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The Evolution of Education in Gloucester County, Virginia.

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THE EVOLUTION OF EDUCATION
IN
GLOUCESTER COUNTY, VIRGINIA

by
Norris L. Thomas

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

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THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this thesis is to show the development of education in Gloucester County from 1652 through 1930. The author was actuated by a desire to make the history of education in Gloucester County accessible to those who are interested in its development and to preserve a record for future reference if the need for such should ever arise. As the counties of Tidewater Virginia are similar in their social, political, and economic conditions, it is but natural to believe that their educational conditions would be similar; therefore, the history of the development of education in Gloucester should throw some light on the development of education in other tidewater counties.

As it is impossible to describe in detail the whole history of education in Gloucester, an effort was made to select the most interesting details and to elaborate on these in such a way that a general idea of the prevailing educational conditions would be grasped by the reader. Whenever possible, graphs and tables are used to give the reader a complete picture of the development of certain phases dealing with education.

While preparing this thesis, the writer, whenever possible, used primary source materials; such as Moning, Statutes at Large, The Acts of the General Assembly, parish records,

bulletins, and documents issued by the State Board of Education. He made an earnest attempt to avoid personal interpretations on the one hand, yet to unravel the misty and incoherent records of the past, on the other, in such a way that the content might be of interest to the reader.

CHAPTER II
ECONOMIC AND GEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
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GLOUCESTER COUNTY

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When one attempts to show the evolution of education in a colonial county he must consider the economic and social conditions of that particular area, as these always affect education in its development. The majority of the people in Gloucester County have always believed in education. A boy, whether he desired to or not, was usually sent to a private tutor, an old field school, or an academy, for his training. His mother's knee was his Sunday school, while his father's lips were his code of honor. He rejoiced in taking up his father's ways and preserving them. The Gloucester girls lived an independent life. Their maids looked after their every need, and all that was left for them to do was to make themselves charming. These girls often attended delightful parties where gaiety prevailed. The Gloucester people, like other Virginians, knew no limit to their hospitality. Visitors were entertained with royal fox hunts, parties, weddings, and splendid dinners. If they desired to spend their leisure time in seclusion, they

would find good private libraries consisting of a broad collection of books.¹

In the year 1652 the vast territory of York County was divided, and that part north of the York River was formed into a new county called Gloucester, after Henry, Duke of Gloucester, third son of Charles I.² The newly formed county had four parishes: Abington, Ware, Petsworth, and Kingston. As Gloucester was strictly an agricultural county, there were no large villages in this section. As early as 1667 the British built a fort on the York River for the purpose of protecting the people in Gloucester from unfriendly water-crafts. Several people settled around this fort and called the place Gloucester-town, which never grew beyond the size of a village. During the Revolutionary War, Tarleton occupied the place and destroyed the few buildings that were standing. The place was never rebuilt until a few years ago when a small number of homes was constructed. This is known today as Gloucester Point.

The first county seat of Gloucester was located near the Elmington farm on the present road that leads to Mathews Court House. The county seat was moved to its present location in 1760, and a court house was built.³ The village was laid out as a town and named "Bototourt", in honor of Lord Bototourt, who was then Royal Governor of Virginia. Later the

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1. Robins, Sally Nelson, History of Gloucester County
 2. Green, B. W., Word Book of Virginia Folk Speech, p. 52
 3. Combs, M. L., Educational Survey Report, Gloucester County, Virginia, 1921

place became known as Gloucester Court House, and the name "Botetourt", with the exception of the hotel, high school, and Masonic lodge, which are still known by that name, passed out of existence. On June 3, 1819, the county clerk's office burned, thereby destroying many of the records.⁴ At the beginning of the War between the States, the county records were moved to Richmond for safe keeping. During the invasion of Richmond they were destroyed; however, a few court records that were not moved withstood the destruction of war, and are among the records in the county dating before 1860.

In 1790 a further division of Gloucester was made when the legislature of the state passed the following enactment:

"Be it enacted by the General Assembly, That from and after the first day of May next, the county of Gloucester shall be divided into two distinct counties, that is to say, all that part of the said county lying to the eastward of a line, to begin at the mouth of North River, thence up the eastern branch of the mill pond to the head of muddy creek, thence down the said creek to Piankatank River shall be one distinct county and called and known by the name of Mathews, and the residue of the same county shall retain the name of Gloucester".⁵

This division included the parish of Kingston, thus leaving Gloucester with Abingdon, Ware, and Petsworth Parishes. After the separation of Mathews, the county contained 255 square miles, or 135,344 acres, covering an area twenty-seven miles

4. Gloucester County Court Records, 1819-20

5. Henning, Statutes at Large, VOL. XIII, Chap. XLI

long and eight miles wide.

The county is bordered on the north by the Pianka-tank River; on the east by Mathews County, North River, and the present Mobjack Bay, which was known originally as Mock Jack Bay; on the south by the York River and the Chesapeake Bay; on the west by the York River and King and Queen County. The beautiful Severn River, the broad sweeping Ware River, and several creeks, such as Sarah's, Sedger's, Wilson's, and Poroportank, flow inland, thereby giving access of a water frontage to many places in the county. On these water courses the lands are low, level, and very productive; further back, they are higher and gently undulating. No portion is very far from deep water. The soil is generally a sandy loam, with rich alluvial lands along its many streams.⁶

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As Gloucester was desirably situated from the standpoint of climatic and geographic conditions, people began to settle there at an early date. In 1635, Augustine Warner acquired the first land grant in that section. Prior to this time, the inhabitants of the colonies were very cautious and afraid to branch off into the wilderness. In 1642, Thomas Curtis, John Jones, Hugh Gwynne, and Richard Wiatt took up tracts of land in Gloucester. Others who acquired early land grants were James Whitney in 1643, John Robins in 1645, Thomas Seawell in 1646, Lewis Burwell and George Roade in 1648, Richard Kemp and Francis Willis in 1649, John Smith and Mordecai Cooke

6. Virginia Agriculture and Immigration Report, 1910, page 145

in 1650, and John Page and Thomas Todd in 1653.⁷ Each of these grants included large acreage. It is known that as early as 1664 the planters of Gloucester were interested in raising silkworms, because during that year Major Thomas Walker of Gloucester reported that there were 13,642 mulberry trees planted, and an additional number of 56,155 were planted the following year. At this time the principal cultivated crop was tobacco. In 1682, tobacco was so plentiful that it became almost worthless, and two-thirds of the crop in Gloucester was cut down and destroyed.⁸

In 1710, Gloucester was the most populous county in Virginia. The plantations, small principalities manned by living machinery, supplied every article of home consumption. The life of a Gloucester planter possessed a fantastic independence. He gave a general supervision to his affairs, but a sense of ownership and mastery added zest to this burden. In the morning he visited his fields on his well-kept steed, while towards the middle of the day he usually visited other planters and discussed crops, politics, or any other question of interest. The owners of these plantations were not a moneyed aristocracy, but people who were good providers, independent and congenial. The planter had his own oysterman, carpenter, and blacksmith. Like the master, the mistress of the house had the whole responsibility of operating the home

7. Robins, Sally Nelson, *op. cit.*

8. Bruce, P. A., Economic History of Virginia during the Seventeenth Century, pp. 405-6

and supervising the work of preparing meals and cleaning the mansion. In the evening, she entertained lavishly, sometimes by giving dances, when the negro slaves would play on their fiddles, other times by giving abundant dinners. This marked the life of the average mistress.

Gloucester is rich in tradition and history. On its shores once lived the powerful Chief Powhatan, who ruled his tribe with genius. Here, too, his daughter, Pocahontas, saved the life of Captain John Smith, who had been condemned to die. Gloucester remained the home of the Indians until 1688, when the Chickoyackes, which was the last tribe to inhabit Gloucester, moved out of the county. In addition to the home of Powhatan, we find in Gloucester several mansions that were built by early settlers. These old stately mansions are monuments to the glory of the past. Among these are "Rosewell", the home of the Pagos, which was "one of the most splendid mansions of Colonial Virginia".⁹ This old mansion was swept by fire in 1916. Another old mansion is "Warner Hall", the home of Augustine Warner, who also owned "Severn Hall". There is "Fairfield", which was built by the Burwell family. In addition to these, we find the home of Mordecai Cooke and several others.¹⁰ Gloucester is not only noted for its historic homes, but it also boasts of three old churches: Abingdon, Ware, and Poplar Grove. To these the planters and their families went to attend services. The Abingdon and Ware churches are still standing, and today people continue

9. Wilstach, Paul, Tidewater Virginia, p. 211

10. Stubbs, W. C., Descendants of Mordecai Cooke, p. 5

their worship in them.

The War between the States came; a pitiable era dawned; and silent canoes bore the negroes off in search for freedom. A reign of terror began; the old men, women, and children were left home, defenseless, while the youth went to fight on the battlefield for a cause that they thought was just. When the war was over, they returned home to find their slaves free, their farms devastated, and their homes destroyed. Instead of remaining idle and worrying about the lost cause, these people began life anew. The war horse was hitched to the plow, and the youth began to till the soil, something that they had not done before. In a short time, the fields were in cultivation; and the owners had learned to do things that their slaves did prior to the war.

Gloucester has always been principally an agricultural county; and its people, in the main, derive their livelihood from the soil. The leading farm products of the county now are hay, corn, oats, rye, and wheat. The soil and climate are also admirably adapted to trucking. Such trucking crops as Irish and sweet potatoes, peas, cantaloupes, watermelons, and the like, are raised for the market. In addition to these crops, several of the farmers of Gloucester have raised such fruits as pears, peaches, grapes, and strawberries, to a profitable extent. The raising of poultry in recent years has

been a very successful enterprise.¹¹ The county is fairly well timbered, principally with pines; while oak, hickory, and cyprus are found to a limited extent. This natural resource is used for lumber, railroad ties, pulp wood, and cord wood; and serves to give employment to many people.

Gloucester is very fortunate in having a small percentage of tenants. In 1927, they represented only 4.9 per cent of the total population. The individual who is a tenant labors under a severe handicap. He is at most a shifting element, his average stay on a farm being about two years.¹² His primary interest is producing, rather than improving the soil and working for the betterment of society. With this in view, the soil is usually worked until it is robbed of its fertility; and as a result the community suffers, thus impairing the church, school, and community life.

In addition to being an agricultural county, Gloucester has the advantage of having a long waterfront, where an extensive seafood business is carried on. Gloucester is probably more largely engaged in the oyster planting industry than any other county in Tidewater. The fisheries of the county are very extensive and valuable, employing large capital and labor. A large percentage of the people in the lower part of the county derive their living almost entirely from the water.

From the foregoing facts, we see that Gloucester is

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11. A Handbook of Virginia Published by Department of Agriculture and Immigration, 1910, p. 145
 12. University of Virginia News Letter, February 1, 1927

advantageously situated in that its climate permits the growing of practically any crop, and its situation on the water's edge makes it possible for a large per cent of its population to deal in seafood in addition to farming; thereby placing the people in a position where they are practically independent.

CHAPTER III

EARLY EDUCATION IN GLOUCESTER
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During the colonial period, Virginia, like the other original states, was dominated more or less by the religio-
aristocratic conceptions of school government and support,
conceptions that were common to the thought and practice of
old England. Education reflected the social philosophy and
safeguarded the economic-social interests upon which the
plantation system was built. Under patronage of the Church,
certain parishes in Virginia supported Latin grammar schools,
though it can not be said that even a majority of the churches
did this. In some of the agricultural sections of the state
it was useless for the Church to undertake such a plan, because
the great distance between plantations made it impossible for
a school to have an enrollment that justified its existence.
In this case, as was true in Gloucester County, the Church saw
that the children of indigent parents were given a practical
education, appropriate to their social standing, through
apprenticeship to a master of one of the trades.¹ In some

1. Ware Parish Records. Many children of indigent parents
were bound out in this way.

instances, we find that characteristic English benevolence motivated the founding of the early town charity schools, the Lancasterian schools, the infant schools, the Sunday schools, and other private rural and urban educational enterprises in behalf of the Virginia poor.

The masters of the majority of the schools were clergymen, who were largely educated in English schools. The consensus of opinion was that the people preferred to have clergymen for their teachers, because in 1693 there was a proposition before the Committee on Propositions to the following effect:

"No one shall undertake the education of the youth but such as are the professed members of the Church of England and subscribe to the canons".²

These men had to be upright and sober, and conform in their religious opinion to the doctrine of the Church of England. The people were very much interested in having their children tutored by one who possessed a degree of culture as well as knowledge. There must have been a limited number who undertook the task of teaching during this early period, because a strong sentiment prevailed in the colony in favor of giving all the encouragement possible to school masters in order to increase their number. This fact is revealed by the smallness of the fee which they were expected to disburse in order to obtain a

2. Minutes of the House of Burgesses, Colonial Entry Book Vol. 1882-95, October 13, 14, 1693

license. The fee was a few pounds of tobacco, to compensate the clerk for his trouble in writing out the certificate.³

During the transition from colony to commonwealth, the free common schools were slowly evolving, but their establishment was a result of great effort. Radical institutional changes did not take place. As before the Revolutionary War, there were still two classes of people in Virginia. The upper, or wealthy, class could not conceive the idea of having their children educated in the same school with the children of the lower, or working, class. The lower classes did not patronize the free schools because the name "pauper" had been attached to most of them. With these opinions prevailing, we could not hope for a system of education until a strong middle class developed. Before it could become a success, the state would have to assume the responsibility of popular education as something more than a "pious performance"⁴ or a means of protecting society against vagrancy.

The interest that the churches in Gloucester had in the training of the poor is revealed by the many instances when children of indigent parents were bound out to learn a trade or, in some instances, to learn how to read, especially the Bible. We find recorded in the Vestry Books of Ware Parish that on October 4, 1669, it was ordered that Nicholas Lewis be bound

3. Bruce, Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, page 385
 4. Maddox, W. A., Free School Idea in Virginia before the Civil War, p. 10

out until he was twenty-one years of age in order to learn the skill of cooportunity.⁵ This request must have been executed, because the following extract was found in the minutes of September 10, 1700:

"Bind out unto Hennery Morrish an orphan boy by name of Nicholas Lewis unto him ----- for to instruct and learne ----- ye true art and skill of a cooper",⁶

Later, in October, 1707, we find:

"it is ordered by this present vestry that the church-wardens doe bind out Richard Austin unto Richard Hill and the Sd. Hill is to give the Sd. Austin three years schooling".⁷

The interest of the Church in educating the youth was not confined to the boys alone but was extended to the girls also. On March 22, 1711, it was voted that "Ezekiel Smith be allowed 800 pounds of tobacco and cask at the laying of the next levy for keeping and schooling Jame Holloway".⁸ Many other instances could be cited where the Church provided for schooling or training the children of the unfortunate ones. If a boy or girl desired to have an education or trade, he could usually get it by making it known to either the citizens or the church wardens.

In addition to the interest shown by the Church, we find that several individuals were very much interested in educating the poor children of Gloucester County. This interest

5. Ware Parish Records, p. 60

6. IBID.

7. IBID., p. 91

8. IBID., p. 112

was shown by making bequests for the purpose of establishing free schools. In 1668, a Mr. King devised a tract of land containing about 100 acres to the parish in which he resided, for the foundation and maintenance of a free school.⁹ In 1675, Henry Peasley made possible a bequest for the purpose of establishing a free school for the children of Gloucester. This consisted of a plantation covering 800 acres, 10 cows, and a breeding mare. From time to time, this original gift of Henry Peasley was supplemented with slaves from generous people who were also interested in the training of the youth in the county. When this gift was made, Mr. Peasley ordered that a free school with a school master should be kept forever for the education of the children of the Parishes of Abingdon and Ware. Owing to the sparsely settled community and the small number taking advantage of the school, the intentions of the said Peasley were not exactly carried out; however, the bequest "continued without interruption for eighty years".¹⁰

In 1756, the ministers, church-wardens, and vestrymen of the Parishes of Abingdon and Ware represented to the General Assembly that

".....if proper persons were empowered to lease out the said land and slaves, the annual rents thereof would be sufficient to support and maintain a free school in each of the said parishes for the education of the children residing there".¹¹

After hearing the petitioners, the General Assembly authorized

9. Hening, Statutes at Large, Vol. VII, pp. 41 ff.

10. J. A. C. Chandler and T. B. Thomas, Colonial Virginia, p. 107

11. Hening, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 41 ff.

"...that the present ministers, church-wardens, and vestrymen of the said two parishes of Abingdon and Ware and the ministers, church-wardens, and vestrymen of the same parishes, for the time being shall, and are hereby nominated and appointed trustees and governors of the said land, slaves, and other premises forever, and that the said trustees and governors shall forever hereafter stand and be incorporated, established, and founded in name and deed a body politic and corporate, to have continuance forever, by the name of trustees and governors of Peasley's free school, and that they the said trustees may have perpetual succession and that by that name they and their successors may forever hereafter have, hold, and enjoy the above mentioned tract or parcel of land, slaves, and other premises, with their increase, and that the said trustees and governors and their successors or the great part of them, by the same name, shall and may have power, ability, and capacity to demise, lease, and grant the said tract or parcel of land, slaves, and other premises for any term of years, not exceeding twenty-one years, or for any term of years determinable upon one, two, or three lives, reserving the best and most improved rents that can be got for the same and to take, acquire, and purchase, and to sue and be sued, and to do, perform, and execute all other lawful acts and things good, necessary, and profitable for the said incorporation in as full and ample a manner and form, to all interests, constructions, and purposes as any other body. And be it further enacted that the said trustees, governors and their successors or the greater part of them shall and they are hereby empowered and required to erect and found a free school in some convenient part in each of the said parishes of Abingdon and Ware and by writing under their common seal to nominate and appoint when and as often as they shall think necessary such person or persons as they shall approve of to be masters,

before they be admitted to keep school shall undergo an examination before the minister of the parish in which the school he shall be appointed master of shall be situated and produce a certificate of his capacity and also a license from the governor or commander in chief of the dominion for the time being, agreeable to his majesties instructions; and the said trustees and governors shall issue and apply the rents of said track or parcel, of land, slaves, and other premises for the erecting, maintaining, and supporting a free school and school master in each of the said parishes forever for the education of the children of the said parishes respectively and the said trustees and governors and their successors for the time being shall and may have full power and authority to visit the said free schools".¹²

From the passage of this act until 1814, the rents accumulating for the use of the property were used to support a school in each of the two parishes. The schools were not as successful as had been hoped by the people, but they were superior to the one that was originally established in 1675. In 1814, the people of Ware, Abingdon, and Petsworth Parishes petitioned the General Assembly asking that the proceeds which had been derived from the sale of the glebe lands be placed in the hands of trustees for the purpose of erecting a poor house, a work house, and a school house. They also asked that the slaves which were then owned in connection with the Peasley estate be sold and the money be devoted to the same purpose. The General Assembly granted the request and appointed Phillip Tabb, Nathaniel Burwell, Peter Wiatt, William Robins, Morgan

12. Ibid.

Tomkies, Skaife Whiting, William K. Ferrin, William Harwood, John Stevens, James Baytop, Francis Whiting, Richard Jones, John Lewis, John R. Carey, William Jones, Thomas B. Fox, and John B. Seawell, as trustees who were to transact all business under the incorporated name "Gloucester Charity School".¹³ These same trustees also served as overseers of the poor. From the passage of this act, the gift of Mr. Peasley and the funds derived from the sale of the glebe lands in Gloucester were placed in the hands of the above trustees and managed together. A school house was now established in connection with the poor house, and children of indigent parents were permitted to enroll. As the cost of managing the poor house and operating the school was kept together, it is impossible to determine the exact amount of money that was actually spent for educational purposes. The same organization that was created by the General Assembly in 1814 to attend to the funds of the Gloucester Charity School continued until 1871, when the trustees of the poor were abolished and the office of Superintendent of the Poor was created. During this same session of the legislature, it was authorized that the trustees of the Gloucester Charity School should cooperate with the Superintendent of the Poor in disposing funds belonging to this incorporation, provided no more than the interest was used.¹⁴

In 1886, the board of trustees of the Gloucester

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13. Acts of the Assembly, 1814: "Appropriating the Proceeds of the Glebe Lands and other Property Belonging to the Parishes of Abingdon, Ware, and Pelsworth, in the County of Gloucester, and for Other Purposes." Passed January 25, 1814.
14. Acts of the Assembly, 1870-71, Chap. 501.

Charity School was authorized by the General Assembly to sell a tract of land known as the free-school field.¹⁵ This land was situated in a place that is now known as Robin's Neck. This land was sold in small parcels. Again in 1914, the trustees were authorized to sell additional land belonging to the Gloucester Charity School. Between 1914 and 1920 all the real estate belonging to the charity school was sold. In 1920, the trustees were discharged, and the members of the Board of Supervisors of the county served as trustees of the fund.¹⁶ In 1922, the question of separating the funds derived from the sale of the Peasley estate and those derived from the sale of the glebe lands arose. This was an impossible task, because the burning of the clerk's office on June 3, 1819,¹⁷ and the destruction of the county records during the War between the States destroyed most of the books pertaining to the transaction of business relating to the two funds. During this same session, the General Assembly, after being petitioned by the voters of the county, dissolved the Gloucester Charity School Board and created the Peasley School Board, composed of the division superintendent of schools, the clerk of the court, and the chairman of the board of supervisors. This board was authorized to invest the money belonging to the Peasley School Board in safe securities and distribute the income from this fund to the several district school boards of Gloucester

15. Acts of the Assembly, 1895-96, Chap. 227

16. Acts of the Assembly, 1920-21, Chap. 279

17. Gloucester Court Records, 1819

County in proportion to the school population of the said school districts.¹⁸ In 1924, the Peasley School Board was abolished; and the funds, amounting to \$22,244.66, were turned over to the treasurer of Gloucester County, with the understanding that they were to be placed to the credit of the school board and expended for school purposes in equal amount in the districts of Ware, Abingdon, and Petsworth.¹⁹ Thus the funds derived from the Peasley estate and the glebe lands were transferred to the school boards and expended for school purposes.

In addition to the interest shown by the churches and in addition to the bequests made by generous-hearted individuals for the education of the poor children, the county received allotments from the state for the purpose of establishing and maintaining schools for the children of indigent parents. In 1826, there were fifteen schools in Gloucester County with an enrollment of seventy-nine poor children. During this same year, it was reported that there were one hundred poor children in the county. This represents a very small number, when we consider the population of Gloucester at this time. The total amount expended for educating these poor children between September 30, 1826, and October 1, 1827, was \$420.59. The sum of \$420.59 represents a very small amount, but the educational facilities of the county could not have been limited on account

18. Acts of the Assembly, 1922, Chap. 452; approved March 24, 1922

19. Acts of the Assembly, 1924, Chap. 384; approved March 20, 1924

of finances, for at the end of this same session a balance of \$1069.69 was reported by the treasurer. In this same report, the county school commissioners stated that the funds were sufficient for their purpose and that much good was done to the poor by the institution.²⁰ In 1836, the school commissioners again reported:

"The commissioners state that the funds being ample for the education of all the poor children they could procure to attend school, they have heretofore made no discrimination as to sex. Their interpretation of the term 'indigent' used in the law is that the children educated must be the children of those whom they personally know to be incapable of educating them or orphans without property or income".²¹

By 1850, the necessity for good competent teachers was realized more than it had been in the past. The superintendent of schools in Gloucester suggested the importance of sending children to competent teachers or not sending them to school at all.²² In 1852, a most encouraging report from the school commission in Gloucester appeared. The report stated that the

"commissioners have not visited the schools as regularly as it is their duty, but they can safely say it is a great deal of good resulting from the primary schools in this county. The teachers are generally capable and of good deportment. There is

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20. Abstract of the School Commissioners' Report for 1826
 21. Abstract of the School Commissioners' Report for 1836
 22. Proceedings of the School Commissioners in the Counties
For the year ending September 30, 1849

no preference given to the children of either sex. The school quota for the county is entirely insufficient for the education of the indigent children; and the board is decidedly of the opinion that nothing but a system of district schools will meet the want of the people".²³

During this same year there were still fifteen schools in the county, but the number of poor children attending these schools had increased to one hundred and forty-eight. The total number of poor children in the county had increased from one hundred in 1826 to four hundred and sixty-nine in 1852. For educating these poor children, Gloucester spent \$561.19, making the rate of tuition for each pupil range from one and one-half to four cents per day. Some of these teachers were a Mr. Stubbs, Mrs. Lucretia Buck, and Mrs. Martha Berry. The school in which Mrs. Berry taught was situated in the lower part of Gloucester, about one mile from the present Severn Post Office. On June 17, 1859, a tornado passed through this section and turned the school over while it was filled with children. With the exception of one who suffered a broken collar bone, the children did not receive any injuries.

In addition to the many forms of education that were provided for the poor children, the land-holders of Gloucester put forth a great effort to educate their own children. Some of these employed private tutors, who taught the children in their own homes; others sent their children to be educated in what

23. Second Auditor's Report of the State of the Literary Fund for the year 1853; and Proceedings of the School Commission for the year ending 30th September 1852, p. 51

was known as Old Field Schools; and still others sent theirs to academies. The academies and the Old Field Schools were practically the same, the only difference being that the academies were usually incorporated and employed more than one teacher, while the Old Field Schools were usually composed of one room and taught by a single teacher. The name "Old Field" was given these schools because they were usually established on some vacant spot that was then unsuitable for cultivation. Some times these schools were surrounded by small pines or broom straw. In 1781, a Rev. Mr. Hughes, the minister of Abingdon Church, taught a first-class school near that church. The fact that this was a school of high quality is shown by its fruits in the many who were educated there. Many made their mark in the world and were so favorably affected by the teaching of Mr. Hughes, that one of them, Dr. William Taliaferro, established a school on his own property and secured John McPherson, a Scotchman, to teach. He did this in order that his family and the neighborhood might have the advantages of a school. The enrollment reached seventy-five at one time. Young men from all parts of Gloucester and the surrounding counties attended this school. After two years, this school was abolished, and Mr. McPherson was called to Williamsburg.²⁴

In 1796, a lottery was authorized for erecting an

24. Virginia School Report, 1885: "History of Education in Gloucester County, Virginia", by Robert H. Franklin, Superintendent.

academy on the glebe land of Ware Parish, in the County of Gloucester, to be known as Ware Parish Academy.²⁵ This academy perhaps had no existence, because we have no record of its opening or operation for work.²⁶

In 1818, the Newington Academy was incorporated.²⁷ This academy was made possible by the generous subscription of \$1,000 each from Dr. William Taliaferro, Captain William Robins, Mr. Thomas T. Tabb, Dr. James Dabney, and Mr. Thomas Smith. They purchased Newington, a large and commodious mansion near Gloucester Court House that was formerly owned by the Whiting family. This had a little over one hundred acres of land attached. The academy was first intrusted to the management of Mr. John Smith, a native of Augusta County, who was regarded as a good teacher. During his second year at Newington, he was assisted by Mr. Elijah Barnum, a native of Connecticut, who was recommended to the trustees by Dr. Gaius Deans, a northern gentleman. Mr. Barnum was examined by Dr. Taliaferro and Dr. Dabney, who were noted for their classical education. He was appointed as usher, and remained at the academy one year, at the end of which time he was succeeded by the Rev. Mr. Hughes, who also remained at the academy only one year. The Rev. Mr. Hughes was succeeded as assistant teacher by Mr. Gustavius Schmidt, a Swede, who remained in this position for two years. At this time, Mr. Smith, who had served as principal since the school was organized, resigned.

25. Morrison, A. J., The Beginning of Public Education in Virginia, 1776-1860, p. 77

26. Journal and Documents, 1850-51, Document 9

27. Acts of Assembly, 1817-18, p. 151

The school was now reorganized on a military basis. Colonel John R. Cary was appointed to take care of the boarding department, some of the English branches, and tactical instructions. Mr. William T. Michie took charge of the classical department and the remaining English branches. At this time, the boys even wore uniforms. After two years, Colonel Cary left the academy, and the military training was abandoned. Mr. Michie remained an additional year, acting as sole teacher. When Mr. Michie retired, the property was sold to Mr. John Tabb, with the understanding that the school was to be kept in operation. The school now opened under the care of Rev. William Cairns, who had been called as Rector of Abingdon and Ware Parishes. He held the position as teacher for a period of two or three years. We find that the academy now suspended operations for a few years. In 1851, John P. Scott, an Irishman and a graduate of Dublin University, took charge of the academy. During his career at Newington, he was assisted at one time or another by Mr. John Stubbs, Mr. Roy Jones, a Scotchman named Stuart, and an Irishman named Murray. Mr. Scott was an able classical teacher. He required his pupils to translate English books into Latin and Greek as well as the ancient authors into English. He was a rigid disciplinarian, often "using a good wholesome flogging" as the penalty for idleness. Under his influence, the academy won high esteem; however, after a period of five years, he left the academy, and was succeeded by the brothers Albert G. Stubbs and Robert F. Stubbs. The rigid discipline that had been established under Mr. Scott was discontinued, and affection substituted for fear. During the administration of the Messrs.

Stubbs, the average enrollment was about fifty. The academy was in the full tide of a successful career when early one morning in June, 1838, fire destroyed the building, thus ending the career of an outstanding academy and striking a serious blow to the educational interest of Gloucester County. The Stubbs brothers taught day school until the end of the term.²⁸

Another academy of high reputation was the Benvenue for girls. This academy stood in the fork of the roads leading from Gloucester Court House to King and Queen County, on one side, and Belroi, on the other. It was established about 1825 by Miss Fanny Hughes, a middle-aged single lady with great administrative ability. With the exception of a short period, Miss Hughes was the sole teacher at this institution. She, like Mr. Scott, who taught at Newington, used the rod on all occasions. Benvenue enjoyed a high reputation and was the outstanding educational institution for girls in Gloucester. In 1843, it was burned, thus depriving Gloucester of another educational institution.²⁹ Several years afterwards a large house was built on the site of the old Benvenue, but the enterprise was a failure, because the old academy had lost its prestige during the period of inactivity.

About 1850, the Belle Roi Academy was started. This academy was situated about five miles from Gloucester Court House. The school survived but a short period. On March 15, 1858, the General Assembly of Virginia passed the following

28. Virginia School Report, 1885: "A Sketch of Newington Academy, an Institution of Large Reputation in Gloucester County Some Fifty and More Years Ago", by Gen. William B. Taliaferro.

29. Virginia School Report, 1885: "History of Education in Gloucester County, Virginia", by Robert H. Franklin, Superintendent.

29. Virginia School Report, 1885: "History of Education in Gloucester County, Virginia", by Robert H. Franklin, Superintendent.

resolution:

"Be it enacted by the General Assembly that Jefferson W. Stubbs, John L. Hebble, George W. Smith, Mary E. Hughes, Joshua L. Garrett, Caleb Leigh, John Leigh, Alexander Hogg, and William H. Shield be constituted a body politic and corporate, by the name and style of Cappahosic Academy and by that name shall have power to receive and hold, to them and their successors forever, any lands, tenements, goods and chattels of what kind soever which may have been purchased, delivered, or given to them for the use of the said academy".³⁰

This school had been organized but a short time when the war started. It never did reach the fame that was hoped to be realized by those who inaugurated the idea. After the war, it resumed operation as a one-room school, remaining like this until the session of 1870-71, when it became a part of the public free school system.

The school system in Gloucester, like the other counties in Virginia, was hit a severe blow when the War between the States broke out. It appeared as though the whole cause was lost. Those men who had been teaching left the classrooms in order to fight on the battlefield. Those women who had rendered a great service in the schools left their posts in order to attend to home duties or to help comfort those who were on the field of battle. Many slaves left their masters and took refuge beyond the battle line, thereby leaving every duty to the care of the master and mistress who were not accustomed to the toils of

30. Acts of the Assembly, 1857-58, Chap. 360

everyday life. A few who were exempted from the call for troops taught school during this trying period, but the training that the majority of the children received was at their mother's knee. When the war was over, the men who had fought on the field of battle returned to their homes and found their slaves free, their farms devastated, their buildings gone, and the many institutions that had been built up before the war, a total ruin. In spite of all these handicaps, they began toiling as if the war had never been fought.

Mr. John Tabb, a young man of the county who had fought with the V. M. I. cadets, returned home to take up the task of tutoring his brother. As the majority of the schools had been closed during the war and had not yet been opened, the demand for education was so great that he was asked to tutor a number of pupils along with his brother. This was the beginning of the school which was later known as the Gloucester Academy, a non-denominational institution. During a period of two or three years, Mr. Tabb continued to teach day school, at the close of which time he established a boarding school. To this school came not only Virginians but students from as far north as Canada and as far south as Texas, yet at no time was the enrollment greater than thirty.

The curriculum consisted of Latin, Greek, German, French, history, mathematics, literature, mechanical drawing, and bookkeeping. To assist him in the teaching of these subjects, he employed two teachers. The fact that the University

of Virginia recognized the work that was accomplished in the school and admitted its students on an equal basis with those of other first-class academies, shows the high standard of training at the institution. In addition to the subject matter that was taught, morals and the right principles of living were stressed. On several occasions, Mr. Tabb invited the ministers, regardless of their denominational affiliations, to come to the school and address the student body. Life in the boarding department was wholesome, congenial, and similar to that of a private home.

This academy was a great asset to the county, it being the only school in the county that prepared students for college between the close of the war and 1908, when the first high school was established. After the establishment of public high schools in the county, the enrollment at the academy gradually decreased, until 1914, when the institution was discontinued.

CHAPTER IV

THE STRUGGLE FOR FREE SUPPORTED SCHOOLS

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It is generally accepted that the first American proposal for a more modern state school system was the Virginia Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, submitted on June 8, 1779, by Jefferson, as a part of the report of the revisors of the state code.¹ This plan was on a very large scale and is supposed to have been too radical to be incorporated into the state constitution; however, in 1796, a bill calling for an aldermanic system of schools passed the General Assembly.² This bill provided for local taxes or community subscriptions, but did not mention state subsidy. According to Maddox, the records show that no meetings were held, nor were any petitions for local taxes for the purpose of supporting schools presented to the courts of the various counties.³ Many reasons can be given for the lack of interest on the part of the people; such as, the lack of activity on the part of the county magistrates, the extreme and unnecessary economy on the part of some of the people, and the lack of confidence in the principle of establishing such a system of schools, but the most outstanding reason was the lack of local assemblies or meetings to inform the people

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1. Jefferson and Wythe, Report of the Revisors, LXXXIX, Ford, Letters of Jefferson, Vol. 11, p. 220; Maddox, opt. cit., p. 12.
 2. House Journal, Dec. 22, 1796, "An Act to Establish Public Schools"
 3. Maddox, W. A., The Free School Idea in Virginia before the Civil War, p. 15

or to stir up interest. The average landowner could not bear the idea of having his property taxed to help educate the children of the poor or non-property class. He looked upon education as something that should be paid for, and not as a gift to the people.

A special committee in the House of Delegates offered in the fall of 1809 a bill to appropriate certain "escheats, confiscatures, and forfeitures to the encouragement of learning". This bill passed the House on January 29, 1810, and was signed with the concurrence of the Senate on February 8, 1810.⁴ Under this act, the Second Auditor of the state was instructed to open an account with the Treasurer, to be known as the Literary Fund. The creation of this fund and the increased enthusiasm for schools gave new encouragement to the progressive people of the state, and stirred them to the point where they desired to work until a system of public free schools was established in Virginia. Each subsequent General Assembly enacted amendments or changes to this bill, some for the advancement of the system, others not; however, the foundation had been laid, and despite many adverse occurrences, the fund has continually increased, and as a result, has rendered a good service.

The Optional District Free School Acts of February 26, 1829,⁵ was an attempt to keep abreast of the best experience of other states, especially New York. The schools under this

4. House Journal, February 8, 1810
5. Acts of the Assembly, 1829-30, Chap. 12

Act were to be directed by the Second Auditor, now designated as the Superintendent of the Literary Fund. This Act was an attempt to convert the primary schools of 1818 into a common school system that would include all pupils and avoid the declaration of poverty which was construed to be meant by the Acts of 1818. The Act of 1829 provided that each county be divided into districts in which a school was to be placed. If the people of the district contributed three-fifths of the cost of the school-house, the school commissioners were authorized to appropriate the remaining two-fifths from the money received from the Literary Fund, provided it did not exceed ten per cent of the county's quota. One acre of land had to be set aside, also. The school commissioners were authorized to give \$100.00 out of the Literary Fund quota towards the salary of the teacher when the community supplemented it with a like sum. Schools were made free to all alike. They were controlled by three district trustees, two elected by the annual contributors, and one by the county school commission. The weakness of this Act was that it did not force local taxation on property.

The most convincing data and news that aroused people to the point that action must be taken came in the educational statistics of the United States census of 1840.⁶ It stung the pride of Virginia by having the state's illiteracy published. People who had never been interested in the advancement of

6. House Journal, 1841; Second Auditor's Report, Supplementary Document

education came to the rescue of the great cause. It stirred a new and greater effort for common school legislation of the character that all northern and western states were then contending for.⁷

On October 7, 1841, a convention was held in Lexington, composed of delegates from the counties of Bath, Augusta, and Rockbridge, for the purpose of proposing a plan for the organization and support of common schools in Virginia. The fundamental principles of this plan were the organization of a system of district schools under proper superintendence, and the support of these schools by money derived from the Literary Fund and a tax on property. These principles were deemed essential to any successful scheme for the dissemination of common learning through all parts of the state. Many other details that would possibly help add to the success and help carry out the two main principles were designated. These details were: first, that the people of every county and town should be organized into school districts with definite boundaries, except those parts where the population was too sparse to sustain a school. Whenever twenty-five children lived sufficiently near to attend the same school, there a district might be laid off, for even poor people in such a case may, with some public encouragement, maintain a school during three or four months in the year. Second, the school-house should be placed so that it will be in convenient reach of all and have pleasant surroundings.

7. Maddox, W. A., The Free School Idea in Virginia before the Civil War, p. 131

Third, the house-holders and parents in each district should appoint a treasurer, a collector for the district, and any other school officers necessary. The treasurer and collector were to receive a moderate commission for their trouble, but the trustees should act gratuitously. Fourth, each large county and each two or three small counties should have a superintendent of schools. He should be of good character, industry and learning. Fifth, the counties of the state should be distributed into four equal groups, called sections, with a sectional superintendent presiding over each.⁸

Out of the enthusiasm for better schools which had developed since the publishing of the United States census of 1840, came the two Acts of 1846. The first of these Acts amended the existing primary school Act by inaugurating a system of county superintendents to be elected by the county board of school commissioners. Each superintendent was authorized to act as clerk and treasurer of the board. His salary was two and one-half per cent of all money spent for education during the previous year. The counties had to be divided into districts, and a trustee had to be elected from each district.⁹ This created a uniform system throughout the state. It is claimed that centralized state control over education reached its highest point during the ante-bellum days when this bill was enacted.

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8. Report of the Commission of Education, 1899-1900, Vol. I. Some Historical Documents Bearing upon Common School Education in Virginia, Chapter VI, p. 381, Washington, Government Printing Co., 1901.
9. Acts of the Assembly, 1845-46, Chap. 40. Passed March 5, 1846, "An Act to Amend the Present Primary School System"

The idea that public education was for the poor alone was especially prevalent in Virginia during the period immediately at the close of the Revolutionary War. About that time, Virginia had a strong and powerful upper class and a large group of people in the lower class. As education at public expense or public education, as we know it today, seemed to partake of the nature of charity, the aristocracy would not patronize any form of it, but trained their children at home or in private schools. As the poorer people resented the idea of having the word "pauper" attached to the so-called free school, they refused to allow their children to attend it. Thus public education had to await the development of a strong middle class before it could be successfully established. Despite all of this, several attempts were made to establish free schools. These attempts may not have been as successful as they were hoped to be, but they kept the idea of public education before the public.¹⁰

During the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, the state had established a permanent fund for public education, had provided for the use of state appropriations for school buildings, for employing teachers, and for buying supplies for the poor children; but we must say that the General Assembly seemed more interested in the education of indigent children than of the masses. Nearly half a century was still to elapse

10. Snavely, Hyde, and Biscoe: State Grants-in-Aid in Virginia, p. 44

before public education as a state system met with general approval, yet during this period the counties desired greater state support.¹¹

The fight for public education in Virginia was a gradual process. It came through the untiring efforts that were put forth by those who believed in its cause. Unlike many other enterprises, it did not develop over night. The public school system was made possible by the members of the legislature and the people who continually called meetings in behalf of the system.

The counties and cities near Gloucester put forth a great effort to educate the children in the respective places. The burgesses as early as 1691 petitioned Governor Nicholson to send appeals for a grammar school. In this request, it was stated that the children of Virginia were deprived of a liberal education, and that

"many of the parishes lacked the instruction and comfort which might be expected from a pious and learned ministry, and that they have unanimously resolved that the best remedy for these great evils is to ask for a charter to erect and endow a free school and college".¹²

On October 30, 1754, a convention, with delegates from various parts of the state, held at the College of William and Mary, adopted the following:

"Schools therefore, are of great importance where the youth may have an opportunity of being taught what

11. Ibid., pp. 46-48

12. Stannard, Mary Newton: The Story of Virginia's First Century, p. 313

is proper, of reading their Bibles, of learning their prayers and catechism, where, in short, they may by due management, be insensibly led to think, talk, and act as become Christians".¹³

In addition to these, we find that in 1675 Francis Pritchard, of Lancaster County, left a large estate for the establishment of a free school. William Gordon, in 1685, gave one hundred acres for the establishment of a free school in Middlesex County. In Essex County a Sunday school was opened for the purpose of teaching children to read. In 1819, a similar school was established in Westmoreland County.¹⁴ As early as 1828, Colonel Robert Blakey, of Middlesex County, left a bequest for free elementary school purposes in that county. In 1838, we find that an Act of General Assembly gave the Middlesex County Commissioners \$1,000.00 from the estate of Colonel Robert Blakey for the purpose of helping to establish a district system of common schools.¹⁵ In other counties of Eastern Virginia we find several bequests for the benefit of educating, similar to the above.

In Gloucester County, there were several who worked for the development of education by making bequests to its cause. In 1688, a Mr. King made a donation for the foundation and maintenance of a free school.¹⁶ In 1675, Henry Peasley left a parcel of land for the purpose of establishing and

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13. Perry, William S., Papers Relating to the Church in Virginia, 1850-1876. A Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention Held at the College of William and Mary, October 30, 1754, p. 417.
14. Maddox, William A., The Free School Idea in Virginia before the Civil War, p. 35.
15. Acts of the Assembly, 1838-38, March 30, 1838
16. William and Mary Quarterly, Vol. V, p. 113

maintaining a free school for the poor children of Ware and Abingdon Parishes.¹⁷ From time to time, the original gift of Henry Peasley was supplemented with gifts of slaves, etc., until it grew to be a substantial trust.¹⁸ We find that many of the ministers, especially those connected with Abingdon and Ware Parishes, were interested in furthering the cause of education. The Rev. Mr. Hughes, who is known more than any other for his interest in education, opened a school about the close of the Revolutionary War. This school was situated near the Abingdon Church. In this school Dr. William Taliaferro was taught, a man who was so interested in education that he made considerable effort and sacrifice to secure for his family and community similar advantages. In 1816, we find John McPherson established in the work of education.¹⁹ The school building in which he taught was furnished by Dr. Taliaferro. Others who worked for the advancement of education in Gloucester were Captain William Robins, Mr. Thomas T. Tabb, Dr. James Dabney, and Mr. Thomas Smith. Miss Fanny Hughes was another who made considerable sacrifice for the advancement of education.

In the year 1843, the Messrs. Samuel D. Puller, Joel Hayes, Jefferson W. Stubbs, Edward Sears, William Hobday, John A. Pointer, Richard Jones, A. G. Taliaferro, Robert Taylor,

17. Hening, Statutes at Large, Vol. VII, p. 41

18. Ibid.

19. Virginia School Report, 1885: History of Education in Gloucester County, Virginia, by Robert H. Franklin, Superintendent (1885)

William R. Stubbs, R. C. Curtis, and Gary S. Jones served as school commissioners.²⁰ People who served in this capacity during these times deserve great credit, because it was a time when schools in general met with a limited approval. In 1852-53, Mr. J. W. Stubbs served as county superintendent. He traveled throughout the county investigating the educational conditions. On these trips he would often talk with the leading men of the various communities about the advantages that would be gained from a system of education that was made public for everyone. He wanted to see the day come when the poor and the rich would attend the same school. On the Board of School Commissioners at this time were the Messrs. William Shackelford, G. S. Kemp, William R. Stubbs, John A. Harwood, John W. Hughes, William F. Lewelley, Jowl Hayes, Benjamin Rowe, A. W. Robins, and A. G. Taliaferro.²¹ Each of these worked for the advancement of education, and tried to inform the people about the advantage of a public school system. During this same session, the commissioners reported that the "board is decidedly of the opinion that nothing but a system of district schools will meet the wants of the people".²² This proved that they had been visualizing such a system and had given serious thought to the operation of such an organization. Another man who worked for the establishment of public schools was William ap W. Jones, who became the first county superintendent of

20. Report of the School Commissioners, 1843

21. Report of the School Commissioners, 1853

Gloucester after the enactment of the school laws of 1870. The fact that the majority of the teachers who operated schools before the Acts of 1870 believed in the free public school organization is shown by all coming into the system except one, that of Mr. John Tabb. The reason that he remained out was that he was teaching more advanced classes than would be found in the public schools.

CHAPTER V

PUBLIC FREE SUPPORTED SCHOOLS

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The development of the public school system in Virginia was a slow and gradual process. At first, public education, which was supported and administered by the state, was looked upon as being intended for the pauper class. This idea prevailed mostly during the ante-bellum days; however, it still existed to some extent after the war. The planter or aristocrat could not conceive the idea of having his children educated in the same school and under the same teacher with those of the poor or working class. Since he had always been able to provide tutors for his children, he did not understand why a system of public education, supported by taxing the people, should be adopted. This did not show that the aristocrat of Virginia was opposed to education. He was a great believer in education and realized its necessity, though not as much from a technical side as from the social side. Owing to their social custom, the aristocrats believed that education should be provided like the other necessities of life, and not be made a gift. Some of the wealthy people, therefore, did not sanction public education. In spite of all these obstacles, the public school system was made possible by the acts of the General Assembly and through

the untiring efforts of those who believed in the system and worked for its cause.

At the time of secession, Virginia had developed her social and educational institutions to such an extent that she was looked upon as the social and intellectual leader of the South. However, at the close of the War between the States, she found that all these social and educational institutions had collapsed, and that she was confronted with new problems that had been caused by the war. The state began to devise some means of rebuilding these institutions in order to make the inhabitants of the state good citizens; thus we find that a system of public education was planned.¹ On July 6, 1869, the new constitution, which contained the first provision for a complete system of public education in Virginia, was adopted.²

According to the constitution, the General Assembly elected William H. Ruffner, March 2, 1870, as Superintendent of Public Instruction. Within less than a month, Dr. Ruffner submitted to the General Assembly a plan for inaugurating a system of public education. This plan, after several changes, was passed by the Assembly, and on July 11, 1870, was signed by the Governor.³

The first meeting of the Board of Education was held July 29, 1870, at which time twelve county superintendents were appointed. Before the fifteenth of November, more than one thousand school officers, including superintendents, trustees,

1. Heatwole, C. J. History of Education in Virginia, p. 213
2. Virginia School Report, 1871, pp. 3-5
3. Virginia School Report, 1871, p. 4

etc., had been commissioned. The first duty of the newly appointed county superintendents was to take the census of the school population in order to determine the number of schools and teachers needed in the various districts. Public school work moved on with vigor. In every district in which a vote had been taken, with the exception of one, the question of laying a local tax for the support of education was carried by large majorities.⁴

The first public schools were opened about the middle of November, 1870. By January, 1871, about one-half of the counties of the state had opened or were planning to open schools. These schools were financed by the interest accruing from the Literary Fund, the annual tax of not less than one nor more than five mills on the dollar, the capitation tax, and the funds derived from local taxation in the counties and districts.

Dr. Ruffner stated in his report of 1871 that

"...on the whole, though not entirely satisfactory, the schools were fair, always equal and often superior to those which had previously existed in the same localities, and better it may be added, than could have been expected for an average pay to teachers of thirty dollars a month".⁵

During this same session, there were 130,469 pupils enrolled in the public schools of Virginia.

While the other counties were showing their interest in the educational development, we find that in Gloucester, too, much interest was being aroused concerning the education of her

4. Virginia School Report, 1871. Educational Journal, January, 1870

5. Virginia School Report, 1871, p. 4

citizens, thus we find that during the session 1869-70, by census taken preparatory to the opening of the public free schools, there were in Gloucester County fifteen schools taught by fifteen teachers. On the school rolls were 308 pupils with an average daily attendance of 225. The aggregate pay of these fifteen teachers was \$3,500.00 per year. With one exception, all of these schools came into the public school system. The one exception was the Gloucester Academy, taught by Mr. John Tabb.⁶

At the close of the first session, the Superintendent of Public Instruction requested each county superintendent to submit a report giving the prevailing opinion concerning education in his particular county. To this request Mr. William E. Wiatt, Superintendent of Gloucester, responded: "The property holders, on a large and moderate scale, are opposed to it".⁷ This report proved that the old narrow conception of education still prevailed among the wealthy class in Gloucester; however, this should not have proved discouraging, because each subsequent report made by the county superintendent was better and better.

For the year ending August, 1871, Gloucester reported a total of nineteen white schools and six colored schools. In these schools were employed twenty-one white and four colored teachers, who taught an average of four and seven-tenths months. During this session, the average salary paid these teachers was \$28.86 per month, with an average en-

6. Virginia School Report, 1885, "Education in Gloucester County, Virginia", by Robert H. Franklin, Supt., 1885

7. Virginia School Report, 1871, p. 149

rollment of 627 white and 309 colored pupils, making a grand total of 936 pupils enrolled in the public schools of Gloucester County. The average daily attendance was 399 for the white, and 186 for the colored pupils. The total cost for educational purposes in Gloucester County for this session was \$3,847.20, or about \$300.00 more than it cost to educate less than one-half this number of children during the previous year. This represented an average tuition of seventy-seven cents per month for all pupils enrolled, or \$1.23 per month for each pupil in average daily attendance.⁸

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY

During the second year of the public school system, the people in Gloucester were considerably more interested and put forth a greater effort to make the new enterprise a success. At the close of this session, Mr. Wiatt, the county superintendent, reported: "Public sentiment is more favorable to the public school system. The mass of the people appreciate its necessity".⁹ When we compare this report with that of the previous year, we wonder why the opinion of the people changed so quickly. As I have said, this was due to the fact that the people in Gloucester already believed greatly in education, which is proved by the number of private schools and academies that existed before the war, and that the only thing they had to become reconciled to was the system of tax

8. Virginia School Report, 1871, p. 162

9. Virginia School Report, 1872, p. 25

supported public schools.

At the close of this session of 1873, Mr. Wiatt again reported: "The public school system is going forward steadily".¹⁰ This was due to the fact that the people in Gloucester, like other Virginians, were of a very conservative class, and were slow to yield to changes that seemed to be of a radical nature. They were slow to adopt new ideas, but if they once adopted them, they put forth every effort to make the changes a success. This was typical of the public school movement. The people adopted it gradually; and by doing this, they built on a solid foundation.

The first decade of public education in Gloucester County proved to be very successful. The people who were not enthusiastic over the system when it was first inaugurated had become staunch supporters of the plan, and worked for the cause that now seemed justifiable. During the session ending in 1880, William ap W. Jones, who had now become county superintendent, reported the following to the Superintendent of Public Instruction:

"From my observation, crime has diminished, particularly among the colored; and the colored people seem to have clearer ideas of what education is, and a high appreciation and desire for education. I do not mean to say that the whites have depreciated in this respect, but that the advance is more marked among the colored".¹¹

10. Virginia School Report, 1873-74, p. 26

11. Virginia School Report, 1879-80-81, p. 74

In 1880, there were twenty white schools and thirteen colored schools in Gloucester. These schools taught an average of six and sixty-seven one-hundredths months. In these schools, twenty-four white and nine colored teachers were employed. There were 816 white children enrolled, with an average daily attendance of 413; and 995 colored children, with an average daily attendance of five hundred and twenty-seven. The total enrollment for this session was 1,811, with total average daily attendances of 940, or a little over fifty per cent. For educating these children, Gloucester received \$3,830.00 from the state funds, \$1,852.87 from the county funds, \$2,885.18 from the district funds, and \$7.50 from tuition-
al charges, making a total of \$9,573.55 available for education in Gloucester County.¹² This sum represented about three times the amount which was appropriated in the year 1870. The cost of tuition per month per pupil enrolled was forty-six cents, while the whole cost of educating pupils was fifty-one cents per month. During this same session, Gloucester had one graded elementary school, in which there were enrolled one hundred and eight pupils, with an average daily attendance of thirty-nine. This school was situated in the lower part of Gloucester, known as Guinea Neck. These pupils were taught by two teachers, the school operating a term of seven months.

In 1890, Gloucester County still reported one graded elementary school, that in Guinea Neck. During this same

12. Ibid., p. 40

session, the county reported eight graded colored schools. These operated for an average term of six months.¹³ There were twenty-five white schools and twenty seven colored schools operating in the county during this session. In these schools were enrolled nine hundred and ninety-seven white and one thousand four hundred and eighty-four colored pupils. Twenty-five white teachers and twenty-seven colored teachers were employed to teach these pupils. The salaries of these teachers varied, but they were all very low. The white male teachers received \$25.00 per month in Petsworth District, \$27.00 per month in Ware District, and \$29.28 per month in Abingdon District. The white female teachers in Petsworth received \$24.16 per month; in Ware they received \$25.20 per month; and in Abingdon they received \$29.28 per month. The colored male teachers received \$22.50 in Petsworth; \$25.62 in Ware; and \$20.50 in Abingdon District. The colored female teachers received \$22.00 in Petsworth; \$21.22 in Ware; and \$25.00 in Abingdon, per month.¹⁴ These figures indicate that there was very little difference in the salaries of the colored teachers and those of the white teachers. The average length of the school term in Gloucester for this session was five and seven-tenths months.¹⁵ For operating these schools, Gloucester received \$6,758.77 from the state, \$1,441.83 from the county tax, \$2,103.79 from the

13. Virginia School Report, 1890, p. 16

14. Virginia School Report, 1890, p. 55

15. The white schools operated six months in Petsworth, 5.86 months in Ware, 5.5 months in Abingdon; and the colored schools operated six months in Petsworth, six months in Ware, and 6.5 months in Abingdon Districts.

district tax, and \$9.00 from other sources, making a grand total of \$10,313.39 appropriated for schools.¹⁵ The cost of tuition per month for each white child enrolled was sixty-six cents; and for each colored child enrolled, forty-five cents. Tuition for each white child in average daily attendance was \$1.17, while that for the colored children was seventy-four cents per month. During this session, Mr. W. F. Hogge, who had become superintendent, reported that education would become more efficient

"1st, By judicious expenditure of more money in increased salaries of teachers. 2d, A necessary supply of improved school apparatus and furniture. 3d, A better supervision of schools".¹⁶

This report showed that the superintendent was looking far into the future and was hoping to plan a program that would reach over a period of many years.

In 1900, there were thirty-three white schools and twenty-seven colored schools in Gloucester. In these schools were enrolled 1,344 white pupils and 1,528 colored pupils.¹⁷ The average daily attendance was 739 for the white pupils, and 925 for the colored ones. For educational purposes there was appropriated \$7,199.73 from the state, \$1,680.61 from the county tax, \$2,149.81 from the district tax, and \$46.73 from other sources, making a total of \$11,076.88.

15. Virginia School Report, 1890, p. 26

16. Ibid., p. 91

17. Ibid., pp. 104-111

After thirty years of the public school system, the people in Gloucester had become thoroughly convinced that it was a good plan. The county was educating a far greater number of children now than were being educated before 1870. The organization was better, as shown by the numerous documents by which the county was reporting its transactions to the State Board of Education. During this period, there were times of trials and tribulations, times when it seemed as if the whole enterprise was going to be a failure; but like other great undertakings, it proved to be successful. Those in charge of the schools realized that there were many changes and modifications to be made. One of these changes was the policy dealing with one-room schools. Too many of these were being organized. The superintendent and school board were aware of the fact that a few well organized consolidated schools would produce greater results than several unorganized one-room schools; therefore, they hoped to inaugurate a scheme of consolidation, which, unfortunately, did not materialize until many years later. While the superintendent and school trustees were trying to install a system of consolidation, the people were calling for a system of high schools in which the boys and girls could be prepared for college.

In May, 1905, the remarkable "May Campaign" for better education began. Men spoke in every section of the state, including the most remote settlements, as well as the towns and cities. Candidates of both major political parties advocated

an adequate system of education for the state. Editors devoted their columns to the great cause. One hundred of the ablest speakers of the state delivered three hundred addresses in ninety-four counties.¹⁸ The enthusiasm of the people was aroused, and the state began to make progress in education that had hardly been dreamed of. Naturally, this campaign had a great influence on the people of Gloucester. They demanded as never before a more efficient system of elementary schools and a system of high schools. During this same year, the State Board of Education helped the cause by dividing the state into five grand divisions, each including about fifteen counties. An inspector had each of these grand divisions in charge.

In 1908, the General Assembly passed the Williams Loan Fund bill,¹⁹ which provided for lending the Literary Fund money of the state to district school boards at the rate of four per cent interest. This money was to be paid back in ten annual installments. These loans were to be made on buildings whose plans were to be approved by the Department of Public Instruction. Gloucester was one of the first counties to take advantage of this Act, by borrowing the sum of \$3,000.00 for the Botetourt High School building. As late as 1908, there were many one-room ungraded elementary schools in Virginia. The people who were interested in inaugurating an organized

¹⁸. Heatwole, C. J., *op. cit.*, p. 314
¹⁹. Acts of the Assembly, 1908

system of education managed to have the General Assembly pass the Strode Bill,²⁰ which, in addition to several other school measures, created a subsidy fund of \$25,000.00 for the encouragement of elementary graded schools. This fund was to be pro-rated to the counties that established graded schools in place of the ungraded ones.

During the session 1910-11, there were in Gloucester forty-nine white schools having an average daily attendance of 904, and thirty-two colored schools having an average daily attendance of 879. In these schools were employed forty-nine white teachers and thirty-two colored teachers, making a teaching force of seventy-one employed in the Gloucester County school system. For operating these schools, Gloucester received \$10,368.49 from the state; \$5,295.39 from the county tax; \$7,020.13 from the district tax; and \$199.42 from all other sources, making a grand total of \$22,883.43 available for educational purposes.²¹ This appropriation doubled that of 1900.

During the session 1920-21, the value of school equipment in Gloucester County was \$64,550.00. During this same session, the white schools in the county operated a term of 158 days, and the colored ones operated a term of 133 days, making an average term of 143 days for the county. Gloucester received \$24,885.14 from the state; \$12,190.70 from the county tax; \$14,711.56 from the district tax; and \$5,202.25 from all other sources. This made a grand total of \$56,989.00 available

20. Ibid.

21. Virginia School Report, 1909-10; 1910-11, p. 355

for school purposes, a sum representing two and one-half times as much as was available in 1910 for the same purpose. At this time, there were enrolled in the Gloucester public schools, 1,461 white children and 1,523 colored children.²²

During the year 1921, there were in Gloucester County thirteen one-room and ten two-room schools.²³ The school officials of the county had thought of and had hoped to make some plans for consolidating these, but as yet nothing had been done. Many plans were made, and by the year 1923 consolidation had resulted in the closing of twenty school-rooms. During this period, Gloucester officials not only carried out their plans of consolidation, but also inaugurated a system of physical and health education which was under the direct supervision of the superintendent of schools.

In 1926-27, the per capita cost of instruction in the white schools was \$30.23, and in the colored schools it was \$8.21. The average annual salary for the white teachers was \$720.00, and for the colored teachers it was \$324.00, making the average salary of all teachers \$543.00.²⁴ In this division were employed ninety-seven teachers, who taught in the twenty-seven schools that were operating.

22. Ibid., p. 99

23. Combs, M. L., Educational Survey Report, Gloucester County, Virginia, pp. 24-25

24. Combs, M. L., Op. cit., p. 24

For the session 1930-31, Gloucester County received \$49,557.31 from the state; \$42,000.00 from the county funds; \$2,674.22 from other sources; and \$5,770.82 from loans and bonds, making a total of \$100,002.35 available for school purposes.²⁵ In the county white schools were enrolled 1,413 pupils, and in the negro schools were enrolled 1,056 pupils, making a grand total of 2,472 pupils enrolled. The average daily attendance was 1,224 for the whites, and 866 for the colored, making a grand total of 2,089 in average daily attendance.²⁶ The average length of the school term was 176 days for the white schools and 161 for the Negro schools, making an average term of 170 days for the county. The average salary of the elementary teachers was \$634.00 for the whites, and \$544.00 for the colored, making an average salary of \$508.00 for the county. The per capita cost of instruction was \$22.38. At the close of this session, Gloucester had fifteen school buildings for the white children and seventeen for the colored. These schools were in fair condition. Each was equipped with patent desks. The value of the school property had now grown to \$198,850.00.

The development of the secondary system of education in Gloucester is typical of the policy followed in other counties of Eastern Virginia. During the session 1902-03 there were forty-five white pupils in Gloucester County study-

25. Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1930-31, p. 140

26. Ibid., p. 153

ing the higher branches.²⁷ These higher branches were given in connection with the elementary school classes. In 1904-05 there were four graded schools - Hayes Store, Achilles, Belroi, and Newington - in Gloucester doing some form of high school work.²⁸ At this time, the Gloucester Academy, a private institution owned by Mr. John Tabb, was preparing pupils for college. As late as 1905, Gloucester did not have a first-grade public high school, but yet it was not the only county in Tidewater that felt this embarrassment, for we find that at this time not a single county in the circuit bordering on the Rappahannock River had such a high school.²⁹ During the session 1905-06, there were seventy-seven pupils studying the higher branches. Like 1902-03, these were given in connection with the elementary graded school.

Gloucester reported in 1906-07 two "third-grade" high schools, each of these doing two years of high school work. One of these was in Abingdon District, with an enrollment of sixteen pupils; and the other was in Ware District, with an enrollment of eighteen pupils. For the operation of these schools, the county received \$600.00 from the state high school fund.³⁰ In 1907-08, these two schools had second-grade rating; that is, they offered three years of high school work.

27. Virginia School Report, 1902-03, p. 273

28. Ibid., 1904-05, p. LXXV

29. Hentzole, C. J., op. cit.

30. Virginia School Report, 1905-06, p. 368

In 1908-09, Gloucester reported two first-grade high schools, each one offering a four-year high school course. One of these was in Abington District, and the other was in Ware District. The county received \$700.00 from the state high school fund for the purpose of operating these schools. These two schools together had an enrollment of forty pupils.⁵¹ Gloucester could now boast of having two high schools; one in the upper end and the other in the lower end of the county. The wishes of the people had been realized, and now the object was to make these more efficient.

In 1908, Botetourt High School building was constructed at a cost of \$7,000.00. Of this amount, \$3,000.00 was borrowed from the Literary Fund; \$3,000.00 was paid from the local school fund; and \$1,000.00 was derived from local contributions.⁵² These local contributions showed the sacrifice that the people would make for education. During the session 1908-10, Gloucester reported an enrollment of fifty-seven pupils in the two high schools. For operating these schools, the county received \$300.00 from the state high school fund. In 1910-11, Gloucester reported three high schools doing four years of high school work. Two of these were in Abington District, and one was in Ware District. During this session, five other

51. Ibid., 1907-08, 1908-09, p. 428

52. Ibid., p. 46

schools in Gloucester were offering one year of high school work. In the three first-grade high schools, there were enrolled eighty-eight pupils, while there were only twenty enrolled in the five schools offering one year of high school work. It was during this session that the Achilles High School building was constructed, at a cost of \$1,000.00. Of this amount, \$500.00 was derived from public contributions, and \$500.00 was appropriated by the local school board.³³

By 1912-13, the enrollment in these three high schools had reached eighty-seven. In addition to the three high schools, Gloucester reported having two schools in Petsworth District and two in Ware District doing one year of high school work. In these four one-year high schools were enrolled thirteen pupils.³⁴ During the session 1913-14, the enrollment of the three first-grade high schools was one hundred and twenty-five. No report was made of schools offering one year of high school work, but Petsworth District reported one third-grade high school doing two years of high school work. In this school were enrolled twelve pupils.³⁵

In 1918, the State Department of Education set up certain requirements for a standard four-year high school. A

33. Ibid., 1909-10, 1910-11, p. 47

34. Ibid., 1912-13, p. 47

35. Ibid.

few of these requirements were that the high school term should be nine months, the term of the elementary grades taught in connection with the high school should be nine months, at least three teachers should be employed in the high school department, and sixteen units should be required for graduation. This action by the State Department of Education was a great step toward improving the high school conditions in the state. During the session 1920-21, Botetourt was a fully accredited high school, while Achilles and Hayes Store were conditionally accredited. In these three schools were enrolled 142 high school pupils.³⁶ The average monthly salary of the high school teachers, including the principal, was \$100.56 in Achilles, \$108.63 in Botetourt, and \$110.00 in Hayes Store. In 1921, a new building was constructed for Achilles High School. This was an eight-room structure, modern in every respect, including steam heat and electric lights. This building cost \$22,500.00. In 1922, the Kenney Building of the Botetourt High School was dedicated. This building contained eight rooms, auditorium, library, office, and basement which was used for the agriculture department. The building was completed at a cost of \$33,000.00.

In 1923, a committee from the State Department of Education made a study of the school facilities in Abingdon District for the purpose of deciding upon a suitable location for a high school. The committee recommended that the Achilles

36. Annual Report of the Public High Schools of Virginia, 1920-21, p. 32

High School be continued, that the high school department at Hayes Store be discontinued, and that the pupils be transferred to Achilles or Botetourt. As a result of this study, Hayes Store School terminated its high school department at the close of the session 1922-23. In 1924, another unit was erected at Achilles High School, and in 1925 a third unit was completed.³⁷ Gloucester now had two well-equipped high schools doing creditable work. The high school curriculum of the county was broadened in 1922, when agriculture and domestic science was installed in the high schools. In 1923, the curriculum was still broadened by adding commercial work in each high school. During the session 1929-30, the Gloucester Training School for colored pupils was accredited by the State Department of Education. In this school were enrolled ninety-eight pupils. The school offered courses in vocational agriculture and home economics. There were two hundred sixty-four pupils in the two high schools, and eighty-seven in the colored training school. The average annual salary of the high school teachers, including the principal, was \$114.76 in Achilles, \$114.59 in Botetourt, and \$86.66 in the colored training school.³⁸

37. Combs, M. L., op. cit., pp. 24-25

38. Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1930-31, p. 54

Summary

As shown in Chart I, the percentage of white school population attending school during the session of 1870 exceeded the percentage of negroes attending by over fifty per cent; and from 1880 through 1930, the percentage of whites attending school was a gradual increase over the Negroes attending. This chart also shows that there has been a gradual increase in the white school population through 1920, when a decrease is noted. The Negro school population reached its highest number in 1900, and then gradually decreased through the year 1930.^a

Year	Population (Total in Co.)			Number of Pupils enrolled in School		
	White	Negro	Total	White	Negro	Total
1870	4782	5429	10211	627	309	936
1880	5542	6534	11876	816	995	1811
1890	5437	6216	11653	997	1484	2481
1900	6224	6608	12832	1344	1528	2872
1910	6570	5907	12477	1552	1427	2779
1920	6315	5581	11894	1461	1523	2984
1930	6652	4367	11019	1413	1056	2469

According to Chart II, the total number of pupils attending school gradually increased until 1900. From 1900 to 1910, the number of pupils enrolled decreased; however, from 1910 to 1920, another increase was shown. Due to the decrease of Negroes, the total enrollment showed a marked decrease from 1920 to 1930.

Chart III shows that there was a continual increase in the number of schools from 1870 through 1910. From 1910 through 1920, over fifty per cent of these schools were closed, and from 1920 to 1930 consolidation still continued.

Graph I shows that the length of the school term increased from 1870 to 1880, when it began to decrease. The decrease continued until 1900, when the length of the school term began to increase again. This increase continued through 1930.

Graph II pictures to us the appropriations for school purposes in Gloucester County. The appropriations gradually increased until 1900, when they began to double every ten years. From this graph we see also that the state and the local appropriations have been about equal.

CHART I

Year	School Population (5-21 years)			Number of Pupils enrolled in School			Percentage of School Population enrolled		
	White	Negro	Total	White	Negro	Total	White	Negro	Total
1870	1648	1865	3515	627	309	936	38	16	26.6
1880	1856	2573	4429	816	995	1811	44	38	40.8
1890	2235	2752	4987	997	1484	2481	51	50	50.5
1900	2088	2862	4960	1544	1528	2872	60	55	57.8
1910	1806	2140	3946	1552	1427	2779	75	65	70.6
1920	1851	1939	3770	1461	1523	2984	79.7	78.2	79
1930	1949	1761	3709*	1413	1056	2469	72.5	60	66.6

* Ages 7 - 19

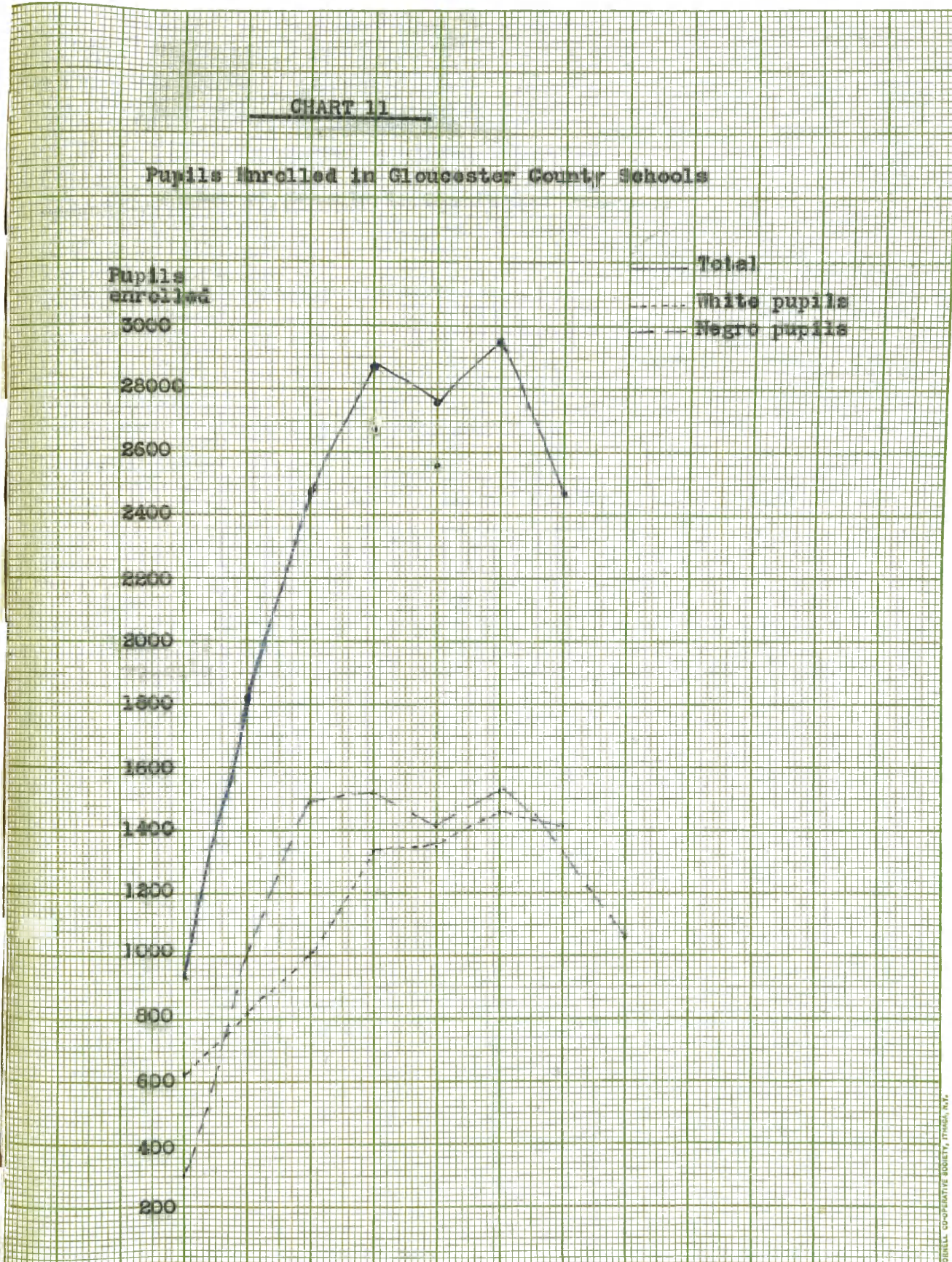
CHART 11

Pupils Enrolled in Gloucester County Schools

Pupils enrolled
5000
28000
2600
2400
2200
2000
1800
1600
1500
1400
1300
1200
1000
800
600
400
200

— Total
- - - White pupils
- - - Negro pupils

Years 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930



GRAPH 1

Length of School Term in Gloucester County

Days

180

160

140

120

100

80

60





40

20

Years 1870 1880 1890 1900 1920 1920 1930

GRAPH 11

School Appropriations for Gloucester County

-  State appropriation
-  County appropriation
-  District appropriation
-  Other appropriations

Dollars

100000

90000

80000

70000

60000

50000

40000

30000

20000

10000

Years

1870

1880

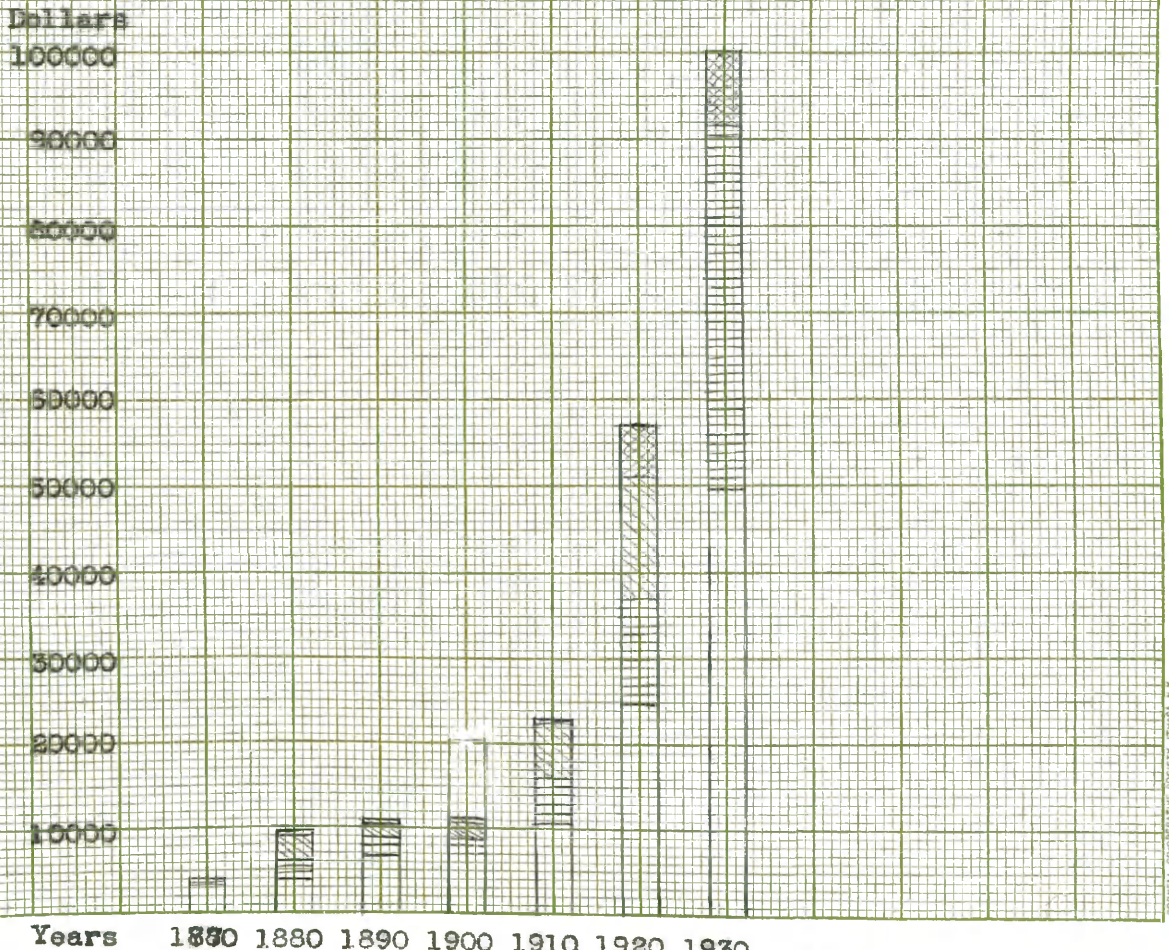
1890

1900

1910

1920

1930



CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

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SUMMARY

The battle for making education a democratic institution began as early as 1779, when Thomas Jefferson introduced his bill for the "More General Diffusion of Knowledge", and continued until 1870. The people on the whole believed in a system of education, and adopted it gradually. In 1869, the people adopted the system of public education because during the previous year they had been prepared for its inauguration. The idea was not new to them; it was not a scheme hatched over night, but a system that Virginia was gradually working toward all the time. Like the majority of Virginians, the people in Gloucester believed in education. They put forth every effort to have their children educated. When the country was sparsely settled, the planters hired their own private tutors and had them educate their children. As the county became more thickly populated, private schools were established, and many of the planters sent their children to these in order for them to receive their training. In a short time, we find that academies began to be established in the county, and as many as two or three teachers were employed in each of these. The curricula usually consisted of Latin, Greek, French, literature, and mathematics, thus giving the student a

classical education.

While the Gloucester planter was looking out for the education of his own children, the children of the indigents were being cared for also. The churches on several occasions arranged to have these children bound out, in order that they might learn a trade or learn to read. In addition to the church, several men, among them Mr. King and Mr. Peasley, made bequests for the purpose of educating the poor children of the county. Anyone in Gloucester who desired an education could get it by making his wants known.

After the passage of the Public School Acts of 1870, Gloucester adopted the system, yet several of the people were somewhat skeptical of it. They were not skeptical of the plan because they were opposed to education, but because they were opposed to the system being used. They believed that education should be acquired like other necessities of life; that is, paid for if you were able to do so. As early as the second year after the adoption of this plan, the majority of the people realized that it was for a good purpose, and therefore became reconciled to it. This showed that they were open-minded and ready to accept changes that were good and just. At the beginning of the public school system, the elementary schools in general were stressed; however, about 1890, the county began to emphasize the elementary graded school. In 1908, the county reported its first high school. Since that time, efficiency has been stressed, and today Gloucester has a creditable system of education.

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VITA

Norris L. Thomas

Born January 5, 1905.

Attended the elementary schools in Gloucester County, Virginia from 1913 to 1920.

Attended Ashlles High School from 1920 to 1924. Graduated June, 1924.

Attended the College of William and Mary from 1924 to 1926.

Served as Principal of Seaford Elementary School, York County, Virginia from 1926 to 1928.

Attended the College of William and Mary during the summer sessions of 1927 and 1928.

Attended the College of William and Mary during the session 1928-1929. Received the A. B. degree September, 1929.

Served as Principal of Apple Grove High School, Louisa County, Virginia during the session 1929-1930.

Attended the College of William and Mary during the summer sessions of 1931, 1932, and 1933.

Served as Principal of Fagessen High School, York County, Virginia from 1930 to 1934. Reappointed to the position for the session 1934 and 1935.