

Out-of-School Teachers

M. L. CARPER

THE RAPID GROWTH of population in war-crowded Norfolk County, Virginia, accompanied by more than a normal loss of teachers, has brought about the use of many outside persons in various aspects of the school program, both as regular teachers and as resource persons. Although the best procedures for discovering and using such persons have not yet been developed, there is a recognition of the great potentialities of this source of learning, and plans for its use are gradually taking shape.

In 1940 there were 6,776 pupils enrolled in the Norfolk County schools. By 1943 the enrollment had increased to 15,345. Three entirely new school communities, one of which has a membership of 2,750 pupils, have sprung into being. The established communities have also felt the impact of the expansion, enrollment in some of the schools having more than doubled. Al-

though 169 new classrooms have been built in the county, many of the schools are operating on shifts and using auditoriums, gymnasiums, and all other available space for classrooms. The teaching personnel has increased from 215 to 471 since 1940. Of this number only twenty-eight white teachers have been in the county ten or more years. In spite of the fact that many of the regular teachers have left the profession for more lucrative jobs in defense industries and a relatively few beginning teachers have come into the system since 1940, a large percentage of the present teaching force are college graduates and none has less than two years of college training.

More than 50 per cent of the teachers are married. Some are permanent members of the community; others are recent additions who are here for the duration only. In both groups most of the teachers are motivated by a high spirit of patriotism. They do not want to see the children become victims of closed schools or suffer the disadvantage of having inexperienced teachers.

A Musician, an Actor, a Lumberjack . . .

Classroom teaching is actually only a minor part of the total participation of out-of-school teachers in the school program. The wealth of background and experience of the people who make up the community in the Norfolk de-

The teachers of the Norfolk County Public Schools have found themselves all but submerged by the flood of children pouring into their classrooms since war activities began to boom in Tidewater Virginia. They are solving their difficulties by making new use of community resources—finding new persons to teach and new ways of teaching. How the necessity for meeting an emergency has actually broadened the school program is described in this article, prepared by M. L. Carper, Director of Instruction of the Norfolk County Schools, with the assistance of Norfolk County teachers.

fense area is of inestimable value as a resource for enriching the classroom experience of the children. One can find persons who have traveled and lived in countries all over the world; members of the Byrd Antarctic Expedition, professional musicians, actors, athletes; persons who have lived in the lumber camps of the Northwest, in mining towns, and Indian reservations and who have worked in almost every conceivable type of job.

The policy of the School Board and the professional leaders of the county is to develop a school program which meets the needs of the people in the county through the participation of all concerned. One of the first steps in such a process is acquainting the people with this point of view, discovering their interests and abilities and planning for group cooperation. Every opportunity to talk, study, and work with individuals and groups has been increasingly used.

The Community Organizes Work-Study Groups

The school principals and supervisors are organized into a professional study group in which general planning is done; they, in turn, are leading their faculties in work-study groups. Persons from the Department of Education of the College of William and Mary and the supervisory staff of the county are serving as consultants. Many of the faculty study groups now include parents and pupils. The schools are analyzing their problems and organizing to work on them through the work-study program. Surveys of resources, including human resources, are being made. The special abilities of persons in the com-

munity and the various ways in which their contributions may be worked into the school program are recorded on a small card. Organizations in the county, such as the Parent-Teachers Association, civic clubs, and church groups, are being acquainted with the needs of the schools and brought into school planning in such a way that they are of great assistance in tapping new resources.

The parents, through the Parent-Teachers Association, are participating in study groups, serving as room mothers, selecting, cataloguing, and distributing teaching materials, keeping in touch with sick and absent children, assisting in clinics, operating lunchrooms, planning and obtaining playground equipment, and sharing in numerous other activities.

Willing Workers Volunteer

Many parents have volunteered their services when teachers could not be found for newly formed groups or while regular teachers are assisting other members of the school staff. One parent is serving without compensation as a full-time librarian in one of the elementary schools because she wants to contribute toward winning the war.

A county-wide recreation program was inaugurated and operated jointly by the Department of Welfare and the School Board last summer. Funds were made available by the Board of Supervisors to pay the salary of a director and an assistant in each community. The program was dependent from the beginning on the additional help provided by volunteer workers, many of them especially skilled in recreational activities.

The cafeterias which are operated by the Parent-Teachers Association on a non-profit basis are serving a large percentage of the children enrolled in school. The necessity for providing low cost meals has forced some places to reduce the normal number of paid helpers. Parents again relieved the situation by volunteering to help in preparing and serving meals. Some who could not leave home to work in the cafeteria have aided by canning fruits and vegetables. Another service in the lunchroom provided by the parents and high school girls is to assist the smaller children in selecting their lunches and to eat with them at their tables in order to create a wholesome family atmosphere even though the dining-room is crowded and operating on shifts.

A Saw and a Paintbrush

One of the objectives for the year has been the beautification of the classrooms and buildings. Teachers and pupils have been encouraged to make their classrooms attractive and comfortable places in which to live. Skilled workers have given their time freely to work with teachers and children in planning and actually doing the job of painting and repairing tables, walls, and bulletin boards and making bookcases, flower stands, and other school furnishings.

One teacher reports: "The people from the community did a fine job, a better job than ordinary workers because of their interest. With each improvement the children became more interested, and the spirit of cooperation and appreciation prepared the way for many valuable learning situations."

Many persons have been brought

into the classroom to work with the teachers and pupils. A project reported by one of the teachers illustrates the way such persons may contribute to school activities.

"While we were studying South America in the sixth grade," writes the teacher, "one member of the class told us of a man in her neighborhood who had lived in South America. The class suggested that she ask him to visit the school and tell the children of the things he had seen there. He sent regrets, saying he was not an educated man and could not make a talk at school. The pupils and I wrote a note to him, addressing him as Uncle Charley, that being the only name by which the child knew him. We asked him to come and sit with us, see our work, and let us ask him questions. He consented to do this. He told us of the large snakes and the monkeys and crocodiles in the jungles, and of the peasant people. He described the coffee and pineapple plantations and made them much more real to the class.

"We were also fortunate to have a visitor who had lived in the Panama Canal Zone for many years. I had once talked with him on the bus coming to school, and I had found him interesting. He explained, using the blackboard, how the locks work and why they are necessary. This first-hand information meant a great deal more to the children than studying the facts in books."

Let's Know Our Resources

The best use of people as resources for learning does not "just happen," as one might infer from the illustrations given. Wide-awake teachers and pupils will quite often run across persons un-

expectedly who can participate in their activities. This hit-or-miss process of finding out-of-school teachers may be the beginning of a better-planned program because it does help the teacher to see that the school program can be enriched tremendously by outside persons. One cannot depend upon this process, however, to discover such people nor feel that it is a guarantee that the special abilities brought to light will be used after they are found.

To achieve the best use of out-of-school teachers, the school must keep an up-to-date record of its resources. The teachers and pupils must know of the resources and plan their program carefully to use them at the most appropriate time. Above all, the administration must be committed to this point of view and work cooperatively with the teachers and others in evolving a program which will meet the needs of the community.

A Teacher's **Dilemma**



ELIZABETH P. STEIN

AFTER EIGHT YEARS of teaching, I am beginning to reap dividends in the form of a reversion of pedagogical techniques. The children are now teaching me. With the volubility of their discourse on P-38's, Flying Fortresses, Liberators, et al.—I am getting so inflated with information that I ex-

pect to take off any day. It is taking a global war to make me realize how stodgy I had become—and to make me appreciate the perspicacity of pupil *versus* teacher.

Before this renaissance, I had begun to despair. I was continually conscious of trying to "bring down" my mentality-level to that of my 7- and 8-year-old pupils. But, like the proverbial hare, I fell asleep by the wayside and they are now surpassing me.

It was not without reason that I had so long doubted this budding intelligence. I recall many of the *faux pas* they made, their incorrect, and tragically humorous responses on examination papers.

Now, I do not contend that my

This delightful story about a modern teacher's troubles comes from Elizabeth P. Stein, second grade teacher in Maple Shade, N. J., and is reprinted here through the courtesy of the New Jersey Educational Review. Judging from Miss Stein's experiences—and her own confessions—there is no limit to what a teacher can learn from her students. "Life itself is a continual process of learning," believes Miss Stein. "We learn from our children—and from all humanity."

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