1981

History of the Virginia Teachers Association, 1940-1965

Alfred Kenneth Talbot Jr.

College of William & Mary - School of Education

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HISTORY OF THE VIRGINIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION: 1940-1965

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

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HISTORY OF THE VIRGINIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
1940–1965

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Faculty of the School of Education
College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Alfred Kenneth Talbot
May 1981
HISTORY OF THE VIRGINIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
1940-1965

by

Alfred Kenneth Talbot, Jr.

Approved May 1981 by

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DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to my late mother whose support and endless sacrifices throughout my educational pursuits has put me where I am.
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Finally, all of my love and my sincerest thanks and appreciation are offered to my late wife Hazel and my present wife Bessie who helped me, encouraged me, and made countless sacrifices in my behalf throughout my studies and the writing of this document.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to examine the Virginia Teachers Association as a force for educational change in Virginia. In order to support the assumption that in Virginia the Virginia Teachers Association was instrumental in improving the quality of public education, through the stimulation of professionalism in teaching and through the contributions of a number of its most able educational leaders, five tasks were undertaken:

1. An examination of the primary purposes of the organization in conjunction with its educational goals and programs,
2. A review of the forces that generated educational change during the period covered by this study,
3. An analysis of the organization and administration of the Association,
4. A survey of the contributions of two of the organization's most influential leaders whose leadership is a primary factor in bringing about the educational changes in Virginia that took place during the period of this study, and
5. An examination of the process utilized in merging Virginia's Black and White teachers associations.

Little formal recognition has been given to the role of the Virginia Teachers Association in the development of education in Virginia. Also, very little has been written relative to the organization's con-
tributions to the improvement of professional relationship within the educational community at both the state and national levels, the attainment of quality education for all children and youths, and the transition from a segregated to an integrated educational system. The focus of this study was placed on the role assumed by the Association during a part of the development of education in the Commonwealth, 1940-1965.

An analysis of the objectives and functions of the Virginia Teachers Association was included as well as an observation of the methods and activities through which the organization attempted to achieve these objectives and engage in these functions. An attempt was made to study the most prominent characteristics of the organization and to assess its significance to black educators who had used it as their primary vehicle for effecting better teaching as well as a higher quality of living for themselves.

Specific questions that this study sought to answer were:

1. What were the programs and activities that were utilized by the VTA in its quest for equality of educational opportunity for every child in the Commonwealth?
2. What programs, activities and procedures were employed by the VTA to effect equality of professional status for every Black educator in Virginia?

Hypothesis

The leadership provided by the Virginia Teachers Association made a significant contribution to the professional development of Negroes in the Commonwealth which, in turn, helped to effect educational change in Virginia, 1940-1965.
Limitations and Scope

The era, 1940-1965 was chosen for this study because it was during this time that the Association experienced its maximum growth in membership and gained some degree of national recognition. It was also at this time that the VTA was led by a succession of dynamic and forceful presidents who played key roles in helping to make the organization a viable social force. It was within this time frame that the Association made the transition from a passive aggregation of educators to a professionaly militant group numbering nearly nine thousand members who were determined that Black educators in Virginia would, "have their place in the educational sun." It was also during this period that the image of the Association, nationally as well as statewide, was greatly enhanced by the employment of its first full-time, salaried executive secretary and the acquisition of a headquarters building in the capitol city of Richmond.

This study was limited to the analysis and examination of the programming, professional activities, growth and development, and leadership of one organization, the Virginia Teachers Association.

Methodology

The historical method of research was employed in this study and the procedure was twofold. First, a review was conducted of the major programs and activities of the Virginia Teachers Association during the period 1940-1965. Examination of these programs revealed the emphasis that had been placed on the contribution of these programs and their related activities toward changing the educational climate in Virginia. Secondly, profiles of two of the key leaders of the Association were developed, including a description of their leadership styles and, a commentary as to how their work contributed to the effectiveness of the
organization.

Association bulletins, newsletters, memoranda, correspondence, minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and other official documents were used in order to determine the many facets of the organization's pattern of operation throughout the period covered in this study. Interviews with selected leaders and other key personalities were employed in order to provide both information and personal insights that would provide a perspective relative to the impact of the VTA on the Virginia educational scene during the final twenty-five years of its existence.

The written records which provide the data are housed in the Johnston Memorial Library, Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia; the Huntington Memorial Library, Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia; the National Education Association, Division of Teachers Rights, Washington, D.C.; and the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, Washington, D.C.

Also, the official papers and records of the writer, who was president of the Virginia Teachers Association, 1962-1964 and chairman of the Board of Directors, 1964-1966 were examined. This information is particularly relevant to the study because it was during the 1962-1964 administration that plans were formulated for the merger of the Virginia Teachers Association with the Virginia Education Association.

Review of the Literature

Comprehensive studies of the origin and development of the Virginia Teachers Association are very limited. Luther P. Jackson wrote one of the first histories of the Association which was entitled, History, Virginia State Teachers Association, 1937. This work was
planned for completion that year to mark the Golden Jubilee Celebration of the organization which was held at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia, November 24, 25, 26, 1937.¹ In his study, Jackson emphasized the impact of the organization on the educational climate in Virginia during the period prior to 1937, and underscored the determination of Negro educators to take care of their own people:

After 1920 a variety of circumstances conspired to give the Negro a better chance in the field of education in Virginia. Ranking first perhaps was the spirit of self-help shown by the State Teachers Association, the School Improvement League, and the Negro Organization Society, and the ability of Negro leaders to work out problems in their own race on a scale comparable to that undertaken by white leaders within their own group.²

Jackson's study differs from the present writing in that he recounted the early years in the development of the organization, 1887-1937. He highlights the individual personalities, both black and white, who played the most prominent roles as leaders of the organization. He also places emphasis on other organizations and educational institutions that have contributed to the growth of the Association during its formative years.

Conclusions reached by Jackson were that, (1) Negro educators in Virginia must insist that more attention be given to a study of their own people in the schools for Negroes, (2) the Virginia State Teachers Association must become a prominent part in the notion to study Negro life and the preservation of their history, (3) participation in the affairs of government must become one of the major goals


²Ibid., p. 67.
of the Association and (4) Virginia's Negro teachers need to continue their demands for salaries that are equal to those paid to white teachers in the Commonwealth if they are to achieve greater economic security.  

J. Rupert Picott's study, History of the Virginia Teachers Association, is essentially the same as the Jackson study in terms of format, except that Picott's study covered the period between 1887 and 1967, a span of eighty years, while the Jackson study dealt with the period 1887-1937, a fifty-year period. The latter half of the Picott study, however, records those events having to do with the Association when it was enjoying its greatest influence and stature, the period between 1940 and 1967. In contrast to the Jackson treatise, Picott's analysis is based on the period of time when the organization was experiencing a struggle for survival. As a matter of fact the VTA experienced three false starts before it was able to establish itself on a permanent basis.

Similar to the Jackson Study, the Picott approach to the history of the VTA reveals a preoccupation with the task of highlighting and applauding the contributions of an array of Negro state and local leaders who contributed to the growth and development of the Association. Even though the study does not provide any definitive conclusions, the final paragraph of Picott's work seems to be a broad conclusion. He says:

It was while the VTA listened to integration drummers that death came, mayhaps, prematurely. But the historian perceives not only eighty years of age, but eight times ten years of achievement. The contribution is etched forever, and the

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3 Ibid, p. 100-110.
Virginia Teachers Association lives and will continue to live whenever and wherever instructors of the Commonwealth get together and discuss teaching and learning.4

Picott asserts further that, "because Negro teachers were not welcome in the National Education Association in the early days, the need grew for a national organization of black teachers which could coordinate the efforts of the minority state teachers associations and project for the future."5

This study differs from the studies of Jackson and Picott in that Jackson's study covers the early years in the development of the organization, the period when it was known as the Virginia State Teachers Association. His account covers the body's first fifty years, 1887-1937. He simply catalogues the individual personalities, both black and white, who played the most prominent roles in the organization. He also focused on the other organizations and educational institutions that contributed to the growth of the Virginia State Teachers Association during its formative years. Picott covers the Virginia Teachers Association from its founding in 1887 to its merger with the Virginia Education Association in 1967. He too focuses on those individuals who were the leaders in the VTA structure at the local, regional and state levels. He also describes in detail the contributions which black and white educators, politicians, community, and religious leaders made to education generally and to the growth of the Virginia Teachers Association specifically.


5Ibid, p. 209.
Unlike either of the previously cited writers this study of the Virginia Teachers Association will be approached from the perspective of viewing the organization as providing in microcosm an example of a socio-political movement in which the Association is absorbed into the Virginia Education Association. The merger resulted in the loss of identity by the VTA as a viable and influential entity.

Other studies of State Teachers Associations are Aloysius Harold Nothen's Study at the University of Nebraska Teachers College, 1966, entitled, "A Determination and Analysis of the Functions and Objectives of State Teachers' Associations." Some of the major conclusions are:

1. State Teachers Associations have been organized to promote two overall goals; to advance the interests of education and to advance the interests of the teaching profession. The interests of education are myriad but the primary concerns of education as an institution are the inculcation of the culture of the society to each new generation and the perpetuation of current cultural patterns while discouraging deviation from them. The teaching profession's primary goals are to have a strong base of expert knowledge and to have mastery of teaching methods and techniques of classroom management.

2. Indications are that while much emphasis on recent programs of State Teachers Associations have been in the area of teacher welfare, the American Federation of Teachers Union

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6 Dissertation Abstracts International, Vol. 27, p. 3234, 10A.
will continue to promote membership in its organization by stressing welfare, and thus will compel the professional associations to increase the emphasis on their welfare programs.

(3) It is indicated in the evidence that the "militant" teacher group is going to grow in number and press for more authority and welfare benefits. Thus, administrators and school board members are apparently going to have to come to accept more professional negotiations.

Also, Thomas Lawson Ramsey's work, "A Study of the County Music Educators Associations in the State of New York with Recommendations for Future Development." Some conclusions are: A county association can do a great service to music education by (1) putting itself on a well organized basis, (2) maintaining a job information service, and (3) promoting college extension work.⁷

Finally, O. Wayne Phillips' Study, "A Survey of Community Teachers Associations in Missouri, 1960-1961," University of Missouri, 1963. Two of the major conclusions are:

(1) If community teachers associations are to be recognized as a potent force for the improvement of education by boards of education and the general public, a way must be found to combat some of the apathy that exists in many of the associations covered in this study.

(2) It is evident that local associations must develop dynamic leadership and a vital program of significant activities if

they are to take-on the vastly increased professional responsibilities as described in the recent resolution of the National Education Association.

None of these studies seem to reflect the purposes of this current study, but they do provide general background material that helps one to conclude that the struggle in Virginia for black identity within the VEA was not unique.

In this study an analysis of the objectives and functions of Virginia Teachers Association was made. Also, a survey was conducted of those methods and activities to assess whether the objectives were accomplished.

In order to support the central thesis of this study, which is that the VTA served as a force for educational change, it was necessary to determine what circumstances and conditions, nationally and in Virginia, contributed to the founding and development of the VTA as a predominant force in fighting for and to attaining equality of educational opportunity for all in the Commonwealth.

Other questions that needed to be answered in order to assess the Virginia Teachers Association as a major force for educational change in Virginia were:

(1) What were the socio-political developments that affected the VTA in establishing itself as a permanent and viable professional organization?

(2) In what ways did the VTA exercise its influence in the achievement of its major goals?

(3) In the historical sense was the VTA the effective instrumentality for the professionalization of Black educators that it was intended to be?
(4) Finally, when the VTA merged with the VEA was it a victory or a defeat for the VTA as an agent for educational change?

Answers to these questions were sought in a review of the social, educational, and political conditions that obtained during the formative years of the Virginia Teachers Association, and an analysis of the rationale for the primary goals of the organization and the sense of mission that motivated its leaders to build an influential professional association. Also, an examination was made of the organizational structure of the association and the administrative techniques that contributed to its impact; an analysis of the leadership styles of two of the VTA's key leaders; and a review of the process that was utilized to ultimately effect the unification of the Virginia Teachers Association and the Virginia Education Association.
CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF THE VIRGINIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
AND EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

The Virginia Teachers Association was first known by several different names, two of which were the Virginia Teachers Reading Circle and Negro Teachers and School Improvement League. There was an attempt made to effect an organization as early as 1883 but the actual founding of the association did not actually take place until 1887.¹ The Negro Teachers and School Improvement League of Virginia and other state organizations of Negro teachers did not appear until the latter quarter of the nineteenth century. Perry notes the appearance of state and territorial associations suggesting that even though the Oklahoma territory did not become a state until 1907, the teachers of Oklahoma County organized the Ida B. Wells Teachers Association in Oklahoma City in 1893.² Its membership numbered 14 Negro teachers and its first president was Jefferson Davis Randolph. Within just a few years the group expanded into the Territorial Association of Negro Teachers. This group was so persistent in trying to enroll a black student in a white public institution that the Oklahoma legislature very quickly


passed a bill in 1897 to establish the Colored Agricultural and Normal School at Langston Oklahoma, in order to provide educational opportunities for black students. Some years later the name of this institution was changed to Langston University. In December 1907, almost immediately following the merger of Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory into the state of Oklahoma, 67 teachers of what had been formerly two separate territories met at Langston University and out of this meeting came the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers (OANT).³

The Kentucky Negro Education Association (KNEA) came into being in 1877; the Georgia Negro Teachers in 1878; the Florida State Teachers Association in 1891; and the founding of the Association of Teachers of Youth of Arkansas took place in 1898.⁴

These groups were prohibited from joining the National Education Association, therefore, these new associations of black educators needed a national organization to serve as an instrument for consolidation, unification, and coordination of the professional efforts and activities of the black educators, therefore, in 1904, the National Association of Teachers In Colored Schools (NATCS) was formed. These state groups became important in the continuity and effectiveness of the NATCS, whose name would soon be changed to American Teachers Association (ATA). Effectiveness of the national body was dependent on the state associations and thus a weakened national organization resulted that would not become a strong leader such as NEA because the genesis of the latter was from the national level.

³Ibid., p. 22.
⁴Ibid., p. 22.
In looking back at these early beginnings of the determination of black educators to unite themselves into an effective and dynamic instrument of intellectual power designed to compensate for the social and educational deficits which had developed among Negroes as a result of societal neglect, Thelma Perry emphasized the gravity of the situation when she observed that even though these educators were severely limited by the customs, laws and other discouraging circumstances of the time they persisted in their efforts to improve the quality of life for their people. They were strong and they used their strength to accelerate the progress and upward mobility of their own people.\(^5\)

"Black teachers throughout the South were victims of society, but despite this the black teachers consolidated into formal organizations. These teachers through their organizations involved themselves in community activities, shared their labor, their humanity, and their earnings to help the black community."\(^6\) The black educator was aware of the fact that there could be no security for blacks unless they were educated. Therefore, adult education programs were launched by black educators.

The spirit of the educational improvement of black people by black teachers was especially strong in Oklahoma, Georgia, Kentucky, Florida, Arkansas, and Ohio. The concept of developing black professionalism in other parts of the country provided the impetus for the feeling of pride among black teachers that spread to Virginia. Because of the felt need to be professional and to help black people, the Virginia Teachers

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 23.

\(^6\) Ibid., p. 23.
Association was formed at the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute at Petersburg in 1883. This event coincided with the establishment of the college whose name was later to be changed to Virginia State College. Ironically, the college survived its beginning but the teachers association did not. The speculation was that the organization's failure lay in the fact that during this period there existed no institution or organized group of black native Virginia educators capable of holding the organization together.  

A second attempt at establishing a professional association of Virginia teachers was made the following year in 1884, when at a summer institute for teachers held at Farmville, Virginia, a Teachers Reading Circle was organized for upgrading the teaching skills of teachers. This second attempt also failed to survive beyond the duration of the institute session. Prior to the move on the part of black teachers to improve their own teaching skills and to effect a professionalization of their role as teachers, the professional training for Virginia's black teachers was accomplished through a series of summer institutes underwritten by the Philanthropy of George Peabody. "Self Help," the basic consideration of the voluntary teachers association, if needed by the white school system was needed all the more by the Negro school system. Under the dual system of education in the South, and under a system of unequal educational opportunities for the two races, it was clear that the Negroes had to do something for themselves or witness their own decline.  

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7 Ibid., Luther P. Jackson, p. 8.

8 Ibid., p. 9.
The third attempt to establish a teachers association occurred at the Peabody Summer Institute held at Lynchburg in 1887. The meeting was regarded as being important because it was the first institute to be supervised and taught by Negroes who were born in the state and employed in the public school system.\(^9\) It was felt that this fortunate circumstance set the stage, finally, for the establishment of a permanent teachers association. An informational flyer that was sent to prospective students reflected this feeling. It read:

This is the first instance in which a summer normal for colored teachers has been conducted by Virginia's colored teachers, and it presents a fine opportunity for the instructors to display their ability in this direction. Virginia teachers should by this time be able to conduct their own summer schools.\(^{10}\)

The Lynchburg Institute of 1887 was under the direction of Professor James H. Johnston and it was as a result of his leadership that a permanent organization of Virginia's Negro Teachers was formed. Those individuals who were associated with Johnston in conducting the four weeks Lynchburg session, July 19 - August 16, were Dr. Webster Davis and Rosa Bowser of the Richmond Schools, William L. Hamlin and I. Garland Penn. Also participating in the activities of the Institute were Daniel Williams, F. Calloway, D. M. Vassar, C. J. Daniel, H. C. Edmunds, Frank Trigg, John Mitchell, Jr., L. Penn, W. F. Grasty, Lelia Perkins, P. H. Johnson, Albert Johnson, Katie Cook, Ananius Stewart, A. E. P. Pride, Joseph Wheeler, J. W. Leftwich, J. H. Presley, P. W.

\(^9\) Ibid., p. 12.

\(^{10}\) Ibid., p. 13.
Dawkins, Lucy Flood, Clara Alexander, P. G. Poindexter, J. B. Tynes, Anna B. Rhoads, C. M. Hamlett, T. P. Dudley, Julia E. Coles, and J. W. Nowlin. This latter group can properly be designated as the movers in this third and successful attempt to found the Virginia Teachers Association. It should be noted, however, that the new organization was not called the Virginia Teachers Association at the time of its founding; rather its charter members chose the name, Virginia Teachers Reading Circle.11

Professor James H. Johnston was chosen the Reading Circle's first president and with his appointment as president of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute at Petersburg in January 1888, the Petersburg campus became the first permanent home of the Reading Circle. During the next eighteen years (1888-1906) the organization took on the value system of the college community.12 This embryonic professional association of black educators was headquartered on the campus of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute and its annual meetings took place in conjunction with the four to five weeks summer sessions of the College. The annual meeting of the Virginia Teachers Reading Circle in 1889 was particularly significant because it was at this time that they changed their name to the Virginia State Teachers Association.

The objectives of the Virginia State Teachers Association were enumerated in the 1892 edition of the Petersburg Herald and were enunciated as follows:

To give teachers a chance for general professional improvement, to have them pursue a regular three year course of study, and afford them an opportunity to meet annually and discuss questions

12 Ibid., p. 14
pertaining to the educational interests of the State, and to become acquainted with the basis of their profession—the philosophy and history of teaching as well as the methods of the new education. In so doing the lower plane of teacher would be lifted to the 'lofty pinnacle of educator.'

Mrs. Rosa D. Bowser succeeded Johnston as VSTA president and was the first female to head the organization. Daniel B. Williams, Professor of Ancient Languages at the Petersburg College, assumed the VSTA presidency at the end of Bowser's tenure in office. Williams' tremendous leadership qualities and his reputation as a scholar were so widely recognized by the teachers of the association that they continued to reelect him to the presidency until his death in 1895. Daniel B. Williams, James H. Johnston, and Rosa D. Bowser, as heads of the Teachers Association during the first eight years of its existence set a precedent of exceptional executive leadership and professional expertise which became the model for subsequent leaders of the organization.

Beginning about 1900 the officials of the Association developed more comprehensive and in-depth pre-planning for both the periodic meetings and the annual convention sessions. The result was a move by the leadership and the constituency of the organization toward focusing on the issue of improving the quality of the programming and making the projected program more definitive. It was determined that the goals of the Association might be more readily achieved if the annual

13 Ibid, p. 17.
meetings were divorced from an institution of learning and the programs made accessible to the general public. 15

Despite the thrust to make the State Teachers Association more effective, and despite the fact that the organization's leaders viewed the body as worthwhile, the Association was actually an ineffective entity. Most of this ineffectiveness was attributable to the fact that the location of the Association on the campus of Virginia State College during this early period in its development caused it to be perceived as being dominated by college professors and other members of the higher education hierarchy. This resulted in the program planning being done, or viewed as being done, at the "Lofty Level" of the college campus. The planning that took place, it was believed, was based on considerable input from college faculties and administrators, while the program planning reflected minimal input of the grassroots leadership and membership in the cities, counties and towns of the Commonwealth. This situation resulted in a lack of enthusiasm and an apathetic reaction on the part of the general membership toward the mission of the association. 16

Further evidence of the ineffectiveness of the State Teachers Association lies in the fact that during the early formative years the state body had not developed a structure of local associations and affiliates to serve as conduits or channels for disseminating program information to the remote regions of the state and to serve as a proving ground for developing strong dynamic local leaders, some of

15 Ibid., p. 29.
16 Ibid., p. 25.
whom would eventually play prominent roles as state leaders. 17

When John M. Gandy became president of the Virginia State Teachers Association in 1903, he attempted to revitalize the association. A report made to the Delegates attending the annual meeting of that year reflects the dearth of substantive activity. The report states:

Much work was laid out for the next year, and all seemed to be anxious to make the association a power for good. A reorganization was effected this year by the creation of a new executive committee. 18

It was clear that despite repeated efforts by the officialdom, much of the activity in which the organization engaged was more verbal than action oriented. Evidence of the absence of challenging activity in the association's program can be seen in the following description of the major pursuit of that body:

The essential feature of the organization involved a system in which the secretary of the organization would purchase a number of books on teaching and distribute them to the members scattered over the state. . . . The members were expected to read a certain number of books within a three-year period and at the expiration of this time would receive a certificate from the organization. 19

17 J. Rupert Picott, Executive Director, Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, Interview by this writer, June 12, 13, 1979, Washington, D.C.

18 Op cit., Luther P. Jackson, p. 33.

For whatever consolation it may have been to the less than one hundred fifty members of the State Teachers Association, the reality of this situation as it existed in 1903 was that for all of the shortcomings from which this organization of Negro educators suffered, there were many parallels to be found in other state teachers associations all over the United States, the most notable of which were the State Associations of California and Illinois.

Jackson speaking of the shortcomings of teachers associations observed:

Lying still deeper than all other causes enumerated for the ineffectiveness of state teachers associations are several unfortunate factors. The first of these was the lack of specialized preparation of teachers during the whole of the 19th century. The second was short time appointments, while others were the rapid movement of large numbers of persons in and out of the profession, and the infrequent contacts of teachers with one another. If all of these factors were true of white teachers, even in the most advanced states of the union, they were all the more accentuated with Negro teachers in Virginia. 20

Though the Negro teachers in Virginia were a weak entity, they did at least come together to form their organization at about the same time as did White teachers in the Southern states. One point of similarity between Negro and White State Teachers Associations, especially in the South, was that both groups attracted only a small following.

Historically, the State Teachers Association up to 1905 exhibited

20 Op cit., Jackson, p. 36.
one outstanding characteristic, that being it was an organization which enjoyed the contributions of a number of committed leaders butressed by a handful of loyal followers. This would seem to be the norm for the embryonic organization which, as a result of perseverance and the leadership of individuals with vision and a penchant for placing the welfare of the group above their own personal ambitions, ultimately developed strength, attracted members and increased effectiveness.

By 1905 White Virginians and their fellow Southerners began to take on a different perspective relative to education in the South. Piccott says in regard to this:

> Selected Negro leaders were advised, quietly at first, by White friends to engage in a self-help school effort for the benefit of their own race. Thus, while one strong element of the white race, the political group, sought to keep the Negro down, another small group befriended him and suggested ways and means for improving school conditions. Among these staunch friends were Dr. S. C. Mitchell and the other men and women whose defense of the Negro foreshadowed the later activities of the Interracial Commission.21

One of the primary goals, relative to education in Virginia, was that of improving educational facilities. The Commonwealth of Virginia lagged far behind many of her sister-states in the following particulars:

1. Local School Revenue,
2. Enrollment of Pupils,
3. Per Capita Expenditures,
4. Agencies for the Training of Teachers,
5. Number and Efficiency of High Schools, and
6. Provision for Industrial Training.22

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21Picott, Virginia Teachers Association, p. 51.
22Ibid., p. 51.
The educational and social lag that plagued the State of Virginia was underscored by the revelations of inadequacy that were emphasized by the Virginia Teachers Association's campaign to improve educational facilities in the state in 1905. Toward the goal of educational improvement a so-called May conference was held. Many of the speakers at the various sessions pointed out that most of Virginia school houses were in a state of disrepair, the facilities were without heat, they had not been painted or white washed since being built, and their drab, austere appearance created a less than attractive environment for the teaching-learning process. During the first thirty years of public education in Virginia very little progress had been made. In reference to this "low-water mark" in the school system of the Old Dominion Picott wrote:

To bring Virginia out of this valley of despair, in 1904 these same leaders organized the Cooperative Education Association. This organization developed from the efforts of Harry St. George Tucker and Dr. Robert Frazier of the General Education Board in 1902 and 1903, before the more famous campaign of 1905. The Cooperative Education Association at once addressed itself to the task for which it was created. Within five years it raised $750,000 in addition to the state and local funds for physical equipment in the rural schools. For this notable achievement special credit was due such persons as J.H. Binford, Mrs. B.B. Mumford and Mrs. L.V. Dashiel, all officers of the Association.\(^{23}\)

The conditions that were typical of the 1905 educational scene were as relevant for white schools as they for Negro schools. The prevalent picture was the one-room log cabin devoid of chalkboards, charts and maps and furnished with a makeshift table for a teacher's desk and backless benches for the pupils. The school term was less than five months in length and Negro teachers were compensated at the

\(^{23}\)Ibid, p. 52.
rate of less than twenty-five dollars a month.  

It was clear that if white citizens were aware of the need to make the effort to improve the quality of education provided for white children, then Negro leaders needed to find the means for providing for the needs of Negro children. Luther P. Jackson in his study noted that this aforementioned consideration was especially important since it was evident that the hostile white pressure groups might make good their threat to cut appropriations for Negro schools to an amount equal to the amount of direct taxes paid by Negro citizens. He also pointed out that if the Virginia legislature did effect such a change a supplemental effort on the part of Negroes themselves would assure that they would still have schools of some description in which to educate their children.  

The Cooperative Education Association provided a vehicle for whites in Virginia which was to be instrumental in effecting their campaign to move their schools upward and out of the social and educational doldrums that prevailed in the Commonwealth in 1905. Virginia Negroes needed a comparable vehicle to do for them what the Cooperative Education Association was in the process of doing for whites. They found such a vehicle in the founding of the School Improvement League at the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute in 1907. In 1909 this league united with the State Teachers Association.

As a result of the establishment of the School Improvement League

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24 Ibid., p. p. 53.
25 Op cit., Jackson, p. 45
26 Ibid., p. 46.
at the state level, local school improvement leagues under local leadership began to mushroom all over the state. Various individuals both male and female, at the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, at Hampton Institute, and at St. Paul College in Lawrenceville became spokesmen for the directors of the movement that had as its goal better health, better homes, and better farms. It was, therefore, a logical next step for the program they espoused to include better schools reflecting the program of the School Improvement League at the state level.27

The primary objective of this new organization, then was not that of simply appealing to both teachers and other educational leaders but, more importantly, to appeal to parents and especially to the general public. Picott makes reference to the function of the School Improvement League as it was described by Professor James T. Phillips. Phillips said:

The objects of this organization (the School Improvement League) are to arouse all over the State, not only the teachers and pupils, but the parents as well, the public school officials from the highest to the lowest, and all people, professional and otherwise, White and Black, to assist in improving the present poor conditions of Negro schools, in helping to elevate Negro home life, to create and cultivate more healthy moral, religious, and economic ideals for Negro community life, to bring our Negro boys and girls to see the possibilities and beauty in farm life; in short to so correlate and unify the work of the schools, the churches, and the homes of any given community, that the people of such a community shall see it to be as it verily is, that the highest good of the church and the home rests upon the health and well being of the schools, and vice versa.28

Virginia Union University, an institution of higher education which began in 1899 as the Richmond Theological Institute came on the educational scene during the 1909 crisis and joined those institutions of

27 Ibid., p. 47.
learning that were to have a considerable impact on the direction of the State Teachers Association. One of the major contributions which this institution made to the Association as well as to Virginia education during the early years was the organization of the Annual Conference of Principals and Teachers in Secondary Colored Schools, a structure that was the forerunner of the State Teachers Association's Department of Secondary Principals and Department of Secondary Teachers which were established when the Association was restructured in the 1940's.29

The campaign to build a higher quality of life for Virginia Negroes was led by a number of educators. Foremost among these persons were John M. Gandy and James T. Phillips of the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, and Robert R. Moton, W.T.B. Williams, T.C. Walker and Allen Washington of Hampton Institute. Virginia was sorely in need of leaders of this calibre because it was during this period, the early 1900's, that the mood and attitudes of the Virginia legislators and other key individuals in the statewide power structure were characterized by an organized effort to discredit, disenfranchise and otherwise reduce the Negro to the level of second-class citizenship. This effort at reduction was reflected in a number of definitive actions taken by the state legislature, most prominent among which were the inauguration of the poll tax requirement for voting—a move calculated to eliminate the Negro voter, the discontinuance of the college department at the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute and the subsequent change of its name to the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, and the reduction of the state appropriation for Negro schools to the level of

the amount of direct taxes Negroes actually paid. 30

The reactionary period of the early 1900's in Virginia education was not altogether gloomy, however, because in contrast to the negative political climate that had been created relative to Negro education by the Virginia legislative body, there emerged a certain small group of Whites who befriended the Negro and sought ways and means to provide for his education. As a result of the impetus provided by the School Improvement League in pursuit of the goal of improving the quality of education, the State Teachers Association in 1912 began to take on a new character and one that was quite different from that which had evolved during the period 1887 to 1911. This was the year that the Teachers Association chose to dissolve the coalitions it had with other organizations such as the School Improvement League and the Negro Organization Society and "go it alone," as a separate and distinct entity. The 1912 convention of the Association, held at Lynchburg, was the first meeting of the organization as a separate body. 31

Immediately following 1920, a series of events worked in concert to reverse the negative political and social pressures that impacted the Negro community in Virginia. The changes that accompanied these events resulted in improved educational opportunities for Negroes. Added to the positive impact previously indicated were the development

30 Ibid., p. 42.

31 Ibid., p. 55.
of the "Self-Help" spirit as inspired by the leadership of the State Teachers Association, the School Improvement League, and the Negro Organization Society, the acquired ability of Negro leaders to work out problems of their own race on a scale comparable to that undertaken by white leaders within their own group. The World War of 1917-1918 revealed the tremendous illiteracy and physical weakness that plagued the citizenry of the nation, the recommended remedy for which was the promotion of public education on a scale previously unknown in American history. 32

As a result of the national effort to reduce the level of illiteracy, tremendous sums of money became available, much of which was generated by World War I to finance the assault that was to be launched against illiteracy and physical weakness in the nation. The years immediately following 1920 in Virginia and the South were marked by the construction of new schools for Negroes which were paid for the first time out of public funds. High schools emerged and the curricula of the colleges, both public and private, began a rapid expansion upward. While the strengthening of the colleges was in process the academic requirements for teaching were also strengthened and teachers at all levels found themselves under compulsion to expand their knowledge and upgrade their skills or suffer the loss of their jobs. 33

The attitudes relative to the education of Negroes in the Commonwealth improved somewhat, but these attitudes were not paralleled in Virginia by increased funding and the modification of policies

32 Ibid., p. 67.

33 Ibid., p. 67.
necessary to reinforce this new climate of liberality.

However, it was conceded that within limits the Negro might now advance along certain lines at a level comparable to the whites. Jackson writes:

All of these forces combined made possible a State Teachers Association which could not possibly have been created in the early days. Whereas previously the membership, not only among Negroes in Virginia but everywhere, was low, more favorable conditions following World War I led to a significant increase. Among these general conditions were the increased appreciation of the effectiveness of group action, and the encouragement of membership in state associations by school officials.34

The State Teachers Association witnessed the dawning of a new day after 1920 and it was especially fortunate to have in the ranks of the organization many of its thoroughly seasoned leaders. Joing these veterans were new personalities who were destined to become significant factors in the building of a larger and more powerful body. Much of the new leadership that was at this period coming into the association was doing so largely by way of the Department of Education of the several colleges mentioned earlier in this chapter. From the Department of Education at Virginia State College came Edna M. Colson, Rose Butler Browne, Wilhelmina E. Hamlin, Viola B. Harris and Doxey A. Wilkerson. From Virginia Union University came Miles W. Conner and Robert P. Daniel. From Hampton Institute came Eva C. Mitchell and William Mason Cooper, and from St. Paul, Genevieve C. Whitehead. Many other persons from these colleges became part of the State Teachers Association and lent their talent and expertise to whatever departments of the association their field of specialization enabled them to make the greatest contribution. Among the many such persons was Thomas H.

34Ibid., p. 68.
A variety of very able and academically well-prepared individuals came upon the scene during the 1920-1935 period in the history of the State Teachers Association. Luther P. Jackson says of them,

They were graduates of the best northern colleges and universities or of the best Negro colleges and all were very capable leaders who contributed to the building of the Association in the various sections of the State of Virginia in which they worked. The organization under the general command of its key officers outlined a plan of action in the field so that local leaders had every opportunity to perform an important service. Under these conditions there came into prominence as leaders such persons as Alma B. Layton, Anita P. Evans, A.M. Walker, W.E. Robinson, W.E. Knox, L.C. Baltimore, William McIver Green, Edward Howe, D.C. Rawley, S.L. Claytor, W.H. Willis, Constance Fuller, B.L. Allen, A.P. Young, Nannie Boyd, Mayme Coleman, L.A. Reid, Diana B. Brooks, Wiley Hall, S.C. Abrams, J.S. Jordan, Kate G. Colson, W.D. Elam, T.C. Erwin, and Mildred D. Peters.35

Two major goals dominated the thinking of the Association leadership between 1930 and 1935. They were: (1) participation in the affairs of government, and (2) the use of Negro life and history as material for subject matter in the schools. The significance of these issues received emphasis in articles and editorials published in the Virginia Education Bulletin, Official organ of the Association, and in many of the major addresses delivered at the annual meetings of the body. Closely allied with the Association in their pursuit of these two goals were two organizations, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.36

35 Ibid., p. 72.
36 Picott, op. cit. p. 96.
Of the two major issues previously cited as being prevalent in the thinking of the vanguard of the Association's leadership, Negro History tended to receive the greater emphasis. Picott addresses the matter in his study when he says:

Forces which operated in the thinking of American citizens with respect to the Negro were (1) his former enslavement to the white race, and (2) his supposed inherent inferiority as a result of his condition. Since the Negro was a slave up until 1863 in this country, the thought was implanted that slavery had always been his condition, that he had always been lower than other men; that he had made little contribution to civilization in any field of interest to mankind; that he (the Negro) had never written a poem, painted a picture, carved a statue, written a book of any kind, or produced a philosophy by which society might be guided.

This line of thought when transferred to the schools of the country meant that the Negro found no place in the subject matter of instruction. If the race appeared in history or geography in Virginia textbooks, it was always in an inferior role and one which the Virginia child might well despise. The heroes of history were mostly heroes of other races.

In short, when the question of the Negro's role was included in American history textbooks used in the schools of Virginia, they pictured the race as having had virtually no part in the discovery or exploration of America, little or no part in the wars of the country, as having produced few inventions, showed relatively no disposition to become free men, and usually suggested that they were satisfied with their condition. The system which developed permeated the outlook of both the Negro pupil and the Negro teacher. 37

Negro educators, especially those in positions of leadership in the Virginia State Teachers Association demanded that more attention be focused on the teaching of Negro history and the contributions of Negroes to American and world culture. In the Negro schools of Virginia it was the contention that while it was important that Negro youngsters be thoroughly knowledgeable relative to the achievement of

37 Ibid, p. 97.
all men it was equally as important that they be made aware of the contributions of such celebrated black personalities as Estevanico, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Crispus Attucks, Benjamin Banneker, Frederick Douglass, and Booker T. Washington. One of the resolutions resulting from the deliberations at the 1936 convention at Richmond recommended that Negro teachers and pupils familiarize themselves with such resources at the "Negro Yearbook," "Negro Makers of History," and "Negro in Literature and Art," and the "Negro History Bulletin," as well as with the achievements of such distinguished Negroes as Roland Hayes, Marian Anderson, J. Nathaniel Dett, William L. Walker, C.C. Spaulding and others. Obviously the Virginia State Teachers Association cannot expect all of the credit for the promotion of the Negro life and history idea, but they do deserve the plaudits of the state and the nation for the dissemination and the implementation of the concept.

The Golden Jubilee observance of the fiftieth birthday of the Virginia State Teachers Association came at the November 1937 Annual Convention which was convened at Hampton Institute. This session celebrated the fact that the organization enrolled as members 3700 of Virginia's 4000 Black teachers. The predominant action of the Golden Jubilee Convention had to do with what the Black educators of Virginia had decided to do for themselves. The one thousand Delegates present at that meeting pledged through the executive committee of the Association to transform their organization at once from a Reading Circle to an aggressive, fighting educator and child-representative organization. Following this momentous decision a sense of seriousness came over

the body and more than one teacher was heard to say, "we've put our hands to the plow and we cannot turn back." 39

The sustained growth and expanded influence of the State Teachers Association immediately following the observance of the organization's Golden Jubilee was significantly influenced by the introduction of a different pattern of organization and administration which was utilized in the operation of the Association. This component of the organization's continuing progress will be examined in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III
ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE VIRGINIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

The attitude of many white Virginians toward the education of Negroes, the erection of barriers limiting the access of Negroes to equal educational opportunities and the determination by the Negro community to develop leadership for their improvement in the political, educational, economic, and social spheres, were all forces that helped to generate an urgency for building a permanent professional organization. Negro educators were closer to the achievement of their goal of realizing such an organization when W.H. Ruffner was appointed by the Virginia Legislature as the State's first Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1870.

Ruffner made an effort to improve the quality of each phase of public education, including the aspect that he considered the most important, the training of teachers. In order to provide a vehicle for upgrading the professional preparation of teachers he established the summer institute for teachers. During the third teachers' institute which was held in 1883 at Petersburg the teachers began to express the need for a "closer union of teachers."

A continuing attempt to establish some kind of professional association was made again during the following year, 1884, when at the fourth summer institute for teachers held at Farmville, Virginia, a teachers reading circle was organized. Once again the organization did not survive beyond the duration of that year. In his history Luther P. Jackson explained the failure of the first two attempts to establish a teachers association.
on grounds that there were insufficient numbers of Negroes being prepared
to teach and among those teaching there was a lack of enthusiasm for
a teachers' organization. 

Jackson's point of view relative to the urgency for the establishment of a permanent professional association
of teachers and the apathy exhibited by Virginia teachers, both black
and white, toward such an organization is supported by what state super-
intendent of public instruction, John E. Massey, had to say in a terse
statement in his first annual report for the 1890-91 school year. Said
Massey:

Teachers associations have not met with success in the State. It is believed that a state association well or-
ganized and directed, with local associations as auxili-
aries, would be of incalculable benefit to teachers.

In 1888 James H. Johnston, a professor of religion at Virginia
State Normal and Collegiate Institute was elevated to the presidency.
The Petersburg campus of the college became the permanent home of the
Reading Circle between 1887 and 1905 and during that period of nearly
two decades, with its home on the Virginia college campus, the organi-
ization tended to be influenced by the college community.

During the eighteen-year period that this professional associa-
tion of Black educators was headquartered on the campus of the Virginia
Normal and Collegiate Institute, its annual meetings took place in con-
junction with the four to five weeks summer school sessions which the
college regularly held. The annual meeting of the Virginia Teachers


2J.L. Blair Buck, The Development of Public Schools in Virginia, 1607-1952, (Richmond, Virginia: Commonwealth of Virginia, State Board

Reading Circle in 1889 was a particularly significant session because it was at this time that they changed their name to the Virginia State Teachers Association, with the same immediate aims and purposes of the Reading Circle carried over five or ten years longer.  

Having enunciated these primary organizational goals, some of Virginia's leading Negro educators began their concerted effort to create a vehicle through which to promote their own professional growth. The activity was a close parallel to what was taking place on a nation-wide basis in the educational community.

From the period of the 1880's, under the James H. Johnston administration, to 1937 the time of its Golden Jubilee, the VTA had grown from barely 400 members to a total of 3700 members. This growth in numbers of members was 92.5% of Virginia's 4000 black teachers. In 1937 Hampton Institute was the site chosen to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the organization.

Lutrelle F. Palmer, who was executive secretary of the Association and editor of the Golden Jubilee Anniversary issue of the Virginia Teachers Bulletin for November, 1937, stated in his editorial in reference to the high membership statistics noted at the 1937 annual convention:

> With such loyalty comes the mandate that the association work unceasingly to batter down the open inequalities which block the way in our schools.... We accept this task as inescapable duty and know that, in doing so, we shall not only promote the cause of education in the Commonwealth of

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4 Jackson, History, Virginia State Teachers Association, p. 16.
5 Picott, History Virginia Teachers Association, p. 105.
Virginia, but shall advance the cause of Christianity and civilization within a great nation.\textsuperscript{6}

Palmer's words signaled the beginning of a new era in the administration of the affairs of the Virginia State Teachers Association. He used the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Anniversary to crystallize the determination of Virginia's black educators to use their collective strength to dismantle the social and political structures in the state responsible for the erection of the barriers which limited the access of Negroes to equal educational opportunities, and to accelerate the process of developing the leaders who were needed to assist Negroes in overcoming the social and economic inequities which they encountered.

J.B. Blair Buck in his study of the development of public education in Virginia says of these societal maladies that concerned Negro educators:

\begin{quote}
In the early days of its history, the organization undoubtedly had a precarious existence for it was formed at a time when there were relatively few educated Negroes in Virginia to give the leadership needed and when few Negro teachers could afford to pay membership dues or to pay for travel from their pitifully small salaries. Through the years, however, the Association has grown in vigor and effectiveness.\textsuperscript{7}
\end{quote}

The vigor and effectiveness of the Association to which Buck refers are reflected in his observation that within the decade 1940-1950 membership in the Virginia State Teachers Association had grown to 5,964 and the organization began to play an increasingly active part in the promotion of the professional improvement of teachers. He also points out that in the movement to require the local school boards in

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{6}Ibid.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
the state to eliminate discrimination on the basis of race in the salary scales for teachers, which were activated in 1938, the Association played a very conspicuous but tactful role.\textsuperscript{8} Buck goes on to say:

Action taken in Maryland to equalize the salaries of white and Negro teachers gave great impetus to the campaign in Virginia which was initiated and conducted by Negro teachers with the help of legal counsel from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. By the end of the year 1941, about 53 of the 190 school divisions in the state were reported to have made some plans for equalizing salaries, which may be considered an amazing accomplishment in view of the deep-seated traditions and long continued practices opposed to the principle.\textsuperscript{9}

It was the leadership of Dr. Lutrelle F. Palmer in concert with the leadership of the Virginia State Teachers Association in the movement to equalize the salary schedules for Negro and white teachers in the Commonwealth that brought Palmer and the organization into prominence during the decade of the 1940's, not only in Virginia but throughout the South. Details relative to Palmer's leadership role in the salary equalization movement will be examined in Chapter IV.

As a result of the educational, economic, social and political climate that obtained in Virginia and in the South in 1940, the leadership of black teachers in Virginia recommended that a full-time officer was needed both to administer and to direct the affairs of the State Teachers Association. The rationale for the recommendation was that the black teachers felt the pattern of repression, discrimination, and segregation in Virginia in 1940 was no longer tolerable in view of the changing legal and social developments of the previous decade.

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., p. 376.

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., p. 376.
It should be noted also that during the 1940's blacks in Virginia could not vote therefore, without full political participation, black people were not eligible for the public offices through which school systems were administered. "Negroes had to court the favor of influential whites by advocating the kind of education whites wanted Negroes to have or by Negroes 'bootlegging' the kind of education they felt their children must have." 10

The new administrative position within the VTA was designated as Field Secretary, and the delegates at the 1943 assembly viewed this action as being the most important to be taken at that annual meeting. As a consequence the convention delegates were determined to select the best qualified person for this position. A nine-member committee under the chairmanship of Samuel F. Scott, principal of the Addison High School, was appointed. Other members of the committee were, Mrs. Mayme Coleman, Supervisor, Bowling Green; Mrs. Maude Winston, teacher, Franklin; John L. Nixon, elementary school principal, Richmond; W.H. Pitts, high school principal, Alexandria; C.W. Seay, high school principal, Lynchburg; and president of the state teachers association; William M. Cooper, college administrator and director of the summer school, Hampton Institute; and L.F. Palmer, not only a high school principal, Newport News, but also the Secretary of the State Teachers Association. 11

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The committee was organized on December 11, 1943 and held its second meeting on March 4, 1944. The major item on the agenda was the naming of a person to fill the new position of Field Secretary. J. Rupert Picott was selected to fill the new position and the selection committee expressed confidence that, "he will bring to this new office integrity, tact, determination, and efficiency."\(^{12}\) The qualifications and leadership acumen of Picott will be examined in Chapter IV.

The movement toward greater effectiveness of the Virginia State Teachers Association paralleled the appointment of J. Rupert Picott as Field Secretary of the organization. As a result of Picott's leadership there emerged a two-man executive team composed of J. Rupert Picott and Lutrelle F. Palmer who was Executive Secretary of the Association and the principal of the Huntington High School in Newport News. In his capacity as chief executive of the teachers association, Dr. Palmer wielded wide influence not only in Virginia but in the Nation as well, with the result that the latter segment of the history of the association represents the embodiment of its two very aggressive executives, Lutrelle Fleming Palmer and J. Rupert Picott.\(^{13}\)

At the beginning of the decade of 1940, both the organization and administration of the Virginia State Teachers Association took on an entirely different character. In the four decades prior to 1940 the major, and sometimes the only, activity of the organization was the annual meeting. Considerable activity centered around the leaders

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 124.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 126.
both before and after the annual meeting. The deliberations engaged in by the convention participants involved for the most part persons at the college and university level as well as those functioning at the upper echelons of the public school systems. These people tended to talk to each other rather than with the general membership and the leadership at the grassroots level. This situation, tended to promote a lukewarm interest in the organization's program on the part of the rank and file teacher membership. This point of view is supported by Thelma D. Perry's study in which she notes:

> It was necessary for Arthur D. Wright, State School Inspector for Virginia, to remind the teachers of the state that too many had been absent from the Danville meeting of the previous year, that most of those who had attended were the "usual leaders," and that it was for the teachers to decide whether your organization is to be an entity "for usefulness in name only or in fact."\textsuperscript{14}

The two primary executive officers, Palmer and Picott, were determined that the Association would be an organization of usefulness in fact and not in name only. They were aware of the formal organization principle that, "An organization has needs of a practical nature that must be fulfilled if it is to survive. These needs are of a higher order than simply its ability to attract the people and the economic support with which to maintain itself and generate output of services or products."\textsuperscript{15} Of primary importance to Palmer and Picott was the need for organizational effectiveness, so the new executives assumed the responsibility for achieving that effectiveness by charting a new and


different course for the organization and administration of the Association. The new administrative policy was reflected in the formulation of a full-time program for the months of April, May, and June of 1944.

This program had four components. The first of these was the continued promotion and the maintenance of the high quality of professional interest which had for some time characterized the teachers association. Toward that end the May 1944 issue of the Virginia Teachers Bulletin, official organ of the Association, contained among its many articles the following: "Elementary Education Appropriate for the Times," by Roma Gans, Columbia University professor; "Federal Aid to Education Imperative," by R.B. Marston, Director, NEA Legislative and Federal Relations Division; and "Chicago Schools Include Negro Achievements - A Suggestion for Your School," by Madelyn Morgan. 16

A second element of the program projected by Picott was his visitation with all of the local teachers associations in the state to discuss their needs and their problems and to enlist their support for the new action program, a program that was now going to feature input from the rank and file of the local community of educators as well as the contributions from the leadership throughout Virginia. 17

The third aspect of the program formulated by Picott was concerned with, (1) promoting the welfare of teachers, (2) continuing and reinforcing the effort to equalize teachers salaries; and (3) effecting the equality of teaching assignments, work loads and other benefits.

17 Ibid., p. 125.
Finally, the new Field Secretary's action program provided that he serve as the spokesman for all of the black teachers of the state and that he initiate this role by arranging conferences not only with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dabney S. Lancaster, but also with the Governor of Virginia, Colgate W. Darden, and the General Assembly.

From 1896 to 1924 the headquarters for the Virginia Teachers Association was located on the campus of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute, and it was during this period that the organization and the structure of the Association became more definitive. The organizational chart (Table 1) reflects that trend.

The leadership by L.F. Palmer also brought a new identity to the VTA. Now the Negro teachers of Virginia began to view their state organization with a feeling of pride and admiration and they joined hands in a commitment to make the organization what it subsequently became, a dynamic entity. J.L. Blair Buck in his historical study of public schools in Virginia documents this assertion when he says of the association, "In the early days of its history, the organization [VTA] undoubtedly had a precarious existence, but through the years, however, the association has grown vigorous and effective."\(^{18}\)

In November 1944, during the annual convention of the State Teachers Association, L.F. Palmer, executive secretary was succeeded by Picott, who had served the association in that capacity for twenty-five years and had been principally responsible for enhancing the reputation of the VTA during that period.\(^{19}\) The elevation of Picott to executive sec-


\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 126.
TABLE 1

The VTA

6,000 MEMBERS

FUNCTION THROUGH

10 DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONS

AND

OVER 100 LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

PRESIDENT

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

10 DISTRICT
PRESIDENTS

EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE

FIELD
SECRETARY

EXECUTIVE
SECRETARY

TREASURER

STAFF

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VTA organization chart taken from papers in official files of J. Rupert Picott, former Executive Secretary of the organization, housed in the headquarters of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and history.
retary placed him in a strategic position for implementing the new organizational structure as depicted in Table 1.

The nearly 6,000 members operating through ten district teachers associations and approximately over 100 local associations choose from 1500 to 2500 delegates each year to constitute the representative assembly. Each year at the convention the delegates passed upon resolutions, recommendations, reports, by-laws, and amendments. It was the policy determining body. The Board of Directors with certain specified officers was the deliberative body and the action agency of the assembly.

The Executive Committee consisting of between twelve and fifteen persons served as the interim board of directors between conferences. The Board of Directors also served as the custodian of the permanent funds of the organization. The Executive Secretary served the needs of the Association and the Executive Committee and directed the headquarters staff.\textsuperscript{21}

The ten districts into which the Virginia Teachers Association was organized provided for the state body a regional dimension which reflected the differences in educational needs in the Eastern, Western, Northern and Southern sections of Virginia. These several districts sponsored regional conferences annually and the officials of the state and district associations were always invited to serve as conference participants or as observers. Examples of a few district conference themes from 1964 are representative of the kinds of concerns that were of primary importance in these districts. These themes were: District 2 "VTA Leadership and the Problems of New Teachers;" District 5 "Drive-In Conference on Teacher Evaluation;" and District 9 "Conference on

\textsuperscript{21}J. Rupert Picott, former Executive Secretary, VTA, 1945-1965, interviewed 10-11 July 1979 at offices of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History.
Elementary and High School Dropouts".  

The major functions of the district and local associations were:

(1) to consider and recommend to the representative assembly proposals for the improvement of the public schools of Virginia and for the advancement of the teaching profession;

(2) to aid in the administration of the program and policies of the Association within the district; to maintain contacts with the membership and to provide convenient means of publicity and the distribution of professional literature; and

(3) to furnish the means, at the local level, whereby the individual member may participate in the initiation and development of policy for the Association.

Also the members of the districts, as a body, had the power to determine such forms of organization, methods of internal government, and procedures as may be suited to their respective areas and the needs of their membership.

The Representative Assembly was the statewide representative body of the Association and had as its primary functions and powers, serving as the legislative and policy-forming body on behalf of the membership in carrying out the purposes of the Association; considering and acting upon proposals affecting the welfare of the schools of Virginia submitted by the Board of Directors or officers, committees or commissions of the Association; and recommending and approving a major project of the Association which might involve substantial indebtedness.  

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23 Ibid., Constitution of Virginia Teachers Association, Article VIII, Section I.
The Board of Directors of the VTA was composed of (1) the officers of the Association, (2) the president of each of the VTA districts, ten members elected at large and (3) the state directors of the National Education Association and of the American Teachers Association. Foremost among the powers and duties of the board was the authority to exercise all of the corporate powers of the Association and to supervise and control its business and affairs. Other duties of the Board dealt with the appointment and removal of staff officers. The Board was given the right (1) to determine their qualifications, (2) to establish their compensation, (3) to prescribe their duties, and (4) to require such agreements and bonds as necessary to insure faithful performances. Finally the Board held the right to approve the financial budget, to supervise receipts and expenditures and to establish proper procedures for the safekeeping and accounting of all funds of the Association.24

The structure of the Virginia Teachers Association was strengthened further by the inclusion of thirty-five departments such as the Department of Elementary School Teachers, Department of High School Teachers, Department of Elementary School Principals, Department of Secondary School Principals, Department of Teachers of Art, Department of School Secretaries, and the Division of College Teachers.25

Finally, the elective officers of the Association were President, President-elect, ten Vice Presidents (the Presidents of the ten districts), Executive Secretary, Secretary of Civic Education, Secretary of Educational Research, and Auditor.26

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24 Ibid., Article IV, Sections 1 and 6.
25 Ibid., Article XVI, Section 1.
26 Ibid., Article VI, Section 1.
The VTA, however, was more than its officers, boards and committees. It was far more than its departments, special committees and commissions, and its Executive Secretary and headquarters staff, and more than its district and local affiliates. It was more, even, than its nearly 6000 members and their annual representative assembly. What it was, in fact, was a large closely-knit network of friendships and professional relationships resulting in a united community of educators who were dedicated to the mission of coordinating efforts to secure wide support for the highest quality of instruction in every classroom, better health services in the schools, more books in school libraries, larger appropriations for school buildings, and other such goals, for the black children. 27

The Virginia Teachers Association by 1945 was now a large-scale complex organization covering the entire state of Virginia through its several district units and local affiliates, yet it was a unified and integrated entity which continued to grow. Its members trusted it and they had developed the administrative machinery and procedures for controlling its policies and managing its activities. 28

The policies of the VTA originated with the membership and were formalized by a vote of the representative assembly. The Resolutions Committee, for example, usually a sizeable group and representative of the various interests of the total organization, formulated tentative statements and presented them at open meetings of the Committee. Criticisms and suggestions relative to the proposed resolutions were numerous and the discussions always spirited as the committees and

28 Ibid., Picott Interview.
the members at large pondered the recommendations which were to be hammered into policies and procedures to direct the work of the Association. The revised versions were then presented for action by the Assembly. Resolutions adopted more than two years in succession were usually, although not always, incorporated into a continuing platform which was supplemented by annual resolutions. The platform and the current resolutions constituted the policy statement of the VTA. 29

Special commissions and committees, the officials and staff, the departments and the affiliated associations, both initiated and attempted to implement the policies so developed. The interpretation and application of these policies were observed by a very careful and vigilant Assembly which was anxious to see that its agents and designated leaders had correctly interpreted its intentions. If uncertainty developed as to the intent of the representative assembly, a committee, commission or officer could call upon the executive committee for an interpretation of the VTA policy. In emergencies the Executive Secretary was authorized to make tentative interpretations. 30

The leadership skills of the Palmer-Picott team contributed identity, stability and integrity to the stabilization of the Virginia Teachers Association. Crystallization of its organizational structure and administrative procedures was accomplished and thereby set the stage for the thrusts which the body would now make manifest.

"From 1924 through 1943, the office of the Virginia Teachers Association was in a room in the Huntington High School, Newport News,

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29 Ibid., Picott Interview.
30 Ibid., Picott Interview.
where L.F. Palmer was the Principal. In 1945 in keeping with the organization stretching its wings and taking on a new posture of independence commensurate with the revamping of the organizational structure, the body under its new Executive Secretary made the decision to move the headquarters offices to Richmond. They rented two rooms at 201 East Clay Street. And so it was that members of the teachers association which had not had a home of its own since its founding in 1887, began to talk about acquiring permanent facilities. This initial move to acquire a permanent home for the association came about as a result of an address made by L.H. Foster, president of Virginia State College, at the annual convention dinner meeting of the life members of the Association on November 22, 1945. Foster told his listeners:

The standing of this Association, and the effectiveness and success of its program depend more than we seem to realize upon our having suitable headquarters, conveniently located and appropriately equipped. With appreciation for its every achievement and a feeling of deep gratitude to the agencies which have provided headquarters for it, every member of the Association should feel a deep sense of embarrassment over the fact that the Association has no permanent home or quarters, appropriately located. Our Association is simply limping along at a time when its responsibilities, in every area of human endeavors, are heavier and more exacting than ever before in its history.

Foster's speech was a significant event both in terms of timing and the impact it had on those present at the dinner meeting. So impressed were they with the plans suggested by Foster that the Delegate Assembly in general session the next day, November 23, 1945, appointed a Headquarters Building Committee and charged them with the responsibility of implementing the plan of action projected by Foster.

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32 Ibid., p. 144.
The pride and expectation experienced by the VTA membership at the prospect of establishing a centrally located headquarters coupled with the aggressive leadership provided by their new Executive Secretary, Picott, helped to inspire the initiation of the new thrusts of the organization. Of primary importance among the new thrusts were:

1. The abandonment by the Association of its traditional reading circle role and its transformation to a pressure group for equalization of Negro and White teachers salaries, improved schools and equipment, and adequate support of education.33

2. The Association broke new ground by demanding the enjoyment by Negro citizens of certain rights and privileges guaranteed to all American citizens by the Constitution—rights and privileges which had previously been denied Negro citizens.34

By taking a firm position on the aforementioned issues the Association helped to change the Southern tradition of inequality in the education of the races, and it opened doors for the participation of teachers in the affairs of government. Through the creation of a Department of Civic Education as a permanent part of the organization's structure, teachers throughout the state were made conscious that they should qualify to vote, and seventy-five percent of them actually voted in the presidential election of 1944.35 As a result of making personal appearances in the Virginia General Assembly through its Executive Secretary and by making group appearances in hearings before State educational commissions, the Association became involved in the development of State educational policies.

33 Ibid., p. 137.
34 Ibid., p. 138.
Of the various new thrusts of the organization taking shape in 1945 priority was given to equalization of teachers' salaries, the improvement of all teachers' salaries, the legal defense of teachers displaced because of questionable school board action, and the protection of teachers as professionals. The 1947 VTA program was entitled "United Action", and its format reflected the priority thrusts of political action and unification of black teachers. From this time forward this would characterize the work of the Association (see Appendix for the program format).

Within this atmosphere of pride, unity and a heightened sense of professionalism generated by the Association the two leaders, Lutrelle F. Palmer and J. Rupert Picott gave to the black community in Virginia a strengthened organization, a VTA, that would become involved with educational policies in the Commonwealth.

36 Ibid., p. 145.
CHAPTER IV
THE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS OF PALMER AND PICOTT
TO THE GROWTH OF THE VIRGINIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Much has been written about complex organizations, whether the organization be a local school district, a labor union, an athletic team, or our Nation. In this context there always seems to be a constant assumption that new leadership will turn the organization around.\(^1\) It was also true that the desire of the constituency of the Virginia Teachers Association was to have new leadership as they headed into a new era of progress and influence in the Commonwealth.

Hall notes, "Elections in labor unions and other voluntary organizations always contain the assumption that continuation of the old or the election of the new leaders will make an important difference in the continuing operation of the organization."\(^2\) In short, leadership would seem to be a crucial element having to do with organizations. It has been said that organizations are the lengthened shadow of a single man, and if this be true, then the story of the Virginia Teachers Association during the period 1940-1960 is very closely related to its executive leaders, Lutrelle Fleming Palmer and J. Rupert Picott.


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 237.
From the black community of Newport News, Dr. L.F. Palmer was appointed by the city school authorities to organize and head the high school for Negroes. The Negro citizens had, as early as 1912, petitioned the School Board of Newport News to provide high school facilities for their children. Campfield in her study refers to the outcome of their effort when she notes:

Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, then a Mr. Jenkins, the petitions were not granted. Offering as a basis for not allowing the petition, the superintendent pointed out that the proximity of Hampton Institute -- then Hampton Normal and Agricultural School -- provided an adequate place for the Negro boys and girls to complete their education under far more favorable conditions than could be provided by the city. Subsequent petitions for a Negro high school which were presented from time to time met a similar fate.

However, these setbacks in their efforts to secure a high school for their children served merely to reinforce the interest displayed by the Negro community in secondary education for their children. The reward for their perseverance finally came in 1919 when the city board agreed to set aside a room in the John Marshall Elementary School for a class to be instructed in high school subjects. This one-room school within a school was named, "Dunbar High School."  

Their success in getting the one-room high school prompted the Negro community to make yet another appeal to the Newport News School Board for a separate building for the high school. The Joseph D. Parker School, a four-room frame building valued at $5000 was closed in

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4 Ibid., p. 38.
1917 because of poor attendance and in 1920 the Negroes requested that this building be designated as their high school. They also requested that a faculty of three teachers, including a man who was to be principal, be appointed. Their request was granted and two women teachers and a man, the latter to serve as principal, were elected. The full-time principal was Lutrelle Fleming Palmer. The name of the school remained Dunbar High School and the enrollment on the first day of the 1920-21 school session was ninety-two students. By the first week in October the enrollment was in excess of one hundred pupils, necessitating the employment of an additional teacher. Prior to the end of the school year, the enrollment had risen to one hundred thirty four students, with girls outnumbering boys better than two to one.

Palmer's administration of Dunbar High School was of such calibre during the 1920-21 school year that his leadership style could have been viewed as paralleling Hall's conception of effective leadership. Hall perceived this type of leadership as being composed of several elements, (1) what a person does beyond the basic requirements of his position, (2) his ability to persuade people, (3) his ability to generate innovative ideas, and (4) his skill in decision making. Palmer's administration exhibited all of these elements.

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In 1921 the Newport News Board of Education appointed Dr. Joseph Saunders as the superintendent of schools for Newport News. Among the first official acts of Saunders was to persuade the board to construct two new buildings, one of which was to be used for the Negro high school. The Dunbar High School students moved into the new building in January, 1924. The name of the school was changed and named to honor Collis P. Huntington, the founder of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company and major stockholder in the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. Dr. Saunders appointed L.F. Palmer to be the first principal of Huntington High School.

Huntington High School moved again in 1936 when a new plant was constructed in the northeast section of the city. The new facility was built to accommodate approximately six hundred students and was equipped with twenty classrooms, office space for the principal, a cafeteria with a capacity of one hundred, and a library with a seating capacity for one hundred fifty.\(^8\)

Palmer wrote his master's thesis entitled "Community Centered High School in Newport News, Virginia." The findings were based on Palmer's experience at Huntington High School. He noted the growth of the Huntington High School student body from forty-four students and one teacher in 1919-20 to 632 students and nineteen teachers in 1936, and he proposed to organize and to administer the school in such a fashion as to make it "the focal point, not only of the educational activities of the entire Negro community, but also as the center of

It was at this juncture in Palmer's career as a high school administrator that he became committed to working for improvement of Negro education in the Commonwealth. Subsequently Palmer was tapped by the membership of the Virginia Teachers Association to become their executive secretary. "In this capacity as executive secretary, Dr. Palmer not only wielded wide influence in Virginia and the nation, but also used his administrative skills successfully through his leadership in both Huntington High School and the State Teachers Association."  

Picott underscored the effectiveness of Palmer's leadership when he wrote:

Palmer had a capacity for understanding, for going to the heart of a problem and taking action that was the envy of his peers. His exhortations infused his high school students and staff with a sense of equality virtually unknown in the South at the time.

His genius lay in the fact that there was never any doubt where he stood. Whether it was supporting his student who sat in the seat up front in a street car in 1930 between Hampton and Newport News, despite segregation laws, or declaring that teachers of equal training and performance should be paid equal salaries, Lutrelle Fleming Palmer was on the side that was morally right and not necessarily expedient.

Palmer's eloquence helped to persuade others on issues that came before the State Teachers Association. In fact, some of his

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11 Ibid., pp. 111-112.
most outstanding achievements occurred while he served as executive secretary of The Virginia Teachers Association. He became part of the organization during the period when the Association was beginning to take on a more definitive organizational shape, 1920-1936. Luther P. Jackson writes the following account of Palmer's induction into the key leadership role of the Teachers Association:

Lutrelle Fleming Palmer, a product of Wilberforce University and the University of Michigan, arrived in the State in 1919 and in the Association in 1922. Mr. Palmer was given the heavy assignment of the editorship of the Bulletin (official organ of the Association). The load was destined to increase. In working up to the position of Executive Secretary in 1926 this industrious and able leader then became the "pack horse" of the Virginia Teachers Association.

The office of the Executive Secretary was the "beehive" of the Association. From this office varied functions operated efficiently. That Palmer operated all of these varied functions extremely well hosts of Virginians would attest to in the affirmative. Palmer may well be remembered in educational history as one of the creators of the Virginia Teachers Association. 12

Due to the efforts made by Palmer, the Association increased its membership from less than 500 during the period 1924-1925 to nearly 5,000 during the period 1944-1945. Membership of the VTA when Palmer left office in 1943, included more than 95 percent of the Negro teachers in Virginia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>MEMBERSHIP</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924-1925</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-1930</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-1935</td>
<td>2680</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939-1940</td>
<td>3900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944-1945</td>
<td>4380</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Much of the success that Palmer experienced in the recruitment of new members for the VTA was attributable to his skill in establishing lines of communication with the school division superintendents throughout Virginia. He kept these lines of communication open with a steady stream of letters and memoranda to both city and county school officials apprising them of the type of programming which the Virginia Teachers Association had either designed or was in the process of designing. The intent of such communication was to upgrade the instructional skills and to promote the professionalization of the Negro teachers in their school divisions. A typical example of this type of written communication is found in Appendix I.

This type of communication proved to be effective not only for increasing the membership rolls of the Association but also for changing the attitudes of school superintendents, many of whom did not look favorably on the efforts of VTA officials at the State and local levels to enroll Negro teachers. Many superintendents were also strongly opposed to the notion of closing Negro schools so that teachers could attend professional conferences.

By corresponding with school superintendents and sending them memoranda and literature from the Virginia Teachers Association, Palmer kept them apprised of the activities of the Association. The communications also helped superintendents to become aware of contributions their own Negro supervisors, principals and teachers were making to promote Negro education at the local, state and national levels. Palmer, in fact, was effecting an alliance between division superintendents and VTA officials in an effort to professionalize Negro teachers. This was a role which the division superintendents of white schools would find
it awkward to repudiate.

Palmer's primary goals for the black community were: assuring that black teachers were professionally prepared; that curriculum offerings in the black schools were of the highest quality; that school plants for black children had the finest facilities and equipment; and that black schools had well-trained administrators. However, Palmer contended that none of these goals were fully achievable for the black community unless and until the equalization of salaries for black and white teachers was effected. So committed was he to that premise that "following The Golden Jubilee Convention in November, 1937 he began writing in The Virginia Teachers Bulletin about the projection of equalization of teacher's salaries."\textsuperscript{14}

In an editorial in the \textit{Bulletin} for January, 1938, which was the climax of many editorials and speeches, Palmer declared:

The Golden Jubilee Convention of the State Teachers Association has now become a glorious memory. It would be tragic if we terminated our celebration without due regard for our enlarged responsibilities as a powerful pressure group. Culture patterns today are in a state of flux. New ideals, changed ways of thinking, and social, economic, and political innovations are characteristic of the age.

The VTA Executive Committee, during the three day session, proposed a momentous resolution which was adopted by more than one thousand delegates without a dissenting vote. The resolution proposes: (1) joint action with the NAACP to raise $5,000 for court action toward the equalization of salaries (2) appropriation of $1,000 of the Association's funds to begin this action at once, (3) that each local association be urged to raise funds and send them to the joint committee of the N.A.A.C.P. and the State Teachers Association, and (4) that each teacher be asked to contribute at least one dollar immediately to the cause.\textsuperscript{15}


There were three major legal cases involving the equalization of Negro teachers salaries in Virginia. They were in Surry, Newport News, and Norfolk. The Newport News case was the one with which Palmer was most closely associated and was the culmination of a movement which had been initiated through his leadership.

Campfield indicates in her study that the chief features of the Newport News case were as follows:

1. The Newport News Negro teachers sued for equalization of salaries.
2. A Federal Court decided in their favor.
3. The school board refused to abide by the court's decision.
4. The teachers cited the Board for contempt of court.
5. The court held the Board in contempt and ordered immediate equalization. 16

Campfield says further that the Newport News Negro Teachers Association through a committee appointed for that purpose petitioned the Newport News School Board on November 12, 1940 requesting equalization "in accordance with the Supreme Court decision in the case of Alston vs. Mason et al." The board asked for the advice of the superintendent of schools, Joseph H. Saunders who in turn sought the opinion of the city attorney who advised the board to abide by the court's decision and equalize salaries. 17

Superintendent Saunders went even further, he sought advice from

17Ibid., p. 72.
the State Attorney General who supported the opinion of the city
attorney. The Virginia Teachers Bulletin referring to the Newport
News case editorially said:

Immediately after the United States Supreme Court rendered
its decision in the Alston Case, the teachers in Newport News
filed a petition with the School Board asking for equalization
of salaries and offering to cooperate with the Board to bring
about equality of pay without upsetting the financial structure
of the city. The Newport News School Board had been traditionally
so liberal toward the Negro schools that it was with much sur­
prise and disappointment that the teachers encountered, first
delay in receiving an answer to their petition, and finally
determined opposition to a straight-forward plan to bring the
pay of Negro teachers on a par with the salaries of white
teachers.18

Over a period of a year the Black teachers of Newport News attempted
to negotiate with the school board but failed to get replies to their
petitions. Finally the board ruled that all teachers, both white and
black were required to take the National Teachers Examination for the
purpose of determining where each teacher was to be placed on a new
salary scale which had been adopted and put into effect at the begin­
ning of the 1941-42 school session. Still intensely interested in
the welfare of Virginia’s Negro teachers generally and the teachers of
Newport News specifically, Palmer set about the task of organizing
study groups to prepare the teachers to take the examination and to
pass it. The examinations were administered but the results were
never disclosed.19

18 L.F. Palmer, Editorial, Virginia Teachers Bulletin, January,
1941, Vol. XVIII, No. 1.

19 J. Rupert Picott, Interview at Headquarters of Association for
The new salary scale was publicized by the school board as being the first step toward the equalization of the salaries of black and white teachers. The scale contained a "sliding minimum" and a "sliding maximum" for newly appointed teachers, but teachers already in the system were not affected by the new scale. Palmer noted in an editorial that one of the features of the controversial new salary scale to which the Negro teachers strongly objected was the variable minimum and the variable maximum which made it possible for the board to employ teachers with the same degree and the same number of years teaching experience at a salary differential of as much as $200. The teachers viewed such a salary scale as a deliberate attempt by the Newport News School Board to circumvent the decision of the Supreme Court. The Board denied this contention, claiming that the Negro teachers were misinterpreting their motives. Nevertheless, negative feelings were aroused on both sides and the relations between the teachers and the school officials were considerably strained.  

A second petition was filed with the School Board by the Newport News Teachers Association and Dorothy Roles on January 14, 1942 and after an extended period of negotiations without results, the teachers finally filed suit in Federal District Court on February 18, 1942. 21 The


21 Reprint of Minutes of the Newport News Teachers Association, January 14, 1943.
NAACP counsel for Dorothy E. Roles and the Newport News Teachers Association "requested that the court determine the rights involved and award a permanent injunction against further discrimination in the payment of salaries to Negro teachers by the Newport News School Board."

The principals filing the suit charged that Negro teachers and principals had, over a period of years, been paid lower salaries than white teachers and principals with comparable training and experience, holding the same certificates, and performing similar duties.\(^{22}\)

Judge Luther B. Way of the United States District Court heard the case for the Eastern District of Virginia and rendered a decision on January 22, 1943. Judge Way stated in that decision:

> The evidence establishes without any substantial conflict, the charges of discrimination were, in fact based on race and color; there is a lack of any other evidence tending to show that it was based on any other grounds. The Court, therefore, concludes that the plaintiff and those similarly situated are entitled to the relief as stated in the complaint.\(^{23}\)

The result of the movement to equalize salaries of black and white teachers in the City of Newport News had a dual outcome, one of which was positive, and the other negative. The positive outcome resulting from a series of court hearings, was that the Negro teachers of Newport News won a legal as well as a professional victory. In so doing, however, the Negro educators were alienated from the city school officials causing these officials to be resentful and vindictive and creating an atmosphere of tension. This led to the decision of the school board to dismiss Dr. Palmer. Another result was that a number of contracts for

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\(^{23}\) Roles vs. Newport News School Board, Civil Action No. 18 in U.S. District of Virginia, Newport News Division, January 22, 1943, Judge Luther B. Way.
veteran teachers and principals, among them, J. Rupert Picott and this writer, were not renewed.

The Newport News Times Herald editorialized relative to the crisis in a piece entitled "A Clarification Is Due" which is quoted, in part, here:

It has been nearly a week now since the Board of School Trustees, through declining to renew their contracts, in effect, dismissed from the school system several veteran Negro school principals and teachers. Oldest in point of service is Principal L.F. Palmer of Huntington High School with 23 years in the school system. The only information so far given the public by the Board is that these teachers were not given new contracts for "The Benefit of the School System." The sole light so far shed on the brief generality is the statement of Dr. Palmer that he was threatened with dismissal from the system several months ago unless he discontinued his activity on behalf of parity pay for teachers in the Newport News System. In the absence of any statement from the Board, that stands as the sole visible reason for failure to re-employ a veteran school official whose service has covered nearly a quarter century.24

In this chapter emphasis has been placed on the details of the Newport News teachers salary equalization controversy because this crisis, perhaps more than any other event, underscored the courage and leadership of L.F. Palmer. The high calibre of Palmer's leadership and his uncompromising commitment to professional excellence brought stature, as well as state and national recognition to the Virginia Teachers Association.

J. Rupert Picott, one of Palmer's contemporaries, said of his colleague and mentor, "Dr. Palmer was a person who possessed a high degree of integrity. Coming out of Mississippi and Ohio as he did, he

worked for equalization of civil rights. He had little tolerance for incompetence, or for persons who would not stand up for what was right."\textsuperscript{25}

Among the many acknowledgements of Palmer's leadership was the one in evidence when, in 1942, Virginia Union University awarded Palmer the honorary degree of Doctor of Pedagogy.\textsuperscript{26} The general sentiment throughout the South that prevailed at the time of his death was expressed in editorials in a number of newspapers. Portions of three such editorials are quoted here.

The Journal and Guide wrote under the heading, \textit{Virginia Loses One of Its Educational Leaders}:

A Virginia educator who distinguished himself in many ways passed this week before his time. Only sixty-two years old, Dr. Lutrelle Fleming Palmer was properly esteemed as one of the pioneers in the efforts of Virginia teachers to improve their status...especially to erase the racial differentials in salary between teachers of the two chief groups in the state.

...He lost his principalship at the Newport News Huntington High School after leading the fight for equal pay for equal qualifications. He was one of those who pioneered and paid the penalty before the differentials based on race were wholly discredited by the courts and public opinion.\textsuperscript{27}

Said the Newport News Daily Press:

Palmer was the victim of circumstance; who was right and who was wrong is still a matter of conjecture. The blow dealt Palmer did not stop him, he went on to greater heights. Lutrelle Palmer was animated by a soft-spoken, gentle, patient personality.


He easily won the respect, even the reverence of hundreds of boys and girls who passed through Huntington High School, and those college students in his Hampton classes (Hampton Institute) were equally devoted to him. ...

Service is the supreme activity of mankind and brings the highest rewards. This was the doctrine that this leader lived in life.28

And finally from the Carolina Times the following:

The Life of A Good Man -- The editorial from the Daily Press of Newport News, Virginia pays a tribute to a man whose life bore evidence that he would not sell his soul to the school board of Newport News to hold his job as principal of Huntington High School.

Although the school board gave no explanation for his dismissal and that of two other Negro principals, it is commonly believed that they were relieved of their positions because they fought relentlessly for the equalization of Negro and white teachers salaries in the public schools, the employment of Negro policemen and the abolishment of many other discriminatory practices in Newport News. In paying tribute to Professor Palmer we would like to call the attention of our readers, especially those who are educators, to one very pertinent sentence in the editorial (Newport News Daily Press) about Professor Palmer which says, "In brief, he lived to serve. Service is the supreme activity of mankind and brings the highest rewards" -- rewards not to be measured in wealth.

Negro principals and other school heads in Durham and elsewhere would do well to study the editorial thoughtfully and learn all they can about a man who could not be bought.29

Even though the loss of Dr. L.F. Palmer left a void in the Negro communities of Virginia, the Newport News city officials, in concert with its citizens at large, decided to attempt, at least, to compensate for that void. So, the school board in a resolution offered by a black member in 1973, named a new elementary school in the almost all white, northern fringe of the city -- the Lutrelle F. Palmer School.


29 Editorial, Carolina Times, Durham, North Carolina, Saturday, December 1, 1950.
J. Rupert Picott was invited by the school board to be speaker for the new school's dedication ceremonies. Picott was another one of the black principals dismissed by the board in the salary equalization struggle of 1943.

Almost simultaneously with his receipt of the news of his dismissal as principal of the John Marshall School in 1944, Picott was designated by the VTA as the organization's field secretary. The committee responsible for his selection referred to him as being young, intelligent, poised, and energetic. He had studied at The College of William and Mary, received the AB degree from Virginia Union University and the M.Ed. from Temple University. His professional experiences included high school teacher, South Boston, Virginia; Associate Managing Editor, Norfolk Journal and Guide; high school teacher (Huntington High School) Newport News; and instructor and assistant to the director of the summer school, Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia.30

Trained in the Palmer tradition, Picott brought to the field secretary's position expertise gained from being editor of the Virginia PTA Journal; associate editor of "Our Family," official publication of the National Negro PTA; secretary of the Newport News NAACP; campaign manager for a young Negro attorney who had entered the democratic primary for a seat on the Newport News City Council; and from Hampton Institute where he was a member of the faculty of the U.S. Army Specialized Training Program. Picott's administrative acumen was put to work immediately in the interest of Virginia's teachers.

Picott was field secretary in the VTA for only a few months. When L.F. Palmer resigned as executive secretary of the Virginia Teachers Association in 1944, Picott was elected to replace Palmer. 31

As a result of his elevation to the executive secretary of the VTA, Picott inherited from L.F. Palmer the leadership of a social movement which Palmer initiated.

Social movements have their genesis in a condition of unrest and develop their momentum and drive as a result of two considerations (1) dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and (2) wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living.32

The social movement initiated by Palmer was launched to change limitations placed on Negro educators both by law and custom.33 The climate created by a white society generated school tension and strained relations between the Negro and white communities. The result of these social tensions helped black educators to unite into an effective and dynamic instrument for social change.

After Picott assumed the role of executive officer he began to forge VTA into an even more effective change agent. The thrust of the new programs were focused upon in two conferences of the Virginia Teachers Association and local leaders, one held in Richmond and the other in Roanoke. These meetings had as their goal the gathering of opinions regarding the Denny Report. The commission recommended that regional schools of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, law and technology


be established in the South to provide graduate training for Negroes. Thus the provision of such facilities for Negroes at the white colleges and universities in Virginia could be circumvented.\textsuperscript{34}

Immediately following the series of meetings with leaders of local associations, Picott arranged for a meeting with the legislative committee of the VTA; and Virginia Governor Colgate W. Darden, Jr. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss with the Governor those portions of the Denny Report that seemed to project a distorted image of the Negro community. Most prominent among these segments was the commission's reference that "the Negro population do not constitute in many instances large taxpayers, and under the prevailing tax system, many of them pay no state taxes whatever."\textsuperscript{35} During the meeting, the VTA legislative committee directed the attention of the Governor to the fact that many Negroes pay taxes indirectly (sales tax, etc.) as do many submarginal whites.

The meeting of the Association officials with Governor Darden had a far reaching impact on the cause for improvement of relevant opportunities for Negroes. One result was the appropriation by the General Assembly in 1945 of more than a million dollars for assisting schools in purchasing audio-visual aids.\textsuperscript{36}


\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 128.

As a result of imaginative planning and bold, aggressive action Picott continued to mold the VTA into an influential organization. The constraints of space and the predetermined scope of this study, do not permit an exhaustive account of the planning and action that provided the basis for building the organization into one in which the Negro had great pride. Therefore, only a random sampling of these elements (planning and action) will be dealt with in this chapter.

Believing that an organization's strength is heavily dependent upon a sound fiscal foundation, Picott worked with leaders at both local and state levels to increase the membership fee from $1.00 to $2.00. A life membership fee of $25.00 was also established. 37 Picott's planning for the expanding of the financial resources of the Association included his recognition that if the goals of the organization were to be realized there would need to be further increases in membership dues in future years. Therefore, if the teachers were going to be in a position to continue support their association financially their salary levels would need to be greatly improved. But, more importantly, if Virginia's educators were to enjoy the same standard of living as that enjoyed by their counterparts in the other major professions, then their compensation would have to reflect the status and the dignity of their calling.

Inasmuch as Picott had determined that the local leadership as well as the rank and file in the Negro community generally were deeply

concerned about the low level of teachers' salaries in Virginia, he worked with the organizational leadership in formulating a plan of action designed to generate the momentum necessary for the creation of a favorable climate of opinion. A typical example of his strategy was illustrated by the action program on teacher's salaries which became one of the constants in the over-all VTA program. The following correspondence was forwarded to all of the division superintendents of schools in the State:

This follows our letters of April 8 and May 22. Your kindness in complying with the following request will be of very great assistance to this association.

The legislative committee of the Virginia Teachers Association has for some time been giving attention to the salary objectives and program of this organization. As you know, it has been our custom to present a plea for general school improvement to the General Assembly.

In order that we may have proper information on which to base our recommendations, we ask that you send a copy of your teachers' salary scales, pay rates, including bonuses, now in effect in your school division, and pay plans for principals and special teachers, if separate from your teachers' schedules. Also, if your scales are not equal for the races, please send scales for both Negro and white teachers. The information which you send will be treated as confidential, if you wish, and so state.38

From the very beginning of his career, Picott knew the value of building the proper image for the Virginia Teachers Association. While L.F. Palmer was principal of Newport News Huntington High School, the official office of the VTA was administered out of three filing cabinets in his school office. When Palmer moved to a new position it became necessary to seek a new association headquarters. At this moment of crisis, R. O'Hara Lanier, acting president of Hampton Institute, came to the aid of the organization by providing space in the administration

38 J. Rupert Picott, Letter to Division Superintendents of Schools, June 30, 1947.
building of the college. 39

In 1945 the Association, inspired by the incentive of enhancing its organizational image and needing to make its services more accessible to the membership, moved its offices into a two room suite at 201 East Clay Street, Richmond. The VTA offices had been at their new location only a few months when, at the annual convention dinner meeting of the life members of the Association on November 22, 1945, the suggestion for purchasing a new and permanent headquarters came.

L.H. Foster, president of Virginia State College, was the keynote speaker for the banquet and in his speech outlined plans for the new headquarters. He also included the details for raising the necessary funds. (See Appendix for chart). On the following day the delegate assembly meeting in regular session endorsed the proposals and named a special building fund committee consisting of the following persons: William H. Barnes, L.P. Jackson, L.F. Palmer, Naomi Wright, Mrs. L. Cheatham Taylor, and L.H. Foster, chairman. The committee did its job well and eventually a property at Fourth and Clay Streets was purchased, repaired, and refurnished. Within three months the organization for the first time in its history now owned a permanent headquarters. 40

The hallmark of J. Rupert Picott's leadership of the Virginia Teachers Association was quality programming, both for the ongoing day-to-day operation of the organization and in the planning of the Association's annual convention. An excellent illustration of the kind of meticulous planning that went into each convention during Picott's


40 Ibid., p. 162.
administration can be seen in the press release for the sixty-first convention of the Association which noted the prominent figures in the fields of education, politics, business and industry, civil rights, law and human relations that were to contribute to the various sessions of that annual meeting. The following is a partial account taken from the press release previously mentioned:

Richmond -- Three gubernatorial candidates are scheduled to address the 61st Annual Convention of the Virginia Teachers Association at Virginia Union University, October 27 through 30. "Cooperative Planning for Better Living" will be the convention theme.

All three of the announced candidates for the governorship of Virginia have accepted invitations to address the representatives of the 5,000 teachers of Negro children in the State. These are, Horace H. Edwards, former chairman of the State Democratic Organization, John S. Battle, member of the Senate, Virginia Assembly, and Francis P. Miller.

A special feature of the convention will be the four "work conferences on current problems."

The speakers listing for the various sessions include: Dr. Stephen J. Wright, dean of the faculty, Hampton Institute; G. Tyler Miller, State Superintendent of Public Instruction (Va.); Lewis Mumford, noted author and lecturer; Dr. Stephen M. Corey, Teachers College, Columbia University; and Mable Studebaker, president, National Education Association.41

The contributions of L.F. Palmer to education in Virginia resulted in a number of significant outcomes most important among which were:

(1) The welding together of the teachers of the state to fight without let-up for "Education in a Democracy, Fit for a Democracy."42

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(2) The securing of facilities for graduate and professional education for Negroes.  

(3) The launching of the official organ of the Virginia Teachers Association, the *Virginia Teachers Bulletin* which provided an important vehicle of communication for Virginia's Negro teachers.  

(4) Citation of Palmer by the *Richmond Times Dispatch* as one of Virginia's twelve most eminent citizens for making of Huntington High School a center for Negro life in Virginia, and  

(5) The growth in membership of the Association from less than 400 to nearly 4000.  

Just as was true of Palmer, Picott's commitment to establishing the Virginia Teachers Association as a powerful force in Virginia and in the educational community at large prompted him to make quality programming for the association the "center piece" of his leadership. Among the most notable results of Picott's dedication to the aforementioned goal were; as a result of his direction:  

(1) The structure, organization and administration of the annual convention in such fashion as to bring to the teachers of the State of Virginia outstanding leaders in education, business and politics, and the creation of an atmosphere charged with educational ideals.  

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43 Letter from Palmer to J. Rupert Picott, Executive Secretary of the Virginia Teachers Association, December 18, 1946.  


45 *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Virginia, January 1, 1938.  

46 *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Richmond, Virginia, Sunday, January 3, 1939.
The information and inspiration gained at the convention gave teachers an ever enlarging vision of the vital importance of their profession.

(2) The organization of the counties, cities, and districts of the State into local associations to deal with educational problems peculiar to the respective communities.

(3) The development of a research department in the Association that made careful and thorough studies of many of the important questions that affected Negro education.

(4) The establishment of a teacher placement bureau that was very effective in finding positions for its members.

(5) The establishment of the observance of Negro History Week to provide the opportunity for the Negro community to strengthen their faith in the glorious heritage of the race.47

Both Palmer and Picott set out to build a professional organization for black educators and to consummate a social movement. Certainly other factors and forces at work in Virginia and in the Nation at the time made some of their successes possible. However, the evidence presented in this chapter would seem to support the contention that except for the leadership of these men the progress of educators toward improved status, both personal and professional, would have occurred at a much less rapid pace if indeed it occurred at all.

CHAPTER V
Merger of Virginia Teachers Association and
the Virginia Education Association

Picott believed his leadership role to be not only that of making
the VTA an effective organization, but also that of preparing the black
community and black teachers to accept desegregated education. ¹

The beginning of the end of school segregation occurred in 1954,
when the U.S. Supreme Court in the Brown v. Board of Education declared
the Plessy v. Ferguson decision of 1896 to be unconstitutional. In the
Brown v. Board of Education decision 1954, the U. S. Supreme Court held
that racially separate public school facilities are unequal and constitu-
tute a denial of equal protection of the laws to blacks as a class.
The court ordered local school authorities to make a prompt and reason-
able start toward compliance with the decision in order that admission
to public schools without considerations of race could proceed.

Reaction by the people to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the
Brown case was one of shock, particularly in the seventeen-state area
where de jure segregation was functioning. The state was now set for
the dismantling of segregated public schools. More to the point of
this study, the state was also set for the demise of the separate pro-


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professional associations that served the personnel who were employed in segregated schools.

The talk of uniting the black and white state teachers association had begun some years prior to the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision. Actually, a working relationship between the two organizations had been sought intermittently by black teachers since the founding of the Virginia Teachers Association in 1887. However, efforts toward unification had not been productive up to this point. Nevertheless, the possibilities of merger of the two major teachers associations in Virginia were strengthened as a result of increased professional contacts among the membership of the two organizations.\(^2\)

In January, 1965, at its Miami Beach Convention, the National Education Association provided further impetus to the elimination of dual professional teachers associations when it adopted Resolution #12. The resolution clarified the opposition of the NEA to the organization of educators on a segregated basis. The NEA advocated an establishment of a definite deadline for presenting jointly-developed plans for the unification of dual associations.\(^3\) The mandated unification of teacher organizations helped to reinforce the Virginia Negro teachers' position regarding the formation of a desegregated state teachers association.

Their stand was published in the VTA Bulletin,

The Virginia Teachers Association has each year in convention assembled since 1955, proposed that there be one professional organization of teachers in the Commonwealth of Virginia. At


\(^3\)National Education Association, Resolution #12 Desegregation in the Public Schools, Adopted at Annual Convention at Miami Beach, July 1, 1966.
the Seventy-fifth Annual Convention in 1962, the VTA adopted unanimously a series of proposals for the formation of such a representative professional teachers association. Our VTA members at that time appointed a Merger Committee and authorized our officials to work toward this end with our counterpart the Virginia Education Association.4

The nine-point proposal for merger which the delegate assembly adopted included a number of stipulations. The most important provision of the resolution was that the two associations should begin immediately to discuss provisions for the establishment of one major professional organization of teachers, to appoint committees from the respective organizations, and to authorize them to work toward this end. Other items contained in the proposal were: (1) unification should be on the basis of equality of each member of the respective organizations, (2) the unified teachers organization should be so organized as to enable it to deal effectively with the problems of minority groups, (3) the proposed combination of the professional teaching force should be effected only by prior agreement between the parties, and (4) if a merger cannot be effected within a reasonable period then either of the two professional associations should be free to petition the NEA to be designated the integrated association of the teaching profession in Virginia. (See Appendix II for complete text of editorial)

As contained in the proposal for merger, a schedule for preparing the preliminary plans for developing the merger was devised by the leadership of the VTA. A part of that schedule is found in Table III.

As the Virginia Teachers Association began the preparation of its membership for the merger of the VTA and the VEA, opposition to merger by those people who were committed to the maintenance of the status quo

<table>
<thead>
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<th>November 2,3</th>
<th>November 8,10,16</th>
<th>November 7,18</th>
<th>November 20</th>
<th>November 28</th>
<th>December 5,9</th>
<th>December 14</th>
<th>December 18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merger vote, 1966 VEA and VTA Delegate Assemblies</td>
<td>Meeting with VTA Attorney</td>
<td>Discussion and planning by VTA and VEA executive secretaries via telephone and exchange of Association operation information via letters</td>
<td>Emergency VTA Unification Conference, 10 district presidents and 76 local head officers</td>
<td>Conference of presidents and secretaries, VTA and VEA</td>
<td>Further discussion and exchange of Association information by VTA and VEA executive secretaries</td>
<td>Conference of presidents, executive secretaries, legal advisors and others, VEA-VTA</td>
<td>Meeting on proposed Merger schedule, VTA Board Directors</td>
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5 VTA Reports of Committees and Commissions, "Guidelines for Merger" to be approved at the Seventy-Eight Annual Convention of the Virginia Teachers Association, Richmond, Virginia, October 25, 1965.
was strengthened.

Between 1954 and 1965 the Virginia Teachers Association had proposed to the VEA the consolidation of their respective forces in order to achieve a unified professional organization in Virginia. Efforts of the VTA toward merger were reinforced when in 1964, at the NEA Representative Assembly a new coalition of classroom teachers comprised of Southern blacks and urban liberal forces, arose to defeat the old administrators/Southern white/conservative coalition by means of pushing through Resolution #12 calling for action by the separate affiliates in the South (1) to remove existing racial membership restrictions (2) to take steps leading to the ultimate merger and (3) to integrate the formerly dual affiliates. 6

The National Education Association, as the overall body of educators in the nation, urged the southern states with dual associations to work together to eliminate the dichotomy of the "segregation of leaders" in the field of education while "integration of pupils" was being encouraged. An editorial in the official organ of the Virginia Teachers Association called attention to the fact that the Virginia Education Association had been disturbed over the terms "merger" and "joint." 7 The VTA's response was that the use of the terms was merely a matter of semantics. The action could just as well be called "unification" or "consolidation." The VTA leadership contended that the intent of the organization was in the best educational tradition and was offered with professional integrity in order to


comply with the NEA mandate. The VEA's reaction was that the matter of unification "must be decided in Virginia by Virginians." Reaction to the merger by the VEA leadership ignored the fact that the constituency of the VTA had expressed the same sentiment more than a decade earlier. Leaders outside were still willing to give the matter consideration.

Evidence of efforts made by the Virginia Education Association to discourage any dialogue with the Virginia Teachers Association pertaining to a merger of the two associations is found in the letter written by J. Rupert Picott, Executive Secretary of the VTA, to J. Shelby Guss and Cortlandt M. Colson, President and Chairman of the Committee on Merger, respectively, of the VTA. Portions of that letter are as follows:

Dear Mr. Guss and Dr. Colson:

Permit me to forward these comments for some possible use as background for the deliberations of the merger session that will be held in Williamsburg on Thursday and Friday of this week.

In a few months following the close of the October 1964 Convention, contact was made with the president and executive secretary of the Virginia Education Association. Mrs. Irma B. Blackwell, then president of the VTA, and I had visited with our counterparts in the VEA and attempted to lay some basis for the meeting of joint committees. A meeting of the members of the committees, appointed from VEA and the VTA, were called several times but always cancelled because of difficulty the VEA encountered in coming to Richmond for the proposed session.

Virginia, much to our dismay and disappointment, then embarked on a program of "massive resistance" and the officials of the VEA felt that because of the emerging segregationist political climate in the Commonwealth, they could not meet with us or further envision the combination of our professional statewide forces. This meant that all efforts, for the next several years, to integrate our professional associations were dropped by the Virginia Education Association.

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Our position is one of opposition toward the "absorption" of our members through the present VEA method of admitting to state membership only those Negro teachers who belong to integrated associations. We believe our two associations (VTA and VEA) should sit down together and talk merger and as a result proceed to combine our memberships and resources for the betterment of education in the Commonwealth on a planned and previously agreed upon basis. (See Appendix IV for full text of the correspondence)

The Virginia Teachers Association's plan for combining the two associations culminated in the VTA leadership appointing a Committee on Merger chaired by Dr. Cortlandt M. Colson, the members of which were James B. Cooley, James B. Woodson, Herbert A. Marshall, J. Shelby Guss, Ex-Officio, and Alfred K. Talbot, Jr. The committee held its initial meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia, for two days during the week of February 3, 1965. That session produced a document entitled, Position Paper on the Impending Merger Between the Virginia Teachers Association and the Virginia Education Association: "Suggested Guidelines for Merger."10

In the position paper developed by the committee on merger it was noted that for more than ten years two separate teacher associations had existed at both the state and local levels. This did not make for optimum growth of teachers in the State and Nation. Minutes of the Association's annual meetings attest to the unsuccessful attempts of the VTA to remedy the situation. As the first step toward finding that remedy the association appointed a special committee and directed it to develop a statement of policy and a set of procedures which might serve as guidelines for the VTA membership in

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9 Correspondence of J. Rupert Picott to J. Shelby Guss, President VTA and Cortlandt Colson, Chairman, Merger Committee, February 3, 1965.

facilitating a fair and equitable consolidation of the two professional organizations.

The Committee on Merger felt so strongly about the importance of its mission that it included in the position paper the following statement which reflected its commitment to the establishment of a single statewide association of educators to represent Virginia:

This special Committee, your Board of Directors, and the membership at large, encouraged by recent national developments, are at present even more strongly of the opinion that segregation in any of its many forms is highly detrimental to the best interest of the young and teachers of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Therefore, we wish to state officially . . . . that the Virginia Teachers Association is unequivocally dedicated to the task of erasing every semblance of the blight of discrimination and segregation from our beloved State of Virginia in order that our own house will be in order when our voices are heard at the council tables of the world and Nation. 11

The major concerns of the merger committee were that there be an orderly pattern established for merger by the leadership and staff of the VTA, and that the merger plan deal objectively with the problem of allocating a fair share of the leadership roles for all groups included in the new association. The basic problems which should have priority relative to any merger agreement were: (1) communication, (2) name of the organization, (3) membership, and (4) assets, liabilities and records. 12

Two recommendations of the committee's guidelines for merger were:

1. That the VTA attempt to effect an improvement in the communication between the two professional associations by requesting a joint meeting with a similar merger committee of the Virginia Education Association; such a meeting to be

11 Ibid., p. 1.
12 Ibid., pp. 4-5.
called at someplace inside Virginia by an appropriate NEA official who will be requested to set up such a session and serve as coordinator.

2. That a number of panels be organized to meet with the teachers of the several congressional districts in the state for the purpose of briefing them thoroughly on the dimensions of the merger dilemma and interpreting and delineating the various facets of this very complex problem. The content of the presentations will be dependent upon the results emerging from our proposed conferences with the representative of the Virginia Education Association.13 (See Appendix V for full text of Guidelines for Merger)

The initial meeting of the committees to consider merger of the Virginia Teachers Association with the Virginia Education Association took place on July 23, 1966, at the VTA headquarters building in Richmond, Virginia (See Appendix VI for agenda of that meeting). J. Rupert Picott, executive secretary of the VTA, submitted for discussion by the VEA-VTA joint committee a number of recommendations among which were the following:

It is recommended that:

The Board of Directors of the Virginia Teachers Association and the Virginia Education Association, respectively, at least 30 days prior to the 1966 Annual Conventions, adopt resolutions urging merger of the two associations into one major organization of the teaching profession in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Legal counsel be employed at the discretion of the Merger Committees of the VTA and the VEA to provide, define and suggest the legal basis for disposal of properties and other matters incident to such merger.

13 Ibid., p. 5.
During the period of merger contingency, every effort be made to have joint meetings of departments, sections and groups of the two associations, so as to provide immediate basis for goodwill, understanding and mutual respect that will place emphasis on the "human" in unification, and that will provide a key to leadership in the surviving organization, and that will reflect the ethnic and other composition of the teaching profession in Virginia.\textsuperscript{14} (See Appendix VII for complete list of recommendations).

The original VTA merger committee, which had met on July 23, 1966, met again in a follow-up meeting and selected a sub-committee of four persons. This sub-committee was directed to meet on August 3, 1966 to deal with a number of substantive matters that had to be resolved before a final merger agreement could be reached. Foremost among the items on the agenda of the August 3 meeting were the continued employment of the VTA secretarial staff and the field secretary of the organization and settlement of the major problems as necessary before a merger agreement could be consummated. Pursuant to the matter of the secretarial staff of the VTA, the sub-committee recommended that a condition of unification the individuals comprising the VTA secretarial staff and Mrs. Rosena Willis, Field Secreatry, be incorporated into the unified organization with titles comparable to their changed responsibilities. They recommended further that a Negro be employed at the policy level and that for a period of ten years no fewer than five members of the unified organization's board of directors be former members of the VTA board of directors. Also, that at least one of the Negro members of the unified board of directors be appointed by that board to serve on the executive committee of the unified organization.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Report: Recommendations submitted by J. Rupert Picott to VTA-VEA Joint Committee, meeting in Richmond, Virginia, July 23, 1966.

\textsuperscript{15} Minutes of the VTA sub-committee meeting of August 3, 1966.
The major problems for which the sub-committee sought resolution were:

1. The unification of the professional staffs of the VTA and VEA.

2. The existence of about 35 VEA locals that have not removed membership restrictions.

3. The integration and unification of the committee membership of the merged association.

4. Representation on the unified board of directors (membership should be proportionate to the current membership of each association).

5. Ajudication of problems of discrimination against Negro teachers.

6. Retention of all teachers or most of them in the merged professional organization.

7. The choice of a name for the unified organization.

8. The procedural steps that should be taken to unify the VTA and VEA departments.

9. Orientation of the committee and department membership of the VTA with the VEA.16

It was decided that a still smaller committee chosen from the respective pre-merger committees of the VTA and the VEA be designated to find solutions to the problems enumerated above. Chosen to represent the Virginia Teachers Association were, Cortlandt M. Colson, Herbert A. Marshall, and Alfred K. Talbot, Jr. and to represent the Virginia Education Association, William C. Parrish, Edwin M. Betts, Jr., and John B. Madden.17

16 Ibid., Minutes of August 3, 1966 meeting.


The joint committee met at the VEA headquarters in Richmond, Virginia, on August 20, 1966 to disclose the decisions it had reached relative to the problem areas that the six-member sub-committee assigned for more intensive study. The joint committee made the following recommendations:

1. In order to effect unification, we recommend that the persons who are now on the staff of the VTA whose positions are: (1)"Secretaries; (2) Assistant Secretary for Business; and (3) Director of Field Services" be incorporated in the staff of the unified association with titles appropriate to their changed responsibilities.

   The sub-committee also recommends that a Negro be employed at the policy-execution level.

2. We recommend for a period of two years that no fewer than five (5) former VTA members be included on the Board membership of the unified association. The selection of the former VTA members on the Board would be made by the VTA prior to unification with one of the five members elected by the unified board of directors to serve on the executive committee for a two year period.

3. We recommend that the following committees be established or maintained in the unified association:

   Committee on Civic Education and Citizenship
   Committee on Professional Rights and Responsibilities
   Committee on Cultural Behavior and Juvenile Decency and,
   Committee on Academic Standards

   Recognizing the importance of providing the opportunity for active participation in the State organization by all members, we further recommend that for a period of two years the membership on these committees be proportionate to the membership of the VEA and the VTA as of June 30, 1966.
4. In the unification of Departments, it is recommended that the practices and procedures used in the general VEA-VTA unification procedures be followed.

5. We recommended that the name of the unified association be the Virginia Education Association.

6. We recommend that unification become effective as of January 1, 1967.18 (See Appendix VIII for complete list of recommendations)

Nancy H. Gibbs, President of the Virginia Education Association reported to the VEA Delegate Assembly on November 2, 1966, the substantive content of the unification document as it was finalized in the fourth and final meeting of the Joint Committee of VEA-VTA on Unification. She noted that the 1964 VEA Delegate Assembly granted its local affiliates the option of removing membership restrictions and that since that time all of the 122 county and local units had removed such restrictions. Also, in 56 counties and cities there now existed single integrated local associations to which approximately 50% of VEA members belong. Nancy Gibbs called to the attention of the delegates that at the local level not only were schools desegregated, but faculties were desegregated as well, and local teachers meetings, workshops, and education conferences were also held on an integrated basis.19

The VEA president observed that it was within the context of the aforementioned events that in May 1966, the VEA Board of Directors authorized her to set up a committee which would meet with the VTA and discuss problems of mutual concern associated with the projected merger

18 Minutes, Meeting of the Joint Committee of the VEA-VTA on Unification, August 20, 1966.

of the two professional teachers associations. Said Nancy Gibbs:

We participated in four meetings with the VTA. As a result of these meetings, the representatives from both the VTA and VEA unanimously adopted these recommendations. The VEA Board of Directors believes that these recommendations are reasonable and equitable and if approved by both Associations, will result in a unification of the teaching profession in Virginia that can only constructively move public education forward....I urge that you adopt these recommendations.20

The recommendations on unification were adopted by the VEA Delegate Assembly on November 2, 1966, by a vote of 1229 in favor and 250 against the plan. The same recommendations were adopted by the VTA delegates on the following day, November 3, 1966, by a vote of 217 to 7.21 The merger of the Virginia Teachers Association and the Virginia Education Association occurred officially on January 1, 1967. However, there were those people, especially in the black community, who viewed the unification of the two organizations as an absorption of the former by the latter rather than a true merger. Since January 1, 1967, there has been continuing concern among many black educators fearful of negative results of the union of the two associations. Sustantiation for this observation lies in the transcript of an interview conducted by the writer with J. Rupert Picott, former Executive Secretary of the Virginia Teachers Association and currently Executive Director of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History. Picott monitored the entire merger process from its inception to its culmination, and he asserts that the only two persons from the former Virginia Teachers Association who were designated by the Virginia Education Association to become members of the VEA's officialdom were J. Shelby

20 Ibid., p. 20.

21 Ibid., p. 21.
Guss and Fitz Turner. Guss and Turner were both immediate past presidents of the VTA and were also two of the representatives of the VTA on the VEA-VTA joint merger committee. Both of these men were already conservative in their leadership styles, and their appointment to the VEA leadership team rendered them even more unlikely to contend for implementation of the merger agreement.\(^{22}\)

However, there was also a very positive aspect of the merger of the VTA and VEA that served to counter-balance what may have appeared to some to be a negative result of joining the two organizations. That aspect of the merger was the election of a Negro to the presidency of the Virginia Education Association. She was Ms. Mary A. F. Hatwood who was elected to head the association in March 1976. She defeated her closest opponent, a Falls Church teacher by a margin of more than nine thousand votes. The first black president of the 50,000 member VEA pledged that she would work for professional negotiations legislation and greater retirement benefits for Virginia educators.\(^{23}\) This development bodes well for the future of education in Virginia.

Now that the VTA-VEA merger had been effected, the NEA became conscious of the education profession's responsibilities in the area of human rights and moved to ascertain whether the unification of Virginia's black and white teachers associations had violated any of the rights.

On November 20, 1969, the NEA Executive Committee issued a directive creating a three-member evaluation committee. The committee was


given the charge of assessing the progress made by state associations which had been merged for at least one year. It was in response to this mandate that an evaluation of the Virginia Education Association was conducted.

The study which provided the information for the evaluation report was conducted on December 13-16, 1970. The procedure was as follow:

The committee interviewed members of the VEA-VTA merger committee, former executive secretaries of both organizations, black and white members of the VEA executive committee, some members of the VEA staff, the VEA president and president-elect, the NEA directors for Virginia, representatives of local associations, and other persons directly involved in the conduct of public education in Virginia. 24

The rationale for evaluating the merger lay in the acknowledgement by the NEA that it had an obligation to its members to evaluate statewide affiliates in states where segregated associations formerly existed. The national body was also determined to assure that the process for merger was consistent with the spirit of NEA Resolution 66-12 which called for an end to the organizing of educators on a racially segregated basis. 25

The evaluation committee attempted to determine the extent to which the VEA provided for its members full democratic access to all the benefits of the association, and as a result the following observations were made:

1. No complaints were received by the committee of violations of the merger agreement, and at the time of the report two elected black members were seated on the 27 member board


25Ibid., p. 2-3.
and three more black members were to join the board as of January 1972.

2. There was a general feeling among blacks interviewed that the merger did not produce a new organization. Instead, the VEA prevailed and the VTA was "absorbed." On this point, the committee noted that a tour of the VEA building did not lead to a conclusion that there had ever been a statewide teachers organization in Virginia other than the VEA.

3. The committee discovered that while prior to the evaluation process there had been blacks on the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission (PR&R), including a black chairman, there were no blacks at all on the PR&R commission in 1969 despite the fact that approximately 50 percent of the cases handled by the commission involved black teachers.26

The NEA evaluation committee concluded its report with a number of recommendations, some of which were that the leadership of the VEA take aggressive action on controversial issues which concern VEA members, especially those problems having to do with the unfair demotion or dismissal of black educators; that some appropriate recognition be made of the merger by displaying a plaque commemorating the event in a prominent place in the VEA building; that an official history of both the VEA and the VTA be written and published in the "Virginia Journal of Education"; and the VEA assign someone to write an official history of the merger which should be published in the "Journal" and made available in booklet form.27 (See Appendix IX for full report)

After fourteen years of operation as a unified organization some doubts remain among black educators whether the combination of the black and white teachers associations in Virginia was a significant step forward. This is an important question for several reasons. First, the Virginia Education Association has failed to implement many

26 Ibid., p. 4-5.
27 Ibid., p. 5.
of the recommendations of the National Education Association concerning recognition of the former educational contributions of the VTA.

Secondly, during the existence of the VTA, black educators were able to rely on the organization to champion their cause if they were victims of discrimination or suffered unfair treatment at the hands of school officials in their respective school divisions. Black educators wonder whether the VEA was capable of providing protection of equal strength.

Thirdly, throughout the more than seventy-five years that the Virginia Teachers Association represented Virginia's black educators, one of the primary components of its "action program" was the encouragement and motivation of black students to excel. The organization worked intensively with teachers to sensitize them to their responsibility to help students succeed. With the passing of the VTA this effort of encouraging excellence on the part of students had been lost momentarily because the VEA did not perceive such an effort as being a priority goal.
CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The hypothesis of this study was that the educational leadership provided by the Virginia Teachers Association made a significant contribution to the professional development of Negro educators. The leadership of the Association also helped to contribute to the acceleration of educational change in Virginia during the twenty-five year period, 1940-1965.

Answers to five questions provided support for the contention governing this study:

1. What were the primary purposes of the Virginia Teachers Association in terms of educational goals and programs?

2. What were the social and political forces in Virginia that generated educational change during the period covered by this study?

3. Who were the influential leaders that contributed significantly to effecting educational changes in Virginia during the period covered by this study?

4. What was the nature of the organizational structure and administrative thrust of the Association? and

5. What process and procedures were involved in merging Virginia's black and white teachers associations?

These primary questions were answered by means of a review and an analysis of the major programs and activities of the Virginia Teachers Association during the period 1940-1965. The profiles of two of the key leaders of the Association and an examination of the organizational bulletins, newsletters, memoranda, correspondence, minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and other official
documents were also examined for formulation of answers to these ques-
tions.

In answer to the first question it was found that some of the primary purposes of the Virginia Teachers Association were:

(1) To improve through concerted effort the black teachers instructional skills. This action in effect served to professionalize the black teachers.

(2) To make facilities available to provide opportunities for the improvement of teachers.

(3) To afford black educators an opportunity to meet annually in order to discuss questions pertaining to the educational interests of the State, and

(4) To become acquainted with the basis of their profession -- the philosophy and history of teaching as well as the methods of the "new education."

The goals of the organization were:

(1) The improvement of educational facilities in the Commonwealth and

(2) The building of a higher quality of life for Virginia Negroes.

Some of the social and political forces in Virginia that helped to focus on the need for educational change were (1) the prohibition of black educators from joining the all-white National Education Association; (2) the recovery of the Commonwealth from the effects of the Civil War; (3) the threats made by white pressure groups to cut appropriations for Negro schools to an amount equal to the amount of direct taxes paid by Negro citizens; and (4) the inauguration, by Virginia, of the poll tax requirement for voting.

However, despite the reactionary social and political climate of the early 1900's in Virginia, the situation was not altogether gloomy. Within such a negative political climate a small group of whites emerged who not only befriended the Negro but also sought ways and
means to provide for their education. In addition to the help given by this group of whites there were in the early 1920's a series of events that served to ease the negative political and social pressures that engulfed the Negro community in Virginia. Changes that resulted from these events culminated in improved educational opportunities for Negroes.

Two leaders, Lutrelle F. Palmer and J. Rupert Picott emerged within the VTA and helped to improve the social and political climate in Virginia for the Negro. The administrative and organizational expertise and the personal zeal of these two educators also helped to restructure the VTA into a dynamic and influential entity in the educational community. Too, under the leadership of Palmer and Picott membership of the Virginia Teachers Association grew and became unified.

Along with a reorganized VTA, the district and local associations made recommendations to the representative assembly for purposes of improvement of the public schools of Virginia and administration by the district the programs and policies of the Association. At the State level of the VTA the representative assembly was the statewide body of the Association with several primary functions. It served as the official legislative body of the VTA wherein policy formulation was effected. It was responsible for approving any major project proposed by the organization which might involve substantial indebtedness and it worked through the board of directors to appoint and remove staff officers.

The elective officers of the Association were a President, President Elect, and Vice Presidents. The Vice Presidents were also the elected presidents of the educational districts.
The major administrative thrust of the nearly 6,000 member Virginia Teachers Association was that of welding a large closely-knit network of friendships and professional relationships into a united community of educators dedicated to the mission of coordinating efforts to secure wide support for the highest quality of instruction in every classroom and greater appropriations for school buildings and other educational facilities for black children.

Two forces served to cause the merging of the Virginia Teachers Association with the Virginia Education Association, a mandate handed down by the National Education Association and a stimulus from the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision to integrate public schools. The primary rationale for joining Virginia's black and white teachers associations was that each group would make improvements for their own benefits.

Immediately following the NEA Miami Convention in July, 1966, it was agreed by both the black and white State Teachers Associations that a joint committee should be formed composed of an equal number of persons from each of the two organizations to discuss plans for and recommend the details for the joining of Virginia's teachers into a single professional organization. Such a committee was formed composed of eight members, four members each from each of the two organizations. The joint committee held three meetings and prepared the report which set forth a considerable number of recommendations. These recommendations were approved by the VTA and VEA boards of directors on August 26, 1966. On January 1, 1967, the unification of the Virginia Teachers Association and the Virginia Education Association became an accomplished fact.
Some of the conclusions drawn from this study are:

1. The primary goals and purposes of the Virginia Teachers Association as well as the programs which it projected were of such depth and quality during the period covered in this study that the organization was able to survive and to grow within an adverse social and political climate of the times. Chapter II of this study supports this contention.

2. Black educators effectively used the political and social mood of the 1930's and 1940's to build a network of self-help organizations and through these mechanisms contributed significantly to changing the attitudes of the members of the political power structure and heightening their respect for the black community. Chapter II also bears this out.

3. Through the leadership of many members of the Virginia Teachers Association, but specifically Lutrelle F. Palmer and J. Rupert Picott, the Association made a lasting contribution to the professionalization of Virginia's teachers. Evidence of this conclusion can be found in Chapter IV of this study.

4. Finally, the VTA seized the initiative in bringing about the merger of the VTA and the VEA and thus gave Virginia a single professional organization of educators thereby bringing about a major change in the state-wide educational community. Support for this conclusion can be found in Chapter V.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon the basis of this research the following recommendations for further study are made:

1. An in-depth and comprehensive study of the leadership qualities and personal attributes of L.F. Palmer and J. Rupert Picott that made them effective and creative as executives of the Virginia Teachers Association should be made with the view of possible utilization of such traits by those who follow them.

2. Many assume that most of the problems of discrimination and separation that affected educators prior to the period of desegregation and the ultimate merging of the dual teachers associations have been solved. A study is needed to ascertain the degree of real progress in human relations that has been realized since Virginia has had a single professional organization of educators.

3. The philosophy and major activities of the merged VTA-VEA
projects an identity that is different from either of the former organizations. What makes the current organization a different entity? Further study is necessary to determine the conditions that caused the new directions of the merged organization to develop. Also, to what extent have the strengths of the two original organizations been retained? Finally, to what extent have the changes in emphasis and impact of the Association resulted from factors not directly associated with education or the professional development of educators.

4. Further research is necessary in order to determine how the VEA can provide more effective training in human relations and in the protection of student and teacher rights in the continuing school desegregation process.

5. The records, official documents and working papers of the VTA are scattered and housed in the archives of several institutions. For the purpose of conducting further research, in connection with the former teachers association, these records should be collected, organized and housed in a single location, preferably the VEA headquarters in Richmond, Virginia.

6. This study reveals the tremendous impact of the VTA, especially during its early years, on the educational and cultural improvement of the entire black community in Virginia. Research is needed to determine: (1) the factors underlying these developments and (2) how the momentum of this driving force can be regained and, hopefully, be adapted by other social or ethnic groups.

SUMMARY

The primary concern of the Virginia Teachers Association was how the educational process in Virginia could be the most effective and at the same time the most satisfying of experiences for pupils and teachers. In order to promote the conditions and contribute to the creation of the climate that would improve the quality of education in the Commonwealth for black children in particular and all children in general, black educators in partnership with the black community spent eighty years in developing an association that became an aggressive and uncompromising power base for the professional, educational and political aspirations of the entire black community.
The uniqueness of the Virginia Teachers Association lay in the fact that even though it championed the causes of the black educators and the black community it also articulated many of the concerns of mainstream Virginia and America as well. Even though the focus of the Association was black, much of what was said and done was looked upon sympathetically and oftentimes admired by all teachers. This study is intended to serve as a documentation of these facts.
To The Superintendent of Schools

For more than fifty years the Virginia State Teachers Association, the state-wide organization of Negro teachers, has been endeavoring to increase the efficiency of the Negro teachers in the state of Virginia. Through all these years it has played its part in encouraging teachers to improve their professional status, and to recognize the obligation that rests upon them as teachers of future American citizens.

In its effort to achieve these objectives the Association has sent thousands of speakers to hundreds of localities to address both parents and teachers on the great issues involved in education for democratic living. Out of modest funds it has for the past seventeen years published a quarterly magazine to aid in the professionalization of its members. This year its Fifty-fourth Annual Convention will be held at the Maggie Walker High School in Richmond. The Convention dates are November 19, 20, and 21. The theme around which the discussions will center is "The Negro's Part in Building the American Democracy." In these days when the status of minority groups is before the world as never before, we think this theme is timely and significant.

I am requesting you to call these facts to the attention of the Negro teachers in your division and invite them to join again with us in keeping alive the professional spirit which we have tried to nurture through the years. The membership fee in the Association is one dollar per year. This includes a subscription to our quarterly publication, The Virginia Teachers Bulletin. For convenience in enrolling your teachers, I am enclosing a membership blank which may be filled out by your clerk or Jeanes Supervisor and returned to me in time for the teachers to receive their membership cards for the Convention.

Very truly yours,

L. F. Palmer
Executive Secretary

Memorandum from Palmer to Virginia Division School Superintendents advising them of the Annual VTA Convention, dated September 27, 1941.
To Merge - - -  
That Is The Question

The predominantly Negro teachers association in the South faces a crisis of continuation never before experienced.

For more than three quarters of a century — in case of the Virginia Teachers Association, the period has been for the past seventy-eight years—we have talked, fought and dreamed of the new day when all members of the various professions with similar training, experience, position and contribution would be regarded as equals. Primary in this is the formation and establishment of one major state-wide teachers association that would encompass all professions in the educational field and that would accord to each of the members of this consolidated body, equality of membership, recognition of person and opportunity for participation.

Following the decision of the United States Supreme Court in Brown vs. School Board of Topeka, Kansas and the school integration implementation decision of 1955 in which the highest tribunal in our land declared school segregation illegal to the ideals and purposes of our democracy, your Virginia Teachers Association initiated a plea for professional association unification in the Commonwealth.

We have been at this matter now for the past eleven years and at the recent annual conventions in Richmond, of the Virginia Teachers Association and the Virginia Education Association, your VTA proposed to our counterpart the consolidation of forces to a desired "oneness" of professional organization in Virginia.

Despite VTA's patient, reasonable and professionally designed and presented efforts for merger, there are those, unacquainted with the long history, who may say, "Why can't we do this in Virginia?" The answer is unmistakably clear. We have tried for the past decade to talk about one major professional body in Virginia, only to be rebuffed.

In New York in July of this year, in Seattle of last year and at the Detroit convention of the year before, the National Education Association, as the overall body of educators in this country, urged the southern states with dual teachers associations to work together and eliminate this anachronism of "segregation of leaders" in the field of education where "integration of pupils" is the vogue. The NEA took decisive action last summer in this matter. Resolution 12 of our national organization states:

Affiliates whose memberships reflect the above-mentioned restrictions shall be given until July 1, 1966, to revise their constitutions and bylaws, where necessary, to take whatever steps are required to expedite the complete removal of all restrictive labels, and to present a jointly developed plan to effect the complete integration and merger of their associations . . .

Our counterpart—the VEA—appears to have become disturbed over "merger" and "joint." This seems to us to be a matter of "semantics." The VTA holds no special brief for the words "merger" or "joint." The action may be called "unification" or "consolidation." The intent of the Virginia Teachers Association is in the best educational tradition and is offered with professional integrity to comply with the NEA mandate. We believe our action over these past years in seeking consolidation of the teaching forces in Virginia to be appropriate and proper. Our Board and membership are in a quandary as to what more could be expected of us.

We read that the Virginia Education Association says now that this matter of unification "must be decided in Virginia by Virginians." Let it be noted that this is just what the VTA has been trying to do over the years. Even now, we would welcome meetings of our two groups at which this item could be discussed in good faith.

Matters about which discussion could be re-opened or initiated at such a conference of leaders of both the Virginia Teachers Association and the Virginia Education Association are the legal combining of the associations, personnel, property, finance (assets and liabilities), bonded indebtedness, departments and dual local associations.

The VTA is and all these years has been a solvent organization. Our annual operating budget is in excess of $100,000. We occupy a new modern headquarters office in the downtown section of Richmond, adjoining the proposed civic center. The amount owed on this building is only approximately two fifths of its estimated value.

The Virginia Teachers Association, since its founding, has been opened to all teachers in the Commonwealth. We have no prohibitions of race to repeal. Moreover, every one of our local associations will accept professional members of all ethnic groups in every city and county in the Commonwealth. Now, it is our understanding, based on facts presented to us by officers of the Virginia Education Association, that this organization has many local units that practice segregation. In addition, we are similarly informed that the VEA by constitution, can only accept in the state organization persons who hold membership in the local associations. The topic of "membership availability" certainly needs to be discussed.
APPENDIX C
### UNIFICATION SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 2, 3</td>
<td>Merger vote, 1966 VEA and VTA Delegate Assemblies</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 8, 10, 16</td>
<td>Meetings with VTA attorney</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 7, 18</td>
<td>Discussion and planning by VTA and VEA executive secretaries via telephone and exchange of Association operation information via letters</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 20</td>
<td>Emergency VTA Unification Conference, 10 district presidents and 76 local head officers</td>
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<td>November 28</td>
<td>Conference of presidents and secretaries, VTA and VEA</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 5, 9</td>
<td>Further discussion and exchange of Association information by VTA and VEA executive secretaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 10</td>
<td>Emergency Unification Conference -- VTA presidents, departments, sections, affiliates</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 14</td>
<td>Conference of presidents, executive secretaries, legal advisors and others, VEA-VTA</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 18</td>
<td>Meeting on proposed Merger Schedule, VTA Board of Directors</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Cessation of acceptance by VTA of memberships, and referral to VEA of memberships received after this date</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 10</td>
<td>Statewide voting by VTA membership on candidates for membership on Virginia Education Association Executive Board and Board of Directors</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 16</td>
<td>Closing of VTA books for audit</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 31</td>
<td>Submission by VTA President of nominees for VEA committees and commissions membership</td>
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**Unification Schedule...#2**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>Report of Auditor to VTA Board, with subsequent release to VTA membership</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>Submission of VTA membership lists to VEA</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Reports to VTA Board and VTA membership of Joint Merger Committee studies of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) VEA Constitution</td>
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<td>b) Elevation of VTA member to elected officership in merged Association</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Establishment of guidelines for merger of VTA-VEA departments, sections, affiliates</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d) Time limit for recognition of segregated local units</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Public Meeting -- Official Merger Ceremony, signing of merger legal papers, etc. by VTA and VEA presidents and others--suggested speaker, Dr. Irvamae Applegate, NEA President</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
February 3, 1965

Mr. J. Shelby Guss, President
Virginia Teachers Association
Bowling Green, Virginia

Dr. Cortlandt M. Colson, Chairman
VTA Committee on Merger
Virginia State College
Petersburg, Virginia

Dear Mr. Guss and Dr. Colson:

Permit me to forward these comments for some possible use as background for the deliberations of the session that will be held in Williamsburg on Thursday and Friday of this week. May I add that I am happy to have been able to make the arrangements and eagerly await your report for the committee.

Back in 1955, the Virginia Teachers Association launched a program calling for desegregation of schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia. We envisioned then, as now, that the first line of defense for success in this regard would be the integration or merger of the two state-wide professional organizations of teachers. The matter was offered to our VTA Executive Committee, approval given and directions issued to prosecute the idea with speed.

In a few months following the close of the 1964 Convention in October, contact was made with the president and executive secretary of the Virginia Education Association. Mrs. Irma B. Blackwell, then president of the VTA, and I had visited with our counterparts in the VEA and attempted to lay some basis for meeting of joint committees. The meeting of the members of the committee, appointed from the VEA and the VTA, were called several times but always cancelled because of difficulty the VEA "encountered in coming to Richmond for the proposed session."

However, at the executive level, Messrs Bell, then president of the VEA and now superintendent of schools in Williamsburg; Dr. Williams, Mrs. Blackwell and I "kept up" our conferences. Some success was achieved. As a result of
these efforts, we secured a breakthrough and were able to hold an integrated breakfast of both VEA and VTA members at the NEA Convention in Miami. I was nominated by President Robert P. Daniel and seconded by a former VEA president, for the vice-presidency of the National Education Association. I was the first member of our ethnic group to hold such position.

Virginia, much to our dismay and disappointment, then embarked on a program of "massive resistance" and the officials of the VEA felt that because of the emerging segregationist political climate in the Commonwealth, they could not meet with us or further envision the combination of our professional state-wide forces. This meant that all efforts for the next several years in the integration of the associations were dropped by the Virginia Education Association. In the meantime, the VTA continued as it has during these past ten years to clamor for the desegregation of schools and of teaching organizations. Our demands have been publicized widely. Our position is known throughout America and also abroad. We have received praises from governmental officials and others for our position.

The VTA has thus insisted upon proper recognition of our members in the combining of the teaching forces in Virginia. We have carried this fight to the national level and helped to offer the resolution at the Atlanta City NEA Convention in 1951, which resulted in the National Education Association's permitting associations at the local level who desire to integrate to do so. During the past summer in Seattle, your VTA official was honored by being selected by all the Negro participants at the convention to write the resolution and to second the resolution on the floor which has resulted in the NEA demanding that all of its affiliates offer a plan of professional association desegregation. This resolution is basically responsible for action of the VEA in the past October and means that the National Association hereafter will apply some force in the integration process.

Our position is one of opposition toward the "absorption" of our members through the present VEA method of admitting to state membership only those Negro teachers who belong to integrated associations. We believe our two associations (VEA and VTA) should sit down together and talk merger and as a result proceed to combine our membership and resources for the betterment of education in the Commonwealth on a planned and previously agreed to basis.

Do accept best wishes.

Cordially,

[Signature]

Executive Secretary

JRPlym}
POSITION PAPER ON THE IMPENDING MERGER BETWEEN
THE
VIRGINIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION AND THE VIRGINIA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Suggested Guidelines for Merger of the Virginia Teachers Association and the
Virginia Education Association

RATIONALE

For some ten years or more the Virginia Teachers Association has
recognized the fact that two separate professional teacher associations,
operating as discrete bodies on a segregated basis at both the State and
local levels, did not make for optimum growth of teachers in the State
and Nation. Minutes of the Association bear evidence of the unsuccessful
attempts of the Virginia Teachers Association to remedy this frustrating,
debilitating, and costly situation. The VTA, therefore, has created a
special committee whose purpose it is to work out a statement of policy
and procedure which may serve as a guideline for members of the VTA.
This special Committee, your Board of Directors, and the membership at
large, encouraged by recent national developments are at present more
strongly of the opinion that segregation in any of its many forms is highly
detrimental to the best interest of the youth and teachers of the Common-
wealth of Virginia. Therefore, we wish to state officially, and with all
the emphasis possible, that the Virginia Teachers Association is unequi-
vocally dedicated to the task of erasing every semblance of the blight
of discrimination and segregation from our beloved State of Virginia in
order that our own house will be in order when our voices are heard at
the Council tables of the world and Nation.
Educators and proponents of human rights have long fostered the opinion that education will be a determining factor in removing from our society the barriers that inhibit the full acceptance of the principle of equality for all people. Within this Commonwealth and the Nation, our educational organizations comprise the largest single body of educated people in history and, therefore, must be charged with the responsibility of full and active participation in implementing the beliefs advanced by those who treasure the dignity and worth of mankind.

The responsibility of educating a great society will command all the intelligence, fortitude, energies, and resources of those who are dedicated to this sacred profession of teaching. We can no longer waste our time and dissipate our strength on sectional goals and beliefs when the major charge of educating the great society demands united and optimum effort.

The position this Committee takes is based upon the Declaration of Independence, the Virginia Bill of Rights, the Constitution of the United States, and is further substantiated by the Nation's unending quest for the American Dream, The Great Society. Obviously, the conscientious implementation of the 1954 Supreme Court Decision, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the recent mandate of the National Education Association that plans for the elimination of dual state associations be effected by July 1, 1966 poses a state of extreme urgency for the merger of the two Virginia teachers' associations. It is inevitable that as time passes, old wounds heal, and stifling traditions are discarded, the schools of our State and Nation will be filled with youth and staffed by teachers of various religious and ethnic groups. It is apparent that it would be highly unrealistic, extremely expensive, and totally inefficient to attempt to provide a high caliber of leadership for these various groups of teachers.
through separate professional associations. In fact, there will be no "various groups", so called, as all will be designated only as "teachers".

PROPOSAL

This Committee, therefore, recommends to the Board the report which follows:

One of the major concerns of the VTA leadership is that there be an orderly process of merger based upon a plan agreed upon by the leadership of the two associations, with each recognizing the personal dignity, the personal integrity, and the personal worth of the other. This concern would tend to eliminate any process of absorption or assimilation by which the predominately Negro association and its leaders are pushed aside or ignored as having nothing of value to offer. A very real problem of major concern is how the merged organization can best utilize the existing leadership and professional staff of the Virginia Teachers Association. There must be an orderly process by which trained and responsible leaders and professional staff members will be integrated into the new organization in order to effect an efficient and fair representation of the interests and needs of all the teachers. The merger plan must face up to the problem of getting a fair share of leadership roles for all groups included in the new association.

Attendant to any merger or reorganization of existing institutions are certain problems which should be anticipated by both organizations. Basic problems which should have priority in this consideration are the following:
1. **Communication**

   Previous attempts to establish lines of communication and to effect a merger based upon cooperation and mutual understanding have been thwarted. This may have been the result of a state-wide climate of opinion which has not been conducive to such action. Fortunately, this climate of opinion is changing; and, therefore, plans for effecting more complete lines of communication should be possible.

2. **Name of the Organization**

   Careful consideration should be given to naming the new organization. It should be worded in such a way that it represents both groups. A suggestion might be Virginia Teachers and Education Association or Virginia Education and Teachers Association.

3. **Memberships**

   Memberships represent the life blood of the organization and, therefore, any process or plan other than one of complete or total merger of the two organizations on the State and local levels is subject to make it difficult for the VTA to maintain sufficient membership to support its business and professional operations.

   The impact of the Civil Rights movement, the sociological changes which are in process and the desire to integrate and be integrated caused many members of the VTA to be hesitant about continued membership in a predominantly Negro teachers association.

   Because of the transfer of membership of many VTA members to local VEA associations the VTA will probably lose the following cities and counties to the VEA by the end of the 1964-65 school year:

   1. Arlington
   2. Alexandria
   3. Fairfax
   4. Prince William
   5. Loudoun
   6. Charlottesville

   Total members VTA 1,000
   Total VTA dues now paid $10,000.00

   Because locals in the following areas are in the "talking" stage leading to integration proposals, it is likely that they will be lost by the end of the 1965-66 school year:

   1. Richmond
   2. Norfolk
3. Newport News
4. Roanoke
5. Hanover
6. Hampton
7. Henrico
8. Portsmouth

Total members VTA 3,750
Total VTA dues now paid $37,500.00

4. Assets, Liabilities, Records, etc.

The assets and liabilities of the VTA should be carefully assessed in light of a proposed merger. The problem of the transfer of all tangible assets and the assumption of liabilities by a new organization at the time of the merger should be handled in the light of existing VTA constitutional provisions.

VTA records, reports, and important documents should be properly housed and catalogued for current and future use by the merged associations.

We recommend:

1. That the VTA attempt to effect an improvement in the communication between the two professional associations by requesting a joint meeting with a similar merger committee of the Virginia Education Association; such a meeting to be called at some place inside Virginia by an appropriate NEA official who will be requested to set up such a session and serve as coordinator.

2. That there be organized a number of panels to meet with the teachers of the several congressional districts in the State for the purpose of briefing them thoroughly on the dimensions of the merger dilemma and interpreting and delineating the various facets of this very complex problem. The content of the presentations will be dependent upon the results emerging from our proposed conferences with the representatives of the Virginia Education Association.

3. That in view of the present situation which indicates the possibility of a decrease in paid membership dues in VTA, we suggest as one possible approach a reduction in the paid personnel and other professional services of the association.

4. That if the dues fall below the minimum necessary to discharge the responsibilities of a professional teachers association that a new incorporated organization be formed. This curtailment might take the form of an incorporated organization in which the members would purchase shares. Thus, we would then have a "watch dog" organization to protect our interest. Membership would be open only to those who purchase a minimum number of stipulated shares in the organization.
However, services would be available to any or all Negro teachers—with non-members paying the necessary fees for such services.

5. That as a last resort, the VTA might consider complete dissolution as an association and countenance absorption in the ranks of VEA with the hope that, in time, professional integrity, moral justice, and the spirit of Christian brotherhood will prevail to the extent that all members will become part and parcel of the fabric of democracy at work in the teaching profession.

The foregoing deliberations of the VTA Committee on merger were based upon the following:

I. Review of the history of the efforts of VTA to effect the desegregation of VEA. (Letter dated February 3, 1965 from Picott)

II. Background of NEA position on the proposition of the desegregation or "merger" of dual teacher's associations.

III. An exploration of all possible arguments that might be advanced by the VEA against the Committee's proposed plan of merger.

IV. Possible penetrating questions which the VEA will project in order to keep the Committee's proposals from being unrealistic.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE

James B. Cooley
James B. Woodson
Herbert A. Marshall
Alfred K. Talbot, Jr.
J. Shelby Guss, Ex-Officio

Cortlandt M. Colson, Chairman
MEMORANDUM

It is recommended by the Committee that this

1. Report be made jointly by the President of the VTA and the Chairman of the Merger Committee to the Executive Secretary.

2. That there be a March meeting of the Board of Directors to which this Committee will report.
APPENDIX F
TENTATIVE AGENDA

Invocation
Introductions
Statements Virginia Education Association
         Virginia Teachers Association
Selection of Chairman or Chairmen
Establishment of Operational Procedures
Discussion Immediate Action
         Future Action
         Next Meeting
Adjournment

This tentative agenda and the materials in the folders were prepared to facilitate meaningful discussion only. Effective guidelines for Virginia must come from the deliberations of this joint committee.
Submitted by J. Rupert Picott for Discussion, VEA-VTA Joint Committee

It is recommended that:

1. The Board of Directors of the Virginia Teachers Association and the Virginia Education Association, respectively, at least 30 days prior to the 1966 Annual Conventions, adopt resolutions urging merger of the two associations into one major organization of the teaching profession in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

2. As an indication of a willingness to move forward in professional human relations, the Program Committees of the VTA and VEA, respectively, agree upon the holding of one general major meeting to be attended by members of both organizations at the forthcoming 1966 Annual Conventions.

3. Legal counsel be employed at the direction of the Merger Committees of the VTA and the VEA to provide, define and suggest the legal basis for disposal of properties and other matters incident to such merger.

4. If merger is voted favorably by the general bodies of the VTA and the VEA, respectively, at the 1966 conventions, then, the organization so desiring be permitted to hold one final general session to close affairs as may be deemed necessary or required.

5. Provision for employment of the staff be an integral part of any merger plans to be approved and adopted.

6. The surviving organization be required to offer to all members under the merger a full program of professional services, such as teacher protection and that the current programs of the two associations be examined with this end in mind and the programs to be continued so based, and

7. During the period of merger contingency, every effort be made to have joint meetings of departments, sections and groups of the two associations, so as to provide immediate basis for goodwill, understanding and mutual respect that will place emphasis on the "human" in unification and that will provide a key to leadership in the surviving organization that will reflect the ethnic and other composition of the teaching profession in Virginia.
APPENDIX H
RECOMMENDATIONS of Joint Committee of VEA-VTA on Unification

1. Unification of Staff.

In order to effect unification, we recommend that the persons who are now on the staff of the VTA whose positions are: "Secretaries--2; Assistant Secretary for Business; and Director of Field Services" be incorporated in the staff of the unified association with titles appropriate to their changed responsibilities. (This recommendation is to be reworded if a VTA staff member does not wish to work for the unified organization.)

The committee also recommends that a Negro be employed at the policy-execution level.


We recommend that in the event the local VEA-VTA associations have not unified, that the State association recognize both associations as affiliates until such time as local unification is effected.

3. Representation on the Board.

We recommend for a period of two years that no fewer than five (5) former VTA members be included on the Board membership of the unified association. The selection of the former VTA members on the Board would be made by the VTA prior to unification with one of the five members elected by the unified board of directors to serve on the executive committee for a two year period.

4. Representation on Committees.

We recommend that the following committees be established or maintained in the unified association:

(list of committees)

Recognizing the importance of providing the opportunity for active participation in the State organization by all members, we further recommend that for a period of two years the membership on these committees be proportionate to the membership of the VEA and the VTA as of June 30, 1966.
5. **Regional and National Representation.**

The committee recommends that every effort be made to continue multi-racial representation at all national and regional meetings.

6. **Departments.**

In the unification of Departments, it is recommended that the practices and procedures used in the general VEA-VTA unification procedures be followed.

7. **Name of Unified Association.**

We recommend that the name of the unified association be the Virginia Education Association.

8. **Membership Classification of Life Member.**

We recommend that, in the process of unification, the membership classification of a life member be included only for those individuals whose initial application was made to VTA prior to June 30, 1966.

9. **Building and Finances.**

We recommend that, in the event of unification, all assets and liabilities of the two associations be joined into one under the new association.

10. **Effective Date of Unification.**

We recommend that unification become effective as of January 1, 1967.
VIRGINIA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

MERGER EVALUATION

NEA FINAL REPORT
EVALUATION COMMITTEE:

William S. Parrish, Chairman - South Carolina
David C. Sharpe - Michigan
S. J. Whisenhunt - Alabama

CONSULTANT

James H. Williams, Director
NEA Southeast Regional Office

WRITER

Paul K. Ryan, PR/TV Coordinator
NEA Southeast Regional Office
INTRODUCTION

In July of 1966, the NEA representative assembly adopted a resolution endorsing the principle that individual worth comes from sources other than race, creed or class. In recognition of the education profession's responsibilities in the area of human rights, the NEA resolution contains the following statement:

Education must seek to eliminate prejudice and bigotry from the public mind, support democratic principles and the free society which embodies them, and uphold respect for law, protection of individual rights, and use of democratic processes to effect change.

The NEA called upon local and state affiliates to merge racially separate units so that education associations might take the lead in trying to eliminate racial bigotry from the nation's public schools. NEA issued guidelines for compliance with the merger dictum on October 10, 1968.

On November 20, 1969, the NEA Executive Committee issued a directive setting up three-member evaluation committees to assess the progress made by state associations which have been merged for at least one year. Evaluation committee members have been selected from the NEA Executive Committee and the NEA Board of Directors. It was in direct response to this mandate that an evaluation of the Virginia Education Association was conducted.

The field study which provided the information for this report was conducted December 13, 14, 15, and 16, 1970, in Richmond, Virginia. During the course of its evaluation, the committee interviewed members of the VEA-VTA merger committee, both former executive secretaries, black and white members of the VEA executive committee, some members of the VEA staff, the VEA
president and president-elect, the NEA directors for Virginia, representatives of local associations, and other persons directly involved in the conduct of public education in Virginia.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

The NEA team followed the evaluation guidelines issued by the NEA Executive Committee in November of 1969. The committee wishes to acknowledge that since the guidelines were issued some three years after the two Virginia associations voluntarily merged, some of the criteria do not necessarily apply in this case. However, it must be pointed out that the committee felt obligated to evaluate the VEA's current commitment to the spirit of the NEA resolution on merger. As a result, this report seeks to reflect the committee's assessment of the VEA's present responsiveness to the needs of minority-group teachers in Virginia.

RATIONALE FOR A MERGER EVALUATION IN VIRGINIA

The NEA has an obligation to all of its members to evaluate statewide affiliates in states where segregated associations once existed. The NEA evaluation in Virginia is consistent with the spirit of Resolution 66-12. That resolution calls for an end to the organizing of educators on a racially segregated basis. Experience with mergers has taught that while an end to separate associations on racial lines is desirable, the need to retain racial identity within the merged organization is necessary. The purpose of the evaluation is not to find villains or lay blame or urge punishment. The committee tried to find the extent to which the VEA provides for its members full democratic access to all the benefits of the association. The criticism contained in this report is constructive. The NEA wishes to work with the VEA to make both the state and the national associations more responsive to the needs of all educators.
NOTE

The NEA committee wishes to commend the VEA for all actions taken in the area of human rights particularly at its last convention in October of 1970. In an appendix at the end of this report, the NEA committee has included verbatim accounts of VEA convention action some of which was prompted by what has been designated as a self-named Black Caucus which tends to enhance the status of minority-group members in the education profession in Virginia.

BACKGROUND

Before merger, the predominantly black Virginia Teachers Association had a membership of approximately 8500 educators. The predominantly white Virginia Education Association's membership was close to 36,000. Although the Virginia merger plan was accepted by both organizations before NEA resolution 66-12 was adopted, it is apparent from testimony received by the evaluating committee that the merger was hastened by what officials of both VEA and VTA saw as an impending NEA mandate. The merger was facilitated and hastened by the evolvement of school desegregation, particularly in Virginia's urban areas, underscoring the inadequacy and futility of dual organizations representing teachers in the same building and the same school system. In light of Virginia's record of massive resistance to desegregation in the years immediately preceding the merger of VEA-VTA during the 1966-67 school year, officials and members of both organizations are to be commended for taking a bold step in the area of human relations. Although the merger agreement lacks many of the built-in protection minority group members have in other Southern states, one must realize that the Virginia plan is something of a prototype. Much has been learned about the merging of racially separate associations in the
years since Virginia educators took the step on their own. What is missing from the merger agreement must be provided through the years by acts of good faith by leaders of the merged organization and through the guaranteeing of opportunities for minorities to participate in VEA structure, program, and policies. The evaluating committee will make recommendations in this area later in the report. (A copy of the merger plan appears as an appendix at the end of the report.)

COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS

1. There appeared to be general acceptance from all those interviewed that the terms of merger agreement as adopted in 1966 are being fulfilled. The committee received no complaints of violations of the merger agreement. The VEA went a step beyond the terms of the agreement by granting a two-year extension of the five at-large terms of black members of the VEA Board of Directors. This has given black members a total of four years to gain election to the board. At the moment, two elected black members are seated on the 27-member board and three black members will be board members as of January 1972. One of the black members is an NEA director authorized by NEA Board of Directors.

2. Despite general acknowledgement that terms of the merger agreement have been followed by the current leaders of the VEA, there was a general feeling among blacks interviewed that the merger did not produce a new organization. Instead, the VEA prevailed and the VTA was "absorbed." The majority group could easily put to rest any resentful feelings of absorption by actions which acknowledge that a merger took place and that an all-black organization once existed. On this point, the committee wishes to note that a tour of the VEA building did not lead to a conclusion that there had ever been a statewide teachers' organization in Virginia other than the VEA.
3. It is difficult to make an accurate assessment of the changes in membership since the merger. Figures supplied by the VEA indicate that the association has maintained a membership of approximately 96 per cent of Virginia's educators. However, a number of blacks who voiced displeasure with the VEA to the committee, indicated that pressure from administrators motivates some black teachers to join the VEA each year.

4. A major concern of the NEA committee is whether minority-group points of view and special interests are being represented adequately by the VEA. Blacks were given positions on the VEA Board of Directors initially for a two-year period and extended for an additional two years which ended January 1, 1971. There is a degree of black representation on the current board. Blacks are beginning to gain positions of leadership in local, especially urban, associations. A black candidate for VEA president made a strong showing in a losing effort in the organization's 1970 elections. There are signs that blacks are becoming a part of the VEA. The professional staff liaison to the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission (PR&R) is black and his whole area of PR&R was upgraded to "division" status in 1969. However, the committee discovered that while in the past there have been blacks on the PR&R Commission including a black chairman, there are no blacks at all on the PR&R Commission this year despite the fact that approximately 50 per cent of the cases handled by the commission involved black teachers.

5. The VEA staff gradually is acquiring black professionals. Four out of the 18 professional staff at the present time are black. The committee noted however that there are no blacks at the top management level such as an assistant executive secretary which has become a common practice in the more recent mergers. It should be made known that a VEA staff member and members
of some local associations are active participants in the "Black Elected Officials" organization which is made up of black members of school boards, city councils, and board of supervisors along with black members of the Virginia General Assembly. It should be pointed out that the presence of blacks on the staff does not necessarily guarantee that specific black member's interests and aspirations will be represented. Staff members should always be people of both races who possess sensitivity and compassion for all members of the association.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The state association should abandon its current procedure of having nominating committees choose candidates for statewide office. The VEA should require that nominating committees be elected rather than appointed and encourage open nominations. This action would go a long way toward eliminating the feeling expressed by both blacks and whites that VEA leadership is open to only a small "power clique."

2. The committee recommends that the Human Relations Committee, which currently is a sub-committee of the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission be given full committee status. Members of the Human Relations Committee should come from all areas of the state. Membership should not be restricted to members of the VEA Board of Directors or the PR&R Commission. The Human Relations Committee is urged to utilize all relevant human relations resources and continue to call on the NEA Center for Human Relations and the black colleges of Virginia for consultative services.

3. The evaluating team got the impression that some black and white teachers in Virginia believe controversial educational issues which involve race rest outside the purview of the VEA. The NEA committee strongly urges the
leadership of the VEA to take aggressive action on controversial issues which concern VEA members. Problems in the area of pupil and faculty desegregation, teacher transfers and the unfair demotion or dismissal of black educators in the wake of massive school desegregation are the rightful province of VEA. Testimony indicated that 50 per cent of the VEA's PR&R cases involve black educators. The NEA team urges the VEA to appoint a PR&R Commission with equal representation of blacks and whites to recommend association policy in the area of PR&R. The NEA team recognized that the VEA has an Ethnic Understanding and Involvement Committee as a channel through which minority viewpoints may be expressed. However, the committee feels that minority participation should be guaranteed on all association committees in order that association decisions are representative of the total VEA membership.

4. The VEA should strengthen its efforts to recruit for the professional staff when vacancies become available minority-group members who are responsive to contemporary professional, political, and social issues, have contacts with major civil rights organizations, and are committed to creating positive change within the VEA.

5. The NEA committee recommends that some appropriate recognition be made of the merger. This could be done by displaying a plaque commemorating the event in a prominent place in the VEA building. Also, the VEA building would be an appropriate spot for displaying side by side pictures of past presidents of both the VEA and the VTA.

6. The NEA committee recommends that an official history of both the VEA and the VTA be written and published in the "Virginia Journal of Education." Also, the VEA should commission someone to write an official history of the merger. It too should be published in the "Journal" and made available in booklet form.
7. During whatever period of time race continues to be a significant factor in the conduct of public matters in Virginia, the VEA should guarantee that at least 20 per cent of the VEA Board of Directors be black. In order to guarantee full participation of minorities in the affairs of the VEA minority representation should be included in all areas of association policy making including committees, commissions and boards. Many of those interviewed, both black and white argued against the principle of guaranteed representation of blacks. However, the committee feels that under the current circumstances, guaranteed representation will provide the minority viewpoint necessary for democratic decision making.

8. The committee recommends that the VEA continue to publish periodically in its newspaper the grievance procedure a member can follow if he has a complaint about the association or his present job. (See appendix December 1969-VEA News and Virginia Journal May 1969). Resolution of PR&R problems should be similarly publicized periodically.

9. Many persons, both black and white, interviewed stated the need for some type of organizational training. The committee urges the VEA to continue to call upon the assistance of the NEA in conducting statewide organizational training sessions, with maximum black participation, aimed primarily at developing future leaders.

10. In order to insure that decisions made by VEA are truly democratic and representative of the total VEA membership, the committee recommends that the VEA take steps to raise classroom teacher representation to at least 75 per cent on all boards, committees, commissions and appointive bodies that are intended to be generally representative of the interest of educators.
11. The committee recommends that the preamble of the VEA Constitution be revised to include up-to-date goals and objectives consistent with those of NEA which clearly define the associations positions on civil and human issues.

12. The committee recommends that VEA insure that advertisements or illustrations in VEA publications portray racial diversity.

13. The committee recommends that the Ethnic Understanding and Involvement Committee study and make recommendations to VEA regarding how VEA can become more responsive to minority needs.

14. The committee urges the VEA to develop plans for a physical plant keyed to increasing services to teachers and improving membership involvement. A new plant should give equal evidence that the joining of two former associations produced the present organization.
APPENDIX

1. Unification Agreement

2. 1970 Board and Delegate Assembly Actions

3. In addition to these items Board stands are noted (1966–1968) on such diverse social education and human relations topics as:
   
a. Quality Education — including public relations for, full funding of equal opportunity in, and problems of society
b. Education for the Physically and emotionally handicapped
c. Brown vs. Board of Education
d. Character Education
e. Black Studies Conference
f. Ethnic Understanding
g. Political Rights — including registration, voting, running for office, interviewing candidates, taking collective stands on issues, the 18–year–old vote
   
h. Tenure Rights
   i. Teacher Evaluation
   j. Student Rights
   k. Drugs
   l. Environmental Education
   m. Sex Education
   n. Dropouts
   o. Humanities

Additionally VEA Instructional Conferences have brought the following issues to our statewide membership:

   Student Teaching
   Kindergarten
   Sex Education
   Dropouts
   Drug Education
   Ethnic Studies
   Black Studies
   ecology

4. “Black Caucus” Resolutions
President Nancy H. Gibbs presented the following Unification Report at the 1966 VEA Delegate Assembly:

Ten years after the historic 1954 desegregation decision of the United States Supreme Court, the VEA, at its 1964 Delegate Assembly, granted its local affiliates the option of removing membership restrictions.

Since that time all of our 122 county and local units have removed such restrictions with the exception of fifteen. Ninety-five percent of all VEA members are now in local associations which have removed membership restrictions.

In 56 counties and cities there is a single integrated local association to which around 50% of our VEA members belong.

As you know, at the present time the State-Division of Education is integrated, having added several Negro staff members during the past year. All of the meetings and conferences of the State Department of Education are held on an integrated basis.

At the local level not only are schools desegregated but there is a faculty desegregation as well. Local teachers' meetings, workshops, and conferences are held on an integrated basis.

It was therefore, in this context, that in May, 1966, the VEA Board of Directors authorized the President to set up a committee which would meet with the VTA and discuss problems of mutual concern. We participated in four meetings with the VTA. As a result of these meetings, the representatives from both the VTA and the VEA unanimously adopted these recommendations.

These recommendations were approved by the VEA Board of Directors and by the VTA Board of Directors on August 26, 1966.

They have been publicized not only in the Virginia Journal of Education but also in the VEA News and have been the topic of discussions in the eight regional meetings which were held in September. They have as well been the subject of discussion in many faculty and local association meetings.

These recommendations must be voted on as a whole. The reason for this is obvious. It would be both a physical and parliamentary impracticality for us to attempt to change these items here in this body, have the VTA Delegate Assembly vote to change them, and have the VTA Delegate Assembly agree to our changes or modify the changes, then have the changed provision brought to us for subsequent discussion. Such a procedure would be an impossible one.

The VEA Board of Directors believes that these recommendations are reasonable and equitable and if approved by both associations, will result in a unification of the teaching profession in Virginia that can only constructively forward public education.

I should like to repeat the fact that now 95% of all VEA members are in county and city local associations which have removed membership restrictions and around 50% of our members are in counties and cities in which there is a single integrated association.

I urge you to adopt these recommendations.

Recommendations of Joint Committee of VEA-VTA on Unification

Adopted

Recommendations on unification were adopted by the VEA Delegate Assembly on November 2, 1966, by a vote of 1229 for and 250 against. (The same recommendations on unification were adopted by VTA delegates on the following day, November 3, 1966, by a vote of 217 to 7.)

1. Unification of Staff

In order to effect unification, we recommend that the persons who are now on the staff of the VTA whose positions are: "Secretaries—2; Assistant Secretary for Business; and Director of Field Services" be incorporated in the staff of the unified association with titles appropriate to their changed responsibilities. (This recommendation is to be ratiuated if a VTA staff member does not wish to work for the unified organization.)

The committee also recommends that a Negro be employed at the policy-execution level.

2. Membership Restrictions in Some Locals

We recommend that in the event the local VEA-VTA associations have not unified, that the State Association recognize both associations as affiliates until such time as local unification is effected.
3. Representation on the Board
   We recommend for a period of two years that no fewer than five (5) former VTA members be included
   on the Board membership of the unified association. The selection of the former VTA members on the
   Board would be made by the VTA prior to unification with one of the five members elected by the unified
   board of directors to serve on the executive committee for a two year period.

4. Representation on Committees
   We recommend that the following committees be established or maintained in the unified association:
   (The list includes all the committees which were in existence at the time the unification agreement was made.)

   Recognizing the importance of providing the opportunity for active participation in the State organiza-
   tion by all members, we further recommend that for a period of two years the membership on these
   committees be proportionate to the membership of the VEA and the VTA as of June 30, 1966.

5. Regional and National Representation
   The committee recommends that every effort be made to continue multi-racial representation at all na-
   tional and regional meetings.

6. Departments
   In the unification of Departments, it is recommended that the practices and procedures used in the gen-
   eral VEA-VTA unification procedures be followed.

7. Name of Unified Association
   We recommend that the name of the unified association be the Virginia Education Association.

8. Membership Classification of Life Member
   We recommend that, in the process of unification, the membership classification of a life member be in-
   cluded only for those individuals whose initial application was made to VTA prior to June 30, 1966.

9. Building and Finances
   We recommend that, in the event of unification, all assets and liabilities of the two associations be joined
   into one under the new association.

10. Effective Date of Unification
    We recommend that unification become effective as of January 1, 1967.

* Ballots are distributed by district presidents and other aides for secret voting by delegates on unification of VEA
    with VTA, resulting in an affirmative vote of 1229 to 250. By this action, unification will become effective as of January
    1, 1967. Delegates voting represent nearly 33,000 VEA members, VTA members number about 8,300.*
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PERIODICALS


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EDITORIALS


BULLETINS


UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL


MINUTES AND REPORTS


Minutes, Meeting of the Joint Committee of the VEA-VTA on Unification, August 20, 1966.

Minutes of the VTA subcommittee meeting of August 3, 1966.


LETTERS

Letter to Dr. Fred M. Alexander, Supervisor of Negro Education, Virginia State Department of Education, from J. Rupert Picott, Field Secretary, Virginia State Teachers Association, Richmond, Virginia.

Letter from Willard E. Givens to white staff teachers and education associations in each of the seventeen northern and southern states and the District of Columbia maintaining separate schools for colored children. April 18, 1947, NEA Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

Letter from Robert P. Holmes to Division Superintendent A. W. Yowell and the Madison County School Board, Madison, Virginia, October 30, 1946.

Letter from Robert P. Holmes, President, Madison County Teachers Association to J. Rupert Picott, Executive Secretary, Virginia Teachers Association, Madison County, Virginia, January, 1947.

Inter-Office Memorandum from L. F. Palmer to J. Rupert Picott, May 16, 1944.

Letter to L. F. Palmer from J. Rupert Picott, Executive Secretary, VEA, Richmond, Virginia, January 27, 1947.

Palmer, Lutrelle F. Sr., Memorandum from Palmer to Virginia School Division Superintendents advising them of the Annual VTA Convention, dated September 27, 1941.


Inter-Office Communication from J. Rupert Picott to Dr. L. F. Palmer, May 17, 1944.

Letter from J. Rupert Picott, Executive Secretary, Virginia Teachers Association to Robert P. Holmes, Madison, Virginia, January 18, 1947.

Letter to J. Rupert Picott, Executive Secretary, Virginia Teachers Association, Richmond, Virginia from Walter N. Ridley, President, American Teachers Association, Virginia State College, Ettrick, Virginia, July 17, 1945.


Letter to J. Rupert Picott, Executive Secretary, Virginia Association for Education, from L. F. Palmer, Director, Division of Experimentation in Teacher Education, Hampton Institute, November 18, 1946.

Letter from J. Rupert Picott, Executive Secretary, Virginia Association for Education to Dr. L. F. Palmer, Chairman, Committee on Moving Headquarters to Richmond, Hampton Institute, Virginia, May 21, 1945.


Letter from J. Rupert Picott, Executive Secretary, VTA to S. Shelby Guss, President, VTA and Cortlandt M. Colson, Chairman, VTA Committee on Merger.


Letter from J. Rupert Picott, Executive Secretary, Virginia Association for Education to Mrs. Mildred D. Peters, Supervisor Norfolk Public Schools, Richmond, Virginia, October 30, 1946.

Letter from James B. Woodson, Principal, Nottoway Training School, Blackstone, Virginia to J. Rupert Picott, Executive Secretary, Virginia Association for Education.

Letter from A. W. Yowell, Division Superintendent of Schools, Madison, Virginia to the Colored Teachers of Madison County Public Schools, January 14, 1947.
NEWSPAPERS


Editorial in the Carolina Times, Durham, North Carolina, Saturday, December 1, 1950.


VITA

Alfred Kenneth Talbot, Jr.

Birthdate: September 1, 1916

Birthplace: New York City, New York

Education:

1975-1981 The College of William and Mary in Virginia
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Doctor of Education

1947-1949 Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia
Master of Arts, School Administration

1936-1940 Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia
Bachelor of Science

Graduate Schools Attended:

George Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee, 1955 - Special graduate work in Public School Administration and Supervision

New York University, Graduate School Division of Administration and Supervision, Summer Sessions, 1953-1954 and 1956-1959.

University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, Division of Administration and Supervision, 1965.

Professional Career:

High School Teacher, English and Social Studies, Accomac County, Virginia

Elementary Teacher, Public Schools, Newport News, Virginia

Summer Playground Director, Newport News and Hampton Public Schools

Counselor, Intermediate Boys, Children's Center, New York Department of Welfare

Critic Teacher, George P. Phenix School, Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia

Chairman, Guidance Department, Industrial High School, West Palm Beach, Florida

Principal, Carver Elementary School, Loudoun County, Virginia, 1947-1955
Professional Career:


Director, Project for Migrant Workers for the United Presbyterian Church in the U.A.A., in Orleans County, New York, Summer of 1961.


Abstract

The major purpose of this study was to examine the Virginia Teachers Association as a force for educational change in Virginia. The study involved (1) an examination of the primary purposes of the association and their relationship to its educational goals and programs, (2) a review of the forces that generated educational change in Virginia during the period 1940-1965, (3) a survey of the contributions of two of the organization's most influential leaders, and (4) an examination of the process involved in merging Virginia's black and white teachers associations. The historical method of research was utilized in this study.

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following conclusions seemed to be warranted:

1. The primary goals and purposes of the Virginia Teachers Association as well as the program which it projected were of such depth and quality during the period covered in this study that the organization was able to survive and grow.

2. Black educators used effectively the political and social mood of the 1930's and 1940's to build a network of self-help organizations and through these mechanisms contributed significantly to changing the attitudes of the members of the social and political power structure of Virginia.

3. Through the leadership of many members of the Virginia Teachers Association but specifically as a result of the leadership of Lutrelle F. Palmer and J. Rupert Picott the Association made a lasting contribution to the professionalization of Virginia's teachers by the elimination of discriminatory practices in public education.
4. The Virginia Teachers Association seized the initiative in bringing about the merger of the VTA and the Virginia Education Association and thus gave Virginia a single professional organization of educators.

Upon the basis of this research, the following recommendations are made.

1. An in-depth and comprehensive study of the leadership qualities and personal attributes of L.F. Palmer and J. Rupert Picott that made them so effective and creative as executives of the Virginia Teachers Association should be made with the view of possible utilization by those who follow them.

2. Many assume that most of the problems of discrimination and separation that affected educators prior to the period of desegregation and the ultimate merging of the dual teachers associations have been solved. A study is needed to ascertain the degree of real progress in human relations that has been realized since Virginia has had a single professional organization of educators.

3. The philosophy and major activities of the merged VTA-VEA projects an identity that is different from either of the former organizations. What makes the current organization a different entity? Further study is necessary to determine the conditions that caused the new directions of the merged organization to develop. Also, to what extent have organizations been retained? Finally, to what extent have the changes in emphasis and impact of the Association resulted from factors not directly associated with education or the professional development of educators in either of the former organizations. What makes the current organization a different entity? Further study is necessary to determine the conditions that caused the new directions of the merged organization to develop. Also, to what extent have the strengths of the two original organizations been retained? Finally, to what extent have the changes in emphasis and impact of the Association resulted from factors not directly associated with education or the professional development of educators.

4. Further research is necessary in order to determine how the VEA can provide more effective training in human relations and in the protection of student and teacher rights in the continuing school desegregation process.

5. The records, official documents and working papers of the VTA are scattered and housed in the archives of several institutions. For the purpose of conducting further research, in connection with the former teachers association, these records should be collected, organized and housed in a single location preferably the VEA headquarters in Richmond, Virginia.
6. This study reveals the tremendous impact of the VTA especially during its early years, on the educational and cultural improvement of the entire black community in Virginia. Research is needed to determine: (1) the factors underlying these developments and (2) how the momentum of this driving force can be regained and, hopefully, be adapted by other social or ethnic groups.