

Reducing Illiteracy Through Adult Education in the South

By WIL LOU GRAY, Supervisor Adult Schools, South Carolina

(Special for The United American)

IN THE culture of cotton, South Carolina's chief crop, the month of August, known as "lay-by" time, is the farmers' vacation month, therefore, intensive campaigns for the establishment of schools for illiterates and near-illiterates have been waged at this time for a number of years. The campaign of 1924 reached a high water mark when two hundred and forty of the best teachers of the State went to the most isolated communities for the purpose of giving to the unlettered their belated chance. As a result 6,380 pupils registered in 226 schools, 1,297 pupils did not miss a single session during the entire month.

SCHOOLS IN THE OPEN COUNTRY

Fourteen County Departments of Education coöperated with the State Department of Education in putting on this campaign by employing skilled teachers to organize their respective counties. These organizers with their superintendents appointed the teachers, the best in the State being available since this was vacation time. Before reporting for work the organizers and teachers were guests of Winthrop College, the State College for women, for a week's institute when, under the direction of the State Supervisor of Adult Schools, a thorough course in adult teaching was given. This work enabled the teachers to go to their schools with some technical training and a consciousness of its purpose which made success inevitable.

The term was from four to six weeks. The time for the daily session was determined by the pupils. The course of study was the 3 R's vitalized by every day problems. As supplementary reading a special newspaper, *The Lay-by School Messenger*, the gift of a public spirited editor, was used. The teachers lived in the various communities and, though remaining there for only a short time, identified themselves with all community activities. They attended church, sang in the choir, visited the homes of all pupils who needed to come to school, and often gave individual lessons to pupils until their confidence was gained and they were willing to enter school. The following excerpt taken from a teacher's letter gives a graphic idea of the work and the response:

"I came to Old Hundred one month when I was seven years old and sixty years after I came to the same school another month." The remark was made by one of my most interesting pupils at the commencement exercises of my school. He then told how in his youth he had been denied schooling because of poor school facilities and because of the fact that at his father's death he had to pay off the mortgage on the farm. When a young man he had helped build the first Old Hundred School and when it was completed he asked to be allowed to go to school for a few months by paying tuition. The idea of a married man going to school appeared so ridiculous to the trustees that his request was refused and it was not until this summer that his ambition was realized. He made a bargain with me that he would come three days and if he found he could learn he would be there every session. It was a revelation to him that an old man could be taught to write his name, make figures and learn to read several pages in a few days. Time was no item when home work was to be done. He bought two readers and had learned to read some twenty pages in both by the end of school. He had no difficulty in learning to spell and did enjoy doing it. He is studying at home now and looking forward to next year's

school. He considers this school the greatest single blessing ever given him by his State.

The various counties closed their campaigns with a county commencement. The following from an organizer shows the coöperation given:

We had a big commencement. The Court House was crowded. One school with an enrollment of fifty-one came a distance of forty-five miles to attend the exercises. Another school with an enrollment of twenty-six was there almost to a man. Many of the leading men and women of Chesterfield were there to lend a helping hand and those helping hands were gladly received and I haven't seen one yet that wasn't needed.

COLLEGES WELCOME ADULT PUPILS

In addition to the school in the country two colleges were opened: Lander College, Greenwood, for girls and women, and Erskine College, Due West, for boys and men. These schools, called Opportunity Schools, were

An Interesting Booklet

YOU WILL enjoy reading the Ladd & Tilton Booklet describing the departments and services of this bank.

It was written to help you get acquainted with the "Oldest Bank in the Northwest,"—to make it easy for you to use every department in this Bank.

Ask for Your Free Copy

LADD & TILTON BANK

Oldest in the Northwest
Washington & Third
Portland, Oregon

ASK YOUR DEALER

for the following brands

Manufactured in Portland

Mt. Hood Overalls
Mt. Hood Shirts
University Overcoats
University Mackinaws
Jenny & Joe Playsuits
Columbi-Ann House Dresses
Columbi-Ann Ladies' Night Gowns
A Warranty Bond with Every Garment

Place Your Orders With The United American Advertisers—and Tell Them Why