

Mrs. Mary Nottingham Smith  
1886 - 1951

Birthplace - Townsend, Virginia, Northampton County

Education - (1) Townsend Elementary School (2) High School and College at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia

Positions Held - was a teacher and principal at Essex County, Virginia and Townsend, Virginia. She was Supervisor in Concord Parish, Louisiana for six years and was then transferred to Accomack County, Virginia.

Greatest Ambition - To obtain a Negro high school in Accomack County.

Results - Founder of the Mary Nottingham Smith High School, Accomack, Virginia.

Other positions and services - Served as an executive member of the Virginia Teachers Association. Honorary member of the Virginia Conference Branch Mite Missionary Society; member of the N.A.A.C.P.; president of the Accomack Chapter of the Hampton Alumni. She was a religious and civic leader.

Mrs. Margaret E. McCune  
1878 - 1954

Birthplace - Cumberland, Ohio

Education - Elementary and High School in Zanesville, Ohio  
Wilberforce University, Magna Cum Lauda

Positions Held - Manassas Industrial School, Manassas, Virginia  
Head of Home Ec. Dept. of Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Ala.  
A. & T. College, Greensboro  
North Carolina  
She was called to Tidewater Institute in Northampton County by Dr. Dillard, President of the Deanes Board upon the recommendation of Dr. Booker T. Washington. She worked untiringly for a Public High School for Negro boys and girls; for Free Public Bus transportation, and for consolidated Elementary Schools. She was a life member of the Negro Organization Society. She also served on the Executive Board of the V.T.A. and Negro Organization Society.

Mrs. Patterson

## The History of the Negro in America

We are Negro boys and girls. Our great, great, great grandfathers and grandmothers came from Africa.

Africa is a long way from us. We have to travel over large tracts of land and much water to get to this country.

Africa is a very rich country. Many people have wanted to own this rich land. Some people other than Negroes, have owned much of the land.

Negroes first came to America as explorers. They came with the Spanish, the French, and the Portuguese. Negroes were with Balboa when he discovered the Pacific Ocean and with Cortés when he explored Mexico. One of these Negroes introduced the raising of wheat to the New World. Estevanico, a Negro explorer, led a party of explorers into New Mexico. Negroes were also with the French when the Mississippi Valley was settled.

In 1619, twenty Negroes were brought to Virginia. They had to give their services to their masters for a set length of time. White people also had to give service for a certain time. These people were not slaves. They were called indentured servants.

When they had given their service for the time required of them they were free.

Complete ownership of a person known as slavery was not made lawful in Virginia until 1661. This was around one hundred years after the first Negroes came to America.

Slavery was very bad. Many states in the South made laws to make slavery lawful. The slaves had no freedom. They had no set time to work. They could not vote or hold office. They had no rights as free people.

There were some Negroes who fought against slavery. There were these who ran away. Some of them were able to buy their freedom. Some bought freedom for their families. Many free Negroes spoke out against slavery in the North among their white friends. Others found ways of helping the slaves get away from their masters. By these means, many Negroes became free. But, there were still those who remained in slavery.

When Abraham Lincoln became President, slavery was still a great problem in this country. The South wanted to keep the slaves to work on their large farms. The North had little need for slaves because they had many large factories. They didn't need the slaves to work in the factories. The people in the North wanted to free the slaves.

Abraham Lincoln wanted to free the slaves. Most of all he wanted the states to remain together. He wanted them to be united. Once he said, "If I can free part of the slaves and save the Union, I will do it. If I can free all of the slaves and save the Union, I will do this." All of the time, however, he hoped he could free all of the slaves.

Finally, the North and South became so angry with each other that they began a war. This was called a Civil War because people within the same country were fighting each other.

The people in the North and South fought and fought. For a time it seemed that the South would win but when the North began to win President Lincoln said, "I shall make a new law." He called his new law the Emancipation Proclamation. The Emancipation Proclamation stated that all Negroes would be free. He made the law on January 1, 1863.

The people in the South became very angry with President

Lincoln. They didn't want to give up the slaves, but they had to give them up. The North was very happy. They didn't want slavery.

When the Civil War was ended the South had still another problem. Many of the states had left the Union. They were no longer a part of the United States. They had their own President. After the war they wanted to come back in the Union. They wanted to become a part of the United States again. To do this the Federal government asked them to do certain things. First, they had to obey the law to free all Negroes. Second, they had to give the former slaves the right to vote in all elections and they had to give them the privilege to hold office if they were elected.

Negroes in the South had long looked for the time when they would have a chance to be free. They wanted to have the rights of free people. Some of them who bought their freedom or secured it in other ways went to school. Some went to the colleges and universities in this country. Some went to schools in England and in other countries. They were preparing themselves for the day when they would become leaders of their race and leaders of their country.

This day finally came. When Negroes were given the right to vote many of them voted. They helped to send twenty Negroes to represent their states in Washington. They held positions in the local and state governments.

Negroes had bright hopes in their future. They knew that they had a President who could help them fully realize their freedom. It wasn't long, though before a tragedy occurred-President Lincoln was assassinated. This made the Negroes very sad. It made most people sad because Lincoln tried hard to do what was

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best for his country.

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For a number of years, however, Negroes continued to hold public office and to vote. They were very proud of their new freedom. Even though they had been treated cruelly by their masters most of them still felt as we do, that they wanted to live in this country. There were a few Negroes however, who wanted to go back to their native home. Marcus Carvey thought this was a good idea. He organized a steamship company to help those Negroes return to Africa who wanted to do so. As a result of this and other movements like it the republic of Liberia was founded. This republic was and still is, governed entirely by Negroes. It was our second all Negro republic.

Negroes were given their freedom more than a hundred years ago. We have had many Presidents since Lincoln's time. Most of them have tried to help Negroes fully realize their freedom.

We have come a long way toward becoming full citizens of America. Many opportunities are open to us today that were closed only a few years ago. The time has now come or is certainly well on the way when we will be first class citizens. This means that we will have the same chance for an education, for jobs, for travel convenience and for living in general that every other citizen has. Since this is true we know that as young people we must continually study hard, work hard, and show good training in our daily living.

America is our native land. This is where we were born. We are entitled to the rights of all other American citizens. We are proud of the accomplishments of our race. We are proud of our country. Young people show their appreciation for their heritage and their country by using their time and

opportunities to prepare themselves for the day when they  
too will become contributing members of this society.