

Segregated Schools in Amelia County, Newspaper articles (page 1 of 2)

**26 Negroes Finish
Amelia High School**

**Exercises Friday Mark Close
of Successful Year in Fine
New Building**

The 26 members of the first graduating class at the new Negro high school in Amelia county will receive their diplomas at exercises in the school auditorium tomorrow night. Baccalaureate services were held Sunday, the sermon being preached by Rev. J. T. Hill of Second Baptist church, Richmond.

Dr. J. B. Brown, of Zion church, Petersburg, will deliver the commencement address Friday night. He will be introduced by H. N. Randolph, the agricultural instructor. The principal, W. A. Brown, will present the awards, and Miss Hilda Hall will give a summary of the work of the school year.

Sarah Courtney Robinson, daughter of John and Martha Robinson, will be valedictorian, and Josephine E. Tyler, daughter of Mrs. Mary Tyler, salutatorian.

Other graduates are: Everett Banks, John Branch, Nannie Delaney, Channie Gray, Charles Harris, Conrad Harris, Marion Holmes, Anna Jeter, Helen Johnson, Graham Johnson, Lillian Johnson, Jessie Johnson, Grace Jones, Ola McGee, Helen Mays, Elnora Ross, Geneva Richardson, Ellwood Richardson, Alvin Scott, Henry Swann, William Swann, Virginia Walton, Blanche Ward and Irving Wright.

170 Enrolled in High School

There were 170 pupils in the high school department this year. The year has been one of great progress and a special effort is being made to have the school accredited. Splendid work has been done in all branches. Many of the boys have taken vocational agriculture under Prof. Randolph and 80 girls have taken home economics under Miss Kane.

The colored people of the county are very proud of the fine brick high school building toward the cost of which they provided \$5,000. Of this sum the Negroes of the county raised \$3,500, and \$2,000 was obtained from the Jeanes Fund. Five school buses carry students to and from the school. The cost of the buses is paid in part by the county. The cost to the parents in the past years has been \$2 per child.

Citation: "26 Negroes Finish Amelia High School," *Virginia Southside News*, May 20, 1937,
Library of Virginia, online at *Virginia Chronicle*.

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Uses Wool Cards

Woman Still Makes Quilts As Her Grandmother Did

By Hamilton Crockford
JETERSVILLE, Dec. 27 -- A slight woman made of iron makes some handsome quilts at her house north of here, and makes them right from scratch.

It's the softest job she ever had.

It's a pin money project with Mrs. Lettie Robinson, who is 76 now, but lives alone and likes the independence on a small farm near the west side of Amelia County.

Time was when it took a passel of projects and a good many pins just to hold things together, she says, though a daughter and a schoolteacher granddaughter would each like to fetch her home with them now.

They are aunt and niece, but just two years apart in age, she explained, and she put them both through college at the same time—one at St. Paul's at Lawrenceville and one at Virginia State—via the projects. Her husband, John W. Robinson, died the July 1 before they started college, 18 years ago.

Education was her preoccupation: She had just a year in school herself.

The quilting began before that, when she was a child in Hanover County. She learned it from her grandmother, she said, and still has the wool cards with the myriad of prickly steel fingers that her grandmother used to make the wool into batts as a slave before the Civil War.

"White people came from far and near" to buy quilts from her mother in Hanover, and she herself has made 100, she figures—but not so many for a while after she moved out here 39 years ago.

Her older daughter died, and

she raised the granddaughter with the other daughter. She got them educated, and some more.

Her own one school year was the seventh grade, at 14, she said. She'd had to go to work at 10. "But the lady I lived with had been a teacher. She taught me many things, and I'm very grateful to her. I carried my books everywhere. I loved history. . . ."

When her children were in grade school, she said, she drove her model T as a bus, hauling pupils for years. "When they were finishing, 21 years ago, there was no high school in Amelia for colored children; they had to go to Nottoway. I couldn't pay tuition. . . ."

She circulated a petition, she said; one woman helped; the two went before the school board and asked for one room to start. When they found an auditorium at a church could be had, the board agreed to try it—"but the superintendent warned us the law said you had to have 35 pupils, and if we didn't get them there, he would have to close it up."

"We got our cars and took them. We had 92 there the second year, and two teachers. By then the board saw we were so determined, they started that high school we have now at Amelia." Russell Grove High started up in 1935. . . .

When Robinson died, the debts stood at \$2,000, she recalled. She paid interest through the four college years. She managed to sell some timber and pay part off.

"I did a lot of praying and I did a little bit of cussing, too," Lettie Robinson said. "But I don't owe a nickel on it now. . . ."

Citation: "Woman Still Makes Quilts as her Grandmother Did," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Dec. 28, 1955.