

HOW TO BUILD UP A GOOD SCHOOL IN THE SOUTH.



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The colored schools in the south, especially in the country districts and smaller towns, are not kept open by the state fund, as a rule, longer than three or four months during the year, and the great question with teachers and parents, is how to extend the school term to seven or eight months, so that the school shall really do some good. I want to give a few plain suggestions, which I think, if carefully followed, will result in placing a good school in most every community. In this I am not speculating, because more than one Tuskegee graduate has built up a good school on the plan I outline.

A GOOD TEACHER.

In the first place, a good teacher must be secured—one that is not only working for money, but one that is willing to sacrifice for the good of the race, and one that is willing to remain in one community and not move from place to place every three months. The teacher must be one who is willing to settle down in one community and make that his home and life work.

A COMFORTABLE SCHOOL-HOUSE.

The next thing after securing an educated, honest teacher, is to get a convenient and comfortable school-house. Usually in the far south, the state is not able to build a school-house. How is it to be secured? A good school-house should be carefully planned. Then let the teacher or some one go among the people in the community, both colored and white, and get each individual to give something, no matter how small, for purchasing the lumber. If enough money cannot be secured in this way; a supper, festival, entertainment or church collection will help out. After the lumber is secured, parents should be asked to "club in" with their wagons and haul it free. Then at least one good carpenter should be secured to lead in building; each member of the community should agree to give so many days work in helping to build the school-house. In the work of building, the larger pupils can help a great deal. In these ways, by patient effort, a good frame school-house can be secured in most any community.

HOW TO EXTEND THE SCHOOL TERM.

In cases where it can be done, take a three or four month's public school as a starting point, and work in co-operation with the school officers, but do not let the school close or the teacher leave at the end of three or four months, because if that is true, the school will amount to almost nothing.

As soon as teacher goes into a community he should organize the people into an educational club or society, and there should be regular meetings once a week or twice during the month, and plans for building a good school should be discussed and decided upon.

There are a number of ways of extending the school term. One is for each parent to pay ten, fifteen, twenty-five or fifty cents each month during the whole time the school is in session. Often parents who cannot pay in cash, can let the teacher have eggs, chickens, butter, pigs, sweet potatoes, corn, etc. Another way is for each farmer to set aside a certain portion of land and give all that is raised on it to the school. Still another plan, and one that is being successfully carried out in at least one place, and one that I think much of, is for the teacher to secure, either by renting or purchasing, a small tract of land—say from two to five acres, and let the children cultivate this land while they are attending school. If in this way three bales of cotton can be raised and a variety of vegetables and grain, the produce can be sold and in this way the school term extended from three months to six or seven months.

Some parents may object to this at first, but they will soon see that it is better to let the school close at 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon and let the children work on the school land for an hour or two, and in this way keep the school open six or seven months, than to let it close at the end of three months. This latter plan has another advantage—the teacher can, in this way, teach the pupils in a practical way, better methods of farming. Short talks on the principles of agriculture are much more effective to them than time spent in committing to memory the mountain peaks in Central Africa.

Very often there is enough land right about the school house for the pupils to cultivate.

HOW THE TEACHER CAN HELP HIMSELF.

In every case where it is possible, the teacher should buy a home in the community and make his home in every way a model for the community. The teacher should also cultivate his farm or follow some other industry when not teaching or in connection with his teaching, and in this way not only help himself, but set a good example for the community. There are few communities

where a woman teacher cannot add much to her income by sewing, dressmaking or poultry-raising.

Another tract giving more detailed information as to how the teacher can help the community outside of the school room, will soon follow this one. Parents or teachers wanting more tracts or information can address,

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