

Knox Academy

Selma, Alabama.

GLIMPSES
OF THE
MISSIONARY OPERATIONS
OF THE
Reformed Presbyterian Church
TO THE
FREEDMEN
IN
SELMA, ALABAMA
AND
VICINITY
1911



W. J. SANDERSON, Supt.

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PREFACE.

This booklet is not intended to give a history of the Missionary efforts of the Reformed Presbyterian Church among the Freedmen in the regions of Selma; nor is it intended to contain a full account of the work being done at the present time, for to contain such an account a book of no mean proportions would be required; nor yet is it intended to be a manual for those who might wish to study this field to learn more of the work that is being done and the greater work that needs to be done if conditions are to be adequately met, and great moral and social problems rightly solved.

These few pages are intended simply to give to those who may not be able to visit the field a few glimpses, by word and picture, of the work being attempted in the hope that by thus seeing a little, a more intense and self sacrificing interest may be awakened in behalf of this corner of the Master's Vineyard until abundant gifts for it shall be offered and hearts enlarged in the prayer that "Ethiopia may stretch out her hands unto God"

Observer, catch the glimpses here presented of a work in progress and invest your means and life in it for the Lord's sake and humanity's is the prayer of your servant who with others is attempting to fill a place in carrying it on.



KNOX ACADEMY PUPILS

KNOX ACADEMY BUILDING

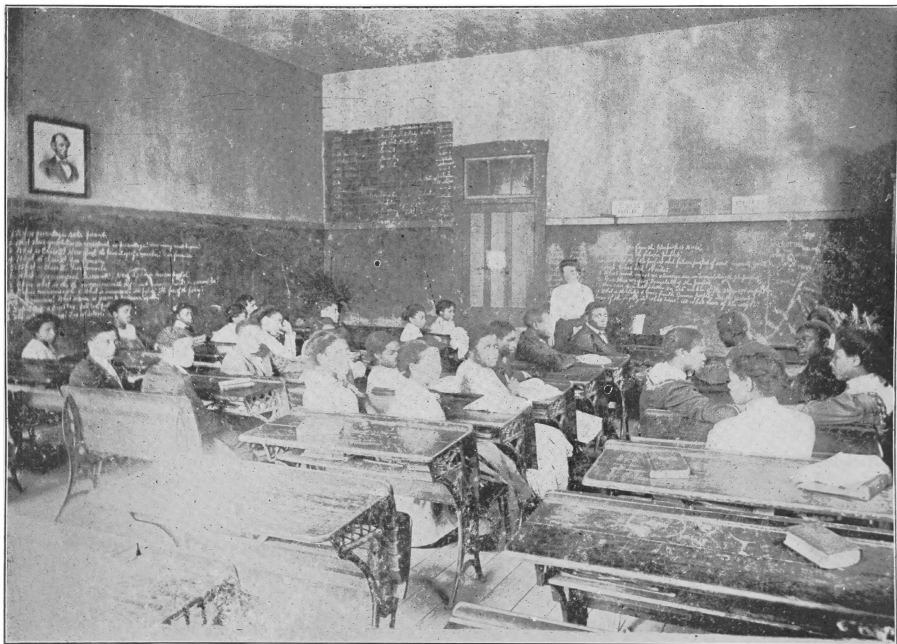
Is a three story brick structure and is the hub of the school life. The building was erected in 1881 and is located in the west side of Selma, a city of 16,000 inhabitants, of whom over 10,000 are colored. The first floor of the building is occupied by Grades Nos. 1, Annex 1, 2 and 3. On the second floor are the Grammar School, High School, Superintendents Office, Recitation Room and Chapel with a seating capacity of 450 which is often more than taxed with an enrollment of 600 in the Academy. On the third floor are Grades Nos. 4, 5 and 6, the sewing room where the girls are taught sewing, and the clothes room where the barrels and boxes sent to the Mission are unpacked and whence the contents are distributed. The pupils are under discipline from the time they enter the grounds. They line up, the girls on one side of the building and the boys on the other, and march into the rooms and chapel accompanied by music on piano and triangle, and in like manner they march out. The sight is more than impressive to see them march thus five and six hundred strong. One is made to feel a responsibility and wonders what of the future. The Bible and Catechisms are taught one-half hour every day and recited once a week by grades in Chapel. The upper grades commit from 10 to 20 verses every week and thus the word is not only studied but well planted and some glorious fruitage it must bear.

HIGH SCHOOL

The High School department of the Academy has four grades, 9, 10, 11 and 12, and 45 pupils are in it this year. Few, comparatively, of those who pass the lower grades go through the High School. In Grade 6 and the Grammar school the dropping out of pupils is most noticeable. The lack of means is often given as the reason why schooling must terminate at this stage. It is to be regretted that the school life of the average negro youth is as short as it is but it is encouraging to see it lengthening. The course in this department compares favorably with the High School Course in White schools. Literature, Economics, Pshysics, Algebra, Geometry and Latin represent the highest studies taught. This course furnishes the negro youth with none too much mental equipment with which to face successfully their higher problems of life.

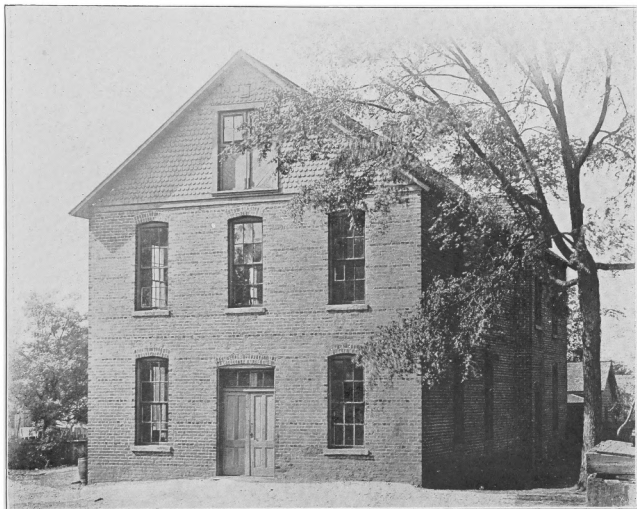
BOYS INDUSTRIAL BUILDING

Industrial education is important for any people; for the Negro it is imperative. It is imperative for two reasons, first to eliminate from the mind the thought that any legitimate manual labor is degrading, and to instill the opposite thought, the dignity of it. One of the fruits of slavery is a wrong conception of work. Second, to give the ability to do the most necessary kinds of work skilfully and well. In slavery the negro did not depend upon a calling for a living. He was worked in an occupation (for



HIGH SCHOOL ROOM

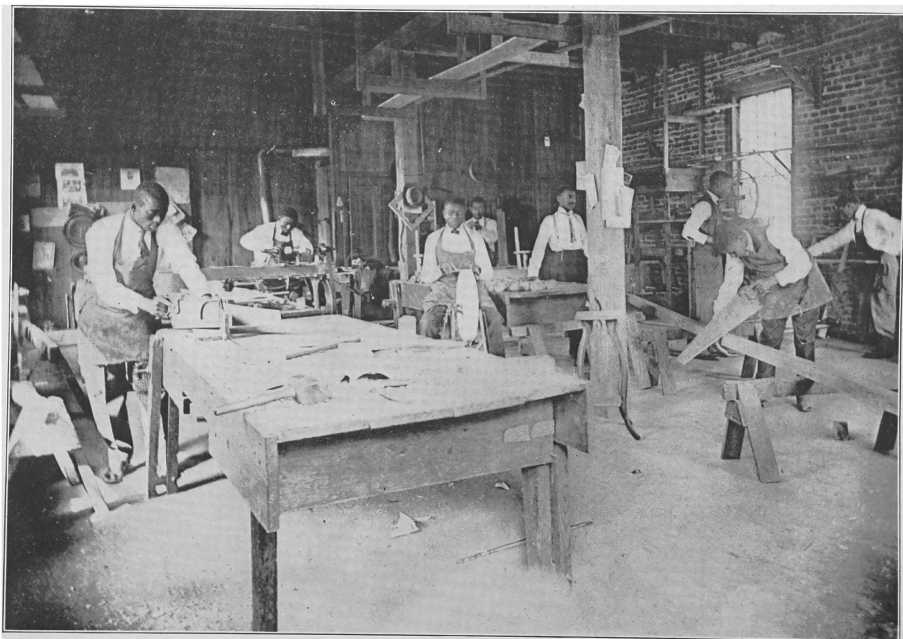
the most part the cultivation of cotton) and was fed for it. In freedom he is to be taught that his dignity lies in being a workman and not a worked man. Besides there is not complete industrial freedom for the Negro. Some trades are comparatively closed to him. His hope of success as the hope of any other lies in absolute efficiency. That is necessary to win the way for any people. The economic factor, skill in the manual trades, ability to supply his needs lie near the heart of the Negro's emancipation, and hence the reason that the more important industries, such as carpentry, blacksmithing, cooking, sewing and agriculture are given due attention in the educational efforts that center about Knox Academy.



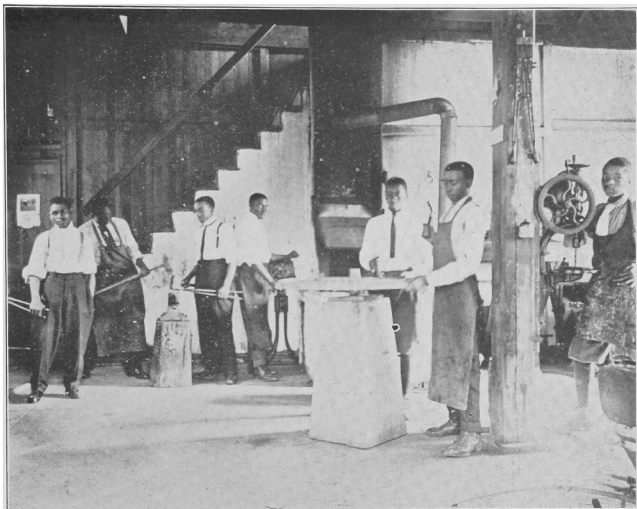
BOYS INDUSTRIAL BUILDING

BLACKSMITHING DEPARTMENT

This scene presents some of the Knox boys at work in the Blacksmith shop. No doubt forty-five years ago freedom meant to many Negroes to be free from work with the hands. But the lesson taught here and elsewhere in the school means the opposite. The boys in all the grades above the fifth are permitted to choose between blacksmithing and the carpenter course. The aim is to acquaint the boys with blacksmithing tools, their names, uses,



CARPENTER SHOP

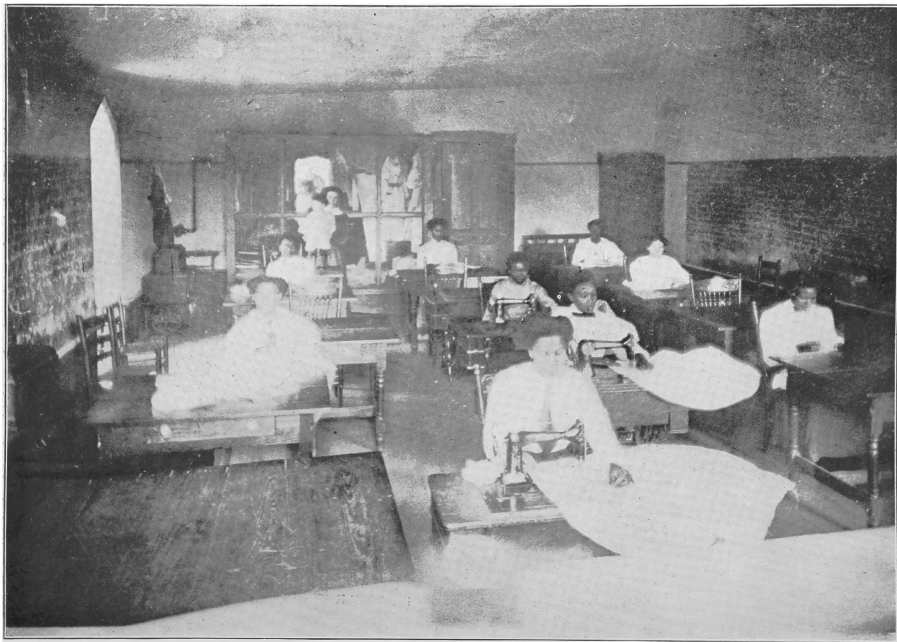


BLACKSMITH SHOP

their care and how to handle them. They are taught how to temper and weld iron. Custom work is taken in and this gives a practical side to the training and affords experience in forging, wheelwrighting, work in both wood and iron, shoeing and almost anything that pertains to general blacksmithing.

CARPENTER DEPARTMENT

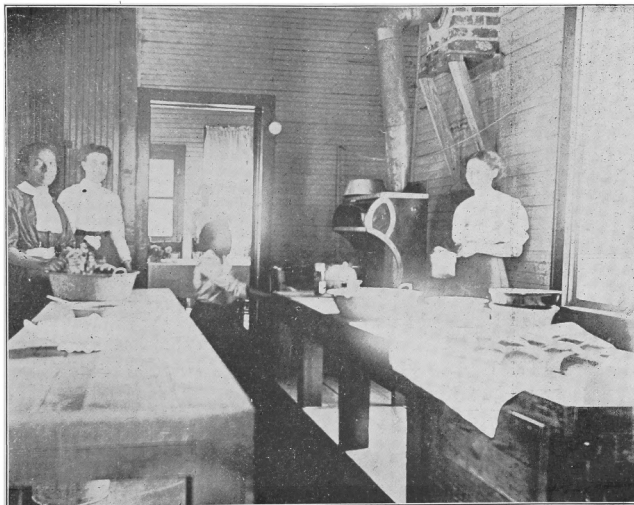
That the Carpenter Department is an important adjunct to the course prescribed for Knox Academy is substantiated by examples of practical results. The time since this department was introduced into the school has been short but already young men have gone out from it who are now making a success in carpentry and some of whom are getting positions of teachers of it in other schools. The boys are introduced into this department from the fourth grade. The course embraces the following: Sloyd knife work, Names and uses of tools, Sawing, Planing, Squaring, Beveling, Levelling, Grinding of tools, Selecting material, Names of parts of a house, Forming rafters, Mitering, Saw filing and setting, Drafting plans, Estimating, Making Screens, Doors, Sideboards, Bookcases, Chiffoniers and such like.



SEWING ROOM

SEWING DEPARTMENT

The picture on the adjoining page is a glimpse of the girls at work in the Sewing room. This means much in the preparatory life of young women. From the Third Grade sewing is taught; below that paper cutting, folding and pasting is the industrial work for the girls. The course in sewing includes class drill practice in position, making the different stitches on sample pieces, making plain garments, cutting from patterns, taking measurements and drafting patterns, study of cloth, color and form, harmonizing colors, taking measurements and cutting by system, sponging, shrinking and pressing, and testing fabrics. The girl graduates appear at commencement in dresses made by themselves.



KITCHEN

The Domestic Science course is of the greatest value to girls who come from homes which are sadly deficient. If they are to receive training for this side of life they will get it for the most part at school and not at home. This course at Knox includes Combination of materials, Composition of foods, Chemistry of foods, Chemistry of cooking, Food economics, Calculation of dietaries, Household science and sanitation, Household arrangement, Home nursing and hygiene, History of vegetables, fruits and cereals, Cooking and demonstrations.



FACULTY

From left to right; 1st row sitting—Miss Ella Frazier, Miss Anna Sims, Miss Mable Gill, Miss Elvira Sims, Rev. S. F. Kingston, Mrs. Kingston, Miss E. M. Hays.

2nd row—Mrs. Kynett, Mr. T. Kynette, W. J. Sanderson, Mrs. Sanderson, Miss Ada Hamilton, Miss Gussie Ware, Mrs. G. M. Sims, Miss Pattie Anna Kingston.

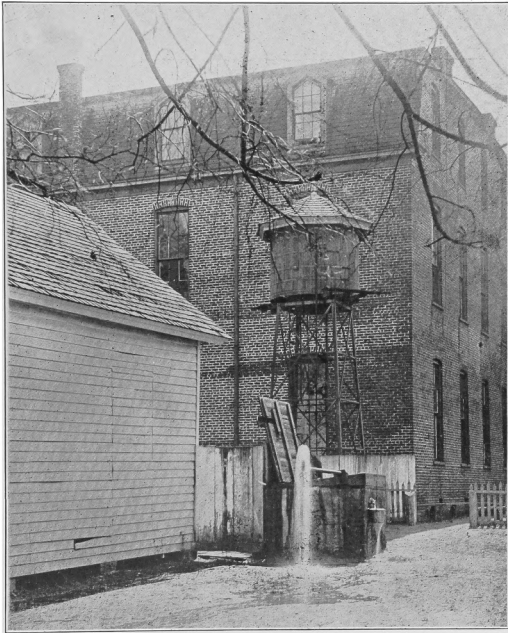
3rd row—Prof. W. M. Bottoms, Mrs. Bottoms, Miss Margaret Martin, Mrs. M. J. Robb, Miss Mary Wilson, Miss Lulu Lavander, Miss Mary Fowler, Miss Sophia Kingston, Mrs. W. J. Anderson.

To meet the present demands of the work about 22 teachers and workers are required. Seven of those now at work are from the north, the rest are colored, several of whom are graduates of Knox. Once a month all come together for an evening in a Teachers Institute to consider the problems of the work and the best methods of meeting them.

The faculty is required to be a band of workers not for five days in the week but for seven, always giving their lives in service educationally, morally and spiritually to those to whom they are sent to help.

THE WELL

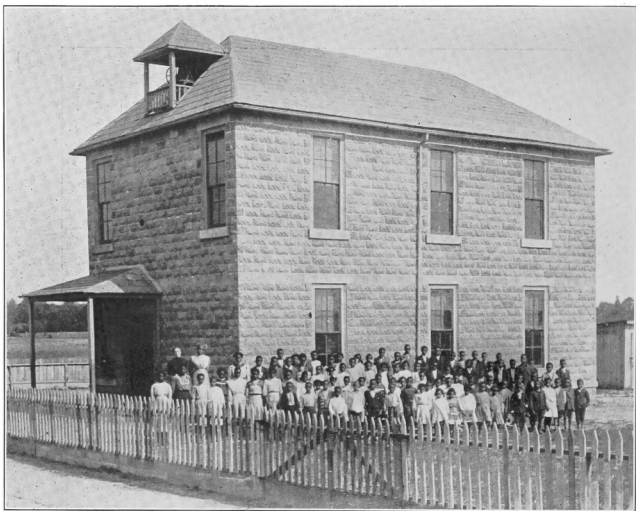
In this picture the reader may see what was once Knox's much prized overflowing well. A constant stream two inches in diameter of pure health-giving water came gushing from depths 600 feet below the surface. The good health which has prevailed for the past five or six years in the school has been due doubtless in good measure to this well whose waters would make most any place a health resort. This last fall however to our great



regret the flow ceased, the water rising only to about three feet of the surface. While the water seems quite as good as formally, yet we are deprived of the service of the tank into which water was pumped by a ram and from which water was forced to different quarters for use. There is hope that by some expense the flow may be started again.

EAST SELMA BUILDING AND PUPILS

The work in East Selma was begun six years ago, in a part of the city with scarcely no school advantages. There was considerable hesitancy in opening work here but the success that has followed is sufficient proof that it was the right thing to do. The work was started in a two-room cabin, and now there is a commodious two story cement-block building, in which



EAST SELMA SCHOOL

there are four grades with 146 pupils. The building is the work of Knox boys under the direction of Professor Bottoms. Miss Sophia Kingston the efficient principal in charge, conducts Sabbath School every Sabbath with an attendance of 125, holds monthly mothers meetings and constantly devises such other meetings as may be thought best for the educational and religious interests of the community.

PLEASANT GROVE SCHOOL

This school is situated four miles north of Selma, and is properly a Country school, a thing that is needed throughout the South especially in the Black Belt. There are sections four and six miles square without a school for the Negroes, and the schools that are found are only makeshifts, tempo-



PLEASANT GROVE SCHOOL

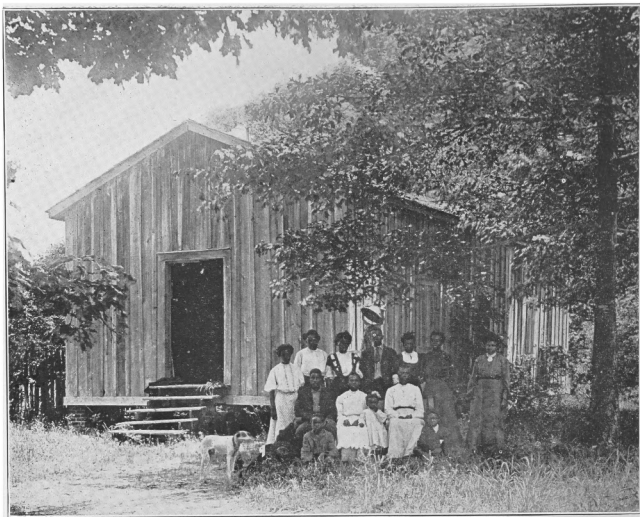
rary expedients, a house loosely built of roughest boards, no windows but the doors which are open in many cases only three months in the year for service, and during even that time only an excuse of a teacher is at the desk. Not much light for the dense darkness of ignorance that exists. The colored population in country districts in the "Black Belt" is dense. From within the radius of one mile or a little more Pleasant Grove has 95 pupils. The school is located in a pleasant place, has a good building and is representative of what a country school ought to be.

A Sabbath school is conducted here every Sabbath, also Junior meetings, and preaching service at least once a month.

The school is on the Pleasant Grove farm, a farm of 24 acres owned and controlled by the Board in the interests of agriculture. Mr. T. Kynette and family are the present incumbents, Mrs. Kynette being the teacher of the school.

VALLEY CREEK SCHOOL

The school bearing this name is located three miles north-west of Selma in the country and is designed to be a little educational oasis in the desert; while it does not fill as large a place as Pleasant Grove school it is



VALLEY CREEK SCHOOL

intended to fill a place with similar needs. There are many spots that need the lamp of a good school set in their midst, for in 1900 there were 352 Counties in the United States in which one half of the Negro population was illiterate. There is a six months school at Valley Creek with 20 to 30 pupils. A Sabbath school is conducted each Sabbath under the superintendency of Mrs. S. F. Kingston and once a month there is preaching service.

RUSTIC FARMER

The two views on the following pages illustrate a way and a better way of farming. Both views are true to life. The above is a picture of a farmer at work in the vicinity of Valley Creek as he was caught in the camera by our artist Prof. Anderson. While a mule to the plow is the most common outfit for breaking up the ground, a bony milk cow or a diminutive ox is frequently seen doing the work, and the plow used in such cases is also a very diminutive tool. The farming as a rule is exceedingly poorly done. It takes only a superficial glance at many a patch that is said to be plowed to discern that one-half or two-thirds of the surface has never been disturbed while the part that has been touched has not been loosened to a depth of more than three or four inches. When one considers that much of the work

of cultivation is after the same order of deficiency it ought to become at once evident to most any one that agricultural training is a necessity for the Negro's emancipation from poverty, and especially so in view of the fact that for the most part farming is the Negro's business. The great mass of the race, 83 per cent. of them are in the country, and it is here the real African earns his livelihood and makes his home, or what he has for a home. In 1900, 732,362 farms were operated by Negroes in the South. In the country in the Black Belt nine out of ten of the population are colored. So farming as a business concerns masses of the people.



A RUSTIC FARMER

The second picture is Mr. Kynette, the mission farmer with his team at work on the Pleasant Grove farm. He is given the management of this farm that he by example, the employment of better methods, and farmers' institutes might set before others of his race better ideals and lead them to greater success in farming. Mr. Kynett is energetic in his line of work, has already greatly improved the Pleasant Grove place, and is proving what great good the right kind of a Negro farmer may do for the industrial progress of his race.



MR. KYNETTE AND TEAM

THE NEGRO HOME

This is a typical Negro cabin photographed for this booklet. It is not the best nor is it by any means the worst, but a fair example of the dwellings in which the masses of the race in the country districts of the Black Belt live. And when one touches the home life of the Negro there is touched one of the most deplorable features of his present condition. The greatest lack of the race as a whole is proper home surroundings and training, and proper notions of the fundamental principles of pure family life. The housing conditions of the race in many country districts have not changed radically since the war. Professor Dubois writes of the conditions thus; "The form and disposition of the laborer's cabins throughout the 'Black Belt' is to-day the same as in slavery days. Some live in the self same cabins, others in cabins rebuilt on the sites of the old. *** All over the face of the land is the one room cabin. *** It is nearly always old and bare, built of rough boards, and neither plastered nor ceiled. Light and ventilation are supplied by the single door and by the square hole in the wall with its wooden shutter. There is no glass, porch, or ornamentation without. Within is a fire place, black and smoky, and usually unsteady with age, a bed or two, a

table, a wooden chest, and a few chairs compose the furniture, while a stray show bill or a newspaper makes up the decorations of the walls." The writer has seen a man and wife and six children before a one room cabin sixteen feet square with a single door as the only opening in its walls, within which all their cooking, sleeping, the forming of ideals and preparation for life must take place.

Early marriages, divided families, husbands living apart from their wives and wives from their husbands, concubinage, incests, illegitimate children, unlawful divorces and remarriages abound and make up a mighty

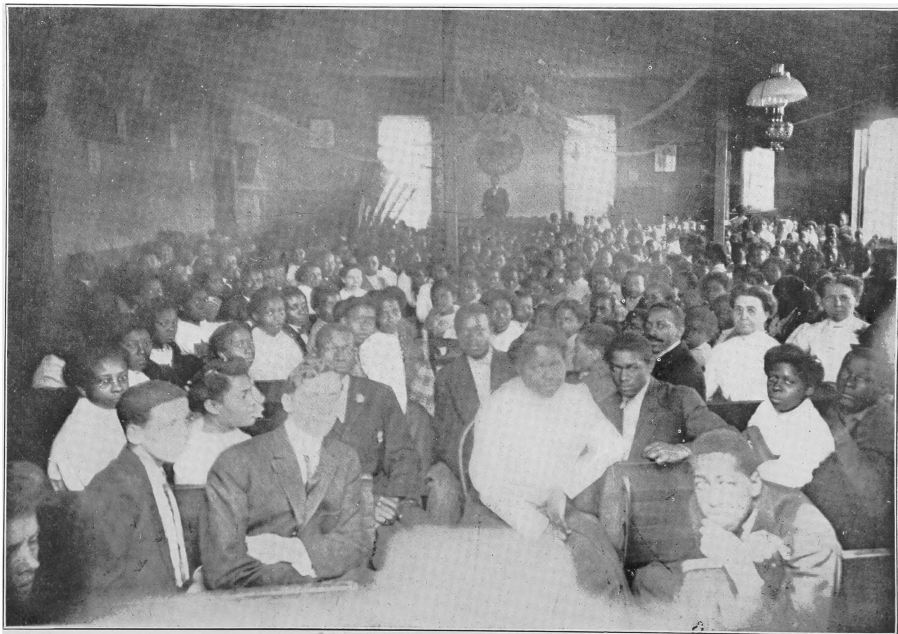


NEGRO CABIN

stream of evil, polluted from the very fountain head, the home. If the home is the mark of civilization it is also the maker of it and the crying need in the Christianization of the Negro is houses with more rooms and light in them, home surroundings with improved moral standards, and better notions of the Christian principles that regulate the family.

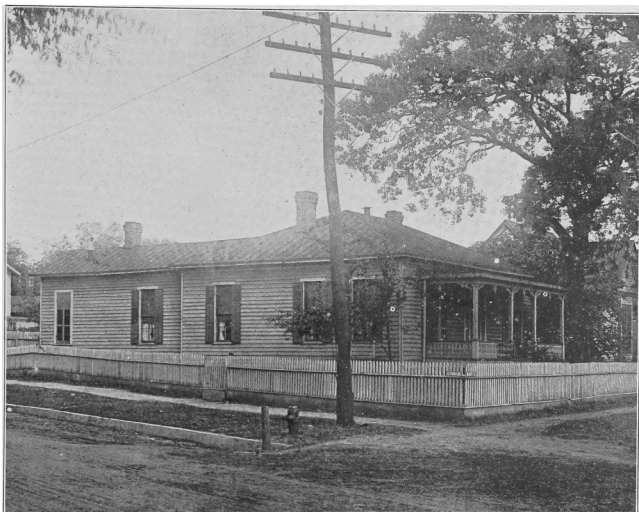
KNOX CHAPEL

The following page is a picture of the pupils of the Academy assembled in chapel where they gather every morning for religious services, and



KNOX CHAPEL

on other occasions for literary exercises, musicals, temperance programs and such like. Often there is brought to bear upon schools among Negroes a pressure to have entertainments and plays whose value intellectually and morally, no matter what their value may be financially, is below par. It is the constant aim to keep Knox chapel free from all such associations and have exhibited here that only which is in the highest sense profitable.



SUPERINTENDENT'S HOME

Is a seven room cottage, conveniently located just across the street from the Academy. It was purchased by the Board, November 1902 and is a part of its possessions in this field.

TEACHERS' HOME

Was erected in the summer of 1894. It stands on the same side of the street as the Academy and is separated from it by the church building and yard. It is owned by the Board; has eight rooms, and makes a suitable dwelling place for the five or six white teachers who are sent to labor in the mission from the North. The Board owns four other small dwellings in this same block.



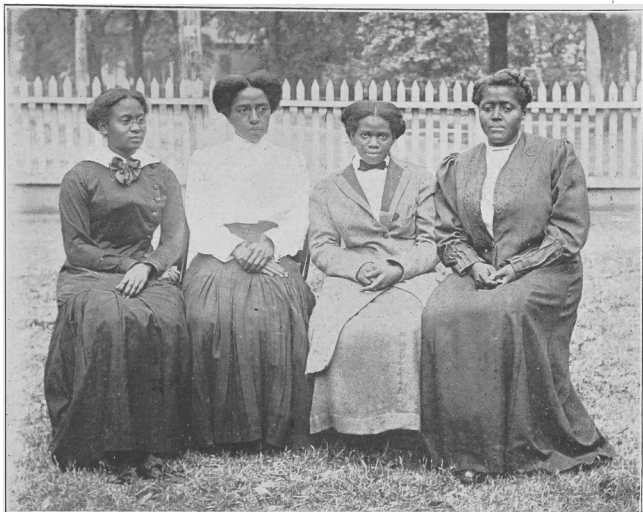
TEACHERS' HOME

LADIES QUARTETTE

In the Academy there are various organizations among the pupils to help to further the interests of the musical, literary and religious work of the school. There is a literary society which presents an hour's program in the chapel every other Friday afternoon. Essays, orations, current events, debates, music, instrumental and vocal make up the program. This is designed for literary improvement and training in conducting meetings according to parliamentary order.

There is a Y. W. C. A. and also a Y. M. C. A. which have regular meetings. These organizations have as their object the winning of souls for Christ, the deepening of spiritual life and preparation for service. This winter the girls have been studying missions and how to help in them, while the boys have been seeking profit from a study of Bible characters.

There are several musical organizations such as a Ladies Quartette, Male Quartette, Glee Club, Girls Orchestra and Boys Band. These are formed both for the musical training resulting to the members and to provide for plenty of music on the various programs that are given by the school. About twenty-five public programs have been given this year.

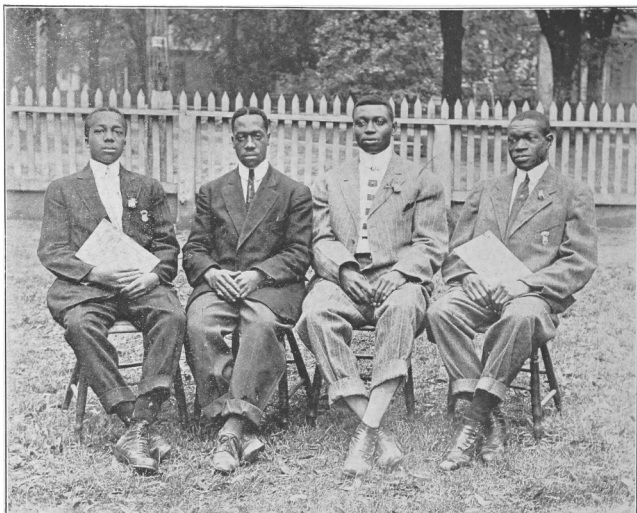


The members of the present Ladies Quartette have sung together only this year, but have done their part in furnishing music and have filled their place with credit.

MALE QUARTETTE

For the past two years Knox has been favored with a good Quartette of male voices notwithstanding several changes in the membership of it have been necessary. The excellency of its work merits a place for it on almost every program. It meets once a week regularly for practice and has studied some twenty-five different selections this year.

The singing is a delightful part of the school work as the pupils take readily to it and make good progress in it. The Negroes as a race are more naturally singers and musicians than are the whites. They possess two important essentials for singing, first rythm which with them is innate; second they have a characteristic chest, throat and face which are admirably suited to the production of musical tones. There is a material basis for singing just as there is for violin music a material basis in the wood, glue and strings of which the violin is composed. For singing the physical structure of the average Negro is of a type among races that corresponds with the Stradivarius type of instruments among violins.



In all the grades singing is taught and for instruction and practice in piano music the Academy possesses two instruments. The services of an efficient, consecrated musician are always needed.

KNOX BAND

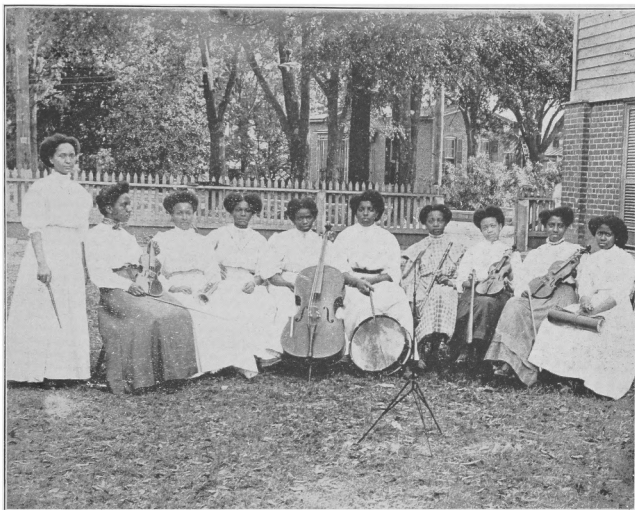
For the past five or six years under the faithful management and efficient instruction of Professor Bottoms a desirable adjunct to the institution has been a good band. It helps out on many an occasion and the melodious strains it sets afloat about the premises lend an additional attractiveness to the place. The Band has its place on many a public program at Knox and elsewhere. It generally consists of about 16 members. There are many changes, old members dropping out and new ones coming in, and while this makes it difficult to have the Band always at its best, it affords at the same time to a greater number the opportunity of a musical training under a leader who is capable of making such a training profitable.

GIRLS ORCHESTRA

While the boys have their opportunity in the Band it is the design to give the girls a similar opportunity in an orchestra.

The aim of the work in Knox Academy and its associate schools is to

represent as many sides of education in the training of the Negro youth as will best fit them for the duties of real life regarding as fundamental to all a most thorough religious training. Hence the reason that all the activities of the school are made to bear upon the four special lines of training, the Industrial, Musical, Literary and Religious.



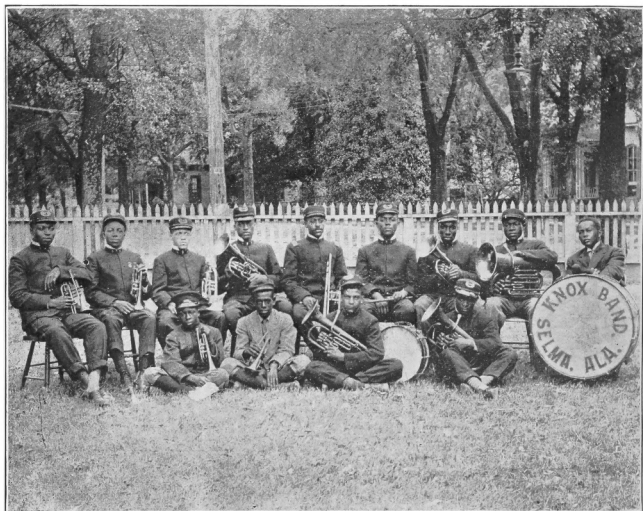
MEDAL WINNERS IN TEMPERANCE ORATORY

Knox and associated schools seek to engage themselves actively in temperance work, not confining the work simply to themselves but extending it to the world outside. Of temperance instruction there is certainly the greatest need from the cook in the kitchen who dopes her cakes and pastries with brandy to the besotted man and woman toppling into a drunkard's grave. Christianity can save no race in intoxicants, only from them. Hence the effort in temperance work. And one of the impressive sights in the school work is to see and hear young men and women as they stand before audiences in chapel and elsewhere throughout the city and community and deliver messages to the members of their own race that mean to multitudes of them life from death.

On a following page is a group of pupils each of whom during the past year has won two medals in temperance oratory.

Since January a year ago 24 contests have been held, 170 temperance orations have been delivered, a little over half of them in Knox chapel and the remainder in churches, halls and schools situated within a radius of a little less than ten miles and 64 different young people have spoken in these contests.

Miss E. M. Hays is the superintendent of this work with Miss Mary Fowler assistant. Much seed has been sown by these young people and the increase is with God.



R. P. CHURCH BUILDING.

As a result of Missionary work among the Negroes by the Reformed Presbyterian church a Congregation was organized in 1875. Three years later the present church building was erected. It is two-story, the upstairs being the main auditorium with a seating capacity of 500 while the down stairs is divided into four rooms for Sabbath School work. The following have served as pastors: Rev. Lewis Johnson, pastorate brief; Rev. G. M. Elliott followed with a much longer service. The present pastor is Rev. S. F. Kingston, an able and faithful preacher of the word with twenty years of service to his credit.

The membership of the Congregation is one hundred, four elders and five deacons. There is a Woman's Missionary Society, a Ladies Auxillary, a Sabbath School and a Young Peoples Society. While the people's practice of moving about from place to place is in one way a hindrance to the congregation's rapid growth and most efficient service among the Negroes, yet in another way it is an advantage in that it forms a dispersion by which the church's life and influence are extended. During the 36 years of the Congregation's history a great host have been identified with its life and work and have caught its spirit for service elsewhere and we trust for glory hereafter.



THE MEDAL WINNERS IN TEMPERANCE ORATORY

OFFICERS OF CONGREGATION

This group is a partial representation of those who at present are serving the Congregation as officers. This band of men and women are joining hands in a consecrated effort to lead the Congregation to financial and spiritual success and to aid their brethren according to the flesh out of bondage into life and liberty.



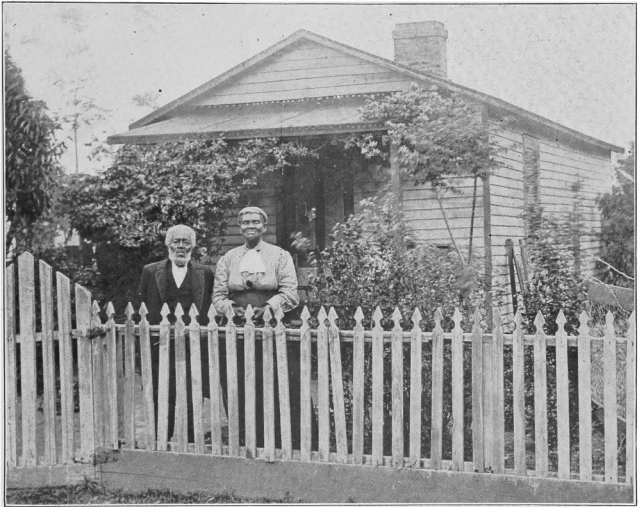
OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

SUPPORT OF THE MISSION

To carry on the work in this field as operated at present approximately \$8,400.00 is required annually. A regular Endowment Fund of \$5,481.28 furnishes \$301.40. One share of the yearly profits of the David Gregg Endowment fund comes to the Mission annually and amounts to \$600.00. \$400.00 is being now received yearly from the five annual payments to be made from the estate of Mr. Charles McIlroy. From Mr. Andrew Alexander for ten years annually \$1000.00. The average each year for the past four years from congregations \$3,200.00 and the local receipts for the same time about \$2,000.00. Contributions of clothing, household goods and material for the sewing room are always acceptable. Everything should be plainly addressed to Knox Academy, Selma, Alabama, with the name of the sender inside as well as outside of package. Have the package labeled household goods, which they mostly are, and ask that they be released when shipped and so reduce freight bill. The Louisville and Nashville and the Southern Railroads pass through Selma.

AGED MEMBERS

Here is a picture of the most aged couple in the congregation, Joseph Shearer and his wife Barbara. They have lived together 56 years and their combined ages are 160 years, making their lives to extend far back into slavery, a condition in which they were deprived of the privilege of hearing the letters of the alphabet, although now they are privileged to hear much more, even the word of life which they hear with gladness. They are child-like Christians, faithful to the church, rich in grace, and their lives are a



sample of the glorious fruits being gathered from mission fields. In character and life they are like the ripe fruit which the Lord desires.

Once in slavery they are now free, truly free, because free in Christ. But the multitudes of their race are not free. In bonds of poverty, ignorance and evil passions they yet "groan within themselves waiting for their adoption to-wit, their redemption."

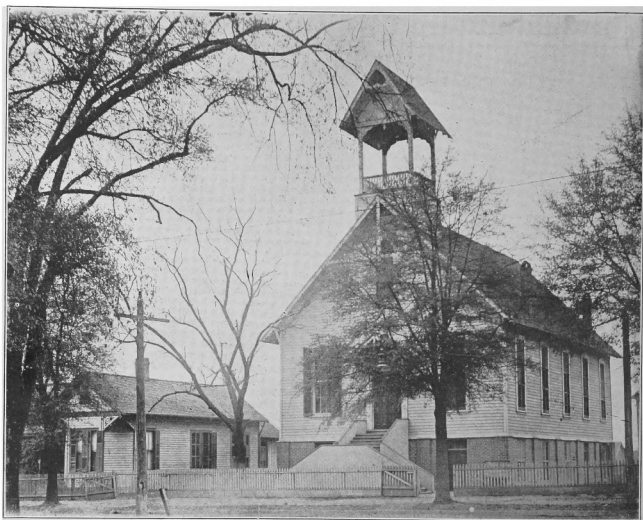
There was a shout of victory in the land the day Lincoln proclaimed liberty for four million slaves in chains but we labor for a better day when to eleven million souls the call can go out,

"Shout, O children!
Shout, you're free!
For God has bought your liberty."

But their emancipation is not yet, and if the hopes of all for their upward progress have not yet been realized remember,

“Slow moves the pageant of a climbing race
Their footsteps drag far, far below the height.”

Only unfaltering faith and untiring patience in God's service can win the day of a truly ransomed people. Whoever is willing let him lend a helping hand.



CHURCH BUILDING

KNOX SONG

Of Knox we sing with all our might,
Our boys, you know, why they're all right,
Our girls are trim, and nice and sweet,
And neatly dressed from head to feet,
Our school is just a big bee hive;
Our bees are very much alive;
We've no room here for drone or shirk;
Our motto word is, work, work, work,

We learn the song of plane and saw,
The hammer's merry tat, tat, ta,
The jolly tune of clang, clang, clang,
Of hammer when on anvil rang,
Our girls don't fear to soil their hands,
Or tackle dishes, pots and pans,
Our school has got a dandy Band
The finest chorus in the land.

CHORUS—We'll shout and sing
In Selma Knox has come to stay,
We'll shout and sing
For Knox till we are gray,
Tra, la, la, Tra, la, la, Hurrah for Knox!
Hurrah for Knox!
Tra, la, la, Tra, la, la, Hurrah for Knox! Hurrah!
For Knox Hurrah!

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