

**Chauncey Depew Harmon, Senior:
A Case Study in Leadership for Educational Opportunity and Equality
in Pulaski, Virginia**

by

N. Wayne Tripp

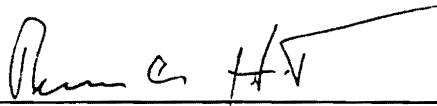
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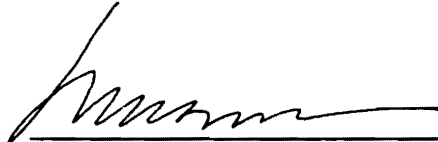
in

Educational Administration

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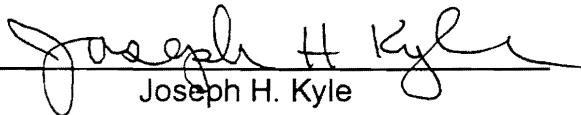
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**CHAUNCEY DEPEW HARMON, SENIOR:
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by

N. Wayne Tripp

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Educational Administration

(ABSTRACT)

A major battle in the struggle for African American civil rights has been the pursuit of educational opportunity. Little has been written about the early civil rights movement in western and southwestern Virginia. There is an especial paucity of information about the efforts of African American Southwest Virginians to improve their educational opportunities. This dissertation addresses that need by centering the study on an individual educator's life during the period 1913-1940 in Pulaski, Virginia.

Chauncey Depew Harmon, Senior, was an African American educator born in Pulaski, Virginia, in 1913. Educated at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute during 1929-35, he returned to Pulaski to become principal of Calfee Training School in 1938. With the assistance of the NAACP and the Virginia State Teachers Association, Harmon led one of the earliest campaigns for equalization of teacher salaries and facilities during the 1938-39 school term. In March of 1939, the Pulaski County School Board decided to send its African

American high school students to the Christiansburg Industrial Institute, effectively eliminating Harmon's position. Harmon's efforts resulted in a suit, Corbin et al. v. County School Board of Pulaski County, that was one of eleven facility equalization suits supported by the NAACP prior to Brown v. Board of Education.

The study is an example of microhistory. Microhistory is the detailed, intensive study of the lives of particular individuals or groups. The study employs accepted methods of historical research. The study is organized chronologically.

The outcomes of the study are threefold. First, the study serves to document the youth, education, and early career of Harmon. Second, the study examines the persons, events, and institutions of the period that played a role in leading up to Harmon's decisions and actions to push for equalization of teacher salaries and school facilities in Pulaski. Finally, the study endeavors to add to the body of knowledge and understanding of the issue of race in American education.

Dedication

To my wife Joan. You have always believed in me. Your quiet confidence and assurance that I could complete a doctoral program were a reservoir of strength when I was filled with doubt and fatigue. You patiently tolerated four years of night classes, vacations lost to summer seminars, and weekends in the library. I can not begin to adequately express how much your presence in my life has meant. I thank God for you.

To Benjamin and Matthew. We missed a lot of football games, band festivals, and picnics so that I could finish this degree. I hope the experience will serve as a challenge to the two of you as you go about your lives. You can make a dream become a reality through much hard work, some sacrifice and a constant devotion to your values. Gentlemen, I love you. You truly are the “son of my right hand” and a “gift from God”.

To my mother and father. You gave me a strong set of values that have carried me thus far in life. You helped me to see the importance of family, time, and place in life. You taught me to believe in myself. You showed me the importance of hard work. You were examples of self-discipline. You believed in the power and value of education. You believed in me. I owe you all that I am today. Thank you.

Acknowledgments

So many people have helped the researcher through the process of completing this dissertation that he is reluctant to name them for fear of omitting one. Nonetheless, he would be remiss if he did not attempt, at least, to thank and give credit to those who played a role in the development of this work. With apologies to anyone who may be overlooked, here are acknowledgments of the contributions of some of the people who provided assistance to the researcher.

The support of the Harmon family was absolutely critical to the completion of the study. Without their consent and active participation, the study could not have taken place. Mrs. Lucy Martin Harmon's gifts of her time and her memories established the foundation of the study. The various artifacts and records that she shared with the researcher became its framework. Mr. and Mrs. Harmon's daughter, Dr. Marylen Harmon, made significant contributions both as an important source of information and as an editor.

The members of the researcher's committee deserve his lasting gratitude. Their professional counsel was wisely and gently given. Most especially, Tom Hunt, Co-Chair of the author's committee, has been far more than a mentor in this process. He has been a good friend and a guide. His advice and direction were always on target. He has given of his time and energy generously and graciously. Thank you, kind sir.

Wayne Worner, also Co-Chair of the committee, provided counsel and a

sympathetic ear to the researcher both during his graduate program and his career. His pragmatic approach and patience have meant a great deal to the researcher over the years. The university will lose a leader of stature and vision when he retires.

Steve Parson and Larry Weber are veterans of the Roanoke Area Program, the field based doctoral program in which the researcher began this study. Both of them suffered the researcher's occasional impatience and cynicism with good humor and tolerance. Both have offered suggestions for the study that strengthened it beyond the researcher's capacity to do so. Joe Kyle, a former teacher and administrator with Mr. Harmon at G. W. Carver School in Salem, was able to look at the study from the perspective of both a participant and a scholar thereby testing it for accuracy. His participation as a committee member greatly enhanced the study's legitimacy and credibility.

Many others kindly gave of their time to this study. Amanda DeHart, Raymond Lottier, Georgia Reeves, Glenice Mills Cottman, Annie Mills, Willis Gravely, and Jacqueline Corbin Pleasant granted interviews that were essential to the study's completion and its authenticity. There were other individuals who wished to be interviewed with whom the researcher unfortunately was not able to meet. He sincerely appreciates their interest in preserving Mr. Harmon's story. It simply was not possible to include everything that Mr. Harmon accomplished in his career. Perhaps another researcher will pick up the story and conduct a

comprehensive study of the latter portion of Mr. Harmon's life.

Other individuals provided materials that were instrumental to the study. Carolyn Walcott Ford, former librarian at Tuskegee Institute, obtained copies of the Tuskegee Bulletin from the 1930's that were essential to describing Mr. Harmon's education. Susan Ariew, College of Education Librarian, was crucial to the researcher's gaining access to the NAACP papers in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

Colleagues in the Roanoke Area Program gave support and encouragement for over four years. The members of the ABD Group became not only colleagues, but valued friends.

Marsha Ogburn, the researcher's secretary, cheerfully facilitated arrangements for the study's completion.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgment.....	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE, PROLOGUE: 1913-20.....	8
CHAPTER TWO, THE EDUCATION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN VIRGINIA PRIOR TO 1945.....	62
CHAPTER THREE, TUSKEGEE TIMES: 1929-35	129
CHAPTER FOUR, EARLY CAREER EXPERIENCES: 1935-38.....	154
CHAPTER FIVE, CRISIS: 1938-39.....	208
CHAPTER SIX, EPILOGUE: 1939-93.....	276
SUMMARY.....	330
NOTES ON SOURCES.....	334
REFERENCES	335
APPENDIX.....	351
PHOTOGRAPHS	361
VITA.....	368

CHAUNCEY DEPEW HARMON, SENIOR: A CASE STUDY IN LEADERSHIP FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND EQUALITY IN PULASKI, VIRGINIA

INTRODUCTION

Americans continue to live with the legacy of slavery and racial segregation. It has long been a defining issue in the culture and experience of the United States. Alexis De Tocqueville, the French observer of the early American Republic, considered the differences of race and slavery to be threatening to the very survival of the American nation (Tocqueville, translated 1945, pp. 364-381). The history of the South, in particular, is permeated with the influence of race. African American indentured servants and slaves were among the first to occupy the land that became known as Virginia. Nat Turner's Rebellion, Black Codes, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Redemption, Jim Crow, and Massive Resistance all represent chapters in Virginia history that carry great political import and emotional significance for Virginians of all races.

Since their arrival in Jamestown in 1619, African Americans have struggled to improve their status in life--first by seeking freedom, later by gaining equality in the eyes of the law, and finally by striving for social equality. A major battle in the struggle has been the pursuit of educational opportunity. Initially, it fell to the lot of American public schools to be one of the vehicles by which racial segregation was established and maintained. Ultimately, it became the lot of

American public schools to become a primary means by which desegregation was accomplished.

Little has been written about the early civil rights movement in western and southwestern Virginia. Turner (1983) found a dearth of scholarly work about African Americans in the Appalachian region generally. There is an especial paucity of information about the efforts of African American Southwest Virginians to improve their educational opportunities. This dissertation addresses that need by centering the study on an individual educator's life during the period 1913-1940 in Pulaski, Virginia. In order to place the study in context, there are references to periods before and after the events under study and to influences devolving from the state and national levels.

The purpose of the study is threefold. First, it seeks to document the youth, education and early career of Chauncey Depew Harmon, Sr., a Southwest Virginia African American educator. Second, the study examines the persons, events and institutions of the period that played a role in leading up to Harmon's decisions and actions as principal of Calfee Training School in Pulaski, Virginia, during the 1938-39 academic year. In doing so the study attempts to place Harmon's career in the larger contexts of historical time and place. Finally, the study endeavors to meet its third purpose of adding to the body of knowledge and understanding of the issue of race in American education by examining

Harmon's efforts to achieve equality of educational opportunity for African Americans in the community in which he was raised and later served.



Chauncey Depew Harmon, Senior, was an African American educator born in Pulaski, Virginia, in 1913. Educated at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, he returned to Pulaski to become principal of Calfee Training School in 1938.

With the assistance of the NAACP and the Virginia State Teachers Association, Harmon led one of the earliest campaigns for equalization of teacher salaries and facilities in Virginia during the 1938-39 term. In March of 1939, the Pulaski School Board decided to send its African American high school students to the Christiansburg Industrial Institute, effectively eliminating Harmon's position.

Harmon's efforts resulted in a suit, Corbin v. County School Board, that was one of eleven facility equalization suits supported by the NAACP prior to Brown v. Board of Education.

Methodology

The study is an example of microhistory as defined by Lichtman and French (1978). Microhistory is the detailed, intensive study of the lives of particular individuals and groups. The study also falls into the category of a local history as Lichtman and French describe the term. According to Lichtman and French, local histories serve three functions. First, they preserve local history for its own sake. Second, they are vehicles by which hypotheses about broader jurisdictions are tested through the means of case studies. Finally, they

focus on understanding the processes of community growth and development (pp. 158-60).

The study employed accepted methods of historical research. Primary sources were utilized whenever available. Interviews with individuals who were contemporaries of Harmon were conducted. Harmon's personal papers and mementos were made available by his family for the study. Official records of the day, such as school board minutes and other government reports, were examined. Reports of the media were reviewed for contemporary accounts of the events under study.

Secondary sources were consulted in the course of the completion of the study. Written histories of institutions and communities were scrutinized for references to the events and persons under study. An examination of pertinent literature was conducted to further document historical contexts and to assist in the analysis of the results of the study.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited by certain factors. The foremost limitation is the effect of the passage of time. As a consequence of the events under study having taken place 50 to 80 years ago, resources were scarce. Many of the key actors under study were deceased or unable to participate in its completion for other reasons. Therefore, the reliance on secondary sources necessarily was substantial. Additionally, African Americans were often ignored or

acknowledged in a limited fashion in the official records of the day. The effect of this limitation was to rely frequently on oral history and informal records.

A final significant limitation of the study is that it was performed by a researcher who is not African American. As a Caucasian, the researcher is not as personally knowledgeable of the conditions and experiences he sought to study as he might have been if he were of African American descent. In response to this limitation, the researcher offers two thoughts for consideration. First, readers are asked to judge the work on its own merit. The researcher made every effort to follow the accepted practices of historiography. He attempted to fulfill the two basic obligations of every historian: to be honest and to be as exhaustive in his work as possible. Second, an observation by an artist who painted workers in the New York City Post Offices illustrates the researcher's point of view about the limitation of his race. The artist was asked in an interview whether it was a problem to accurately portray the African American postal workers since she was White. She replied that, "Whites tend to paint Blacks too Black and Blacks tend to paint Whites too White. The trick is to capture people as they are" (National Public Radio, Weekend Edition, 1994). The researcher believes that the challenge in historical research is to capture people and events as they were. As Sloan (1973) wrote, "the historian must preserve a sense of the actors in the situation and the ways they work and are worked upon by the institutional structure in given circumstances" (p. 22). That

was what the study attempted and that is the basis on which the study should be evaluated.

Organization of the Study

The organization of the study is chronological. It examines events in the history of Pulaski and Harmon's life in the order in which they occurred. The period under study encompassed those years prior to 1940. Every effort was made to situate the events chronicled in the study in the dual historical contexts of time and place. While the study focused on the community of Pulaski and Harmon's career, care was taken to refer to events and circumstances on the state, national and world stages. These references serve to provide comparative bases for the reader and acknowledge influences over the events under study that were not of local origin.

Conventions Used in the Study

Throughout this study, several terms to designate the race or ethnic origin of persons are utilized. The sole purpose of the use of these terms is to identify the status of the individuals in question. In view of terminology having changed over time, the researcher struggled to identify a rubric by which he might govern his use of such terms. In his book, The Mis-education of the Negro, Carter Woodson (1933) offers guidance on the subject in an appendix entitled "Much Ado About a Name." Woodson wrote that "It does not matter so much what the thing is called as what the thing is. The Negro would not cease to be what he is

by calling him something else” (p. 192). The eminent logic of Woodson’s comments permits writers to employ racially descriptive terms with operational definitions that are rooted in common sense.

In order to identify a term that would be generally acceptable and suitably descriptive, the researcher sought assistance from knowledgeable sources. Following the suggestion of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association and his major professors, the researcher inquired of the Harmon family what term they would prefer to designate Mr. Harmon’s race. Their choice was African American. Therefore, that designation was used by the researcher to describe persons of color who are of African extraction. At various points in the study, however, African Americans also are described in direct quotations, in titles of documents, and in the names of organizations as “colored”, “Negro”, or “Black”. These terms were utilized to preserve the integrity of the quotation or title. Similarly, Caucasian Americans are designated in the study as “White” or “Caucasian” unless a quotation or title employs another term. In the case of quotations, the term is presented as it was originally written including capitalization.

CHAPTER ONE

PROLOGUE: 1913-20

Chapter Overview

Historians advise researchers that the influences of time and place must be examined to understand and interpret the events of the past (Hunt, T. C., personal communication, 1995). This chapter of the study attempts to describe the contexts of time and place leading up to and during the childhood of Chauncey Depew Harmon, Sr. The emphasis of the chapter will be to examine places, events, and persons in Pulaski County, Virginia, that may have influenced Harmon's life during the period 1913-20.

Discovery and Settlement of Pulaski County, Virginia

The County of Pulaski and the Town of Pulaski, which is located within the county, are situated in the New River Valley in Southwest Virginia. Both the county and the town were named after Count Casimir Pulaski of Poland. Pulaski served under George Washington during the American Revolution commanding troops that defended Charleston, South Carolina. He was mortally wounded in an action at Savannah, Georgia, in 1779 (Wysor, 1937, p. 2).

The New River Valley is geographically and culturally an extension of the Great Valley of Virginia. Before the arrival of Europeans in Virginia, the Great Valley was a major migratory and travel route for Native Americans. The Valley

is bisected today by Interstate 81 which follows the north-south course of the Great Road and continues to be the major path of ground transportation and commerce for the region. In The Land That Is Pulaski County Conway Howard Smith asserts that Colonel Abraham Wood may have reached the New River while on an expedition from Fort Henry in 1654. As an alternate account, Smith suggests that Captain Thomas Batts and Robert Fallam discovered the river after Wood commissioned them to undertake further exploration of western Virginia (Smith, 1981, p. 5).

The Valley of Virginia continued to be a highway for migration long after the discovery of the river. One of the first European settlers in the area was Jacob Hermann, a German who traveled down the Valley from Pennsylvania in the early 1740's (Smith, p.11). Hermann, also known as Harman, was followed by other Germans who left Pennsylvania for religious reasons. After the Germans came the Scotch-Irish, who spread their Presbyterian heritage throughout Southwest Virginia as they moved south from Pennsylvania (Wysor, 1937, p.4).

Predecessor Jurisdictions to Pulaski County

Along with the European settlers came European government. With the formation of Augusta County in 1738, the area that was to become Pulaski County came under the supervision of the county court and other authorities. In 1746 John Buchanan began surveying land west of the New River (Kegley,

1938). Smith (1981) reports that in 1746 and in 1750 the Augusta County Court ordered roads built in the area (p. 16).

The Europeans initially made friends and sought trade with the Native Americans who lived in the New River Valley. Inevitably, conflicts arose when permanent settlers attempted to take possession of the land in ever-increasing numbers. Early expeditions of Europeans had contacted relatively peaceful tribes of Native Americans such as the Toterias. By the mid-eighteenth century, the dominant Cherokees and Shawnees had driven out the more peaceful tribes and stood as a challenge to further European expansion westward. In 1755, the Draper's Meadows Massacre marked a watershed event in the relations between the Shawnees and the Europeans in the New River Valley and Virginia. Eventually events escalated into the French and Indian War. In 1763, as a condition of the treaty ending the war, George III, King of England, issued a proclamation that limited European settlement to east of the Allegheny watershed. This action proved to be unpopular with the people of Virginia and was rescinded in 1768 (Smith, 1981, pp. 44-52).

In January of 1770, Botetourt County was formed out of the area of Augusta County that included the future County of Pulaski. Botetourt County was huge, extending all the way to the Mississippi River as a result of the lifting of the restriction on migration west of the Allegheny Mountains. The first appearance of African slaves in the area took place about the same time (Smith,

1981, p. 55). Kegley (1938, pp. 9-10) reports that indentured servants accompanied both Captain Wood on his exploration in 1654 and the Batts and Fallam expedition in 1671. Kegley does not comment as to the race of the servants.

Fincastle County was carved out of Botetourt County in 1773. It, too, was a very large county encompassing all of present day Southwest Virginia, a goodly portion of what is now West Virginia, most of Kentucky, and part of Tennessee. In 1776, Fincastle County was divided into three smaller counties-- Montgomery, Washington, and Kentucky. The area that was to become Pulaski County was a part of Montgomery County (Smith, 1981, p 115). In 1790 Wythe County was partitioned out of Montgomery County. The eastern portion of modern day Pulaski County remained in Montgomery County and the western portion became a part of Wythe County (Smith, p. 114).

While this division of the territory that was to compose Pulaski County was in place, the community produced its first governor of the Commonwealth. Doctor John Floyd, a physician from Newbern, had served in both the General Assembly and the United States House of Representatives prior to being elected governor by the members of the General Assembly in 1830. His son, John Buchanan Floyd, was elected governor in 1849 (Whitman, 1974, p. 11).

Dr. Floyd was a progressive leader, especially on the issue of slavery. Even though he owned slaves himself, he believed the practice to be a bane to

Virginia and the South and favored gradual abolition of the practice (Dabney, 1971, p.226). Floyd, supported by western Virginia members of the Assembly, brought the discussion to the floor of the Assembly in the 1831 session (Smith, p. 191). The effort failed along the same sectional lines that dominated many of the political debates in the state during the period. Westerners favored gradual abolition and deportation of all African Americans. Most easterners could not imagine the plantation system functioning without slave labor. The easterners who did favor abolition wanted compensation for their lost “property” (Hunt, 1985). Nat Turner’s Rebellion, a slave revolt in Southampton County, in Floyd’s second year as governor halted his efforts to end slavery once and for all. Floyd was forced by circumstance to respond to Turner’s action by calling out the militia and eventually ordering the execution of the conspirators. In fact, it was during Floyd’s term that many of the infamous Black Codes limiting the freedom of all African Americans were enacted (Dabney, p.226).

Formation of Pulaski County

It was not until 1839 that residents of the area comprising Pulaski County petitioned the General Assembly for the formation of a new county. On March 30 of that year, the bill was passed that brought present day Pulaski County into being (Smith, 1981, p. 204). The first court of the county was held at the tavern of James Tiffany in the town of Newbern on May 10 (Wysor, 1937, p. 4.).

The 1840 United States census, taken the year after Pulaski County's formation, provides a profile of Pulaski at the time. Smith (1981) states that the census reported that Pulaski had 3,739 residents. Some 2,768 were free Whites. There were 971 African Americans living in the county. Only 17 of them were free. The remaining 954 African Americans were slaves owned by 109 different families. Most families possessed less than 10 slaves. Smith goes on to say that nearly half the people living in Pulaski were engaged in farming as an occupation. Seven schools were in existence at the time, all noted as primary and common schools (Smith, p.207).

In the two decades immediately before the Civil War, plantations developed in Pulaski County. Smith (1981) writes of "elegant and well furnished homes" which were surrounded by a number of supporting buildings including "stables, barns, coach house, wood house, smoke house and corn crib" and "slave cabins" (p. 219). Most average citizens did not live in the lap of luxury, however. Four out of five families did not own slaves. The majority were small farmers who lived modestly (p. 219).

The county's population reached 5,118 persons by 1850, 1,471 of whom were slaves. In 1860, the last census year before the abolition of slavery, 5,416 people were living in Pulaski. Of this number 1,589 were slaves. There were 155 slave owners in 1860. Three plantation owners held fifty or more slaves at that time (Smith, 1981, p.241). By comparison, the state population in 1860 was

nearly one-third slaves (Holloway, 1993, p 20). By contrast, there were counties in the eastern part of the state where the slave population outnumbered the White population.

Effects of the Civil War on Pulaski

During and immediately after the Civil War life was harder for the citizens of Pulaski County than it had been prior to the war. Pulaski County sided with the South in the war. Many White men served in the armies of the Confederacy and gave their lives for the "Lost Cause". Slaves also were pressed into service in the war effort. On several occasions officials in Richmond requisitioned slaves for the fortification of the capital and for labor in other areas of the state. Toward the end of the war, the county court certified that so many of Pulaski County's slaves had been taken that no further contributions could be made to the war effort (Smith, 1981, pp. 273-277).

The Reconstruction period brought change to Pulaski on many fronts. Plantation owners were reduced to a low estate. Some businessmen who had extended credit on the faith that the Confederacy would prevail were ruined. The tenant farm system of share cropping was instituted. Smith (1981) reports that the five years following the war and prior to Virginia's re-admission to the union were a period of uncharacteristic lawlessness in Pulaski. Jobless war veterans and freed slaves had become vagrants. Local government remained

in the hands of natives, however. No “scalawags” or “carpetbaggers” achieved office in Pulaski (pp. 291-296).

Industrialization and Growth of Pulaski

After recovering from the effects of the Civil War, Pulaski began to grow. In 1871, Dublin was granted the status of incorporated town by the General Assembly. Newbern was re-incorporated as a town in 1872 after having given up its charter several years earlier. Across the South manufacturing and mining, often funded by northern capital, were surging as industries. Industrial development in Pulaski paralleled that of other southern communities. The Bertha Zinc Works, Pulaski's first heavy industry, began operation in 1880 at Martin's Tank, the future Town of Pulaski. The year before the Altoona Coal Company had built a rail line to the coal fields located nearby (Jamestown Exposition, 1907, p.68).

The Bertha Works and its corporate fellows, the Pulaski Iron Company, begun in 1884, and the Dora Furnace, established in 1890, attracted many men to Pulaski to work and live. Pulaski Iron Company had a payroll of 210 men in August, 1888. The majority of the workers were classified as laborers who earned \$1 per day, a good wage at the time. Most of these laborers were African American men who worked 12 hours each day of a seven day week. The management and owners of three of the four Pulaski major mineral companies were northerners. The influence of the mineral companies remained strong in

Pulaski until the New River Valley deposits proved no longer competitive in the first third of the twentieth century (Smith, 1981 pp. 314-323).

Pulaski City, the former Martin's Tank and future Town of Pulaski, was granted a charter to incorporate by the General Assembly in 1886. By 1900, twelve mining companies had offices in the municipality renamed Pulaski City (Smith, p. 335). Virginia Iron, Coal, and Coke Company, which had acquired the Dora Furnace, was the largest with a \$10,000,000 capitalization (Jamestown Exposition, p. 70). Along with the mining offices, an equal number of land companies had opened in Pulaski. The largest was the Pulaski Land and Improvement Company organized by northern capitalists in 1884. The Norfolk and Western Railroad constructed the Maple Shade Inn in 1884 and in 1891 the Pulaski Land and Improvement Company built the Hotel Pulaski. Nearby towns of Allisonia and New River Depot also grew as a result of their location on rail lines and proximity to ore mines (Smith, pp. 335-336).

The older towns of Newbern, Dublin and Snowville experienced a decline in population as result of having been bypassed by the railroads (Smith, 1981, p. 353). Mathews (1993) states that the Newbern residents "would have no part of the railroad", a decision that would cost them dearly. The Town of Pulaski was growing rapidly into the county's center of business and industry at the expense of the older municipalities. When the courthouse at Newbern burned in 1893, the new commercial center of the county flexed its muscles by seeking the re-

location of the courthouse to Pulaski. Its position as county seat was about all that was keeping Newbern alive as a governmental entity. When Pulaski went after the designation as the seat of county government, Newbern residents saw the relocation proposal as a life and death struggle for their community.

Unable to resolve their differences, county officials took the dispute to the 1894 General Assembly. The legislators avoided the decision to move the seat of county government, electing instead to put the matter to two referenda of the voters. In the first, Pulaski led the ticket over Dublin and Newbern. In the second, with Newbern dropped as a choice, Pulaski prevailed in its quest to become the center of Pulaski County's government as well as its commerce. The fight over the court house location was bitter. The resultant animosities lingered for many years. African American voters played a key role in the decision organizing their own rally the night before the first vote and expressing unanimous support for Pulaski as their choice for county seat (Smith, pp. 351-359). The courthouse vote would be the last time for many years that African Americans would influence the outcome of an election. Animosity toward African Americans was building among Whites in the state and it would not be long until African Americans in Pulaski and the rest of Virginia would have their franchise severely limited.

Pulaskians and the Constitution of 1902

At the turn of the century, a third Pulaskian was elected governor of Virginia. J. Hoge Tyler had been a member of the Senate of Virginia and lieutenant governor before being chosen governor in 1898. One of Tyler's challenges as governor concerned the use of African American troops from Virginia in the Spanish-American War. According to Dabney (1971, p. 427), two battalions of African American troops were among the first Virginians to volunteer for service. The question for Tyler was whether to allow the African American troops to serve under the command of African American officers. Tyler wanted to permit the soldiers to follow their own leaders into battle, believing that to replace them with White officers was a violation of Virginia law and the Fourteenth Amendment. Pressure from the White politicians was greater than Tyler could withstand, however. Instead, he appointed a White colonel to oversee the African American officers. Bitterly disappointed, the African American soldiers requested to leave service and were allowed to do so by Tyler (Dabney, pp. 427-428).

Tyler, a second governor from Pulaski with racially moderate views, was to preside over the initiation of another period of official hostility toward African Americans much as did his predecessor, Dr. John Floyd. It was during the waning days of Tyler's term that the Constitution of 1902 was framed. On June 12, 1901, the constitutional convention convened in Richmond in the old House

of Delegates. Dabney (1971) writes that “the elimination of the African American vote to the maximum degree possible was the intention from the outset” (p. 436). The convention met until June 26, 1902. By that time Andrew J. Montague who had been elected as governor in 1901 had assumed the helm of the Commonwealth (p. 439).

The Constitution of 1902 firmly established the capitation tax and institutionalized racial segregation in Virginia. The capitation tax is often referred to as the poll tax because its payment was required as a condition to vote. Actually, the effect of the capitation tax pervaded many functions of state and local government. Citizens of Virginia were required to pay the tax to gain access to many government services. Payment of the capitation tax was a prerequisite for receipt of any license issued by government authorities except for marriage licenses. An individual who had not paid his or her capitation tax was not supposed to receive a driver’s license, a license to teach, nor a business license (Wysor, 1932, p. 35). In theory all citizens over 21 were required to pay the capitation tax. In actuality there was considerable delinquency among both the White and African American citizens of the Commonwealth. Snavely (1916) states that the knowledge alone that the purpose of the tax was to prevent them from voting was sufficient cause for African Americans not to pay the tax, to vote, or to participate in political affairs.

Another Pulaskian played a pivotal role in the development of the 1902 Constitution. Joseph C. Wysor represented Pulaski and Giles counties at the convention. Wysor offered an amendment to the understanding clause that had been proposed by Carter Glass as a way to limit the franchise. The understanding clause required prospective voters to demonstrate literacy by reading and interpreting a section of the U. S. Constitution. Wysor feared that the understanding clause would eliminate many illiterate White residents of the western part of the state as registered voters. His amendment, which was accepted by the convention, rendered the use of the understanding clause inoperative after January 1, 1904 (Morton, 1918 reprinted 1972, pp. 153-154).

The Constitution of 1902 was hostile to African American Virginians on many fronts. Especially significant to the development of this study, Section 140 of the 1902 Constitution stated that "White and colored children shall not be taught in the same school" (Guild, 1936, p. 181). In the wake of the adoption of the constitution, racial segregation was made a de jure practice. Access to public conveyances and accommodations was restricted along racial lines. The members of the General Assembly even attempted to dismantle and redirect one of the few opportunities for higher education available to African Americans. They discontinued the college department of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute, renaming it the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. The action was

viewed widely throughout Virginia and the rest of the South as meaning that college instruction was out of place for African Americans (Picott, 1975, p.17).

Pulaski at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

The dawn of the twentieth century saw continued growth in both the County of Pulaski and Pulaski City. In 1892, the Pulaski Light and Water Company, owned by a syndicate of Philadelphia investors, drilled wells and pumped water to a storage tank on the hill near Randolph Avenue. From there, water was piped across the city yielding the first municipal water supply. Three banks were chartered during the first decade of the century (Smith, 1981, pp. 370-373). The Pulaski Mining Company was built between the Pulaski Iron Company and the Dora Furnace (Jamestown Exposition, p. 70). Local businessmen founded the Pulaski Telephone and Telegraph Company in 1897. Electricity became readily available in 1911 when the Appalachian Electric Power Company bought the small municipal power plant and was granted a franchise by the town (Smith, p. 394).

The year 1918 proved to be a fateful one in Pulaski. World War I was ending. Pulaski soldiers had served in the war with distinction. A more immediate threat to Pulaski was on the home front. Several cases of Spanish influenza had been diagnosed in Pulaski in September. By the end of the month all schools were closed by local health officials as a precaution. During the next month, 125 people in Pulaski County, 92 of whom were residents of the town of

Pulaski, died in an epidemic of influenza the like of which no one in Southwest Virginia had ever seen before (Smith, 1981, p. 423).

The epidemic was exacerbated by a shortage of physicians. Two of the local doctors came down with the disease themselves and were thus incapacitated. A third was in Europe serving in the Army. Only five doctors were available to treat all the citizens of the county. One of these, Dr. P. C. Corbin, was an African American doctor who had begun a practice in the town in 1913. Due to his remarkable success treating the disease and his willingness to go wherever he was asked, Dr. Corbin became much sought after by both African Americans and Whites. Many of Corbin's White patients continued with him for many years afterward (Smith, 1981, p. 424.)

The epidemic raged throughout the town for weeks. Mayor E. W. Calfee ordered non-essential businesses, churches and meeting halls closed as of Monday, October 7. Twenty-three people had died that weekend. With the assistance of zone committees and physicians from other communities, the epidemic began to lessen around October 15. By the first Sunday in November, church services and public gatherings were allowed to resume (Smith, p. 428).

The 1920's saw the closing of the Bertha Zinc Works and Dora Furnace. As a consequence, the town fathers were anxious to bring new industry to Pulaski. Mayor Calfee and several businessmen had heard that furniture interests in Henry County and Carroll County were looking for a suitable

expansion site for their operations. In a move that was to yield benefits for many years to come, the Coleman-Vaughan Furniture Company was enticed to locate in Pulaski by an offer of twelve acres of land for \$1. The company opened a factory on the site in 1923 bringing employment to 125 workers. Pulaski rapidly became a furniture manufacturing center. Joining the Coleman plant were the Pulaski Furniture Corporation and Pulaski Mirror Company (Smith, 1981, pp. 436-438).

Other industries located in Pulaski in the first quarter of the century. Operating from their base in Pulaski, the Wallner family brought hosiery mills to Pulaski and several other Southwest Virginia communities. The hosiery mills and the accompanying thread factory offered employment to Pulaski women. The Pulaski Foundry and Machine Company opened in 1916 and grew steadily during the 1920's. During both of the first two decades of the century, agriculture remained a primary occupation in the county and surrounding region (Smith, 1981, pp. 434-437). The county experienced a growth of over 20 per cent in population during the 1920's reaching a high of 20,628 in the census of 1930 (Wysor, 1936, p. 54).

Pulaski in the Depression

The Depression had a catastrophic effect on Pulaski. Many farmers lost their land. The Pulaski Iron Company closed its gates at the beginning of the Depression. Furniture factories laid off workers by the score. Instead of the

northern capitalists of the 1890's, vagrants and hoboes were following the railroads into Pulaski (Smith, 1981, pp. 443-444). County Treasurer J. Frank Wysor commented in his annual report for 1931-32 that "on account of business depression and lack of employment the collection of taxes has been more difficult, entailing a considerable loss over receipts of former years" (Wysor, p. 3). Tax rates were lowered. The county put to work in the local quarry at the wage of \$1 per day able-bodied, out of work men who needed food (Wysor, 1932, p.43).

Wysor went on to state that increasing demands for relief and a 10 per cent reduction in state appropriations combined with reduced local tax receipts had caused "drastic cuts" in the compensation of all county employees and school teachers. Wysor's comments were affirmed by the budget adopted by the Board of Supervisors for 1932-33. It totaled \$207,454 down from \$303,555 for 1931-32 (Wysor, 1932, p. 3). U. S. Banks were closed for a week in March of 1933 by order of President Franklin Roosevelt. All the Pulaski banks were healthy enough to re-open after the banking "holiday" (Smith, p. 450).

By the summer of 1933, Pulaski was on the road to recovery or at least it thought it was. Under the long-lived Mayor Calfee's leadership, the town organized and conducted a "Recovery Parade". Over 10,000 people reportedly attended (Smith, pp. 443-453). In actuality, the 1933-34 fiscal year marked the low point of the Depression in Pulaski. The total county budget dipped to

\$182,248 that year. The school budget and expenditures for teacher salaries were at their nadir as well.

The next year produced evidence of a turnaround in the county's circumstances. For the first time since 1929-30 county expenditures did not decrease in 1934-35 (Wysor, 1936, p. 10). It was not until the 1937-38 fiscal year that reductions in teacher salaries were reinstated, however. The Appalachian Power Company began construction in 1937 of what was to become known as the Claytor Lake Dam. The project had been in the planning stages since 1925. The cost of the dam was projected at \$10,000,000, much of which was expected to be spent locally on labor and materials (Wysor, 1937, p. 55-56). Slowly the community was progressing toward economic recovery.

Pulaski Celebrates Its Centennial

In 1939 Pulaski celebrated the centennial of the founding of the county. For one full week in August, the entire county gathered to acknowledge and celebrate its history. Once again Mayor Calfee led the community through an important event in its life. Parades were staged in Newbern and Pulaski. A pageant, "100 Years of Progress", was presented twice at Calfee Park. A cast of over 750 members participated. There were balls, dances, fireworks, and even a horse show held in conjunction with the occasion ("Pulaski County Centennial," The Southwest Times, July 16, 1939).

It was an exciting time in the history of Pulaski, the nation and the world. In New York, the World's Fair was about to open. In Europe, Hitler was pushing for the annexation of Czechoslovakia and was poised to invade Poland. "Wrong Way" Corrigan had landed in Ireland. Joe Louis was a great hero to both African American and White Americans, having defeated the German Max Schmeling in 1938. Orson Welles had frightened the nation with the power of the mass medium of radio with his "War of the Worlds" broadcast. A few weeks later on Armistice Day Kate Smith introduced her signature song, "God Bless America" in a nationwide radio broadcast. The world, the country, Virginia, and Pulaski were changing rapidly and profoundly.

Slavery in Pulaski

In his history of Pulaski County, Smith (1981) makes his first mention of African Americans appearing in the area as slaves who were brought into what was then Botetourt County around 1770 (p. 55). It would seem unusual that the arrival of African Americans would be so late since the first permanent European settlements in the area dated to around 1745 and African Americans had been a presence in Virginia since 1619. Absent evidence to the contrary and especially since the first settlers were German Dunkards from Pennsylvania who did not practice slavery, there is no compelling reason not to accept Smith's assertion. By the time of the Revolution, slaves in Virginia were nearly exclusively African American having replaced indentured servants almost entirely. Africans had

been found to be more submissive than the Native American population, adept at learning English, and willing to be converted to Christianity (Guild, 1936, pp. iv-vi).

Slavery was not widely practiced in Pulaski County and its predecessor jurisdictions. Four out of five families in the county did not own slaves during the period from the county's formation in 1839 until the Civil War. Between 109 and 155 slave owners lived in the county from 1840 to 1860. Nonetheless, slaves represented a significant portion of the population ranging from about 25% in 1840 to nearly 30% in 1860 (Smith, 1981, p. 241).

Slaves in Pulaski, like slaves in the rest of Virginia, lived under strict laws governing nearly every aspect of their daily life. They could not travel freely, own property, or marry without the permission of their owner (Smith, 1981, p. 242). Slaves could not be taught legally to read and write (Guild, 1936 p.175). However, Smith (1980) and Mary M. Baker (1976) both conclude that, while difficult, the life of the African American slave in Pulaski was more tolerable than that of slaves in eastern Virginia or other parts of the South. Harmon (1986) states that the work of male slaves in Pulaski included working in the fields of farms and plantations, cutting timber, running sawmills and performing carpentry work. Female slaves often were required to act as house servants and to care for their owner's children (Harmon, C. D., p. 11).

Free African Americans in Antebellum Pulaski

Free African Americans in Virginia suffered severe restrictions of their liberties before the Civil War. Guild reports that “the manumitted slave did not become a citizen and enjoyed few civil rights in Virginia” (1936, p. iv). Free African Americans were required to leave the state within one year of being granted their freedom (Holloway, p. 21). Court records cited by Smith (1981) indicate that life was challenging for emancipated African Americans in Pulaski. Two former slaves were required to hire themselves out to pay their taxes. In another instance, an African American Pulaski freedman petitioned in 1857 to return to the condition of slavery under ownership by Anthony Owens (pp. 249-251).

Smith (1981) gives several examples illustrating that Pulaski, as a western county, tended to have greater tolerance for violations of the laws regulating the lives of African Americans of the period. As a youth, Hugh Legare Wysor, a member of a prominent Pulaski family, taught his father’s slaves to read and write on Sunday mornings. Robert M. Woolwine was tried twice on the same charge of allowing his slave to go free hiring himself out for employ. James C. Currin paid fines in 1858 and 1860 for permitting a slave to go at large. In 1861 he chose to go to trial on a charge of the same offense and was acquitted as were James M. Henderson, John M. Taylor, and Joseph Summers. Smith records two cases in which allowing the unlawful assembly of slaves was

brought to trial. In both instances the accused was fined. He further details incidents of slaves who were tried and acquitted of various criminal charges including arson, murder, housebreaking and burglary (Smith, pp. 247-248).

Tolerance had its limits. Two "strolling" slaves from Wythe and Campbell Counties were found guilty of one charge of burglary. Their punishment was to be whipped and imprisoned. Their owners were fined \$100. Smith (1981) identifies only one case of a slave being executed in Pulaski, that for the rape of a White woman in 1844 (Smith, pp. 244-246). The lot of an African American in antebellum Virginia was a difficult one. Even in a western county with a reputation for tolerance, the life of a slave was hardly an easy one.

Pulaski African Americans During Reconstruction

Conditions improved somewhat for African American Pulaskians during Reconstruction. Notwithstanding their impact on the courthouse fight in 1894, political influence eluded the new citizens of the county. The reins of power in Pulaski remained firmly in the hands of native Whites. A few African Americans were allowed to register to vote. No African Americans held political office. Peyton Randolph is reputed to have become the first African American to serve as a juror in Pulaski after the Civil War (Baker, 1976).

Educational opportunities opened up during the Reconstruction period. Formal schooling for African American youth took place for the first time in Newbern under the tutelage of a White northern schoolmistress (Smith, 1981, p.

293). Captain Charles S. Schaeffer, Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau in the New River Valley, established the Christiansburg Industrial Institute in nearby Montgomery County. Captain Schaeffer also helped to organize African American churches in the New River, Dublin, Bell Spring, Pulaski, and Rich Hill communities.

Even though educational opportunities had improved for African American Pulaski citizens after the Civil War, most freedmen were still economically dependent upon Whites. Having only recently emerged from the state of slavery, few owned property and practically none owned businesses. A fortunate few like Bill McGee, a blacksmith in Snowville, had been given the chance as slaves to learn a trade that could be carried over into life as a freedman. Many former Pulaski slaves relied on the Freedman's Bureau for grants of money and property. Others had no choice but to remain on plantations of their former owners entering into a new form of servitude, share-cropping a tenant farm (Smith, 1981, pp. 459-471).

The Effect of Industrialization on African Americans in Pulaski

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the arrival in Pulaski of the railroad along with mining and manufacturing interests brought economic opportunity for African American Pulaskians. Smith (1980), Baker (1976), and C. D. Harmon (1986) all cite the Pulaski Iron Furnace, the Dora Furnace, and the Bertha Zinc and Mineral Company as major employers of African American

men. Harmon also notes the role of the railroad, the Maple Shade Inn, and the Hotel Pulaski as business establishments that “offered employment to African American men” (Harmon, C. D., p. 3). There were many jobs available and they were not difficult to obtain during the boom times from 1890 until 1930. (Harmon, C. D., p. 4).

The influx of African Americans to the Town and County of Pulaski brought with it the necessity for housing. Several communities of African American residents grew up. Harmon records that African American men and their families were eligible to live in the company houses built by the Pulaski Iron Furnace for its employees. The area came to be known as the “P. I.”. Harmon also writes of the Christian Hill community near the Dora Furnace where a church and school were begun by the African American residents (Harmon, C. D., p. 5). Many African American men who worked at the furnaces bought land and farmed as well according to Harmon. Other communities of African American families in and around Pulaski included Dude Hill, Needmore, Big Railroad, Dora Mountain, and Randolph Avenue (Harmon, C. D., p.17).

As the communities of African American residents grew, supporting institutions were required. A review of the dates of organization of African American churches in the area reveals that their histories parallel the development of economic opportunity for African Americans. Subscription schools, organized and financed by African American parents who “subscribed”

to the schools for a tuition fee, were established about the same time. By 1888, the first public school for African American children had opened. Others were to follow.

The development of African American social institutions in Pulaski paralleled events in the rest of Virginia and the South. Bullock (1967) writes of the closed communities created by racial segregation creating an “unintended effect” of economic opportunity for African Americans. In larger cities entire districts of African American enterprise grew up to serve the needs of a people denied the services of White society. The writers of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in Virginia document such districts in Richmond, Danville, Norfolk, and Roanoke. In these neighborhoods, the WPA writers reported, African Americans entered business safely and easily among their own people (Writers of the Works Progress Administration in Virginia, 1940).

African American businesses and some professional offices were established in different areas of endeavor in Pulaski as well. Smith (1981), Harmon (1986), and Baker (1976) all list J. Rush Johnson as one of the wealthiest and most active African American businessmen in 1900. Johnson had moved to Pulaski from Wythe County. In Pulaski he operated a livery stable. He also became a real estate speculator, owned an iron ore mine, and held many acres of timber land. Baker also mentions Robert Ferlines as another real estate broker who amassed considerable wealth in the first twenty years of

the century, describing him as "one of the wealthiest African Americans in Southwest Virginia" (Baker, p.11). Harmon lists African American businesses in many different areas of commerce in Pulaski including a leather repair shop, several barber shops for African American customers, a smaller number of barber shops operated by African Americans for Whites, a grocery, a cabinet shop, beauty shops for women, eight food service establishments, three plumbers, a mortician, three carpenters, two midwives, four taxis, a gasoline service station, a hotel, and several dance halls (Harmon, C. D., p. 23).

Emergence of African American Community Leaders in Pulaski

As the various institutions of African American Pulaski became the foundation of a new social order, leaders of the new order emerged. In much the same way as Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois and others came into their roles on the national stage, leaders of the African American Pulaski communities appeared. Just as in any organization some leaders achieve their role by holding a formal office and others derive their influence from less formal sources, there were leaders of Pulaski's African American communities who represented both types of leadership. Several of the leaders who presented themselves in the first quarter of the new century are of particular interest to this study and will be examined in some detail here.

Percy Casino Corbin

Doctor Percy Casino Corbin has been mentioned in this study before as a hero of the influenza epidemic of 1918. Doctor Corbin's accomplishments as a businessman and leader of the community were impressive as well (Burkett, Burkett, and Gates, 1991). Corbin had come to Pulaski in 1913 to begin a medical practice (Caldwell, 1921). A native of Athens, Texas, Corbin had finished medical school at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995).

Corbin initially came to Salem, Virginia, to practice medicine with his college roommate, Doctor William Brown. Corbin had difficulty seeing due to a problem with his eyes. Brown had assisted Corbin by reading his assignments to Corbin in medical school. As a result they became friends for life. Corbin decided to leave the Roanoke Valley and move to Pulaski because there were no African American doctors in the New River Valley. He believed that the Pulaski area offered both a chance to serve people in need of medical care and a good business opportunity (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995).

Doctor Corbin had both African American and White patients, although the majority were White. His skill and success in treating influenza in 1918 had won him the confidence of many patients from the White community. At that time, African Americans had no choice as to the race of their doctor or any other professional service provider. Whites, on the other hand, could seek treatment

from an African American or a White physician (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995).

Corbin was a forward thinking man often looking for a business opportunity. In 1915, he purchased his first car for use in his practice. He also had one of the first telephones in the town, for many years having the telephone number "7". In 1920, Corbin built a two story building that housed his office and his home until he moved into a new home built in 1936. In the early 1920's he helped to organize the Pulaski Mutual Savings Society becoming its first president and remaining as a trustee for many years. He and other members of the society operated the Graham, Corbin and Lewis Concrete Block Manufacturing Company for several years in addition to making loans and supporting other African American entrepreneurs (Caldwell, 1921). In 1923, Corbin financed the erection of a three story building constructed of concrete block produced by the society's factory. Corbin made the structure, which came to be known as the Corbin Building, available as rental property. The first floor housed a grocery store and the top two floors were apartments. He also operated a dance hall at one time (Harmon, C. D., pp. 19-23).

Corbin was active in many organizations in Pulaski and the region. He was a member of the National Medical Association, the Old Dominion Medical Association, and the Magic City Medical Association. He belonged to the Masons, and the First Baptist Church. In addition, he was president of the

Pulaski Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Calfee School Improvement League (Harmon, C. D., p. 19).

Corbin married Evelyn Linscom of Dallas, Texas, on October 21, 1914. They raised five children: Evelyn Jacqueline, Percy Casino, Jr, Johnson Alphonso, Maurice Costello, and Mahatma Navorro. Mahatma's namesake was Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian leader who won his country's independence from Britain. Corbin admired Gandhi for what he had done for the people of India and wanted to use the name as a challenge for his son (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995).

Corbin was an outspoken man who left little doubt about where he stood on issues. Burkett, Burkett, and Gates (1991) list him as a "reformer" in their publication, Black Biography 1790-1950. Caldwell (1921) indicates that even in his adult youth, he advocated better educational leadership and equipment. His daughter, Jacqueline Corbin Pleasant, recalls going to Parent Teacher Association meetings and meetings of the local chapter of the NAACP only to leave when her father began to speak so as not to hear his statements that she knew would upset those in attendance. She remembers returning home to the family telephone ringing with calls from people who had heard what Doctor Corbin had said about one issue or another. Often the calls were from White community leaders who had heard of Corbin saying something they considered

inflammatory. His daughter describes him as “not the most popular person in town with Blacks or Whites” (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995).

Popular or not, Doctor P. C. Corbin remained a force with both African Americans and Whites in Pulaski for over 40 years until his death in 1952.

Maceo A. Santa Cruz

The other African American member of the medical profession practicing in Pulaski during the scope of the study was Doctor Maceo A. Santa Cruz.

Santa Cruz came to Pulaski in 1928 to establish himself as a dentist. Doctor Santa Cruz is referred to in C. D. Harmon’s History of the Origins of the Black Citizens of Pulaski as “Pulaski’s first Black dentist” (Harmon, 1986, p. 20).

Comments by Jacqueline Corbin Pleasant, his name, and a picture published at his death in 1951 suggest that he may have been of Cuban extraction. Harmon lists him as a native of Hampton, Virginia. Regardless of his lineage, he functioned in Pulaski as an African American man.

Santa Cruz graduated from Serris Institute in Michigan and Howard University Medical School in Washington, D. C. He opened his first office for his dental practice in the Corbin Building in 1928. Subsequently, he built a building of his own next door in which he located his office and some rental space.

Santa Cruz apparently earned the respect of both African American and White citizens as a fair minded and honest man. At his death, the mayor of Pulaski, Howard Imboden, described Santa Cruz as “a man who was keenly interested in

our civic life and a Christian gentleman” (“Dr. M. A. Santa Cruz Dies,” The Southwest Times, February 6, 1951).

Pulaski became Santa Cruz’ permanent home. He married Cathleen Jenkins, a teacher who worked at the Calfee Training School. Community affairs were a strong interest of Santa Cruz’. He became an active civic leader. The work of the local chapter of the NAACP was another passion of his. He was a Master Mason of Pulaski Lodge 154 (Harmon, C. D., 1986).

Santa Cruz was apparently respected outside the immediate Pulaski community as knowledgeable about race relations. The “Colored News” column of the August 8, 1939, edition of The Southwest Times reported that “Dr. M. A. Santa Cruz and S. J. Harris of New River were guest speakers to the history and race relations classes at Radford State Teacher’s College Thursday morning” (Carter, 1939). While not within the immediate scope of this study, it is worth noting that Santa Cruz died in 1951 as result of head injuries sustained while defending a African American teenager, Evelyn Bland, from an assault by two White men (“Dr. M. A. Santa Cruz Dies,” 1951).

African American Ministers in Pulaski

African American ministers have traditionally been community leaders. In the early years of freedom for African Americans, ministers were often the most educated, sometimes the only educated, individuals in the community. Two

African American ministers in Pulaski merit notice in this study as community leaders in the first third of the twentieth century.

Reverend T. G. Howard was a citizen of Pulaski for over twenty years. During that time he ministered the New Century Methodist Church. Howard also served as superintendent of the Bristol District of the East Tennessee African American Methodist Conference (Smith, 1981, p.468).

Howard was particularly interested in young people, perhaps as a result of being married to a school teacher, Mrs. Ellavester Howard. Howard was one of the prime movers behind the organization of the Christian Citizen's League. One of the league's first projects was to sponsor the Corbin Branch YMCA housed in the Santa Cruz Building (Harmon, C. D., 1986, p. 20). Under Reverend Howard's leadership, the league devoted its efforts to the establishment of a community center for African Americans. Howard worked for many years hoping to see the project become a reality. Regrettably he did not live until its opening. The center was named in his honor (Smith, 1981, p. 469).

The Reverend Thomas J. Chick was another respected African American minister in Pulaski in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Chick was born a slave in Appomattox County. As a slave he was barred from any formal education. When he gained his freedom as a grown man, he sought out schooling for himself. Chick went to Richmond for his ministerial training at the Virginia Union Seminary (Smith, 1981, p. 468).

In 1892 Chick was called to pastor the First Baptist congregation in Pulaski. Founded in 1879, First Baptist was one of the oldest churches in Pulaski, having been organized with the assistance of the Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church in Christiansburg. Chick made his greatest contribution to the church by designing and overseeing the construction of a new building for the First Baptist Church. The new church was a grand facility, one of the largest in the town. African Americans of all faiths took pride in the completion of the structure in 1892 (Harmon, C. D., pp. 7-8).

James R. Martin

James R. (Bob) Martin was an African American who rose to prominence in Pulaski through hard work and native intelligence. Martin was born in Smyth County, Virginia, in 1878. He was the oldest of nine children of John H. Martin of Rome, North Carolina, and Martha Shucks Martin from Draper Valley in Pulaski County. As a small boy, he moved with his family to Pulaski in a horse drawn wagon (Harmon, L. M., personal communication, June 23, 1995).

Martin's mother worked for a family named Draper and another family named Tate. The family worked mainly in domestic service outside the home and raised crops and livestock on the family farm. Often the family had barely enough money to buy a little food and a few clothes (Harmon, L. M., personal communication, June 23, 1995).

Martin's parents sent him to school regularly. He walked for several miles in order to get to class. He became determined to get as much education as he could and to make a better life for himself and his family. At the age of ten he went to live with a family by the name of Eskridge in order to be able to continue to go to school. He worked for the Eskridges and saved every penny he could. When he got a dollar saved up, he would give it to his mother to assist with expenses at home. At the age of fourteen, Martin went to West Virginia to work in the coal mines there. He worked in the mines for two years, continuing to send money home whenever he had it to spare (Harmon, L. M., personal communication, June 23, 1995).

Around 1894 he came home to Pulaski and took a job at the Dora Furnace, then owned by the Virginia Iron, Coal, and Coke Company (VICCC). The VICCC was a large firm owned by northern capitalists who owned and operated furnaces in several southwest Virginia and West Virginia communities. As a new employee, Martin worked a variety of jobs in the furnace. Over a period of time, he learned a great deal about the total operation of the furnace (Harmon, L. M., personal communication, June 23, 1995).

The president of the Virginia Iron Coal and Coke, a Milwaukee industrialist, sent his son to the Pulaski furnace to learn the business from the ground up. The White foreman of the furnace resented the presence of the young educated northerner. The foreman ignored him and failed to teach him

anything about the operation of the furnace. The youth was left to fend for himself by wandering about the furnace. Martin admired educated men and befriended the young man when he appeared one day in the clinker room where Martin was working (Harmon, L. M., personal communication, June 23, 1995).

At the youth's request, Martin took the budding capitalist throughout the plant explaining the operation of each department. They spent the next several months together going over the furnace's operation from top to bottom. When the young man returned to Milwaukee, he related to his father the treatment that both the foreman and Martin had given him. The industrialist immediately promoted Martin to the position of foreman and labor recruiter for Dora Furnace. The foreman was given Martin's old job of sweeping clinkers (Harmon, L. M., personal communication, June 23, 1995).

As foreman and labor recruiter for the Dora Furnace, Martin was an important individual in the Pulaski community. He hired and fired both White and African American men. He traveled throughout the area hiring men in both skilled and unskilled positions (Harmon, C. D., 1986, p.5). He worked at the furnace until it closed in the 1920's. After its closing, Martin secured work with the Norfolk and Western Railroad as a fire and water tender, a job he held until his retirement in 1945. He provided well for his family, purchasing and installing electric appliances before electric lines were even extended to the Dora Mountain community (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995).

Martin was a firm believer in the importance of education. He often advised his children and grandchildren to get all the education they could saying "Nobody will ride your back if you stand up straight" (Harmon, Marylen, personal interview, June 23, 1995). When snow fell and the Dora Mountain children could not get out to school, Martin would hitch a horse to a log and break a path to the main road. The White children would meet the school bus there and the African American children would walk to school behind the highway department snow plow. He persuaded the Virginia Iron, Coal, and Coke officials to donate the former company office for use as the Rich Hill School. Martin paid Ed Cox, a taxi driver, to take his older children into Pulaski to Calfee School so that they could attend the eighth and ninth grades. He started his daughter, Lucy, and her older brother in "pay school", later placing them both in public school (Harmon, L. M. personal communication, June 23, 1995). Martin sent both his daughter and her brother to Tuskegee, Alabama, to complete high school in 1930-31 and 1931-32 at the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (Tuskegee Institute Bulletin 1930-31, p. 122 and Tuskegee Institute Bulletin 1931-32, p. 148). Six of his nine children, including the future Mrs. Chauncey Harmon, graduated from college.

Martin was a man who insisted on firm discipline with his children and who demanded respect both from them and for them. When his children started school at Calfee School in Pulaski, he took them to the stores along their route

to school. Martin showed the proprietors his children telling them that he wanted the children to respect everyone, African American and White. He asked them to come to him if there were ever any problems with the children. One day, a group of White boys picked on the Martin children as they walked to school kicking them and calling them names. One of Martin's sons tried to fight back, but the older White boys just picked him up and shook him like a rag doll. Exasperated and frightened, the Martin children stopped at W. D. Aust's store and told him what was happening. Aust stopped the boys from annoying the Martin children, telling them that the children were Martin's and that they were risking their safety by picking on them. Upon learning what had happened, Martin immediately left on his horse to confront the boys at their home. Martin was well acquainted with the family, having given the father a job. The boys' mother greeted him when Martin arrived and he calmed down after she chastised the boys in his presence. He demanded that the boys never touch one of his children again and warned them of serious consequences if they did (Martin, L. M., personal interview, June 23, 1995).

According to Jacqueline Pleasant, daughter of Dr. Percy Corbin, Martin was active in the leadership of the NAACP in Pulaski. She recalls him as a major contributor to NAACP. He took great pride in the fact that none of his children ever worked as a domestic. (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12,

1995). He was active in church, the Knights of Pythias, and the Masons until his death at age 90 (Harmon, C. D., p. 22).

Racial Segregation in Pulaski

Despite the successes of African American Pulaskians in laying the foundation of a new African American social order between 1890 and the 1930's, there were cracks and flaws in the businesses, schools, and communities that stood on the foundation. For the most part all these institutions were segregated by race, some more strictly than others. Not unlike the western Virginia experience with slavery, segregation in Pulaski was generally a less virulent form than that found in the eastern part of Virginia or in the Deep South. Nonetheless, Jim Crow was a constant presence for the African American citizens of Pulaski during the first half of the twentieth century.

Racial segregation was encountered in nearly all phases of life by African American Pulaskians. The news reports of the day make an effective example of the practice. A review of copies of The Southwest Times, the Pulaski daily newspaper, printed from January 1935 through December 1940, reveals very few articles mentioning African Americans. Those that do mention African Americans often are reports of criminal activity or sporting events. No accounts of African American weddings, funerals, meetings, athletic events, school news or other announcements appear. Occasionally, a news story refers to "colored citizens". As an illustration, the accounts of school openings each year do note

enrollments for schools serving African Americans. Articles detailing the deliberations of the school board also mention plans for a “colored” school in 1938. For the most part though, African Americans in Pulaski did not exist in the newspaper at that time.

There was one exception. Beginning in 1938, Ethel J. Carter’s column, entitled “Colored News”, ran in the paper each Friday. In the space of two columns, half a page long, the lives of the African American people of Pulaski were chronicled by Carter, a teacher in the Pulaski school system. Here were found the church schedules, the announcements of deaths, the news of residents’ travel, and the other routine events absent from the paper’s other pages. In all fairness, it must be noted that The Southwest Times devoted much of its space to world events at that time (The Southwest Times, January 1935-December 1940).

The attitude of Whites toward African Americans in Pulaski was not generally hostile. The Ku Klux Klan did occasionally surface in the town. Some of Doctor Corbin’s patients were even reputed to be members (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995). Whites reserved an antagonistic attitude for African Americans in general or for African Americans whom they did not know personally. If an African American was familiar to a White, their discourse was frequently friendly and inviting. African Americans knew there was a line

though. They knew at times they had to “plumb the line” for Whites and usually they did so (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, April 27, 1995).

Social institutions were an area of particular restriction. Churches were strictly segregated by race. Even the few White churches that had African American members, such as the Thorn Spring Methodist Church, kept them apart in balconies (Whitman, 1974, p.37). The Corbin Branch YMCA served the needs of African American youth from the Santa Cruz Building (Harmon, 1986, p. 25). Harmon lists four fraternal organizations open to African American men in Pulaski in the early 1900's: the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias, the Masons, and the Red Men. African American women could join the Eastern Star, the Household of Ruth, or the Gem City Garden Club. A public library for use by African American people was located in the Perry Building (Harmon, C. D., pp. 19-20). Even the Pulaski Wayside Park on Draper Mountain was divided into separate sections for Whites and African Americans (“Colored Folks Given Section”, The Southwest Times, August 3, 1938)

Raymond Lottier, a resident of Pulaski in the 1930's and 1940's, describes Pulaski as “rigidly segregated”. He recalls working at the Coleman Furniture factory the summer before departing Pulaski for Virginia State University. To get the job he had to beg for it. After laboring there throughout the summer, he advised his supervisor that he would be quitting in order to go to school. The supervisor complimented him on his performance by asking if he

knew any more “nigger boys” like him looking for a job. Lottier also remembers both the Dalton and Pulaski theaters permitted African Americans to attend the shows presented there only if they seated themselves in the balcony (Lottier, R. L., personal interview, December 28, 1994).

Whitman (1974) relates an experience that occurred while he lived at the Maple Shade Inn. It seems that he suspected an African American employee of taking liquor from his “bottle.” To teach him a lesson, Whitman offered the employee a drink on him if he would drink it from what appeared to be a turtle shell. After the African American man had his drink, Whitman told him that the vessel he had drunk from was the top of an African American man’s skull. From that time on Whitman left the alleged skull fragment on the bottle and the cleaning man literally swept a wide berth around the bottle (Whitman p. 56). This form of intimidation through the combination of thinly veiled threats with superstition was common practice throughout the South at the time (Woodward, 1966).

In an interview with The Southwest Times, David B. Jones recalled that Doctor Corbin treated Jones’ daughter, Catherine, for cerebral palsy at the Jones’ home in Pulaski 1934. African Americans were not admitted to the Pulaski Hospital at the time. The Jones family eventually moved to Rahway, New Jersey, to be near adequate medical services for Catherine. When the family returned to Pulaski in 1971, they moved into a predominantly White

community where their neighbors organized a house warming to welcome them to the neighborhood (“Blacks Need to Remember,” The Southwest Times, March 27, 1988). By contrast, Mrs. Mary M. Baker, a long time African American resident of Pulaski said in 1988 that her family “never had any awareness of Black and White. We were accepted by both Blacks and Whites” (“Educator Enjoying Past and Present,” The Southwest Times, March 27, 1988).

The Harmon Family: Mary Bell and Wilmer Harmon

Chauncey Depew Harmon, Sr. was born May 18, 1913, in Pulaski, Virginia. He was the second oldest of the seven children of Mary Bell Howard Harmon and Wilmer Richard Harmon. The other Harmon children were Margaret, George Eli, Wilmer Richard, Anna Bell, Lilita, and Deloise (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

Mary Bell Howard, the only child of Caleb and Ann Cannaday Howard, was born November 18, 1888. The family was originally from the Indian Valley section of Floyd County, Virginia. Ann Cannaday Howard’s four brothers had moved to Pulaski County around 1890 to seek work in the burgeoning mining industry there. After the death of Caleb in 1897, Ann moved with Mary Bell to Pulaski to join her brothers because they could not manage the family farm alone (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

Mary Bell Howard Harmon was reported to be an “ambitious, energetic and industrious person who knew nothing but hard work” (Croslin, Eulogistic

Service, 1975). In her early adulthood, Howard worked as a domestic for many White Pulaski families. She worked for families by the name of Dewey, Roberts, Tate, Long, Livingston, and Cole. Howard attended grammar school through the fifth grade at the Pulaski Graded School (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

In 1905 Howard was living with Mr. and Mrs. Dan Poe in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Poes were former residents of Pulaski who had moved to Pittsburgh seeking work. Howard worked mainly as a domestic in Pittsburgh. While living there, she attended church regularly. Howard was a deeply religious woman throughout her entire life. One Sunday in 1905 at church services she met Wilmer Richard Harmon (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

Wilmer is reported to have said it was love at first sight. They courted for about a year until Mary Bell's mother, Ann Howard Cannaday, suffered a stroke. Mary Bell had to move back to Pulaski to care for her ill mother. Wilmer followed her to Pulaski about six months later. In 1909 he opened a White trade barber shop on Main Street. In 1910, he joined with Jerry Murphy as a partner to open the Harmon and Murphy Barber Shop. They operated the shop together for many years (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

In 1910, as well, Wilmer married Mary Bell Howard at First Baptist Church on Magazine Street in Pulaski on September 29. The ceremony, a double

wedding with Mary Bell's first cousin Laura Cannaday and her fiancé, Garland Thompson, is thought to be the first and only one of its kind held at First Baptist (Harmon, C. D., 1985, p.4). In the records of the county clerk 's office, Wilmer's initials are listed incorrectly on page 113 line 107 as J. R. Harmon. His occupation is listed as barber. His place of birth is listed as Virginia and his age is listed as 31. Mary Bell is not listed as having an occupation, nor are any of the other brides. Her age is listed as 23, her place of birth as Floyd. Their residence is listed as Pulaski. The officiating minister is recorded as G. S. Reavis. Differences in names of both of their parents are recorded. Wilmer's parents are recorded in the book as George and Harriet Harmon. Mary Bell's are noted as Coleph and Ann Howard. Both are noted as "Black" (Morgan, 1982).

Wilmer Richard Harmon was the son of Will and Harriet Conner Harmon of Crisfield, Maryland. He was born October 4, 1878. He had six known siblings, Joseph, Charles, Oswald, Vera, MaryEtta, and Louise. The Harmon family believes there may have been other children in the family as well (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

Wilmer Harmon attended school in Crisfield. He also went to school in Accomack County, Virginia, and in the town of Onancock in Virginia. As a young man, Harmon worked up and down the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia. He shucked oysters for a living, making 10 cents a bushel, often earning only a

few dollars for a two or three week stint in an oyster house. In addition, he worked as a farm hand. Harmon learned the barbering trade from his father who made his living as a barber in Crisfield (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

Around 1900 Harmon had traveled to Pittsburgh to visit his uncle who showed him the job opportunities there. Impressed by life among African Americans in the North, he moved to Pittsburgh and opened a barber shop of his own. There he cut hair for both White and African American customers. In the North race did not govern where one could have one's hair trimmed (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

In Pulaski, however, race made a great difference in the lives of Wilmer Harmon and his family. As the operator of a White trade shop, Harmon could not cut African American customers' hair. As a matter of fact, he was not even supposed to cut his own children's hair in his shop. Sometimes, after he closed the shop at 6:00 PM, he would pull down the shades and cut their hair and that of a few close friends who could be trusted not to tell where they had received their trims. Harmon never made a trade of cutting African American persons' hair, however, because cutting hair for Whites was more lucrative (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

After their marriage, Wilmer and Mary Bell Howard Harmon worked hard to provide a good home and living for themselves and their children. Mrs.

Harmon continued to work as a domestic in private homes. She also worked as a maid at the Maple Shade Inn, a hotel built by the Norfolk and Western Railroad in Pulaski. Mrs. Harmon took in laundry in order to further supplement the family's income (Croslin, Eulogistic Service, 1975).

The Harmons aspired to economic independence. They wanted a better life for themselves and their children. On May 10, 1920, the Harmons made a move toward greater independence by buying the old Moone Hotel for \$3200, to be paid as \$1250 cash and four equal payments of \$487.50 each. Daniel Moone and his wife, Lucy, had originally opened and operated the hotel for African American travelers to Pulaski (Harmon, C. D., 1986, p.23). The Harmons had become something of a rarity in Southwest Virginia, African American entrepreneurs.

At that time the hotel was the only place in which African American travelers could stay in Pulaski since they were not allowed in the Maple Shade Inn or the Pulaski Hotel. Indeed, there was no boarding house or hotel for African American travelers between Roanoke and Bristol. The hotel became the family home for Chauncey and the other Harmon children. Mrs. Harmon ran it as a boarding house up until her passing in 1975 (Croslin, Eulogistic Service, 1975).

The Harmon boarding house served construction workers, plasterers, painters, salesmen, preachers and other African Americans who sought a place

to stay and a meal. Often the local Salvation Army office would send transients to stay with the Harmons. The Salvation Army would pay for the first two nights. After that, Mrs. Harmon would charge those who could afford to pay 50 cents. Many stayed at no charge until they could move on. Some left with coats and clothes given to them by Mrs. Harmon. In its later years of operation, the boarding house was integrated and served travelers of all races. Mrs. Harmon also took in elderly individuals to live in the boarding house, some of whom stayed until their death after which they were buried in the Harmon family cemetery plot (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

Both Mary Bell and Wilmer Harmon were faithful church members. Mary Bell belonged to the woman's organizations in First Baptist Church and was an active member of the Saint Luke's Lodge in Pulaski. Wilmer taught Sunday School at First Baptist. He also was superintendent of the Sunday school and served as a deacon of the church until his death in 1954. He almost never missed either a Sunday morning worship service or Wednesday evening prayer meeting service. Living near the church, he often would open the building and start the fire before the minister arrived during the colder months. Wilmer gave not only time and energy to his church, he also made considerable financial contributions. In 1939 he, along with four other deacons and three other trustees, signed a contract with the Pulaski Lumber Company to install a new roof on the church at a cost of \$530 (Harmon, C. D., 1985, p.4).

Wilmer was a civic-minded individual as well. He was secretary and treasurer of the Citizen's League of Pulaski. He helped to found and was a dedicated member of the Pulaski chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He became a prominent businessman in Pulaski. He was a member and trustee of the Pulaski Mutual Saving Society which financed African American businesses including a concrete block making company (Harmon, C. D., 1986, p. 19).

Although reportedly a quiet man, he could discuss nearly any subject knowledgeably. He was mainly a self-educated man relying heavily on subscription books to develop knowledge of a wide array of topics. Wilmer was an ardent reader. Evidence of his love for reading is found in the name he chose for his son. Wilmer named Chauncey after a favorite author, Chauncey Depew. It has been reported that Depew was an English author whose writings Wilmer had read in the Harvard Classics (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994). No English author by that name could be located in the Concise Dictionary of National Biographies (Stephens and Lee, 1969) or the Lincoln Library of Language Arts (McNeil and Herbert, 1978). The researcher believes that the author after whom Chauncey was named actually may have been an American, Chauncey Mitchell Depew. Depew was a well known lawyer, railroad official, senator, orator, presidential candidate, and author of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While the actual source of Chauncey's

name may be unclear, it is certain that Wilmer had become a self-taught student of literature. It also appears that he thoughtfully chose a name for his son and attached more than a passing significance to it.

Wilmer Harmon educated himself in other areas, as well. He studied art and developed an interest in the subject. He took many art courses by correspondence. Over time, he acquired considerable skill as an artist himself. Drawing and painting became a hobby that he enjoyed throughout his life (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

Both Wilmer and Mary Bell Harmon were intent on seeing to it that their children received an education. All their children went to Calfee School in Pulaski for their primary and elementary schooling. Three of the Harmon children, Chauncey, George Eli, and Anna Bell, attended Tuskegee Institute. Margaret attended nurses training. Deloise attended North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

Harmon's Childhood in Pulaski

Chauncey Depew Harmon's youth in Pulaski was marked by hard work. As soon as the Harmon children grew old enough to help, they were enlisted to assist in the family commerce. From the time he was able to walk, young Chauncey helped with the various family enterprises. He was often seen picking up laundry in a little red wagon throughout Pulaski on Monday morning. On Thursdays, he would deliver to customers who did not pick up their laundry.

Around the family boarding house he handled any duty his mother assigned to him. His assistance was required to clean rooms, carry luggage, serve meals, and perform the tasks associated with the operation of a boarding house (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

These duties did not preclude Harmon from participating in normal youthful activities. In an interview with The Southwest Times in 1983, he recalled playing in the alleys behind his father's barber shop on Main Street. Harmon and Joe Robinson, a White friend, often waded in the neighborhood creeks together looking for crawfish, tadpoles and minnows. Robinson went on to become owner of Hatcher Askew, a men's clothing shop in Pulaski (Schrader, J. R., 1983).

More typical Southern racial attitudes were a part of Harmon's childhood as well. The mother of one White friend wanted Chauncey to call the friend and his sister, Mister and Miss. In the 1920's and 1930's in the South, such deference by African Americans to Whites was commonly expected. Chauncey refused to address his playmates as Mister and Miss. Many years later Harmon recounted the experience to his wife saying "We all played together like friends. I couldn't see any sense in it" (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

Chauncey's refusal to call the children Mister and Miss may have stemmed from a simple inability to see "any sense in it". In the South, however,

such choices were viewed as a threat to the very fabric of society. In his book, Following the Colour Line, Ray Stannard Baker (1908) relates the importance attached to terms of address. African Americans were never to be referred to as Mister or Miss by Whites. To do so implied equality. Whites, on the other hand, expected African Americans to call them by some deferential term, such as Captain or Boss (Baker, 1908 reprinted 1964, p.63). Apparently, the incident did not damage Chauncey's relationship with the family. While he was away at school at Tuskegee Institute, his friends' mother frequently corresponded with Chauncey and occasionally sent him articles of clothing. Harmon's school experiences in Pulaski will be addressed in Chapter Two of the study.

Religion was an important part of Harmon's life from his infancy. As noted above, both his father and mother were deeply religious people. They attended the First Baptist Church regularly and required their children to do the same. Chauncey's father was a leader in the church serving both as deacon, trustee, and Sunday school superintendent for many years. Chauncey himself followed in his father's footsteps. He became a member of the church at an early age and remained so until his death in 1993. Even after moving to Salem, Virginia, he maintained an associate membership in the First Baptist Church for forty years insisting that his full membership remain in Pulaski.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter One of the study, the researcher attempted to describe the contexts of time and place leading up to and during Chauncey Depew Harmon's childhood and early adolescence. The emphasis of the chapter was an examination of the places, events, and persons in Pulaski County, Virginia, that may have influenced Harmon's life during the period 1913-20.

The first section of the chapter was an overview of the history of Pulaski County. European exploration of the area began with expeditions commanded by Abraham Wood, Thomas Batts, and Robert Fallam. Pulaski's location astride the Valley of Virginia facilitated the migration of Germans and Scotch-Irish settlers from Pennsylvania. The first African Americans arrived in Pulaski around 1770. The area that was to become Pulaski County was a part of several counties organized in Virginia before the Civil War. Pulaski County itself was formed in 1839. Antebellum Pulaski was a rural community dominated by agricultural pursuits. The Civil War took a heavy toll on the population of Pulaski. During Reconstruction, governmental offices in Pulaski were occupied by native White Pulaskians. Shortly after the end of Reconstruction, northern capitalists financed railroad, mining and foundry ventures in Pulaski. The Depression caused many Pulaski businesses to close during the 1930's. In 1939, Pulaski marked its centennial with a week long celebration.

The second section of the chapter was a discussion of African American life in Pulaski. Slavery was less common and less harsh in Pulaski than in eastern Virginia. Nonetheless, life as a slave was very difficult. Life for free African Americans in Pulaski before Emancipation was hard as well. Some free African Americans in Pulaski actually had to sell themselves back into slavery to pay their taxes. After the end of the Civil War, educational and economic opportunities opened up for Pulaski freedmen although political opportunity did not. Industrialization hastened the development of an African American middle class in Pulaski. With the emergence of an African American middle class, African American community leaders rose to prominence in Pulaski. The institutionalization of racial segregation restricted economic, political and education opportunities available to African Americans in Pulaski.

In the final section of the chapter, the Harmon family history was introduced. Mary Bell Howard Harmon's family had come to Pulaski for jobs in the mines and foundries located there. She left Pulaski to work as a domestic in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Wilmer Harmon was born in Crisfield, Maryland. He later moved to Pittsburgh where he met Mary Bell Howard. When Howard moved back to Pulaski to nurse her ill mother, Harmon followed her there. The two were married in 1910, the same year Wilmer opened a barber shop. Mary Bell worked as a domestic and a laundress. In 1920 they purchased the Moone Hotel and ran it as a boarding house until Mary Bell's death.

Chauncey Depew Harmon, Sr. was born in 1913. He worked with his parents at home, in the barber shop, and in the boarding house. As a youth, he was friends with both African American and Caucasian young people. He also related well to older people of both races. He demonstrated an unwillingness to accept the conventions of racial segregation current in the South at the time. The influence of Harmon's parents was brought to bear in the areas of education and religion. Wilmer Harmon was an ardent reader who insisted on schooling for his children. Both of Harmon's parents were devoted members of First Baptist Church where Chauncey spent many hours as a child and adolescent.

CHAPTER TWO
THE EDUCATION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS
IN VIRGINIA PRIOR TO 1940

Chapter Overview

In Chapter Two the researcher continues to define the contexts of time and place of the study. In the first section education and schooling for African Americans in Virginia and Pulaski are examined. Harmon's public school experiences during the period 1920-29 are described in the second section of the chapter.

Education and Schooling of African Americans in Virginia:

A Frame of Reference

In an article appearing in the African American Educational Review, William Jimmerson Holloway (1993) advances the thesis that any analysis of the education of African Americans must be set against the backdrop of the total educational opportunities available in the general society (p. 3). Bernard Bailyn (1960) describes education as the "entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations" (p. 14). He contends that education is much more than the process of schooling. According to Bailyn, family, community and church have accounted for the greater portion of that cultural transmission in America (p. 19). Both of these writers suggest that education must be placed in a

larger context, that education can not be understood adequately by limiting its study to a single group or institution.

Carl Kaestle (1988), commenting on the revisionist interpretation of educational history, points out that the notion that American education being more than schooling is a concept that revisionists have adopted as their own. Kaestle goes on to say that the revisionists have portrayed American schools as exploited by capitalism. Some historical revisionists, such as Michael Apple (1983), have maintained that schooling, by representing mainstream values, has been culturally abusive to minority cultures.

Henry Allen Bullock (1967) agrees with the idea of education as a broad based force emanating from society as a whole and not solely from the formal institutions of schooling. Bullock develops a variation on the idea into a thesis which he believes drives education in general and racially segregated education in particular. Bullock posits the theory of "intended and unintended dimensions of the functions of society" (p. ix). He argues for the interpretation of history through a model that can be summarized as conflict mitigated by unintention leading to accommodation. Bullock describes segregated education as the "great detour" that took African Americans from slavery to equality (p. 60).

This study will use the broad definition of education advanced by Holloway, Bailyn, Kaestle, and Bullock as a frame of reference for its examination of the development of the common schools in Virginia. Within this

frame of reference, the general development of education in Virginia will be reviewed. The history of education and schooling for African Americans in Virginia and Pulaski will be situated within the same frame of reference.

Bullock's theory of the unintended effects of racially segregated education will provide a backdrop against which African American education in the state and in Pulaski will be presented.

Education in Virginia During the Colonial Period

Education in colonial Virginia was largely an informal enterprise. Most Virginians of the period, White or African American, never attended an organized school. An attempt to start a free school was made in Charles City County in 1622. Benjamin Sims left part of his estate in 1635 for the establishment of a free school in Elizabeth City County and in 1649 Thomas Eaton did the same. For the most part, however, schooling in colonial Virginia was delivered by family members, masters to indentured servants, private tutors, or ministers who taught in the old field schools to supplement their income (Bruce, 1964).

A number of reasons for the limited access to schooling existed in the colony. The rural nature of Virginia retarded the development of schooling. Virginia had organized itself around agriculture and the resultant large plantations. It was impractical, if not impossible, to attempt to organize local schools without the financial sponsorship of a wealthy planter. The population

was too widely dispersed to make schooling economically profitable or even appealing as a vocation (Bruce, 1964). Kulikoff (1986) writes that before the middle of the eighteenth century there were few free schools in Virginia and private schoolmasters were in short supply.

Additionally, in the earliest days of the colony, many of the settlers thought of themselves as Englishmen who would some day return to the mother country. Both before and after the founding of the College of William and Mary, those who could afford to do so sent their sons home to England or to other European countries for a proper education. There was little interest on the part of the leaders of Virginia society in public schooling for the masses. Governor Berkeley is infamous for his 1671 statement thanking the Lord that no free schools or printing presses existed in the colony (Dabney, 1971). Kulikoff (1986) reports that literacy among the plantation owners was almost universal, but that only forty percent of the poor tenants could read.

The dearth of books in Virginia was another factor holding back education in Virginia. Holloway (1993) states that the Bible was the only book owned by many Virginia families. It and the Almanac were the most commonly found books in seventeenth century Virginia. The Williamsburg Gazette sold over 6,500 copies of the Almanac. It was not until the eighteenth century that wealthy planters began to build extensive libraries (Holloway, 1993). Educational opportunities for the middle class colonists were not as extensive. Merchants,

tradesman, and skilled laborers educated their children in grammar schools, endowed free schools, and old field schools. Education for the poor Whites was delivered mainly through the apprentice system (Maddox, 1918, pp. 6-7).

Parents, and occasionally the young people themselves, bound youths to a master who taught the apprentices a trade and the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Schooling in Virginia in the Early Days of the Republic

As limited as formal schooling was before the Revolution, the sources for it became even more restricted after the founding of the Republic. According to Maddox (1918, p. 108), "two thirds of the colonial parish ministers failed to return to their charges after the War." The English parsons were replaced in some areas with the Scotch "dominie" (Buck, 1952, p.25). In many communities, however, formal schooling came to a halt due to a lack of teachers.

Thomas Jefferson introduced "A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge" in the General Assembly in 1779. It was a plan for the universal education of White youth in the Commonwealth. Schooling was to be available on three levels of organization. The first was to be composed of elementary schools open to the children of every White citizen. The second was a collegiate level to which twenty selected White boys were to be advanced. The ultimate level was to be a university in which all the branches of science were to be taught in their "highest degree." Jefferson's bill failed to win approval until

1796. Even then, the bill was weakened by the eastern Virginia representatives who succeeded in placing the administration of the schools in local hands exclusively (Heatwole, 1916, p.101). Consequently, few schools were ever put into operation. Those that were begun were viewed disdainfully as “charity schools ” (Maddox, 1918, p.24). For the most part, formal schooling continued to take place by traditional means: family members, old field schools, a few endowed free schools, private tutors, and apprenticeships.

In the wake of the Revolution, many of the leaders of new Republic saw the need to educate the people for the responsibilities of citizenship (Kaestle, 1983, pp. 8-9). Jefferson shared this objective and also had as another purpose to forge a Virginia deeply divided by cultural and geographic barriers into a “single like-minded Commonwealth” (p. 8). This would be accomplished by the graduates of the new educational system and by the system of organization established to administer it. Jefferson’s plan failed not because of philosophical differences, but because of more mundane, yet powerful issues. The reluctance of the General Assembly to approve Jefferson’s grand plan resulted mainly from reservations over costs and sectional rivalries (Maddox, 1918, pp. 16-20).

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Virginia was the beneficiary of two new sources of schooling: the academies and the secular Sunday schools. Heatwole (1916) reports that most of the academies were established by graduates of Princeton and Yale (p. 6). Buck (1952) records that

many of the early academies were founded and supported by churches. He further notes that some later evolved into private colleges. Buck gives Hampden-Sydney College and Washington and Lee University as examples of such development (pp. 42-43). The curriculum for the academies was comprised of classical studies: higher mathematics, physics, chemistry, and botany. The state's connection to the academies was limited to issuing their charters and occasionally approving lotteries for their support. The academies received most of their financial sustenance from student tuition. The academies became the primary source of secondary schooling in the nineteenth century for Virginians who could afford them (Heatwole, 1916, pp. 125-130).

For those who could not afford the academies, choices were much fewer. One new option appeared in the form of the secular Sunday school. Maddox (1918) cites Virginia as a leader in the Sunday School movement. He asserts that "the Sunday school came in answer to a genuine desire ... to improve the wretched condition of" poor Whites by equalizing the differences between the rich and the poor (p.32). The Sunday schools, although often organized, taught, and supported by churchmen, were not generally sectarian (Maddox, 1918, pp. 30-41).

The Founding of the Literary Fund

In 1810, the General Assembly of Virginia established the Literary Fund, a source of support for educational endeavors that remains in existence until the

present day. The act creating the fund required that certain fines, penalties, forfeitures, and confiscations be set aside for the encouragement of learning. The General Assembly augmented the fund in 1816 with \$1,210,550 received from repayment of a loan that the state had made to the federal government during the War of 1812.

Buck (1952) states that “the Literary Fund constituted a very significant achievement in the slowly emerging idea that the state had a responsibility for subsidizing free schools” (p. 28). Maddox (1918) describes the fund as “ the foundation of all future state school legislation” (p. 48). Thus, the Literary Fund accomplished dual purposes of providing financial support for public schools in Virginia and reinforcing the idea that schooling was a function of the state.

In his “A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge”, Jefferson envisioned primary schools, academies, and a university as a system of schooling supported and directed by the state. He intended for the system to function as a whole. Frustrated by Virginia’s failure to embrace his vision, Jefferson made a choice in 1817 to abandon creation of the total system in favor of using the Literary Fund to establish the University of Virginia (Cremin, 1980, p. 113). The university had always been Jefferson’s first priority for state financial support (Hunt, 1981).

In that year, Charles Fenton Mercer and other western Virginia legislators had re-introduced a plan for state financing of a system of public schools open to

all White youth through the Literary Fund. Jefferson opposed the use of the Literary Fund to fund public schools for two reasons. Philosophically, he believed in the ward system he had advanced for years. In Jefferson's system, local taxes would have financed local schools. Practically, he preferred that the state monies from the Literary Fund be used for the university (Dabney, p. 246). Jefferson and the eastern legislators opposed to Mercer's proposal prevailed. Mercer was elected to the House of Representatives in 1817. Without a champion, Mercer's plan to finance public schools was postponed indefinitely (Hunt, 1981). Buck (1952) recognizes the significance of this decision by writing that "the founding of this distinguished University marks an epochal step in the history of education in Virginia, but it also furnishes additional evidence of persistent reluctance to provide education for the masses" (p. 31).

The Struggle for Common Schools Continues

Maddox (1918) records that the next concerted move toward a system of state supported public schools in Virginia was the Free School Act of 1829. The debate split along familiar sectional lines with the west favoring greater support of publicly funded common schools. Just as the debate was organized in similar fashion to past discussions, the outcomes were similar as well (pp. 95-97). The act's provisions were permissive rather than compulsory. The act did not require state taxation for school purposes (Hunt and Simmons, 1992). For that reason, the act failed to increase the availability of schooling on a widespread basis.

The act does represent a progression toward a state controlled system of schooling. Among the provisions of the act was the change in designation of the chief administrator of the Literary Fund from "Second Auditor" to "Superintendent" of the fund. Additionally, the superintendent was given increased administrative responsibilities (Maddox, p. 98)

Virginia leaders were embarrassed at the prevalence of ignorance documented by the US Census of 1840. One of every thirteen White citizens was found to be illiterate. In view of western Virginia's persistent advocacy of state supported schooling and eastern Virginia's stubborn opposition, the even distribution of illiteracy between the east and west documented by the census is striking. Nonetheless, it was the West who mounted yet another campaign for increased public schooling. Meetings were held in Clarksburg and Lexington in 1841 to discuss how to improve the rate of literacy (Hunt, 1986).

At the Lexington conference, Henry Ruffner, president of Washington College, emerged as leading spokesman for the west. Ruffner put forth a plan with the following provisions: a district system supported by a school tax and the Literary Fund, a normal school in each county to train "apprentice teachers", and a library in each school. The district system would be overseen by state board of education, a state superintendent, and county superintendents (Hunt, 1986).

Debate over Ruffner's proposal and alternative suggestions from the east ensued for over five years. In 1846 the General Assembly attempted to resolve

the debate by adopting three separate acts intended to satisfy the competing interests of the geographic sections and the opposing philosophical views within the Commonwealth. The first act, "An Act to Amend the Present Primary School System", authorized the system of county superintendents Ruffner had proposed in 1841. The action moved Virginia ever closer to a state system of public education. The act called for local schools supervised and administered by the superintendents with funding from locally initiated taxes. The second act, the "Act for the Establishment of a District Public School System", required each locality to hold a local referendum before the implementation of the act's provisions. The act provided for free tuition to the schools thus established for all White male and female children (Hunt and Simmons, 1994). The third act attempted to establish by statute a district free school system in specific counties who had already petitioned to do so (Maddox, pp. 156-157). Without the direction of Ruffner's state board of education and with the raising of revenues left to the discretion of local officials, the acts of 1846 failed to realize a system of free district schools for the state. Even under this confused state of affairs, the movement toward universal schooling advanced inexorably forward. By 1861, there was a superintendent and a board of school commissioners in every county in Virginia (Maddox, 1918 p. 166).

Education in Virginia During the Civil War

The cataclysm of the Civil War temporarily brought a halt to the progress Virginia had made toward the establishment of a state system of public schooling. Dabney (1971, p. 330) describes the dire circumstances in Virginia in 1864. He relates the widespread lack of food and clothing and goes on to tell of the effect on the state of disrupted transportation systems. It goes without saying that, with the exception of a few individual schools, formal education in Virginia for all intents and purposes ceased during the war.

In his book, Development of Public Schools in Virginia, Buck (1952) writes that

constant fighting in Virginia for four years, followed by a painful period of reconstruction for another four years, created an atmosphere which made schools a relatively unimportant consideration for an impoverished people who were trying desperately to provide the bare necessities of life for their families. (p.63)

In his study of secondary education from 1870 to 1886, Bowman (1938) finds the same condition among the academies, stating that many schools had been forced out of existence and that many gaps in the teaching ranks resulted from the war (p. 3).

The Campaigns for Public Schooling During Reconstruction

From the end of the Civil War in April of 1865 until 1870, Virginia was governed as Military District Number One, effectively occupied territory. Francis

H. Pierpont, a native of the western part of the state that had become West Virginia, served as provisional governor. For the most part, Virginia was relatively calm immediately after the war. The formidable task of the leaders of the day was to rebuild the political, economic and social order (Dabney, pp. 360-363).

There were monumental problems facing Virginia during Reconstruction. Militarily defeated and demoralized, Virginia had lost thousands of its youth. Its farms and factories were in ruin. Roads were in disrepair. There was no medium of economic exchange. Confederate money was worthless. Amidst these blows to the very foundation of Virginia's society as it had existed, the state was faced with a challenge that was totally new to the Commonwealth. Somehow, the leaders of the state had to cope with the effects, economic and otherwise, of the abolition of slavery and the assimilation of former slaves into a reformed societal structure (Dabney, 1971, 354-360). Donald Spivey describes dealing with the situation presented by the emancipated African Americans as the "severest issue facing the new nation" (1978, p. 16).

Dabney (1971) writes that 360,000 former slaves were wandering throughout the eastern half of the state in the first few months after the war. These refugees from slavery were seeking the promised "forty acres and a mule." Many gravitated to cities in eastern Virginia when the mule and land did not materialize. In response to the needs of the refugee African Americans, the

federal authorities established the Freedmen's Bureau. The Bureau was charged with feeding, protecting, and educating the former slaves.

Education was a primary interest among the former slaves. James Anderson (1988) writes that "Blacks emerged from slavery with a strong belief in the desirability of learning to read and write" (p. 5). Anderson argues that the freed African Americans instinctively understood the power of education. He advances the idea that "former slaves were among the first native southerners to depart from the planters' ideology of education and society and to campaign for universal, state-supported public education (p. 4). Anderson quotes W. E. B. DuBois as saying that "Public education for all at public expense was, in the South, a Negro idea" (p. 6).

As Anderson (1988), Spivey (1978), Dabney (1971), Buck (1952), and many others document, the freed African Americans responded to the opportunity for schooling in overwhelming numbers. Anderson cites instances of thousands of Freedmen starting schools and enrolling in northern missionary society schools throughout the South. African Americans desperately wanted education and sought it passionately in the years immediately after the Civil War. Weinberg (1977) reports that in 1867 former slaves in Virginia owned 68 schools and supported 155 more. By 1870 they owned 111 and were supporting an additional 215 (p. 41).

Weinberg (1977) concludes that the freedmen were unable to succeed in their aspirations unassisted, however. The Freedmen's Bureau and northern volunteer teachers from the American Missionary Association and several Protestant denominations aided the African Americans in their quest for schooling. Bullock (1967) writes that Virginia's schools for freedmen established by the Bureau were among the most favored by receiving, along with Louisiana and North Carolina, over half the teachers and schools in the South. Dabney (1971) reports that the Freedmen's Bureau was directly responsible for the erection of over 200 schoolhouses and for teaching 50,000 freedmen to read and write (p. 362).

Weinberg (1977) reports that Whites reacted negatively to the efforts to establish schooling for African Americans in the South (p. 43). While Virginia freedmen generally did not suffer the outright violence and intimidation that Weinberg found in Georgia, Alabama, and much of the rest of the South, there was a general negative feeling toward the schools for freedmen among White Virginians. The northern volunteer missionaries sent to Virginia were regarded as having a "supercilious attitude" (Dabney, p.362). Demonstrating the same feeling in Pulaski, Smith (1981) gives as an example the diary of Ella Wysor Darst in which she comments unflatteringly about a northern schoolmarm teaching African Americans in the Town of Newbern (p. 293).

The Constitution of 1870

The election of 1869 marked the effective end of Reconstruction in Virginia. That year Gilbert C. Walker, a Republican moderate, and an overwhelmingly conservative General Assembly were elected. Walker's successful candidacy was part of an overall conservative strategy that included the approval of the Underwood Constitution. With the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the United States Constitution in October, the last hurdle to re-admission to the union was removed. In January of 1870, Virginia's re-admission to the union was approved by Congress. Federal troops and the Freedmen's Bureau were removed soon thereafter. (Dabney, pp. 367-372).

The Constitution of 1870 was unpopular among White native Virginians. Buck (1952) comments that the ratification of the constitution "carried with it no popular enthusiasm and probably little real approval" (p. 67). It was, however, the Constitution of 1870 that vested constitutional responsibility for free public schools in the state. Prior to its adoption, Virginia's progress toward the establishment of universal schooling opportunities had been minimal. Perhaps the cataclysm of Civil War followed by the humiliation of Reconstruction was necessary to move the state forward toward a system of public schools.

The Constitution of 1870 did advance Virginia schools significantly forward as a system. Heatwole (1916) states that the Constitution of 1870

required the General Assembly to elect a State Superintendent of Public Instruction whose responsibility it was to be the chief state school officer. A board of education for the Commonwealth, composed of the Governor, the State Superintendent, and the Attorney General, was created under the provisions of the constitution. Further, and importantly, the constitution provided for the support of public education financially through the Literary Fund, the capitation tax, a state property tax, and optional local taxation (pp. 216-218).

Ruffner's Plan for Schooling in Virginia

The legislature elected widely respected William Henry Ruffner as the first Superintendent of Public Instruction (Dabney, p. 389). Ruffner was the son of Henry Ruffner, author of the 1841 plan for free district schools. He immediately went to work to draft a blueprint for implementing the provisions of the constitution for a state school system. The plan, developed by the younger Ruffner and submitted to the General Assembly in a remarkably short period of twenty-five days, was similar to his father's effort of thirty years prior (Heatwole, p. 219).

Ruffner's plan provided for instruction at the primary and elementary levels. In most cases the schools were one room buildings with children of all ages taught by one teacher. Local jurisdictions were initially forbidden to use state funds to pay for high schools. A few such schools were established by

certain localities, but for the most part secondary schooling remained a task reserved to private academies until 1875 (Dabney, 1971, p. 382).

According to Heatwole (1916) twenty-nine hundred schools operated by three thousand teachers opened their doors to 130,000 pupils for the 1870-71 term (p. 220). Old attitudes persisted, though. In 1870, in a public address, Matthew Fontaine Maury spoke disparagingly of the new schools as “this system of common schools that has been thrust upon us” (quoted in Dabney, 1971, p. 381). Despite the authorized taxes, adequate funding continued to be an almost insurmountable obstacle. In 1878-79, almost half the schools failed to operate because of a lack of money. That year the school system was unable to collect \$1,500,000 due from the state because the legislature had directed it to other purposes (Dabney, 1971, pp. 381-382).

The system of schools that Ruffner proposed and the General Assembly approved was segregated by race. Luther Porter Jackson (1937) portrays Ruffner as “a strong advocate of the education of the Negro” (p. 5). Buck (1952) quotes Ruffner as instructing the local school officers not to discriminate against African Americans in school arrangements. Buck goes on to describe a debate on the subject of schooling for African Americans between Ruffner and Dr. R. L. Dabney, a professor at Hampden-Sydney College. The debate was carried out by means of letters to the Richmond newspapers. Dabney vigorously opposed the schooling of African American children. Ruffner just as vigorously advocated

for the schooling of African Americans, invoking the hallowed names of many Virginia leaders from the past who Ruffner said would not have sided with Dabney's position of intolerance (p.91). Ruffner, however, was also a pragmatist. He knew that the White Virginians of the day would not tolerate integrated schools (Hunt and Wagoner, 1988). He was first and foremost concerned with creating public sentiment favorable to the public schools. In a state without a strong tradition of such support and with many outspoken opponents of public schooling, he faced a monumental undertaking. Therefore, to reduce opposition, he chose to advocate universal, but racially segregated, schooling for Virginia's children (Hunt and Simmons, 1990).

Samuel Chapman Armstrong and the Founding of Hampton Institute

While Ruffner was fighting his battle for the establishment of the public schools in Virginia, Samuel Chapman Armstrong was fighting his own battle for schooling in Hampton, Virginia. Armstrong was a former union general who had commanded African American troops in the Civil War and who subsequently became superintendent of the Freedmen's Bureau in Hampton, Virginia. In 1868, Armstrong founded the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute with the cooperation and support of the American Missionary Association (Bullock, 1967, p.76). The purpose of the Hampton Institute was two-fold: to prepare teachers and to deliver manual training (Hunt and Simmons, 1994).

Armstrong was a product of his time and his experiences. His parents had worked in the Hawaiian Islands as missionaries while Armstrong was a youth. His father had served as Minister of Public Education there for twelve years (Hunt and Simmons, 1994). In his book, The Education of Blacks in the South 1860-1935, James Anderson (1988) argues that this period in his life fundamentally influenced Armstrong's educational planning and programming for the students of Hampton. Anderson concludes that Armstrong saw the freedmen as akin to the Polynesian "savages." Both groups possessed limited intellectual capability and weak morals in Armstrong's estimation. Armstrong's mission became to save the freedmen from the perceived error of their ways in the same fashion that his father had worked to bring salvation to the Hawaiians (p. 38).

Donald Spivey (1978) in Schooling for the New Slavery describes Armstrong as "the ideological father of Black industrial education [who] tried to solve the race problem through education" (p. x). Spivey contends that Armstrong was fundamentally concerned about the instability of the South due to the presence of millions of newly freed African Americans. As superintendent of the Freeman's Bureau in Hampton, Armstrong had seen the social upheaval emancipation had brought to that Virginia city. Spivey states that Armstrong devised what he hoped would become the solution to the "African American problem" in the South.

His solution was schooling of a particular type. Armstrong called it “an education of the head, hand, and heart” (Spivey, 1978, p. 4). Armstrong brought into being in Hampton Normal Institute the realization of his philosophy. The Hampton Normal Institute educated African Americans, under the direction of White teachers, to become teachers of their own people. Hampton functioned primarily as a normal school preparing African American teachers to teach an industrial curriculum to African American students. Armstrong believed the type of education best suited to African Americans was an industrial education emphasizing manual labor (p.18-20). Spivey, Anderson (1988), and Bullock (1967) all criticize Armstrong for taking the schooling of freedmen down a path that led to a second class education. Spivey goes so far as to assert that Armstrong’s primary purpose was not to uplift African Americans through education but to make them “subservient laborers” (p. x). Hunt and Simmons (1994) conclude that:

the brand of education proposed by the Hampton model, and followed by those institutions that subsequently were founded in the South to prepare teachers for the Black common schools, was that not only were Blacks to become an economic asset to the South, they were also to accept their political and economic subordination to Whites in a White-dominated southern society of that and subsequent eras. (p.147)

Not all historians have judged Armstrong so harshly. Dabney (1971) characterizes him as “dynamic” and Hampton Institute as “valuable” (p. 362). Buck (1952) assesses the guiding philosophy of the Hampton Institute as one

which was to “achieve a place of real importance in the annals of American education” (p. 74). Buck goes on to say that “through a judicious blending of work and study” Armstrong “furnished a convincing demonstration of the worth of his ideas and ideals by training thousands of young Negro men and women for lives of great usefulness” (p.74). Heatwole (1916) describes Armstrong as “having a firm belief in the moral and intellectual value of manual labor” and as providing “wise direction” for the implementation of the industrial model in which he believed (350-351).

Whether Armstrong’s intentions were as Spivey, Anderson, Bullock, Hunt and Simmons viewed them or more beneficent as Dabney and Buck saw them, his school was successful. Freedmen flocked to Hampton after the founding of the school lured there by the combination of an idealized city life and the promise of an education. Booker T. Washington, Robert Russa Moton, and Thomas C. Walker were among the African American youths educated there who will be discussed further in this study.

The Influence of Philanthropy on Virginia Education

In his book, Speak Now Against the Day, John Egerton (1994) sums up the contribution of northern philanthropists to schooling in the South.

Northern philanthropy provided most of the educational opportunity available to Whites in the isolated mountains of Appalachia and to Blacks throughout the South until the 1930’s. The Rockefellers and Peabodys, Julius Rosenwald, John F. Slater, Anna T. Jeanes, and the Congregational Church appear to have done almost as much for the education of the Southern poor in the seventy-five

years following the Civil War as all of the South's state and local governments combined. (p. 25)

Egerton may exaggerate somewhat, but the influence of philanthropists from both the North and South upon education in Virginia undeniably has been deep and lasting.

As related previously, the first two free schools in Virginia were established as the result of the generosity of Benjamin Sims and Thomas Eaton. Many of the free schools operated prior to the Civil War were endowed through similar individual acts. Leavell (1930) cites the Quakers, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and other religious sects as active in the education of slaves in the South (p.26). John Hope Franklin (1947) reports that organized philanthropy on a large scale did not begin until after the Civil War (p. 383). It was not until the last third of the nineteenth century that a movement of considerable scope and resources emerged. At that time, northern philanthropists, moderate southern educators, and politicians of both regions joined in a partnership that changed the face of formal schooling in the South.

The Peabody Fund

George Peabody was born in Massachusetts in 1795 to English immigrant parents. Peabody entered the mercantile business in Baltimore and was phenomenally successful, amassing a huge fortune. He moved to England in 1837 where he added to his business fortune. In England he first became

involved in philanthropic activities. By 1857 his interest returned to the United States where he bestowed \$300,000 on selected beneficiaries for the advancement of education (Buck, 1952, pp. 86-87).

Peabody had Robert Winthrop, a friend and agent of Peabody's, invite a group of fifteen men to Washington, D. C. in 1867. Winthrop announced to the assemblage a gift of a \$1,000,000 fund intended by Peabody to be used for the needs of the areas of the country that had suffered most as a result of the Civil War. The fifteen gentlemen became the first governing board of the Peabody Fund. The stated purpose of the fund was the "promotion and encouragement of intellectual, moral, or industrial education among the young of the more destitute portions of the Southern and Southwestern States" (Leavell, 1930, pp. 59-60).

Dabney (1971) relates that the first agent of the fund, Dr. Barnas Sears, made his headquarters in Staunton. Sears often assisted Superintendent Ruffner in the early years of the state school system. Heatwole (1916) states that one of the most common uses of the fund in Virginia was the operation of summer schools for teachers which became commonly known as "Peabody Institutes." Peabody Fund gifts were also used to aid graded schools and city schools. Ruffner was exceptionally successful in his efforts to obtain aid for Virginia. Heatwole reports that the state was the recipient of \$233,000 while Ruffner was superintendent, an amount equaling nearly one-fifth of the total awarded to all of the Southern states (pp. 239-240).

The John F. Slater Fund

John F. Slater, the namesake of the Slater Fund, was a textile manufacturer from Norwich, Connecticut. Franklin (1947) indicates that Slater was influenced by the success of the Peabody Fund (p.384). In 1882 Slater selected a group of ten men to act as trustees and gave them charge of \$1,000,000. Former president Rutherford B. Hayes served as the fund's first president (Leavell, 1930, p. 63).

Slater outlined the general purpose of the fund as uplifting the former slaves of the South. He left the details of defining the fund's purpose to the board of trustees (Leavell, 1930, p. 62). Buck states that in Virginia the Slater Fund devoted most of its resources and activity to funding the construction of facilities. The establishment of the county training school movement was a primary focus of the Slater Fund (Leavell, p. 161). Promotion of industrial education was another function the fund's trustees undertook (Leavell, p. 65). In 1931 the Slater Fund was consolidated with the Negro Rural School Fund also known as the Jeanes Fund to form the Southern Education Fund (Buck, 160).

The Capon Springs Conference and the Southern Education Board

In 1898 an event took place at Capon Springs, West Virginia, that was to influence the course of educational philanthropy and the scope and content of schooling in the South for many years thereafter. Dr. Edward Abbott of Cambridge, Massachusetts, proposed the idea of a conference patterned after

the Mohonk Conference on Indian Affairs to Captain William Sale, the proprietor of a hotel located at Capon Springs. The purpose of the conference was to explore two questions. The first was to what extent could the public school system in the South be improved. The second was to what extent was it feasible to introduce industrial education (Bullock, 1967, p. 90).

Heatwole (1916) reports that the conference planners included Dr. Hollis Frissell, successor to Samuel Chapman Armstrong at Hampton Institute; Dr. Julius Dreher of Roanoke College, Bishop Dudley of Kentucky; and A. B. Hunter, a clergyman from Raleigh, North Carolina. Heatwole (1916) characterizes the conference as a watershed event that eventually led to a program “that touched the social conscience in every rural community in Virginia and over the entire South, and resulted in an era of wonderful achievement for popular education” (p. 309). Buck’s (1952) assessment of the conference is that the broad idea of an improved system of public education in the South emerged from the initial conference and its successor conferences (p. 152). The first three conferences took place at Capon Springs. The 1901 conference met in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The Winston-Salem Conference saw the work of the conferees yield fruit in the form of the organization of the Southern Education Board (Buck, 122).

Bullock (1967) takes a slightly different position from Buck and Heatwole, arguing that the true significance of the Capon Springs conference lay in its

effect on African American education in the South rather than southern education generally. In making his case, Bullock points to the founders of the conference as educators and churchmen who were acceptable to both the North and South. They were, Bullock says, men who "had won the confidence of White southerners through the work they had done with the Negro schools which they headed" (p. 91). Bullock believes the true purpose of the Capon Springs conference and its successor conferences in Winston Salem and Richmond, Virginia, was the development of a compromise solution to the problem of how to educate the African American in the South (p. 92).

The General Education Board

One of the key attendees at the Capon Springs conferences was William H. Baldwin, Jr. Baldwin became the chairman of the General Education Board, incorporated in 1903. The General Education Board was funded by a grant of \$1,000,000 from John D. Rockefeller. The grant was to be expended by the board over a period of ten years (Leavell, 1930, p. 67).

Leavell (1930) reports that the purpose of the board was "the promotion of education within the United States of America without distinction of race, sex or creed" (p.66). As Leavell illustrates with a review of the act of incorporation, the activities the board was authorized to undertake were "as broad as the field of education" (p. 67). In practice, the board devoted most of its work to higher

education and to education in the South. The latter undertaking was at the suggestion of Rockefeller himself in a letter to the board (Leavell, p. 68).

Rockefeller's wherewithal for generosity was considerable. In 1905 he gave the board a second gift. This contribution was in the amount of \$10,000,000 from which only the interest was to be used. Following that gift, he bestowed on the board the staggering sum of \$32,000,000 in 1907. In 1909 he gave a second \$10,000,000 grant to the board and removed the requirement that the principal not be used (Leavell, 1930, pp. 69-70).

Buck (1952) reports that by 1940 the General Education Board had taken in over a quarter billion dollars of which \$85 million had been spent on southern education. He goes on to say that the first direct expenditures in Virginia were to employ two men who worked to spread the "gospel of better schools" and to support a professor of secondary education at the University of Virginia (p. 157). In 1910 the board advocated for the establishment of the position of State Supervisor of Negro Schools. In addition, Buck reports that the General Education Board supported teacher training, special studies, demonstrations, conferences, research in agriculture, and nutrition in Virginia (p. 158).

The Jeanes Fund

On April 22, 1907, Anna T. Jeanes executed a deed of trust in which she appointed Booker T. Washington and Hollis B. Frissell as trustees of the Negro

Rural School Fund. Miss Jeanes was an eighty-five year old Quaker heiress. Her father had earned his fortune in the shipping business in Philadelphia (Wright, 1933, pp. 1-2).

Miss Jeanes initially was solicited by Booker T. Washington and Hollis B. Frissell on behalf of their respective schools, Tuskegee Institute and Hampton Institute. Miss Jeanes was not interested in providing funds for large schools, but she demonstrated considerable interest in rural schools for African Americans in the South. Frissell and Washington received checks for \$10,000 each for rural school development in Alabama and Virginia. George Foster Peabody succeeded in winning the favor of Miss Jeanes toward the General Education Board upon which she bestowed \$200,000 (Wright, 1933, pp. 4-5).

When she executed her deed of trust for the establishment of the fund in 1907, Jeanes endowed it with \$1,000,000. Washington and Frissell were named two of the fund's first trustees. Among the other trustees were the future president of the United States, William Howard Taft, and Andrew Carnegie, the industrialist. More commonly referred to as the Jeanes Fund after its benefactor, the fund concentrated its work on the appointment of teachers to do industrial work in rural schools and the appointment of teachers to do extension work teaching other teachers the methods of industrial education (Leavell, p. 73).

The model of operation for the teachers who became known as Jeanes Teachers had its origin in Henrico County, Virginia. Miss Virginia Randolph was

an exceptional teacher in the Henrico County School System during the first part of the twentieth century. Dr. Jackson Davis, superintendent of schools in Henrico, had recognized Miss Randolph's capacity for supervision and allowed her to visit other schools in the county and demonstrate her methods. Upon hearing that the Jeanes Fund was seeking suggestions on how best to use its resources, Davis wrote to Dr. James H. Dillard, rector of the College of William and Mary who had become the president of the fund, to advocate for the Henrico system as a model for replication throughout the South. Dillard agreed after meeting Miss Randolph and her methods were employed extensively by the fund's supervisors. (Brown, 1988, pp. 112-135)

Buck (1952) describes the Jeanes supervisors in Virginia as teachers with an "unusual capacity for establishing good relations with their school community and who had a grasp of the Hampton-Tuskegee idea of giving manual work and skills an important place in the school program" (p.159). The work of the Jeanes teachers was often praised by the state superintendents in their annual reports according to Buck. From 1908 until 1932 a total of \$207,849 was given to Virginia for teacher salaries alone. In 1931 the Jeanes Fund was consolidated with the Slater Fund as the Southern Education Fund. (p. 160)

The Rosenwald Fund

Julius Rosenwald was the president of the Sears-Roebuck Company, the Chicago mail order house, from 1910 until 1925 when he became chairman of

the board, a post he held until 1932. Under his leadership the company thrived. Consequently, Rosenwald prospered financially.

Rosenwald took an early interest in philanthropy beginning with his personal donations to various charitable organizations including the erection of sixteen Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) buildings and one Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) for African American youth (Bullock, 1967, p. 126). Like Miss Jeanes, Rosenwald was sought out by Booker T. Washington to support his school in Alabama. Unlike Miss Jeanes, Rosenwald went to Tuskegee and even became a member of the Tuskegee Institute Board of Trustees in 1912. Leavell (1930) reports that, while on a visit to Washington's school, Rosenwald saw several model schools in the countryside around Tuskegee supported by the institute. As a result, Rosenwald gave \$25,000 for the support of "colored schools that have grown out of Tuskegee Institute or are doing the same kind of work as Tuskegee branch schools" (Leavell, pp. 77-78).

In October of 1917, Rosenwald incorporated the Julius Rosenwald Fund in Illinois. According to Bullock (1967) the fund exceeded forty million dollars at one point. The fund had as its stated purpose the rather ambitious and nebulous charge to provide for "the well being of mankind" (quoted in Bullock, 1967, p. 127). Actually, Rosenwald focused much of the attention of the fund on the construction of schools patterned after the Tuskegee model (p. 127). Rosenwald believed that the local African American and White citizens should

have a vested interest in the schools that his fund helped to finance. As a consequence, the fund required that the local citizenry raise monies equal to or greater than the contribution made by the fund. In addition the schools had to be public schools operated by the local school authorities (Anderson, 1988, p. 159). Thousands of Rosenwald schools were built across the South. Each of the fourteen southern states had a declared "Rosenwald School Day" during which African American communities were engaged in drives for the matching funds required to receive the Rosenwald monies (Anderson, p. 173). Both Bullock and Anderson hail the Rosenwald Fund as the most benevolent and effective philanthropic agency for African American youth (Bullock, p. 127; Anderson, p. 153).

According to Buck (1952), the Rosenwald Fund contributed to the construction of 363 buildings in Virginia. He also notes that the buildings were required to be situated on sites whose adequacy was subject to approval by the fund authorities as were the plans for the buildings themselves. The five thousandth Rosenwald school built was the Greenbrier School in Elizabeth City County, Virginia, erected in 1930 (pp. 229-232).

Assessment of Philanthropy on Education in Virginia and the South

Many writers believe that philanthropy played a positive role in the development of education in Virginia and the South. Egerton (1994), Buck (1952), Heatwole (1916), Jackson (1938), and Booker T. Washington (1965) are

unanimous in their opinion that the work of the various funds and their leaders had a salutary effect on education in the South in general and education for African Americans in particular. They point to the millions of dollars that Rockefeller, Rosenwald and the other benefactors pumped into Southern education. They cite the thousands of schools built, the tens of thousands of teachers employed and trained, as well as the changes in curriculum and programming resulting from the expenditures. Their assessments may be viewed as somewhat literal. These writers see good ends accomplished through the means of the funds. They do not appear to question closely the means employed to determine whether they were justified by the ends that were achieved. Nonetheless, it can hardly be argued that the philanthropists did bring many positive changes to the institution of public education in the South.

There is another school of thought, however, whose assessment is quite different. As noted previously, Anderson (1988) and Spivey (1978) disagree with the view that the philanthropists acted solely out of compassion and good will. In addition Bullock (1967), and Link (1986) question whether the real purpose of the alliance of northern philanthropists, moderate southern educators and southern political leaders was benevolent in nature.

Anderson (1988) takes the position that the Capon Springs conferences allowed the participants to recognize that they shared a common set of values that included universal education, White supremacy, and African American

industrial training (p. 84). He argues that the Hampton-Tuskegee industrial model was established to train teachers to spread the gospel of industrial education (p.34). Spivey (1978) concurs with Anderson's judgment. The title of his book, Schooling for the New Slavery: Black Industrial Education, 1868-1915, is instructive in itself of his point of view. Spivey is no less pointed in the text of his work. He states that the partnership was conceived to "guarantee a stabilized and efficient Black labor force" for northern financed industry in the South or the "new slavery" (p. 76).

Bullock's (1967) conclusions about the philanthropists, while less strident than Spivey's, are substantially the same. He contends that "by the close of the nineteenth century, northern educators had made a crucial decision. They had decided to sell the idea of Negro education to White Southerners by sacrificing the principle of racial equality" (p. 93). In Bullock's opinion the works of the great philanthropic funds were selfishly motivated. He argues that by accepting the notion of special funds for a special kind of education, Rockefeller and the other philanthropists were seeking to improve their own image and to seek opportunities for expansion of their businesses in a non-union South (p. 120).

Link's (1986) understanding of the influence of the philanthropists is slightly more favorable. He advances the idea that intersectionalists from both the north and the south accommodated each other in order to promote the common goal of universal schooling. The intersectionalists often had their own

individual reasons for supporting the goal. Their differences were put aside in order to achieve the goal (p. 89). Link acknowledges the coordination of effort among the philanthropists, mentioning as an example that the Southern Education Board and the General Education Board shared eleven common members and many of the same goals and strategies (p. 116).

The Constitution of 1902

As noted earlier, the Constitution of 1902 had a number of lasting and far-reaching effects on education and African Americans in Virginia. For several years antipathy toward the African American population in the state had been building among the members of the White race. Dabney (1971) reports that by the early nineties there were demands that the races be separated and that African Americans be disfranchised (p. 435). Harlan (1968) records that State Superintendent of Public Instruction John Massey claimed in 1889 to be tired of White men being taxed “to educate Negroes who opposed the Whites in elections” (p. 136). Harlan goes on to say that Massey’s successor, Joseph Southall, reportedly publicly characterized African American education as a failure (p. 138). Luther Porter Jackson (1937) describes the circumstances of the Virginia African American at the time in this passage from the History of the Virginia Teachers Association.

The leaders of the day in the government of Virginia thought of themselves as merely purging the ballot box, but in a larger sense they were making a drive to increase the system of racial segregation, to drive the Negro from juries and office holding of all

kinds, to reduce the amount of education offered him, to change the content of his education, and, in general, to label him like the free Negro of slavery days, the pariah of society (p. 42).

It was in this racially charged atmosphere that the constitutional convention opened its discussions in 1901. Dabney (1971) states that "elimination of the African American vote to the maximum degree possible was the intention from the outset" (p. 436). Harlan (1968) says that "disfranchisement of Negroes was the main business of the convention, but the anti-Negro movement pervaded all of its deliberations" (p.136).

Heatwole's (1916) account of the constitution of 1902 appears in a chapter he interestingly labels as "Educational Renaissance." It relates thirteen provisions of the document including the membership and powers of the state board of education, the requirement that the state superintendent be a professional educator, authorization of localities to levy a school tax, free textbooks for poor children, prohibition of the use of public funds in any school not under control of the state, authorization of the General Assembly to require compulsory education, and separation of students in schools by race. Heatwole concludes that the constitution of 1902 made possible many educational reforms (p. 310-312). Buck's (1952) version of the convention's work parallels Heatwole's in that it lists several of the sections of the constitution and their provisions. Yet, he reaches a decidedly different conclusion about the effect of the document stating that it "did not authorize much that was not already

included in the old constitution” and that “it can hardly be considered a great forward step for public education as some writers appear to regard it” (p. 129).

The May Campaign of 1905

The Capon Springs conferences and the philanthropic organizations that grew out of it eventually led to a campaign across the South to improve public schools. Agents of the Southern Education Board and the General Education Board had taken as their mission to spread the gospel of public schools. Link (1986) advances the idea that the campaign was, indeed, similar to a religious revival, pointing out that many of the early Capon Springs attendees were ministers or educators from church supported schools. Link concludes that the public school crusade was faltering until elected leaders and bureaucrats entered the battle under the leadership of Governor Montague (p. 112).

Montague had called an educational conference in Richmond in April of 1903 that generated much interest in schooling. That November the governor hosted a meeting in Richmond with four other leaders in the campaign for public schools. Out of this meeting emerged the Cooperative Education Association. This association spearheaded the May Campaign of 1905. Working with funds provided by the Southern Education Board, the association orchestrated a campaign that touched nearly every community in the state. Over one hundred speakers delivered addresses in ninety-four counties (Dabney, 1971, p. 449).

The May Campaign had the adoption of an eight point plan as its objective. The plan included a nine month school year for both African American and White students, rural high schools, industrial education, school consolidation, transportation, improved teacher training, rural school libraries, and the establishment of local chapters of the Cooperative Education Association throughout the state. The result was a greatly heightened interest in the public schools. Harlan (1968) estimates that hundreds of thousands of citizens attended over 1800 speeches (p. 154). Jackson (1937) figures that fifty citizen school associations were organized in the thirty day campaign. The major outcome of the campaign was the recognition by traditional political leaders that the public sentiment for schooling was high. The politicians of the day then sought to co-opt the campaign for better schools as their own. As a result, the voters chose John Eggleston, a progressive, as state superintendent and Claude Swanson as arguably the first "education governor" of Virginia (Harlan, p. 154).

The Negro Organization Society

The Cooperative Education Association had a parallel in the Negro Organization Society. The Negro Organization Society sought to improve conditions in African American schools using much the same strategies that the Cooperative Education Association employed (Buck, 1952, p. 379). Jackson (1937) reports that as much as the condition of schools and teaching in the

White schools required improvement, the conditions in African American schools were in far greater need. He states that the typical African American school in the first decade of the twentieth century was a one room log school house, without blackboards, and seats comprised of rude benches without backs. The school term in these facilities was less than five months and taught by a teacher with a local permit paid less than twenty-five dollars a month (p. 45).

Prior to 1912 there were two primary organizations of African Americans interested in promoting schooling for African Americans. They were the School Improvement League and the Virginia Teachers Association. The School Improvement League had as its main function the improvement of the physical facilities that housed schools for African Americans. The Virginia Teachers Association was at the time an organization devoted mainly to professional development activities. These two groups had united in 1909. Not unlike the funds of the philanthropists, the directorates of the two bodies shared many members with common philosophical viewpoints. In 1912, under the leadership of John Gandy and T. C. Walker, the Negro Organization Society was established. R. R. Moton of Hampton Institute was the first president. Gandy, who later became president of the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, was the first field agent. Walker, a lawyer from Gloucester, served in various leadership roles (Jackson, 1937, pp. 46-49).

The Negro Organization Society brought together all farm, school health and home agencies devoted to the improvement of the lives of African Americans in Virginia. The society was most active in the area of education. Its leadership traversed the state preaching its own version of the gospel of self-help. In the aftermath of the 1902 constitution and subsequent legislation, the leaders recognized that African Americans would have to supplement the public funds their schools received with private donations. Gandy and the others exhorted their fellow citizens to build more and better schools, to improve existing ones, and to raise funds to pay teachers to extend the school term (Jackson, 1937, p. 49). Between 1912 and 1916, according to Jackson, the society was responsible for the accumulation of \$133,191 and for bringing the average school term for African Americans up to six months. (Jackson, 1937, p. 8)

The O'Shea Report of 1928

As this review of the history of education and schooling in Virginia moves closer in time to the period contemporary with the subject of the study, Chauncey Depew Harmon, it is useful to examine not only the efforts to establish firmly the public schools but also the condition of the schools. The O'Shea Report of 1928 provides an instructive examination of the state of schooling in Virginia in the years Harmon was a student in Pulaski County schools.

Buck (1952) records that the General Assembly had authorized the first comprehensive scientific survey of public education in Virginia in 1918. The O'Shea survey, the second such study, was authorized by the Assembly in August of 1927 and published in January, 1928. Buck makes the effort to note that the survey was not a creature of the Department of Education or the Board of Education. It was a part of Governor Harry Byrd's effort to reform and simplify the structure of government in Virginia (p. 273).

The General Assembly appointed a commission of eleven citizens to conduct the survey. The commission, in turn, selected Dr. M. V. O'Shea of the University of Wisconsin to direct a staff of fifteen who actually collected the data and prepared the Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State. In just four months time the staff compiled the 634 page report (Buck, 1952, p. 274). Buck describes the report as a "priceless record of the status of public education in Virginia at the time" (p. 288).

In Chapter Two of the commission's report, the staff reports its findings in a summary. Among the major findings are the following conclusions:

- Virginia has been and still is lukewarm in respect to universal education.
- Rural education is of first importance in Virginia.
- Virginia education does not adequately stress scientific thinking.
- Pupils are not classified according to ability in the elementary schools.

- Institutions of higher education are not adequately supported.
- The teaching staff in Virginia schools possess superior personal qualities but are deficient in knowledge of modern educational methods.
- Teachers in every department of the public system in Virginia are underpaid when judged by standards for the country as a whole.
- Teacher turnover is very rapid.
- There is a need for improvement of facilities for Negro education.
- Courses of study and methods of instruction in public schools for Negroes can and should be improved.
- Provision should be made for higher education for Negro leadership.
- Teachers in Negro schools are for the most part untrained for their work.
- The State Board of Education is not free from political influence.
- The compulsory education [attendance] law is not well enforced in some sections of Virginia.
- There is great variation among the various sections of Virginia in ability to support public education.
- Vocational agriculture, home economics, and trade and industrial education should be extended and emphasized. (O'Shea, 1928, pp. 7-43)

In Chapter Three of the report, the commission staff laid out fifteen areas of recommendations for the improvement of Virginia's public education system. They included comprehensive suggestions for rural education, elementary

education in cities, secondary education, higher education, training and certification of teachers, African American education, general administration and supervision, attendance regulations, financial accounting, schoolroom facilities, vocational agriculture, home economics, trade and industrial education, extension of library facilities, and supplementary educational agencies. The recommendations of the commission regarding high school education and African American education are of particular interest in the context of this study.

The commission acknowledged that public high schools were relatively new to Virginia and that some citizens questioned the need for publicly supported high schools (O'Shea, p. 16). Indeed, although the Commonwealth permitted the establishment of public high schools in 1875, it was not until 1906 that the Mann Act provided state funds and state regulation of a system of public high schools (Buck, 1952, p. 143). In 1906 there were 74 high schools in Virginia (p. 143). By 1917-18, there were 522 high schools of which 183 were accredited four year institutions (p. 239). Alexander (1943) found that there were only three accredited high schools for African Americans in 1918-19. The commission observed that support for free high schools was paralleling their growth in the state. The commission determined that charging tuition for high school instruction was still a widespread practice, however. The unavailability of transportation and the almost exclusive emphasis on college preparatory

instruction were lamented as limiting factors by the commission as well (O'Shea, p. 16).

The commission gave special attention to schooling for the African American children of Virginia. Dr. W. T. B. Williams of Tuskegee Institute was employed with funds from the Jeanes and Slater Funds to conduct the study (O'Shea, p. 5). As has been observed previously, no matter how well or poorly White children were being educated in Virginia at any given time, African American children always fared worse. The commission reported that "a considerable proportion of African American children of compulsory school age is without any facilities for an education and is growing up in illiteracy" (p. 32). Further, the commission advised its readers that there was very little education of secondary or collegiate grade provided for African Americans (pp. 32-33).

The commission reflected a belief in what Bullock (1967) described as "special education" in its recommendations (p. 89). The staff stated that it believed that the best interests of the African American population of the state were not promoted by imposing upon African American youth the same type of education as that provided for the White population. Instead, the staff recommended training in agricultural pursuits, improved hygiene education, and elementary concepts of citizenship. (p.33) From these suggestions, it can be inferred that African Americans were seen as incapable of functioning on the same basis as Whites.

Distinctions based on race emerged in other recommendations about African American education as well. In its comments on the improvement of secondary education for African Americans, the commission pays particular notice to the value of county training schools as appropriate for African American young people (O'Shea, p. 33). The county training school movement will be discussed in a later section of this chapter. At this point it is sufficient to point out that it was an institution peculiar to the schooling of African Americans financed and encouraged by the Slater Fund. In regard to the training of African American teachers the commission found their status woeful, describing many of them as "utterly untrained" and commenting that African American children might be better off not in school at all than being taught by such teachers (p. 33). The staff urged an immediate effort to upgrade the training of African American teachers, including increasing salaries and requiring the same standards of an African American teacher as of a White teacher. The staff carefully pointed out that they did not mean to advise precisely the same course of study to be followed in the African American and White schools, only that African American teachers should be equally competent to teach the appropriate course of study for African American students (p. 33).

The County Training School Movement

The County Training School movement was initiated to increase the availability of secondary education to African Americans in the South. Its

primary impetus came from the John F. Slater Fund. Prior to 1911 the Slater Fund concentrated its efforts on the improvement of college and university education for African Americans. After that time, under the leadership of James Hardy Dillard, the fund moved its attention to the development and extension of the public secondary schools for African Americans (Redcay, 1935, p. 5).

The vehicle by which the Slater Fund chose to expand opportunities for secondary schooling for African Americans was the county training school. As outlined above, the county training school was an institution peculiar to the South and to African Americans. Redcay (1935) defines the county training schools as:

those larger public county schools for Negroes in the Southern states which are open in the higher grades to children from all parts of the county and offering, or planning to offer, work including the eighth grade or higher, and which have been aided by the John F. Slater Fund. (pp. 12-13)

The purpose of the training school movement is reported by Redcay (1935) to be to offer a more advanced education based on the assumption that African Americans would remain engaged in agriculture and other rural vocations and to train teachers for the rural common schools (p. 34). Redcay indicates that while many of the county training schools became high schools, they were not initially intended to do so and could not have been fairly described as high schools. The name county training schools was suggested by John D. Eggleston, a former state superintendent of public instruction in Virginia and

president of Hampden-Sydney College and Virginia Polytechnic Institute, as suitably descriptive of their status. Subsequent to their establishment and assistance by the Slater Fund, many of the county training schools did become high schools (p. 37).

The county training school movement spread throughout the South. State Superintendent R. C. Stearnes reported in his annual report for 1915-16 that five were operating in Virginia, one each in Alleghany, Caroline, Nottoway, Roanoke, and York counties (Redcay, 1935, p. 35). As African American community leaders conducted successful drives to provide the matching funds required by the Slater authorities, their numbers increased. By 1933, there were 612 in existence according to Redcay. At that time in Virginia there were 68, one of which was located in Pulaski County (pp. 76-77). Redcay goes on to report that the Pulaski School enrolled 224 students and offered two years of secondary work (p.161).

A Brief History of Public Schooling in Pulaski, Virginia

As well as examining the general history and development of public schooling in Virginia with an emphasis on schooling for African Americans, this study must address the develop of education and public schooling in Pulaski County in order to situate itself in a proper historical context. What follows is an effort by the researcher to do so by giving a review of the growth of schooling and education in the county.

The Development of Education in Pulaski County

The development of education and schooling in Pulaski County followed the same general pattern as did the state of Virginia. In the absence of formal schools, Virginia ministers frequently doubled as schoolmasters during the pre-Revolutionary period. According to Smith (1981) the New Dublin Presbyterian Church had three school houses located nearby at various times. These schools were staffed by the ministers who pastored the church. Presbyterian ministers were valued both for their own excellent schooling and for the education that they were able to give the youth of a community (p. 49).

By the late eighteenth century, it can be inferred that residents of the future Pulaski County were obtaining some education. Smith (1981) reports that the records of the Cloyd's Store reveal that books were among the inventory available for purchase. Apparently they were not only available but in demand as many copies of the Bible, the New Testament, almanacs, hymnbooks, histories, spelling book, and "home books" were recorded among the store's sales. Smith surmises that the sale of books was a result of private tutors actively working in the area (p. 150).

In 1840, one year after Pulaski County was formed, the United States census was taken. Smith reports that there were seven schools in the county listed in the census under the category of primary and common schools. There were 136 students enrolled in these seven schools of whom 32 were attending

free (p. 207). These schools were the “charity schools” of the antebellum period supported by the Literary Fund.

In addition to the public schools there were private schools in Pulaski organized and supported by parents of young people in need of instruction. Smith (1981) presents the text of a contract between W. H. Henderson, who had proposed teaching a school in the Belspring area of Pulaski County, and his subscribers. The contract called for Henderson to attend faithfully and diligently to the duties of teaching school for a term of “3 or 5” months. The subscribers agreed to pay him \$1 per scholar per month of school. School was scheduled to take up on July 9, 1855 (Smith, p. 223).

Private schools and academies were in operation in Pulaski in the antebellum period as well. Reverend George Painter conducted an academy at his home in Draper’s Valley. Painter’s school was successful, attracting young men from other areas of the state, reputedly including a youthful J. E. B. Stuart (Smith, p. 224). Painter, a Presbyterian minister, operated the school until his death shortly before the Civil War. (Bowman, 1938, p. 709). James McNutt of Tennessee and Charles Heuser, an expatriate German, ran an academy in Newbern from the 1850’s until 1862 (Smith, p. 224).

Smith (1981) concludes that in early Pulaski County the children of the wealthy received excellent educations. The less affluent who attended the public schools supported by the Literary Fund secured educations that were less

comprehensive and more elementary. Many residents of the area never learned to read and write at all. As Smith correctly points out, in that group were the slaves and free African Americans of the day whom it was forbidden to teach (Smith, p. 224)

In the same fashion as in the rest of the state, the Civil War effectively brought schooling to a halt in Pulaski. Once the war was over, schooling recovered rapidly from its effects. In 1880, a decade after the founding of the public school system in Virginia, there were 32 public schools in the county. These schools were mostly one and two room buildings with an equal number of teachers. The schools were open to both races on a segregated basis. The schools offered elementary level instruction leaving the "higher branches" to the academies (Smith, 1981, pp. 307-308).

The Dublin Academy was opened in 1866 by George W. Walker, a graduate of the University of Virginia (Bowman, 1938, p. 710). The academy was a private classical academy. Walker obtained the Wysor family mansion to house his academy. According to Smith, Walker's academy enrolled both boys and girls. It functioned primarily as a preparatory school for boys who planned to go to college (Smith, 1981, p. 308).

The Draper's Valley Academy was well organized and financed. It opened in 1873 and was chartered in 1878 as a joint stock company. Stock in the school valued at \$10,000 was sold and the corporation acquired forty acres

of land upon which the school's buildings were situated. This school was the successor to the earlier mentioned Draper's Valley Academy also having as its master the minister of the Draper's Valley Presbyterian Church, Rev. George H. Gilmer (Bowman, 1938, p. 709). Smith (1981) reports that both boys and girls attended the school studying Primary English, Higher English, mathematics, modern languages, and music for the monthly tuition of \$10 (p. 308).

By the 1900-01 session the public school system in Pulaski had grown considerably. There were 2,398 White students and 672 African American students enrolled in the schools. Seventy-two teachers taught in 54 schools. Reflecting the rural nature of the county, most of the schools were one and two room units. There were two larger schools in the town of Pulaski, a three story brick school for White students and a two story frame building for the African American students (Smith, p. 386)

Private schools continued to flourish in Pulaski County. The Draper's Valley Academy remained active up into the new century. The Saint Albans School for Boys had opened its doors in 1892 near the city of Radford. The school operated until 1916 attracting boys from within Virginia and beyond. The school's strength was its athletic program which competed on the collegiate level. The Pulaski Institute was chartered in 1902 and operated until 1906 when it became a part of the public school system. The Dublin Institute opened in

1905 and attracted as many as 219 students while it functioned as a private school. It, too, was absorbed into the public school system (Smith, pp. 391-393).

Schooling for African Americans in Pulaski

In the same way that the overall development of schooling in Pulaski paralleled the development of schooling in Virginia, the schooling experiences of African Americans in Pulaski followed much the same path as did that of other African Americans in Virginia. As reported previously, African American slaves and free African Americans were not permitted an education prior to the Civil War. Some Pulaski residents did violate this law, apparently with no serious fear of prosecution. For most African American residents living in Pulaski before 1865, their only education was the practical education of learning to perform tasks assigned by an owner, an overseer, or an employer. Allen Bullock (1967) argues that this practical education served an unintended purpose as the beginning of the end of slavery and eventually segregation. He states in his book, A History of Negro Education in the South, that Whites who taught African Americans fundamental skills such as speaking in English and the skills associated with their work had set in motion a cycle that inevitably led to freedom and, in turn, integrated education (Bullock p.1). James Anderson (1988) indicates that the restriction of African Americans from education imposed by Whites only enhanced its desirability (pp. 18-22).

Formal education for African Americans began in Pulaski after the Civil War with the activity of the Freedmen's Bureau. In 1866, Captain Charles S. Schaeffer, a Philadelphian, was appointed commissioner for the counties of Montgomery, Giles, and Pulaski by the Freedmen's Bureau. Schaeffer worked for four years as commissioner bringing the ex-slaves food, housing, and other relief. With the re-entry of Virginia into the union in 1870 and the dissolution of the Freedmen's Bureau, Schaeffer found himself without organizational support for his work. He persisted, however, obtaining the assistance of Philadelphia Baptist and Quaker churches (Smith, 1981, p. 461). The Christiansburg Industrial Institute, founded by Schaeffer, was known for many years as one of the preeminent schools for African Americans in Virginia (Hall, 1940, p. 38).

Schaeffer also worked in Pulaski County. In Newbern, under Schaeffer's direction, a school was organized and taught by White schoolmistresses from the North. While still associated with the Bureau, Schaeffer reported in 1868 that 97 day students and 28 night students were attending the school. Schaeffer was undaunted by the sometimes antagonistic attitude of the White population. He observed that while some Whites were openly hostile, others seemed to wish the freedmen well in their endeavors. The freedmen were seen by Schaeffer as making good progress in both their studies and their citizenship skills (Smith, 1981, p. 461).

The first public school for African Americans opened in the town of Pulaski in 1880. It was located in an old house in the Big Railroad section of Pulaski. The teacher was reported to be a Miss Byrd. Subsequently, Mrs. Virginia Mann Calfee and Mrs. Della Mills Hunter served the school as teachers. In 1888 a second school for African Americans was opened in a building on Water Street in Pulaski. This building was owned by the Episcopal church at the time. The teacher was Miss Jennie Barber, a native of Willamsport, Pennsylvania, who was assisted by a Miss Brown (Harmon, C. D., 1986, p. 14).

Also in 1888, two other schools for African Americans were established in the outlying areas of Pulaski. The Christian Hill School was located in the Dora Mountain area. Mrs. Sallie Nuckols Murphy was the first teacher there. In North Pulaski the Needmore School opened. It was a one room school like Christian Hill. The first teacher there was Miss Lula McClanahan (Harmon, C. D., 1986, p. 14).

Outside of the town of Pulaski and its immediate environs there were a number of one and two room schools that served the rural communities of African Americans. In addition to the well known Draper's Valley Academy, the Draper community was the home to the Draper Elementary School. Little Creek Elementary, Massie Elementary, Rich Hill Elementary, West Dublin Elementary, and William Gresham Elementary schools all operated until around 1960 (Calfee, n. d., p. 6).

Amanda DeHart has examined the contracts of Edna C. Gardner, one of the teachers who served in several one room schools for African Americans in Pulaski County. Her analysis gives an insight to the conditions under which African American teachers labored. Gardner first came to work for the Pulaski school system in 1918. She taught in three different one room schools over 16 years before joining the Calfee faculty in 1934 (Dehart, 1995).

Mrs. DeHart's study reveals that Gardner began her work for \$38 per month working a six month term. By 1934 she had progressed to a salary of \$55 per month and a 160 day or eight month term. In 1932 and 1933 her salary was reduced by \$5 per month each year. Gardner's contracts required her to keep the buildings clean and to prepare a fire in the winter. For these janitorial duties she was paid an extra \$1.50 monthly. The contracts contained a variety of special covenants over the years as well. Marriage would result in dismissal. Teachers could be reassigned at will by the superintendent. Proper housekeeping was required for classrooms (DeHart, 1995).

DeHart also interviewed Gardner before her death. She recalled taking a local train each Sunday afternoon to Allisonia where she walked two miles to the home in which she boarded during the week. In the one room school there, students in grades 1-6 were taught. Miss Gardner delivered lessons to students ranging in age from 5 to 19. Usually students entered school at the age of 8 or 9. Students walked to school as no transportation was provided for African

Americans. The schools had no running water or indoor toilet facilities. Water carried from nearby springs was consumed from a common dipper and outhouses were employed (DeHart, personal communication, April 21, 1995).

A 1924-25 term report from the Needmore School, housed in a North Pulaski church, also gives information about the schooling of African Americans just outside the town of Pulaski. The teacher, Beatrice C. Buford, recorded that the school operated for 134 days with an enrollment of 52 students, 25 boys and 27 girls. Average daily attendance was 39 students. The students ranged in age from 6 to 15 years old. No student was in attendance each day. Nine attended fewer than 100 days, with most attending around 120 days. The home of the student who lived closest to the school was located 6 miles distant. One student lived fourteen miles away (Pulaski County Schools, Needmore School Term Report, May, 1925).

The Pulaski School Board consolidated four smaller schools into the Pulaski Graded School in the Water Street building in the Town of Pulaski in 1895. Mrs. Calfee and Mrs. McClanahan were brought to the consolidated school as teachers at the time of consolidation with Miss Barber serving as principal. The next year Mrs. Mary White Buford joined the faculty and remained until 1918. She was named principal in 1911 when Miss Barber died. As industry thrived in Pulaski, the town grew and so did the need for more school rooms. From 1915 until the 1930's the school maintained an enrollment of about

300 students. A four room addition was constructed in 1915 along with sanitary toilets and a water fountain. The school was staffed by Mrs. Buford and four teachers; Mrs. Fannie Chick, Miss Emma Hogan Anderson, Mrs. Della Mills Hunter, and Mrs. Nannie C. Henry. These five women combined to work in the Pulaski County Schools for a total of 114 years.(Calfee, n. d., p.1)

Mrs. Buford became the Jeanes supervisor for Pulaski County in 1918. She was succeeded as principal by Mrs. Anna B. Norman. Mrs. Norman was known among the African Americans of Pulaski as the “mother of the high school department.” During her tenure as principal, two grades were added making up the high school department. The first students to complete a junior high school program were Alberta Clark, Gretchen Washington, Gladys Wilson, and Helen Cannaday (Calfee, n. d., p. 1).

Establishment of Calfee Training School

J. P. Reir was named principal of the Pulaski Graded School in 1921. Reir was a native of the British West Indies. He served as principal for two years. Mrs. Cathleen Jenkins Santa Cruz was added to the staff as a teacher that year as well. Another important event took place in 1921. Superintendent E. L. Darst proposed that the name of the school be changed to the Calfee Training School. This change apparently was made for two reasons. First the Calfee name honored Lee Calfee who had donated the land for the school some twenty years prior (Calfee, n. d., p. 2). Second, designating the school as a

training school seems to indicate financial involvement by the Slater Fund. Redcay (1935) reports that every school called a training school had been found to have received assistance from the fund (Redcay, p.13). The minutes of the Pulaski School Board support this conclusion. In November of 1935, they record receipt of a letter from William D. Gresham, Supervisor of Negro Education. Gresham indicates in his letter that the "Slater Fund would appropriate \$100 to Calfee Training School for equipment provided the School Board would appropriate \$50 to put with it" (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of November 12, 1935, p. 76). The board approved Gresham's offer without dissent or comment.

It can be inferred from this action and others that Darst was interested in the education of African Americans. Mrs. Buford's appointment as supervisor was during his term of office. A memorandum from his office dated August 20, 1925, appears to evidence an effort to improve the quality of teaching through teachers' institutes. The memorandum indicates that an institute for White teachers would take place at the Pulaski High School on Friday, September 4, and that a similar institute for African American teachers would be held on Saturday, September 5 (Darst, Superintendent's Memo. No. 1, August 20, 1925).

The year 1923 brought Rueben Harold Clarke into the principalship of the Calfee Training School. Clarke was from Rappahannock County, Virginia. Clarke began the process of departmentalization of the high school grades. The

high school teachers were Mrs. Santa Cruz, Mrs. Nannie Henry and Mr. Irvin W. Greene. The pattern of male principals continued in 1925 with the appointment of Greene to the post followed in 1928 by George William Liverpool (Calfée, n. d., p.2).

Liverpool held the position for nine years with one year off in 1931 for a study leave. Liverpool began the practice of formal record keeping, establishing a file on each student. During his service the first high school class graduated in 1935 (Calfée, n. d., p. 3).

Several staff changes took place under Liverpool. Mrs. Lizzie Ward joined the faculty in 1927 and Mrs. Hazel Calfée, a graduate of Calfée and later author of a history of the school, was hired in 1931. Both became long time teachers at the school (Calfée, n. d., p. 2). In 1937, three other graduates of Calfée returned to become teachers there. Gretchen Washington, a member of the first junior high class; Lucy Martin, who had graduated from Tuskegee High School and attended Bluefield College and Chauncey Harmon, a 1935 graduate of Tuskegee Institute, were employed (Calfée, p.4). This pattern of graduates returning to teach in the community was in keeping with the aims of the county training school model.

Harmon's School Experiences

As described in Chapter One, Wilmer and Mary Harmon were intent on their children having as much formal education as they could obtain for them.

They made a concerted effort to see to it that their children attended school regularly. Their son, Chauncey, entered the first grade at the Pulaski Graded School, later to become the Calfee Training School, in 1920. He was seven years old at the time. His first grade teacher was a Mrs. Brooks (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994).

In the second and third grades Chauncey was taught by Mrs. Fannie Chick (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994). Mrs. Chick was married to the Reverend Thomas J. Chick pastor of the First Baptist Church (Smith, 1981, p. 468). Mrs. Chick had become a teacher at the Calfee School in 1915. She taught in Pulaski for 33 years (Calfee, n. d., p. 1).

In the fourth and fifth grades Harmon's teacher was Miss Charlotte Duncan Perry. His sixth grade teacher was Mrs. Della Mills Hunter. She has been described as a "real lady in education" (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994). Mrs. Hunter was another long time teacher in the Pulaski County schools. She served for 31 years in the system, 21 of which were at Calfee beginning in 1915 (Calfee, n. d., p.1). In the seventh grade Harmon encountered a third teacher who began in 1915 at Calfee and who remained there for an extended tenure. Nannie Cox Henry taught for 18 years in the system (Calfee, p.1). This longevity is remarkable when the comments of the O'Shea study about high turnover among teachers in Virginia is taken into

consideration. Apparently the staff at Calfee School was considerably more stable than the typical school staff in Virginia.

In the school years 1927-28 and 1928-29 Harmon received his eighth and ninth grade instruction from George William Liverpool. Liverpool was the principal of Calfee School. As was often the practice at the time, Principal Liverpool also taught classes in addition to performing his administrative duties. Liverpool had come to Pulaski in 1927. He lived for a period in the boarding house run by Mary Bell Harmon. He often spoke with Mr. and Mrs. Harmon about the importance of education in discussions at the dinner table and around their home. Liverpool took a personal interest in Chauncey Harmon, believing that he saw great potential in the youth. He encouraged both Harmon and his parents to get Chauncey as much schooling as they could afford (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994).

In the absence of documentation, it is difficult to ascertain particular experiences that Harmon had while at Calfee. It seems reasonable to draw some inferences from the general documentation that is available. As Barzun and Graff (1992) state, "the historian arrives at truth through the determination of probability" (p.112). Based on DeHart's analysis of Gardner's contracts and the Needmore term report cited above, it seems probable that Harmon would have gone to school most years for about 134-150 days. His daily schedule would likely have been from 9:00 AM until 3:30 PM. It is likely that he was in fairly

large classes in the lower grades (DeHart, personal communication, April 21, 1995).

Certain definite information about Harmon's school experience is known from the experiences of his classmates and his own recollections to his family. As no school buses were provided for African American children, he walked to school, although that was not a severe hardship as he lived in the town proper. Like the other students at Calfee, Harmon used second-hand books after the White students had finished with them. He brought his lunch to school most days (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994). On days when he did not, a meager lunch was available at the school. Mrs. Santa Cruz, who taught domestic science, prepared and sold bowls of soup for five cents a bowl during the winter (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995).

Harmon's program of study was typical of that described in the O'Shea report. Arithmetic, English and reading made up most of the curriculum. The courses that Harmon took at Calfee included domestic science. Perhaps to satisfy the requirements of the Slater Fund for an industrial curriculum, both boys and girls had to participate. Harmon was said to have become adept at sewing and caning chairs. He diligently applied himself to his studies and reportedly earned good grades. Evidently his education at Calfee served him well. When he entered Tuskegee in 1929 he was tested for placement in the high school there, and received full credit for all nine years of schooling he had

completed at Calfee actually skipping a grade (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994).

Mrs. Jacqueline Corbin Pleasant recalls that not all of the times at Calfee were serious for Harmon. She remembers him as a popular and sometimes mischievous boy. She relates an incident in which he absconded with two pies that Mrs. Santa Cruz had set out to cool after preparing them for sale to the students at lunch (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995). He participated in many extracurricular activities as well. In March of 1929, Harmon had one of the lead roles of as a physician in a four act play, "The Road to the City." The play was presented by the senior class (ninth grade) of Calfee School at the First Baptist Church.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Two continued the effort to define the context of time and place of the study. In the first section education and schooling for African Americans in Virginia were examined. Education was defined broadly by Bernard Bailyn (1960) as the "entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations" (p. 14). In the early days of Virginia education was a function of the family. Parents either taught their children themselves or arranged for their instruction. The common schools were slow to develop in Virginia due to the resistance to taxes, suspicion of governmental control, and the rural nature of the state. Support for state operated schools was strongest among the residents

of the western part of the state. The establishment of the Literary Fund in 1810 gave rise to a funding mechanism for schools for White children. The resultant "charity schools" were not accepted generally. Formal schooling for African American children was almost nonexistent in Virginia before the Civil War. A few African American youths were taught to read and write by sympathetic Whites in defiance of legal prohibitions against such activity. For the most part, the education of African Americans was limited to training to perform tasks associated with their duties as slaves. Henry Allan Bullock (1967) argues that even this minimal education was the beginning of a process that inevitably would lead to equality of educational opportunity.

The Reconstruction period was a time when northern missionary societies were active in initiating schooling in the South, especially among African Americans. The Constitution of 1870 required the establishment of publicly supported common schools in Virginia. William Henry Ruffner, the first Superintendent of Public Instruction, successfully drafted and executed a plan for public schooling throughout the Commonwealth. Ruffner was an advocate for the education of African Americans, but chose to support racially segregated public schools to ensure a more general acceptance of public schooling.

Philanthropists were important sources of support, financial and otherwise, for public schooling of African Americans. The General Education Board and the Southern Education Board were involved in the campaigns for

public schools. The Peabody, Slater, Jeanes, and Rosenwald funds gave hundreds of thousands of dollars to build schools, employ teachers, conduct institutes on teaching methodologies, and support supervisory efforts among the African American schools of Virginia. Many of the schools supported by the philanthropists' efforts were patterned after the Hampton Model developed by Samuel Chapman Armstrong at Hampton Institute.

The first third of the twentieth century brought considerable official hostility to schooling for African Americans in Virginia. The Constitution of 1902 and the accompanying implementing legislation had as one of its prime goals the reversal of gains made by African Americans after the Civil War. White political leaders sought to restrict the franchise and opportunities for schooling among African Americans. African Americans responded to the challenges by raising funds among themselves through Rosenwald Days and the Negro Organization Society. The O'Shea Report of 1928 documented the poor conditions of schools for African Americans during the time Harmon attended school in Pulaski.

The second section of the chapter demonstrated that the development of education and schooling in Pulaski paralleled that of the state as a whole. Prior to the Civil War, education and schooling in Pulaski were limited to charity schools, private tutors, and academies. A few African Americans in Pulaski were taught to read and write, but most never obtained any formal schooling at all. During Reconstruction, Captain Charles Schaeffer and other northern

missionaries began schools for African Americans in Pulaski and nearby communities.

After the adoption of the Constitution of 1870, the public schools took hold in Pulaski and grew rapidly. African American schools in Pulaski date from about 1888. Before 1900, most secondary education was conducted in academies in Pulaski. Many of the academies were eventually absorbed into the public school system. Rural African American residents of Pulaski County had several one room schools available to them. Most students attended irregularly due to the distance they lived from the schools and the unavailability of a bus system for African Americans. Beginning in 1921, the Calfee Training School provided elementary education for African American residents of the Town of Pulaski and two years of high school education for African Americans throughout Pulaski County.

Chauncey Depew Harmon's educational experiences were given emphasis at the end of the section. Harmon attended Calfee Training School beginning in 1920. He had several teachers who enjoyed a long tenure at the school. Harmon was popular among his peers and a frequent participant in extracurricular activities. Harmon was subject to many of the same hardships that faced other African Americans. Calfee School operated fewer days than White schools. Calfee had no auditorium, gymnasium, or cafeteria. There was

no bus available. Despite these disadvantages, he was a successful student, earning good grades and graduating in 1929.

CHAPTER THREE

TUSKEGEE TIMES: 1929-35

In 1929, at the age of 16, Chauncey Depew Harmon set off for the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama, to further his education. It was the single longest formative experience of his life other than his childhood and adolescence in Pulaski. This chapter will be devoted to an examination of Harmon's experiences while a student at Tuskegee. The purpose of reviewing his time at Tuskegee is to provide further background against which the events of his later life and career may be assessed.

Options for Further Education

Harmon was enrolled as a student at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute for six years, earning both a high school diploma and a baccalaureate degree in business from the school. Due to financial limitations, he returned to Pulaski only twice during the entire period, once for his sister Lilita's wedding in 1932 and once for a few weeks in the summer of 1934 (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 22, 1994). The friendships and lessons of Tuskegee lasted Harmon for a lifetime. Throughout his adult life Harmon returned to Tuskegee for reunions, contributed to its alumni fund, and corresponded with former classmates and teachers. As late as 1992, at the age of 79, he exchanged correspondence with some of his Tuskegee teachers to inquire of them their

recollections of his times at the school (Gomillion, letter to Harmon, July 13, 1992).

Like most African Americans living in Virginia in 1929, Harmon's choices for a secondary and post-secondary education were limited. At the time Pulaski County offered no course work beyond the ninth grade for African American students. As described in Chapter Two, the first high school class did not graduate from Calfee Training School until 1935 (Calfee, n. d., p. 3). In 1926 there were nineteen public high schools for African Americans in the Commonwealth. The combined enrollment of these nineteen high schools was 5,729 students. Of the nineteen, only 8 were accredited. The O'Shea Report of 1928 described the limited options for high school work for rural African Americans with these comments:

This leaves the great mass of colored people almost without standard high school facilities. And it makes effective training for leadership, so sadly needed by this isolated group, both difficult and unduly expensive. For they must send their children away to boarding schools for advanced elementary and high school training, which they should receive free of cost at their homes. (p.287)

Both Harmon and his parents wanted Chauncey to attend a boarding school. In Virginia he considered three possibilities, the nearby Christiansburg Industrial Institute, Virginia State College, and the Hampton Normal Institute. He rejected the Christiansburg school on the basis of its proximity to his home and its limited curriculum. Virginia State and Hampton Institute were not chosen

because of the climate of their locations. The Harmons thought both to be sultry and humid, undesirable characteristics because of Chauncey's asthmatic condition (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 22, 1994).

There were other factors favoring Tuskegee as a choice. The Harmons selected Tuskegee at least partly because of the statements of Meekie Saunders, a boarder who lived with his mother in the Harmon family's hotel. Saunders was a Southern Aid Insurance Company representative who had attended Tuskegee. Like many of the graduates of Tuskegee, Saunders was a great booster of the school. At every opportunity, he encouraged the Harmons to send Chauncey to his Alabama alma mater. He spoke glowingly of the discipline and close supervision that was a part of the Reserve Officer Training Corps at Tuskegee. The Harmons believed that such an experience would make Chauncey a strong person, preparing him for life (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 22, 1994).

Tuskegee's reputation weighed heavily in the Harmons' minds. The school had been founded by Booker T. Washington, at one time the foremost African American educator in the United States. Washington's fame as a leader among the African American race made the school especially attractive to the Harmons. The presence of George Washington Carver, the noted African American scientist on Tuskegee's staff was further evidence of the school's quality in the Harmons' judgment. So the choice was made. Chauncey Depew

Harmon, native of Pulaski, Virginia and graduate of Calfee Training School, would attend the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994).

Tuskegee Institute and the Hampton Model

Tuskegee Institute had been founded by Booker T. Washington in 1881. Washington was a former slave, born in Hale's Ford, Franklin County, Virginia in 1856. Washington had received his schooling at Hampton Normal Institute. Indeed, Washington was Hampton's most distinguished graduate, having become the foremost African American educator of the time as well as a nationally recognized spokesperson for African-Americans (Washington, 1901).

Hampton Normal Institute was founded by Samuel Chapman Armstrong in Hampton, Virginia, in 1866. Armstrong had served as a general in the federal army during the Civil War, commanding a regiment of African American troops. At the time of Armstrong's arrival in Hampton the American Missionary Association was supporting the Butler School, a school formed by the consolidation of several missionary schools in the area. It offered a grammar school education and vocational training to the children of the freedmen of Hampton and the surrounding community. At Armstrong's suggestion the American Missionary Association authorities purchased a 125 acre plantation, Little Scotland, and converted the former government hospital located there into a school (Workers of the Writers' Program, 1940).

Armstrong was successful in bringing his vision of a “permanent and great educational work” to reality (Workers of the Writers’ Program, 1940, p. 292). By 1868 he had begun classes with two White teachers to help him and 15 former slaves as pupils. In 1869 he persuaded the Virginia General Assembly to grant the school a charter that charged the school to “prepare the youth of the South, without distinction of color for the work of organization and instructing in the Southern states” (Workers of the Writers’ Program, 1940, p. 293). Thus, Hampton’s initial mission was to be a normal school for African Americans. Armstrong hired White instructors who trained African American youth to return to their home communities to teach other freedmen to read, to write, to do simple mathematics and to work diligently (Anderson, 1988, p. 34).

As Armstrong’s and Hampton’s star pupil, Washington was imbued with the Hampton idea. Tuskegee was organized and established as a normal school along the same lines as Hampton. Tuskegee, like Hampton, emphasized teacher training in an industrial and manual arts curriculum (Anderson, 1988). Washington even directed the department heads at Tuskegee to hire Hampton graduates annually (Spivey, 1978, p. 55). The primary difference between the schools was the use of African American instructors at Tuskegee (Anderson, 1988).

Both the criticisms and the acclaim directed at Hampton and Armstrong described in Chapter Two apply to Tuskegee and Washington. Washington

often came in for even more vehement criticism because of his race. Fellow African Americans tended to judge Washington harshly, believing him to be too accommodating to Whites. In his later years Washington moved toward a stronger position on civil rights after realizing that discrimination against African Americans was mounting (Spencer, 1962). By then it was too late, the Hampton-Tuskegee Model was under withering attack. W. E. B. Dubois, a primary Washington critic, had founded the Niagara Movement largely as an effort to offset and neutralize Washington's influence. Ultimately, Washington's and Armstrong's ideas were rejected by African Americans in favor of a classical education. African Americans wanted an education like that given Caucasian Americans (Spivey, 1978).

By the time Harmon arrived at Tuskegee in 1929, Washington was dead. Robert Russa Moton was principal of the school. Moton, like Washington, was a Hampton graduate. While at Hampton, Moton had been active in promoting schooling among African Americans in Virginia. Moton was one of the three principal organizers of the Negro Organization Society in 1912 (Dabney, 1971, p. 467) . He was a devoted practitioner of the Hampton Model. In Tuskegee, Moton sought to perpetuate the normal school with an industrial curriculum (Spivey, 1978). It is not known whether Harmon had close contact with Moton. Moton's son, Robert Russa Junior, and Harmon were two of the fourteen business majors in the Tuskegee Class of 1935 (Tuskegee Bulletin, 1935, p.

173). Harmon and "Bob" Moton were good friends for many years (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994).

High School at Tuskegee

Upon his arrival at Tuskegee, Harmon was given a placement test to determine the grade level to which he would be assigned. This standard practice was sometimes a painful experience for new Tuskegee students. It was not unusual for students who had completed ninth grade in their home schools to be assigned to the sixth grade or lower at Tuskegee. Most African American schools were not standardized at the time. In many cases the schools were not graded schools. Consequently, the Tuskegee students presented themselves with a wide variation of knowledge, skills, and school experiences. Harmon was fortunate. His teachers in Pulaski had prepared him well. He successfully passed the entrance examinations and was placed in the high school at Tuskegee not only losing no credit, but actually skipping a grade (Harmon, L. M., personal communication, December 14, 1994). In the 1929-30 Tuskegee catalog his name appears on page 110 in a listing of third year high school students (Tuskegee Bulletin, 1930).

During the 1929-30 session and for most of the time Harmon attended, Tuskegee was organized into five departments. The Academic Department or high school included three industrial schools. Two of these, the School of Vocational Agriculture and the School of Vocational Trades and Industries were

for boys. The third, the Vocational Training School was for girls. The College Department included the Teachers College, the Business School, and the Training School for Nurses. The Department of Extension Work was devoted to the organization and conduct of the Farmer's Conference and the Worker's Conference. The remaining two departments were organized to carry out the Annual Clinic and Agricultural Extension. Tuskegee also operated a night school for those who could not afford a boarding school experience, a kindergarten, and its own training school, a public elementary school of seven grades (Tuskegee Bulletin, 1930).

At the time of Harmon's matriculation at Tuskegee, the school had modified its industrial curriculum. The late 1920's saw an acceptance of a more liberal arts based model in the College Department in particular (Anderson, 1988). The High School or Academic Department continued to maintain a strong industrial influence and a bent toward practical training. The curriculum available to Harmon seems to demonstrate that Dr. Washington's educational philosophy lived on after him.

Harmon was enrolled in the Vocational Trades and Industries School of the Academic Department in 1929-30 and 1930-31. As one of the industrial schools at Tuskegee, the school was governed by Tuskegee's "Ideals in Industrial Education". The 1930-31 institute catalogue expressed the philosophy in this manner:

Tuskegee Institute aims to provide an opportunity for young colored men and women to acquire a sound vocational training so that upon graduation they may be thoroughly equipped for active service leadership in promoting moral, educational, industrial, and economic betterment in the communities in which they may thereafter live.

The educative and instructional processes are coordinated so as to afford the largest possible correlation between the general studies and shop and field activities in order that special emphasis may be put upon skilled labor as a constructive, educative and moral force (p.17).

Harmon was enrolled in Curriculum A of the Trades and Industries School which was designed to lead to a diploma and a trade certificate. Curriculum A was the highest curriculum offered in the industrial schools at the time. The Forty-ninth Annual Catalogue for the 1929-30 term and the Fiftieth Annual Catalogue published for the 1930-31 term detail the curriculum available to students so enrolled.

CURRICULUM A--LEADING TO A DIPLOMA AND
A TRADE CERTIFICATE
THIRD YEAR

	Periods per week
Chemistry	4
English	3
Music	2
History	3

Physical Education	2
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Elect two from the following:

Algebra	3
---------	---

Geometry	3
----------	---

French	3
--------	---

Spanish	3
---------	---

German	3
--------	---

American Problems	3
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All trade students must elect Geometry

Shop Work

Practice	20
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Theory	2
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Trade Drawing	2 (p.30)
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FOURTH YEAR

Periods per week

American History	5
------------------	---

English	5
---------	---

Music	2
-------	---

Physical Education	2
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Elect three from the following:

Chemistry	7
Bookkeeping	5
Physics	7
Geometry	5
Sociology	5
Economics	5
Commercial Geography	5
French	5
Spanish	5
Biology	7
Negro History	5
Shop Work	8

All trade students must elect Physics (p. 31)

An examination of the course descriptions in the catalogues yields more detailed information about the classes available to Harmon. The required chemistry class was comprised of two-thirds lecture periods and one-third laboratory experiments. Stress was placed on the fundamental principles of chemistry with an effort to associate the course with practical interests. Third

and fourth year English was a study of written and oral composition combined with a study of literature. Rudiments of English, writing themes, reports and letters were reviewed and practiced. Authors whose works were studied included Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, and Edmund Burke. Geometry was limited to plane geometry in both the third and fourth years. The Physics course was a practical applications class having to do with the nature and characteristics of liquids and solids likely to be encountered in the various trades taught at Tuskegee. The bookkeeping course was also set up to assist students in elementary principles of accounting likely to be used in trades and businesses typically entered by Tuskegee graduates (Tuskegee Bulletin, 1931, pp. 55-108).

Apparently the course work suited Harmon's interests and abilities. He completed the two years of high school study successfully in 1931. In that regard he was the exception to the rule at Tuskegee. Anderson (1988) reports that many Tuskegee students never finished their courses of study.

A College Education

Upon completion of his two years in the Tuskegee Academic Department, Harmon proceeded directly into the School of Business in the College Department. The College Department had been organized in 1927. In keeping with Tuskegee's original mission, the College Department was established for the purpose of training teachers. Its formation opened other areas of study for

Tuskegee students as well. Within the Teachers College were the School of Agriculture, the School of Education, the School of Home Economics, the Trade Technical School, and the Summer School for Teachers. The School of Business and the Nurse Training School, also founded in 1927, were separate entities (Scipio, 1987).

Harmon chose to pursue a business degree because he wanted to become a successful businessperson. He hoped to return to Pulaski and help operate and expand his family's businesses. He dreamed of owning property and business interests employing himself and other family members. With a Tuskegee business degree along with Tuskegee vocational and military training, he believed that he was more likely to be able to accomplish his goals (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994).

The curriculum of the School of Business while Harmon was in attendance may be found in the Tuskegee annual catalogues for the years 1931-35. The Tuskegee business curriculum was a four year program leading to a bachelor of science degree. Majors were offered in Accounting and Business Administration, Commercial Teacher-Training, and Private Secretaryship (Tuskegee Bulletin, 1931-35). Harmon chose to pursue a degree in accounting with a minor in economics ("Fourteen Students," 1935).

The College Department also subscribed to Dr. Washington's belief that work and practical experience were essential to a sound education. According

to the 1930-31 catalogue, Tuskegee's School of Business offered "very unusual opportunities to one desiring a commercial education, in that the school itself is a large business organization" (p.40). The many different offices and departments were described as "splendid opportunities for the business students to do actual work in addition to their academic requirements" (p. 40). Students were utilized extensively to perform essential functions of the institute.

The first two years of study in the four year program were the same regardless of the major elected by the student. At the time, Tuskegee was on the quarter system. Freshman course work in 1931 included nine quarter hours of accounting principles, nine quarter hours of the mathematics of accounting, nine quarter hours of English composition, an additional nine quarter hours of the study of literature, nine quarter hours of shorthand principles, nine quarter hours of typewriting, six quarter hours of physical education, and nine quarters of electives. Electives could be chosen from European history, German, French, Spanish (Tuskegee Bulletin, 1931).

The sophomore curriculum in 1932 included nine quarter hours of accounting. Instead of composition and literature, a study of business English was undertaken by the second year students. Three new areas of study appeared in the form of business law, economics and psychology for three quarters of credit each. A second year of typewriting, shorthand, and physical education was required for the same duration as in the first year. Sophomores

were allowed one elective course as well, although they did not have German as a choice (Tuskegee Bulletin, 1932).

As a junior in 1933, Harmon experienced a more in depth study of largely the same course work taught in his freshman and sophomore years. Another three quarters each of accounting, economics, business law, and mathematics of accounting made up the core curriculum. No required English course of any kind appeared in the junior year program of study. If a student were so inclined, he or she could take an English elective in composition which focused on writing an extended essay. Other available electives were nine quarter hours of American history, sociology, Spanish, or French. Principles of insurance and business finance were introduced as areas of study for the first time. Each carried nine quarter hours of credit (Tuskegee Bulletin, 1933).

In Harmon's graduation year of 1934-35, the senior curriculum concentrated on business classes exclusively. Nine quarter hours each of auditing, business English, business finance, and money and banking were required. Salesmanship, merchandising and retail accounting were taken as three quarter hour courses each. No elective course work at all was allowed in the senior year in 1935 (Tuskegee Bulletin, 1934).

Work Experience at Tuskegee

Harmon also had a number of experiences at Tuskegee that afforded him the opportunity to develop manual and vocational skills. As required by his

chosen course of study, he completed the training for a trade. He chose to take up shoemaking, a skill he was to practice for most of his life, although never as a vocation. Harmon had a number of other work experiences at Tuskegee. He worked in the institute warehouse accepting deliveries and preparing shipments. He also worked in the tailoring and painting departments and developed considerable skill in electrical wiring and repair ("Fourteen Students," 1935).

For the entire six years he attended Tuskegee, Harmon worked not only to learn and develop his skills, but to supplement his income and pay his fees. For several years he was employed at the power house coal tipple unloading rail cars of coal for five cents a ton. Here he formed a lasting friendship with Louis A. Rabb, his partner at the power house. Rabb later earned a doctorate and worked as a staff member at Tuskegee (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994).

At one time, Harmon was employed as a waiter in the faculty dining hall. He frequently waited on Dr. George Washington Carver's table. In later life Harmon commented that Dr. Carver was the "most peculiar of them all" (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994). He recalled in an interview with the Salem Times Register in 1990 that Carver carried an umbrella rain or shine and a long glass tube in which he placed samples of grass and plants (Simpkins, 1990). According to Harmon, Carver consumed vegetables almost exclusively. Unlike most Southerners, he preferred them raw, often sending Harmon back to

the kitchen to secure the uncooked variety. Harmon recalled that Carver rarely ate meat, but ate it nearly raw also when he did (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994).

Harmon had other opportunities to observe Dr. Carver personally. For four years he worked in the warehouse at the institute, delivering and picking up shipments throughout the campus. Dr. Carver was a frequent recipient of biological specimens from all over the globe. In addition, Dr. Carver taught the Sunday School class that Harmon attended each Sunday. Consequently, Harmon came to know the scientist quite well (Simpkins, 1990).

These jobs were important to Harmon because they gave him the income he needed to pay his tuition and fees. They would also give him a better understanding of how to work with individuals that would aid him throughout his life. Mrs. Tempie Beard, Supervisor of the Faculty Dining Hall, and her husband, B. J. Beard, were instrumental in steering work his way so that he could stay in school. Harmon not only was paying for his own way at Tuskegee, but sending a few dollars home to his parents whenever he was able to do so to enable another sibling to attend the school. Tuskegee paid most of its students on a credit system. Reportedly, when Harmon left the school, he had accrued \$600 credit toward tuition (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994).

Costs for Harmon to study at Tuskegee were not excessive but were by no means insignificant, considering that he attended during the depths of the

Depression. Tuition was \$40 annually in 1929. By 1934-35 tuition had risen to \$51. The 1934-35 catalogue stated that the actual cost per student was \$150, but that through the generosity of various benefactors the cost was reduced to the \$51 figure. Other costs included \$25 for a uniform for the men and \$20 per month for boarding expenses. A \$5 athletic association fee was due from all students as well as a \$3 annual fee for the Lyceum activities. Science courses carried laboratory fees ranging from 50 cents to \$2. The estimated costs for books was \$15-\$20 per year (Tuskegee Bulletin, 1934, p. 26).

Books were a major cost in Harmon's budget. At one point in his schooling at Tuskegee, Harmon and his roommate, Calvin Washington, were taking the same course at different times during the day. Trying to save a few pennies, he and Washington worked out a system to share the book. Harmon, who had the course first each day, would take it with him when he left for class. Later in the day, he would leave it at a pre-arranged spot for Washington to pick it up in time for the meeting of his section of the class. The professor never discovered the arrangement even though each student was required to have his or her own individual book. (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, June 14, 1995).

All fees had to be paid in advance by the fifth of each month. Living expenses were estimated to be \$180 for the nine month term. In addition, each student had to have in his possession three white table napkins, one white bed spread, two blankets, and a Bible (Tuskegee Bulletin, 1934). On average, a

year of study at Tuskegee cost about \$200-\$365 during Harmon's six years there. To put the costs in perspective, the average annual salary for African American teachers in Harmon's home town of Pulaski was \$451.07 during the 1935-36 school term (Wysor, 1936, p. 57).

Military Training at Tuskegee

All male students at Tuskegee were required to participate in military training. It was in the military environment that Harmon's leadership skills were first recognized. He earned the rank of cadet sergeant in 1930 while still a senior in the Academic Department. He progressed through the cadet corps receiving appointments as first lieutenant in 1931 and captain in 1933. In 1934 he was named cadet major, a post second in rank only to the cadet lieutenant colonel who commanded the corps (Appointment certificates, 1930-34).

During most of his Tuskegee military training, Harmon was under the tutelage of one of the most celebrated African American officers of the day. Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. had been assigned by the Army as Commandant of the Tuskegee Cadet Corps. Davis was the first African American to achieve the rank of Brigadier General in 1940. For many years he was one of only two African American regular Army line officers. Davis first commanded the Tuskegee Corps from 1920-24. When Davis' tour of duty at Tuskegee was completed, Principal R. R. Moton requested that the other African American line officer, Lieutenant Colonel John E. Green, be assigned to relieve Davis. Green

was not available, so Moton was faced with a choice. Either Davis would be replaced by a White officer or the Tuskegee Cadet Corps would lose its status as an official Reserve Officer Training Corps unit. The War Department required a line officer to command all Reserve Officer Training units. In June of 1924 Moton wrote to the War Department that he believed Tuskegee should follow its traditions and have an African American commander even if it meant losing the corps' sanction. As a result of Moton's decision, the War Department did withdraw its sanction of the Tuskegee Corps (Scipio, 1987).

In 1930, recently promoted to full colonel, Davis was ordered to Liberia after finishing a tour of duty as commander of the cadet corps at Wilberforce University. Upon hearing that Davis was no longer assigned to Wilberforce, Moton pursued having him redirected to another tour of duty at Tuskegee. This time Moton was successful in his appeal to War Department officials. Davis' orders to Liberia were revoked and he returned to Tuskegee where he presided over the reinstatement of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps to full status. In 1941 Davis was ordered to duty with the Army Air Corps (Scipio, 1987).

If Harmon and his parents were seeking the school with firm discipline that Meekie Saunders had described, they certainly had chosen well. Tuskegee life was regulated and monitored to the last detail. On Tuesdays and Sundays the corps marched to chapel. Their roll was checked carefully to determine if any students had failed to comply with the mandate that they attend. Frequent

personal inspections were made by faculty members. Clothing was expected to be clean and well pressed. Shoes were expected to be shined carefully. While they were at chapel, the students' rooms were often inspected for cleanliness and contraband (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994). When traveling off the campus students were required to have written passes, for a short or an extended period. Even upon graduation, they were given an excuse card without which they could not leave.

When Harmon first arrived at Tuskegee, he did not like the strong discipline. He and Captain Buddy Love, the Corps tactical officer, were often at odds. Love's favorite statement to students about whom he had concerns was "You'll do what you're supposed to or you'll be home by Thanksgiving" (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 22, 1994). As described above, Harmon adjusted to the military environment and eventually thrived in it.

In his first years at Tuskegee Harmon was given a room in the Emorys, the complex of boys' dormitories (Harmon, L. M, personal interview, December 22, 1994). There were four of the Emory Dormitories (Scipio, 1987). Chauncey lived in the fourth of the Emorys from 1930 until his graduation. Photographs of his room show a Spartan lifestyle. Individual living space was no more than seventy square feet, barely enough for a bunk and a footlocker. After achieving rank within the corps, Harmon could have moved to better quarters. Dormitory assignments were made on the basis of rank. He chose to stay in the fourth

Emory with his roommate, Calvin Washington of Millville, Florida (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 22, 1994). Harmon and Washington had become fast friends and remained so until his death. Washington also entered public education as a career, working as a high school and community college teacher (Heningburg, 1936).

Harmon believed in some of the principles that Booker T. Washington had left as a legacy at Tuskegee. He sought out both a degree and a trade. In later life, he remarked to his wife and children that “if a Tuskegee graduate could not make it with his degree, he could always make it with his hands” (Harmon, M., personal interview, December 14, 1994).

On May 23, 1935, Chauncey Depew Harmon was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in business by the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. Six years after his arrival, through much hard work he had earned a high school diploma and a bachelor’s degree. His formative experiences were over. After graduation he left for home to begin his career and adult life.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Three of the study documented the second longest formative experience of Harmon’s life, his education at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. Harmon wanted to further his education beyond what he had received at Calfee Training School in Pulaski. As was the case for most African Americans living outside metropolitan areas in Virginia, no further educational

options were available to him in Pulaski. With the assistance and encouragement of his parents, Harmon decided to attend Tuskegee over Hampton Institute, Virginia State College, and Christiansburg Institute. He was influenced in his decision by Meekie Saunders, an alumnus of the school and by the reputation the school held as one of the best secondary and collegiate institutions open to African Americans at the time.

Booker T. Washington founded Tuskegee Institute in 1881. Washington was a graduate of Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute. Under Washington's leadership, Tuskegee Institute adopted the Hampton Model of educating African Americans. The Hampton Model, developed by Samuel Chapman Armstrong, included training teachers who were versed in the industrial training curriculum.

Harmon entered the Academic Department of high school in 1929. He was admitted with full credit for his work at Calfee after successfully passing a placement test. Harmon was enrolled in Curriculum A of the Vocational Trades and Industries School. The two year program was designed to lead to a high school diploma and a trade certificate. It included courses in English, history, chemistry, algebra, geometry, foreign language, and a heavy emphasis on shop work. Harmon graduated in 1931, having completed the course of study within the allotted two years.

Harmon entered the School of Business in the Tuskegee College Department in September of 1931. The School of Business offered a four year

baccalaureate degree. He chose to pursue accounting as his major area of study with a minor in economics believing that his training would be helpful to his family in their business endeavors. The course work Harmon encountered in the School of Business was practical in nature. In the first two years of the program, there were courses in a variety of subjects. The final two years were almost exclusively devoted to applications of business skills in accounting, bookkeeping, business mathematics, auditing and other similar courses.

In keeping with the Tuskegee philosophy, Harmon worked at a variety of jobs at the school. These work experiences served two purposes. First, they allowed him to earn enough money to pay his tuition. Second, they gave him the opportunity to develop manual and vocational skills. While working in the school warehouse, Harmon became familiar with George Washington Carver.

Like all male students at Tuskegee, Harmon participated in military training. He thrived in the military environment. While still a senior in the Academic Department, he received the rank of cadet sergeant. He continued to earn rank until, as a senior in the School of Business, he was appointed cadet major, the second highest post in the cadet corps. Harmon received much of his military training from Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, the most celebrated African American Army officer of the day.

Harmon graduated from Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute on May 23, 1935. His experiences at Tuskegee completed the formative stage of his

life. He was an exception to the rule for African Americans in Pulaski, having completed both high school and college during the depths of the Depression. At the age of twenty-two, he left Tuskegee for home and the hope of a career in business.

CHAPTER FOUR

EARLY CAREER EXPERIENCES: 1935-38

Chapter Overview

Chapter Four advances the study out of the formative periods of Harmon's childhood and adolescence into his early adulthood. It concentrates on the three years between his graduation from Tuskegee and his appointment as principal of Calfee Training School in 1938. The first section of the chapter examines Harmon's choice to return to Pulaski, his efforts to establish a career in business, and his work teaching adults in the Works Progress Administration. The second section of the chapter documents Harmon's first year as a teacher in the Pulaski County Public Schools. Emphasis is placed on describing conditions at the Calfee Training School, the state of public education for African Americans in Virginia as a whole, Harmon's attendance at the Virginia State Teachers Association 1937 Golden Jubilee Conference, and his subsequent involvement with the NAACP and Virginia State Teachers Association campaign to equalize salaries for African American teachers.

Return to Pulaski

On May 25, 1935, Harmon received the pass from the registrar's office that was required for graduates to leave Tuskegee Institute's strictly controlled campus. He set out for Pulaski shortly thereafter. By doing so he became the

exception to the rule among college educated African Americans. Writing about the effect of African American college graduates on segregated American society, Bullock (1967) reports that "Few ever returned to pour nontypical traits into the closed world of the Negro community" (p.153).

Historically, the North had represented opportunity to African Americans of the South. Prior to the Civil War, runaway slaves and freedmen sought safety and freedom in the American North and Canada. In the period immediately after the war, many newly freed African Americans chose to locate in cities in the South rather than move to the North. The adoption of Jim Crow laws and the rising tide of White hostility in the first two decades of the twentieth century convinced many African Americans of the South that the promise of the future lay in northern cities. By the mid 1920's, African Americans of the South had begun one of the largest peacetime migrations in the history of the world. They were moving north in vast numbers to Detroit, Chicago, and New York (Weinberg, 1977).

Harmon's own parents had been part of the exodus north. Both Mary Bell and Wilmer Harmon had migrated around 1908 from their homes in Virginia and Maryland to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in search of work and better living conditions. The mass migration of the 1920's had slowed considerably in the 1930's due to the Depression (Cowan, T. & Maguire, J., 1994). One can not help posing the question why Harmon chose not to join the movement north. He

had a degree in business from one of the better colleges open to African Americans at the time. Many of Harmon's contemporaries report that prospects for a college educated African American were far better in the North (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995 and Lottier, personal interview, December 22, 1994). Yet Harmon chose to come home to Pulaski.

One possible answer may lie in his Tuskegee training. By 1935, three generations of the Hampton-Tuskegee leadership had urged African Americans in the South to "cast down your bucket where you are" (Washington, 1901, p. 206). For Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Booker T. Washington, and Robert Russa Moton, the phrase had become an article of faith in their gospel of self help. The Hampton-Tuskegee leadership incessantly exhorted their charges to stay in the South and to build their futures there. Whether this point of view entered into Harmon's decision to return to Pulaski is uncertain.

It is clear, however, that Harmon's Tuskegee's experience had an enduring effect on his life and career. As documented in Chapter Three, he maintained close ties with former classmates and professors until his death in 1993, often attending reunions and donating to Tuskegee fund drives. In some respects Harmon was a classic Tuskegee graduate. He believed in and practiced many of the tenets of Tuskegee's philosophy. He spoke favorably to his family of the manual training Tuskegee had given him and he practiced the vocational skills he learned there (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December

22, 1994). Tuskegee graduates were expected by school officials to bring other like-minded individuals to the school (Spivey, 1978). Harmon had been recruited by another Tuskegee graduate, Meekie Saunders, who extolled the virtues of the school to Harmon and his parents. While a student, Harmon spoke highly of Tuskegee to his family and neighbors in letters and in person on his rare visits home. In fact, he persuaded two of his siblings, his future wife, and his future brother-in-law to join him at Tuskegee. In view of his devotion to the school, it seems reasonable to conclude that the Tuskegee philosophy may have played a part in Harmon's decision to return home to Pulaski.

It must be noted, however, that Harmon's Tuskegee was different from the Tuskegee of a generation earlier. By the time Harmon completed his degree, a fundamental change in Tuskegee had taken place. Both Anderson (1988) and Spivey (1978) document a rejection of the Hampton-Tuskegee industrial curriculum among African Americans throughout the South by 1915. At the time of Harmon's graduation, the College Department was in its eighth year of operation and was rapidly assuming the most prominent position in the organization of the school. Manual studies were still part of the curriculum, but the Liberal Arts had become an accepted part of the collegiate program of study. The Academic Department (high school) was only a few years away from closing. R. R. Moton was in his last year as Principal (Scipio, pp. 186 and 220). While Tuskegee continued to employ vestiges of the Hampton-Tuskegee Model,

the Tuskegee of Chauncey Harmon was not the Tuskegee that Armstrong, Baldwin, and Washington had envisioned originally.

Bullock (1967) offers a possible cause that may have had an influence on Harmon. The closed community resulting from racial segregation had produced an “unintended effect” of opportunity for African Americans. Bullock writes of a “demand for business enterprises within the Negro communities” (p.164). He cites the appearance of eating, drinking, tonsorial, medical, and recreational services for African Americans as businesses that African Americans could enter safely. Eventually, a small proprietary and professional class of African Americans, supported by these business endeavors, emerged. Bullock identifies the children of this class as the ones who would be the source of change by driving for greater economic and social opportunities for themselves and their children (p.164).

As documented in Chapter One, Pulaski had its own emerging middle class of African American entrepreneurs and professionals. Harmon’s family owned and operated a laundry business and a boarding house. Rush Johnson, P. C. Corbin, Maceo Santa Cruz, Bob Martin, and the ministers of the community were local examples of Bullock’s class of proprietors and professionals. Harmon had grown up with these people as role models. Perhaps he believed that since they had succeeded in his home town, so could he.

There were practical reasons for Harmon's decision to return to Pulaski as well. Despite increased opportunities resultant from the rise of an African American middle class, the Depression still held America firmly in its grip. Job prospects were few and far between for Americans in general and were especially limited for African Americans (Wolters, 1970). Harmon knew that in Pulaski he had the support of a home and family that would provide a base from which he could attempt to establish himself in business without incurring significant living expenses (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

Perhaps the most powerful reason for Harmon's return to Pulaski was emotional. Even though financial constraints had limited him to returning home twice in the six years he attended Tuskegee, he stayed in close contact with his family through letters and occasional visits from one of his brothers or sisters. Two of his siblings attended Tuskegee while he was a student there. Harmon had helped to pay their tuition by working in the various jobs he held at the school. He felt keenly a sense of responsibility and connection to his family. It was his mother who exercised the greatest pull on Harmon, though. Throughout her life, Mary Bell Harmon was a force that influenced nearly every major decision that her son made. Harmon was deeply devoted to his mother. As noted earlier, she was the matriarch of the family, operating the boarding house and the laundry business, keeping active in the church, and counseling her

children to obtain as much education as they could (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 22, 1994).

This study can only offer informed speculation as to why Harmon returned to Pulaski in the summer of 1935. Sixty years after the fact no one can be certain why he made the decision he did. It appears reasonable to assume that all the factors discussed above may have played some role in his choice. For whatever reason it was made, it was a choice that was to have a lasting effect on Harmon, Pulaski, and the African American young people of Southwest Virginia.

Efforts to Establish a Business Career

His return to Pulaski was hardly a triumphant experience for Harmon. When he moved back into the family boarding house to live with his parents in Pulaski, he found a town little changed from his last visit during the summer of 1934. Segregation was still the order of the day in Virginia. Business continued to suffer from the effects of the Depression. Consequently, opportunities for African American college graduates like Harmon were limited in the small industrial town.

During the summer of 1935, Harmon spent most of his time working in his father's barber shop and helping with work at the boarding house. He cut hair and shined shoes in the shop while he sought permanent employment. At home, he performed all the duties associated with operating a small, family owned boarding house. He registered guests, cleaned rooms, helped with the books,

and generally performed whatever tasks were required of him (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, June 23, 1995).

At night, he had another vocation that was somewhat more glamorous. According to a publication of Tuskegee Institute, Analysis of the Placement of Graduates of 1935, he was the “proprietor of a night club in Pulaski, Virginia” (Heninburg, p. 5). As one of the 92 employed graduates out of the class of 98 members, Harmon was evidence that Tuskegee was achieving its major objective expressed in the publication, that being “training young men and women for useful service” (p. 1). One can not help but wonder, however, what Samuel Chapman Armstrong and Booker T. Washington would have thought of one of their progeny being engaged in the operation of a night club.

In actuality, managing a night club in Pulaski, Virginia in 1935 was not a disreputable occupation at all. The establishment, known as the Rainbow Garden, was located on Randolph Avenue in Pulaski. It served as both a restaurant and night club. Many large bands came to the Rainbow Garden. It was the central point of entertainment for African Americans between Roanoke, Virginia, and Bristol, Tennessee (Harmon, C. D., 1986). While he did not become rich managing the Rainbow Room, the job did add to Harmon’s income and to his business experience. (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 22, 1994).

From 1935 until fall of 1937, Harmon also worked as a teacher in the Works Progress Administration (WPA) adult literacy program (Harmon, C.D., 1978, p.1) The WPA was established by Congress in May of 1935 with the charter to create work for the unemployed of the nation. The majority of projects were intended to employ manual labor. In addition the WPA engaged in a number of activities designed to train workers in new skills as well as to allow them to practice the skills and talents they had already acquired. The WPA supported a wide variety of projects including many for writers, actors, and musicians (Workers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Virginia, 1940).

Over time the WPA developed a considerable presence in the field of education for adults. The Richmond Afro-American reported in its August 28, 1938, edition that a conference of African American teachers in the WPA Adult Education Program was held at Virginia State College during the week of August 21. Two hundred teachers were present for the conference which represented a 100 per cent attendance of the African American WPA teachers in Virginia. At the conference, James B. Adkins, "specialist in Negro education", told the conference attendees that there were 45,000 WPA teachers nationwide "of which 6,000 are colored" ("200 Attend WPA School Confab," Richmond Afro-American, August 28, 1938).

When Harmon first went to work for the WPA in the fall of 1935, the program was just beginning its work. Harmon was hired along with a White teacher, Foy Aust, to start an adult literacy class in Allisonia, a rural section of Pulaski County (Harmon C. D., 1978, p.1). The first official mention of the program appears in the March 10, 1936, minutes of the Pulaski School Board. The minutes indicate that, "The matter of holding a National Youth Administration [NYA] school in the school building at Allisonia was discussed but nothing was decided, except that the arrangement was left to Mr. Bruce [Pulaski Superintendent of Schools appointed in 1936] and Foy Aust to do whatever they deemed most advisable" (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of March 10, 1936, p. 97). Apparently Bruce and Aust deemed the establishment of the program advisable as they proceeded to do so.

In the Allisonia program, Aust taught the Whites and Harmon taught the African Americans. Aust served as Harmon's supervisor even though he did not have a college degree or administrative experience (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994). Such an arrangement of administrative duties was not unusual. African Americans were under-represented in administrative and supervisory positions throughout the country (Daniel, W. G. and Miller, C. L., 1938). The program apparently was well received by the school authorities. Bruce allowed Aust to appear before the board in September of 1936 to give an account of work with the Allisonia area out of school youth. Bruce even went so

far as to recommend that Aust be paid a \$50 supplement since he was handling so many problem youth from the regular school system. The board approved Bruce's recommendation. No mention is made of Harmon in the minutes reporting Bruce's recommendation (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of September 4, 1936, p. 134). Despite his lack of education and administrative experience, Aust and the NYA program at Allisonia quickly achieved respect among his colleagues. The Southwest Times reported in November of 1937 that Aust had just returned from Richmond where he addressed the annual state conference of welfare workers ("Aust Takes Part on State Meeting Slate," The Southwest Times, November 5, 1937).

During 1935-36, Harmon stayed with Jim and Ada Schucks for several weeks at their home in Allisonia. He then rented a one room shack from Mr. and Mrs. Welcher Martin in their Allisonia orchard. The shack had to be reached by crossing a swinging footbridge. That first year, Harmon's Allisonia pupils were mostly males in their late teens and early twenties. Teaching in such a setting was not an easy undertaking. Most of the students had little formal schooling, having lived in the rural community all their lives. The instruction was mainly teaching reading and a little arithmetic. One might have thought Harmon would have been disappointed with his lot in life. That was apparently not the case. Reportedly, he was grateful for the job and threw himself into it with relish (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, June 23, 1995).

At times, the circumstances made for comical experiences. Elwood Martin, a friend of Harmon's, tells of a time when Harmon was teaching one youth to read the word, "watch". Harmon encouraged the student to look at the word and reminded him as a clue that a watch kept time. Later when the young man encountered the word again, he faltered in his attempt to recognize it. Another student pulled out his watch as a hint. Taking the cue, the first student then read the word letter by letter, "w-a-t-c-h" and proudly proclaimed the word to be "time". According to Martin and other students, Harmon served as an inspiration and role model for them. Most had never encountered an African American with his education and refinement. They were in awe of this man who came from their home county and environment who had attained a level of education beyond that of most people they knew, African American or White (Martin, L. M. personal interview, June 23, 1995).

Harmon appears to have been well regarded by Aust and his superiors. A letter from James B. Patton, Jr., Assistant Director of Virginia Education and Recreation Programs, asks Aust to "express my appreciation to both Mrs. Duncan and Mr. Harman [sic] for the excellent reports and fine contributions they have made to adult education (Patton, letter to Aust, April 12, 1937). Aust sent a copy of Patton's letter with a memorandum to all emergency educational teachers in Pulaski in which he cites Duncan's and Harmon's work as exemplary (Aust, memorandum, April 20, 1937).

In 1936-37 Harmon purchased a car from Lloyd Martin for \$8 and drove daily to Allisonia. Aust paid Harmon a small fee to ride with him to the WPA school. There are several mentions of small reimbursements to Harmon in the minutes of the spring of 1937. They appear to be for Aust's transportation costs to Allisonia (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of March 9, April 13, and May 11, 1937, p. 178, 181, and 188). Out of their work relationship arose a lifelong friendship. There was never any issue of race between Harmon and Aust. They were simply co-workers who became friends. Harmon spent his entire career as an educator. Aust also worked in the field for a number of years as attendance officer at Pulaski High School (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of October 12, 1937, p. 211).. The two men visited each other's homes periodically well into the 1990's reminiscing about old times in the WPA and telling each other of their children's accomplishments (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

During the summers of 1935, 1936 and 1937 Harmon occupied himself with whatever work he could find. He continued to help his father and mother in their businesses. He did a little farm work and odd jobs as well. He also worked in Camp Dubernwaski, a camp for underprivileged Pulaski County children (Harmon, L. M., personal interviews, December 16, 1994 and June 16, 1995). The camp's name was derived from four of the principal towns in Pulaski County, Dublin, Newbern, Hiwassee, and Pulaski. The camp, sponsored by the

National Youth Administration, had as its principal purpose to give underprivileged young people a week in the country during which they would receive adequate nutrition, exercise, and recreational activities. The Pulaski health department physician, Dr. H. M. Kelso, conducted examinations to determine eligibility to attend. Four groups attended each summer for two weeks each. The final session each year was reserved for African American children ("55 Boys Enjoying Camp," The Southwest Times, July 1, 1938).

Entry into the Public School System

The Pulaski County School Board received pressure from Dr. P. C. Corbin and the Calfee School Patrons League as early as May of 1936 to pursue accreditation for the Calfee Training School (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of May 12, 1936, p. 104). In 1937, the board discussed the matter of caring for African American high school pupils who had completed the two years of work at Calfee and who desired further education. The solution identified by the board was the employment of another teacher to allow four years of high school work (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of August 11, 1937, p. 104). The board's solution had actually been undertaken in May when Harmon had been appointed a member of the Calfee Training School faculty.

On May 17, 1937, Chauncey Depew Harmon was appointed to the staff of Calfee Training School. As the least experienced teacher, he was scheduled to receive \$55 per month in salary, three dollars per month less than any other

teacher. (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of May 17, 1937, p. 183).

Nonetheless, achieving an appointment as a teacher in the Pulaski County School System was a considerable accomplishment. A position with the school system was seen as desirable, near permanent employment. Employment at Calfee was an especially desirable assignment. Often teachers labored for years in the one room rural schools of Pulaski County before getting a job in town. (DeHart, A. E., personal interview, April 21, 1995).

Harmon was hired to expand the high school department staff at Calfee. He was assigned to teach mathematics and English in 1937-38. There were seven other faculty members in the school. They included Gretchen H. Washington, a graduate of the school, assigned to teach first grade; Cathleen Jenkins Santa Cruz, wife of Dr. Maceo Santa Cruz and fourth grade teacher; Lucy E. Martin, Harmon's future wife and teacher of a combined class of second and third graders; Edna Gardner, teacher of fifth grade; Hazel S. Calfee, teacher of biology and social studies; Lizzie Ward, assistant principal and teacher in the high school department; and principal George William Liverpool (Calfee Training School, 1938). Harmon, Martin, and Washington were in their first year as public school teachers. Martin and Washington had been appointed by the school board during the summer. Santa Cruz had begun teaching at Calfee in 1921. Gardner had joined the staff in 1934. Calfee had arrived in 1931. Ward had been added to the faculty in 1927 (Calfee, p.2).

George William Liverpool had replaced Irvin W. Greene as principal in 1928 and was entering his eighth year at Calfee in 1937. In 1931-32 he had taken a leave to undertake additional study (Calfee p. 2). Liverpool had lived in the Harmon family hotel before finding a home of his own. Being familiar with Harmon and his family, Liverpool was pleased to have him on the Calfee staff (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994). Liverpool's chief accomplishments were the graduation of the first high school class and the establishment of a system of permanent records for the school (Harmon, C. D., 1986).

Teaching in Calfee school may have been a coveted assignment, but it certainly was not an easy one. The eight teachers were responsible for the instruction of approximately 250 students, making for very large classes in certain grade levels. The school building itself was quite dilapidated, being about forty-three years in age and poorly maintained (Calfee, p. 1). There were only eight rooms for the 250 students and their eight teachers. There was no cafeteria or auditorium. The school library was housed in a classroom. Most of the children brought their lunch to school (Lottier, R. L. personal interview, December 28, 1994). Superintendent of Schools Haynes Bruce reported to the Pulaski School Board in September of 1937 that the boiler in the school was "in very bad condition, possibly dangerous." The board responded by directing

Bruce to secure a second hand boiler for the school (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of September 22, 1937, p. 206).

The hot lunch program, begun in 1935 at the White Pulaski High School with WPA funding, was not extended to the Calfee Training School until 1937 ("WPA Hot Lunch Projects Offer Real Help," The Southwest Times, December 19, 1937). Mrs. Santa Cruz, who taught some domestic science to the students, prepared soup beans daily for sale at 5 cents a bowl. The money earned from each day's sales was used to buy supplies for the next day's meal. She also taught the boys and girls how to cane chairs, weave, sew, and cook (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995). The effort to teach domestic science likely resulted from the requirements to receive financial support for Calfee from the Slater fund as a county training school. As noted in Chapter Two, Redcay reports that every school called a training school had been found to have received assistance from the fund and that the fund required an industrial curriculum as a condition of receipt of the assistance (Redcay, 1935, p.13). In November of 1935, the Pulaski County School Board Minutes record receipt of a letter from William D. Gresham, Supervisor of Negro Education. Gresham indicates in his letter that the "Slater Fund would appropriate \$100 to Calfee Training School for equipment provided the School Board would appropriate \$50 to put with it" (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of November 12, 1935, p. 76). This reference, combined with the absence of any other industrial training

in the curriculum in use at the time would seem to indicate that Mrs. Santa Cruz' domestic science classes resulted from the Slater Fund's requirements.

Supplies, equipment and services at Calfee were limited as well. Textbooks almost always were in short supply. Usually the few books available were old, second-hand books left over from the White schools. The desks were the double seat variety with lift up tops. There were no buses for African American children to ride. For the town children the walk was not unreasonable. For some of the children from the more remote parts of the area, the walk to school could be as much as five miles one way. The teachers often had to use their own personal funds to buy supplies as the school board often did not give the African American schools very much financial support for supplies and equipment (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994). County Treasurer J. F. Wysor reports that the per capita cost for Calfee students was \$21.48 in 1936-37 compared to \$31.04 for the White high schools (Wysor, 1937, p. 59).

The minutes of the March 15, 1938, school board meeting illustrate the attitude of the board toward requests for expenditures for African American schools.

Letter from Elaine Ward, teacher of the Rich Hill Negro School was read to the Board, which letter made request for installation of electric lights at said school, but the Board deemed it unwise to have lights put in at present, owing to high cost of current and the fact that the school would not benefit enough to warrant the cost of installation. (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of March 15, 1938, p. 225)

The Purple and Gold

The Purple and Gold, the 1938 yearbook of Calfee Training School, is a primary source of information about the school in which Harmon began his public school teaching career. The yearbook was the first in the history of the school. An examination of the yearbook yields information about a variety of topics. As the editors write in the foreword, they “tried to portray the life and activities of the entire high school” thinking that a yearbook “should represent the school and teach of its activities” (p. 1). Their work allows this study to provide a contemporary view of the conditions and circumstances in the school in which Harmon began his career in public school work (Calfee Training School, 1938).

Mrs. Hazel Calfee, who later became school historian, served as faculty advisor to the yearbook staff. Eight students made up the staff including an editor in chief, an assistant editor, a business manager, a production manager, a sports editor, a literary editor, an art editor, and an associate art editor. Of the eight, four were seniors and four were juniors (Calfee Training School, p. 4).

The 1938 senior class history printed in The Purple and Gold records that the class entered high school with seventeen members in 1934. In their freshman year the class did not hold an organizational meeting until November. Despite their late start that year, the class held several fund raisers in order to purchase a “Negro history book” for the school library. By the beginning of their

sophomore year in 1935, the class had lost two members to what the class history calls the “magnetic attraction from the outside” (p. 7). The transition from sophomore to junior year cut the class roll by more than half. Only seven returned in the fall of 1936. According to the class history, even with the drop in class membership, the class managed to present a series of one act plays as its project for the year. In the 1937-38 school year, the class roster had declined by nearly half again to a total of only four members (Calfee Training School, 1938).

The rate of attrition for the class was enormous. From the freshman year to the senior year the class had lost 13 of its 17 original members. The number of students lost from the elementary level is even more staggering. The class of 1938 had entered first grade with thirty-eight members. The next year the class actually grew to forty-two students. From that point on the class history chronicles yearly losses in enrollment until its entry into high school in 1934. Over ninety per cent of the class had dropped out or moved by 1937. One unfortunate individual had died. Each time the history of the Calfee Class of 1938 refers to lost membership there is a commentary about the dropouts. Apparently some of those who left school lacked motivation. The class history editorializes that “some have broken ranks and lost themselves in the deep mud holes and gullies” (p. 8). On another occasion the dropouts are described as “lazy loafers” (p. 12).

The pattern of high attrition was not limited to the class of 1938. The junior class history also details the pattern of students leaving school in large numbers. As freshmen in 1935, the group numbered twenty-seven. Two years later, the class roster had diminished to fourteen members (Calfee Training School, 1938, p. 14). It must be noted that the attrition took place at the deepest points of the Depression. Many of those who dropped out had no choice but to go to work to support themselves and their families (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, September 14, 1995).

In reference to themselves, the class history describes the four graduates as “blessed with talent in many forms” and as having “come up through labor, sacrifice, study, and bitter chastisements” (p.8). The four who had persisted optimistically proclaimed their class motto, “Hitch Your Wagon to a Star,” as their guide as they prepared to leave Calfee (p. 8). In the class prophecy the seniors saw themselves experiencing success in their lives. One graduate was predicted to become the operator of the largest beauty shop in New York City. Another was thought likely to become a medical doctor in San Francisco. The third was expected to be an owner of a chain of dance schools. The final graduate was prophesied to be a funeral director in New Orleans. None of the graduates included returning to Pulaski to live and work as a part of their future. Unlike Harmon, Pulaski apparently held little attraction for them (Calfee Training School, 1938).

The Purple and Gold documents participation by Calfee Training School students in athletics and activities. The 1937-38 school year must have been a year in which the students attempted many new activities. In addition to publishing their first yearbook, the athletic editor, Elisha Price, reported that an effort was made that year for the first time to organize the students into athletic teams. The purpose of the teams was to learn the value of teamwork and cooperation. He went on to write that starting the teams was a daunting task. There was no equipment or funds with which to purchase any according to Price's account (Calfee Training School, 1938). Nevertheless, basketball, volleyball, and softball teams were fielded. This accomplishment is remarkable when one realizes the Calfee Training School had no gymnasium and limited play fields.

The yearbook lists four clubs open to the students at Calfee. The Junior Citizen Club was sponsored by Hazel Calfee and had as its president Alphonso Corbin, one of Dr. P. C. Corbin's children. The Junior Citizen's Club seems to have functioned as a civic club. Its primary activity in 1937-38 was to raise funds to sponsor the publication of the yearbook. The Contineo Club was sponsored by Lucy Martin. It produced assembly programs and musicals. The Art Club, sponsored by Edna Gardner, organized shows of student art work. The Emanon Club was sponsored by Hazel Calfee also. It sponsored fund

raisers for the yearbook and a school wide outing to Peak Knob (Calfee Training School, 1938, pp. 26-27).

The photographs, advertisements, and publication methods used in the yearbook offer additional first hand evidence of the environment in which Harmon worked in 1937-38. In the faculty group portrait, Harmon is a well dressed, smiling figure. There are no individual photographs of the staff. The pictures of the young people in the yearbook are all group photographs as well. Interestingly, the pictures in the yearbook are actual prints that have been glued onto the pages. They are not the pictures printed as an integral part of the page that appear in the yearbooks of today. The advertisements reveal support for the Calfee students' work from a cross-section of the community. African American churches entered announcements of their services. The major banks of Pulaski are among the advertisers as are the two movie houses (Calfee Training School, 1938). A great deal of work must have gone into producing the book by hand. From all appearances its publication was a matter of great pride for the entire school.

Observations From Two of Harmon's Students

In order to gain a sense of how Harmon was viewed by his students in 1937-38, the researcher undertook to interview former Calfee students of the period. It should be recognized that the names of most of the students were referred by the Harmon family. It is important to understand that the number of

students available for interviews is limited considerably by the passage of time. Many have died and others are no longer able to recall reliably details of the past.

Amanda Edwin DeHart

Amanda Edwin DeHart was one of Harmon's students at Calfee Training School in 1937-38. She later became a teacher herself at the Christiansburg Industrial Institute. She is an historian of African American education in Pulaski having worked with Hazel Calfee, author of a history of Calfee Training School. DeHart co-authored a history of the Christiansburg Industrial Institute in 1991. For many years, DeHart has collected report cards, contracts, memoranda, teacher's registers and other artifacts from Pulaski area African American students and teachers. Many of these come from the period under examination in this study and are instructive in developing an understanding of the context of time and place.

Material provided by Mrs. DeHart during her interview with the researcher in April of 1995 lends additional evidence of the conditions of Harmon's first year of teaching at Calfee. From DeHart's own report card, one can determine that Harmon taught seventh grade students. The card is signed by Harmon as teacher. He certifies that DeHart is promoted from the seventh grade to the eighth. Seventh grade was apparently part of the high school department of the time as the card is headed "Pulaski County Schools, High School Report Card."

The recognition of seventh grade as part of the high school is verified by the inclusion of the seventh grade in the Calfee yearbook as well. The card also documents that students' grades, department, and attendance were communicated to parents at six week intervals.

DeHart's collection of artifacts includes a picture of the entire Calfee student body and faculty. In it Liverpool appears as the principal. DeHart dates the picture around 1934, a year before Harmon's graduation from Tuskegee and three years before his affiliation with the Calfee faculty. The photograph offers visual evidence with regard to several aspects of the school. About 210 students are in the photograph. The students range in age from what appears to be five or six years old to well into their twenties. There are seven, possibly eight, adults who are assumed to be teachers. The size of the student body and faculty is in line with Harmon's first year. The picture was taken in the front of the school. The building itself is of brick construction as DeHart and other sources recall it. It has a large four column porch with a series of wooden steps that acted as risers for the student body to pose upon. There is a set of double wooden doors leading to the interior of the building. To the right and left of the porch, there are windows approximately six to eight feet in height.

DeHart remembers the school as an eight room structure. Each classroom held 35 to 40 students. According to her, classes were often combinations of two grade levels. This practice is verified by the Calfee

yearbook. DeHart relates that students remained in their rooms all day except for recess and lunch (A. DeHart, letter to Tripp, April 26, 1994).

DeHart recalls classwork composed mainly of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Textbooks for the subjects were purchased and resold by students and their parents at the beginning of each term. No textbook rental system was available, nor was there provision for indigent students to receive free textbooks. As DeHart remembers the circumstances, the books were used repeatedly until they literally fell apart (DeHart, personal interview, April 21, 1995).

Like other students of the time, DeHart recollects walking to school daily. In her case, the walk was two miles each way. One year she achieved perfect attendance frequently walking to school in bad weather and while she was ill. As a reward, she received a small photograph album from her teacher, Hazel Calfee. DeHart remembers watching the White children board buses to be transported to school (DeHart, personal interview, April 21, 1995).

DeHart expresses no rancor over the conditions under which she attended school. Indeed, she appears to experience some fondness and considerable pride when reminiscing about her years as a student at Calfee Training School. Her teachers were, in her estimation, dedicated and talented people who strove to overcome extremely inadequate resources. She views Harmon as one of the best of the teachers she ever encountered either as a student or teacher. She sees him as a mentor and friend worthy of emulation.

By DeHart's account, a particularly endearing quality of Harmon's was his love of the community in which he grew up. She states that "Mr. Harmon was rare, he returned to his roots to make new roads in the field of education. He worked more and theorized less than most educators. This community has greater value because of his outgoing spirit" (DeHart, letter to Tripp, April 26, 1994).

Raymond Lottier

Raymond Lottier is another former Calfee Training School student who developed a friendship with the Harmon family over the years. Lottier was a close friend of Harmon's younger brother, George Eli. Lottier's knowledge and experience with the Harmons was gained in a social setting as well as at school. He attended First Baptist Church where the Harmons were sustaining members. Lottier's mother was a friend of Mrs. Harmon who often visited the Harmon home. When she visited, she took Raymond along with her. Lottier came to know the family well from these contacts (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994).

In 1937-38 Lottier was in sixth grade at Calfee. He is pictured with other members of the class in The Purple and Gold, the school yearbook (Calfee Training School, 1938). He had entered the first grade at Calfee at eight years of age. Like DeHart, he completed his education at Christiansburg Industrial Institute. Lottier left Pulaski to attend Virginia State College in Petersburg in 1943. He later entered the military and earned a Master of Business

Administration degree from the University of Puget Sound, subsequently teaching there and at the University of Washington. His recollections of the period provide additional information concerning Harmon's first year of teaching at Calfee (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994).

Some of Lottier's most vivid memories of his Calfee Training School experience involve the teachers who staffed the school. He was especially fond of Miss Hazel Calfee. Lottier describes her as an individual who took a personal interest in him and other children. He recalls Gretchen Washington, Edna Gardner, Cathleen Jenkins Santa Cruz, Liverpool, and Harmon. He describes the teachers as the most positive attribute of the school. He saw them as concerned and determined to inspire young people to learn one way or another. According to Lottier, the teachers used books and chalk to teach the lessons to most children. With other students, they used the paddle and the ruler to make their points effectively (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994).

Lottier recalls Harmon and Liverpool as two imposing, yet distinctly different men in their approach with their charges. Lottier assigns Liverpool the role of a foreigner trying to establish himself in a community that never fully accepted him. He was an authoritarian leader within the school. He relied on physical punishment frequently to secure and maintain order. Lottier's image of Harmon, by contrast, is that of "a hometown product" who had made good. Few Pulaski African Americans had left to attend a college as prestigious as

Tuskegee. Even fewer had ever returned to the community they had left. In a similar fashion, the disciplinary methods of the two men were different as well. Harmon would take a young person aside and talk with him or her softly when misbehavior needed correcting. He would remind the offender that he knew their parents and that he thought they would not be proud of what the student had done. Lottier believes that one of Harmon's talks was a far more stinging experience for students than one of Liverpool's whippings. In Lottier's mind Liverpool was the school system's teacher. Harmon was what Lottier characterizes as "our teacher". Harmon was the first person outside his own family that Lottier had identified as a role model (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994).

Lottier's memory of the Calfee School building are similar to those of others received by the researcher. He has one particular memory that others do not recount. As a youngster he remembers the building as extremely drafty and cold during the winter. Additionally, he recalls walking to the school early when it would snow because he had to follow his mother or father to work so they could break a path for him in the snow. Once there, he would go down to the furnace room where the custodian was stoking the furnace. There he would dry out and warm up while waiting for the teachers to arrive (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994).

Lottier recalls that the Calfee School had limited facilities. There were no recreational facilities at all. He reports that all athletic contests in 1937-38 were played on opponents' fields and courts because Calfee had no place to host them. By the same token, plays and programs were staged at the Dalton Theater or in local African American churches. Without a cafeteria, Mrs. Santa Cruz's room served as makeshift kitchen and lunch room. Lottier states that he often had a bowl of soup beans and crackers for his midday meal. In Lottier's opinion, it was the best meal of the day for many Calfee students. Lottier recounts that the school library was housed in a teacher's classroom. There were few modern books available. Most of the books that were there had been donated or scavenged from personal possessions of African American and White benefactors. Lottier sums up the state of the facility by calling it "dilapidated and unfit for use as an educational institution" (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994).

In response to questions about the quality of education he received at Calfee and theories that the education of African Americans was purposely kept at a second class level, Lottier offers these observations. First, at the time he did not recognize that the education that he received at Calfee was not first class. The differences between resources for Whites and resources for African Americans were so institutionalized that they were accepted by African Americans and Caucasians alike as a matter of course. Even the differences

between an education at Calfee and an African American high school in Richmond and Washington were almost incomprehensible in Lottier's mind. He remarks that those cities were like foreign countries in the minds of African American children in Pulaski in 1938. Second, he contends that a second-class education was better than no education at all.

"If the design was to give us a second-class education, fine. But you see, above that, we had an aspiration. Above second-class is first class. I would rather have had a second-class education than none at all because it enabled me to go on to get a first class education later." (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994)

Report of the Governor's Commission of 1939

An official, contemporary assessment of Virginia schools at the time of Harmon's entrance to the teaching profession is provided by the report of the commission appointed by Governor James H. Price to study the curriculum of Virginia public high schools. Price was a moderate democrat who maintained good relationships with Franklin Roosevelt and the African American leadership of the state. Many African Americans had left the Republican party in the 1920's and 1930's to become a part of Roosevelt's Democrat coalition. Immensely popular with the public, he was never well liked by the Byrd machine leaders, especially Senator Byrd himself (Dabney, 1971, p. 436). In April of 1939 in an address at Mary Washington College, he suggested that free textbooks be provided to all students in the Commonwealth ("Price Calls for Free Books," The Roanoke Times, April 21, 1939). Price took a particular interest in the quality of

secondary education in the state believing that improvement of vocational programs was desirable and necessary.

The commission's report was prepared by the department of education staff under the leadership of Superintendent of Public Instruction Sidney B. Hall. Hall was an instructional innovator. At a meeting of the District F of the Virginia Education Association in Lynchburg, he advocated for a 12 month school term ("Hall Proposes 12 Month School Term," The Roanoke Times, April 16, 1939). Buck (1952) credits Hall with a ten year emphasis on the improvement of instruction through increased supervisory activity by the department of education. Hall organized the first division of instruction within the department. He was especially anxious to improve the quality of Virginia public high schools assigning staff to positions devoted to particular subject areas and disciplines. These staff produced numerous plans for improving high school instruction. Fred Alexander, secondary supervisor, traveled widely throughout the state speaking to both White and African American teachers on ways to improve the secondary program (Buck, pp. 293-294).

In the commission's report Alexander strongly argued for developing a secondary program that would meet more effectively the needs of the 86% of the pupils who entered high schools and who did not go to college. Alexander listed the establishment of more shops and laboratories for vocational education as an urgent need in the Virginia public high schools. The supervisors of agricultural

education, homemaking education, and trades and industrial education also recommended the expansion of programs within their areas of supervision as a means for meeting the needs of the majority of students who were not college bound (Hall, 1940, p.48-49).

The commission's report quoted a 1930 report to the Senate of Virginia regarding the preparation of teachers. The Senate report had revealed an oversupply of teachers. As a consequence, the Senate had passed a resolution that called for an increase in the license requirements for Virginia teachers. Hall argued in the commission report that while the increase in qualifications for teachers had been a desirable move, there had not been an accompanying increase in compensation for the teachers. Therefore, the intended effect of improving the quality of the Virginia teaching force had not been achieved (Hall, 1940, p. 44).

One section of the commission report was devoted to African American education. The report was pessimistic about both enrollment and attendance by African Americans stating that 26 percent of all African American children of school age were not enrolled in 1937-38 and that the average daily attendance was only slightly over half of the eligible population. Consequently, the commission recommended that the state make a concerted effort to enroll all African American children of school age, increase attendance by African

American students, and improve the quality of education within the schools for African American children (Hall, 1940, p. 37).

In addition, the commission noted the following additional needs for African American education. Salaries had to be improved in order to attract and retain more capable teachers. Adequate transportation should be provided. New facilities were needed for the safety, comfort and health of African American children. More and better equipment for African American schools was desperately needed (Hall, 1940, p.40).

In keeping with the study's emphasis on secondary education, the commission stated that there were 107 African American schools offering high school work. Fifty-four of these were accredited, seven were qualified and two were certified by the department of education. Only eight schools were accredited by the Southern Association. The report suggested a high school curriculum that would meet the needs of African American people in Virginia. The content of the proposed curriculum reveals much about the perceived needs of African Americans. Subjects included English, social studies, practical mathematics, biology, homemaking education including maid service, and industrial education including wood working and hotel service. Just as revealing as what was included were the studies that were missing. No mention was made of algebra, advanced mathematics, chemistry, physics, foreign language, or any other college preparatory classes (Hall, 1940 p. 39). Bullock's (1967) notion of

a special education designed for special purposes was evident even in the report of an enlightened superintendent of public instruction.

The 1937 Virginia State Teachers Association Conference

In his first year at Calfee Training School, Harmon participated in an event that was to shape conditions for African American teachers throughout Virginia for many years to come. He attended the Virginia State Teachers Association Golden Jubilee Celebration at Hampton Institute over Thanksgiving Weekend 1937 (Harmon, L. M., personal communication, April 27, 1995). The celebration was a carefully planned event designed both to celebrate the association's past and to issue a call to action for its future.

The Virginia State Teachers Association (VSTA) was the professional organization for African American teachers in the Commonwealth. Two histories of the organization provide perspectives on the importance of the event. Luther Porter Jackson's History of the Virginia State Teacher's Association was written in 1937 expressly for the golden jubilee celebration (Jackson, 1937, p. v). J. Rupert Picott's chronicle of the VSTA, titled History of the Virginia Teachers Association, was written in 1975. Picott's work was written as part of the agreement that dissolved the VSTA as an independent organization and merged it into the Virginia Education Association as a unit of the unified National Education Association structure (Picott, 1975, p. 13).

Jackson organizes his book into five chapters. The first covers the period 1865-1890 and is entitled "The Rise of the State Teachers Association." In it, Jackson writes that leadership of African American educational affairs from 1865 until 1870 was in the hands of northern Whites. Jackson states that the association was organized under African American leadership in Lynchburg on August 13, 1887, predating the White association by seven years. He reports that the Lynchburg meeting grew out of a series of Peabody Institutes organized and conducted by the supervisor of African American schools from Washington, D. C. (Jackson, 1937).

Jackson mentions several accomplishments of the association during this early period in its development. One of the most significant achievements in Jackson's estimation was the drive for African American teachers in African American schools. He relates that 31 percent of the teachers in African American schools in 1880 were White. By 1900, he notes, the proportion of White teachers had declined to 7 per cent. The second achievement Jackson cites is the professional growth of the African American teaching force. This goal was accomplished by the secretary of the association purchasing books on teaching methodology and distributing them to the membership. The members were expected to read an assigned number of books within a three year period and to pass a test on each book (Jackson, 1937).

Jackson's second chapter, "Holding the Annual Meeting", describes the annual meeting held each summer in conjunction with the summer session at Virginia State College as the primary activity of the association during the period from 1890-1905. The purpose of these annual meetings was to further develop the professional capacities of the African American teacher of the time. In addition to readings, the membership was asked to "meet in conference and gain ideas leading to efficiency in the science and art of educating" (Jackson, 1937, p. 30). Some of the topics addressed at the annual meeting included the advantages of graded schools and the attitudes of Whites toward African American education (Jackson, 1937).

In his second chapter, Jackson begins advancing a theme that recurs throughout the remainder of the book. He compares the accomplishments of the African American teacher associations in the United States with European teacher organizations and with other professional associations. He draws the distinction that European teacher organizations had sought to improve the social and economic conditions of the teacher while the American associations had worked to improve school conditions and the culture of the teacher. This attitude he labels as complacency using as an illustration a credo issued by the State Teachers Association of Virginia about 1915.

I believe it is the business of the public school authorities to furnish adequate facilities for the carrying on of the work of the school, but, if things are not what they should be, I believe it is my duty to make them so by every legitimate means at my command.

I believe in adequate compensation for the teachers, but I also believe that what I do and how I do it is more important than what I get for doing it. (p. 35)

In view of events at the Hampton meeting and comments in subsequent chapters, it can be argued that Jackson was laying the foundation for the equalization of facilities and pay that was to be undertaken at the meeting.

Chapter III of Jackson's book covers the period 1905-1920 and carries the title "Facing the Crisis." Here Jackson discusses the Jim Crow legislation that followed the Constitution of 1902. He charges that the leaders of the government of Virginia were moving purposefully

to increase the system of racial segregation, to drive the Negro from juries and office holding of all kinds, to reduce the amount of education offered him, to change the content of his education, and, in general, to label him like the free Negro of slavery days, the pariah of society. (p. 43).

Jackson writes that African Americans responded to this challenge by helping their schools through whatever means available. Principal among these was the establishment of statewide organizations to help fund facilities and pay teachers' salaries with monies raised by African Americans themselves. Jackson lists the School Improvement League and the Negro Organization Society as the two primary sources of such private support (Jackson, 1937).

The fourth chapter of Jackson's history, covering the period 1920-1935, is "Serving All the Teachers of Virginia." During this period, the VSTA moved into a role of a service organization for its membership. According to Jackson, the

1926 convention, held in Roanoke, marked a milestone in the association's movement toward service as its mission. An eight point plan was adopted at the Roanoke meeting. The plan included conducting the annual conference, establishing a job placement service, hiring a professional association staff, opening a speaker's bureau, initiating district meetings, expanding the association's bulletin, creating a research department, and sponsoring forensic competitions (Jackson, 1937).

The final chapter in Jackson's history of the VSTA is called "At the Crossroads 1935-." In it Jackson makes the case for moving the African American into a state of self expression and away from a sense of inferiority and dependence. He commends Carter Woodson's work in promoting a pride in African American history and the contributions of African Americans to the history of mankind. He calls on African American teachers to take up the challenge to teach African American students that they are not inferior. Jackson insists that African Americans should participate in the affairs of government (1937).

Jackson argues for an activist teacher association for African American teachers in Virginia. He gives European teacher organizations, White education associations, and African American teacher associations in other states as examples for the VSTA to emulate. He demonstrates that all three were advancing agendas that would benefit their members and the students in their

charge. Jackson goes on to use Charles Houston, legal counsel for the NAACP, and Winston Douglas, president of the VSTA in 1937, as representative of a new generation of leaders among African Americans. He concludes the chapter with a call for the VSTA to

give full recognition to those forces which have been pushing themselves forward in late years, carry the Negro teachers of Virginia into the realm of personal security, a realm which is conditioned by their attitudes toward participation in the affairs of government, and a due consideration of the study of Negro life and history. (p.112)

Picott describes the meeting in Hampton in Chapter XIII of his work. His account benefits from the advantage of hindsight. Writing in retrospective, Picott understands fully the significance of the events of the VSTA Golden Jubilee Convention in Hampton in 1937. As a consequence, he describes the conference as an historic occasion (Picott, 1975).

Picott writes that 3,700 of the 4,000 African American teachers in Virginia in 1937 were members of the VSTA. Over 1,000 members of the association were in attendance at the conference ("Va. State Teachers Groups Counts Milestones," The Richmond Planet, December 4, 1937). He recounts that the delegates opened their work with discussions of students' needs, curriculum, and improvement of teaching methodologies. The conference leaders devoted much of the initial phase of the program to celebration of the VSTA's accomplishments (Picott, 1975).

On Friday morning, Picott records, there was an air of anticipation and excitement in Hampton's Ogden Hall. The morning speakers led the delegates in reflections on past events and projection of future activities. Jackson presented his history of the association. The research secretary contrasted the African American schools of 1937 with the schools of fifty years before. Eva C. Mitchell, Director of Elementary Education at Hampton Institute, urged the delegates to accept the enlarged responsibility of a pressure group for African American education. Thurgood Marshall, Assistant Special Counsel for the NAACP, then spoke to the assemblage about the success of Montgomery County, Maryland, teachers in their campaign for salaries equal to the White teachers of the county (Picott, 1975).

Marshall had written to Dr. J. M. Tinsley, President of the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP, in August 1937 to ask that Tinsley arrange a meeting between the State Conference of Branches of the NAACP and the State Teachers' Association and Marshall to discuss starting a salary equalization effort in Virginia. His letter explains that the success of the Maryland effort would raise the standard of living, not only for the Maryland teachers but African American physicians, lawyers, dentists, and other professionals as well. Marshall continued by saying that the NAACP legal staff believed the equalization program should move into Virginia and North Carolina after Maryland (Marshall, letter to Tinsley, August 30, 1937). Tinsley had agreed to

seek the meeting. Tinsley succeeded in persuading Luther Palmer, Executive Secretary of the VSTA, to issue the invitation. Palmer had full knowledge of Marshall's intention to enlist the teachers in the equalization campaign (Tushnet, 1987).

The delegates applauded and cheered Marshall's account of the Maryland teachers' effort. According to Picott, the executive committee chose the moment to propose a four part resolution for action. The proposal included:

1. Joint action with the NAACP to raise \$5,000 for court action toward equalization of salaries.
2. Appropriation of \$1,000 of the Association's funds to begin this action at once.
3. That each local association be urged to raise funds and send them to the Joint Committee of the NAACP and the State Teachers Association.
4. That each teacher be requested to contribute at least \$1.00 immediately to the cause. (p. 108)

The resolution passed the delegate assembly without a single dissenting vote. Picott describes the scene in this fashion.

Following this momentous decision, a reverent hush prevailed. A sense of seriousness, amid a call to greatness, came over the body. In this super-charged atmosphere, more than one teacher was heard to say, "We should give 'til it hurts. We've put our hands to the plow and we cannot turn back." (p. 108)

Picott concludes his account of the conference by stating that the proposal transformed the association from a Reading Circle to “an aggressive, fighting, teacher- and child-representative organization” (p. 108).

The news of the VSTA’s endorsement of an equalization campaign in Virginia was well received in the NAACP’s headquarters in New York. Marshall telegraphed Walter White, President of the Association, immediately after a meeting of the joint committee on the evening of November 26, 1937. Marshall described the VSTA action and the meeting of the joint committee as “perfect.” The notation, “marvelous,” appears in the margin of the telegram, apparently written by White or Charles H. Houston, Senior Legal Counsel, whose initials are written in the corner of the missive (Marshall, telegram to White, November 26, 1937). In the January 1938 issue of the NAACP news organ, The Crisis, E. Frederic Morrow describes the event as “1000 Negro public servants registering an open, courageous, and intelligent protest against the rising tide of white oppression and discrimination” (Morrow, 1938, p. 6). He goes on to say that “history was written at Hampton, Virginia, November 26, 1937” (Morrow, 1938, p. 6).

It is difficult to assess the effect of the 1937 VSTA conference or the rhetoric it generated on Harmon. It is known that he kept his copy of Jackson’s history until his death. Further, it is known that he believed that the VSTA was an important force for the improvement in conditions for African American

students and teachers (Harmon, C. D., 1956). Harmon was a dedicated member of the VSTA throughout his career. He was elected to several district offices (Virginia Teachers Association, 1957). Picott (1975) identifies him as one of the key leaders in the organization around 1953 and as a candidate for the presidency of the VSTA in 1956.

Involvement with the NAACP

At some point in the 1937-38 school year Harmon decided to act on the call for equalization of salaries sounded at the VSTA Conference in November 1937. The exact date of his decision can not be pinpointed. A series of letters found in the NAACP Papers in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress does document that some time before June 1, 1938, Harmon had taken action to become involved in the joint effort of the NAACP and the VSTA to equalize teacher salaries in Virginia.

In the first of these letters J. Thomas Hewin, legal staff member for the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP, writing to Thurgood Marshall, Assistant Special Counsel in the national office of the NAACP, states that he had "located a petitioner in Plulaski [sic] County" (J. T. Hewin, letter to Marshall, June 1, 1938). Following up on Hewin's letter, Marshall writes to Dr. J. M. Tinsley, President of the Richmond Branch and of the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP, that he has a letter from Tom Hewin informing him that Hewin and his assistant, Byron Hopkins, have "additional plaintiffs [sic]" (Marshall, letter to

Tinsley, June 10, 1938). In a reply typed at the bottom of Marshall's original and , consequently undated, Tinsley expresses doubt that Hewin and Hopkins have additional plaintiffs stating that "They said that they had many names before, but I was the only one to present a name" (Tinsley, letter to Marshall, marked as received in NAACP office June 13, 1938).

Harmon's interest in serving as the plaintiff for a test case on salary equalization in Virginia had become known in other quarters as well. Dr. Luther Palmer, principal of Huntington High School in Newport News and Executive Secretary of the VSTA, edited The Virginia Teacher's Bulletin, the Association's professional journal, for many years. In the January, 1938, Palmer had issued a statement designed to encourage teachers to become plaintiffs in the salary equalization campaign. In a series of questions and answers, the statement addresses concerns of potential litigants and encourages their participation in the effort (Picott, 1975).

On June 11, 1938, Palmer writes to Charles H. Houston, Marshall's superior, that "information has just come to me that Mr. Chauncey Harmon of 235 Magazine St., Pulaski, Va., is willing to be the plaintiff in our suit for the equalization of teacher's [sic] salaries in Virginia" (Palmer, letter to Houston, June 11, 1938). Palmer goes on to suggest that Houston make contact with Harmon immediately. Marshall, responding to Palmer for Houston, who was out of town, writes on June 16, that, "We are happy to learn of the proposed plaintiff

[sic] in the case to equalize teachers' salaries in Virginia" (Marshall, letter to Palmer, June 16, 1938). He adds that he is sending the information to Hewin, who is in charge of questionnaires to be used with Virginia teachers who volunteered to be plaintiffs (Marshall, letter to Palmer, June 16, 1938). The same day Marshall writes to Hewin informing him that he has just been advised that Harmon is willing to be the plaintiff in the suit to equalize salaries. Marshall appears to attach a sense of urgency to contacting Harmon, requesting that Hewin write Harmon immediately and send him a questionnaire. Marshall concludes by saying that, "It is very essential that this be done at once and please let me know what he says in reply" (Marshall, letter to Hewin, June 16, 1938). Hewin replied in a short telegram-like letter to Marshall in which he says "I shall immediately send one of your questionnaires to Mr. Chauncey Harmon" (Hewin, letter to Marshall, June 17, 1938).

Apparently not wishing that any time be lost, Marshall sent a letter of his own to Harmon the same day as his letter to Hewin. In it, he tells Harmon that he has been informed that Harmon is willing to be a plaintiff in a suit to equalize salaries in Virginia. Marshall explains that he has asked Hewin to send Harmon a questionnaire as soon as possible. He ends the letter with praise for Harmon for his "fine spirit of cooperation" and with an encouraging statement about forthcoming equalization cases in Florida, and Alabama (Marshall, letter to Harmon, June 16, 1938).

In a letter dated June 25, 1938, Harmon replies to Marshall's correspondence. He opens his letter with a statement that, "It is true that I am willing to be a plaintiff in a suit to equalize teachers' salaries in Virginia" (Harmon, letter to Marshall, June 25, 1938). Harmon then advises Marshall that he does not yet have a teacher's certificate but that he has taught in the Pulaski County School System "on my credits," explaining that he has a B. S. degree from Tuskegee Institute (Harmon, letter to Marshall, June 25, 1938). Harmon continues by saying that he is finishing a correspondence course from Virginia State College in order to obtain his Collegiate Professional Certificate in September. Harmon expresses to Marshall that he does not have to depend on the teaching profession to earn a living, noting that his degree is in Business Administration and that he also works as a part time barber of White trade. Consequently, he asks only that employment of some kind be assured in case he finds it necessary to give up the teaching profession as a result of the suit (Harmon, letter to Marshall, June 25, 1938).

Despite Harmon's apparent confidence that he did not need the teaching job to make a satisfactory living, his letter to Marshall evidences a desire for secrecy about his intention to become involved in the equalization fight. He explains to Marshall that no one in Pulaski knows of his feelings or interest in the matter. The phrase "no one" is underlined. Harmon goes on to say that he is keeping his interest "absolutely under cover" (Harmon, letter to Marshall, June

25, 1938). Oblique references to being in Richmond “some time ago” and “a personal chat with someone directly connected with the case” are further indications that Harmon had contemplated for some time involvement in the equalization battle (Harmon, letter to Marshall, June 25, 1938). Harmon’s letter does not reveal with whom he had discussed the possibility of becoming a plaintiff. He does make it clear that it was not Hewin saying that at the time he was in Richmond he was unaware of Hewin’s interest in the case (Harmon, letter to Marshall, June 25, 1938).

Harmon closes his letter to Marshall by saying that he is anxious to know the full details of the suit. He expresses hope that the questionnaire, which he had not yet received, would answer many of the questions that he had. In his last statement to Marshall, he assures Marshall of his full support in the equalization effort (Harmon, letter to Marshall, June 25, 1938).

On July 6, 1938, Marshall replied to Harmon. He writes that he has received Harmon’s June 25 letter and had reviewed it. Marshall tells Harmon that he also has a letter from Hewin stating that Hewin would be sending Harmon the questionnaire. Marshall cautions Harmon that he should keep the matter quiet as he had been doing. He tells Harmon to expect further contact in the early fall, but that if he has questions in the meantime, he should feel free to write Marshall (Marshall, letter to Harmon, July 6, 1938).

The letters exchanged among Harmon, Marshall, Tinsley, Palmer, and Hewin make it clear that Harmon had contact with the leaders of the salary equalization effort in Virginia, both on the national and state levels, while he was in his first year of teaching at Calfee Training School. Taken together, the letter from Hewin to Marshall dated June 1, 1938 and Harmon's comments that he did not know of Hewin's interest in the case when he visited Richmond, would seem to indicate that Harmon's first contact with the leadership took place in May of 1938 or earlier. There are no other records extant to allow the date to be more precisely placed.

Exactly what sparked Harmon's interest in the equalization battle is uncertain. It seems likely that the impetus may have come from the VSTA Conference in Hampton in November of 1937. Marshall had appeared at the conference to solicit the VSTA's support of an equalization campaign among Virginia's African American teachers. Marshall's attendance at the conference was part of the overall national strategy of the NAACP (Tushnet, 1987). The NAACP strategy to achieve equalization is examined in depth in Chapter Five. The NAACP and the VSTA had appointed a joint committee to coordinate the equalization effort. In a confidential memorandum in May of 1938, Marshall requested the members to "attempt to get additional qualified petitioners of the type we desire" (Marshall, confidential memorandum to Joint Committee on Teachers' Salaries in Virginia, May 13, 1938). Perhaps Harmon had contacted

or been contacted by one of the members to be a petitioner. While the specifics of his actions remain lost today, Harmon's intentions can be discerned clearly. By spring of 1938, he fully intended to become part of the battle to equalize salaries for African American teachers in Virginia.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Four moved the study out of the formative periods of Harmon's childhood and adolescence into his early adulthood. The three years between his graduation from Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute and his appointment as principal of Calfee Training Institute formed the scope of the chapter. The first section of the chapter examined Harmon's choice to return to Pulaski, his efforts to establish a career in business, and his work teaching adults in the Works Progress Administration. The second section documented his first year as a teacher in the Pulaski County Public Schools.

Unlike many college educated African Americans, Harmon chose to return to his home town after completing college. By 1935, the year of Harmon's graduation, many African Americans had left the rural communities and small towns of the South for larger cities, especially cities in the North. Several possible factors that may have influenced Harmon's choice not to follow the movement north were presented. One was the influence of the Tuskegee practice of exhorting African Americans of the South to stay in the South and build their futures there. A second possible factor presented was the perception

of opportunity represented by the development of a small proprietary and professional class in Pulaski. The third factor reviewed was that his home offered economic support in the form of a base from which he could attempt to establish himself in business. The fourth and perhaps most powerful factor presented for his return to Pulaski was the emotional tie between Harmon and his family, particularly his mother. The discussion of his choice to return to Pulaski concluded by stating that no one factor can be cited to definitively explain Harmon's choice to return to Pulaski. Rather, it is thought that all the factors presented may have played a role in his decision.

Harmon's efforts to establish a business career were reviewed in the first section of the chapter. The combination of the effects of racial segregation and the Depression severely limited business prospects for Harmon. As a consequence, he took whatever jobs were available. During the day, he worked in the family hotel and his father's barber shop, performing whatever tasks were required of him. At night, he managed the Rainbow Garden, a local night club. He first entered the field of education in 1935 as a teacher in the Works Progress Administration adult literacy program in Allisonia, a rural community in Pulaski County.

The second section of the chapter documented Harmon's first year as a teacher in the Pulaski County Public Schools. Harmon was appointed in May of 1937 to the Calfee Training School, where he became a member of the high

school department faculty. Conditions in the Calfee Training School were difficult. The school lacked many services and facilities. No transportation was provided. There was no auditorium, gymnasium, cafeteria, or library. Textbooks were in short supply and the per capita cost at Calfee was about two-thirds that of the high schools for White students in Pulaski County.

A review of the Calfee yearbook, The Purple and Gold, offered insight to the 1937-38 school year. Attrition among the students was found to be at a staggering level, exceeding ninety per cent of the class of 1938 from its entry until its graduation. None of the four member class were predicted to remain in Pulaski. Athletic teams were formed for the first time at Calfee in 1937. Due to the unavailability of facilities, contests were played at opponents' fields and gymnasiums. Several clubs operated in the school in 1937. They offered a variety of activities including plays, art shows, fund raisers for the yearbook, and a school-wide outing.

Observations from two of Harmon's former students, Amanda E. DeHart and Raymond Lottier, were presented. Both recalled the school as an old building in need of repair. Each also remembered the quality of the faculty as the school's most outstanding attribute. Harmon was especially praised for his devotion to the students and to the community.

A report from the Governor's Commission of 1939 was also examined to provide contextual reference for education among African Americans in Virginia

as a whole during the period. The report reveals that conditions in the Calfee Training School were paralleled on the state level. Attendance and enrollment was poor statewide. The absence of transportation, poor facilities, and lack of equipment were cited as limiting participation by African Americans in nearly all Virginia localities.

The effect of Harmon's attendance at the Virginia State Teachers Conference in 1937 was explored in the latter section of the chapter. The conference, held at Hampton Institute, was the Golden Jubilee meeting of the VSTA. Two histories of the VSTA were reviewed to place the event in context. Luther Porter Jackson's (1937) history was written specifically for the occasion of the Golden Jubilee. J. Rupert Picott's (1975) history was written nearly 40 years later. Jackson's history appeared to be a combination of a celebration of the VSTA's accomplishments and a call for the VSTA to become an activist organization. Picott, writing after the fact, portrayed the 1937 conference as a carefully planned effort to gain the support of the VSTA membership to enter into a campaign for equalization of teacher salaries and educational facilities.

Harmon attended the 1937 VSTA conference. He was active in the affairs of the association from the early days of his career until its merger with the Virginia Education Association and the National Education. He held a number of district offices in the association and ran for president of the organization in 1956.

The chapter ended with a presentation of a series of letters exchanged among Harmon; Thurgood Marshall, Special Assistant Counsel for the NAACP; Dr. J. M. Tinsley, President of the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP, J. Thomas Hewin, Jr., legal counsel for the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP, and Luther F. Palmer, Executive Secretary of the VSTA. The letters demonstrate that Harmon had contemplated involvement in the equalization campaign in Virginia as early as May, 1938. The letters reveal that Harmon had contact with the leadership of the NAACP and the VSTA at the highest levels. He had volunteered to serve as a plaintiff in a suit for equalization of salaries. Harmon's candidacy as a plaintiff was taken seriously and encouraged by the leadership of both the NAACP and the VSTA.

CHAPTER FIVE

CRISIS: 1938-39

Chauncey Depew Harmon, Sr., became principal of Calfee Training School in Pulaski, Virginia, in 1938. At the age of twenty-five, he had attained one of the highest positions open to African American residents of the town. The 1938-39 school term would test severely the mettle of Harmon, the other residents of Pulaski, and the social and educational institutions of the community. This chapter examines some of the critical events of the school year, the primary actors involved in them, and some of the forces that shaped both the events and the actions of the actors.

Principalship

In the summer of 1938, George William Liverpool resigned the position of principal of Calfee Training School. Liverpool had held the post for eight years. Since completing advanced studies while on a leave in 1932, he had investigated openings with other school systems. In 1938, he left the position in Pulaski for a similar position in Leesburg, Virginia. Liverpool went on to enjoy a long and successful career, serving as a member of the faculty at Maggie Walker High School in Richmond after his departure from Leesburg (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994). Liverpool kept in contact with Pulaski and his successor, Harmon, occasionally returning for visits with friends and colleagues there. In January, 1939, Liverpool and his wife were the guests

of honor at a house party given by Frank Watson. Among the guests attending were Miss Lucy Martin and "Professor" Chauncey Harmon. (Carter, January 6, 1939).

Apparently Liverpool's departure caught the Pulaski School Board unawares. At the June school board meeting when the customary appointments of staff were made for the coming school year, the Calfee Training School faculty appointments were deferred (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of June 3, 1938, p. 241). No record of the appointment of the faculty appears in any subsequent minutes. The minutes of the regular monthly meeting held in August are missing in the minute book. The only record of a meeting in August that appears is of a meeting called to approve a resolution for an application for WPA funds for construction of several additions to schools. Despite the silence of the minutes, the appointments evidently had been made by August 19, 1938. The Southwest Times reported in its edition of that date that the teacher list for 1938-39 had been announced. Under the heading "Colored Teachers" is the following listing: "Calfee Training School: Chauncey Harmon, principal, Edna C. Gardner, Lizzie C. Ward, Cathleen Jenkins, Hazel Calfee, Gretchen Washington, Lucy Martin" ("Teacher List Is Announced", The Southwest Times, August 19, 1938). Interestingly, the article's sub-heading proclaimed "No Principal Changes To Be Made" ("Teacher List Is Announced", The Southwest Times, August 19, 1938). Whether this error is indicative of an ignorance of the

facts or an indifference to the personnel at the town's African American school is unknown.

Harmon was pleased with his selection as principal of Calfee School. He not only had achieved a position of respect and responsibility, he had come to a place in his community where he could help others of his race. Harmon was especially interested in setting a good example for young people and in giving them a solid school experience. As principal of the school, he could influence decisions about curriculum, personnel, and allocation of the meager resources available at the school. Harmon's family was delighted with his new position. His father was proud of his accomplishment. His mother, who had been Harmon's inspiration throughout his life, was more philosophical. She celebrated his new job but also gave thanks to God for his favor. His brothers and sisters who were still in school were excited about their older sibling's selection as the head teacher of the school (Harmon, L. M., personal interviews, December 16 and 22, 1994). The community reaction was positive as well. Even fifty years later, both Raymond Lottier and Amanda DeHart recall with a great depth of feeling the pride they felt in Harmon's accomplishment (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994 and DeHart, personal interview, April 21, 1995).

Willis Cabell Gravely

One of Harmon's first tasks as principal was to find a replacement for himself as a teacher. Harmon's choice was a man with whom his fate was to be closely linked for the next year and with whom he would maintain a life-long friendship. Willis Cabell Gravely was a member of a prominent West Virginia African American family. His father worked as a coal miner in Raleigh. His mother's family had been active in the Republican party since West Virginia had separated from Virginia. His mother's brother, T. Edward Hill, had served as a member of the West Virginia legislature successfully campaigning for African American rights in West Virginia. He reportedly fought for a salary equalization law for West Virginia teachers and a law against segregated transportation in the state. Hill was able to deliver patronage positions to his family. Another of Gravely's uncles, James L. Hill, was named president of the West Virginia State School for the Colored Deaf and Blind (Clagg, 1975). Gravely indicates the position was awarded at least partially because of his brother's sponsorship. Unfortunately for Gravely, Edward Hill's influence evaporated with Franklin Roosevelt's election in 1932. Hill committed suicide shortly thereafter (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995).

Left without a champion, the young Gravely had to fend for himself as there were no political favors to pave the way for him. Apparently Gravely was a person of merit, as he did quite well in school. At Stratton High School in

Beckley, he was salutatorian in the Class of 1934. Moving on to Bluefield State College in Bluefield, West Virginia, Gravely excelled at a variety of activities. He was president of the student council, member of the debating team, a drama star, and a popular man on the campus (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995). Mrs. Lucy Martin Harmon recalls Gravely fondly. She was a classmate of his at Bluefield for two years before leaving to begin teaching with a normal certificate at Calfee Training School (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 22, 1994).

Upon graduation from Bluefield State in June of 1938, Gravely began a search for employment. He had prepared himself to be a teacher, wanting to follow in the footsteps of his educator uncle. By August, Gravely had no job and no prospects for a job. At that point, a former teacher and mentor of his at Stratton High School, Mrs. Bertie Wade Jones, heard of an opening for a teacher in Pulaski, Virginia. According to Gravely, she literally put him on the bus to Pulaski in the dark one August morning and sent him off to check on the job (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995).

Gravely arrived in Pulaski at 6:30 AM, long before the town began to stir. After obtaining breakfast at a local restaurant, he waited at the courthouse until Mable Purvis, clerk of the school board, arrived at the school board office around 9:00 AM. Purvis gave him an application to complete and allowed him to see Haynes Bruce, the superintendent of schools. Having satisfied himself as to

Gravely's qualifications, Bruce sent him to see Harmon (W. Gravely, letter to Tripp, December 12, 1994).

Armed with Bruce's directions, Gravely found Harmon at the family boarding house. There, the nervous Gravely was reassured by Harmon's friendly and quiet demeanor. The two men got on well immediately. Gravely recalls that they talked for hours about the school and faculty. After a lunch prepared by Harmon's mother, Harmon invited Gravely to go with him to meet his girlfriend. Gravely had no idea that the girl in question was his former classmate at Bluefield, Lucy Martin. Seeing her familiar face settled the issue in Gravely's mind, he wanted the job. Harmon wanted Gravely just as much. Indeed, before Gravely left on the evening bus back to Bluefield, Harmon offered him the position for the "magnificent sum of \$55 per month" (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995).

Gravely returned home to await the opening of school. In September, he traveled to Pulaski again, anxious to begin his teaching career. Gravely was given a position in the high school department at Calfee. His assigned duties included teaching French I and II, English 9, 10, 11, American History and World History. Gravely remembers "being busy about all day and having no free breaks" (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1994). Gravely recalls the Calfee school building as "an ancient structure badly in need of repair" (W. Gravely, letter to Tripp, December 12, 1994). The eight member faculty was a dedicated

group of professionals laboring in abysmal conditions in Gravely's estimation. Nevertheless, a job at Calfee represented a salary and experience to Gravely and he was grateful to have it (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1994).

Catastrophe

The 1938-39 school year began uneventfully in Pulaski. The Southwest Times reported on September 12 that the school year had gotten off to an auspicious start. School began for the African American students a week after the White students in keeping with the practice of a 160 day school year for African Americans versus the 180 day year for Whites. Nearly 250 students began the year at Calfee in grades 1 through 11 ("No Term Exams", The Southwest Times, September 12, 1938). Both Lucy Martin Harmon and Willis Cabell Gravely remember starting the year with great anticipation. Harmon and several other teachers at Calfee were in their twenties and full of the enthusiasm of youth (Harmon, personal interview, December 16, 1994 and Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995). The year proceeded along without incident for the first two months of the term (Gravely, letter to Tripp, December 12, 1994).

Armistice Day fell on Friday, November 11, in 1938. The school staff and students received a three day weekend thanks to the holiday. After school closed on Thursday, Harmon, Gravely and several other friends went to the home of Frank Watson for a party in celebration of the occasion. The party was

an enjoyable affair, breaking up around midnight (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994 and Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995).

As Harmon and Gravely returned home, they noticed a red glow in the sky as they topped a hill near the school. Drawing nearer the school they realized that it was Calfee that was in flames. At some risk to themselves, Harmon and Gravely managed to enter the building and retrieve a few valuable records and personal possessions. Upon realizing the extent of the fire, they called the fire department, who fought the blaze for hours but were unable to save the structure (Gravely, letter to Tripp, December 12, 1994).

Newspaper accounts of the event laud the efforts of the Pulaski firemen. The Roanoke Times describes the firemen's work as "heroic" in defense of the building it viewed as a "fire hazard unsuited for class work" (Negro School at Pulaski, The Roanoke Times, November 12, 1938). The Southwest Times, the local Pulaski newspaper, reports the event in this fashion:

Spotted by night patrolmen, one fire truck turned out in record time and a hose line was hooked up. Within a few minutes the second truck made its appearance along with additional fire fighters and several lines were concentrated on the blaze.

It was soon found that nothing could stop the flames' progress and efforts were bent upon saving other structures near the ill fated building.

Meanwhile, a huge crowd, attracted by the two alarms and the flames which shot over a hundred feet above the two story structure, gathered and were treated to one of the most spectacular blazes Pulaski has had in years (Fire Destroys Calfee School, The Southwest Times, November 11, 1938).

The Southwest Times went on to say that “the origin of the fire had not been determined, although it was believed to have started next to the roof” (Fire Destroys Calfee School, The Southwest Times, November 11, 1938). This conclusion seems to be supported by pictures of the building in the possession of the Harmon family and by Gravely’s account of the event. The pictures show a building left with essentially no roof at all. One small portion of a single gable clings precariously to a wall. A photograph of the interior reveals a severely damaged stairwell. Gravely remembers being able to enter the first floor of the building after the fire had been extinguished to attempt to save records and personal possessions but not being able to gain access to the second floor because of the extensive damage (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995). Harmon speculated that the cause was faulty wiring in the second floor (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994).

According to both Gravely and Raymond Lottier, there were whispered accusations from Whites that Gravely and Harmon may have been connected with the fire (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995 and Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994). Similarly, some African Americans believed that Whites may have set the fire (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994). Gravely and Harmon’s widow are emphatic that neither Gravely nor Harmon had anything whatsoever to do with the cause of the fire. They point to their whereabouts being known to several people at the time the fire broke out

as well as their empathy for young people as evidence they could not have possibly had any involvement with the fire's origin (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994 and Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995). Their contention is supported by the absence of any official charges ever having been placed by authorities against any party, African American or White.

The fire was a disastrous event for the African American students of Pulaski and their teachers. Their school was completely unusable. No readily available alternative housing existed. The African American students could not be educated with the White students because Jim Crow laws and social custom prohibited the mixing of the races in school. The rural schools were full and too widely dispersed about the county, to say nothing of lacking the seating capacity to handle the African American students. This was the challenge facing the twenty-five year old principal, his staff, and the school community they served.

Indifference

Harmon immediately set about finding a place for the students to have school. He believed strongly that the year should not be allowed to go to waste because of the fire. Harmon did not expect an enthusiastic effort from the superintendent, Haynes Bruce, and the school board chairman, E. T. Howard, to secure housing for the school. He believed that these two men had been reluctant to allocate resources to African American students and their teachers in the past and that they probably would be again (Harmon, L. M., December 16,

1994). Mrs. Harmon, Gravely, and Lottier all cite the same incidents as an example of proof of the indifference or hostility of the White school officials. It appears that Harmon requisitioned supplies from the school board on several occasions. Bruce apparently sent Harmon a catalogue in reply telling him that he could order them as well as the school board could. On another occasion, he was refused funds for science equipment and materials (Harmon, L. M. personal interview, December 16, 1994; Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995, and Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994).

If it was indifference and hostility that Harmon expected, he was not to be disappointed. For a week and a half, he sought places for the students to have class. In a statement reported by The Southwest Times on November 20, 1938, Harmon said

I have searched this town in an effort to find a place fit for the students to hold classes and the only possible places were considered by the head of the school board and the superintendent to be too expensive, or were not considered at all (Principal of Colored School Appeals to Pulaski Citizens in Effort to Reopen Classes, The Southwest Times, November 20, 1938).

Cost appears to have been a major factor in the conflict between Harmon and the White school officials. The Southwest Times went on to report that:

Asserting the expense of maintaining class schedules would amount to approximately \$10 monthly, Harmon claimed he had received no cooperation from the board and it appeared that one year would be lost from school by the 240-odd pupils unless some arrangement was made immediately. [Followed later in the article by this statement:] 'Mr. Howard, chairman of the school board, has looked with disfavor on every plan I have offered, yet he has made no suggestion himself. We could have used the basement of the

Baptist Church on Magazine Street, but Mr. Bruce thought it would cost too much to build an outside toilet and partition the interior. The trustees said they felt a flue should be fixed to make it safe and asked only for rent that we give them enough of our fuel to heat the church on Sunday and donate the partitions when we left.

A colored lodge building basement needed only the installation of a toilet to make it usable, but apparently the school board thought us unworthy of such a small expenditure. If our former building had been kept in proper repair, it would have taken three times the amount mentioned monthly for a substitute school which is so badly needed now. ("Principal of Colored School Appeals to Pulaski Citizens in Effort to Reopen Classes", The Southwest Times, November 20, 1995)

Harmon's comments are remarkable for several reasons. First, they appear to be somewhat sudden, coming only nine days after the fire. Second, they are most straightforward for an African American speaking of his employer in Virginia in 1938. Harmon's comments beg the questions, why so quickly and why so vociferously? To challenge the situation so quickly and so vociferously was to throw down the gauntlet before the White school officials. One can not escape asking the question, why?

After 57 years have passed along with many of the actors in the events, it can not be ascertained with any degree of certainty why Harmon chose to speak out when and how he did. The researcher, however, can offer informed reasoning as to why Harmon acted when and how he did. The reasoning and the data supporting it follow in the next section.

Opportunity

When one looks at the information that is available today, one possible conclusion about Harmon's public statement that appears reasonable is that he may have intended to provoke a fight with the White establishment. Indeed, it appears that he may have seen the school's burning as an opportunity in disguise. Before he could take advantage of the opportunity, however, he had to take care of the immediate needs of his students and teachers.

Gravely writes:

The primary task before us was to find a place in which to continue classes for all the Black children in the city. This was managed by securing the cooperation of two local churches and a lodge group. The elementary classes were held in the First Baptist Church, Chauncey's family church, and the New Century Methodist Church on Main Street. The high school classes were held in a lodge hall on the second floor of a building which had a restaurant on the second floor. (Gravely, letter to Tripp, December 12, 1994)

This arrangement is confirmed from other sources as well. Lottier recalls "going to school wherever we could find a place large enough to hold a class. I remember going to school in the Methodist Church on West Main Street. I remember going to school in the Odd Fellows Hall" (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994). The December 13 minutes of the Pulaski School Board offer the following record.

Mr. Howard told the Board that since the fire at Calfee Training School, the pupils from this school were now being taken care of in basements of two Negro churches in town and the second floor of one of the Negro lodge buildings. (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of December 13, 1938, p. 277)

The minutes go on to reveal that, out of a feeling that they were “morally bound to,” the board did agree to the terms that Harmon described in his remarks printed in The Southwest Times. In fact, the board authorized Bruce to take out a \$3,000 insurance policy on First Baptist Church (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of December 13, 1938, p. 277).

Local Support

With the immediate needs of the children for a school temporarily met, Harmon turned his attention toward permanently ameliorating school conditions for African American students and their teachers. Gravely’s record goes on:

While we were trying to operate under these very adverse conditions, the school board seemed to be dragging its feet about what to do about rebuilding and making plans for the future. In the meantime, Chauncey with the cooperation of Dr. P. C. Corbin, a local physician and a very militant force in trying to secure for all Black children the same opportunities, began trying to galvanize the Black community in fighting to use this situation as a chance to secure for themselves the best possible educational advantages that they could. (Gravely, letter to Tripp, December 12, 1994)

Corbin’s long-standing interest in schooling for African American students has been documented previously. He had served as president of the Calfee Parent Teacher Association (PTA). In 1936, he had petitioned the school board to upgrade Calfee School to accredited status. He had served actively in a variety of leadership roles in the local chapter of the NAACP and he was respected by

both African American and White Pulaskians. In short, Corbin was well positioned to assist Harmon in his efforts.

Five days before Harmon's remarks were printed in The Southwest Times on November 20, the paper published a letter to the editor from Corbin. In his letter, Corbin lays out the basic issues before the community. First, he makes the case that the African American school needs were severe and had been so for some time saying:

...it was quite unfortunate that so much time had to lapse until the building we formerly occupied became so defective and dilapidated that it became self-destructive.

In previous years it so happened that whenever we attempted to carry out a school building program, the fund would always become exhausted at the conclusion of all other projects and that naturally left our school on the waiting list. (Corbin, "Open Forum", The Southwest Times, November 15, 1938)

Corbin goes on to assert that money should no longer be the determining issue in school improvement. Referring to federal monies available for school construction through the Public Works Administration (PWA) and to the impending construction of the Applachian Power Company Dam (known today as the Claytor Lake Dam), Corbin says "there is absolutely no cause for any hesitation on the part of anyone concerned in carrying out whatever program that is necessary to give the Negroes in the county the kind of building and equipment is needed" (Corbin, "Open Forum", The Southwest Times, November 15, 1938). He argues further that a consolidated school located in Pulaski or

some central point in the county would actually save the school board money in the long run. Corbin concludes with an appeal to the better nature of the White community, urging the school authorities to follow the Golden Rule and pledging the cooperation of the African American citizens in any plan for advancement (Corbin, "Open Forum", The Southwest Times, November 15, 1938).

Corbin's assertions are supported by contemporary records. In the 1930's, The Roanoke Times served as the unofficial regional newspaper of record, covering events from all over Southwest Virginia as well as those that occurred within the immediate environs of the Roanoke Valley. A review of the pages of the Times shows that Corbin had observed circumstances accurately. Communities throughout the region were planning, designing, constructing, and opening new schools ("Grant Accepted by Board [Roanoke County]," The Roanoke Times, July 2, 1938 and "New High School at Floyd," The Roanoke Times, December 4, 1938). The day before Corbin's letter appeared in The Southwest Times, The Roanoke Times reported that public school building in Virginia totaled nearly \$10,000,000, affecting 60 of Virginia's then 100 counties and a half dozen cities. The paper quotes Superintendent of Public Instruction Sidney Hall as attributing the construction boom to "the fact that the PWA [Public Works Administration, a Depression era federal agency that funded capital projects as an economic stimulus] provides the ready cash, which is not available in ordinary times" ("Public School Building in State Totals Nearly

\$10,000,000," The Roanoke Times, November 14, 1938). As reported in Chapter One of the study, the Appalachian Power Company had begun construction in 1937 of what was to become known as the Claytor Lake Dam. Pulaski County Treasurer J. Frank Wysor had stated in his annual report for 1936-37 that the cost of the dam was projected at \$10,000,000, much of which was expected to be spent locally on labor and materials (Wysor, 1937, p. 55-56).

Indeed, the Pulaski School Board itself had been developing a capital improvement plan for its own schools for some time. As early as July of 1935, the board had authorized Superintendent E. L. Darst to apply for a federal grant in aid to finance construction of several projects. Most of these projects were one room additions to existing rural schools. The application also included a proposal for an auditorium for Calfee Training School (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of July 30, 1935, p. 73). Almost a year later in June of 1936, the projects are mentioned again and a set of resolutions prepared for the PWA authorities appear in the school board minutes. One resolution describes the Calfee Training School as a school of eight rooms with seven teachers and an enrollment of 275 children. The resolution goes on to say that "The need for an auditorium or assembly hall of some kind for the colored people has long been recognized and considered a necessary thing by the school board" (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of June 13, 1936, p. 122). The slow progress on the projects apparently resulted from the injury of Superintendent Darst in a car

wreck in December of 1935. Darst died in January of 1936 and the board was preoccupied with securing a successor until February 1936 when Haynes H. Bruce, a professor at the University of Virginia, was appointed (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of December 22, 1935, January 7, 1936 and February 13, 1936, pp. 83, 85, and 95).

At the July meeting in 1936, Superintendent Bruce presented the board with two options for a new plan for a building program. Item 10 in Program Number One is recorded in the minutes as follows:

The construction of an entirely new plant of 11 rooms for Calfee Training School on a site of approximately 8 acres located just north of the present building at an estimated cost of \$30,000. This would involve abandonment of the present unsatisfactory plant. The proposed building would provide for an assembly hall in the basement. The construction of this building would be the first step toward accrediting the colored school and the additional yearly expenditure for 3 teachers due to the inclusion of an industrial department. The additional yearly expenditure for maintenance and operation over the present system would approximate \$2,000. (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of July 18, 1936, p. 126).

Item Six in Program Number Two is presented in the minutes with this description:

Addition of 2 rooms at Calfee Training School at a cost of approximately \$6,000. The Board is aware that such an addition is a shortsighted policy due to the inadequacy of the location and the present condition of the existing building. The alternative is to start the nucleus of a future building program by the construction of 4 rooms at a distance of approximately 2,000 feet from the present location, with a view to eventual abandonment of the present plant. The latter plan would involve capital outlay of approximately \$10,000. (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of July 18, 1936, p. 126).

By August of 1938 the board's plans had become clearer. In its August 4 edition and again in its August 26 edition, The Southwest Times reported on the board's plans. On August 4, the paper stated that the school board had received formal notice of a grant to aid in the construction and modernization of school buildings in Pulaski. The article records that the project included a "negro school building" ("Pulaski Receives Formal PWA Aid For New Schools, The Southwest Times, August 4, 1938). The August 26 article, announcing receipt of a Literary Fund loan, includes this statement: "A new school for the colored children will also be built in Pulaski, relieving the overcrowded situation of the present building" ("School Loan Approved", The Southwest Times, August 26, 1938). It would seem that not much relief would be obtained from the new building as it had been reduced in size to eight rooms, no larger than the structure that was to burn on November 10. Despite the reduced size, plans to replace the building had moved forward.

Herein lay what was to become one of the fundamental issues that concerned Harmon, Corbin, and other citizens of Pulaski, both African American and White. What improvements would be made to African American schools? The fire in November 1938 had rendered moot the question of whether to replace the school. That had to be done. The question before the community had been transformed from "should a new school be built" to "of quality would the new school be"?

Harmon could gather a feeling of support not only from Corbin and the knowledge that plans to improve school facilities for African Americans already were underway, but from other, less expected, sources as well. The same day as Corbin's letter to the editor appeared in The Southwest Times the newspaper ran an editorial in which it urged "a new building [that] will be adequate for all needs" and ended with a call for school officials to "do their utmost to provide for the best interests of the colored people" (New Colored School, The Southwest Times, November 15, 1938). The editorial was unusual in two regards. First, the paper seldom commented editorially on local issues, reserving its interest for events on the world stage. Second, the editorial marked the only time in three years the paper commented on the affairs of the African American citizenry.

Other sources of support from the majority community emerged after Harmon's public statements. Several civic clubs responded to Harmon's comments with resolutions urging that the school board move quickly to build a school that would meet the instructional needs of African American students as well as provide safe and comfortable quarters for the students and their teachers. The Roanoke Times reported in its November 23 edition that:

Resolutions urging the county school board to build an 11-room structure for the colored people of Pulaski and to provide manual training and domestic science departments have been drafted by the Rotary Club, churches, civic and fraternal groups it was learned today. The action followed an announcement that the new colored school would have the same number of rooms as the old one which was recently destroyed by fire. ("Resolution Urges Colored School", The Roanoke Times, November 23, 1938)

The Southwest Times reported on December 2, 1938 that the Senior and Junior Women's Clubs had adopted similar resolutions ("Adequate Colored School Building Favored by Clubs", The Southwest Times, December 2, 1938). Harmon had actually met with several leaders of these clubs who offered support in the form of supplies and materials as well as words of encouragement (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 16, 1994). The Roanoke Times ran a second article on December 9, 1938, in which it noted that the governing board of the Music Club had announced resolutions calling upon the school board to provide adequate facilities. The Roanoke paper went on to say that "Similar resolutions have been passed by practically all local organizations since the colored school was destroyed by fire several weeks ago" ("Pulaski Club Urges Adequate Negro School, The Roanoke Times, December 9, 1938).

External Support

While Harmon could be heartened by the support of Dr. Corbin, the editorial position of The Southwest Times, public opinion, the apparent availability of funding for a new school, and progress on the development of plans for a school, it is important to note that he was receiving encouragement from sources outside Pulaski as well. As documented in Chapter Four, Harmon had communicated with officials of the NAACP at both the national and state levels and with officials in the Virginia State Teachers Association in the spring of 1938. From his correspondence with Thurgood Marshall, it is clear that he

had contemplated becoming involved in legal action to equalize salaries for African American teachers in Virginia. The NAACP was not only involved in salary equalization, however. It had become interested in equalization of facilities as well (Hewin, letter to Marshall, December 17, 1938).

In order to understand Harmon's involvement with the NAACP, it is necessary to review briefly the history of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and its efforts in school equalization. In his book, The NAACP's Legal Strategy against Segregated Education, 1925-1950, Mark V. Tushnet (1987) gives an overview of the development of the NAACP's involvement in school equalization as a precursor to its efforts toward desegregation. Tushnet argues that while some NAACP leaders had an interest in pursuing litigation as a means of desegregation of many aspects of American society including public education for many years, it was not until the organization received a grant of \$100,000 from the Garland Fund in 1930 that an NAACP "school campaign" actually began to take shape (p. 13). Initially, the "school campaign" was only a part of the broad based constitutional challenges to all forms of racial segregation that the NAACP was mounting under the leadership of Nathan Margold, a White attorney and associate of Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter (p.15). Margold had advanced the concept of equalization of schools by turning the rubric of "separate but equal" expressed in Plessy v. Ferguson to the advantage of African Americans. Margold believed that strict enforcement of the doctrine of

“separate but equal” could improve social and educational conditions for African Americans. In Margold’s assessment, rigorous application of Plessy could make a dramatic difference in the South where some states did not even provide certain educational services at all, much less equal services.

In 1934, Margold was replaced as NAACP counsel by Charles Houston. Houston, who was African American, had served as dean of the Howard Law School since 1929. Almost immediately after his appointment, Houston had set out to train a cadre of African American attorneys who he hoped would challenge the legal foundations of segregation. Among Houston’s students at Howard was Thurgood Marshall, who was later to become Houston’s assistant and who would eventually replace Houston himself at the NAACP (Kluger, 1975).

As the NAACP’s counsel, Houston set the agenda for litigation by the Association. Tushnet (1987) writes that Houston placed education high on that agenda. He quotes Houston as writing that “Education...is a preparation for the competition for life.” and that “poor education handicaps an individual in the competition” (p. 34). Houston also had pragmatic reasons for wanting the field of education high on his litigation agenda. Teachers were the largest professional group in the African American communities. Successful salary equalization suits would strengthen the NAACP through the mobilization of this large and educated group (p. 42).

Houston brought Thurgood Marshall onto the staff of the NAACP as a full time assistant in 1936. Marshall had attracted Houston's attention through his activity in NAACP work in the Washington, D. C. and Baltimore, Maryland area. As the NAACP assistant special counsel, Marshall continued to operate in the Maryland area where he won several salary equalization cases in 1936 and 1937. Marshall chose to work in the Maryland area for three reasons. First, he was familiar with the area and had many contacts who could help him in his work. Second, Maryland had expressly discriminatory practices with respect to teacher salaries including published salary scales with differentials ascribed solely to race. Third, Maryland teachers had the protection of a tenure law (Beezer, 1986).

Having achieved some success in Maryland, Marshall turned his attention to Virginia. In August of 1937 Marshall wrote to Dr. J. M. Tinsley, President of the Virginia Conference of the Branches of the NAACP, to tell him of the success of the Maryland suits and to inquire whether Virginia might be ready to undertake a similar equalization program. Marshall writes in his letter that "We believe this effort should next go into Virginia and North Carolina" (Marshall, letter to Tinsley, August 30, 1937).

Following up on Marshall's work, Houston wrote to L. F. Palmer, principal of Huntington High School in Newport News and President of the Virginia Teachers Association to request an invitation to speak at the 1937 VSTA

Conference in Hampton (Houston, letter to Palmer, October 15, 1937). Palmer agreed to the arrangement two weeks later in a letter of reply to Houston (Palmer, letter to Houston, October 31, 1937). A letter from Houston to Palmer dated November 3, 1937 confirmed Marshall as the speaker and documents Houston's own speaking engagement in Hampton on the date of the letter (Houston, letter to Palmer, November 3, 1937). The events of the 1937 VSTA Conference are detailed in Chapter Four and do not require repeating here. It is sufficient to say that through the 1937 VSTA Conference, the NAACP and the VSTA entered into a partnership to equalize salaries for African American teachers in Virginia. As an attendee at that conference, Harmon was apparently moved to become a part of the equalization campaign. The NAACP appears to have become a sustaining force in his willingness to take risks in Pulaski.

Over time, the NAACP's strategy would evolve from using Plessy v. Ferguson to force the equalization of individual schools and school systems into an all out attack on school segregation. Marshall was interested in litigating cases that could serve as precedents for entire states. Other African Americans both within the NAACP leadership and outside its circle, wanted to continue to pursue individual cases. They were viewed as easily won and immediately profitable to the litigants and their community. Others advocated for the all out attack arguing that the sheer number of school districts made equalization a process that required too many resources to complete (Tushnet, 1987).

About the time the school fight in Pulaski erupted, a precedent setting case was decided. In December of 1938, the Supreme Court ruled that Lloyd Gaines, an applicant to the University of Missouri Law School, had a right to a legal education equal to those made available to Whites. Tushnet (1987) writes that, in doing so, the Court had given the NAACP its first decision eroding the principle of "separate but equal". Both the White press and the African American press saw the decision as having far-reaching effects. Reporting on the planned agenda for the Virginia State Board of Education, The Roanoke Times said the board would "consider what must be done about higher or post-graduate education for negroes in line with a recent U. S. supreme court decision holding that a state must provide 'equality' in such educational privileges within a state" ("Negro Problem Will Be Studied, The Roanoke Times, January 4, 1939). The article raises the "question of whether the equality in education principle shall be applied to the present unequal per capita costs for negro and white children and to unequal salaries for negro and white teachers" ("Negro Problem Will Be Studied, The Roanoke Times, January 4, 1939). The Richmond Afro-American stated the ramifications somewhat more dramatically in a story headlined "School War Looms" (School War Looms, Richmond Afro-American, January 28, 1939).

Action

With the confidence of one who believes in his cause and with some reason to believe that he could be successful, Harmon moved to press the case for improving schools and salaries for African Americans in Pulaski. The students at Calfee resumed classes on November 28 in the church and lodge hall quarters that Harmon had arranged for them ("Colored Pupils to Start School Tomorrow", The Southwest Times, November 27, 1938).

That same day, according to The Norfolk Journal and Guide, the Pulaski school board refused a hearing to a special citizens' committee. The Norfolk Journal and Guide was published by Plummer B. Young. Young was active in NAACP activities in Virginia (Suggs, 1988). His paper was one of two African American newspapers distributed state-wide. The Journal and Guide quotes a letter from Mrs. N. C. Henry, a retired Calfee School teacher, in which she leveled these charges at the board.

On Nov. 28, a committee, representing the colored patrons, requested a meeting with the board to discuss an adequate and economical building plan. The board ignored our request and refused us a hearing. They do not know our needs, in fact they know little or nothing about our school, for no school official ever visits it. ("School Board Refused to See Committee Is Charge," The Norfolk Journal and Guide, December 24, 1938).

Henry's letter goes on to identify the number of classrooms planned for the new school as the primary issue separating the committee and the board. The board evidently had reverted to the eight room scenario it had discussed prior to the

fire. She goes on to say that “eight classrooms for eleven grades is absurd” and concluding with a request that the board allow the students to remain in the temporary quarters until the budget would allow the construction of an adequate facility (“School Board Refused to See Committee Is Charge,” The Norfolk Journal and Guide, December 24, 1938). No mention of the board refusing to meet with the committee appears in the minutes of the board. Henry’s claim that the board had reduced its plan for the school to eight rooms is verified by a December 11 article in The Roanoke Times in which the number of classrooms is given (“Pulaski School Board Is Planning Improvements”, The Roanoke Times, December 11).

Harmon had availed himself of the friendly pages of the Journal and Guide on December 3. In a letter to the editor, he argues that because of the introduction of a new philosophy of education including bus transportation, science laboratories, home economics, manual training, music, art, and journalism, the nineteenth century building Pulaski had been employing before the fire was inadequate for twentieth century programming. Harmon asserts that consolidation of all the county schools for African Americans would be the solution to meeting the needs of the African American youth of Pulaski in the future. He calls for a building with the capacity for 450 students composed of not less than 16 classrooms, a gymnasium, an auditorium, and spaces for manual training and home economics (“Pulaski School Principal Pleads for

Adequate Building," The Norfolk Journal and Guide, December 3). The Journal and Guide ran an article in the same edition based on the statement Harmon had given The Southwest Times on November 20. In it, Harmon offered some insight into his motivation for his actions. The article quotes him as stating that

I may be criticized for speaking so openly and baring my relations with the school officials, but as things stand now I have nothing to lose, for I have no school, and through what plea I can make we may be able to provide the colored people of Pulaski with somewhere near the same advantages now provided in other schools. ("Pulaski Pupils Resume Classes, The Norfolk Journal and Guide, December 3, 1938.)

Dr. Corbin joined the letter writing campaign to the Journal and Guide on December 17. In the edition of the paper printed on that date, a letter to the editor from Corbin appeared. It was the same correspondence that Corbin had published in The Southwest Times a month earlier. The intent seemingly was to keep the Pulaski situation in front of the public.

The use of the press to publicize cases and rally support was not unique to Harmon and the citizens of Pulaski. Indeed, in December of 1937, Marshall had suggested to Dr. J. M. Tinsley, the President of the Virginia NAACP, that he write Young to thank him for the Journal and Guide's coverage of the VSTA conference at which the salary equalization campaign was undertaken. Marshall writes also that:

It seems to me that the Journal and Guide can be of great assistance to us in the State Conference [of NAACP branches]. It would be very helpful if you would from time to time give the local representative of the Journal and Guide news concerning the State Conference. (Marshall, letter to Tinsley, December 9, 1937)

In March of 1938, Marshall himself wrote to Young to confide that there were not enough prospective petitioners for the salary equalization campaign in Virginia. Having confided in Young, Marshall then advances his own agenda by asking that Young write an editorial “impressing upon the teachers that they should take an active part in this fight” (Marshall, letter to Young, March 29, 1938). Marshall’s close relationship with and use of the press had been evident in his work for many years. Carl Murphy, publisher of the Baltimore Afro-American had been instrumental in Marshall’s revitalization of the Baltimore chapter of the NAACP and had loaned money to plaintiffs in Marshall’s cases as well as authoring many favorable editorials and news articles featuring Marshall’s work. Harmon’s tactics with the press had precedence in Marshall’s modus operandi. Harmon would continue to employ them throughout the crisis in Pulaski.

Official Rejection

The power of the press was not the only tool that Harmon was attempting to employ, however. Some time in December of 1938 Harmon and other members of the citizen’s committee wrote to Thomas C. Walker asking his assistance to cause the school board to adopt a plan for the larger school Harmon, Corbin, Henry and others sought. Walker held the position of

Consultant and Advisor on Negro Affairs. This was a federal post which afforded Walker some influence with the PWA.

Much to Harmon's chagrin Walker rebuffed their request. On January 5, 1939, after visiting Pulaski to investigate the situation, Walker wrote to the committee to tell them:

I would advise, that the matter be left entirely with the board, especially since they are not asking any contribution from the colored people. Let them put up the school to suit themselves. As it is now, if I were you, I would go along with them, get the best school you can and later get all it is possible to get. No authority in the State not even the State board of education, under the present law, puts your committee in position to demand or require them to do anything other than to furnish a school of their choice. ("Pulaski Scores in Fight for Schools", Richmond Afro-American, March 25, 1939).

In giving this advice, Walker earned the undying enmity of many of the African American Pulaskians and the public denigration and ridicule of the Afro-American. Even today, both Harmon's widow and Gravely speak of Walker's advice with considerable bitterness. They appear to believe that he was an accommodationist who refused to challenge authority to improve school conditions for other African Americans. J. Robert Smith, author of the "Richmond Echoes" column appearing in edition of the Afro-American, lashed out at Walker in several of his pieces (Smith, J. R., "Richmond Echoes", Richmond Afro-American, February 11 and 25, 1939).

In the minds of some writers, Walker was viewed as a reformer. Luther Porter Jackson (1937) refers to Walker as a reformer who had worked to

promote land ownership among African Americans. Jackson points to the percentage of African Americans in Walker's home county, Gloucester, as an example of his effectiveness. Dabney (1971) lists Walker as one of the founders of the Negro Organization Society. In his autobiography Walker acknowledges that he had been called a "white man's Negro" as a term of contempt. He responds that he did not view the term as negative in that he believed the African American could learn much from the Whites (Walker, 1958) Educated at Hampton Institute, Walker was a true disciple of the Armstrong-Washington ethic. Speaking at the Roanoke County Training School graduation exercises on May 31, 1938, Walker advised the graduates to "put their buckets down in their home communities and develop their lives in a friendly, unselfish and constructive manner" ("Training School Conducts Finals", The Roanoke Times, June 1, 1938).

The differences between Walker, Harmon, and Smith illustrate two important points that are often overlooked or misunderstood by Whites. First, not all African Americans supported the movement to equalize and desegregate schools. There were vigorous debates about strategy and timing even among those African Americans who did support the drive to equalize and subsequently desegregate schools (Tushnet, 1987). W. E. B. Du Bois actually advocated separate schools as late as 1935 (Du Bois, 1935). Second, some African

Americans stood to lose considerable influence and power built up over time if desegregation took place (Kluger, 1975).

Rejected by Walker, Harmon attempted to secure support for his cause from other officials. He wrote Fred Alexander, Supervisor of Negro Education with the Department of Education, requesting that he intervene in the situation. He also wrote Arthur D. Wright, Director of the Southern Education Fund. Alexander refused to become involved stating that the local superintendent and school board would have to invite the Department staff into the community. Wright, ducked the issue by referring Harmon's request for funding for the larger school back to Alexander ("Surrey [sic], Pulaski, Middlesex and Alleghany Begin Action," Richmond Afro-American, February 11, 1939).

NAACP Involvement

Frustrated in his efforts to gain support from official sources, Harmon and Corbin turned to the NAACP. It is difficult to pin down a precise date at which the NAACP became involved in the Pulaski school fight. Records are scant and secrecy was the order of the day because of the fear of official retaliation. It is certain, however, that Harmon had contact with NAACP attorneys in the spring and summer of 1938. Those early contacts were limited to the issue of salary equalization, however.

In a letter to Thurgood Marshall dated December 17, 1938, J. Thomas Hewin, attorney for the Virginia NAACP, makes reference to recommending to

the Virginia State Conference of Branches of the NAACP that petitions be filed “for the granting of buildings” and to plans” to “file three more petitions for the equalization of Teachers [sic] salaries in the State of Virginia in the second week in January” (Hewin, letter to Marshall, December 17, 1938). While it is by no means certain that Hewin was referring to Pulaski and Harmon in either of these instances, within a matter of weeks, petitions were filed by Hewin with the Pulaski School Board on both the salary and facility questions. Harmon had received correspondence from Hewin during the summer regarding his interest in serving as a plaintiff in a suit to equalize teacher salaries. Additionally, it can be documented that Hewin apparently stayed in contact with Harmon and planned a salary action there. In a report of a meeting of Virginia State Conference of the NAACP held on Thanksgiving Day, the column “Along the NAACP Battlefront” reported in the January 1939 edition of The Crisis, that the filing of teacher’s salary cases were in the course of preparation in “Louisa County, Pulaski, Loudon County, and Henry County (“Along the NAACP Battlefront”, The Crisis, January, 1939). Based on the sequence of events, it seems a reasonable assumption that Hewin was involved in the case as early as December of 1938.

On January 21, 1939, Dr. J. M. Tinsley, president of the Virginia NAACP, released communications from African American citizens in several localities who had sought the NAACP’s help in resolving grievances. Among the letters

Tinsley released to the press was one from Harmon. The letter quotes Harmon as saying that he hopes Hewin will find it possible to enter Pulaski as soon as possible to file a court action, possibly in combination with suits in other communities. The letter continues with a complaint that the school board plans for replacing the old Calfee school called for a school valued at \$37,000 while a new gymnasium planned for the White high school was projected to cost \$48,000 ("School War Looms", Richmond Afro-American, January 28, 1939).

Petitions

The first overt references to petitions being filed by the NAACP in behalf of Pulaski teachers is found in the February 11 editions of the Richmond Afro-American and the Norfolk Journal and Guide. Hewin had released information about pending litigation in which he was representing NAACP clients. In the Afro-American story, there is a review of several actions either under way or planned in Norfolk, Surry County, Middlesex County, Alleghany County, and Pulaski ("Surrey [sic], Pulaski, Middlesex, and Alleghany Begin Action, Richmond Afro-American, February 11, 1939). These would seem to be some of the cases to which Hewin referred in his December letter to Marshall. After a review of activities in the other communities, the story carries the announcement that, "Pulaski County has gone one step further by petitioning its board and asking for equalization of teachers' salaries and equalization of colored schools" Pulaski ("Surrey [sic], Pulaski, Middlesex, and Alleghany Begin Action,

Richmond Afro-American, February 11, 1939). The Journal and Guide article opens with this statement:

Announcement was made this week from the office of J. Thomas Hewin, Jr., attorney, that he had filed petitions in the Virginia counties of Middlesex, Surry, Pulaski, and Alleghany directed at removing the disparity in school transportation facilities, health service, education facilities, school curricula, and teachers salaries operating against Negroes. ("Move to Secure Better Schools on Wide Front", Norfolk Journal and Guide, February 11, 1939)

The Journal and Guide report goes on to note that Hewin was associated in the cases with Charles Houston, Thurgood Marshall, and Leon Ransome of the NAACP national legal staff. The Journal and Guide ends with this statement:

In another petition filed by Willis Cabell Garvely [sic] to the school board of Pulaski, he asserts that he is paid less than the schedule set up for white teachers of the same training and qualifications as he has, and asks that the school board adopt and enforce a new salary schedule for high school teachers with the same qualifications without any distinction being made as to race or color of teachers in the school system of Pulaski County. ("Move to Secure Better Schools on Wide Front", Norfolk Journal and Guide, February 11, 1939)

Gravely and Harmon's widow, the only two living members of the 1938 Calfee faculty, recall the development of events surrounding the case. In an interview conducted by the researcher in Gravely's home in suburban Cincinnati, Ohio, Gravely recounted his memories of the Pulaski school fight of 1939. According to Gravely, Walker's admonition to Harmon and Corbin that African American people had "no rights that the board or any other legal authority was legally bound to respect" was the spark that set the fires of protest burning

(Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995). He believes that Corbin put Harmon in touch with Dr. Tinsley of the Virginia NAACP. Gravely's recollection is that Tinsley came out from Richmond to Pulaski to assess the situation after receiving a letter from Corbin (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995).

After his return to Richmond, Tinsley turned the case over to the Virginia NAACP counsel, J. Thomas Hewin. Gravely remembers that Hewin visited Pulaski several times in preparation for filing the petition with the school board. He believes that Hewin was working under the direction of Marshall in the case. While the NAACP files in the Library of Congress do not contain references to Harmon after October of 1938, Hewin was definitely in close and frequent communication with Marshall. The February 11 Journal and Guide and Afro-American articles indicate that Marshall, Houston and Ransome were associated with Hewin in all the cases discussed in the article, presumably including Pulaski. There were many opportunities for Hewin to receive advice and instruction from Marshall. The March 11, 1939, edition of the Journal and Guide carried a picture of Hewin, Marshall, and Ransome going over school board minutes in Norfolk to prepare a suit in behalf of Aline Black.

After reflecting on the situation in Pulaski, Hewin suggested that there be two petitions, one dealing with facilities and one with salaries. Gravely believes that Hewin wanted two petitioners to broaden the battle for African American schools as much as possible (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995).

Hewin's December 17 letter to Marshall demonstrates his interest in attacking segregation on several fronts at once. Harmon agreed to petition for equalization of facilities for African American students and persuaded Gravely to seek salary equalization. The two young men chose to act as the petitioners because they had little to lose. Unmarried and young, they did not have the family responsibilities that faced the older teachers. The NAACP had agreed to pay a year's salary to any petitioner whose case the NAACP supported and who lost his job. Tinsley indicated to Hewin and the petitioners, however, that only one petition could be supported by the NAACP. It was agreed that Gravely would be the petitioner officially supported by the NAACP because Harmon had the support of his family to withstand a loss of his job whereas Gravely did not (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995)

Mrs. Harmon recalls the facts surrounding the decision to file the petitions in largely the same way Gravely does. She has one particular memory that Gravely does not. As has been discussed several times previously in the study, Harmon was very close to his mother. In the face of the decisions about filing the petitions, he turned to his mother once more. He explained to his mother what Hewin, Corbin, Gravely, and he had planned. He was careful to tell her that it might mean losing his position as principal. Mary Bell Howard Harmon gave her son both practical and philosophical advice. She said that he was not making any money anyway, so if he believed that the petition would help make

better schools for African American children and he thought it was right, then he should go ahead and file the petition (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, December 14, 1994).

No copies of the petitions could be located by the researcher. The Pulaski County School Board has no copy, nor does the Harmon family or Gravely. Certain inferences can be drawn about the likely content of the petition from other sources, however. The NAACP strategy for equalization in Virginia followed a pattern Marshall established in Maryland (Tushnet, 1987). Marshall outlines the strategy in a May 13, 1938, memorandum received by Hewin and the Joint Committee for Equalization of Salaries in Virginia. The essence of the strategy can be summed up as petition and sue. The first step was to file the equalization petition with the local school board. Marshall indicates that the purpose of the petition is to provide the basis for court action. The petition then was to be followed by a petition to the court for a writ of mandamus (Marshall, memorandum to Joint Committee, May 13, 1938). The writ of mandamus would be ruled by a Norfolk judge to be an inappropriate remedy for equalization in response to a petition filed in behalf of Aline Black in 1939 (Alexander, 1943). Following the dismissal of Black's suit, Marshall turned to Melvin Alston as the petitioner in Norfolk. His petition to the Norfolk School Board is summarized in the November 1939 edition of the Virginia Teachers Bulletin. Four points appear in the summary of the relief requested. The first was a request that the school

board abolish the discriminatory teacher salary scale. The second was that Alston and all other African American teachers be paid compensation equal to that paid White teachers. The third was a request that the school board establish a new, equalized salary scale. The final was a request that the board act quickly ("Melvin O. Alston Files Petition In Second Salary Suit", Virginia Teachers Bulletin, November 1939).

Inequalities

The basis of the petition for equalization for school facilities in Pulaski was obvious. By late winter of 1939, the African American students and teachers of Pulaski not only did not have a school facility equal to that of the Whites, they had no school facility at all. Consequently, a detailed comparison of Calfee Training School to Pulaski High School is not really necessary to make the case of inequality between the two buildings. It is sufficient to point out that the Pulaski High School did have many features that the Calfee Training School did not including a library and a cafeteria. One statement made by Harmon in one of his letters to the NAACP and quoted in the Afro-American makes the differences in the two schools quite clear. Harmon writes that "present [school board] plans call for a \$37,000 eight room school building [for African Americans] with an auditorium and a gymnasium for the whites only at the cost of \$48,000. We know this is not equal or near equal" ("School War Looms", Richmond Afro-American, January 28, 1939). Harmon's estimates are confirmed

by the bids for the two projects received and accepted by the school board on March 1, 1939. The cost of the African American school was approximately \$35,000. The cost of the new gymnasium was about the same as the Calfee project. When combined with a new home economics cottage planned for the White high school, the total did approach the \$48,000 mark (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of March 1, 1939, p. 299).

The question of inequality in teacher salaries actually was not open to much debate either. Pulaski had a history of paying its African American principals and teachers less than their White counterparts. The Pulaski teacher salary budget for 1928-29 documents the practice ten years before Gravely and Harmon filed their petitions. The principals at Pulaski High School, Dublin High School, Draper High School, and Belspring High School, all White schools, were scheduled to earn \$2500, \$2500, \$1500, and \$1000 respectively for the term. The Calfee Training School principal was scheduled to receive \$720, \$160 less than the principal of Snowville Elementary School (Pulaski County School Board, Teacher Salary Budget 1928-29, 1928-1939 Minute Book). The circumstances of African American teachers in Pulaski was similar to that of the principals and did not improve with the passage of time. During the 1935-36 school year, White teachers in Pulaski earned an average of \$667 while African American teachers earned an average of \$451 (Wysor, 1936). The next year, 1936-37, saw little change for either group. White teachers averaged \$645 and

African Americans averaged \$461 (Wysor, 1937). In the year of the petitions, 1938-39, salaries for both groups improved as a result of the Depression easing its grip on the economy. The inequality persisted, however. White teachers were paid an average of \$733 and African Americans were paid an average of \$513 (Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1939). In contrast, the experience of African American teachers in Pulaski exceeded that of the White teachers by 1.2 years in 1931-32 and by 5.5 years in 1935-36 (Wysor, 1932 and Wysor, 1936).

Other measures of equity were little different. The per pupil expenditure for White high school pupils in Pulaski ranged from \$38.08 in 1931-32 to \$30.67 in 1935-36 (Wysor, 1932 and Wysor 1936). For African Americans during the same period the range went from \$19.28 in 1931-32 to \$13.46 in 1935-36 (Wysor, 1932 and Wysor, 1936). The per student expenditure for all White elementary students in Pulaski County was \$16.73 in 1935-36 and \$15.67 in 1936-37 (Wysor, 1936 and Wysor, 1937). For all Pulaski African American elementary students during the corresponding time period the figures were \$12.19 and \$13.77 (Wysor, 1936 and Wysor, 1937). The Pulaski school term itself reflected the disparity between the races. In 1931-32, the length of the term was 172 days for White students and 161 for African Americans (Wysor, 1932). The 1935-36 school year saw a slight widening in the gap. White schools operated that year for 172 days again while African American schools were open for 158 (Wysor, 1936). In 1936-37, the numbers were 172 days and

160 days for White schools and African American schools respectively (Wysor, 1937).

The pattern of school inequality was repeated throughout Virginia and the South. The African American papers of the day decried the inequalities regularly and passionately. Beginning in August of 1938, the Richmond Afro-American ran a series of columns that detailed statistics on the inequalities between the school conditions for African Americans and Whites. The first column showed that in six eastern Virginia counties with majority African American populations, there were 302 classrooms for 8130 White students and only 265 classrooms for 10,509 African American students ("Virginia at Her Worst", Richmond Afro-American, August 20, 1938). Both the Afro-American and the Norfolk Journal and Guide ran frequent editorials comparing the conditions of African Americans in the South to that of Jews in Europe. Cartoons comparing Southern White leaders to Hitler and Mussolini were printed on the editorial page of the Afro-American.

Using data for 1938-39, Fred Alexander (1943) asserts that 90 per cent of the one room rural schools for African Americans in Virginia were obsolete. He goes on to report that 71 per cent of the African American schools located outside the cities in Virginia had water supplies that were not tested and approved for human consumption as required by law. According to Alexander, Over 59 per cent of Virginia's rural schools for African Americans did not even

have sources of water on site. The O'Shea Report, cited earlier in this study, compared rural schools for African Americans with those used for Whites during the 1925-26 school term. The average estimated value for the African American schools was \$1,329. White schools housing roughly the same number of students and located in the same jurisdictions were worth \$6,147 on average (O'Shea, 1928).

African Americans did not even receive the benefit of equality of time in school according to O'Shea. During the 1925-26 school year, the average school term for African Americans was 130 days, two months short of the official standard set by the state (O'Shea, 1928). Margo's (1990) data shows the length of the school term for African American schools to have been 165 days in 1935 and 170 for White schools the same year. The inequality of time may have been the most damaging of all. Old facilities could be repaired and caring teachers could make up for many deficits, but no one could manufacture time.

In 1931, in the South as a whole, the average figures spent on White students in the public schools were \$45.63 in comparison with \$14.95 for African Americans (Tyack, 1967). Part of the reason for the disparity was the cost of maintaining the dual system that segregation required. Writing of the period between the wars and perhaps engaging in some hyperbole, W. J. Cash (1941) estimated in his classic work, The Mind of the South, that the region spent "at least five dollars, often ten or fifteen, for every one spent for each Negro" (Cash,

1941). Alexander (1943) reports in Education for the Needs of the Negro in Virginia that the Commonwealth allotted \$500 to each county for every teaching unit, defined as 25 to 40 students. With simple division and multiplication, he demonstrates that the counties of Virginia spent on African American students only 85.5% of the funds the state allocated for the number of African American students in attendance in 1938-39. The remainder arguably was used to supplement expenditures for White students. Alexander presents data showing that a minimum educational program in 1938-39 in Virginia cost \$36 per student. In Pulaski, the school board spent \$18.61 on each African American student that year (Alexander, 1943). Thompson (1938) indicates that the average African American teacher taught a class of almost 40 pupils whereas the average White teacher taught a class of slightly more than 33 pupils in 1936-37. Kluger (1975) writes that in 1930 North Carolina, Maryland, Virginia, Texas, and Oklahoma were spending twice as much on the education of every White child as they were on every African American child. He places Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama in a group of southern states that were spending five times as much on White students. South Carolina was in a class by itself spending ten times as much on the education of every White child as it did on every African American child (Kluger, 1975).

Teacher salaries for African Americans averaged \$598 in Virginia in 1938-39 (Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1939). White teachers in Virginia

averaged \$912 during that year (Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1939). Beezer (1986) found that the median salary for African American teachers in the 12 Southern states he studied was \$504 in 1939-40. White teachers received \$910. Beezer reports that White teachers in Virginia earned close to the median and that African American teachers in Virginia fared much better than the median getting \$608. Beezer goes on to report that the first two teachers that Marshall represented in Maryland, William Gibbs and Elizabeth Brown, were being paid slightly more than half what White teachers with similar qualifications and duties were paid. Summing up the circumstances for African American teachers, Robert Margo (1990) writes that, "The typical black teacher labored in a poorly equipped classroom, taught larger classes for fewer days per year, and earned less doing it than did her white counterpart" (p. 56). Margo concludes that had there been strict enforcement of the equal part of the "separate-but equal" doctrine, it would have narrowed racial differences in school attendance, literacy rates and test scores. However, he argues through an economic analysis that even strictly enforced "separate but equal" schooling could never have fully equalized educational outcomes among African Americans and Whites in the South.

The School Board Response

The Pulaski County School Board had taken note of Harmon well before Hewin filed the petitions in behalf of Harmon and Gravely. Harmon had

garnered no small amount of attention as a result of his letters to newspapers and to various officials. His public statement on November 19 clearly drew the lines of battle between himself and the board. He had painted both Superintendent Bruce and School Board Chairman E. T. Howard as hard, uncaring men ("Principal of Colored School Appeals to Pulaski Citizens, The Southwest Times, November 20, 1938).

It is not known for certain what the two men thought of Harmon's actions. The January 11, 1939, minutes of the school board offer some insight as to Mr. Bruce's reaction. At the meeting Bruce recommended denial of a request to install a drinking fountain in the First Baptist Church for use by students housed there temporarily due to the Calfee fire. The minutes further record that:

Mr. Bruce also stated that he visited Chauncey Harmon's school room and that he had found a very decided lack of discipline, lack of teaching methods, and lack of proper ventilation, but stated that Willis Gravely, another teacher in the same building, showed very good methods and interest, indeed, also Gravely's room showed good discipline. (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of January 11, 1939, p. 285).

Bruce's comments were unusual. In a review of the Pulaski County School Board minutes from January of 1935 through December of 1939, the researcher found no other report of an individual teacher's classroom being visited and reported upon by either Bruce, his predecessor, Darst, or his successor, Frank Critzer.

Bruce's observations are refuted by an eyewitness. Annie Mills, a student in Harmon's class in 1938-39 in the Odd Fellow's Hall, recalls the situation quite differently. Mills remembers Harmon as "a good disciplinarian" who tried to be fair to all concerned (Mills, personal interview, October 30, 1995). She cites as an example an instance in which Harmon kept in his entire class after school to learn a poem that illustrated right and wrong. She points out that Harmon had a large class, perhaps as many as 30 students in cramped quarters never intended to be a school room, when Bruce visited.

It is quite possible that Bruce's comments to the school board were an expression of his frustration with Harmon or an attempt to set the stage for Harmon's dismissal by discrediting him with the school board. As the most visible leader of the equalization fight in Pulaski, Harmon had become an obvious target for reprisal. Such a reaction was not unheard of in Virginia. Within a few days of filing a salary equalization petition in Norfolk in October of 1938, Aline Black was under close scrutiny. She reported to Marshall in a letter that supervisory staff who had never shown an interest in her work before had visited her school and classroom (Black, letter to Marshall, November 9, 1938). Eventually Black was dismissed from her position and her petition and subsequent law suit was ruled moot because she no longer worked for the Norfolk School Board (Tushnet, 1987). Glenice Mills Cottman, Annie Mills' sister also a student at Calfee Training School in 1938-39, believes that Harmon's fate

was similar to Black's stating that, "Some powers above him thought he was too aggressive" (Cottman, personal interview, October 30, 1995).

The first official reference to the petitions filed by Hewin appears in the minutes of the March 1, 1939, meeting of the school board. Mabel Purvis, the Clerk of the Board, writes that

The Board authorized the superintendent to notify the negro lawyer, J. T. Hewin, who represented the negro patrons league of Pulaski County, that the next meeting of the Board would be on March 15th, and that they would allow him a limited time to speak before the Board on the matters that he had spoken about previously to Mr. Bruce, on a former visit to the office. (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of March 1, 1939, p. 298).

One can glean several conclusions from this entry. First, Hewin evidently had approached Bruce prior to this time, presumably to discuss the petitions.

Second, Hewin had presented himself as representing the school patrons league, not solely Harmon and Gravely, perhaps to make his clientele appear larger and thereby more impressive to the board. Third, and importantly in view of Mrs. Henry's charges of the board's outright refusal to see the committee in November, the board finally had given in and agreed to hear the complaint.

In the minutes of the same meeting, there is further indication that the circumstances of the African American students and their teachers were on the minds of Superintendent Bruce and the board.

Supt. Bruce told the Board that he had given considerable thought and study to the problem of the Negro high school pupils of the county, stating that the enrollment was not large enough at Calfee Training to have a four year accredited school and that even though all high school pupils living outside the town of Pulaski

could be transported to this high school, that the attendance would not be enough to justify the expenditure necessary to equip and operate a four year accredited high school. Mr. Bruce further stated that he recently visited the training and industrial school located at Christiansburg, Virginia, and had gone over the situation with Supt. Shelburne, of Montgomery County, and that he had about decided that the best solution would be for the School Board to send all its high school students to the aforesaid training school, paying the tuition of \$35.00 for each student, and transporting said pupils to the school, this taking care of all high school students in Pulaski County, and Mr. Bruce accordingly made such recommendation to the school board. After a thorough discussion it was moved by Mr. Allison and seconded by Mr. Dobyons that such arrangement be made in regard to the Negro high school students, and this motion was unanimously carried. (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of March 1, 1939, p. 298)

This decision was of great import both to the petitioners and the parents of African American students. Yet, there was no public hearing on the subject nor apparently any other effort to secure a sense of what the community thought about the idea. This cavalier method of making decisions can be accounted for by understanding the process of decision making at the time. First, public business was conducted in similar fashion throughout rural Virginia. Superintendents and boards made decisions and told their affected constituents about them afterwards. Second, as Raymond Lottier put it, "When the school in Pulaski burned down, not a one of those teachers went to Christiansburg. We just were not participants in the trade. African Americans were chips in the trade" (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994).

The March 1 meeting was an important one for African Americans in Pulaski for another reason. The bids for the new Calfee School were received at

the meeting. In a resolution recorded in the minutes, W. J. Dixon, architect, recommended accepting the bid from Trinkle and Dobyms. After receiving the bids, the board, Superintendent Bruce, representatives of the P. W. A., representatives of the Department of Education, and the bidders adjourned to the offices of the school board to take up arranging the contracts (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of March 1, 1939, p. 298).

Two weeks later, as requested by the board, Hewin and his clients appeared before the board. The minutes of the board record the discussion in this fashion:

There being quite a large delegation of colored citizens waiting to appear before the Board, the Board decided to defer the remainder of their business and allow the delegation to come before them, in order that the crowded condition might be alleviated, and the Board therefore invited the delegation into the office, where headed by their representative and spokesman, Thos. J. [sic] Hewin, Jr. Richmond colored attorney, they were ushered in.

Attorney Hewin addressed the Board, stating that he was speaking on behalf of the colored citizens who felt that there [sic] children had been unjustly discriminated against solely on account of their race and color, reminding the Board that he had heretofore presented them with two petitions, one asking that Negro male high school teachers salary be the same as that paid to white high school male teachers, the other petition asking for equal school facilities to those enjoyed by the white pupils.

Mr. Bruce, superintendent, told the speaker and his delegation that the Board had given considerable thought and study to the negro situation, and that they had finally come to the conclusion that it would be most advantageous to the high school negro students to transport them to the Industrial Institute at Christiansburg, where a good many Pulaski County students were already in attendance, stating that the tuition would be furnished by

the county, going further into explaining that even though the Board were financially able to supply the Negro pupils with all the advantages requested in the said petition, they could still not have an accredited high school, and that the school at Christiansburg did meet with this requirement, a standard four year high school course. After considerable discussion on the part of a few disgruntled patrons, the spokesman, Lawyer Hewin, thanked the Board for the hearing, and together with his delegation, retired from the room, stating that his committee would get together and come to some decision in the matter and advise the Board. (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of March 15, 1939, p. 301)

Four other written accounts of the meeting exist. Some present the outcomes in a different light than the official record. The March 16 edition of The Southwest Times carried a front page story about the school board meeting. The first portion of the story concentrates on the awarding of contracts for the construction of the gymnasium addition at Pulaski High and the new Calfee School. The second section of the story is headed "Negroes Petition" and appears on page 8. The story indicates that two petitions were presented by African American residents through Hewin. According to The Southwest Times, the first petition was signed by approximately 200 persons. Marshall's memorandum to Hewin had urged securing as many signatures as possible on petitions. Evidently, Hewin had complied with Marshall's suggestion. The first petition was reported by The Southwest Times to have charged that:

present negro facilities are inadequate; that the school board does not provide any health service for negro students; no transportation provided; no manual or domestic arts classes provided; no free library; no auditorium; no recreational facilities provided and the charge ended with one of discrimination against colored students in not being placed on a parity with white pupils ("Negroes Petition", The Southwest Times, March 16, 1939)

The Southwest Times article indicates that the second petition was from Gravelly. It charged discrimination and requested a revision of the pay scale for African American teachers to place it on a parity with whites. The board deferred action on both petitions according to The Southwest Times. The board's decision to send African American high school students to Christiansburg Institute was announced in the March 16 story as well. The paper noted that "transferring the colored pupils from Calfee Training School will leave only grade school work to be conducted in the new structure, reducing the student load for teachers" ("Negroes Petition", The Southwest Times, March 16, 1939).

The Roanoke Times took note of the meeting on March 16 as well. The Times focused its lead on the 1939-40 budget proposal that called for a ten per cent raise for teachers. On the matter of the petitions the Roanoke paper stated that:

Patrons of negro county schools appeared before the board to present two petitions prepared by a member of a negro law firm in Richmond, one charging discrimination against the colored students and the other presented on behalf of a colored teacher, making the same charge in regard to parity of the white and colored teachers' pay scales. ("Pulaski School Budget May Provide Ten Per Cent Raise for Teachers", The Roanoke Times, March 16, 1939)

Regarding the decision to send the high school students to Christiansburg, the Roanoke paper dispensed with the matter in one line, "It was decided during the

session to send all county negro high school students to Christiansburg for the next school year, purchasing a new bus to provide transportation" ("Pulaski School Budget May Provide Ten Per Cent Raise for Teachers", The Roanoke Times, March 16, 1939).

The African American newspapers reacted to the decisions of the Pulaski Board as if they were major victories for the NAACP's battle to equalize schools. The Journal and Guide reported its story on March 25 under the headline, "Pulaski Gets New \$40,000 Graded School." The Norfolk paper reported that "the county school board, in session Thursday, March 16 [sic] acceded to the requests of the committee and adopted a resolution" to the effect that funds for the construction of an elementary school building containing a combination auditorium and gymnasium would be provided in the 1939-40 budget ("Pulaski Gets New \$40,000 Graded School", Norfolk Journal and Guide, March 25, 1939). The Journal and Guide records that "the committee had originally petitioned also for a new modern, high school building," but that the board had promised the committee to "send their children to an accredited elementary school and high school" ("Pulaski Gets New \$40,000 Graded School", Norfolk Journal and Guide, March 25, 1939). The Norfolk account states that, "J. Thomas Hewin, Jr., attorney representing the petitioners, accepted the resolution of the school board as being adequate to serve the needs of the county." The story concludes that "the action of the Pulaski school board on the

petition is the first among many such petitions now on file with various counties” (“Pulaski Gets New \$40,000 Graded School”, Norfolk Journal and Guide, March 25, 1939).

The Pulaski story written for the Afro-American by J. Robert Smith, staff correspondent and columnist, appeared under the headline “Pulaski Scores in Fight for Schools.” Smith writes that “residents of Pulaski made history last week by being the first in the State to march on the school board and succeed in getting a well-equipped elementary school, free transportation, and tuition for their children of high school age” (Smith, March 25, 1939). Smith’s account refers to “scores” who “invaded the office of the board” (Smith, March 25, 1939). His story continues by calling the citizens’ action a “march on the school board under the banner of the NAACP” undertaken as a “last resort” because no responses were made to communications asking for a date to discuss inequalities in the school system. Smith reports that Gravely’s petition was tabled by the board after Hewin attacked the board’s contention that White teachers had a heavier teacher load. Smith ends his story with a listing of the teachers who had “supported the fight for better conditions” (Smith, March 25, 1939). The list included Maud Toler, Cathleen Santa Cruz, Hazel Calfee, Gretchen Washington, Lucy Martin, Ulysses Broadnaux, Willis Gravely and Chauncey Harmon. Pictures of Harmon, Washington, Gravely, Calfee, Santa Cruz, and Martin accompanied the story.

In addition to the printed versions of the board's actions, anecdotal accounts from Gravely and Harmon's widow are available for comparison. Mrs. Harmon sees their efforts as a pioneering action in the fight for educational civil rights. She believes the petitions filed by her husband and Gravely resulted in better schools for Pulaski's African American youth. Moreover, she sees the struggle as having an important place in the NAACP's early efforts to establish equal rights for African Americans throughout the state and country (Harmon, L. M., December 16, 1994).

Gravely recalls the circumstances surrounding the board meeting along the same lines as Smith reports. He refers to scores of African American citizens marching on the board while it was in session "demanding a voice in securing for themselves educational advantages equal to those already given to Whites" (Gravely, letter to Tripp, December 12, 1994). He describes the board as having "caved in, surprising everyone by giving them practically everything they wanted" (Gravely, letter to Tripp, December 12, 1994). He says that he never received any further response from the board in regard to his petition for salary equalization. Gravely's assertion that the board took no action on his petition subsequently is supported by the absence of any record of any action in the minutes of the school board. In an interview with the researcher, Gravely puzzled over why the NAACP chose to do nothing more with his petition. He speculates that the NAACP wanted a victory desperately and decided to declare

one. Gravely believes that distance was another factor in the lack of follow-up by the NAACP. Kluger (1975) agrees with Gravely, writing in his book, Simple Justice, that the NAACP's first test cases had to be from the populous areas of Virginia because there were more African Americans to support the cases.

Community Reaction

Harmon and Gravely received differing reactions to their efforts from the various segments of the Pulaski community. Some of the earlier and more obvious reactions have already been discussed. Corbin's letter and the editorial by The Southwest Times elicited an initial outpouring of sympathy for the circumstances of the African American students and their teachers. Many civic groups and clubs endorsed the plans for the larger school for African Americans sought by Harmon and Corbin.

As time passed and the rhetoric and activity associated with the petitions increased, opposition emerged. Official opposition came in the form of Superintendent Bruce and the school board's actions. Less obvious but significant opposition existed as well. Raymond Lottier, a student at Calfee, recalls his father's reaction. "He's crazy, he's looking for trouble and he's going to find it", he remembers his father saying of Harmon (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994). Lottier believes that most of the African Americans in Pulaski did not expect sweeping change as a result of Harmon and Gravely's petitions.

Annie Mills and her sister Glenice Mills Cottman, both students at Calfee in 1938, recall the community reaction somewhat differently. Their parents believed something had to be done to improve educational conditions for African Americans. They recall that their parents and other African Americans did support Harmon, Gravely and Corbin in their efforts. The two sisters describe the men as “our leaders” (Mills and Cottman, personal interview, October 30, 1995). Their recollection of the White reaction is of an attitude they label as “indifferent” (Mills and Cottman, personal interview, October 30, 1995). Most members of the White community did not seem to care one way or the other as long as the push was not for integration (Mills and Cottman, personal interview, October 30, 1995).

Gravely’s assessment of community reaction parallels the record of events printed in the newspapers. His memory of the White reaction in Pulaski is not of hostility. Commenting on a question about racial attitudes among Whites in Pulaski, he says “We were separate, but there was no antipathy” (Gravely, April 19, 1995). Rather, he describes the White residents of Pulaski as “not intractable, they would listen. They were not the typical kind of people about which you read back during that time (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995). Gravely gives credit to those Whites who spoke out in club meetings about the new school. He believes their attitude prevented the 1938-39 school

year from becoming even more difficult for the Calfee students and their teachers (Gravely, April 19, 1995).

Gravely's assessment of the reaction from the African American residents of Pulaski is more equivocal. He says that "it was some for, some against and some in the middle" (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995). Some African American people looked at the situation with a "don't rock the boat attitude." According to Gravely, the older teachers were the individuals most opposed to the petitions. The possibility of losing their positions as teachers motivated them to oppose the action (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995).

The undercurrent of opposition among the older teachers was what caused Harmon to deliberately exclude some of them from the discussions in which the petitions were planned according to Harmon's widow. Mrs. Harmon recalls that her husband was extremely circumspect about his plans. Not yet married to him in 1938-39, she was not fully aware of the scope of the action herself. She recalls being present at one conversation in which Hewin told the Calfee teachers to say whatever they wanted to say about the planned actions among themselves but not to write anything down (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, September 14, 1995).

Despite the secrecy and caution that cloaked the preparation of the petitions, they apparently received widespread support. The Southwest Times reported that over 200 people had signed the petition for equal facilities. The

Journal and Guide and the school board minutes indicate that scores of citizens attended the school board meeting on March 15. The scope of support begs the question as to how was it mobilized? Annie Mills states that Reverend T. G. Howard “played a big role” recalling that it was Howard who “got the parents together” to support the petitions (Mills, personal interview, October 30, 1995). It would seem that, for the most part, support was built by word of mouth. A record of one meeting at which it is believed the petitions were discussed does exist. In Ethel Carter’s column, “Colored News” appearing in The Southwest Times on February 17, 1939 a notice of a “Christian educational program” scheduled for February 23 was printed. The program’s agenda, printed as part of the notice, opened with the “Negro National Anthem” and was followed by talks on unspecified subjects by “Professor Chauncey Harmon, Dr. M. A. Santa Cruz, and Dr. P. C. Corbin” (Carter, “Colored News”, The Southwest Times, February 17, 1939). It is thought that this meeting was planned to rally support for the petitions among the Pulaski African American residents.

Outcomes

Twelve days after the board’s meeting with Hewin and Harmon’s delegation, Superintendent of Schools Haynes Bruce resigned from his position without giving a reason for his departure (“Head of Pulaski Schools Resigns”, The Roanoke Times, March 28, 1939). As has been the case with many other incidents in this study, there is no definitive link between the two events. There

are a number of coincidences of fact that do make it seem reasonable to think that a connection might exist. It does not appear as if Bruce had any thought of resigning as late as the March 15 board meeting. In addition to meeting with the African American delegation, he made several long term recommendations at the meeting including an invitation to Fred Alexander, Supervisor of Negro Education for Virginia, to meet with the African American parents "in an effort to have a clearer understanding in regard to the disposition made of the high school pupils of Pulaski County" (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of March 15, 1939, p. 302). Bruce's decision seems all the more abrupt in light of the fact that only a few months prior he had been elected to head the American Legion and the board of the Peoples National Bank ("Superintendent of Schools Heads Legion", The Roanoke Times, July 31, 1938, and "School Head on Bank Board", The Roanoke Times, October 27, 1938). In a letter to the Afro-American thanking J. Robert Smith for the paper's cooperation in providing publicity in his effort to secure better educational facilities, Harmon seems to imply a connection between the effort and Bruce's resignation. Following a statement that "Victory is sure if they [other African Americans] fight their cause together and stop taking 'no' and 'I promise' and petty excuses for an answer", Harmon writes that, "On Monday, March 27, H. H. Bruce (white) resigned as superintendent of Pulaski County Schools" (Harmon, letter to J. Robert Smith in "Echoes", Richmond Afro-American, April 22, 1939). The minutes of the school board offer

no clues as to why Bruce resigned. The April 11, 1939 minutes contain this terse statement on the subject, "Mr. Howard informed the Board that he had received written resignation from Mr. Bruce, and the Board accepted this resignation as of March 31st" (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of April 11, 1939)

It must be noted that the 1938-39 school year was a challenging one for Bruce. In addition to his troubles with the Calfee School, he dealt with a deficit in the athletic fund at Pulaski High School and a perceived lack of discipline there (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of December 13, 1938). Worst of all, a week after Calfee burned, he was robbed of \$9 and his car by three White youths on Campbell Avenue in Roanoke ("Masked Bandits Hold Up Pulaski Division School Superintendent, The Roanoke Times, November 17, 1938). Whether Bruce's resignation was of his own choosing and just how much influence the Calfee affair played in his departure is open to debate. It is not unreasonable to conclude that Bruce's resignation was related to, but not caused by, the Calfee experience. It seems more likely that the cumulative effect resulting from the combination of the many difficulties he faced was the actual cause of Bruce relinquishing his post.

In the wake of the controversy, the plans for the new Calfee School moved forward. Construction on the structure began shortly after the contracts were awarded on March 15. The school was built according to the plans the

board had put in place in February ("Bids Are Being Received, The Southwest Times, February 15, 1939). The primary construction project was an eight room school financed with PWA funds. In addition, a second phase to the project was the long awaited auditorium and two additional classrooms. The second phase of the project was financed by National Youth Administration funds and built by NYA workers ("Work is Started on New Addition to Calfee School, The Southwest Times, May 21, 1939).

On September 15, 1939, Ethel Carter noted in her column that "enrollment at Calfee School numbered 235 (Carter, "Colored News", The Southwest Times, September 15, 1939). Calfee School had opened a week after the White schools. Apparently the school terms had not been equalized. A week later Carter mentioned that the members of the faculty, with the aid of the PTA, were arranging plans for dedication of the new school (Carter, "Colored News, The Southwest Times, September 22, 1939). The next week she writes that "the Calfee School PTA met Monday evening. Dr. P. C. Corbin presided. Professor U. B. Broadneaux was introduced and gave a talk on the school band he is working up" (Carter, "Colored News", The Southwest Times, September 29, 1939).

On May 25, 1939, the school board had appointed six African American teachers when it made its regular appointments for the 1939-40 term. Two of these, Anna Norman and Ida McNorton were assigned to William Gresham

School, a rural two room school. The other four; Maud Toler, Mary Holoman, Ulysses Broadneaux, and Elaine Ward were designated as "to be assigned". None of the teachers closely identified with the petitions or the accounts of it in the African American press were appointed. No explanation is given in the minutes for the action (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of May 25, 1939). On June 27, Frank Critzer, who had been appointed superintendent in May, recommended the appointment of Broadneaux as principal of Calfee Training School. By an ironic twist of fate, Harmon had been replaced by a former classmate from Tuskegee whom he had helped secure a teaching position in Pulaski in 1938. Critzer also recommended the reappointment of Edna C. Gardner, Lizzie C. Ward, Cathleen Jenkins Santa Cruz, Hazel S. Calfee, Gretchen Washington, and Lucy Martin as teachers at Calfee. The assigned salary for all the teachers was \$65 monthly. Broadneaux was to receive \$70 as principal (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of June 27, 1939). Gravely's petition had not been successful either. White teachers continued to receive more compensation than African American teachers, although the African Americans received larger raises and the gap separating them from the White teachers had narrowed to about \$5 per month.

Missing from the final appointment list were the names of Harmon and Gravely. Not having a high school department at Calfee, the board apparently no longer needed high school teachers either. Retaliation and reprisal against

petitioners for equalization was not unusual (Kluger, 1975). Aline Black, Marshall's first petitioner for equal salaries in Virginia, was not reappointed to her position by the Norfolk School Board in the spring of 1939 either (Tushnet, 1987). The Clarendon County, South Carolina, School Board fired Reverend Joseph DeLaine in one of the cases that would be combined into the Brown decision (Kluger, 1975).

The matter would not rest there, however. At the July meeting of the school board, Critzer read a petition to the board. The petition had been brought to him by "some of the negro citizens." The superintendent told the board that "the petition was in reality a demand for the re-employment of Chauncey Harmon as principal and Willis Gravely as teacher in the Calfee Training School, and was couched in no uncertain terms" (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of July 11, 1939). Critzer continued by stating to the board that "he had told the delegation that presented this paper that he would present it to the Board, but that he felt the Board would not rescind their former action in not reappointing the two teachers aforesaid" (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of July 11, 1939). Critzer concluded his report of the discussion with the citizens by saying that "after he had talked with these petitioners, that their attitude seemed to change, and that he believed the main grounds for their dissatisfaction was that they had thought a woman principal had been assigned to the Calfee Training School" (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of July 11, 1939).

Chapter Summary

Chapter Five of the study chronicled the events of the 1938-39 school term. The chapter opened with Harmon's elevation to the principalship of Calfee Training School. At the age of 25, Harmon had attained one of the highest positions available to African Americans in Pulaski. In his new role of principal, Harmon hired as his replacement Willis Cabell Gravely, a West Virginian who had graduated from Bluefield State College. Gravely and Harmon became fast friends and allies in a struggle for equalization of the Pulaski schools.

On November 11, 1938, the Calfee Training School burned. The school was rendered totally unusable. Harmon attempted to arrange temporary quarters for the African American students and teachers in churches and a lodge hall. When Superintendent Haynes Bruce and School Board Chairman E. T. Howard did not respond quickly to his proposed arrangements, Harmon launched a public attack on their apparent indifference to the plight of the African Americans.

Harmon attempted to turn the burning of the school to the advantage of the African American students and their teachers. He attempted to secure a larger and more comprehensively equipped school than the school board had planned prior to the fire. He received support in his campaign from Dr. P. C. Corbin. The majority community spoke out in support of a better school as well. The Southwest Times editorialized in favor of the African Americans. Local civic

organizations and clubs forwarded resolutions to the school board supporting the larger school.

In addition to support from within Pulaski, Harmon enjoyed support from the NAACP and the African American press. J. Thomas Hewin, Virginia NAACP Attorney, planned to file petitions for equalization of the schools with the school board. Hewin worked under the guidance of Thurgood Marshall, Counsel for the NAACP. The Richmond Afro-American and the Norfolk Journal and Guide provided friendly forums for letters to the editor and news accounts of Harmon's efforts in Pulaski.

After his appeals for assistance were rejected by official sources, Harmon agreed to become the petitioner for equalization of facilities and convinced Gravely to file a salary equalization petition. Inequalities existed in the Pulaski school system that paralleled those in the state and region. Salaries, facilities, length of school term, and per pupil expenditure were measures of school equality in which the African American students and their teachers were disadvantaged.

Shortly after the petitions were filed, Superintendent Bruce visited Harmon's classroom and made a negative report to the school board in an apparent attempt to discredit him professionally. On March 1, 1939, the board directed the superintendent to notify Hewin that the board would meet with him and his constituents two weeks later. The board also decided to transport all

African American students to Christiansburg Institute and to only educate elementary students in the new Calfee School.

On March 15, 1939, the board met with Hewin and a delegation of about 200 African American citizens. Hewin presented the cases for Harmon and Gravely. The delegation was told of the board's decision to transport the high school students to Christiansburg and the board's intention to build a new Calfee school for elementary students. Gravely's petition for salary equalization was tabled.

The African American press in Virginia hailed the Pulaski board's decisions as a victory for the NAACP and the local African American citizens. Some older teachers opposed the actions of Harmon and Gravely. Many African American citizens were skeptical of the effort yielding any useful result. Most Whites bore the African Americans no ill will over the situation.

Shortly after the meeting with Hewin and Harmon's delegation, Superintendent Bruce resigned. The new Calfee school was begun including an auditorium constructed by NYA workers. Initially, no African American teachers involved in the controversy were appointed to positions for the 1939-40 school term. Subsequently all were reappointed except Harmon and Gravely. Even after a protest petition was filed with the new superintendent, Frank Critzer, the board refused to re-employ either Harmon or Gravely.

CHAPTER SIX

EPILOGUE: 1939-93

In Chapter Six the researcher brings the study to a close. The first section addresses the long term results of Harmon's equalization challenge to the Pulaski County School Board in 1938-39, giving particular attention to the transfer of African American high school students to Christiansburg Industrial Institute and a suit brought by Dr. P. C. Corbin as a result. The second section is an abbreviated chronicle of Harmon's subsequent career including his work as an educator in Wythe County and Roanoke County. In the final section the researcher attempts to bring together the conclusions and themes that appear to have emerged from the examination of Harmon's experiences.

Long Term Effects of the Equalization Challenge

As documented in Chapter Five, the Pulaski County School Board had decided on March 1, 1939, to transport its African American high school students to the Christiansburg Industrial Institute in Montgomery County, leaving the new Calfee School to operate as an elementary school (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of March 1, 1939). This decision appears to be a curious one on at least two counts. First, it was made prior to any discussion with the committee that had sought a meeting with the board since November 28, 1938. Nor had the board met with either of the petitioners at the time it made the decision. As discussed in Chapter Five, this closed decision making process was not entirely

unusual in Southwest Virginia in the 1930's. A review of the board's minutes from 1935-1940 demonstrates that much of the board's deliberation and many of its decisions occurred in closed executive sessions (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes 1935-1939). It does seem unusual that a board would make a decision affecting a segment of its community without consultation while knowing full well that it already faced a legal challenge from that very same group. It seems obvious that the board did know of the legal challenge. At the same meeting in which the board decided to transport the high school students, it also directed Superintendent Bruce to notify Attorney Hewin that the board would meet with him to discuss the petitions previously discussed with Mr. Bruce (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of March 1, 1939).

The second count that makes the board's action seem curious is its past practice of not encouraging Pulaski African American students to attend the Christiansburg Institute. On October 8, 1935, the board received a bill from Superintendent Shelburne of Montgomery County for "Negro pupils attending Christiansburg Institute" (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of October 8, 1935). The board complained that the students were "not allowed" to attend the school because there was "no budget, no agreement" for the arrangement (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of October 8, 1935). After an extended discussion, the board agreed to pay the charges for 1935-36 provided that applications by pupils were made through the school board and approved by

Superintendent Darst. In July of 1936, the board authorized 10 pupils to attend the Institute. The minutes of the board record that the board “decided to allow tuition for a limited number of pupils to Christiansburg Normal and Industrial Institute” (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of July 29, 1936). Clerk Mabel Purvis was empowered to approve up to ten applicants. Any additional applicants were required to come before the board for its review and action. Only a few months before the 1939 decision to transport the students to Christiansburg the board had given Clerk Purvis specific instructions to guide her approval of applications for attendance by Pulaski students. The board reduced the number of students from Pulaski County allowed to attend Christiansburg Institute to six and permitted no students from Pulaski City to attend “since they could attend Calfee Training School”. The board did agree to provide bus fare for a maximum of ten pupils from the New River community (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of September 1, 1938).

In view of this pattern of reluctance of the board to allow its African American pupils to attend the Christiansburg school, the board’s decision in March is perplexing. Perhaps this reversal of course was due solely to the burning of the school. Perhaps there simply was nowhere for the high school students to go to school after its destruction. Perhaps the board wanted to reduce the student load for the teachers as The Southwest Times reported on March 16 (“Negroes Petition”, The Southwest Times, March 16, 1939). Perhaps

the board wanted the students to be educated in an accredited school as they told the delegation that appeared before them on March 15 (Pulaski County School Board, March 15, 1939). All these possibilities seem plausible enough until one reads the minutes of May 25, 1939. Superintendent Frank Critzer, speaking to the board of the arrangements to send the high school students to Christiansburg, stated that "some requirements would have to be set up in order not to be simply swamped with Negro pupils wanting to ride the bus and attend said school [Christiansburg Institute]" (Pulaski County School Board, Minutes of May 25, 1939). The superintendent's remarks would seem to indicate that the board's good intentions had limits where African American young people were involved.

Nonetheless, the board's plan was carried out. African American students from Pulaski began to attend Christiansburg Institute in the fall of 1939. As early as May of that year, Principal A. M. Walker was planning for their arrival. In a report of the school's 1938-39 activities printed in the May 1939 edition of the Virginia Teachers Bulletin, Walker writes, "Next year, Pulaski County will transport all of its high school pupils (estimated 100) to Christiansburg Institute and pay tuition fees for them (Walker, 1939). Evidently he had not yet heard of Critzer's concern about being "swamped" by African American pupils.

Three individuals cited earlier in the study offer accounts of their experiences at Christiansburg when they were interviewed. Amanda DeHart,

Raymond Lottier, and Annie Mills were among the first high school students to be transported by Pulaski County to the Christiansburg School. DeHart was a ninth grader in 1939-40. Lottier and Mills were eighth graders. All remember the experience of going to Christiansburg the first year Pulaski's African American high school students were transported there.

DeHart graduated from the Christiansburg Institute in 1942 and later taught there for many years. She co-authored a history of the school in 1991. DeHart recalls the school fondly. She remembers new academic classes and expanded training in vocational education that the Calfee Training School did not offer. She also remembers teachers who worked diligently in behalf of their students (DeHart, personal interview, April 21, 1995).

Going to Christiansburg Institute did open up new educational opportunities for the African American high schoolers from Pulaski. The school was accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. As will be seen later in this chapter, the curriculum and facilities there did not compare favorably to the Pulaski high schools for Whites. The school far exceeded anything the Pulaski students had experienced at Calfee, however. Mills remembers that the school at Christiansburg "had a better foundation in the academic aspect to prepare students for college" (Mills, personal interview, October 30, 1995). In Principal Walker's report in the Virginia Teachers Bulletin, he comments extensively on the agriculture program, a curricular offering not

available at Calfee (Walker, 1939). The school also had a limited science laboratory as well as a library, neither of which were available at Calfee (Hayden, 1994).

While the curriculum and facilities at Christiansburg were superior to Calfee's, getting there to make use of them was a hardship for Pulaski students. Many of Raymond Lottier's memories about attending the regional school are of the long daily trip to get there. Lottier recalls walking several blocks from north Pulaski to the new Calfee School where he and other students boarded the school bus to Christiansburg. As the bus traveled along its approximately thirty mile route, it picked up other students at designated stops. The stops were nothing more than selected points along the highway. There were no shelters to protect the students from the elements (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994).

According to Lottier, the winter was the hardest time. There was only one small heater at the front of the bus. By the time the students who had waited the longest in the rain and snow were picked up, all the seats near the heater were taken. After boarding, the students would remove their shoes and place them near the heater while sitting with their feet between each other to get warm. Lottier remembers leaving in the dark and returning well after dark daily (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994). Annie Mills and her sister, Glenice Mills Cottman, remember that, in the 1940-41 school year a student who rode

the bus to Christiansburg died from tuberculosis. Believing that the girls' death was partially due to the harsh conditions of the daily ride to school, their parents and others went to the school board to protest the long ride without heat (Mills and Cottman, personal interview, October 30, 1995). The Christiansburg Institute maintained dormitories for boarding students, but the Pulaski students were not provided that option by the school board (Lottier, personal interview, December 28, 1994).

This state of affairs was maintained for some years until Dr. P. C. Corbin determined to try to bring it to an end through litigation. When the Calfee School burned, Corbin had sent his high school age son, Maurice, to Washington D. C. to school (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995). By the time his youngest son Mahatma was ready to go to high school, Corbin had decided to send him on the bus from Pulaski to Christiansburg. After finding that his son could not use the library after school or participate in extracurricular activities because the bus left immediately after the end of classes, Corbin purchased a car for his son and allowed him to drive there each day despite the fact that he was not yet 16 years old (Pleasant, personal interview, March 12, 1995). No longer willing to tolerate what he believed to be a blatantly illegal and discriminatory practice, Corbin sought legal assistance from the NAACP. In the late 1940's the Virginia NAACP under the leadership of Oliver Hill and Spotswood Robinson was aggressively seeking and litigating equalization cases

throughout the state (Kluger, 1975). At one point in the early 1950's the two lawyers had actions pending in 75 Virginia localities (Edds, 1994). Corbin contacted Hill and Robinson in 1948 to represent his son in what Hill refers to as the "Pulaski School Case" (Hill, letter to Tripp, September 7, 1995).

In 1948, Hill filed suit against the Pulaski County School Board and Superintendent Frank Critzer in behalf of Mahatma in the United States District Court for the Western District in Roanoke (Corbin et. al. v. County School Board of Pulaski County, Virginia, May 2, 1949). The case was argued in October of 1948 before Judge Albert Barksdale ("Pulaski School Action Dismissed by Barksdale", The Roanoke Times, May 3, 1949) Hill alleged in the suit that the school board and superintendent were "pursuing a policy, practice, and usage of denying Negro children of Pulaski County, Virginia, on account of their race and color, educational opportunities, facilities, and advantages substantially equal to those afforded white children similarly situated" (Corbin et. al. v. County School Board of Pulaski County, Virginia, May 2, 1949). Such an action, Hill argued was a violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Barksdale rendered a judgment for the school authorities on May 2, 1949. By the time the case was filed and heard, the Friends Freedmen's Association had conveyed title of the Christiansburg school to the school boards of Pulaski County, Montgomery County and the City of Radford. Pulaski's 102 students comprised over half the enrollment of the student body. This fact seems to have

weighed heavily in Barksdale's ruling. He writes that "the first result [of a decree requiring the Pulaski School Board to provide a high school for African Americans] would be the destruction of the Christiansburg Industrial Institute" (Corbin et. al. v. County School Board of Pulaski County, Virginia, May 2, 1949).

Barksdale remarks that :

if it should be declared to be the law that each County must provide high school facilities within the geographical limits of the County, it would be the death knell of consolidated high schools for two or more counties or cities, notwithstanding the fact that those who should know seem to be unanimous in their belief that such consolidation is highly desirable. (Corbin et. al. v. County School Board of Pulaski County, Virginia, May 2, 1949)

Barksdale's reference to "those who should know" apparently meant the State Department of Education. Archie Richardson (1976), Assistant Supervisor for Negro Education in Virginia for many years, writes in his book, The Development of Negro Education in Virginia, 1831-1970, that in the late 1930's the department staff developed a plan "whereby several school divisions jointly supported what was then known as regional high schools to serve Negro high school pupils and to provide them with a comprehensive high school program" (p. 70).

Hill filed an appeal in the Fourth Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals and the case was argued before a three judge panel of the United States Court of Appeals Fourth Circuit on October 18, 1949. The Court of Appeals reversed the judgment of Barksdale in part, vacated the judgment in part, and remanded the judgment in part, holding that the "evidence showed that

there was discrimination in the matter of high school facilities” (Corbin et al. v. County School Board of Pulaski County, Virginia, November 14, 1949). In keeping with the NAACP policy at the time, Hill had chosen not to challenge directly the issue of segregation per se. Judge Armistead Dobie of Charlottesville, writing for the court, notes that “While plaintiffs do not concede the validity of such segregation, they do not seem here to contest its validity, provided substantially equal educational facilities are afforded to members of both races” (Corbin et al. v. County School Board of Pulaski County, Virginia, November 14, 1949). Dobie was a respected jurist with deep Virginia roots. He was later to preside over the Prince Edward County case that was bundled into the Brown case, ruling in that instance in favor of the school officials (Kluger, 1975). Dobie had also been a member of the three judge panel that ruled in favor of equalizing salaries for Norfolk’s teachers in 1940 and had concurred in that opinion (Picott, 1975). Hill and Robinson had defined the Corbin case narrowly as a question of whether equal facilities were available to African Americans. The question before the court, according to Dobie, was “ the factual one of whether or not the policies, usages and customs of the defendants actually do discriminate against these plaintiffs and others similarly situated on account of their race or color” (Corbin et al. v. County School Board of Pulaski County, Virginia, November 14, 1949).

The court examined the case in three parts. In regard to the charges by the plaintiffs that the school authorities had not enforced compulsory attendance laws with African American students, the court held that there was no difference in the enforcement of the law against either race. As to the charge of unequal facilities for African American students attending Pulaski's elementary schools, the court determined that the lower court had failed to recognize the individual nature of equal protection rights granted by the Constitution. The Court remanded this portion of the case to the lower court with the order that "specific findings be made as to each of the colored elementary schools" and to "determine as to each of them whether or not discrimination exists, bearing in mind that the question cannot be decided by averaging the facilities provided for the two classes of pupils" and "comparing one with the other" (Corbin et al. v. County School Board of Pulaski, Virginia, November 14, 1949).

It was the high school portion of the case that yielded victory for Corbin, Hill and the NAACP. Judge Dobie cited per pupil expenditures, curricular offerings, the long bus ride and its accompanying hardships, and facilities for science, home economics, and athletics as examples of "manifest inequalities" among the three white high schools and the Christiansburg Institute. Dobie continued by writing that, "Whenever the forbidden racial discrimination rears its head, a solemn duty to strike it down is imposed upon the courts" (Corbin et al. v. County School Board of Pulaski County, Virginia, November 14, 1949). The

Court reversed the judgment of the District Court as to high school instruction and remanded it to the District Court with instructions to grant the relief sought by the plaintiffs (Corbin et al. v. County School Board of Pulaski County, Virginia, November 14, 1949).

The importance of the Corbin case was not immediately recognized in Western Virginia. On May 3 The Roanoke Times reported Barksdale's ruling in a matter of fact fashion with no editorial comment in either the article or on the editorial page. When the Fourth Circuit issued its opinion, the reaction was less muted. The Roanoke Times elevated the story to its front page ("Ruling on Discrimination at Pulaski High Reversed", The Roanoke Times, November 15, 1949). The Richmond Times-Dispatch picked up the story as well ("Pulaski Group Wins Appeal in School Case", The Richmond Times-Dispatch, November 15, 1949). The Times Dispatch followed with a second story on November 16 analyzing the impact of the decision ("State Education Officials Feel Pulaski Ruling May Do Harm", The Richmond Times-Dispatch, November 16, 1949). The article reports that the section of the opinion that held that African American pupils were discriminated against because they were transported a greater distance and for a longer time than white students was particularly troubling to state education officials. They were reported to believe that the decision "might affect the entire regional school system of the state" ("State Education Officials

Feel Pulaski Ruling May Do Harm”, The Richmond Times-Dispatch, November 16, 1949).

Tushnet (1987) recognizes the significance of the Corbin decision by listing it among eleven NAACP supported lawsuits challenging unequal physical facilities before Brown v. Board of Education was filed. Tushnet claims that these eleven suits prove that the NAACP’s strategy of pursuing equalization was representative of its constituency. Eventually , he writes the NAACP legal strategy turned from equalization to the direct challenge that Brown represented when it was initiated in 1951. Before that could happen, Tushnet argues, the equalization cases offered the best vehicle to improve the status of African Americans in the segregated South. Equalization cases were a necessary step in the evolution of the NAACP’s legal strategy to challenge segregation.

The reader cannot help but notice the omission of Harmon’s name in this section. His contribution to the Corbin case was indirect. Having been forced out of the Pulaski County School System in 1939, Harmon was left with no official role to play in the educational affairs of the young people of Pulaski. He continued to be active in the Pulaski NAACP. Ethel Carter reports in one of her columns in June of 1939 that he had left Pulaski that week as a delegate to the Virginia NAACP state conference (Carter, June 30, 1939). As will be seen in the next section, Harmon was not ever to be employed in the Pulaski County

Schools again and was actually absent from the community for much of the period between 1939 and 1949, the year the Corbin case was decided.

Harmon's Career after 1939

Without a job as a teacher, Harmon was forced to find other means by which to support himself. Still unmarried in 1939, he did not have the financial obligations of a family to support. He was a proud man, however, and did not wish to be a burden on his own family. Between 1939 and 1944, he worked at a variety of jobs. For much of 1939 and into 1940 he worked at the family boarding house and in the Harmon and Murphy Barber Shop in Pulaski.

Harmon followed in the footsteps of his parents by moving to Pittsburgh in 1940. That summer, an aunt on a visit home from Pittsburgh had told him that a barber was needed in a shop there. Needing work and somewhat frustrated with his situation, Harmon decided to give the North a try. He moved there in early summer. He worked there for six months as a barber in the shop recommended by his aunt. Harmon could not bear to be away from his home, however. His sense of connection to Pulaski and his family exercised too great a pull on him and he returned in December. Throughout his life he was to maintain close ties and a presence in the Pulaski community (Harmon, personal interview, October 23, 1995).

After returning to Pulaski, Harmon secured steady employment with the Hercules Powder Company at the Radford Army Ammunitions Plant (Harmon, L.

M., personal interview, October 23, 1995). The plant had opened to meet the demands for ammunition created by the outbreak of World War II. He was joined there by his colleague Gravely. Gravely had married a woman from Pulaski and had remained in the town living on the money the NAACP had paid him as the plaintiff in the salary equalization petition (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995). Gravely recalls that both of them were grateful to have the jobs. Even with the dual salary scale assigning lower wages to African Americans at federal installations, they earned far more money than they could have earned as teachers in Pulaski or anywhere else. Harmon's W-2 form from 1944, the last year he worked at the ammunitions plant, reports his gross earning as \$1214.70, an average of \$152 per month, for the period from January through August ("Statement of Income Tax Withheld on Wages Calendar Year 1944, Chauncey D. Harmon, Employee"). His wife's contract as a teacher for 1945-46, a year later, shows her monthly salary as \$135 for a nine month term.

Both Harmon and Gravely initially worked as members of the construction crew erecting the many buildings on the huge project. Later they secured permanent jobs with the Hercules Powder Company, the contractor that operated the plant for the federal government. They worked as janitors for part of the time because that was the only work African Americans were allowed to enter at the "arsenal" (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995). According to Gravely, there were "guys there with masters [degrees] and Ph. D.'s pushing

brooms because the money was good and they wouldn't let us do anything else" (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995). Gravely continued to work at the ammunitions plant until 1943 when his shift was laid off. He left Pulaski for Cleveland, Ohio, for another defense industry job, not returning to teaching until after World War II (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995). Harmon stayed on until September of 1944.

While employed by Hercules, Harmon applied himself diligently to his duties. He was recognized as a good worker who was able to get along with others (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995). Eventually he succeeded in reaching a supervisory position with Hercules (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, October, 23, 1995). His mother worried about the effect the chemicals used at the plant might have on his asthma. Despite occasional illness, he successfully completed several long periods of work without missing a day including one in excess of a year (Hercules Powder Company, Attendance Certificate, 1944).

Harmon had known Lucy Martin since their childhood. He had begun to court her in earnest after returning to Pulaski in 1935. Martin had been a teacher on the Calfee staff and an ally of Harmon's in the equalization fight. In 1941, satisfied that he had a secure job that paid well, Martin consented to marry Harmon. After their marriage, they settled down to live in Pulaski. Harmon continued to work at the ammunitions plant. Mrs. Harmon left teaching for three

years to work as a homemaker. Under the custom and practice of the time, married women were not allowed to work as teachers. She busied herself with caring for an ill family friend and helping out around the boarding house. Fortunately, the salary Harmon earned was sufficient for them to make a reasonable living from it (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, October 23, 1995).

Wytheville Training School 1944-1953

In 1944, the Harmons were approached by Mrs. Harmon's sister, Mary who had been working as a teacher in Barren Springs in Wythe County. John Crowgey, Superintendent of Schools in Wythe County, had hired Mary as a member of the elementary school faculty at Wytheville Training School. Crowgey told Mary that he wanted a husband and wife team for the remaining two positions available at the Wytheville Training School and that he had heard about the Harmons. He asked her to inquire if they would be interested in joining the faculty there. Harmon's mother encouraged him to re-enter education as a profession. She was never comfortable with the ammunitions plant as a place for her son to work because of the chemicals and the frequent explosions. On reflecting on his mother's advice, Harmon and his wife agreed to look into the positions in Wytheville. After interviewing them, Crowgey offered Harmon the position of principal of the school and Mrs. Harmon a position as teacher (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, October 23, 1995). The Harmons agreed to accept the positions and began working there on September 15, 1944. Their

return to teaching was delayed due to the postponement of school opening from September 4 due to an outbreak of infantile paralysis ("Wythe County Schools Scheduled to Open Friday", Southwest Virginia Enterprise, September 12, 1944). Mrs. Harmon worked at the Wytheville school for two years until the birth of their first child, Chauncey Depew, Jr., in 1946. Harmon held the post of principal until 1953, first under Crowgey and subsequently under Superintendent Fendall Ellis (Harmon, L. M. personal interview, December 16, 1994 and Unpublished Autobiography 1965).

When Harmon accepted the post at Wytheville, he was given some friendly advice by a fellow African American principal. The principal took Harmon aside saying that Harmon's activity with the NAACP in the Calfee School equalization fight was well known. He went on to say that Harmon now had an opportunity to return to the field of education in another good position and that he should not jeopardize himself or his family by being involved in such activity again (Harmon, L. M., June 23, 1995). Harmon did not engage in the confrontational tactics again. He did continue to work for the improvement of educational conditions and the advancement of African Americans.

A picture of the Wytheville Training School reveals that it was a building not dissimilar from the Calfee School in certain respects. About 110 students and their teachers appear in the photograph. The picture shows the scholars posed on the front porch and steps of the frame building. The main building was

a four classroom structure with oiled floors. Four pot-bellied stoves provided heat for the school. A second building housing the elementary grades and a third building two blocks away was the location of the domestic science program and the cafeteria (Johnson, 1983).

Faced with similar conditions as at Calfee, Harmon chose a different course. Fendall Ellis had replaced Crowgey shortly after Harmon came to Wytheville. Ellis was a relatively young man who had a number of progressive ideas. He began an annual report printed as a supplement in the local newspaper ("Wythe County School Report", Southwest Virginia Enterprise, February 22, 1952). Under his leadership, the county undertook a program of capital improvements valued at over \$1.75 million ("Wythe County School Report", Southwest Virginia Enterprise, February 22, 1952). Ellis was a moderate on racial issues who attempted to facilitate communication and cooperation among the races. Ellis' wife even worked as a teacher at the Wytheville Training School herself (Harmon, L. M., June 23, 1995).

Together, Harmon and Ellis worked to improve conditions for African Americans in Wythe County. Archie Richardson, Assistant State Supervisor of Negro Education, and J. Rupert Picott, Executive Director of the Virginia State Teachers Association, were frequent visitors to the Wytheville school. Richardson was the first African American appointed to the staff of the State Department of Education (Richardson, 1976). Not unlike the circuit riders of old,

he and Picott periodically made a loop from Richmond to Roanoke on to Wytheville, Bristol and back. Harmon often sought and received their advice on the latest teaching methods and curriculum. One day in 1944 Richardson and Picott were discussing with Harmon the dual school transportation system for African Americans and Whites with Harmon. Harmon took them outside to show them that "our buses are already integrated" (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, October 23, 1995). Much to their amazement, the skeptical men witnessed two African American students riding a school bus together to Wytheville from the remote village of Speedwell. This common sense arrangement, quite unusual in 1944, had been worked out by Ellis and Harmon to avoid two buses being sent to the area (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, June 23, 1995).

In 1948-49, Ellis and Harmon began to develop a plan for a new school to replace the three building complex still in use. In October of 1949 the Wythe County School Board selected Smithy and Boynton to design the school. The next month, options were prepared for a 12.6 acre lot on which the school would be erected. At the suggestion of the Wytheville Training School PTA, the name of the new school was changed to Scott Memorial High School in honor of Richard Henry Scott, an African American educator in Wythe County for 47 years (Johnson, 1983). Formed shortly after Harmon arrived at the school, the Wytheville Training School PTA was instrumental in Harmon's success in securing a comprehensive high school. Three members of the PTA, Robert

Green, David Smith, and Marvin Hill, regularly acted as intermediaries and supporters for Harmon's suggestions for the school's design. Without their interest and diligent effort, the school would not have met with the acceptance that it did (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, October 23, 1995). In February of 1952, the board accepted a bid for the new school from the English Construction Company for \$349,400. Construction began that same month and was completed in time for school to open in September of 1952 (Johnson, 1983).

The new school offered 32 Carnegie units of high school work including classes in French, English, Mathematics, Science, Music, Social Studies, Business Education, Home Economics, Agriculture, Shop, Health, and Physical Education (Johnson, 1983). An architect's rendering, published in the August 30, 1952, edition of The Norfolk Journal and Guide, shows a building of brick construction with a combination gymnasium and auditorium. The caption accompanying the drawing indicates that the building would contain a home economics suite, a science laboratory, a library, a business education room, a clinic, a teacher's lounge, a cafeteria, a shop, a two-room office suite, boys and girls locker rooms as well as ten classrooms. In addition, the Journal and Guide reported that the school would have ten teachers to serve 125 high school students from four counties and 85 elementary students, all from Wythe County ("Scott Memorial Hi School", The Norfolk Journal and Guide, August 30, 1952).

The new school, administered by Harmon, served African American high school students from Wythe, Bland, Carroll, and Grayson Counties. Some students traveled as much as seventy miles each way to get to the school. Under Harmon's leadership, the school graduated its first class, a group of 24 students, in the spring of 1953 (Johnson, 1983). It is likely that the White authorities in the counties who supported the Scott Memorial High School were at least partially motivated to participate in its establishment by the Virginia Department of Education's support of regional schools for African Americans as well as by equalization suits lost elsewhere and the all out assault mounted on school segregation by the NAACP. Nonetheless, the successful opening of Scott Memorial certainly offered a stark contrast with Harmon's Pulaski experience.

Harmon had advanced himself professionally as well. He attended graduate classes at Teachers College of Columbia University for several years. In 1951, after three summers of study, he graduated from the New York school with a Master of Arts degree in Educational Administration and Supervision of Secondary Schools. Harmon had chosen to attend Teachers College because he, like all African Americans, was denied the right to attend the University of Virginia. Wanting the best coursework he could find, he elected to go to Columbia rather than to African American colleges in Virginia. The state paid the tuition of African American graduate students to go to out of state schools if

they could prove that the course was available only at the University of Virginia or from another White college from which they were barred. Mrs. Harmon recalls carefully comparing the summer schedule of the University with that of the African American schools and Columbia's in order to be sure to get the state aid. Harmon was not alone in using the system to his best advantage. There were many African American Virginians attending Columbia for the same reasons (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, October 23, 1995). Enterprising African Americans like the Harmons still were using Plessy v. Ferguson to their advantage.

From 1944 until 1948, the Harmons lived in a rented house in Wytheville through the week. On Fridays, if there were no school activities scheduled over the weekend, they would return to Pulaski. Even though Harmon lived in Tuskegee, Pittsburgh, Wytheville, and later in Salem, he always maintained that his home was in Pulaski (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, October 23, 1995). Harmon often brought home with him students from the school who wanted to participate in extra-curricular activities, but who could not because the buses left school too early. Mrs. Harmon graciously accepted the role of surrogate mother for these youngsters on a regular basis (Miller, 1983). In 1947, the Harmons had their second child, Marylen. Mrs. Harmon remained home with the children until 1949. In 1949, she returned to teaching at Calfee School in Pulaski where she

taught in the primary grades for five additional years. The Harmons built a home in Pulaski that same year (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, June 23, 1995).

G. W. Carver School, 1953-1966

Harmon worked in the Scott Memorial High School for only one year. In 1953, at the age of 40, he accepted the position of principal of George Washington Carver School in Salem, Virginia ("Harmon Named Principal of Carver High in Salem", Southwest Virginia Enterprise, July 3, 1953). His tenure at Wytheville had lasted nine years and had been capped by the opening of the Scott Memorial High School the previous fall. Harmon was described as having "efficiently served eight years" as principal of Wytheville Training School and one year as principal of Scott Memorial High School in a front page article ("Harmon Named Principal of Carver High in Salem", Southwest Virginia Enterprise, July 3, 1953). He left on good terms with all whom he had relations. The African Americans of Wytheville lament his departure even today (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, October 23, 1995).

Rush Anderson, the Carver principal, had died in May as the result of an automobile accident. Later that spring at a principal's conference, many African American principals had suggested Harmon as a worthy successor to Anderson. D. Mott Robinson, former principal of George Wythe High School, who had moved to Roanoke County and knew Harmon's work also recommended him to the Roanoke County Superintendent, R. R. Nininger. Harmon agreed to apply

for the position and was selected from among the many applicants. Mrs. Harmon was assigned to work as a teacher in the primary grades at the school (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, October 23, 1995). In two curious twists of fate, Harmon succeeded Rush Anderson, a classmate of Gravelly's (Gravelly, personal interview, April 19, 1995) and was to administer a school over whose construction a major battle had been fought during the same year Harmon had been involved in the Calfee fight ("Kiwans Club Oppose Site", The Roanoke Times, September 9, 1938 and "Judge Keister to Hear Suit Against School Board", The Roanoke Times, October 16, 1938). As the only school for African Americans in Roanoke County, Carver School drew students from all over the county and from Bedford, Botetourt, and Franklin Counties as well ("Memories live on at Carver", Salem Times Register, July 11, 1991).

Over time, Harmon had become something of a celebrity in the African American press. This status appears to have initially derived from his leadership of the Calfee equalization fight. In September of 1939, the Baltimore Afro-American ran a photograph of Harmon, his future wife, Lucy, and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Watson taken on their way to the New York World's Fair. He and Martin are described in the caption as the teachers who led the fight for equalization in Pulaski, Virginia. The Norfolk Journal and Guide followed Harmon's career reporting on the opening of the Scott Memorial High School in 1952 ("Scott Memorial Hi School", The Norfolk Journal and Guide, August 30, 1952). His

appointment at Carver was also noted by the African American press. The New Jersey Afro-American covered the event with a picture and short story as well ("Salem Greet New Principal", New Jersey Afro-American, July 18, 1953).

Nininger ended ten years as superintendent of schools in Roanoke County in 1955. He was succeeded by Herman L. Horn, who was to serve for a ten year term of his own (Middleton, 1986). Harmon worked well with Horn in his position as principal of Carver School. He and Horn traveled several times to Tuskegee Institute and other African American colleges to recruit African American teachers. On one occasion, Horn insisted that Harmon ride with him in a taxi for Whites and made him cross into an area roped off for Whites only in order to board a train back to Virginia from Alabama. The next day an African American church in Birmingham was bombed (Harmon, L. M., personal interview, October 23, 1995).

Glenice Mills Cottman possesses an unique perspective on Harmon's career. Cottman was a student at Calfee Training School in 1938-39. She also worked as a teacher for Harmon at Carver School from 1959 until 1961. Cottman recalls that Harmon demanded organization and accuracy. She reports that a sloppy or incomplete teacher's register would lead to a withheld check under Harmon's leadership. Cottman remembers Harmon as an administrator who backed his teachers. She tells of several incidents in which parents entered the school building to confront teachers only to be headed off by Harmon's

insistence that they come to his office to discuss the problem first. There, Cottman says the issue was frequently resolved by Harmon's diplomatic but firm discussions with the parents (Cottman, personal interview, October 30, 1995).

As a teacher at Carver prior to Harmon's arrival and throughout his tenure there, Georgia Reeves holds a perspective on his career that is equally unique. Reeves began working at Carver in 1948 under Rush Anderson and remained there until 1967. According to Reeves, the Carver faculty's experience with Anderson had been trying during the last few years of his term as principal. An atmosphere of mistrust and caution permeated the building. Teachers were even keeping logs to document events that might come into dispute (Reeves, personal interview, November 4, 1995). Consequently, the teachers at Carver were uncertain of Harmon initially. They had heard that he had been principal at the Wytheville Training School and that he was principal of the Calfee School when it burned. Beyond that, they knew little else about Harmon. By Reeves' account, Harmon's arrival was like a breath of fresh air for the staff at Carver. He treated the teachers as professionals saying, "I am going to leave you to do the job that you were hired to do" (Reeves, personal interview, November 4, 1995). His comments were followed up with behavior that supported his statements. The logs were soon forgotten as Harmon won over the staff with his respect for them. Reeves recalls only one duty that Harmon assigned that created any resentment. Prior to his arrival, the teachers sold tickets to home

football games and were allowed to go home afterwards. Harmon directed the teachers to sell the tickets and to serve the team its post-game meal that cafeteria workers had served previously. When asked by the teachers if they could collect money to pay the cafeteria workers to serve the meal in their place, Harmon answered no, saying that serving the meal was an experience the faculty needed to become like family with the young people (Reeves, personal interview, November 4, 1995).

Reeves believes that Harmon succeeded in his goal of making the faculty and their charges a family. She says that, "As I look back on it, it was good for us. It was like family. His love for children rubbed off on all of us." Reeves relates several examples to prove her contention. In 1960, it snowed every Wednesday in March. On one day, the buses could not make it home. Harmon and his wife kept many of the stranded children in their home for a week until the roads were cleared. In his first year, Harmon began a tradition of hosting a Christmas party at his house for the faculty. Reeves says that Harmon was a friend as well as a principal to his teachers. When her husband died while performing his duties as a Norfolk and Western dining car steward, Harmon and his wife were at her home in Roanoke within 10 minutes from the time she learned of his passing. Later, Harmon came to her house to secure all the windows in her basement. Reeves sums up her assessment of Harmon by

saying, "He was just a good Christian gentleman" (Reeves, personal interview, November 4, 1995).

Harmon had become a leader among his fellow professionals. He continued to be active in the Virginia State Teachers Association, serving as president of the Ninth District for nine consecutive years from 1944 until 1953. Harmon achieved state office in the VSTA in 1953, being elected to one of the vice-presidencies and the executive board of the organization (Picott, 1975). In 1956, he ran for president of the Virginia State Teachers Association with the endorsement of the Ninth District Association (Picott, 1975)). He was an officer in the Virginia Interscholastic Association, the African American athletic league. He took an active role in principal's groups while associated with Carver School as well ("Prominent Retired Educator Passes", Roanoke Tribune, December 9, 1993). According to Cottman, Harmon strongly encouraged his teachers to participate in their professional organizations as well, saying "That's where you are getting your bread and butter" (Cottman, personal interview, October 30, 1995).

Roanoke County Visiting Teacher, 1966-78

Carver School closed as a high school in 1966 due to integration. Integration brought many changes to education for African Americans in Roanoke County. Not all the changes are recalled as victories by some of the teachers of the time. Speaking of the African American students, Georgia

Reeves says that, "They lost more than they got" (Reeves, personal interview, November 4, 1995). She argues that, in the segregated Carver school, African American students received attention and values that they did not in the integrated schools. The exceptional students benefited from academic scholarships and athletic opportunities that opened as a result of integration, but the average student suffered because their new schools "were not like family" (Reeves, personal interview, November 4, 1995).

Reeves relates that the situation for professionals was not much better. She recalls a meeting in April of 1966 in which all the Roanoke County African American teachers met at Carver with Superintendent Arnold Burton to discuss their future assignments. The Roanoke Times had reported that the African Americans were to be assigned as itinerant teachers and reading aides ("Salem Teachers Treated Like Garbage Men" The Roanoke Times, April 13, 1966). As a career teacher of mathematics, she had no desire to become a reading teacher and made her feelings known at the meeting. She was subsequently assigned to Cave Spring High School as a teacher of mathematics. Reeves reports with regret that most African American teachers were assigned as reading teachers. She is especially saddened by what she describes as Harmon's being "relegated to the role of a visiting teacher", believing him to be a superior principal. Reeves is complimentary of Harmon's attitude about the events saying, "We got bitter and mean, but he didn't" (Reeves, November 4,

1995). The transfer of African American teachers and principals after integration was a pattern across the South. Michael Paul Williams (1994) reports that in 1965, there were 105 African American principals in Virginia. Williams says that, by 1971, there were only 16. Williams recounts similar circumstances in North Carolina and Alabama (Williams, 1994).

After Carver's integration, Harmon was assigned to the position of Visiting Teacher in the central office of the Roanoke County Public Schools. If he had any bitterness about his new position, he kept it to himself. Indeed, he performed his duties with "quiet courage" becoming an "outstanding" visiting teacher (Burton, letter to Harmon, May 3, 1978). He remained in the position until his retirement in 1978. While associated with the Roanoke County Schools, Harmon achieved several posts of trust and responsibility in professional associations. He was elected Treasurer of the Roanoke County Council of PTAs, Treasurer of the Roanoke County School Employees Federal Credit Union, Treasurer of the State Visiting Teachers Association, and President of the Roanoke Region Visiting Teachers Association ("Prominent Retired Educator Passes", Roanoke Tribune, December 9, 1993).

Elder Statesman, 1978-93

Harmon was active in the civic affairs of Salem and the Roanoke Valley as well. He was a member of the inaugural board of directors of Total Action Against Poverty, an anti-poverty organization. He also served on the board of

directors for the Roanoke Valley Council of Community Services, the United Way of Roanoke Valley, The Roanoke Valley Chapter of the Red Cross, the Burrell Memorial Hospital, the Roanoke Valley Speech and Hearing Association, the Salem Education Foundation, the Salem Chapter of the NAACP, and the Carver Reunion Association (Prominent Retired Educator Passes, Roanoke Tribune, December 9, 1993). After his retirement, he assumed the role of elder statesman in Salem. Over time, Harmon became a political force in Salem. City council candidates and General Assembly aspirants sought out his support. On two occasions, once in 1978 and once in 1993, Harmon fought successfully to keep the Carver School open and named after his former Sunday School teacher. It was in this context that the researcher first came to know Harmon and to develop a healthy respect for his passion and zeal for causes in which he believed.

Harmon was diagnosed with rectal cancer in 1976. His Roanoke physician referred him to a cancer center in Buffalo, New York where doctors performed surgery. The cancer was removed and Harmon subsequently returned to work. He battled the disease for seventeen years with the same determination he employed against Superintendent Bruce and the Pulaski School Board in 1938. Eventually, the cancer was arrested and Harmon became a long term survivor. In order to serve as an example to other cancer victims he allowed his condition to be known and reported in The Roanoke

Times (Poindexter, 1982). When Harmon died in 1993, he was survived by his wife, Lucy Martin Harmon; his son, C. D., Jr.; his daughter-in-law, Bevelyn; his daughter, Dr. Marylen Harmon; two granddaughters; his brother, George Eli; four sisters, Margaret Haynes, Lilita Robinson, Anna Bell Pinkney, and Deloise Wilson. He left behind a legacy of leadership and caring among the thousands of young people whom his life touched.

Themes and Conclusions

As described in the Introduction, the researcher assumed the historian's obligation to situate the events presented in the study into an historical context. The next section will attempt to discern themes and draw conclusions that appear to emerge from the historical record that comprises the study. Leedy (1993) observes that "the heart of the historical method is not the *accumulating* of the facts but the interpretation of the facts" and that "the interpretation of data is central in all research" (p. 223). Barzun and Graff (1992) offer the historical researcher some guidance on the task of interpreting a study. Reflecting on "Truth, Causes, and Conditions", they write:

It is the organization of the past that makes the past valuable, just as it is the organization of phenomena in scientific formulas that makes the study of nature valuable. The ultimate question for the historian therefore is: What pattern? (Barzun and Graff, 1992, p. 180)

Almost as if responding to Barzun and Graff, Miles and Huberman (1994) pose a question of their own. "What kind of patterns can there be? As usual, we can

expect patterns of *variables* involving similarities and differences among categories, and patterns of *processes* involving connections in time and space within a context (p.246).” These two patterns will be employed in the interpretation of the data presented in the study.

As the researcher looks at the record of Harmon’s youth, education, and early career, four patterns of process appear to emerge. First are the “unintended effects” as defined by Allen Bullock (1967). Second are the parallels with events on the national and state levels. Third is Harmon’s behavior as a change agent. Finally, there are the puzzles to which the historical record of the study does not seem to inform the researcher. These four patterns are the organizers that the researcher will use to present his interpretation of the study.

Unintended Effects

In his book, A History of Negro Education in the South from 1619 to the Present, Henry Allen Bullock (1967) posits the theory of “intended and unintended dimensions of the functions of society” (p. ix). He argues for the interpretation of history through a model that can be summarized as conflict mitigated by unintention leading to accommodation. As an example, Bullock describes segregated education as the “great detour” that took African Americans from slavery to equality (p. 60). Bullock believes that when Whites first brought African Americans to the New World, they unleashed a prolonged

but inevitable process of societal change. This change process was brought about by the education of African Americans, first through the utilitarian training of slavery and later the education of a free people. While the Whites only intended to educate African Americans for their own purposes, the unintended liberating effect of education could not be limited. Eventually the unintended effect overtook and overwhelmed the intended. Bullock asserts that along the way there were many intervening factors that delayed the process, prime among them racial segregation, but that the intervening factors could only slow, not halt, the process.

Several examples of unintended effects appear in the historical record of Harmon's life. One of the most obvious is his own educational experience. Harmon's instance parallels the general educational experience of the African American race in the United States described by Bullock. Limited by racial discrimination to a very few options for his schooling, he took full advantage of those that were available and turned them to his own purposes. Like Booker T. Washington and other educators of African Americans who made compromises to advance the educational circumstances of their charges, Harmon made individual compromises of his own. He left his home town when there was no secondary schooling available to him. He worked his way through Tuskegee to get a college degree, unable to return home for six years. Harmon never compromised his goal, though. He wanted the best education he could secure

for himself and others. Nothing less would do. Like many of the freedmen of Reconstruction, he thirsted for education. He took an education that was intended to be second class by some of its designers and made it into a vehicle for the very changes that they feared.

When African Americans from Virginia sought relief from the legal restrictions imposed by Jim Crow laws and the Constitution of 1902 by moving to northern and midwestern cities, they experienced a level of freedom that did not exist in the South at the time. Even with the housing and other restrictions of segregation that existed in the North and Midwest (Weinberg, 1977), the economic and educational opportunities there far surpassed that available in their home region. As documented in Chapter One, both of Harmon's parents were a part of the mass migration north. There they saw and participated in a more open societal structure than they had known in Virginia.

Similarly, the combination of natural resources, cheap labor and the influx of northern capital to the South after the Civil War attracted a migration of railroad and mining interests to Pulaski. With the northern financed industry came northern attitudes about race. While not wholly benign, as amply demonstrated by the development of Spivey's (1978) "New Slavery" of industrial education, the attitudes of the northerners tended to be more tolerant of African Americans who sought to advance themselves economically. The unintended effect was the change in attitudes that accompanied both migrations.

In Pulaski, as in other southern communities, the development of industry brought with it jobs. African Americans secured some of those jobs and began to have sufficient resources to live above the subsistence level. Eventually, as demonstrated in Chapter One, Pulaski developed its own emerging middle class of African American entrepreneurs and professionals. Harmon's family owned and operated a laundry business and a boarding house. Rush Johnson, P. C. Corbin, Maceo Santa Cruz, Bob Martin, and the ministers of the community were local examples of Bullock's (1967) class of proprietors and professionals. Bullock identifies the children of this class as the ones who would be the source of change by driving for greater economic and social opportunities for themselves and their children (p.164). Bullock's thesis seems to hold up in Harmon's case. He had grown up in an environment like the one Bullock describes. Without question, he was the source of a drive for change in Pulaski in 1938-39.

The decision of the Pulaski County School Board in March of 1939 to transport its African American high school students to the Christiansburg Institute resulted in improved educational opportunities for the African American young people of Pulaski. The Pulaski youth had more class offerings open to them at Christiansburg to say nothing of two additional grades of schooling. If one accepts the statements made by the board at the time, that was an intended effect. There was an accompanying effect that the board never intended and

probably never even imagined. Had it not been for the board's decision, Dr. Corbin would not have had the basis to bring his 1949 suit against the board. As Tushnet's (1987) work makes clear, there is a direct lineage from Harmon and Gravely's petitions to Corbin's suit leading eventually to Brown v. Board of Education. The board had unwittingly contributed to the dismantlement of the very system of segregation that it sought to perpetuate.

Not all of the unintended effects apparent in the study were benign. Harmon and Gravely's loss of their positions as teachers was a decided blow to the Pulaski African American community. Leaders who were willing to take a clear position against segregation were not common in rural Virginia in 1939. With regard to personal economic security, the battle had been a loss for both men. As noted in Chapter Five, the loss of jobs was a fear cited by opponents to the petitions. Often the petitioners were left without positions. It can be argued that the victory hailed by the Afro-American and the Journal and Guide was a Pyrrhic one for the petitioners, at least in the short term.

State and National Parallels

Lichtman and French (1978) state that one of the functions of local histories, such as this study, is to test hypotheses about broader jurisdictions through the means of case studies. As documented in Chapters Four and Five, Harmon's efforts in Pulaski not only paralleled events on the state and national levels, it actually was a part of the ongoing work of the Virginia NAACP and the

NAACP Legal Defense Fund working out of New York. Harmon's battle in Pulaski was an extension of the equalization strategy practiced by the NAACP leadership in the late 1930's. Harmon's case was handled by J. Thomas Hewin under the direction of Charles Houston and Thurgood Marshall, legal counsel to the NAACP.

Many of the elements present in Marshall's work throughout the country are present in the Pulaski case. Harmon appears to have been inspired by the call for salary equalization made by Marshall and others at the 1937 Virginia State Teachers Association. It is certain that his name was forwarded to NAACP officials by VSTA leaders. This partnership of the teachers association and the NAACP was a basic tenet of the equalization strategy as laid out by Marshall.

The use of the African American press by Harmon and others involved with the Pulaski case to promote their cause was consistent with NAACP practice in other equalization cases. Marshall began the practice in Maryland and continued it by courting the Virginia press when he moved the equalization campaign into the state. Hewin constantly passed along favorable information about his cases to both the Afro-American and the Journal and Guide. In response, both papers followed the Pulaski situation closely, reporting on it frequently and extensively.

The Pulaski case is among one of the first instances of the NAACP seeking equalization of a Virginia school system through Marshall's strategy of

petition followed by litigation. While it is impossible to pinpoint the date of the filing of the Pulaski petitions, it appears that only Aline Black's petition filed in October of 1938 predates Gravely's petition for equal salaries. The petition for equal facilities filed by Harmon and the 200 other signatories appears to have been the first of its kind in Virginia, if contemporary news accounts are to be believed. Hewin's correspondence with Marshall seems to indicate that he was the originator of the idea to petition for facility equalization movement in Virginia (Hewin, letter to Marshall, December 17, 1938). There was an effort to obtain new schools for African Americans in Brunswick County in 1930 (Suggs, 1988), but no one had applied the NAACP equalization litigation strategy to facilities until Hewin did so in Pulaski.

Harmon as an Agent of Change

Much has been written in recent years about schools and principals as agents of change (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1990). Nearly all of the recent literature, however, concerns itself with initiating change within schools and the processes of schooling rather than societal issues such as segregation. Harmon, of course, acted as an agent of change in a more general sense throughout his career and especially in his work in Pulaski. The analysis presented here deals with his general leadership style rather than his pedagogical leadership.

In Pulaski, Harmon pursued change through confrontation. It is difficult to say with any certainty why he chose to challenge the authorities as he did. Gravely's comments seem to indicate that youth played a role in Harmon's choice of methods. It is not the immaturity of youth that Gravely cites, however. Rather, Gravely believes that as a young man Harmon believed he had nothing to lose. When one has nothing to lose it is easier to engage in high risk behavior, he maintains (Gravely, personal interview, April 19, 1995).

In addition to the motivation of having little to lose, Harmon had the potential of support for his cause. Harmon was well informed about the NAACP's work with the VSTA on salary equalization. By summer of 1938, he was assured that both organizations would use their resources to assist in a challenge to the educational status quo in Pulaski. Without question, Harmon certainly knew the Pulaski community well, having grown up there. As demonstrated in Chapter Five, he had allies he could count on for support in the form of Dr. Corbin, Gravely, Dr. Santa Cruz, and the other Calfee teachers.

Harmon's convictions likely influenced him to confront the local school authorities. He was reportedly a person who had little tolerance for injustice. His parents had taught him to believe in himself. They had also given him a solid foundation of Christian moral and ethical principles. Perhaps his use of confrontation was driven by a deeply rooted sense of fair play. It may have been his uncomplicated but strongly held belief that unequal facilities for African

American students and unequal salaries for African American teachers was morally wrong. Whatever the reason, Harmon chose to practice a decidedly confrontational style of leadership in Pulaski in pursuit of change.

In Wythe County and Roanoke County, Harmon preferred to effect change through cooperation. He continued to push for change in a zealous, but less contentious, way. Fendall Ellis and Herman Horn became allies for his work in behalf of African American youth instead of opponents like Haynes Bruce had become in Pulaski. He was successful in securing a new school for the African American children of Wythe County and the surrounding jurisdictions. He helped to recruit African American teachers to Roanoke County and brought harmony to a school faculty that had been estranged from its principal prior to his arrival. Later, he achieved considerable influence in the Roanoke Valley by means of a leadership style that could be characterized as one of quiet determination.

The question of which style served Harmon best must be considered. He had success using both methods. In Pulaski, he won a noisy battle only to lose the war by having his position and its influence over young people taken away from him. There, his effect was like that of a match, intense and bright but rapidly consumed. In Wythe and Roanoke Counties, the results of his work was more like a stone dropped into a pool, quieter, more sustained, and widespread. It would seem that this quieter style of leadership allowed Harmon to gain a

greater number of changes and more lasting changes as well. In the many positions he filled as a leader after the Pulaski fight school principal, he influenced the lives of thousands of young people and adults, both African American and White. Harmon saw many changes during the course of his life and career. Some were changes of his own making, others were not. Throughout it all, he seized every opportunity that life offered him and wrung out of each one the very last drop of success that it held.

Puzzles

As the study draws to a close, the researcher must set forth several puzzles that he has pondered and can not reconcile satisfactorily in his own mind. First is the question of why no greater note of the situation in Pulaski in 1938-39 is made in the historical records extant to this point. Conway Howard Smith (1981), author of the most comprehensive history of Pulaski County, makes no mention of it all. This absence of comment is especially curious in view of his devotion of a chapter of his book to African American history in the county. Even more curious is Mary Baker's (1976) omission of the incident from her bicentennial Black History of Pulaski County. Both of those omissions pale by comparison to Harmon leaving the story out of his own A History of the Origins of the Black Citizens of Pulaski. There appears to be no clear reason for the omissions. In Harmon's case, the researcher tends to dismiss the absence of comment to his general modesty. Georgia Reeves, a teacher for Harmon at

Carver School for 13 years, says that he never mentioned the Pulaski fight. She dismisses the absence of comment on his part as part of his personality.

Reeves says that Harmon was not a man given to self-promotion, preferring to work diligently but quietly (Reeves, personal interview, November 4, 1995).

Apparently Baker and Smith held the belief that the events were unworthy of inclusion in their works. It is conceivable that the omission from all three histories relates to the time that they were written. Each was authored in celebration of a significant event in the life of the community. On such an occasion, an author may be reluctant to detail an event that is unpleasant, if not divisive, to the community.

The second puzzle to the researcher is the lack of follow through by the NAACP in the Pulaski case. Why was neither Harmon or Gravelly chosen for a salary equalization suit? Why did the NAACP not attempt to win back jobs for Harmon and Gravelly? There are no obvious answers to these questions either. The researcher can offer some informed speculation in this case, however.

The NAACP files in the Library of Congress yield two clues as to why Harmon was not chosen as a plaintiff. In a letter to Plummer B. Young, the publisher of the Norfolk Journal and Guide, Thurgood Marshall explains why the plaintiff he had selected for the first salary equalization petition, Aline Black, was a superior candidate to one favored by Young. Marshall cited as reasons Black's experience of having taught ten years, her masters degree, and his

expectation that Black would be “a fine witness on the witness stand” (Marshall, letter to Young, December 31, 1938). Examination of a plaintiff questionnaire completed by Mary Pauline Lilly of Richmond reveals that a plaintiff candidate had to be near perfect to be acceptable. Harmon was not the perfect candidate in that he did not have his teaching certificate yet nor did he hold an advanced degree. Harmon’s rural location may have worked against him also. Kluger (1975) indicates that “prudence dictated bringing the Virginia cases in the relatively more progressive cities rather than the rural areas” (p. 268).

Despite the factors that seemingly precluded Harmon’s selection as the plaintiff in the test case, the NAACP did become involved with him in Pulaski. This intense involvement followed by the lack of support for Harmon and Gravely after the loss of their jobs is vexing. It gives rise to the question of whether Harmon and the Pulaski petitioners may have been used by the NAACP to manufacture a victory. Tushnet (1987) quotes Charles Houston as warning William White in 1939 that the NAACP ran the risk of adding to the charges already made against the organization that it was interested in “creating problems for propaganda purposes” (p. 74). The close alliance of the NAACP with African American newspapers in its work reinforces the possibility of a “declared victory” in Pulaski.

The explanation for the absence of follow through by the NAACP could be a matter of pragmatism and logistics. As Gravely points out, Pulaski was a long

way from Hewin's office in Richmond. It was not a large center of African American population. In addition there was the immediate concern of conducting school under the adverse circumstances resulting from the Calfee fire which diverted attention from the equalization campaign. Finally, as Oliver Hill points out, Tom Hewin left Richmond and the NAACP in late 1939 (Hill, letter to Tripp, September 7, 1995). Marshall was occupied with the suit filed in behalf of Aline Black. It is possible that there simply may not have been anyone else to press an action in Pulaski.

Pattern of Variables

Undergirding the processes that appear to emerge from Harmon's career are the variables that defined Harmon as a person and as an educator. These variables can be categorized as the values that seem to have influenced his behavior throughout his life. At various times certain of the values took center stage over others as different circumstances called for differing responses. Over time, though, these values were constants in Harmon's work and life.

Harmon held a deep abiding faith in the power of education. In his own life, he sought every opportunity to secure as much education as he could. He encouraged others with whom he came into contact to do the same. Education was a way to improve one's lot in life in Harmon's estimation. It was the key to better economic opportunities and to social advancement in Harmon's personal value system.

Harmon's life and career exemplified the value of family. His immediate family in Pulaski was a source of strength and inspiration in his early years. He was strongly influenced by his mother from his birth until her death. Each time he reached a crisis in his life, he sought advice and counsel from her and his other family members. In return, Harmon devoted himself to his family, assisting his siblings with their education and his parents in their business endeavors. Indeed, the Harmon family became the model for his professional life. His teachers and students became members of an extended family to which he was nearly as devoted as his own kin.

Perhaps as a result of his experiences at Tuskegee or perhaps as a result of his family's influence, Harmon had a strong appreciation for the personal values of responsibility, duty, belief in self, and hard work. Harmon took responsibility for his situation whenever he could. During the 1938-39 school term in Pulaski, he attempted to stimulate change out of a sense of responsibility to his student charges and to the larger cause of his entire race. As a school principal, he believed it to be his obligation to take children into his home to spend the night so that they would not be denied participation in extracurricular activities. He did not hesitate to drive out of his way to pick up children as he went to school at Wytheville Training School because he deemed it his duty. Harmon believed that he could make a positive difference with his life. He felt keenly the need to be an example to his students, his teachers, the communities

he served and his family. Hard work was a given in Harmon's life. From the time he began pulling a red wagon full of laundry around Pulaski through his years of unloading coal at the Tuskegee Power House until his death in 1993, work was a constant companion for Harmon. He believed in the value of work and he practiced his belief without fail. His former Sunday school teacher, George Washington Carver, would have been proud of Harmon, had he been able to see his accomplishments.

Fundamental to all of Harmon's values were his Christian beliefs. He maintained connection with the First Baptist Church in Pulaski for his entire life. He was an associate member of First Baptist Church in Salem as well. He believed that the tie with his home church was inviolate. In addition, he maintained an associate membership in First Baptist Church in Salem. Only his feelings for his family rivaled his devotion to his churches. One can discern the source of many of Harmon's values as the basic precepts of Christianity as practiced in the African American Baptist faith. His widow, Lucy, believes that it was his own personal faith that sustained him and drove him through both the good and bad times of his career and his personal life, especially when he was battling cancer. It was this source that he drew upon to give him the courage that he exemplified in 1938 and for the remainder of his life (Harmon, L . M., personal interview, October 23, 1995).

Chapter Summary

In Chapter Six the researcher brought the study to a close. The chapter was divided into three sections. The first examined the outcomes of Harmon's equalization battle in Pulaski in 1938-39. The second presented an abbreviated chronicle of his career and life from 1939 until his death in 1993. The final section offered the themes and conclusions the researcher believes emerge from the historical record of the study.

The first section emphasized the long term effects of the equalization challenge. The history behind the school board's decision to send its African American high school students to the Christiansburg Industrial Institute was detailed, showing that the decision represented a departure from the board's practice. The recollections of three Pulaski African American students who went to Christiansburg were presented. They recalled that the transfer to the Christiansburg school was not entirely unwelcome. The curriculum and facilities there were superior to the Calfee Training School. The primary difficulty associated with the transfer involved the distance to Christiansburg and bus trip required to cover it.

The first section of the chapter also discussed the suit filed by Dr. P. C. Corbin in behalf of his son, Mahatma, claiming discrimination against African Americans by the Pulaski County School Board. Corbin's suit was handled by Oliver Hill, the Richmond attorney who at one time had 75 equalization cases

pending in various jurisdictions throughout Virginia. Judge Albert Barksdale ruled against the plaintiffs in the first hearing of the case. On appeal to the Fourth Circuit, Corbin and the other plaintiffs won a partial victory when Judge Armistead Dobie ruled that the school board had discriminated against African Americans by requiring that their high school students go to the Christiansburg Industrial Institute. As one of eleven NAACP supported lawsuits challenging unequal physical facilities, the Corbin case is a link between Harmon's equalization fight and Brown v. Board of Education.

The second section of the chapter gave a summary of Harmon's career after 1939. For five years Harmon worked outside education. From 1939 until summer of 1940, he worked in the family boarding house and in the Harmon and Murphy barber shop. During the summer of 1940, he moved to Pittsburgh where he worked as a barber until December. The construction of the Radford Army Ammunition Plant offered Harmon and his colleague, Willis Gravely, jobs and economic security. Harmon worked there until 1944 earning much more money than he could have as a principal. Lucy Martin, one of the teachers at Calfee Training School and a long time friend, consented to marry Harmon in 1941.

Harmon returned to the field of education as a profession in 1944 accepting a position as the principal of Wytheville Training School. He continued to work for the improvement of educational conditions for African Americans but did not use the confrontational tactics that he had employed in

Wytheville. In Wytheville, Harmon found an ally in Superintendent Fendall Ellis. Ellis was a progressive leader who had entered into a program of capital improvements for Wythe County Schools. The program allowed Harmon, assisted by PTA leaders, to obtain a new comprehensive high school for African Americans in 1952. Harmon only served one year in the new facility, named Scott Memorial High School. While in Wythe County, Harmon earned a master's degree from Columbia University in New York.

Harmon moved to the George Washington Carver School in Roanoke County in 1953. The section reported the recollections of two of his teachers at Carver School. They reported that he earned the respect of the Carver faculty by treating them as professionals. One of the teachers, Georgia Reeves, asserted that Harmon restored the trust and confidence of the faculty in administrators. He demanded careful reporting by the teachers and insisted on their involvement in extracurricular activities in order to establish a family like atmosphere in the school. During his tenure at Carver, Harmon became a vice-president of the Virginia State Teachers Association and ran for the presidency of the organization.

After integration, the Carver School closed as a high school. Harmon was named to a position as a visiting teacher within the Roanoke County central administrative office. He fared better than many teachers who were assigned as itinerant teachers and reading aides. Harmon served in the post until his

retirement in 1978. He maintained membership in a number of local and state associations achieving offices in several of them.

From 1978 until his death in 1993, Harmon assumed the role of an elder statesman in Salem and the Roanoke Valley. He served on the boards of directors of many community service agencies and charitable organizations. He achieved a position of political influence within the community as well. On two occasions he fought to keep Carver School open under the name G. W. Carver. Two years before his retirement, he was diagnosed with colon cancer. He battled the disease for seventeen years, making his case known publicly as an example to others with cancer especially African Americans. Harmon died in 1993 at the age of 80.

In the final section of the chapter, the researcher presented themes and conclusions that the historical record of the study seemed to support. The researcher concurred with Leedy (1993) in recognizing that an historical study must not only report the facts but must attempt to interpret them. Following the advice of Barzun and Graff (1992), the researcher sought to organize his interpretation around patterns within the historical record comprised by the study. The themes and conclusions were organized around two patterns of history. The patterns, suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), were patterns of process and patterns of variables.

Four patterns of process were offered as themes emerging from the study. First, the pattern of unintended effects proposed by Bullock (1967) was applied to the data within the study revealing that several examples of unintended effects existed in the contexts of time and place that made up Harmon's life and career. Second, Lichtman and French's belief that one of the functions of a local history is to test hypotheses about broader jurisdictions was tested by an examination of the pattern of state and national parallels with the events in Pulaski in 1938-39. Not only did Harmon's work parallel events on the state and national stages, it was actually a part of the work conducted by the state and national offices of the NAACP at the time. The third pattern of process used for interpretation was an examination of Harmon as an agent of change within the communities in which he served. The different styles of leadership he adopted to seek change in educational conditions for African Americans were documented. The last pattern of process that the researcher used to interpret the data of the study was puzzles. Some of the events and circumstances in the study appeared to be anomalies. Among them were the absence of a recounting of the Pulaski equalization fight in the historical records extant before the study and the lack of follow through by the NAACP on what it initially hailed as a significant victory.

The second pattern used by the researcher to analyze the data of the study was the pattern of variables. The primary variables that seemed to

influence Harmon throughout his career and life were the values that he held. The power of education was a value in which Harmon believed and which he encouraged others to adopt. He believed strongly in the value of family, even using the extended family as a model around which he organized his school work. Harmon held firmly to a set of personal values that included responsibility, duty, belief in self, and hard work. Foundation to all his values was Harmon's Christian faith. He practiced his religious beliefs throughout his life using them as a source from which he drew strength and courage.

Summary

As described in the Introduction, this study had three purposes. First, it sought to document the youth, education and early career of Chauncey Depew Harmon, Senior. Second, it attempted to examine the persons, events, and institutions of the period that may have played a role in leading up to Harmon's decisions and actions as principal of Calfee Training School in Pulaski, Virginia, during the 1938-39 term. Finally, the study had as its third purpose to add to the body of knowledge and understanding of the issue of race in American education by examining Harmon's efforts to achieve equality of educational opportunity for African Americans in Pulaski.

With regard to the first purpose, the completed study comprises an extensive documentation of Harmon's youth, education and early career. As was anticipated in the Introduction, the researcher had to rely on anecdotal evidence to document a number of events because of the absence of written documentation. Anecdotal evidence was heavily relied upon for documentation of Harmon's childhood and public school experiences. The documentation of his education at Tuskegee and the equalization campaign in Pulaski is well supported by written records as well as anecdotal recollections.

The newspapers of the day, in particular the African American newspapers, yielded critical documentation of Harmon's efforts. They also provided the necessary backdrop of events in the state and national campaigns

for equalization against which Harmon's work may be viewed. The researcher would offer three cautions to other researchers who rely heavily on such press accounts in their work. The first is that the contemporary press was often influenced by actors who had an interest in the events that were being reported. Not all contemporary accounts should be prized for accuracy even though they are from primary sources. The practice of creating a beneficial "spin" in press accounts is not a new one. The second caution is to approach such accounts with a disciplined objectivity. Occasionally, one will find that the contemporary press may have overlooked the historical significance of an event when it reported it. Proximity in time does not necessarily equate to reliable judgment with regard to historical significance. The third caution is to avoid projecting the values and understandings of the researcher back into the events of the past. Barzun and Graff (1985) put it well when they write "it is profoundly unhistorical to read back our habits and behavior into a past era" (p. 122).

Of all the sources of documentation he discovered, the researcher was most gratified to find the correspondence between the national NAACP Legal Defense Fund staff and Harmon. He is deeply indebted to the work of Mark Tushnet (1987) for the clues that led to its location in the NAACP files in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. The correspondence was significant for two reasons. First, it established a direct connection between Harmon and Thurgood Marshall. By doing so, it moved the study from the status

of a regional study to one with some national and statewide implications.

Second, it allowed the Harmon family to document irrefutably that Harmon was a pioneer in the movement for educational equality for African Americans.

The study accomplished its second purpose through its first. The documentation of the study suggests that many persons, events and institutions appeared to have had an influence on Harmon. Most importantly, the documentation demonstrated that Harmon's efforts not only paralleled events at the state and national level, it revealed Harmon himself to have been a player at both levels. His efforts in Pulaski were inspired and aided by representatives of the Virginia State Teachers Association, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and the Virginia NAACP legal staff. He employed the same strategies as Thurgood Marshall by using the press to his advantage and by petitioning the local school board for equalization. Harmon's work was more than just a parallel effort of the state and national campaigns for equalization. His work was a direct extension of those campaigns.

The study's third purpose was to add to the body of knowledge and understanding of the issue of race in American education by examining Harmon's career. Obviously, the body of knowledge has been added to by the documentation of Harmon's work. There is value in that accomplishment. The efforts of an individual such as Harmon should not be forgotten. His life influenced thousands of people over eight decades in a positive, sometimes

profound, way. The researcher was first attracted to the idea of studying Harmon's career because it was a powerful story that demanded to be told. If nothing else comes from the study, the story has now been told and preserved for others.

Whether the study contributed to a greater understanding of race as an issue in American education is a more difficult question, one best left for others to answer. The researcher must comment, however, that he certainly increased his own knowledge of the issue. For example, he was surprised to find that, as revisionist historians have argued, the public schools have not always served as a means to opportunity. Indeed, based on this study, it would seem clear that they were manipulated as an attempted agent of repression in the case of African Americans. This manipulation went well beyond the overt practice of racial segregation, even penetrating pervasively into curriculum and teaching methods in the form of industrial education. The irony of industrial education producing agents of social change like Harmon is reassuring, however. It would appear that education, no matter how selfishly designed and unfairly delivered, is ultimately a liberating and powerful force. That idea is not a new one, however. Indeed, it is only a slight variation on Bullock's (1967) theory of "unintended effects". Nonetheless, the researcher rejoices in the conclusion that an educated person, like Chauncey Harmon, with a strong set of values did make a positive difference in American society.

Notes on Sources

Back issues of the Norfolk Journal and Guide are available on microfilm in the Peabody Collection at Hampton University. Researchers should note that they are not always listed under the heading Norfolk Journal and Guide. They are also listed as Journal and Guide. This is due to P. B. Young's effort to make it a national newspaper.

Back issues of The Southwest Times are available only in the newspaper office in Pulaski. They ought to be microfilmed and preserved for future generations. Their condition is deteriorating rapidly. The newspaper staff are most congenial and helpful to researchers.

Back issues of The Roanoke Times, the Southwest Enterprise, and some copies of The Richmond Planet are available on microfilm in the Newman Library at Virginia Tech.

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Appendix

NAACP Correspondence

Letter from Thurgood Marshall to Plummer B. Young

March 29, 1938

Mr. P. B. Young, Jr., Managing Editor,
Norfolk Journal and Guide,
711 East Olney Road,
Norfolk, Virginia

Dear Mr. Young:

I have just returned from Richmond and a meeting with the Joint Committee on Teachers' Salary Cases in Virginia. I understand Mr. Henderson has sent you a press release on the meeting, but there is something else I would like to request which is not included in the press release.

Confidentially, there are not enough prospective petitioners for these cases. It seems that the teachers have arrived at the place where they are all willing to contribute to the fund and are all behind the movement. This is a very great step, but there is still the next step of getting teachers who are willing to act as petitioners. I do not think this should be made public because it would show weakness in the group, but it seems to me that it would be very helpful if you could write an editorial impressing upon the teachers that they should take active part in this fight. In order to conclude these cases successfully, each one of them should be willing to act as petitioners. I am wondering if this can be done without mentioning the fact that they are not responding as well as we expected.

We appreciate the assistance given by the Journal and Guide and solicit your further cooperation. I expect to be in Virginia some time during the month of April and will drop by Norfolk and talk the matter over with you.

Yours very truly,

Assistant Special Counsel

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Letter from Thomas Hewin to Thurgood Marshall

J. THOMAS HEWIN, Jr.,
ATTORNEY AND COUNSELLOR-AT-LAW
ST. LUKE BANK BUILDING
Corner of Fifth and Marshall Streets
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

June 1st, 1938.

Mr. Thurgood Marshall,
69 Fifth Ave.,
New York City, N.Y.

My Dear Thurgood:-

This is to acknowledge receipt of your memorandum, and I am asking you to advise me when it will be suitable for you to come to Richmond again; as we would like to have a committee meeting, and I have located a petitioner in Plulaski County, and have secured several wage schedules.

Hop and I have been very busy on the Finny case in Powhantan County. We have another case coming up this month, which will be quite a sensation in West Point, Va. These cases will give the association quite a bit of publicity in Virginia, which I am thankful for, as it will be a means of arousing interest in the association's program.

Please let me hear from you and try to arrange to come down in the near future for a conference with the committee.

I am,
Very truly yours,



J. THOMAS HEWIN, JR.

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no ans.
J. T. Hewin
JUN 2 - 1938

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Letter from Thurgood Marshall to J. M. Tinsley and Tinsley's Reply

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June 10, 1938
54-82
JUN 13 1938

Dr. J. M. Tinsley, President,
Richmond Branch, N. A. A. C. P.,
402 1/2 North Second Street,
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Dr. Tinsley:

I have a letter from Tom Hewin and also talked to him in the office on Wednesday concerning the teachers' salary cases. He and "Hop" state that they have additional plaintiffs for the cases and they suggest that a meeting be called of the committee.

I told them that I would be happy to come down to a meeting if it is necessary, providing I am given at least a week's notice. They will take the matter up with you.

Yours sincerely,

Thurgood A.
Thurgood Marshall
Assistant Special Counsel

Dear Marshall:

I think the best thing to do is to give these questioners to Mr. Hewin have him send to the teachers to fill out. After this has been done will be time enough to call a meeting. They said that they had many names before, but I was the only one to present a name. And too since we can't do any thing until fall, I think it best to wait. Several of the men on the committee thought it best not to publish any thing just now.

Tinsley, *Tinsley*

Excuse this letter. Thanks for the check. I am sending you one.

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Letter from L. F. Palmer to Charles Houston

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June 11, 1938

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JUN 13 1938

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Dr. Charles M. Houston
N.A.A.C.P.
69 Fifth Avenue

Dear Dr. Houston:

Information has just come to me that Mr. Chauncey Harmon of 235 Magazine St., Pulaski, Va., is willing to be the plaintiff in our suit for the equalization of teacher's salaries in Virginia. I am suggesting that you make contact with him immediately.

It is gratifying to be able to report to you that interest in the equalization fight is still high among the teachers of Virginia.

Very sincerely yours,

L. F. Palmer
L. F. Palmer,
Principal

Copy to Mr. Thurgood Marshall

LFP:GWN

Letter from Thurgood Marshall to Thomas Hewin

June 16, 1938

J. Thomas Hewin, Jr., Esq.,
327 North First Street,
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Tom:

I have just been informed that
Mr. Chauncey Harmon, 235 Magazine Street, Pul-
aski, Virginia, is willing to be plaintiff in
our suit to equalize salaries.

Will you please write him immediately
and send him one of our questionnaires? It is
very essential that this be done at once and
please let me know what he says in reply.

Yours sincerely,

Thurgood Marshall
Assistant Special Counsel

TK:AG

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Letter from Thomas Hewin to Thurgood Marshall

HEWIN & HEWIN

ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW

CONSOLIDATED BANK & TRUST CO. BLDG.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

June 17th, 1938.

JUN 18 1938

J. THOMAS HEWIN, SR.

J. THOMAS HEWIN, JR.

Mr. Thurgood Marshall,
69 Fifth Ave.,
New York, N.Y.

6000

My Dear Sir:-

Your letter of June 16th, to hand. I shall immediately send one of your questionnaires to Mr. Chauncey Harmon. I shall write you immediately upon receipt of the same.

Thank you very much for your congratulations on the Finny case.

Yours sincerely,

Tom

J. THOMAS HEWIN, JR.

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235 Magazine St. 9304
Pulaski, Va.

June 25, 1938

Dear Mr. Marshall:

It is true that I am willing to be a plaintiff in a suit to equalize teachers' salaries in Virginia. As yet I do not have a teachers certificate but I taught in the Pulaski County school system on my credits. I have a B. S. degree in Business Administration from Tuskegee Inst., Ala. and am also a part time barber of white trade. At the present time I am finishing a correspondence course from Va. State College, Ettrick, Va and hope to obtain my Collegiate professional certificate by September. It will be a pleasure to fight for increase salaries for I feel that I do not have to depend on the teaching profession to make a satisfactory living. I am only asking that employment be assured in case I do find it necessary to give up the teaching profession. No one here knows of my feelings or interest in the matter. I am keeping it absolutely under cover.

I was in Richmond some times ago and had a personal chat with some one directly connected with the case, but at the time did not know

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of Attorney Hewins' interest in the case. As yet I have not received the questionnaire from him.

I am very anxious to know the full details of the suit. Perhaps the questionnaire will ~~also~~ answer many questions that I really want answered.

Again may I say that you may feel assured of my full support.

Very sincerely yours,
Chauncey Harmon

Letter of Reply from Thurgood Marshall to Chauncey Depew Harmon, Sr.

*Harmon
re: Va. plaintiff*

July 6, 1930

Mr. Chauncey Harmon,
235 Magazine Street,
Pulaski, Virginia

Dear Mr. Harmon:

Your letter of June 25 has been brought to my attention on my return to the office from our annual conference. I also have a letter from Attorney Hewin stating that he is sending you a questionnaire. I trust by this time you have received it.

Please keep the entire matter quiet as you have been doing and we will get in touch with you sometime in the early fall.

However, if there is any additional information you desire, please feel free to write me.

Yours very truly,

Thurgood Marshall
Assistant Special Counsel

TH:AG

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Letter to Thomas Hewin from NAACP Staff

October 8, 1938

J. Thomas Hewin, Jr., Esq.,
227 North First Street,
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Mr. Hewin:

Mr. Marshall is in Dallas, Texas, at this time investigating the case of Dr. G. F. Porter. He is expected to be there until about the twentieth of October.

I have checked the files in the Virginia Teachers' Salary Cases and find the names of three prospective plaintiffs, Mr. Chauncey Harmon, 225 Magazine Street, in Pulaski; Mr. John H. Walker, Box 625, in Martinsville; and Mrs. Mary Pauline Lilly, 1516 Brook Road, in Richmond. We have the questionnaire which was filled out by Mrs. Lilly.

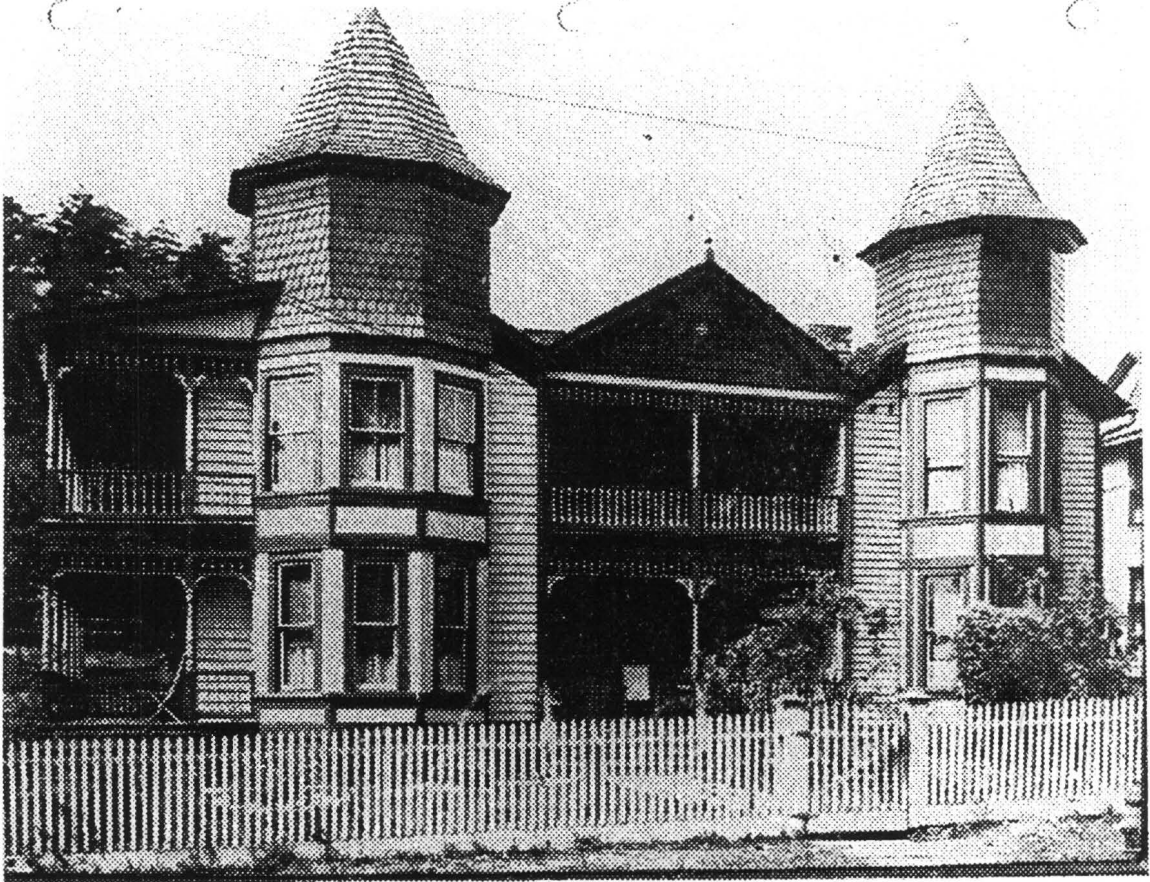
Yours very truly,

Secretary to Mr. Marshall

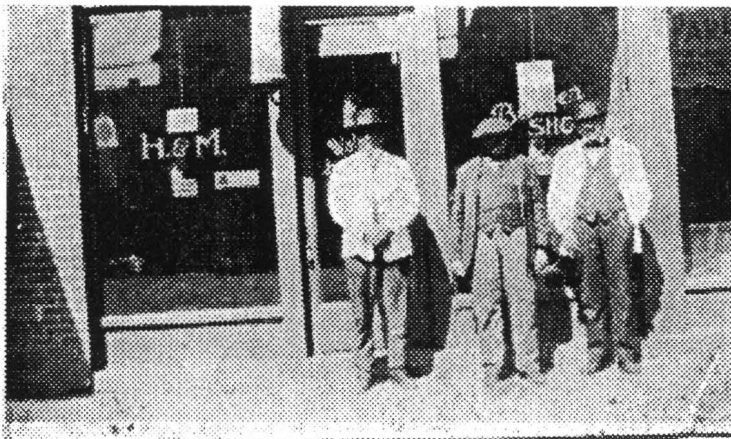
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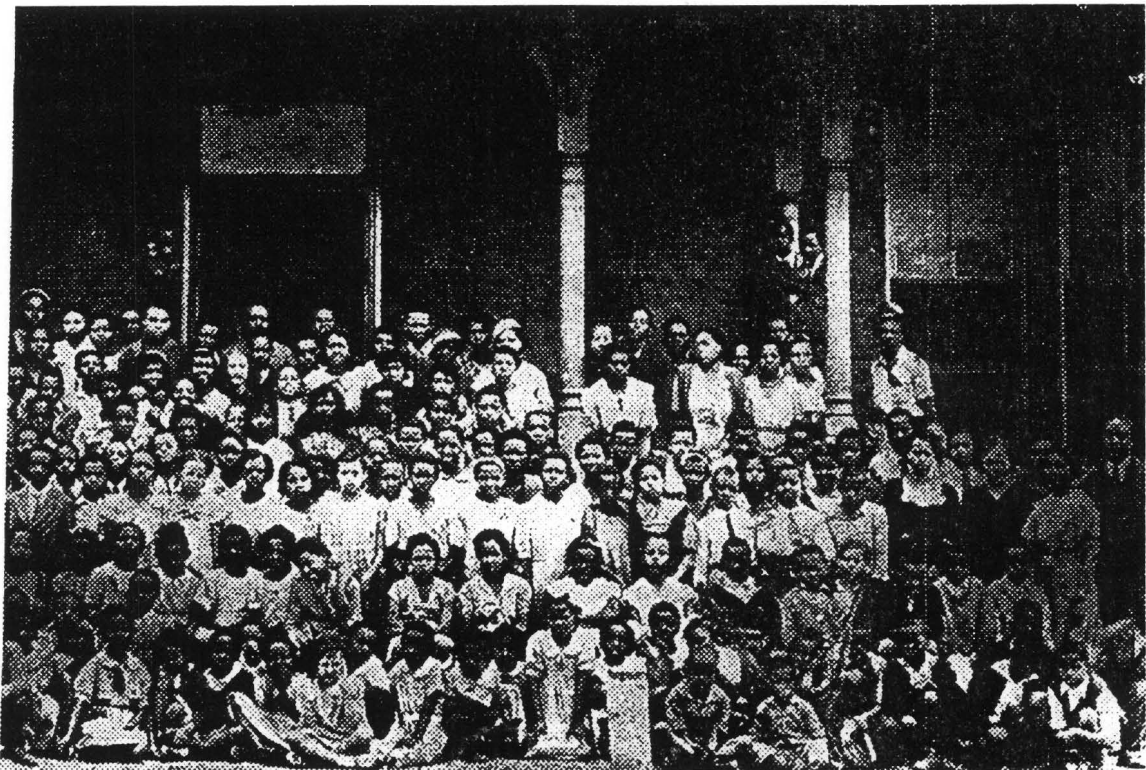
Photographs



The Harmon Home and Boarding House



The Harmon and Murphy Barber Shop



The Calfee School Student Body in 1934



The Tuskegee School of Business Class of 1935
Harmon is second from the left in the back row.



The 1937-38 Calfee Training School Faculty
Harmon Is in the Second Row Looking to the Right

TEACHERS WHO LED FIGHT



Chauncey D. Harmon,
principal
of Calfee Train-
ing School, and
a graduate of
Tuskegee Insti-
tute.

**Miss Gretchen
H. Washington,**
a graduate of
Morristown
College, Ten-
nessee.

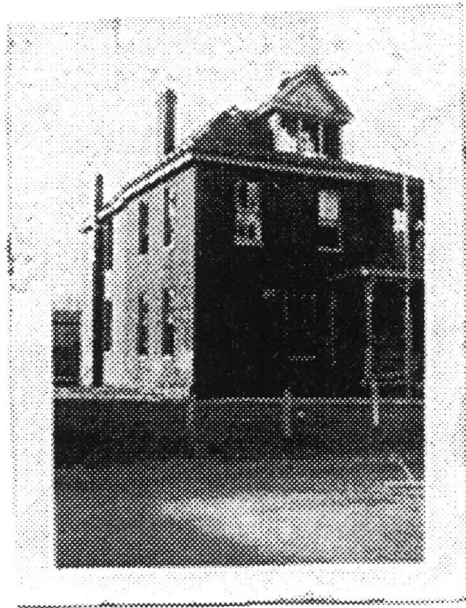
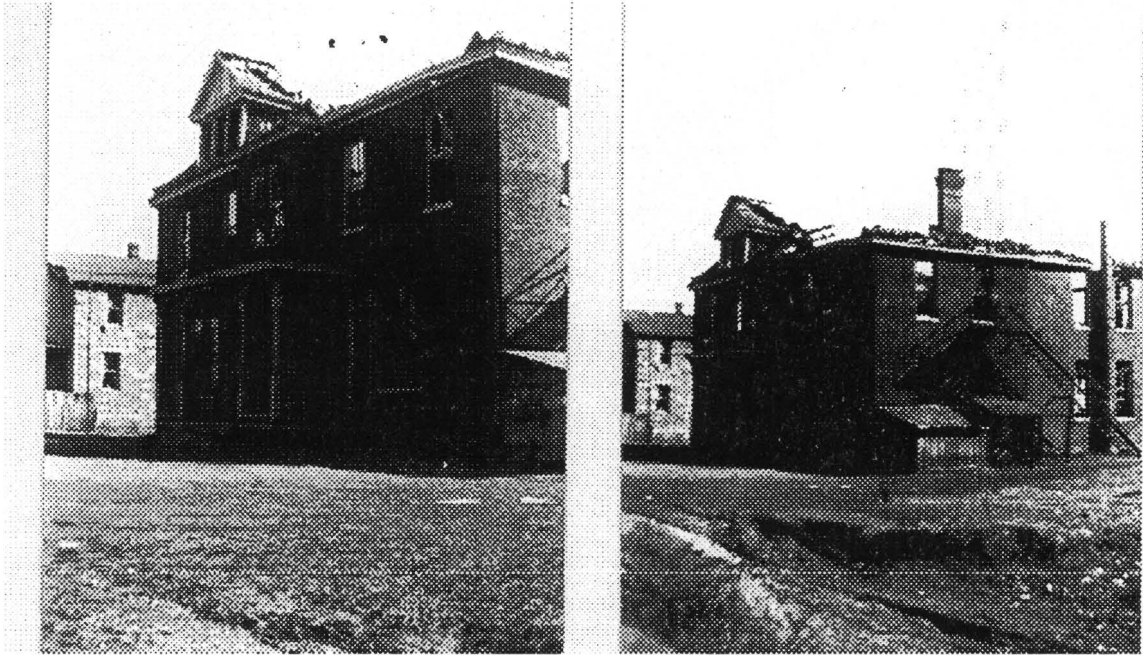
**Willis Cabell
Gravely,**
a graduate of
Bluefield State
Teachers' Col-
lege, petitioner
for equalization.

**Miss Hazel S.
Calfee,**
graduate of W.
Virginia State
College, and a
member of Del-
ta Sigma Theta
Sorority.

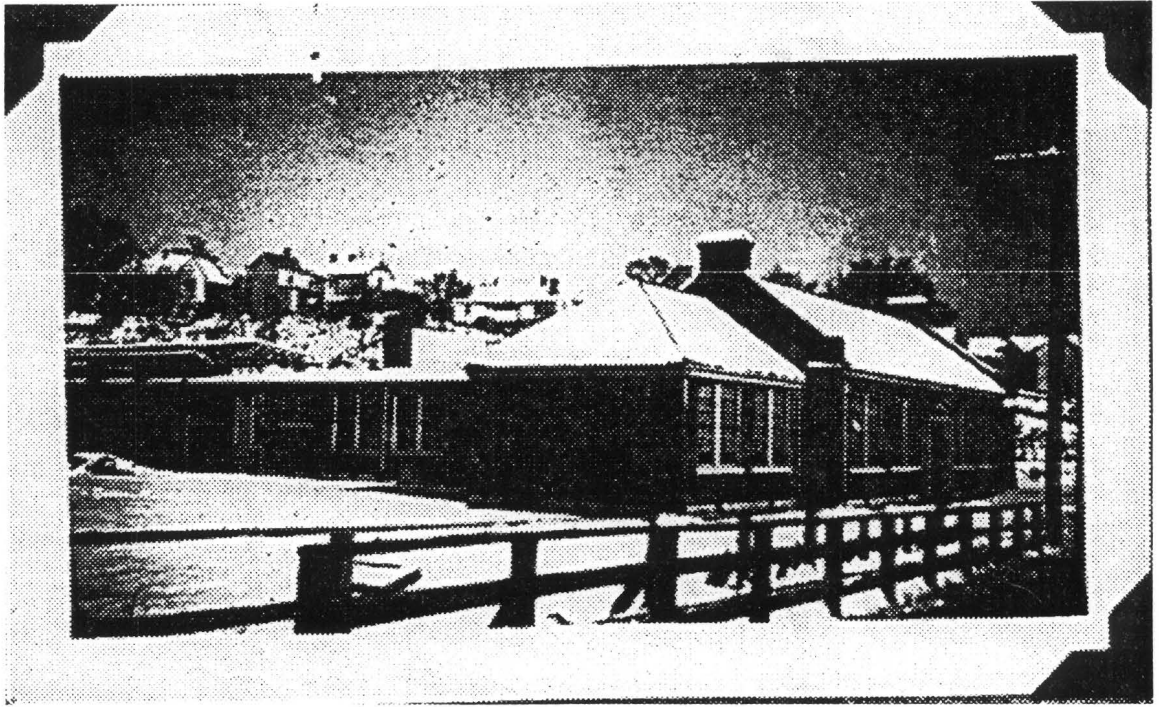
**Mrs. Cathleen
M. Santa Cruz,**
a graduate of
Hampton Insti-
tute and Vir-
ginia State
Teachers' Col-
lege.

**Miss Lucy E.
Martin,**
a graduate of
Tuskegee Hig-
h School and
Bluefield State
Teachers' Col-
lege.

Photograph from the March 25, 1939, Edition of the Richmond Afro-American



Calfee Training School after the 1938 Fire



The New Calfee School



The Wytheville Training School Student Body and Staff



Harmon at a Ninth District Virginia Teachers Association Meeting
c. 1963-64



The 1964 G. W. Carver School Faculty
Harmon Is the Gentleman Seated in the Center of the First Row



A Postcard of the Carver School Made Shortly after Its Construction in 1939

VITA
N. Wayne Tripp

City of Salem School Division
19 North College Avenue
Salem, Virginia 24153
(540) 389-0130

1906 Old Mill Drive
Salem, Virginia 24153
(540) 387-0632

Educational Background

Ed. D.	Virginia Tech	1996	Educational Administration
M. S.	Radford University	1977	Educational Administration
B. A.	Virginia Tech	1972	History

Professional Experience

1989-Present	Superintendent of Schools, City of Salem School Division
1985-89	Director of Instruction, City of Salem School Division
1985	Interim Principal, West Salem School, City of Salem School Division
1982-84	Director of Instruction, City of Salem School Division
1979-82	Principal, Covington High School, Covington City Public Schools
1978-79	Principal, Lancaster High School, Lancaster County Public Schools
1977-78	Assistant Principal, New Castle High School, Craig County Public Schools
1975-77	Title IV-C Project Director, Craig County Public Schools
1973-75	Teacher, New Castle High School, Craig County Public Schools
1972-73	Teacher, Fork Union Military Academy

N. Wayne Tripp