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9-2-1916

The Prairie View Standard - September 2nd 1916 - Vol. VI No. 25

Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College

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Recommended Citation

Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College. (1916). The Prairie View Standard - September 2nd 1916 - Vol. VI No. 25., *Vol. VI No. 25* Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.pvamu.edu/pv-newspapers/40>

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The Prairie View Standard

DEVOTED TO THE EDUCATIONAL AND GENERAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE NEGROES OF TEXAS

VOL. VI.

PRAIRIE VIEW, WALLER COUNTY, TEXAS, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1916

NO. 25

Educating a Nation

Philander P. Claxton, United States Commissioner of Education

Twenty-two million persons in round numbers were enrolled in educational institutions in the United States in 1914. Of these more than 19,000,000 were enrolled in elementary schools, and the rest in secondary schools and in colleges and universities. The teachers for this educational army numbered 700,000. In point of growth the public high school still presents the most impressive figures; the enrollment for last year is greater by nearly 100,000 than for the preceding year. The cost of education was, as nearly as can be estimated, 750,000,000, a relatively small amount when compared with many items in the public expense; less than one-third the nation's expenditure for alcoholic liquors, and less by a hundred millions than the value of exports from the harbor of New York in 1913.

The average school attendance of the American citizen in 1800, according to Dr. E. A. Ross of the University of Wisconsin, was only 82 days. It is now 1057 days. A generation ago free education in most communities consisted of an elementary school course in which the children were taught the three R's, together with a modicum of history and geography. Public high schools had, of course, begun to develop, but attendance there was small, and the majority of communities made no such provision for public education. Now we have reached the point where we consider that it requires twelve years to give an individual an education that fits for life and prepares for the duties of citizenship. Public education has become our greatest single social enterprise.

Great strides have been made in bettering our educational system during recent years. Education begins at birth, and the first years of life are the most important. American children are in school less than four percent of their time from birth to their twenty-first year. Loss of life or health, arrest of development, the formation of vicious habits, or the acquirement of false ideas and ideals in these years may render impossible or ineffective all efforts at education in later years. Realizing the supreme importance of the proper care of children in these earliest years, the Division of Home Education was formed to investigate means and methods of improving education in the home, to assist parents in directing the play of their young children, and above all to bring about a more intelligent cooperation between the home and the school, so that both may work together intelligently for the welfare of the children, and to the extent the education of boys and girls who have quit school, by stimulating and directing their home reading and study.

The home, the primitive and primary institution for the education of children, is still the most important agency for education for life—moral, mental, physical, industrial, economic.

social, civic. The school is still only supplementary. Any agency, therefore, that would promote right education most effectively must find some means of cooperating with the home and of helping parents, who are the most constant—and should be the most effective—teachers of their children.

Last year two new divisions were established in the Bureau of Education, the Division of Civic Education and the Division of Education of Immigrants; the first in cooperation with the National Municipal League, the second with the North American Civic League. The division of Home Education, maintained in cooperation with the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, has been enlarged since its establishment two years ago. Other special divisions are that of vocational Education, including trade and industries; School and Home Gardening in cooperation with the International Child Welfare League; Rural Education and Higher Education.

The Kindergarten Division has already developed into an important agency for the promotion of the education of young children, altho it was established only in the spring of 1913. There are in the United States approximately 4,000,000 children between the ages of four and six years, which is ordinarily considered the kindergarten age. While some formal education in the kindergarten or elsewhere would be helpful for all or most of these, the home conditions of at least half of them are such as to make the demand for such education imperative. Only about 3000,000 of these children are enrolled in the kindergarten. There is little hope of rearing this huge army of children except by making the kindergarten a part of the public school system in every city, town or village. By doing this, not only would two years be added to the period of education of millions of children whose educational life must at best be all too short, but a beginning in the formation of moral and social habits—not possible later—could be made, and much could be added to the individual development of the children in these very important years of their lives.

The Division of Civic Education aims to investigate methods of teaching, in the schools and elsewhere, those things that pertain directly to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy, and of membership in larger and smaller communities, and to foster the desire and will so to live and act as to promote the public welfare.

It is generally conceded that the methods now in common use for teaching the duties of citizenship are inadequate, and there is a strong demand for help in developing better methods. On the other hand, successful experiments have been made here and there which seem to show the way to better results. To

find and bring together the best thought and experience on this subject has been the first work of this division. Plans have also been begun and have since been continued for the development of more adequate methods of civic instruction for adult immigrants and for the stimulation and promotion of public discussion and debate of questions of general and local public interest in colleges, schools, clubs and social centers.

The problem of rural education continues to occupy the attention of our educators and school authorities. Its progress during the last year is seen not alone in the actual achievements of the year, but in the advanced position taken by leading educators relative to rural education and rural-life problems. Nearly four million illiterate persons in this country live in rural communities, in small towns, villages, and the open country. In some parts of the United States illiteracy in the rural population is from two to five times greater than in the urban population. Interest in consolidation of rural schools has greatly increased. The people are slowly but surely becoming convinced that the one-room, one-teacher rural school has, in the main, outlived its usefulness and that, wherever feasible and possible, the consolidated rural school must take its place. Progress in rural education is still slow, however. The states and the Government, meantime, are doing their best to eliminate the causes which may bring about illiteracy.

Education, as a national problem, has two fields: one the child from the kindergarten age until the age of majority has been reached; the other, the illiterate adults.

The problem of adult illiteracy as it confronts us today is no longer one of race or section. The importance of the task of eliminating illiteracy cannot be under estimated, when we consider that there are nearly 6,000,000 illiterates in the United States, nearly all of whom have reached their majority. The full meaning of these figures will be better understood if I say that in double line of march, at intervals of three feet, these illiterate persons would extend over a distance of about 1500 miles; that marching at a rate of 25 miles a day it would require more than two months for them to pass a given point. A mighty army is this, with banners of darkness inscribed with the legends of illiteracy and ignorance, helplessness and hopelessness—too large for the greatest degree of material prosperity and for the safety of our democratic institutions. The last census showed that there were more than two million illiterate males of voting age; in some states and in many counties the illiterate voters hold the balance of power in any closely contested election.

Illiteracy, as I have said, prevails to a greater extent in rural districts than in cities; the greatest number of illiterates are between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five years. In 1910 the total number of white illiterates was greater by nearly one million than the total of negro illiter-

ates. Massachusetts had more illiterate men of voting age than Arkansas; Pennsylvania more than Tennessee and Kentucky combined. Boston had nearly 25,000 illiterates, Baltimore 20,000, New Orleans 19,000, Memphis 9000.

Sporadic efforts show us that there is a shorter way to the reduction and elimination of illiteracy than to wait for time to do away with it. These grown-ups can be taught in schools especially organized for them.

One of the most notable attempts recently made to teach these illiterates is that begun by Mrs. Cera Wilson Stewart, superintendent of schools in Rowan County, Kentucky. After having studied the conditions of the county, Mrs. Stewart decided to open night schools for adults on moonlight nights in the public school houses. All the teachers of the neighborhood responded, and began by visiting the people throughout the county and explaining the plan.

More than 1200 men and women from eighteen to twenty-six years of age were enrolled the first evening! They came trooping over the hills and out of the hollows, some to add to the meager education received in the inadequate schools of their childhood, some to receive their first lesson in reading and writing. Among these pupils were not only illiterate farmers and their illiterate wives, sons, and daughters, but also illiterate merchants, ministers, and landowners. Think of the tragedy in these words, uttered by a woman of seventy: "Oh, to be able to read my Bible and to write to my grandchildren!" Other schools, of similar character, were established here and there in the United States. Pupils were willing and eager to enroll.

These scattered experiments and their success, even under very difficult circumstances, have been such as to inspire the hope that, with the cooperation of schools, churches, philanthropic societies, cities, counties, states and the Federal Government, the great majority of the five and one-half million illiterates in the United States may, in a few years, be taught reading, writing and something more; while millions of those whose school days were very few and who are little above the line of total illiteracy, may be helped to make good to some extent their deficiencies due to lack of opportunity in childhood.

Japan's Wonderful Progress

The Japanese are rapidly becoming the most educated people in the world, a recent writer says. At the present rate of progress Japan will soon have the smallest percent of illiterates and the largest percent of children of school age in attendance in her schools. The National Christian Educational association and all the Protestant missions of Japan have made plans for a great interdenominational university, and the advanced schools for girls are getting together in projecting a great Christian college for women to open in 1916. Japan is more open to Christianity than at any time since the early eighties.

WASTE LANDS COST MONEY

Nonproductive Acres Mean Dead Capital and a Loss to the Farmer

Washington, D. C.—Every acre of nonproducing tillable land should be put to work or sold, says a new publication of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletin 745. Many farmers would make more money if their business were larger, but the size of a farm, from a financial standpoint, is measured not by the number of acres embraced in it but by the number that are producing crops, pasturing animals economically, or supporting a growth of marketable forest products. Nonproductive acres are loafer acres, and the money tied up in them is dead capital.

On every farm, however, there are certain areas necessarily devoted to nonproductive purposes. Fences, ditches, lanes and building lots produce nothing themselves, but they are frequently essential to production on the rest of the farm. Nevertheless, they may occupy in the aggregate a considerable percentage of the available land. It is a part of efficient farm management to see to it that this percentage is no higher than necessary.

In this connection, some interesting figures are given by the bulletin already mentioned in regard to the amount of land occupied by fences of different kinds. It takes, for instance, only 209 rods of untrimmed hedge and only 214 rods of zigzag rail or worm fence to waste an acre of what might be productive land. For the same expenditure of land one can run 459 rods of woven wire and 473 rods of barbed wire. Other considerations, of course, may make it desirable to use the hedge or the worm fence, but the waste involved is a factor that should not be overlooked.

Similarly, farm lanes often may be eliminated by a simple rearrangement of fields, headlands, or turning spaces at the edges of fields, avoided; and the farmstead itself, the group of farm buildings with their lots and yards, the garden and the orchard, made compact. In the case of the farmstead, however considerations of health and attractiveness may well justify a slight sacrifice of economy.

While a little planning often will result in the saving of much land now devoted to these unproductive uses, a more difficult problem is presented by waste land—land that is rendered untillable by swamps, ravines, rocks, slopes, etc., woodland that produces nothing salable, and pastures that are too poor to be profitable. Some areas are, of course, hopeless, and in that case they should be left out of the reckoning altogether. Before this is done, however, it will pay to look into the possibilities of profitable reclamation. Many untillable fields, for example, may be turned into productive pastures, or if they will not grow enough grass to make this economical they can be used for the production of timber. On the other hand, frequently happens that

Published Weekly by Prairie View College, Prairie View, Texas

Managing Editor, I. M. Terrell
Assistant Editor, N. B. Edward
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Foreman Printing Dep't, Wm. Cook
Agricultural Editor, C. H. Waller

Entered as second-class matter March 2, 1911, at the post office at Prairie View, Texas, under the act of March 3, 1879.

Subscription Price

Year..... 50 Cents
6 Months..... 30 Cents
3 Months..... 20 Cents
Single Copy..... 05 Cent
Advertising rates furnished on application.

Special Notice.

All remittances for subscription and all correspondence pertaining to subscriptions should be addressed to the Prairie View Standard, Box 14, Prairie View, Texas, all money orders being made payable to the Prairie View Standard.

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1916

lots which yield nothing but a little firewood for home consumption are permitted to occupy valuable land.

In deciding whether such lots should be cleared and tilled, the cost of clearing, the increased value of the cleared land, the interest on the investment, the salable value of the timber products, and the added expense for firewood which will follow the disappearance of the timber must all be taken into account. With unwooded areas, the advisability of bringing them under the plow may be determined by comparing the probable cost with the market price of good arable land in the neighborhood.

Obviously, the higher the price of land rises the more incentive there is for the farmer to avoid waste in the utilization of it. It is significant, however, that the investigations of the Department of Agriculture have shown that irrespective of the price, tenants put a greater part of their land to productive use than owners. The tenant pays rent for each acre and he can not afford to have any of them idle. On the other hand, the man who has no rent to pay may be able to get along on the produce of a part only of his farm, and he is, therefore, more likely to overlook the potential value of the part he wastes. By so doing he is, of course, throwing away opportunities to make money, but this is not always appreciated by those who have not grasped the important fact that the average farm is too small for maximum efficiency and that in the majority of cases to increase the size of the farm business is to increase the profits from it. These owners, however, who, realizing this, are operating leased land in addition to their own, are, like tenants, careful to see that they pay no loafer acres.

to anyone who is buying or selling then, the important part of "How much am I paying for this tract?"

but "How much am I paying for the acres that are going to work for me?" In the new bulletin it is calculated that a farm of 100 acres selling at \$100 an acre will cost the purchaser actually \$111.11 an acre if 90 percent of it is productive, and \$200 an acre if only 50 percent of it is. As a matter of fact, the percentage of improved land in farms east of the Mississippi is only 59.5 and west of that river only 50.8. Improved land, however, it should be noted, is not always the same as productive land. A good timber lot, for example, is not improved, but it may be highly productive, and farm buildings, fences stand on land that is improved but produces nothing. In the final analysis, it is the amount of productive land that determines the earning capacity of a farm and that should, therefore, determine its price.

TEACHING SCHOOL CHILDREN THRIFT

Now that school children throughout the country are enjoying their long vacation and parents are better able than ever to see the many excellent uses to which childish enthusiasm may be put, the time seems ripe to consider a suggestion that has been made by a Minneapolis business man as to "how the public schools can prevent public waste." The suggestion is based on the idea that the American people are among the most wasteful of all nations, and that the only hope of changing this is to bring up children to a realization of our economic weakness.

PENNY SAVINGS BANKS.

"Now that the penny savings banks are so well established in many public schools," writes Walter Henry Hull, the originator of the idea, to the Survey. "It seems that the American educators should take another step that will teach greater thrift and less waste to the American school children. This step would be the establishment at public schools of depots where valuable materials could be assembled and the value of each particular item brought in by the child to be credited to his or her savings bank account.

"In every household in this country there are lying around in attics, closets, basements and outbuildings waste materials of great value in the aggregate, but of little value in small quantities. In fact, the housekeeper considers them of such little value that when the junk man calls he is politely told there is nothing around that would interest him.

"Is there any class better fitted to collect waste materials and preserve valuable items such as iron, glass, paper, rags, wood, rubber and innumerable other commodities than the school children? In every home one goes into there are piles of old newspapers and magazines, old rubbers and shoes, woolen, silk and cotton rags, bottles and other discarded glassware, pieces of old copper, iron, zinc and other metals, all of which are extremely valuable at present on account of the war.

WAR TIME PRICES.

"Since the war some rags have gone up 500 per cent in value. Woolen rags are almost worth their weight in gold and bring more than raw wool. With crepe rubber at one dollar a pound and all the warring nations gobbling every ounce they can seize or buy, no wonder

CONDITIONS FOR ENTRANCE WITHOUT EXAMINATION

A graduate of a high school of the first class "A" may enter our alternative course of the third year, and by passing in Geometry and Chemistry, may enter the third quarter of the third year.
A graduate of a high school of the first class "B" may enter the alternative course of the third year class.
A graduate of a high school of the second class or holder of a first grade certificate (State) may enter the first quarter of the third year class.
A graduate of a high school of the third class or holder of a second grade State certificate may enter our second year class, and by passing in Algebra, Physics and American Literature may enter the third year class.
A pupil completing the eighth grade in any of these affiliated high schools may enter our first year class by passing in Arithmetic and Grammar.
A graduate from a Normal approved by the Committee may enter the third quarter of the third year class, provided he has had the required work.
A graduate of a college course of the rank of Bachelor, Wiley and Tillotson may enter our fourth year class.
A pupil from any affiliated school who has not had all of the required work must make it up either by examination or class work.

CLASSIFICATION OF HIGH SCHOOLS

All the High Schools of the State are divided into the following classes: First, Second and Third. In making these classes, three things are considered: the number of high school grades, the certificates held by the teachers, and the number of high school teachers doing high school work.
High schools of the first class shall be of two grades, 1st grade "A" and 1st grade "B."
A high school of the first class shall have four years work above the 7th grade done under the departmental system and at least two of the teachers holding permanent certificates.
A high school of the first class, grade B, is one that has at least four years of high school work and employs at least three teachers to do high school work and each teacher holds a first grade certificate.
A high school of the second class is one that has at least three years high school work and has at least two teachers working in the department and each holding a first grade certificate.
A high school of third class is one that has at least two years of high school work and one teacher with a first grade certificate doing high school work.

there is a steady demand for old garden hose, rubbers, tires, articles, tubes, wringers, etc. Prices in these discards of life fluctuate daily, just as do stocks and bonds.

"Rags that brought 4c before the war now bring 14c. This country imports \$2,000,000 worth of wrags every year just to make writing paper. Old tin foil brings 30c and siphon tops are worth 25c a pound. Old bones are worth \$25 per ton. Scrap copper is worth almost as much as new metal. Old tin can be used

Synopsis of the History and Present Development of Prairie View Normal

Established in 1879 during Gov. O. M. Roberts' administration. For the first fifteen years never reached an enrollment of over 140. During the past 19 years witnessed its greatest development, enrollment gradually increased from 140 to more than 900, during the sessions 1911-12, 1912-13, and 1913-14.

There are forty-nine teachers and officers on its regular staff, representing the following institutions: Wilberforce, Straight University, Chicago University, University of Minnesota, Bishop College, Harvard, Talladega, Kansas A. & M., Boston University of Technology, Northwestern, Wiley University, Tuskegee, University of Wisconsin, Leland University, Nico University of Jamaica, Pennsylvania State and Prairie View Normal.

The school has sent out over 1200 graduates and as many as 8000 undergraduates holding either first or second grade certificates to teach in the State in the colored schools.

A more loyal enthusiasm is not to be found in any school among our people. An example of the spirit was manifested in a recent rally for the Athletic Association in which more than \$200.00 was raised for the purpose of equipping the football team a beautiful spirit of self-help.

The school maintains a chorus of 100 voices that fills engagements in some of the most important cities of Texas and on notable occasions.

The school, although liberally supported by the State in past years, received from the last legislature the largest appropriation that has been given a Negro school by any State, the amount being \$257,000 for two years.

There are seven brick buildings, eight frame buildings and thirty teachers and officers' cottages on the campus.

The Carpentry department constructs all frame buildings and construction work is done by the Mechanical department or under the direction of the head of this department.

The school owns 1435 acres of land—wood, pasture and farm—366 acres being under cultivation, including such crops, principally, as corn, melons, cane, peanuts, cotton, broom corn, millet, ensilage corn, peas and potatoes.

The school owns its own light and water system, ice plant and cold storage, generating its own electricity and making its own ice.

Beside the regular normal course which is about the strongest among negro schools in the country, the institution maintains the following industrial courses: General Agriculture, Truck Farming, Truck Gardening, Dairying, Canning, Broom and Mattress Making, Carpentry, Blacksmithing, Tailoring, Shoe and Harness Making, Printing, Steam and Electric Engineering, Heating and Plumbing, Laundering, Blockmaking, Cleaning and Making of Hats, Sewing and Millinery.

The Agriculture Department in its canning division each year puts up thousands of cans of vegetables and fruits. Last year it canned 5500 cans and on a previous year more than

12000. Among the farming implements owned by the Agricultural Department are a gasoline engine for cutting and grinding, a grader, cutter and blower, cultivators, corn meal grinder and potato digger.

The school owns a dairy herd of 45 graded cows and 50 head and two year-olds; seventy-five head of hogs, fifty head to be killed for the mess hall this year; twenty head of mules, a Percheron Stallion and a Spanish Jack, four brood mares and three horses.

There are two deep wells, 100 and 533 feet respectively, on the ground which furnish the water supply, two air compressors being used to facilitate and increase the flow of water. Also erected a 30,000-gallon steel tank and tower.

The enrollment last year was 663, 51 more than previous year. Summer session to date has enrolled 487, the first week.

The school requires that every student shall take some industrial work in order to become eligible to graduation.

It has the largest College Auditorium of any Negro school in Texas.

Its Chapel and Mess Hall are steam heated.

It has spent this session \$7,500 plastering, finishing and equipping assembly hall and erecting gallery thereto, which has seating capacity, including gallery, of 1500.

It has a \$15,000 appropriation for new steam laundry building.

A \$50,000 appropriation to erect an industrial building for girls this coming session.

\$20,000 for new steam and electric plant building, work on which has already begun.

The new water main, among the best in the State and the best among Negro schools in the country, has been installed.

The new 30,000-gallon steel tank and tower already in use.

New devices for fire protection have been installed: fire pumps, fire escapes, air compressors, fire wagons, hose, and other fire apparatus.

The school has one of the most beautiful locations of any school.

It employs a graduate nurse to look after the health of students in the hospital.

It has the best athletic field among colored schools in the State.

A band of 22 pieces which renders concerts and programs frequently—in door as well as open air.

\$1978.75 has been raised as a nucleus for the Y. M. C. A. building fund.

Course of study revised to equal that of any Normal school; in addition, on the basis for a college course has been laid.

1000 opera chairs have been put down in Chapel.

A reinforced concrete reservoir, 100,000-gallon capacity, built.

According to verdict of many who attended, the past commencement was one of the best, if not the best, in the history of the school.

over and over again. Scrap iron was worth \$10.75 a ton before the war and is now worth \$18.50. Old corn cobs are now made into fuel and railroad ties."

Factories have largely eliminated this waste, says Mr. Hull, but the same spirit of thrift has not entered the average household. He continues:

"Let us assume that some typical public school was taken and on the schoolhouse lot in some out-of-the-way place a small frame building was erected with bins built therein for storing various kinds of materials collected by the children. There would also be accurate scales and other accessories needed in the business. The teachers would then instruct the children regarding the proposal to collect all valuable materials

around the house for which the parents had no use. Possibly a little circular would be printed giving a list of all materials that were of value as well as the price per pound for each item.

"A certain time would be allowed before school opened each morning and noon when the children could take the materials they had collected to the depot and get credit for the items turned in. Suppose a child brought in 5c worth of iron, 3c worth of rags and 6c worth of old paper, the total would be credited to the penny savings account of the child. This in itself would be a tremendous inducement to encourage thrift."

Galveston News. The new road will be all right when it stops raining and the sun bakes it.