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How the Arts and Science Division of Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College Can Aid In the Development of The Rural Schools of Texas

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Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College

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A.B.W.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this study the writer has chosen to begin with the history of Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College because it is the intention to show how Prairie View State Normal and Industrial developed from a slave plantation to the Greatest Negro Land Grant College in America and one of the largest schools for Negroes in the world and as a direct result of this development show how the Arts and Science Division of Prairie View State College can aid in the development of the Rural Schools of Texas.

Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College shows the rise of the American Negro from the status of a slave to that of an educated and respected citizen who is making every contribution to the welfare and development of his state and nation that his talents and opportunities will permit. Prior to emancipation the site upon which Prairie View now stands was the slave plantation of Jared Ellison Kirby. The Spanish "Alta Vista" was the name which the old Kirby estate bore when it was owned by the Kirbys. On August 14, 1876, an act of the Fifteenth Legislature of Texas was approved which was: "An act to establish an Agriculture and Mechanic College of Texas for the benefit of the colored youths and to make appropriations therefor."

The Kirby plantation was purchased for \$20,000.00. The Spanish name "Alta Vista" was changed to its English equivalent, "Prairie View". Because the school was named an Agricultural and Mechanical College, the Negroes failed to attend. The result was that under an act approved by the governor of Texas on April 19, 1879, the school was reorganized into an institution whose primary purpose was to train teachers. The school has continually grown and prospered since this reorganization. In 1890, under the second Morrill Act, Prairie View was reorganized as a Land Grant College.

As has been stated before, Prairie View started out as a purely Agricultural and Mechanical School, then changed suddenly to a school primarily devoted to the training of teachers. It has constantly attempted to adapt its purposes and objectives to the needs of the people whom it was established to serve. Principal Blackshear stated that the purpose of Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College to be as follows: "Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College has for its objective the training of persons desiring to fit themselves for the important profession of teaching, by giving them thorough instruction and practical drill in the best organized methods of organizing, disciplining and conducting schools."¹

1. Houston Informer, The - 1932 - Educational Section

To give a well rounded education and to prepare the students for the practical life still remains a part of the educational policy and philosophy of Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College under the guidance of Principal W. R. Banks.

Because the State of Texas emphasizes the importance of professional training for teachers in elementary and higher schools, the Department of Education of Prairie View has become the largest teaching unit or organ in the entire school system. The majority of students in the school of Arts and Sciences are either majoring or minoring in Education and all other Divisions are dependent on this one Department for the educational training of their student groups. It is found that students are encouraged to specialize in certain phases of Education, instead of taking courses in any and all phases of Education. Such means of procedure will give to the teaching world those who are better prepared to understand and teach pupils in specified grades.

Until very recently, the objects of Education of Prairie View were quite satisfactory. The school progressed rapidly and many good students were graduated. Now there is a very definite need of a change in the policy of the institution because of the serious problem that has been confronting all educational institutions in the North as well as in the South and in white institutions as well as in colored ones. That problem is

one concerned with the education of the rural children and the traditional "Little Red Schoolhouse".

This problem has arisen because of the deplorable conditions that are found in the rural schools; it has also come forward as one necessitating careful analysis and study because it has been found that most of the students who graduate from Prairie View go to the rural area to teach.

The so-called rural school problem was brought about by the Industrial Revolution. Before the people began to congregate in cities all schools were more or less alike. But, with the growth of cities and the decline of the rural population new factors made themselves manifest. The cities progressed and in so doing demanded progress in their schools also. The country either actually declined or remained at a standstill in all matters, including the school. In short, the decline in rural population constitutes what we now call the rural problem.

CHAPTER II

THE CONDITION OF TEXAS RURAL SCHOOLS

In this study the writer hopes to present some definite steps that should be taken to aid in the development of rural schools of Texas. It is first necessary to acquaint the reader with the existing conditions of the Texas rural schools in order that he might be given a clearer conception of the problems that are facing the students who graduate from Prairie View and go directly to the rural schools to teach. In a number of instances it has been found that students have graduated from Prairie View and have begun work in rural districts with little or no idea of conception of the problems, which are entirely different from those of urban centers, that will be left for them to solve.

This information concerning the rural schools of Texas has not been in the least exaggerated. It was taken from a questionnaire study designed for rural school principals made out by a committee of the Faculty Members of Prairie View appointed by the principal of the institution. Questionnaires were sent to 1000 rural teachers and principals. Replies were received from 887 teachers, 318 of whom were rural principals.

A check on the sex of the 318 rural principals replying to the questionnaire, shows that for the year 1932-33 there were 128 males and 190 female principals. Only four women listed themselves as being past fifty years of age. A larger number of the schools are one-teacher schools. In fact this type constitutes 39.62% of the whole

with an average term of six months. It is also interesting to note that only 105 of the schools are equipped with library facilities.

Each teacher who reported had at some time attended some college. One hundred seventy-one hold degrees; 671 do not hold degrees. Those not holding degrees are classified as follows: Seniors 79; Juniors 279; Sophomores 269; Freshmen 71. Of the 887 teachers 567 have at some time attended Prairie View State College.

Considering the field in which these 567 teachers did their major work in college it was found that Education and English led. Educational courses are required for certification in Texas and teachers must major or minor in this field in order to qualify for State Certification. The report shows that 230 of the 567 students majored in Education and 147 majored in English. The remaining teachers majored in various other fields. No inquiries were made in the study concerning the teachers' minor fields in college. Only 258 of these 887 rural teachers have had courses in rural education, 90 have had courses in rural sociology and 31 in rural economics. These courses are designed primarily for rural teachers and should be taken by every student who anticipates teaching in rural areas.

In telling how the Arts and Science Division of Prairie View can aid in the development of the rural schools of Texas, it is quite necessary that each department in the Division that can make a definite contribution be con-

sidered separately. Each Department has a deal to offer and the following pages will be devoted to plans whereby the Division of Arts and Sciences might contribute toward the development of the Texas Rural Schools.

OBJECTIVES OF THE INSTITUTION

The objectives of the institution are grouped under three main headings, namely, General, Intellectual and Vocational. The General Objectives are summarized with the following of aims of learning upon which were assumed learning depends vocational training citizenship training group technique for surviving training for leadership training in self-reliance training in health and physical education and home maintenance social and intellectual training in citizenship and a cultivation of greater interest in and appreciation for industrial education.

CHAPTER XII

THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

The Department of Education should be given first consideration because it is in this field that the majority of the students who have chosen to follow the teaching profession in their career work and further because it is the largest.

OBJECTIVES OF THE INSTITUTION

The objectives of Prairie View are grouped under three main headings, namely, General, Inspirational and Divisional. The General Objectives are concerned with: The mastery of tools of learning upon which more advanced learning depends; vocational insight; citizenship; minority group technique for survival; training for leadership; training in self-reliance; culture; thrift; health; use of leisure and home membership; moral and intellectual honesty; social intelligence; and a stimulation of greater interests in and appreciation for industrial education.

... is given the position. The certification regulations of Texas are low in comparison to the progressive states and it would be desirable if the Department of Education would insist on the students' taking certain courses in education that will be most beneficial to them. Each a person should have taken enough courses in education to enable him to give justice to his pupils in all types of supervision and instruction.

CHAPTER III

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Department of Education should be given first consideration because it is in this field that the majority of the students who have chosen to follow the teaching profession do their major work and further because it is the Department that offers more to the student in the way of teaching in that it is designed primarily for the training of teachers.

Much of the retardation of the rural schools is caused by the teachers' inability to cope with the situations in rural communities. This inability on the part of the teacher can be traced, in most instances, back to the weakness of the institution to train the individual for this type of work. It may be added, too, that in rural districts the supervisors do not select teachers on the merits of their work. In many instances the personal element enters and anyone, regardless to the lack of training or inefficiency, is given the position. The certification regulations of Texas are low in comparison to the progressive states and it would be desirable if the Department of Education would insist on the students' taking certain courses in Education that will be most beneficial to them. Such a person should have taken enough courses in Education to enable him to give justice to his pupils in all types of supervision and instruction.

In order to show that the Department of Education is more vitally concerned with the rural problems, let us give a few of the proposed objectives for rural education. In spite of the fact that wide differences of opinion are revealed most of the proposals and tendencies imply that the elementary school is responsible (1) "for preserving a sufficiently large rural population to supply food for the world and sustain a standard rural civilization; (2) for giving country children a definite preparation for the social and vocational demands of rural life; and (3) for solving the many neglected social, religious, recreational and occupational problems of the adult rural group."¹ These purposes demand that the rural elementary school emphasize rural opportunity, that it give preparation for specific local tasks, and that the problems, needs and interests of the adult and of the local community should determine the problems and content of the rural curriculum.

In the rural communities in Texas we realize that the adults are not capable of determining the content of the curriculum because of their lack of training and in many instances it is because of their lack of interest in the schools; therefore, it becomes the duty of the teacher to realize the needs of the community and direct her work in the manner most beneficial to them.

From all that has been said, it can be plainly seen that the most significant problem in the whole field of rural public education is that of formulating the curriculum

for the training of rural teachers. However, the formulating of a program does not rest entirely with the institution. By virtue of the fact that Prairie View is a State institution, many subjects are required by the State for certification, thereby causing some of those that are more essential to have no place in the curriculum. If there is a place in the curriculum where these necessary subjects can be taught they are not required and it is a natural tendency for students to leave off those subjects which are not required.

According to W. H. Boyd in his book, TOWARDS A NEW EDUCATION, by curriculum is meant everything that the child does, everything that contributes to his active life in school: what he reads, or writes, or paints, as well as the debates between the children, their work of individual research, their group excursions and all of their activities." Since the term curriculum is so broadly used and take in the most minute detail of the child's life it is apparent that it should be given first consideration.

The writer has taken twelve courses in Education, two of these courses were in rural education and in not one of these courses has a detailed discussion of the building of a curriculum been given. It is thought by the majority of students that all subjects are to be taught just as the subjects were taught them in their urban homes. This is a

very definite weakness on the part of the Department of Education. The courses in methods are made so general that the students are given only a "smattering" knowledge of how to proceed, with no definite angle from which to work.

It is realized that a course in curriculum building would be out of order but in the methods courses there could be some special emphasis given to the direction of subject matter. In the various methods courses that are offered here, would it not be possible for the training to be special as well as general? The courses could be based more on content than theory. Since the trend of all students who graduate from Prairie View is toward the rurals, the rural aspect of the teaching should be emphasized.

The following extracts from Regulations of the State Department of Education explain the law regarding certificates issued upon college credits. Elementary Certificates of the first class valid for life are issued upon the completion of the second year of work in a State Teachers' College with special work in elementary education, including practice teaching. With this very inadequate amount of training necessary for a permanent certificate one can see that certificates which are issued for four years and six years are more inadequate. Because the States does not require ample instruction, the institution should offer a well rounded curriculum with emphasis

on those things most necessary in order to compensate for these limited requirements.

In Baltimore, Maryland, a plan exists that could be made practical in Texas and this plan would no doubt do much to aid in the development of the rural schools. The charter of Baltimore stipulates that all candidates for positions as teachers in the elementary grades of the public schools must be examined by the Board of Superintendents as to their training, knowledge, aptness for teaching and character and that those candidates who are deemed qualified for appointment shall be placed on the graded lists. This plan is very necessary in Texas or one that is similar because most schools and teachers in Texas have, in the past, been satisfied to have their knowledge consist of knowing how to teach the various subjects of the curriculum, together with an acquaintance with the history and principles of Education and Educational Psychology. As a result of this type of knowledge it is natural for the majority of teachers to be well trained in the methods of teaching but they have a very meager background of the factual information about the world in which they live. Since there is a demand for better teachers in Texas Rural Schools this is one method by which this demand could be supplied.

Of course, it is unfair to lay the entire blame of the weaknesses of rural schools on the institutions from which the teachers come. The Rural School System is to be blamed partly for this unfair distribution of professionally prepared teachers. The rural schools have been offering poorer salaries, poorer social opportunities, and poorer living conditions, than the urban schools. The rural school must better these conditions if it will expect to get its fair share of good teachers. *is the training school* Prairie View must first adopt the attitude that rural service is equal in importance to urban service, and consequently it must make provision for training teachers for various types of rural schools. The institution should provide courses for one and two room schools, for village and small town schools, for high schools, and, in addition to these, there should be courses for principals of rural schools as well as rural school supervisors. The practice of offering a short course in rural education in which the courses are superficially covered is an admittance on the part of the institution that rural service is inferior to urban service. *critically view in the light of current standards. Some of the problems are:*

1. Lack of proper plan to recruit the dull and backward pupils.
2. Too many absences.
3. The lack of necessary tools.
4. The lowering of hygiene conditions.
5. Getting cooperation with community work.
6. Inferior attendance.

OFF CAMPUS TRAINING CENTERS

One main reason why it is found that the graduates are not able to offer any suggestions or do any remedial work when they go out into the rural communities is because the only type of practice teaching they have done is in the campus training school. In this way the student does not get the proper amount of practical work, nor is he given the desirable experiences he would get if the training school were off campus. The off campus training centers present situations more real, more similar to those he will be placed in when he gets his first position.

The plan that is about to be proposed does not mean that the campus training school is to be eliminated. It is in the Sophomore year that Prairie View students do their campus practice teaching which should serve as a model school when the prospective teachers observe the best methods of classroom procedure. Thus, the student teachers have a background which prepares them for effective classroom participation when they go out to teach. There are many problems that will be entirely new in the off campus schools. Some of the problems are:

1. Lack of proper time to assist the dull and retarded pupils.
2. Too many absentees.
3. The lack of necessary tools.
4. The improving of hygiene conditions.
5. Getting cooperation with community folk.
6. Irregular attendance.

These problems were selected from a list that the Jeanes Supervisor of Waller County compiled for that County but since the conditions over Texas are parallel, it is safe to say that these conditions prevail all over Texas. Although these are just a few of the many problems one can see that the campus training school would not prepare students to solve them.

Perhaps the most practical plan for coordinating the Department of Education and the off campus training school is through the organization and administrative set-up. It would be necessary for the administration to take the first steps. Then, the District that is to be taken over by Prairie View and the institution would have to agree on a satisfactory arrangement for the salary and the teachers. One very satisfactory arrangement has been for the college to supplement the salary the teacher receives from the district or probably give the teacher free tuition in Prairie View College. Various plans have been worked out by different institutions. The following are some of the common practices: One half the principal's salary; \$25.00 per practice teacher with a maximum of four teachers; 40% of the teacher's salary. This plan would add a deal to the expense of the Department of Education but the good that would be derived would greatly exceed the expense of the plan.

The next problem that would arise in carrying out

this plan would be the arrangement of the schedule so that the seniors could spend one half day out in the rurals and at the same time carry on their regular work. The rural school does not open until nine o'clock and one senior subject could be offered at 7:30. The other subjects that are required for seniors would have to be offered twice daily, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. It seems that this plan could easily be carried out since there is such a large number of persons on Prairie View's faculty. It would be very desirable to operate the school from Tuesday through Saturday so that many of the students could visit the school and become acquainted with some of the problems that will confront them when they become seniors, then teachers. In this plan the student would only have to teach six weeks in order to have the same number of hours that the sophomore practice teacher has. The student who teaches in the campus training school teaches one hour per day, five days per week, making a total of 90 hours per semester. The off campus teacher could begin teaching at nine and teach three hours; another at one and teach three hours, therefore, causing him to teach only six weeks.

A member of the college faculty should direct or supervise the student teaching at the off campus training school. She should teach a course on practical problems for which all students under her supervision should be

required to register. This supervisor should be responsible for the professional growth of the student teachers. She works with the classroom teacher in the direction and supervision of all student teaching. She acts as a coordinating agent between the college and the training school. Since the student teachers must meet her several times weekly in conferences and class discussions she is familiar with their training and experiences. She is able to advise the classroom teacher in the adjustment of the student teacher load.

In conclusion, the off campus training school will provide an opportunity for student contact with community interests and activities which is very essential to the success of the beginning teacher.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

From the facts deduced from the general survey of the rural schools of Texas one can plainly see the important role that the Department of Biology can play in aiding in the development of these schools. The country has always been pictured as being the most healthful place in which to live and those living in the country have been prone to look upon the city as a veritable breeding place for disease but this is quite contrary to fact. All available evidence indicates that the city is more healthful and takes better care of its people than the country. The city is forced to safeguard the health and welfare of its members. It is necessary to supply pure water and to make provisions for the disposal of garbage and sewage; pure food must be provided; city ordinances guaranteeing health protection must be passed; free clinics must be established so that the poor may have the benefit of expert medical and surgical treatment. While all of this is going on in the city, the country with its usual complacency lives on as before. The regularly recurring epidemics are taken as a matter of course. So, it is easily concluded that the city is the most healthful place in which to live.

PROPOSED PLAN BY WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

Heretofore, the Department of Biology has done nothing to aid in the development of Texas rural schools. This lack of work on the part of the Department, however, is not due to the Department's not realizing the necessity of such a program but because of the fact that certain courses have been outlined by the State and there is little or no time for the consideration of such problems. This problem, as was suggested by the Head of the Department, could be given careful attention by the members of the Research class but the number of students majoring in the Biology who are eligible to enroll in the Research class is so small that the work can not be done effectively. If, in the future, a larger number of students register in this class there are many adjustments that can be made.

leads to restrain the action of the Department, a small amount of postage could be paid and samples of the water could be mailed to the college laboratory. A microscopic examination of water will reveal whether or not it is safe for drinking purposes. If it is found to be impure it will be necessary for the Department to confer, in person or by means of the circulation of literature, with the teachers of that section, telling them just what procedures should be carried out in the purification of the water. A prerequisite for this program would be to show the teachers and parents of the community that such

PROPOSED PLAN BY WHICH THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY
CAN AID IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RURAL SCHOOLS

The problem of finance is one that will naturally arise in this consideration, but if the problem is carefully analysed a deal of aid can be rendered without added expenditures.

An impure supply of drinking water is the source of many diseases or conditions which contribute to illness. Many cases of typhoid can be traced to a contaminated well or a careless human carrier. The evils resulting from the consumption of impure water would be non-extant if samples of the water could be brought to the college laboratory where an examination could be made and a definite follow-up program carried out. If the problem of transportation tends to restrain the action of the Department, a small amount of postage could be paid and samples of the water could be mailed to the college laboratory. A microscopic examination of water will reveal whether or not it is best for drinking purposes. If it is found to be impure it will be necessary for the Department to confer, in person or by means of the circulation of literature, with the teachers of that section, telling them just what procedures should be carried out in the purification of the water. A prerequisite for this program would be to show the teachers and parents of the community that such

procedures will be beneficial.

Another item that will tend to develop the rural school which could be cared for by this Department would be a microscopic examination of human excreta to determine if there are any parasites present. This study would, however, be a bit more expensive than the first because reagents would be necessary in the analysis. But both problems could be done rather effectively and inexpensively.

It has been found that the hookworm is a very prevalent disease of the Southern States. This is a third means by which the Department can aid in the development of the rural schools of Texas. It is not too much to hope that the time will come when dangers from insects and microscopic pests together with the germs of such dreaded diseases as tuberculosis and typhoid fever will be extinct.

The circulating library should circulate books to the parents and also the teachers. The materials that are most beneficial should be chosen. The pupils could be given the types of books that would afford the right kind of reading for leisure time.

Local libraries could be established with the aid of the Library Department of Health. It is the Department's duty, of course, to see that the best type of books is sent to each local library. All of the material should be checked out of the Library Department of Health. This is the only way

THE DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

The Department of Library Science at Prairie View State College has a limited staff and a limited supply of material. If these two outstanding defects could be remedied, the Department could make a very definite contribution to the development of the rural schools of Texas. If more members were added to the staff and there were a larger supply of books, then, the Department could afford a circulating library. Book Clubs and local libraries could be established. Through these three agencies the people in the rural districts could be enlightened. A great deal of the ills of the rural schools is caused by the parents' objecting to new educational devices and practices. They fail to see the value of changing their ideas concerning education. This plan would enable the people to see the defects and desire the needed changes.

The circulating library should circulate books to the parents and also the teachers. The materials that are most beneficial should be chosen. The pupils could be given the types of books that would afford the right kind of reading for leisure time.

Local libraries could be established with the Head of the Library Department of Prairie View as the supervisor. Of course, there should be part-time workers in each local library. All of the material should be checked out of the Library Department of Prairie View State College.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

In an attempt to show just what the Arts and Science Division of Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College can do to aid in the Development of the rural schools of Texas, the writer has given consideration to the Departments of the Division which can make a more definite contribution. It is known, however, that all of the Departments can aid, if the teaching is directed in the right way.

The Department of Education, to aid in this development, could:

1. Enlarge the curriculum.
2. Place emphasis on the phases of subject matter that is most beneficial.
3. Establish an off-campus training school with a member of the Department of Education as the Supervisor or Director.
4. A special course for prospective rural teachers could be offered since the trend of education is toward the rurals.

The Department of Biology has a proposed plan that will aid much.

1. The examination of the water of the schools.
2. The examination of the human excreta.

If these two proposals were carried out many of the diseases which occur so often in the rural sections would be eliminated. The hookworm is a disease that is prevalent

in the South. This disease is caused by the consumption of impure food and water. These two examinations would end the hookworm.

The Department of Library Science could plan a program that would tend to educate the parents of the rural children; to enable them to appreciate and evaluate the changes in our educational system.

In conclusion, the writer wishes to state that the backward state of the rural schools is not due to the rural children's being unable to learn but it is due to the fact that rural parents hinder the learning processes through their inability to see the necessity of a change in their modes of education. Another reason is that teachers who go to the rurals do not realize that their tasks are broader than one who teaches in urban centers. The institution from which these people graduate should be one whose policy is to acquaint the prospective teacher with all of the problems that are common to rural schools.

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