

technicians at a relatively low pro rata cost, and while each builds his general practice, he will study and especially devote himself to clinic attendance at one of the hospitals in the city in the field of medicine or surgery that interests him most, changing his subject if or when he finds he is better suited to or has a chance in another phase of medical practice. Each will have an entire free day a week when rest, study or recreation can be freely enjoyed, leaving his patients to the care of his associates who serve temporarily in his absence. Always the service of the Health Home will be available and a doctor and a nurse will be fresh and ready to serve. There will be practice of medicine by two to five doctors of like mind and spirit, aided by the sympathetic skill and vision of young, competent nurses and technicians, all of whom will work hard because they enjoy work. The strength of neither physician nor nurse, housekeeper nor maid will be exhausted because there will be periodic rest days and the scheme of things will be in keeping with the goal of vigorous health for everyone.

The "Aspiranto Health Home" with its extension into the homes of the community, with nursing care by the hour

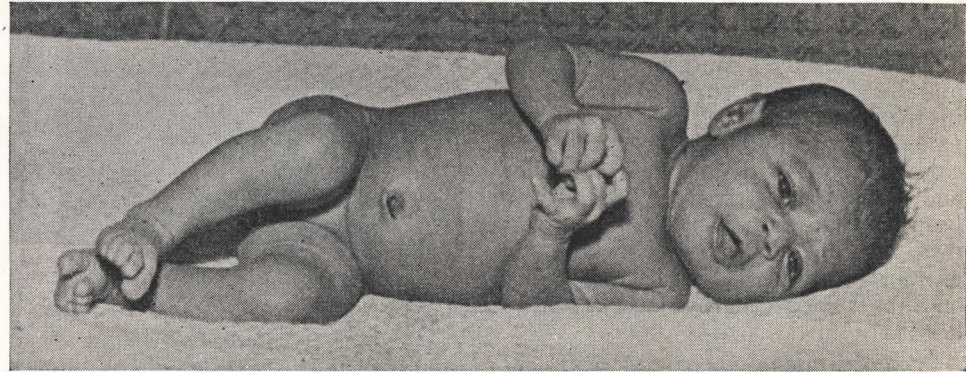
or the day in the homes, housekeeping assistance in the homes, training in food buying, cooking and budgeting is a dream in the making. Its growth and success will depend upon the patient, determined, vital effort of some score or more healthy young men and women who believe like Virginia Alexander that the health of our people is a thing worth striving for.

In religion, Dr. Alexander is a Quaker, being a member of the Friends' Germantown Monthly Meeting (Arch Street); in social work, chairman of the colored Y. W. C. A. Board and member of the City Board; a worker in race

relations, a lecturer to women and in colored churches she has supported a number of students at Cheyney and elsewhere; she is a good speaker and yet always a modest, self-effacing woman.

Of course, Dr. Virginia has her troubles. She looks so young and unsophisticated that fellow physicians, friends and relatives always want to advise and patronize her until at last they realize their own ignorance and inexperience in her efficient, unhurried methods and the iron determination beneath her pleasant smile.

Can you be such a woman physician? Well, that depends.



*Yolande Dubois Williams
A Virginia Alexander Baby*

The N. A. A. C. P. at Work

I. RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

RICHMOND, Virginia, has its problems of color and race. In a city with 125,825 whites and 52,988 Negroes, there is not a single colored member of the state legislature; not a single colored member of the city council, nor is there a single Negro employed in any capacity by the city administration, except in the public schools.

There is not a colored policeman, a colored traffic officer, nor even a colored man employed in the hauling of garbage or ashes in the colored section of the city. Chain stores having from 75% to 95% colored patronage, do not employ a single colored clerk. Under the laws of Virginia there are separate schools and in spite of the fact that many of the Negro teachers are holding high degrees in the field of education, there is not a colored principal in any of the schools.

In other words, the colored city is completely subordinated to the white voters, rich and poor, and to white administrators. A "class struggle" in a city like this would call for new divisions!

These conditions were freely discussed this winter at the many meetings held by the Richmond Branch in connection with the membership campaign. The branch adopted a program for the ensuing year, which will include the attempt to correct as many of the above conditions as possible.

A part of the program adopted by the branch is to put on an intensive campaign by which they hope to qualify a larger number of voters. In the last election only fifteen hundred Negroes voted. The Virginia law requiring that taxes must be paid for three consecutive years, the last tax being paid six months before election, is inclined to discourage Negroes from qualifying. The branch will begin with its own membership, by urging every one of its members to qualify as a voter. Without a doubt, many of the conditions which offer a handicap to the Negroes of Richmond could be corrected if a large number would vote in the democratic primaries, which right has been secured for them through the efforts of local citizens backed by the N.A.A.C.P.

In the campaign for memberships for the Richmond Branch, held December 4 to 15, more than one hundred workers canvassed the city, with the slogan, "One Thousand Members as Christmas Gifts for the N.A.A.C.P."

The campaign had the endorsement of the Ministerial Association, the cooperation of churches, women's clubs, fraternal and civic organizations and insurance companies. The campaign closed at the Third Street A.M.E., Church, at which time eight ministers, representing every denomination in the city, made five minute talks on the different phases of the work of the Association.

When the campaign closed, there were five new members paying from \$10-\$50; ten \$5 members; sixty-two members at \$2.50 and 527 at \$1, making a total of 600 members paying in \$925.

In addition, the Independent Order of St. Luke gave a life membership of \$500, in honor of Mrs. Maggie L. Walker, who is Secretary-Treasurer of this Organization. Mrs. Walker is a member of the Executive Board of the National Association for the Advance-

Negro Physicians

Sent in by Du Bois

Can a Colored Woman be a Physician?

DOWN in Philadelphia in one of its characteristic narrow streets some fifteen blocks north of Market, there is a typical Philadelphia house of the middle-class, neat brick, with a physician's sign outside," Dr. Virginia M. Alexander."

Within there is a waiting room, a doctor's office, a little operating room a dining room and a kitchen. Upstairs, there is what the English call a "bed-sitting room," and two rooms fitted up as hospital wards. Above are two more bedrooms.

This is the "Aspiranto Health Home" and here 20 children have been born in the last two years, and sixty-four patients treated. In five years' practice close to 2,000 patients have had office and home care, forty-three babies have been brought into the world in their own home or in hospitals and an extraordinary work for health, advice and uplift carried on by one girl still in her early thirties.

A good many people looking at Virginia Alexander would say she was too young and too good-natured to be a successful physician. Some folk have made tragic mistakes by not being able to recognize her extraordinary skill, and far beyond that her splendid sacrifice and devotion. As a business woman, she is the joke of her friends; forgetting to collect her fees, handing them back to the poor, furnishing medicine for nothing, working endlessly with her strong young body, and whirling her little Ford through Philadelphia streets with hair-raising accuracy. But among physicians and among patients who know, Virginia Alexander has answered the question as to whether a colored woman can succeed in her profession.

She was born in Philadelphia on Carpenter Street, one of four children, two boys and two girls. The oldest boy, Raymond Pace Alexander, is one of the best colored lawyers of the present generation; his brother, Scholley, is a clerk in his office. The sister, Irene, was formerly bookkeeper in the defunct Brown and Stevens Bank.

Virginia went through the High School with a brilliant record and entered the University of Pennsylvania. Her mother died and her father lost his business of riding master. She had to work, turn and twist; she served as waitress, as a maid, as a clerk,—anything and everything, until she had pushed herself through college. Then, there was the wall of the Medical School. It seemed at first impossible, but by work and outside aid of a philanthropic friend, Virginia went through.



Dr. Alexander

The difficulty there, however, was not simply that of money. The Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania at that time and perhaps even now distinctly did not want nor encourage colored students. To survive the first year at the Woman's Medical College, and to save one's soul, required not brilliance but a far-fixed vision and tremendous physical strength.

The difficulties which they threw in the way of colored girls are almost inconceivable. There was one professor who took especial delight and pains in retelling to his classes, where there were colored students, every discreditable, dirty and insulting story about colored people that he could think of; and when on complaint the Dean had to interfere, the professor simply walked in and lectured these girls about trying to "get above their people!" It did not make any difference what they tried to accomplish, they must remember that they were still "Negroes!"

Virginia got through and today she is on the staff of the Hospital of that same Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania; and also on the staff of the Out Patient Staff of the Pennsylvania Hospital, working in heart diseases; and of Douglass Hospital. She tried to interne at the Philadelphia General Hospital but the Director of Health, Dr. Krewson, told her that she would not be appointed even if she stood "first in a thousand applicants!" Even the colored Kansas City General Hospital hesitated at a woman interne but Virginia became its first. She began practice in Philadelphia and now has a large clientele among colored people and many whites; she has had

extraordinary success in obstetrical work, and has carried on her little sanitarium.

With all this she keeps on studying. She continues with lectures in the Graduate School of the University of Pennsylvania; she has helped operate at her "College Hospital," and at other places.

One professor of women's diseases at Pennsylvania Hospital said of her one time, when she was right for the third successive time in a case difficult to diagnose, "If that woman were to call up and say that she had a man in labor, I should say, 'send him, Doctor,' for I'd know she was right."

Dr. Alexander spends an endless amount of time following her patients to hospitals, checking on her diagnoses, both medical and surgical, standing by her patients when operated upon and visiting them afterwards. She never charges for this but claims the service to be a necessary part of her own education, and a requirement for the future care of her patients. This service probably more than anything else has had the effect of staving or definitely dulling the edge of increased practices of segregation and discrimination in most if not all the hospitals of Philadelphia.

Her "Aspiranto Health Home" was started two years ago and is the beginning of what Dr. Alexander likes to call a socialized or unit practice of medicine. It is a "teaching home" for maternity patients for delivery and two weeks post natal care where she, her nurses and housekeeper, can be in continual attendance; where the patients may learn not only how to nurse the baby but the whys of schedule, rest, food, etc.; a place where one may not feel dread during the hours before delivery, and where husband or relatives may visit when they will. Or again a nervous teacher or a worn housewife, a business man or a thrifty laborer may come here and rest, having medical attendance, tonsilectomy or other minor operations or treatments with the attention of the Doctor and her helpers.

As the work grows, Doctor Alexander wants to have associated with her other physicians, nurses, technicians and dietitians, all housed under the same roof during business hours.

In this socialized practice of medicine, Virginia Alexander hopes to attract new young physicians who have a vision of community service. Each physician will begin his or her own private general practice, each will be served by the same staff of nurses and