not in use now.



II. The Community

A. The Families

Families from which pupils come vary in size. Most of them, however, are large (about ten or twelve). They live from a few yards to about three miles away from the school.

B. Economic Status

Farming is the chief occupation. A near-by rock quarry furnishes part-time work for some men. Few white people live in the community--but most of the land is owned by white people, who live away but come in to see about their holdings. The few white people whom we have met seem pleasant. Most of the colored people with whom we have talked have lived in the same place or in different places in this same community for many years.

People have little cash, thus little money can be obtained for helping the school. They do seem willing to give labor and anything else that they have. There seems to be enough food stuffs, and most children have clothes--though a few have scarcely anything. There are a few families on relief.

People seem outwardly happy--but underneath it all is a deep unrest concerning money, unequal distribution of federal aid, poor houses, etc. This is evidenced by conversations concerning themselves and concerning a certain lecturer who has been speaking in the community.

C. Social Life

There is a general interest in social affairs, many of which were going when we arrived.

1. Debates

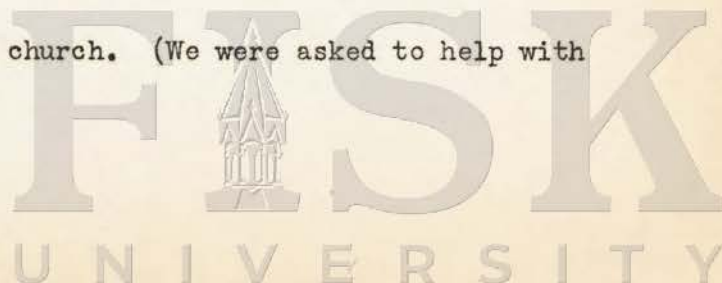
Several debates have been held at the church. Some are reported in detail in the notes. These debates are fostered by the "Ladies Aid" and the men do the debating. Some of the subjects debated are:

- a. Mother and Wife: (If a man sees his wife and his mother drowning, which will he save first)
- b. Who has the mo'est right to grumble: the Negroes for being drug from they homes or the Indians for being druv from they'n.

2. Birthday parties

3. Box suppers

4. Special day socials at the church. (We were asked to help with the Thanksgiving party.)



5. Hunting

6. Community sings

These are held often in neighboring communities by visiting choirs who sing a cross between shaped notes and spirituals. Hundreds attend.

Most social affairs are preceded by a period of religious worship --and trustees of the church are very particular about what types of social affairs are held in the church.

D. The Church (M. E.)

There was general dislike for the pastor, yet many realized that the church was bigger than any one individual, and so they attended the services. Often, though, the service was "cold" and not an "Amen" was said. This pastor has been moved to another charge and his successor has come. The first preacher begged to stay "since," he said, "things seemed so much better since the teachers come."

The Sunday School is active, yet it does not draw in many of the children of the community. The same man has been superintendent for twenty-one years.

Often special sermons are given at night.

There exists a "Ladies Aid."

The lodge has apparently died out.

E. The School

1. Pre-school activities

- a. Mrs. Duncan and I, with Mr. Dixon and Mr. Cousins, visited the county superintendent.
- b. Trustee meeting
- c. Informal conversations
- d. Clean-up day

2. Enrollment

Total enrollment before Christmas was sixty-six, with an average attendance of fifty-five. I am told that the average attendance last year was about twenty. Forty-two of these sixty-six are in the first three grades.

School began October fifteenth, about fifteen days earlier than usual. The older pupils arrived later than this because they had to help complete the gathering of crops.

Many older pupils have come who have been out of school for two or three years. Some have come who have previously

finished this school. There is no provision for an eighth grade and they feel that they could learn more in school this year at Red Oak.

3. Classroom Procedure

The classroom procedure has been largely formal and old type, but we hope gradually to make a transition to what is more informal as to organization and teaching methods. Some progress has been made in that direction.

Pupils have had no little difficulty securing textbooks, yet they have to get them, for parents feel that they are doing little if they do not have textbooks.

Some attempt has been made at better classification.

Retardation is general.

Attempts to make some simple studies, to collect some material for stories, to integrate subjects, and to find out the needs of pupils and of the community have been begun.

F. Special features

1. Thanksgiving program
2. Parent-teachers Association
3. Christmas program.

G. Summary

1. So far as general culture and high ideals are concerned, Red Oak is certainly not the most backward community. While there is a dearth of the finer things in their lives, one sees that the people are somehow attuned to some of the more delicate life interests, and can be led to higher ones.
2. Pleas have been made for an eighth grade, for adult classes, and for better medical care.
3. Fine relations have existed between the parents and the school, and the school and the county superintendent. We need not mention the fine spirit of cooperation and the sympathetic understanding of Mr. Dixon, the State Supervisor of Negro Schools.
4. The interest of parents in the school has been shown by:
 - a. Numerous visits to the school
 - b. Bringing of wood
 - c. Attendance on clean-up days



- d. Making closets, flower boxes, etc.
5. The school is not greatly improved physically--though some cash has been spent for materials, etc. The county has a system of pooling the surplus each year, and remodeling or building one school instead of spreading it out over many. Therefore, Red Oak has had no county aid.
6. We, being new in the county, have moved slowly.
7. We have had some trying moments and some of the pleasantest of our lives. We have had fun.
8. We know little of home life, though we have had some evidence of a carry-over of things taught at school into the home.
9. We have had evidences of the development of confidence in us through invitations, conversations, etc. and though, in our estimation, our offerings are little, we believe we shall be able to have something later to offer as to the textbooks, organization, and the curriculum of the rural school.

Monday, October 15, 1934

School opened this day. There were twenty-two pupils to enroll. Some mothers came with their children and left them; some carried their older children back home to work in the fields. We learned from talking that in a few cases "crops had not been quite gathered" and that the older children would have to be out of school until work was over. We started school with a devotional period. The children then went to the classroom they would have gone to had their last teachers been there. The day was spent trying to learn something about the children and some of the things they knew and some things they were interested in. At the end of the school day we felt we knew them a little better. We also knew just a little about their grasp of one or two fundamentals.

After the dismissal of school, we went to McDonough to Mrs. Brown's office. We told her about the enrollment. She said that of course as long as the cotton had not been picked, the older pupils would be out and that it might

be wise to run short day sessions, opening school early and closing at 12 o'clock to allow the children to work in the fields in the afternoons. She advised us to do this for the next two weeks. She explained to us that the county received equalization money for Negro schools on the basis of the attendance in the Negro schools and she was very anxious to have the attendance as high as possible. She accordingly advised that we make the bargain with the parents that if they would send us their children for the mornings, we would let them have them back in the afternoons.

October 26 - Debate at Red Oak Church

1. Song - Let Jesus Lead You all the Way from Earth to Heaven
2. Prayer - Brother Murphy
3. Song - Look How This World Has Made A Change
You can see it every day
How the people pass away
Just look how this world has made a change.
4. Scripture - Sister Florence Miller
5. Song - You Shall Wear the Golden Crown

Mr. Miller:

I am glad to see so many out, though I hear many of the men ain't going to 'bate tonight. I 'spects the subject's too complicated.

SUBJECT: Who has the mo'est Right to Grumble, the Indians for Being Druv from They Homes or the Negro for Being Drug from They'n and Put in Slavery?

Green Walker, Judge:

Ladies of the jury, I order you to start and stop as in court. Don't put your opinions in this. Take the evidences laid before you, taking sides with none.

The gentlemen of the jury were charged likewise.

JURY: Mr. Ragland, Mrs. Duncan, and Mrs. Cannon.

"We must have three, five, or seven judges."

Answer: "Well, we has three to catch the points."



Question (to judge):

Which is the firmity, Judge?

Judge:

The Indians' side. The subject is done come down to "bound" and "driven" anyway. First speaker, Bro. Pete Murray. (Bro. Murray does not move. He is called again.) Mr. Pete Murray.

Mr. Murray:

Judge, jury, your honor, we are arguing on slaves brought to this country and bound. We are still bound. I don't have much to say, but I know we are still bound. We has to do what others say do, therefore, we is bound. They brought us over here by a red flag. They brought us in the back gate and shut the door in our faces. I ain't got much to say, therefore, I am going to leave it for the rest of the speakers.

Mr. Evans - Indians' side:

I tried to keep quiet 'cause I hadn't knocked the dust off of my history, but I got a question here I would like to know. I wants to know how long is the Indians been in this country, and since I don't know that, I will just try to make a point the best I can. Now we Indians was here. We had nothing but a bow and arrow to 'fend ourselves with, and others had guns and baronets. The lightening and thunder would flash on our pathways before we could find a settling place. We had to leave all except our families. We was druv from our homes without bread. Others had bread when they got here. So I am here tonight to 'peal to you that the Indians have more right than the other slavery side.

(Mr. Evans really seemed to be of Indian descent.)

Mr. Samuel Johnson - slavery side:

Niggers ain't never had no say so, no bread, no justice, and no education. They was brought over here and oxed off like cattle. They had no bread. They got a right to grumble over they treatment. Mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, all separated. They had no chance for education. They was fed

on such food as the boss saw fit to give them, and they still ain't got no justice. Pattyrollers used to catch you and whip you.

Kert Jenkins - Indians' side:

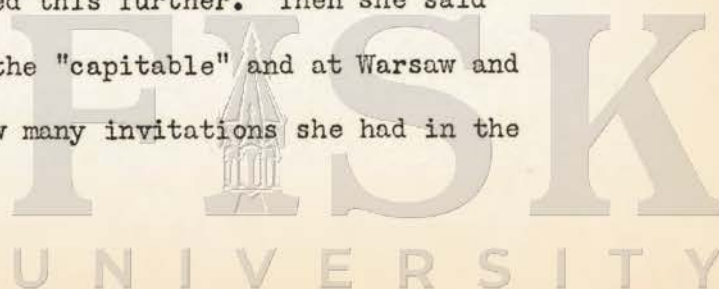
Friends, brothers, and sisters, my belief and my relief is that the Indians should have the mo'est right to this country, because they cleaned the country up. The slaves wouldn't of made much headway if the Indians hadn't cleaned it up for them.

The judge again charged the jury more vehemently than before, and the verdict was given. The slavery side won.

October 28, 1934, Lecture at Rocky Mountain Church by Mrs. Bennie Collier

(We heard Mrs. Brown, the county superintendent, say that she had heard of a woman who was organizing a class of adults in the community. After church services October 28, 1934, we waited around talking to people and noticing where they went after church. We found, upon inquiry, that some were going to a "Community Sing" and others were going to hear a woman speak at Rocky Mountain Church. No one seemed able to tell just who she was. They only said "Her name is Mrs. Collier and she is speaking for the government." We saw Mrs. Barnes, one of the former teachers of Red Oak School, and asked her who this lady was. She said "She is a Communist." Thus, we decided to go to Rocky Mountain to hear her too.)

We arrived early enough to meet the speaker, a very ignorant-talking and rather poorly dressed woman of about fifty. She wore two old rusty shoes but had new ones in a box. We offered her a seat in our car where she might sit and change her shoes. She gladly accepted, and it was during this time that I asked her whom she represented. She first said she was working for Mr. Hunt at Fort Valley School. We questioned this further. Then she said she belonged to a ring with headquarters at the "capitable" and at Warsaw and Washington. She then talked glibly about how many invitations she had in the



community to speak and about the large audiences she had, and she said "We must get these Gentile books out of the hands of our children and have black books and a black president."

*Lecture - Rocky Mountain Church
October 28, 1934
Mrs. Bennie Collier, Speaker

Brothers and sisters, I ain't no preacher, but I may preach. I am just glad to be here in the work simply because it is not a job of pleasure. I always thought that Satan was where there was too much fun. When I look into your eyes, it makes me think there is some power of business there. So by that it just makes me feel good. * * * * *

What I am going to talk about today is "How can a big man become a little man and how a little man can become a big man." That is my subject today. I am going to see where is the man. I ain't no preacher, but I may preach. 'Twould be poor preaching, but I makes my own criticism. Where is the man? Nineteen hundred years ago that very question was asked. You take the book of Isaac when the colored man could just begin to read, read from the spirit without having gone to school. White man went by. Sometimes you think you are thinking easy by yourself when you're talking out loud. So this Negro was reading aloud and a white man heard him and the Negro read it so straight and read so directly that this white man got a little closer. Negro looked around. "What are you reading?" "I am trying to read the Bible." "You ain't trying, you is reading." The Negro read a passage and discussed it to him. Jesus is not in the picture up to now. Where is he? Where is the word Jesus? The Negro put his finger right on it. I said all that because I wanted to say this. This call must be from Jesus? Where is the man? Don't know, but we can feel him. We got our hands on him. Can't see the wind but can feel it pass. ****

* Verbatim excerpts



Our people prayed that they might be out under the bondage. They was so afraid of their masters. So afraid of just a white face--scared--so afraid of them. Why? Because they was so brutish on them. They had to do just as they said. They knew they was going to be whipped. Their baby was taken out of their arms. If they let it be known, they got another whipping. They wasn't allowed to cry. Great God Almighty! Same time is right here now. White man says, "Go ahead and work and I will pay you off whosoinever's right." Our folks didn't know Jesus but they am called on him any how. They had to get into the closet because they could let nobody hear. This baby evaporated. Evaporated right back where he came from and going to live again. People evaporates. Just as fast as one of God's children evaporates, another takes his place--you thought the chains around your father, it was you.

Nothing is impossible for God to do. I'm coming on down the line. Every child born with eyes shut was a slavery child. I was born with my eyes shut. Wonder why? If God is a just God, why do some has such a hard time. Evaporate--you been as black as I am and you been as white as him. Change and evaporate every thing. People just keep on praying, that's why children commence being born with their eyes open. Sun of day! On come day! Just keep on praying and on come day! Let him see, now. Here is a child born with his eyes open. Jesus say, "Let him be born with his eyes open." I'm working on down. How can I be falling from the top of the building to the floor and never been out the building. Come on down, just kept on praying. Somebody says to him, better shorten the time. Bring us to the light of day soon. Better cut the time. God can't stand for his children to shed tears. Christmas come so soon. Years are shorter than they used to be. Great God Almighty, wasn't time to bring his children out of the wilderness.

Over in Italy, seventy-six years ago, history gives me to know, day broke over there. Now we will study a plan. Somebody over there said, "I am going to free every man to be a man." They declared they would turn every-

body free. * * * * * Somebody here said, "I am going to free the beggars and make them work for me, too." Made a slave out of him any way. God Almighty! We ain't no free people yet. White man say, "Take all his bale out with tax, and then go fifty-fifty on this." * * * * *

Every tub is setting on its own bottom. Every tongue is confessing, "Mr. Nigger, you made this cotton." The one who owns the land, and the one who makes the crop has to report. The money goes in, and he was scared to risk his own count. Where is our school teachers and our preachers. Scared to risk their own count. Never paid off his boss. Used to the boss paying him off. Every man must live from the sweat of his own brow. This going to cause a war in 1935. Already has caused rumors of war. Give us a black government.

First thing I can hear one Negro man says, is we got just as much right to go with the white girls as with the black girls. Whole lot of them been locked up in jails now about white women. If that is what you want to get free for, you ought to die. Some gets out of their place before time. The wheel of time will bring all that around. Birds of a feather should flock together. Christ said that. That is his word. Whenever we learn to be gentlemens of our race and love our creed, then we can do better anyway. I don't see what no man want to cross over for. I never seen a hawk and buzzard get along. He will peck your eyes out.

Do you know, there's a man what thinks he want to be a God, why, because it was God revealing it to him. Wanted to be a God - something nobody else had been wanting to be. Fifty-two years ago that man was born, it run in his mind at ten years old he wanted some work. He was so apt of study, wanted and was going to make a great man. He was going over his power, wanted to be too great. God put a poison germ in his arteries and therefore a stroke of paralysis, caused him to cut off his studies soon. So God Almighty got him down, fix him down that way. Got to have some God about you in order to work for him. This man

is named Franklin Delano Roosevelt, breded in England. He was a young man around London and went to school, finished up and came back to New York, finished up and taken a seat. When a thing takes a seat, you know what that means. Set down for eight years. God Almighty! Plenty of money, didn't have to worry over anything. Set down for eight years, wondering over the conditions. God all the time working in the heart of this man. Thought he wanted to be president. Done been governor eight years. Come on down to Warm Springs a few months ago. Things worked out so pretty until it looked bad. In the meantime he put on his overalls. He was just a man. He stayed over there two years. People thought he was in Washington or New York. Didn't he go down low to come up so high? It don't hurt to get low if you get high. * * * * * Now here come Hoover, while Roosevelt got ready back in the dressing room. Hoover entertained the crowd while Roosevelt was getting ready. Hoover just keep on putting out big things. Got their minds on him. Roosevelt was over in Warsaw getting ready. Poor people was suffering down in the mountains. That is the man we need, they thought. They goes ahead and puts him in.

Every man in business, I will give him a signal, says Roosevelt. When you cross the railroad and you hear a signal you look everywhere for a train. I will give every man in business a signal. Give him a signal of three letters. What in the world does the three letters mean? We are so proud of our signal in business. These letters just let the world know we are on the Roosevelt number. Mr. Colored Man don't want him to put nothing on his car, on his window, or on his door, but the trap is baited with cheese to catch the mouse. "We Do Our Part." You had to sign up, too. Some of us went and got ours. Admustration is doing this. Its got this nigger fixed up. Its got another boat, too. Folks held conferences to find out what the NRA means. It had the world, only three letters to cooperate around the United States. * * * * *

Half of the tenants are in the same fix. All the cotton and all the corn is in the white man's barn. Colored tenant done made a number of bales

of cotton, but you don't even see a crib around his house. Where is your labor going folks? Not even a chicken coop. I wouldn't ride a free horse to death. Everybody has to work. I've been in this work seventeen years. I have worked straight through this country. I pretended to be writing insurance, selling toilet goods, doing everything. Great God Almighty! If I told you what I wanted, you'd be sure to tell the boss man. You have blind eyes. Come on down the line of time! That is the way this country was taken. Everything wrong must work out right. Laws is for everybody. Let's don't let colored children use same book. They will going to keep their eyes shut, if they was born with 'em open. White folks don't want you to know anything. They just want you to know how to work. Sixty seconds in a minute, sixty minutes in the hour, but the time gets shorter. Sun--same sun went over in the west--but the time gets shorter.

On the ninth floor of the capitable building, they got a radio connected with Warsaw. Anybody who has not got a farm can have one give to him. We got the thing worked out right nice for you. If you ain't got a chicken, you can get land. It's going to be fixed so everybody can eat chicken, or everybody will eat ham and eggs, or everybody will eat bread and butter. Some won't be eating while others starve. The sharecroppers--we are trying to do away with them completely.

The man without nothing has the same chance as the man with the stock. If you wants to become a land owner, and has no money, go head. They will allow you a farm. And when you register up for your farm, all the produce that it don't take for you to use goes to the government. The government takes it from you. That is the way you pay for your home until the debt is taken off.

Nobody can't make nobody move, that is past. If the owner of a house is going to move, and you like that house, you ask him if he will rent or sell it. You needn't ask the price. You go and report to your FERA admustrator.

Report the place and all to him, and when you go, there will be a intospector to go and look the place over. He got my last report, that was taken to France, that was O.K. * * * * *

The government is turning this country over. They is going to have a place and call it the Black Belt. It will take in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas. There we will have to do our own work, carry our own mail. A black man running right now for President. He is from Alabama. See where the bottom ring is? We got some lesson books for black boys. Every teacher with black children will have to teach these lessons. Let's run it as a independent school. These books is in the press. I am hoping to get them out Tuesday.

They are on these subjects:

1. Farming correctly under the New Deal.
2. Sense in business. Lots of people don't know how to tend to business. Let's form a black government of our own. Any place open to white must be open to colored. Let's get some business sense.
3. Writing business letters--very, very important, write a letter to a president or write a letter to anybody. We needs to know how to do this.
4. Lawful and unlawful crimes.
5. Writing checks.
6. Conferring with Congress.
7. Duties of a senator, trying to reason with each.
8. Presidents and Congressmen. Put a school in every county teaching nothing but these books.
9. Secretaries and governors.
10. Water Tramestry.
11. Industrial.
12. Duties of an imperial, engineers. How would you feel with a black conductor, black train? Train is done made; it's running from Washington to New York now.
13. Railroads, all about railroads. Got to learn that. Any job open to white will be open to colored.
14. Surveying, one of the principal books.

15. Carpentry, age, old-age pensions, canning--some of us think if we put up twelve cans, we has done so much. Let's learn how to put up thousands.

16. Manufacturing.

17. Training in business, merchandizing, and all that.

I got to be on the ninth floor of the capitable tomorrow morning at ten o'clock, to get direct directions from Warsaw, and to get them books out. Let's set up a regular government school, a independent school, so that grown-ups can learn the new way. * * * * * In the new government, there will be forty-two counties in the whole U. S. We have more than that in one little state. Do away with the names of the states. Let the celebration on July first be celebration of New Year's Day. July 1, 1933, Negroes just set free themselves under Roosevelt. Wish you could see these books and read them. God is all. He is power. He is mighty. All them ain't got farms, nothing to hide behind now. Come on out and just get work. We are here to straighten out everything that is crooked. We are to help. We can't save you, if you don't save yourself.

November 9, 1934

Quarterly Conference was held at the Red Oak Church. The pastor, Reverend Burns, invited another preacher to speak--a Reverend Collier from Stockbridge.

The general tone of the meeting was that of trying to reprimand the congregation for their attitude toward the preacher. Reverend Burns said, among other things of the same tenor, "You all ought to quit despising the preacher. Make him comfortable. They are many backbiters among you in this community."

He introduced Reverend Collier, who talked on "Backbiting Your Pastor." Among other things he said, "You all ain't cooperating with your pastor. Bow-legged hypocrits cannot kill a child of God. They wuz once a mule and a ox. The ox wuz working for a white man en he got wuz fired. The mule wuz put in his place. So one day the ox seed the mule en he axed if the boss man had axed

about him. The mule said 'No.' Then the ox told the mule dat dey wuzn't no need of him (the mule) working so hard. Another day the ox seed the mule, and again he wanted to know if the boss man had asked about him. The mule said 'Yes, I hyahed him say he wuz going to kill you.'" (Sniggles over the house.)

"Dey is hypocrits in the church. When you are digging a ditch for somebody, someone else is digging one deeper'n dat for you."

The audience was cold. Not a sound was heard. Not an "amen" except Brother Miller would say once in a while, "Lord, have mercy."

Collection, \$3.25. The preacher was expecting fifteen.

November 14, 1934

The doctor came to give physical examinations. Three parents came. Children had never before seen a colored doctor. They asked him several questions: Should one chew? Should one dip snuff?

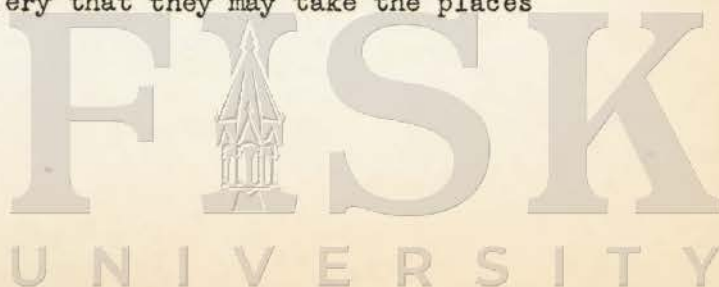
We found that over half of the first three grades either dipped snuff regularly or had dipped at some time.

The general physical conditions of the children were good. Tonsilitis and rhinitis were the prevailing difficulties.

Parents have questioned us numerous times as to the possibility of getting a physician to come to the community at least once a month, since the nearest doctor whom they can get is eighteen miles away.

Most of the complaints are treated with home remedies: salts, castor oil, many patent medicines, rabbit tobacco tea, sassafras, and various other roots and herbs.

Midwifery is used. A white woman, we have been told, comes and meets the younger women and gives lessons in midwifery that they may take the places of the old midwives when they pass.



November 24, 1934

We were invited to attend a birthday party for one of the trustees, Mr. Evans. His children were surprising him. We went.

The house is a very dilapidated one. A lighted lamp was sitting in the middle of the hall floor that it might light the approach to the house and still be protected from the wind. Tin buckets of fall leaves were set about in the room on the floors. (This idea perhaps was taken from school where we had tried to teach the beauty of the fall leaves. At first children said, "What do you all want with those old leaves?") The ten children, the grandchildren, the father, and a few invited friends were present. The youngest child is fifteen. The father owns his home, and is very thrifty.

Fires, which gave the chief light in the house, burned brightly with logs. Tales were told. Jokes on each other were passed. Birthday gifts were arranged on the bed. These included the cake with lighted candles, which was in the middle of the bed. Finally, we were carried to the table that we might eat early, since we had to go to the school for a social for the elders.

The table had been extended to be large enough for all. Mismatched plates, glasses of water, a few cheap knives, forks, and spoons were placed around. There were: chicken, sweet potato pies, cakes, grated potato pudding, fish cakes, and biscuits.

November 27, 1934

Mr. Whiting, teacher of testing and measurements at Atlanta University, came with two student assistants to test the pupils.

At lunch time, one girl, Leah McCoy, was asked to pass the lunches. As she came to one lunch that had been in the case two days, I asked her to throw it away. She begged me to let her leave it because it was such bad luck to throw out or to burn bread, but that she would find a dog and give it to him.

One of the assistants to Mr. Whiting was Bulami Mukasa, an African student at Morehouse College. He talked to the pupils, spoke in his native tongue for them, and wrote his name on the blackboard. The children in the upper grades would not erase it or allow anyone else to erase it for weeks.

TEST RESULTS

NEW STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TEST - Primary Examination

Red Oak School, McDonough County, Ga., Nov. 27, 1934

J. L. Whiting, Examiner

Assistants:

Bessie J. Haywood, Graduate
Bulami J. Mukasa, Student

<u>Pupil</u>	<u>Age</u>		<u>Educ. Age.</u>		<u>Grade Equiv.</u>
3rd Grade					
Greeny Slaughter	12		8-4		2.9
Mildred Slaughter	11		8-2		2.8
B. C. Michael	15		7-10		2.7
Clifford Norwood	10		7-2		2.5
Addis M. Johnson	9		6-6		2.0
Samuel McCoy	13		6-4		2.0
Ellie L. Minter	(?) 16	Below	6-1	Below	2.0
Mary Murphy	(?) 9	"	6-1	"	2.0
William Banks	13	"	6-0	"	2.0
2nd Grade					
Doris Hunt	10		7-6		2.6
Rosa M. Atwater	11		7-4		2.5
Rufus Banks	10		7-4		2.5
Annie P. Thornton	12		7-1		2.0
Saphronia Johnson	7		6-4		2.0
Leah McCoy	12	Below	6-0	Below	2.0
Dazerine Bryant	9	"	6-1		2.0
Luvenia Clark	9	"	6-0	Below	2.0
C. Banks (?)	12	"	6-1	"	2.0

TEST RESULTS

NEW STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TEST - Primary Examination

The HENMON - NELSON TESTS OF MENTAL ABILITY

Red Oak School McDonough County, Ga.
J. L. Whiting, Examiner

November 27, 1934

<u>Pupil</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Educ. Age.</u>	<u>Grade Equiv.</u>	<u>M. A.</u>	<u>I. Q.</u>
7th Grade					
Bennie Minter	14	11-1	5.2	11-3	80
Alph. Ragland	12	10-5	4.4	8-7	72
Naomi Evans	14	10-5	4.4	9-2	65
Rosa Slaughter	15	10-2	4.3	8-10	59
Lula Bryant	16	9-11	4.0	9-2	57
6th Grade					
Purch. Slaughter	11	10-4	4.4	7-5	67
Mary Bryant	14	10-1	4.2	8-5	60
Clarence Dabney	12	9-9	3.9	7-9	65
W. M. Slaughter	13	9-8	3.9	8-3	63
W. J. Frost	16	9-8	3.9	7-11	49
Clar. Minter	13	9-7	3.8	7-9	60
Olen Dabney	14	9-7	3.8	7-5	53
5th Grade					
Rosa Bryant	12	10-0	4.1	9-7	80
Fannie Dabney	11	9-11	4.1	8-1	73
Gert. Murphy	11	9-6	3.7	8-3	75
Moz. Murphy	12	9-6	3.7	8-7	72
E. C. Michael	14	9-0	3.3	7-6	54
4th Grade					
Hugh Ragland	8	9-3	3.5	7-8	96
W. B. Turner	13	8-11	3.2	7-3	56
Larris Frazier	9	8-5	3.0	7-9	86
W. M. Thornton	14	8-2	2.8	7-3	52
Jessie Slaughter	14	7-8	2.6	7-3	52
Mursell Turner	12	6-10	2.0	7-2	45

Assistants:

Bessie J. Haywood, Graduate student
Bulami J. Mukasa, Student

FSK
UNIVERSITY

December 4, 1934

On our way home, we saw a woman standing in the middle of the road waving for us to stop the car. It was Mrs. Norwood, one of the patrons. She was crying as she asked if we would do her a favor. She said she wondered if we would pick up her child whom we would meet up the road. She said the child was hers by her first husband and that Mr. Norwood, her second husband, had put the girl out of doors. The girl, she said, was walking to Atlanta, twenty-five miles. She wanted us to pick her up and take her to her (Mrs. Norwood's) sister's house in Atlanta. Sure enough as we went along, we overtook this girl-- about sixteen years of age, walking toward Atlanta with two large bundles. We took her in the car and carried her to Atlanta to her aunt's house. The girl said she had been driven from her step-father's house before, and that she had once had him arrested. After that she went to live in Atlanta, but that recently, her mother had come after her. This particular afternoon, her step-father had driven her away again.

We asked why she had previously had her step-father arrested. She looked ashamed and said "something bad that he wanted to do to me." We then asked what was done about it. She said her step-father had had her mother to "have the case taken up."

We learned after, from rumors, that the girl was pregnant and that was why she was asked to leave this second time.

Now (March 3) the mother, Mrs. Norwood, has a baby five days old. Mrs. Norwood has a neck that runs continuously. I asked her what was wrong with it. She said a woman had "stabbed" her. She would not talk much, but said "It would be all right but I would not stay in the hospital long enough." The people of the country call the Norwoods "heathen."



Wednesday, January 23, 1935

A Funeral at the Red Oak M. E. Church
Funeral of Mr. Barnes

Patches of snow lay on the ground and in various nooks and crannies made by gullies, mounds of earth, and by piles of leaves and branches gathered here and there. It was cold and things looked quite wintry.

Soon after we got to the school and made fire we saw Mr. Murphy come up. We called him in to get warm. He was the one Negro then working on the Teachers' Home. (FERA project.) The white men working on the project had not shown up. (They did not show up at all that day.) Mr. Murphy talked (rather, he mumbled) quite a bit while he was warming. We found that he was making fifteen cents an hour for eight hours a day, three days a week. He supported his family of nine children, a wife, and himself on this wage. He walks seven miles every morning to get here to work. His children walk that seven miles to come here to school.

We: "You keep your children looking nice and clean even if you are on relief."

He: "Well, not like I 'zires to do."

He:--Later on: "That sho is a nice house y'all gonna have."

We: "Yes, it is."

He: "I wonder why they don't build all the houses in the country like that? Our cows an' cattle got more warmer place to stay in than we got. We got cracks in our house, this big. I wish all houses was made that 'a' way."

Looking out the window we had observed that men had gathered in the cemetery, built a fire, and were digging the grave. Mr. Barnes, the husband of the "principal teacher" at Stockbridge, had dropped dead in town (Atlanta) Saturday. The funeral was being held this day. The custom is to dismiss school while a funeral is being held at the church. So the children came to school prepared to 'tend the funeral. Stockbridge students and adults had rented one of the Henry County school busses to bring them to the funeral. As they arrived

before the funeral began, many of them visited our classroom.

The hearse came to the cemetery, brought the outer box, then went to the home. Some time later it came back to the church with the body. When we saw it come around the bend of the road, all hastened to the church. There were two or three cars in the procession. The hearse was grey and black; artificial flowers made up the "florals." The casket was grey. The undertaker and the pallbearers wore grey cotton gloves. The body was rolled in on the regular funeral rolling frame. The services were conducted in this manner:

Song: "A Charge to Keep Have I."

Prayer

Scripture: "In My Father's House Are Many Mansions."

Song: "How Firm a Foundation."

The house was then opened for anyone to say anything he wished about the life of the deceased. For some moments there was no response so the undertaker rose and gave a nondescript speech and led a doleful song. A rather energetic young man from another community, whom we had seen at other gatherings there, spoke on Mr. Barnes as a "Christian, the head of the nicest home in Red Oak, in Henry County, in this country. A happy couple. Of course Mr. Barnes' way had been hard sometimes. He had always tried to advance his wife. Of course the way had been hard, etc . . ." One of the teachers spoke. Mr. Barnes, the few times he had been encountered, seemed a man of few words and of great humility.

An obituary was read by a young woman of the church.

A solo, "Stand by Me," was sung by a woman, neither young nor beautiful, from Atlanta. She sang unaccompanied.

The telegrams and messages of condolence were read by a Miss Hall, a returned missionary from Africa.

Another song was sung.

Next came the viewing of the remains. Under the direction of the undertaker and his assistant, the audience filed past the casket. The remains were

then rolled over to the family. The sisters and brothers of the dead man looked on sadly. One sister cried out. The wife was quite pitiful when she got up to look in. All in her black veil, she leaned way over and moaned and mumbled a few things. Everybody seemed touched.

While the audience passed the casket, I noticed them. Most of the women were "dressed." Quite a few of the men were in overalls; but many were "dressed up." Some of the pallbearers wore overalls. All of them wore the thin, linty, "deathly" looking, grey cotton gloves furnished by the undertaker. With most of them there was a space of about three or four inches between the glove and the coat or jeans sleeve. There was something striking in the sight of some of those great hulking men passing around in their overalls signifying that they had just left work long enough to 'tend the funeral. The flowers were presented. This is merely the reading of the names of the donors of "floral designs."

Just when everything had reached the climax and we were all ready to go to the cemetery, an announcement was made that the grave had not been completely dug so we would have to wait. Everybody then got up and began to shake hands and greet and talk to each other. There was a general movement toward the two stoves in the church. This social period lasted until the men finished digging the grave. Things were then picked up just where we left off.

The grave was dug by volunteers. Quite a give and take spirit was shown in the way the men gathered early and took turns at digging. They had struck rocks and that had delayed the finishing. (I found at school the next day that a grave must not be dug by anyone kin to the one the grave is intended for because it is bad luck.)

Thursday, February 7, 1935

Some Conversations of and with FERA Workers
on the Teacherage at Red Oak

At noon the workers make coffee on the fire they build to warm them-

selves by now and then. We usually go out to look at the house then. This day I heard a rather interesting conversation. I must describe one man of the group. He is the one who called me out the other day and told me to be sure not to carry the workers in my car with me because one had the "eetch." His name is Mr. Eddie. He looks to be about middle-aged; he has ruddy cheeks, sparkling blue eyes, a "bay window" and a wonderful sense of rough humor. He talks incessantly and seems to like to. He talks about anybody and anything that comes up.

This day he was talking. A subject only had to be introduced for him to enlarge on it. The workers had poured their coffee from their "percolator" (a lard can which had become quite sooty) and were gulping it with their sandwiches. I noticed their fare. One young man had sweet potato sandwiches, one had a jar of boiled cowpeas, and another had link sausage sandwiches. They sat around the fire, eating, laughing, and talking. The conversation went something like this:

Foreman: "Thet shore is good coffee."

Mr. Eddie: "Anything would be good ter us now, 'cause we hongry. Yer know when yer hongry, food is jes' good anyhow."

Foreman: "I wonder ef rich folks enjoy eatin'."

Mr. Eddie: "Naw, yer know they don'. They don' never get hongry. They don' know whut 'tis ter enjoy eatin' like you and me. They jes' eats cause it's there an' time ter eat, but they don' raily enjoy it. Yer know that's why they's so much auperatin' now-a-days. And it's on the rich folks too. Pore folks don't have all that auperatin'. Yer know I knowed a nigger whut had done growed ter be a rat old nigger an' I says ter him, I sez, 'Look hyear, how yer live fer be so old?' 'N he say, 'Boss, I tell yer I done live so long 'cause I'se pore.' I ask him whut thet hev ter do wid it. He say, 'Wall, ef I'd a been rich they'd a been cuttin' on me, but I'se pore an' they let me by.' An' yer know they is cuttin' on rich folks all the time. An' they don' always know whut

they cuttin' fer neither."

Another one (an ex-bootlegger): "Aw, thet uster be but they jest about knows now. They don' cut fer nuthin' now."

Foreman: "I wonder why there is so much auperatin' now-a-days."

I: "People don't eat as much rough food as they used to eat so their systems get clogged. These children out here eat raw potatoes, raw turnips, or raw peanuts, and think nothing of it."

Another worker: "I kin eat a raw pertater ez big aroun' ez thet bucket."

Foreman: "I uster be out in th' fiel' an' dien' have no lunch an' I'd jes' get me a han'ful a green cowpeas an' eat 'em. Never did hurt me."

Another: "Parch them things an' they eats ez good ez goobers."

Mr. Eddie: "Eatin' rough sho do help. I 'member that feller Dean from over younder. The got planty. They had boy an' he up an' died an' they had another. Wall, Dean, he come ter my house atter some surip. He brung th' las' chile wid him. He had passle o'bottles wid him. My ole woman ask him what he got sich purty bottles from. He tol' her he bought water fer th' boy in 'em. He asked the ole 'oman whar'd my boy git water. She tole him he got it outen the pig trough or cow trough or anywhar he could fin' it. He told her he'd a good mind ter bring his boy out thar an' let us raise it. She tole him ter bring him on an' she'd shore do it. But he carried him on back wid 'im an' I think thet 'un died too."

Big laugh.

Foreman: "You know I sometimes wonder if rich folks gonna enjoy heaven?"

Mr. Eddie: "Ain't nobody gonna enjoy it lessen they ain't had much uf it befo'."

Foreman: "I guess they'll hev ter send 'em ter hell fust 'fore he kin appreciate heaven."

I: "I suppose that depends on what heaven is like." (Hoping they would launch out on what they thought it was like.)

Mr. Eddie: "Wall, yer know it ain't gonna be like nuthin' here. 'Nthen yer can't tell 'cause things change so here. Thar ain't no tellin' whut any-thing is like. Yer know I members when it tuk two days an' two nights ter git from hyear to Atlanta."

Another worker: "Whar was you a-livin' at? You musta lived at Miami, Florida." A big laugh.

Mr. Eddie: (ignoring that): "In them days they didn' hev good mules an' horses an' we'd load up with cotton er somethin' an' start out. It 'ud take us two days an' two nights ter git thar. We'd pull inter Peters Street an' unload, then put th' waggin' in th' waggin' yard. Ev'ry man 'ud git a sack o' brown sugar an' a keg o' liquor an' carry it on back wid 'im. Thet's all we had ter buy in them days. Yer raised ever thing else. 'Course I uster buy me . . ."

Younger worker interrupting him: "Some cheese, I know."

Mr. Eddie: "Yea, I'd git some cheese an' sody crackers an' I uster git them big sweet cakes with colored icing over 'em. An' did I eat then!"

Foreman: "Yer know one thing? You'se old! I been callin' you Ed but I'm gonna call you Mr. Ed. You must a been hyear in my grandaddy's day."

Mr. Eddie: (ignoring thrust): "Your grandaddy did make the first pair o' shoes I ever had--ole man Patillo. Used ter live rat over th' hill thar. An' talk about work on 'em, a feller had ter work on them things 'for he could wear 'em--grease 'em, soak 'em, an' everthing else."

Another worker: "You mighty old. Ha! Ha!"

Mr. Eddie: "I kin 'member when girls uster walk to church in the bare-feet 'n git a little ways from the church, set down, 'n put the shoes on."

Foreman: "How old are you? You must be 'bout sixty or over."

Mr. Eddie: "Yea, I'm gonna qualify fer th' pension ef th' bill goes through an' I'm gonna have ally 'all here been talking 'bout how old I am testify that I'm sixty. Ha! Ha!"

March 4, 1935, Teaching School in Church (While the school was being repaired)

Mrs. Cannon and I were sitting near the church door at the noon recess. It was a beautiful spring-like day. Children were calling, running, and playing with each other. David Weems, a slow fellow about twelve years old, was coming toward the church with that loping gait so often seen among youngsters who follow the plow, walk the furrows, and otherwise toil over "the good earth." As we teachers do, at times, I thought I would remind him that he was a child and not an old man and to practice moving with vim. To be sure that he was feeling well before I made the suggestion, I asked quite sympathetically, "David, don't you feel well?"

"Yes, mam," was the reply.

Working up to the point so that even he would see the suggestion before I uttered it, I asked him, "Well, why are you walking so slowly?"

Unsmiling and seemingly quite innocently and earnestly in his slow manner, keeping the same gait coming toward us, he answered, "Well, I had plenty o' time to git here so I thought I'd take my time."

I did not make the suggestion.

Some Superstitions of the Primary Children

It is bad luck to burn persinnon or sassafras wood.

It is bad luck to permit a young baby to look into a looking glass.

It is bad luck to step over the feet of another person.

It is bad luck for two people to comb the hair of a third at the same time. The youngest will die soon.

It is bad luck to tie or fasten one shoe before the other shoe is put on.

It is bad luck to turn back when on one's way somewhere.

If both feet itch, one will walk on strange land.

It is bad luck to walk with one shoe on and one shoe off.

Never permit a stranger to rest his hat on your bed.

Two people must never sweep at the same time in the same room.

When teeth are pulled, never throw them out, burn them.

Never burn bread.

Never carry out ashes or sweep after the sun goes down.

If it rains in a grave that is dug before a burial, another will be dug soon.

People kin to a corpse should never assist in the digging of the grave.

Never sneeze with bread in one's mouth.

If food drops out of one's mouth while eating, one will hear of a death.

Cover clock faces and mirrors when a corpse is in the house.

If a black cat crosses one's path, spit in your hat.

If you hear a screech owl at night, tie a knot in a sheet, turn your pocket inside out, turn a chair upside down, or turn a shoe upside down.

Never cut out a dress on Friday.

When fishing, never let your pole cross that of another person fishing. It will hinder your catches for that day.