

Prince Edward County: The Story Without An End
A Report Prepared for the
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, July 1963

Special Note to the Contemporary Reader

This unpublished manuscript was prepared as a working paper for a larger report written by Dr. J. Kenneth Morland for the Virginia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in the early summer of 1963. Dr. Morland was a Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Randolph-Macon Woman's College and one of the original social science expert witnesses in the 1954 Supreme Court case "Brown vs Board of Education". He was recruited to prepare the final report for publication by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in Washington, D.C. It was anticipated that publication of the final report, using this paper and other data, would encourage the reopening of the Prince Edward County public schools and stimulate the provision of temporary educational offerings to the school-less black children in the 1963-1964 school year, the fifth year of school closing.

My contributing paper is reproduced here exactly the way it was written. It was based on interviews and other research done for my Masters thesis, A Perspective of the Prince Edward County School Issue, as well as further interviews and research conducted immediately after the thesis was written. I was reimbursed for my expenses and awarded a small honorarium through an agreement between the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and the Virginia Council on Human Relations. The footnotes were submitted separately from the draft and have long since been lost. However, a list of sources used are found in my Morland/Peeples Correspondence file attached to a note dated September 27, 1963.

I finished my draft and sent it to Dr. Morland in Lynchburg in late July of 1963. He edited it, had me provide more documentation, added more information from a number of other sources, and created a final report entitled, The Tragedy of Closed Public Schools: Prince Edward County, Virginia, A Report for the Virginia Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. Dr. Morland submitted the report to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on January 16, 1964.

A rough carbon copy draft of Morland's final report was discovered among his papers in 2001. I scanned and edited it with his permission. It is now found in the "Documents" section [see below] of this Virginia Commonwealth University Special Collections and Archives website.

-- Dr. Edward H. Peeples, Jr.

January 2004

The doors of the public schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia, were closed at the end of the spring term of 1959 and have remained closed to both the county's white and Negro students to this day. This action followed some five years of defiance of the famous U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1954 and has, as of this writing, made Prince Edward County the only locality in the United States and one of the few places in the world which does not provide its youngsters with some kind of public education. What follows is a brief account of this sad story of Prince Edward County.

CHAPTER I

SETTING OF THE PRINCE EDWARD SCHOOL SITUATION

Prince Edward County Virginia with a 1960 population of 14,121 is situated in the South-central part of the state in a region known to Virginians as "Southside." "Southside" is that part of Virginia which lies in the region known as the "Black Belt." The so-called "Black Belt" is a region of counties stretching in Virginia from the shores of the Chesapeake Bay south down through the Carolinas, across Central Georgia and west to East Texas. All of these counties in eleven old Confederate states share many of the same economic and cultural attributes. All of these counties are predominantly rural, have Negroes in excess of one third of their total population and possess stringent mores and/or laws which strictly enforce the separation of the races.

Prince Edward County's only incorporated town and its county seat, Farmville, is located on the county's north-central border adjacent to Cumberland County. Farmville with a 1960 population of 4,293, is an economic center, not only for Prince Edward, but for eight counties in the area.

The first settlement of what is today Prince Edward County occurred around 1700. These first settlers came from Tidewater Virginia and brought with them the institution of slavery which was an intrinsic part of the social system of colonial eastern Virginia. Some decades later, Scotch-Irish families moved south from Pennsylvania and also located in Prince Edward County. Most of the white residents of Prince Edward County today are descendants of these two waves of migration.

Prince Edward is usually considered an agricultural county with tobacco and lumber being the most important cash products. In addition to these, corn, wheat and alfalfa are the primary forage and field crops while poultry, dairy and beef cattle as well as hogs are all raised commercially in Prince Edward County. There are also several large commercial orchards in the county growing both apples and peaches.

However, the observer who scrutinizes the economic nature of the county closely, will see that the county's economy does not revolve primarily around its agricultural products, but rather around the prominent role retailing, general contracting and building, banking, some small industries, one mining firm and tobacco marketing play in the life of the county. In fact, in 1960, three out of every four persons employed in the county were working in the above categories and not in agriculture. The gross value of agricultural products makes up only about one fourth of the county's total economy.

One might wonder how remote and isolated a county such as Prince Edward might be from the main stream of communication, transportation and other means of influence from America's larger culture. Some indication of the county's nature and its ability to be influenced by the outside is seen by the fact that the county is served by three U.S. highways, by some limited railway and bus service and by several newspapers from Richmond, Roanoke and Lynchburg. The FARMVILLE HERALD, the county's only newspaper, is one of the largest and most influential in this part of "Southside" Virginia. The HERALD is a weekly having a circulation of 5,964. The county also enjoys radio and television from Richmond, Roanoke, Lynchburg and radio only from Crewe, Blackstone, and Farmville's own radio station.

When one views the economic and educational standards of Prince Edward, he finds that by most indicators this county stands considerably below both the state of Virginia and the United States. This, however, is typical of most counties in the so-called "Black Belt" throughout the southern states.

CHAPTER II

CHRONOLOGY OF THE SCHOOL ISSUE

From the social scientist's point of view, the school conflict in Prince County began long before its first dramatic manifestation in 1951. It is well known among astute observers of Negro history that there was always restiveness and dissatisfaction among Negroes ever since they first came to the shores of Virginia in 1619. The growth of Negro dissatisfaction with their subservient role in Prince Edward County had paralleled similar dissatisfaction elsewhere in the country, but whites knew or understood little of the Negroes true attitudes and feelings. Whites insisted on thinking that their "coloreds" were well satisfied with their destiny. Negro "inferiority" was presumed to be a natural phenomenon and the "will of God." By the spring of 1951, however, there were a number of Negro residents in the county of Prince Edward, who were willing to sacrifice most anything in order that their education standards be improved. Of course, inferior education was not the Negro's only complaint. However, the schools were to become the first battleground for the Negro's assault on a caste system founded on white supremacy and paternalism.

The initial outbreak of dissatisfaction occurred on April 20, 1951. On that spring morning 456 Negro students walked out of R.R. Moton High School on a strike in protest against educational conditions in the county's Negro schools. The strike was organized and carried out entirely by teenage students from its inception in the fall of 1950. In fact, no adults even knew of the plans to strike until it had taken place. The strike was one of the results of a failure on the part of Negro adults to secure improved school conditions in a request to white leaders in October of 1950.

On the day of the strike a student leader phoned the office of Hill, Martin and Robinson, NAACP attorneys in Richmond, and requested that "something be done." These Richmond attorneys, already stormed by hundreds of requests for suits against Virginia's laws discriminating against Negroes, thought little of the youngster's entreaty but nevertheless told them to send a letter explaining the situation. That letter arrived promptly the next day and the attorneys condescended to meet with the teenagers provided their parents were involved in the talks. The attorneys arrived in Farmville fully expecting to chide the youngsters for their radical

solution to the problem of inferior schools. After a series of meetings with the youngsters and adults in the county, the NAACP was startled to learn of the widespread disgust among Negro citizens with the conditions for Negro students. This was the prelude for what was to become one of the five cases which resulted in the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court desegregation decision.

The Virginia State Department of Education records show that at the time of the strike, there were fifteen Negro schools in the county for an estimated Negro student population of 2,000. The total value of these properties was around \$330,000. All but one of these schools were of wood construction, had no toilet facilities, except for outdoor privies and had wood, coal or kerosene stoves for heat. At the same time, white pupils had seven schools for an estimated 1,400 students, with a total property value of about \$1,200,000. Each of these seven schools were of sound brick construction and had indoor flush toilets, lavatories, and steam or hot water heat. Also in this same year of the student's strike, the per capita school property value for white students was an estimated \$817.00 while for each Negro student was \$194.00. These were the conditions upon which the "separate but equal" doctrine was predicated in Prince Edward County.

The first action taken by the NAACP was the submission of a petition requesting a policy of non-discrimination in the public schools to the county school board and superintendent of schools. The school board and superintendent promptly rejected the petition so the Negro attorneys filed a petition with the U.S. District Court of Eastern Virginia on May 23, 1951, naming the county school board and superintendent of schools as defendants.

By August the Commonwealth of Virginia had made clear its intention of resisting not only desegregation, but also obstructing any effort to change social and educational conditions in Virginia. Attorney General J. Lindsey Almond filed a notice of intervention in the case and put the weight of the state behind the white defendants. Some months after the petition had been filed by NAACP attorneys, the county board of supervisors began to make plans to secure land for a new high school for Negroes in order to beef up their argument in support of "separate but equal" schools. On May 7, 1952, the U.S. District Court sustained segregation, but ordered equalization of facilities. Counsel for the some 197 plaintiffs appealed this decision all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, there was a great deal of activity in the county on the part of whites to seek some means to insure, not only segregated education, but also to suture up the rupture in the caste system. Many observers in the county who are familiar with those early years of the school issue, report that a small leadership oligarchy began to appear with the express intention of "subverting public education and establishing private schools." Many whites in the county in the 30's and 40's had begun to resent the upward social mobility of Negroes and opposed providing for Negro education. Some school board members of those earlier years remember occasions in which it was very difficult to get some segments of the white population to support the Negro part of the public school system. Whites felt little responsibility for Negroes and the more ambitious Negroes became, the more these whites felt threatened.

Whites, after hearing about incidents of desegregation around the south in the late 40's and 50's, primarily in graduate schools of universities, suddenly became cognizant of what they must do to insure white privileges. They began in 1953 by

building a new \$948,000 high school for Negroes just outside of the town of Farmville. It was named for R. R. Moton, a famous native of Prince Edward County, who headed Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes. Moton High School became only the third brick structure among fifteen schools (one small structure had been abandoned in 1953) for Negroes with physical conditions comparable to those of white pupils. The only other two buildings for Negroes which compared with those for whites were two of the three structures now known as Mary E. Branch Elementary School in Farmville. One of these two buildings before 1953 had been used as the high school for Negroes. The remaining thirteen school structures were of wood or clapboard construction or with tar paper on the outside and had only outdoor privies, wood stoves and were without water under pressure. All of these schools were in use by Negroes to the day of school closing in June of 1959. Most of the argument posited by whites that Negro schools were equal or superior to white schools was based on the existence on this one new school property, Moton High School.

However, many people in the county report that Moton School was not fully equipped and still failed to meet the standards that white students enjoyed. Several Negroes concur on the report that in this high school for 650 pupils, there was only one microscope for the study of biology.

Most whites in the county were and are still ignorant of the school conditions for the estimated 1,450 Negro elementary students throughout the county who up until 1951 continued to use the defective facilities and equipment given them prior to World War II. Whites considered their own conditions poor and felt that the construction of Moton High School completely absolved them from any guilt for inequitable treatment of Negro pupils and felt also that it should free them from any allegations of prejudice.

Hearings on the Prince Edward case, as well as the four other now famous appeals from Kansas, Delaware, South Carolina and the District of Columbia, were begun in December of 1952. On May 17, 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren delivered the court's decision declaring segregation unconstitutional. The Virginia State Board of Education responded by promptly advising all of the state's school boards to maintain the customary separation of races during the 1954-55 school session.

Since there was no direct implementation of the Supreme Court order, white leadership in the state of Virginia and the county of Prince Edward took advantage of the interim to prepare their resistance and conjure up feelings of animus among white residents.

Within two months of the 1954 decision, the county board of supervisors, the county's governing body, passed a resolution asserting their opposition to desegregation; their view that desegregation was impossible in Virginia; that they would resist compliance with the order with all of their "powers" and implored the state to take immediate steps to preserve segregation. They finally ordered copies of this resolution to be sent to all Virginia state officials. This was followed in the summer of 1954 by the governor's appointment of the 32-man Gray Commission, to study means of maintaining separate schools. The Commission was named for its chairman, State Senator Garland Gray, from Waverly, an avid segregationist and "Byrd Machine" politician. The powerful "Byrd Machine" is the well-known state political organization headed by U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd.

By the spring of 1955, there was much angry resistance built up among county white residents. An oligarchy had developed on the issue with some four to six men at the top and about a dozen more in secondary leadership roles. Many of the county's white residents stood silently and docilely by, afraid or unable to do anything about the land slide of decisions which were to culminate in school closing in 1959.

In April 1955, during a hearing before the county Board of Supervisors on the annual budget for 1955-56, a white county delegation insisted that they would not support tax levies which finance an "integrated system of public schools." The budget under consideration was for \$835,000 of which \$685,940 was provided for public schools. Over one half of this \$685,940 was to be derived from state funds and was not local money. This act by the supervisors was the first public expression of the whites' intentions to withhold support from the public school systems if desegregation threatened. However, the supervisors made no decision on this budget, pending the outcome of the U.S. Supreme Court's final decree.

That mandate came on May 31, 1955. A few hours later, after hearing the May 31 order, the Board of Supervisors met and accepted a county budget which included only the state legal minimum of \$150,000 for school maintenance and debt amortization. The chairman of the Board of Supervisors concluded the evening's work by declaring his own personal beliefs in the interpretation of the U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1896, upholding the "separate but equal" doctrine, states rights, the workability of separate schools, the fact that the county has provided Negroes with a high school, second to none in the county, and the propriety of a continued effort to thwart the U.S. Supreme Court order.

The county oligarchy, by mobilizing the Parents-Teachers Association of the white schools, called a meeting in Farmville, on the campus of Longwood College, a state woman's teacher college. It is reported that 1,500 whites attended this meeting conducted to seek some kind of plan to underwrite salaries for the county's white teachers. This would insure whites of having some kind of education for their children. There was no consideration of educational needs for Negroes by this group which culminated in the formation of the Prince Edward School Corporation, the forerunner of the current Prince Edward School Foundation.

By July, 1955, the U.S. Supreme Court had remanded the Prince Edward case to a special three judge Federal Court for the execution of the court order. This three judge court ruled that the county should begin "adjustment and rearrangement" required for desegregation but failed to order mixing for the 1955-56 school session. The NAACP appealed but nothing significant was to occur in the case until November, 1957, when the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed this decision and ordered the abolition of racial discrimination in schools "without further delay".

Meanwhile, Virginia's Attorney General Almond, had ruled that localities in Virginia would be permitted, under state law, to appropriate funds sufficient only to operate schools for thirty days at a time. The county board of supervisors, with legal assurance and encouragement from the defense counsel for the county school board and influenced by the county oligarchy, adopted for the 1955-56 session this legal option, a thirty day plan known as "Heretofore" operation of public schools.

At the same time most of the state's white leadership were making every effort to develop a plan to resist the court's order which would be workable on a state-wide

basis. This was to be in marked contrast with white strategy after 1959. James Jackson Kilpatrick, the editor of the Richmond News Leader, borrowing from the research of a country lawyer and judge named William Olds of Chesterfield County, with his editorial page began to pound into the awareness of Virginians the doctrine of "Interposition." "Interposition" was a principle predicated on the notion that the United States were no more than a loose confederation of independent political entities and that each of the states's governments were in fact politically "superior" to the federal government. Following from this, a state could "interpose its sovereign powers against the encroachment by the Federal Government."

By November 1955, Governor Stanley had called a special session of the Virginia General Assembly to act on the Gray Commission study proposals. One of the proposals by the Commission, that of providing public funds for private schools was forbidden by section 141 of the Virginia Constitution, so a statewide referendum was called, and on January 9, 1956, Virginia voters approved, two to one, a constitutional convention to amend the constitution to make tuition grants legal in Virginia. The county vote was 2,835 for and 350 against. It must be parenthetically noted that the electorate in Virginia, for reasons of poll taxes and other restraints on voting, has traditionally since the end of Reconstruction been very small and overwhelmingly white.

The constitutional convention held in March of 1956 amended, as was expected, section 141 of the state constitution, thereby, allowing public funds to go to private, non-sectarian schools.

As a result of the impetuous tirades from the News Leader and other stimulants from within and without the state, the Virginia General Assembly on February 1, 1956 adopted almost unanimously a resolution in favor of "The Doctrine of Interposition."

Senator Byrd, pleased with and in large measure responsible for these developments in the state, directed his machine to support "Massive Resistance" as Virginia's recalcitrant policy came to be known. Responding to his directives, the General Assembly was besieged with school legislation which was designed to thwart school desegregation and in fact close public schools and terminate state funds in any locality where desegregation was threatened.

Any voice that was raised in opposition to this Byrd and Kilpatrick view was considered something less than a Virginian and consequently was the object of various forms of intimidation, reprisal and in some cases violence. Many persons believing in the principles of segregation but nevertheless wishing to comply with the court order, suffered much of the same that the "integrationists" endured. Negro opinion, obviously, was not even considered. Prince Edward County was, of course, a microcosm of all these conditions.

All this served to drive most moderates and liberals into seclusion and ineffectiveness. However, during these times of duress, there were a number of individuals and groups who dared go on record for the continued maintenance of free public schools in Virginia. One such group was the Virginia Committee for Public Schools.

During 1955 and 1956, the county would have had little ability to resist the U.S. Supreme Court decision had it not been for the state's aggressive policy of

resistance. The state's attitude toward the Supreme Court's decision, of course, was not the only factor in establishing conditions which were to result in school closing, but it was one of the most important influences.

Meanwhile in the county, the oligarchy had continued to spur feeling among whites and it began to appear that whites in the county were solidly behind a policy of resistance. On May 3, 1956, at a meeting of the county board of supervisors, a petition of intent, signed by 4,184 persons was read. Its reading was followed by an invocation given by Reverend J.A. Vache, the minister of the Farmville Episcopal church. The petition read:

"We, the undersigned citizens of Prince Edward County, Virginia, hereby affirm our conviction that the separation of the races in the public schools of this county is absolutely necessary and to affirm that we prefer to abandon public schools and educate our children in some other way if that be necessary to preserve separation of the races in this county. We pledge our support to the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County and their firm maintenance of this policy."

This was followed by the reading of an elaborate "Declaration," which was said to be approved by a large group of citizens.

The reported 4,184 signatures on the petition and declaration were in excess of the number of eligible, adult, white, poll tax paid voters in the county at that time. It is suspected by many observers, both white and Negro, that the petition was beefed up with the names of children and teenagers and other individuals. The declaration included a lengthy argument supporting the necessity of the separation of the races, a treatise on the illegality of the 1954-55 Supreme Court decisions and an appeal to the state to provide funds for the county, thereby giving force to the state interposition resolution. J.W. Dunnington, the owner of a large tobacco re-handling plant in the county, moved for the adoption of an affirmation of the declaration by the 250 citizens that were present at the supervisors meeting. It was reportedly carried by unanimous vote. The supervisors followed this by passing five resolutions implementing the citizens' wishes. Later the same month on May 31, the Board of Supervisors again approved "heretofore" operation of public schools for the 1956-57 school year.

On July 17, 1956 the three-judge federal court which was now in charge of the case, convened and dissolved itself leaving only Judge Sterling Hutcheson to continue the case. This procedure and future hearings stalled any more court orders until January of 1957 when Judge Hutcheson ruled that the county must have more time to formulate plans for desegregation. The NAACP appealed this decision to the U.S. 4th Circuit Court of Appeals, and Judge Hutcheson was over-ruled and desegregation was ordered without further delay. Hutcheson's order had, however, allowed the county to again adopt, "heretofore" school operation for the 1957-58 session. It also allowed the county oligarchy to intensify county sentiment against any realistic plan for desegregation.

In May of 1957, the Virginia House of Delegates Committee on Law Reform and Racial Activities entered the county for an "investigation." They subpoenaed witnesses of which they questioned thirty-six. Delegate James M. Thomson of Alexandria, the brother-in-law of U.S. Senator Harry Byrd and an ardent racist, was chairman of the committee. He concluded the hearings with the statement that

Negro plaintiffs in the Price Edward suit did not even consider themselves a part of litigation. In this statement, delegate Thomson was suggesting that the NAACP action was illegal under Virginia law.

Following this the Virginia Joint House-Senate Committee of Offenses Against the Administration of Justice, which functions in Virginia in a manner similar to the Un-American Activities Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, charged the NAACP in November, 1957 with gross and illegal promotion and support of five Virginia desegregation cases. They based their legal position on the 1956 so-called anti-NAACP laws and the findings of Delegate Thomson's committee. The controversy involving the rights of the NAACP and similar groups to file suits to contest desegregation was to continue until January of 1963 when the U.S. Supreme Court declared the Virginia anti-NAACP laws of 1956 unconstitutional.

These incidents, as was expected, fanned the fires of racism in the county and served to discredit the Negro plight and brand it illegal while at the same time it enhanced the respectability, at least in the eyes of the local white people, of all-out resistance to the federal courts.

All of this time the county oligarchy was busily engaged in sowing the seeds which in time were, in the words of several individuals closely associated with the issue, to "sabotage the whole public school system." The abandonment of free public education was then not an afterthought by the oligarchy but seemingly their primary goal.

In the already mentioned November, 1957, U.S. Fourth Circuit Court reversal of the lower court order, the legal counsel for the county school board won a stay by Chief Judge Parker pending an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Supreme Court in March, 1958, refused to review the Appeal Court's order and the case returned to the chambers of Judge Hutcheson of the U.S. District Court. On August 4, 1958, Judge Hutcheson ruled a seven year delay for desegregation until 1965, in order to avert what he called "disorder and possible bloodshed." The NAACP appealed this decision.

On January 19, 1959, the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals surprisingly declared in a 5-2 opinion that both school closing and the cutting off of state funds to prevent racial integration in public schools violated the Virginia Constitution since tuition grants for private schooling as an alternative to integration were tied to the notion of "race." Therefore, tuition grants provided for in the 1956 legislation became unconstitutional. This decision accompanied by various federal court orders throughout the issue thus began to pull the carpet out from under the success of the Massive Resistance statutes.

However, the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals and the Federal Courts did not stop the General Assembly from writing and passing new laws providing for tuition and transportation grants, tax write-offs, pupil assignment, pupil regulation and many other statutes designed to impede and thwart desegregation. Beginning in 1959, up to the present, more than a dozen major laws have become a part of the code of Virginia all intended to circumvent the U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1954.

By May of 1959, Judge Hutcheson's seven year delay decision was upset when after an appeal by the NAACP, the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals ordered desegregation in high schools in the county for September 1959 and also ordered that the county

began to plan the same for elementary schools. Upon hearing this, Blanton B. Handbury, president of the Prince Edward School Foundation, announced a full scale preparation for the operation of private schools beginning September 1959. The oligarchy had finally found the catalyst which would launch their private school idea.

A fund drive was started to raise \$200,000 for the private school operation. At the same time the county school board appealed the decision of this Appeals court to the U.S. Supreme Court which again refused on October 12, 1959, to hear the case. From this time forward events fell into place in accordance with the wishes of the county oligarchy.

By the spring of 1959 the power struggle for white leadership had pretty well become what it is today. What evolved was an unmistakable oligarchy of three men at the apex of power. Under them were some fifteen lieutenants of varying influence. The top three of the oligarchy had through the years managed to discredit and debase in the eyes of white residents not only those leaders who wished schools to remain open, but also older leaders and those who would dare deviate in any degree from the "plot to subvert the public schools", as one victim of this power game put it.

As a result of these developments the board of supervisors, the school board and the county's various administrative officers were herded into credulous compliance with the decision of the oligarchy.

So on June 3, 1959, the board of supervisors, under surreptitious order from the oligarchy rejected a school board budget for the 1959-60 school session of \$780,600 as well as an alternative budget of \$489,595 to finance tuition grants. Instead they approved a schoolless \$210,654 county budget for the coming year. There was some small dissent to this decision but it failed to gain momentum. Its failure was mainly due to the oligarchy's ability to mobilize the news media of the area in their favor and not because there was universal support of school closure in the county. We shall never really know how widespread dissent, apprehension and uneasiness was among whites over initiating such a drastic step because of the prevailing atmosphere of embarrassment, harassment and intimidation extended to those who dared to deviate. Disagreement with the "plot" understandably went underground. Nevertheless on June 23, after the supervisors had already executed their decision to close schools, four proponents of continued public schools were allowed to express their opinions before a supervisors meeting. Of course, no change in the county policy resulted as the decision had already been made.

Interestingly enough, all but one of the school board members were in favor of schools remaining open but found themselves dangling between the supervisors failure to appropriate money for schools and their convictions that come desegregation or high water the county should have public schools. Repeated harassment, embarrassment, and intimidation of school board members and in some cases their children, prompted all but one of them later in 1960 to resign. By the end of 1960 the old school board had been replaced by appointees who thought favorably of the oligarchy's plans for the educational destiny of the county. However, various forms of harassment of some ex-school board members was to continue even until 1962.

When the fall of 1959 arrived, the doors of all the public schools in the county remained closed. On September 10, the Prince Edward School Foundation before a

national radio and television audience conducted a formal ceremony for the all-white, Prince Edward Academy. Classes began on September 14. Thus the realization of private all-white schools, the long-sought dream of the oligarchy had come to pass.

Encountering much criticism for failing to provide school facilities for Negro children, white leaders in December chartered a corporation called "Southside Schools, Inc." and sent out letters inviting Negro parents to enroll their children in this all-Negro private school system at a \$240 annual tuition fee. Only one application was returned to the corporation. Since the governing board was all white and nine of the seventeen members were also on the board of the all-white Prince Edward School Foundation, Negroes had little confidence in this enterprise. In addition, few Negro parents could afford the tuition fees.

Considerable minor court action was interspersed throughout the ensuing months, but it was August 23, 1961 when one of the most decisive litigious events occurred. On that date federal judge Oren R. Lewis decreed that public funds, that is, tuition grants and tax credits, could not be used to support private segregated education so long as public schools in the county remained closed. He insisted that the freedom of choice for parents between public and private schools had been breeched. He left the question of whether schools should be opened to the State courts. The county had beforehand been utilizing state tuition grants and local tuition and transportation grants for the school year of 1960-61. They had failed to take advantage of these public funds during the 1959-60 school year because of what they expressed to be fear of being involved in the constitutional question of whether or not the use of public grants were valid for use in private schools. However, their first year was one of rather dramatic financial success. Contributions and visitors came from all over the South to encourage and contribute to Prince Edward's defiance of the U.S. Supreme Court order. It is reported by several county residents that one of the more notable visitors to Prince Edward was William J. Simmons of Jackson, Mississippi, the titular leader of the White Citizens' Councils of America. None of these contributing individuals and observers from other segregationist states were ever considered "outsiders." However, the allegation of "outsider" was soon to be the frequent cry by the Prince Edward County proponent of school abandonment, even when talking about someone from Richmond, Lynchburg or Charlottesville, who may have occasion to visit the county, but who was opposed to school closing.

Following Judge Lewis's decision outlawing tuition grants, a new petition was filed by Negro plaintiffs in the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals asking for writ of mandamus to compel the county board of supervisors to appropriate funds for public schools for 1961-62. That state court ruled on March 5, 1962 that the county was not required by state constitution or state statutes to operate public schools. That summer, following the State Court's order, Judge Lewis ruled that public schools in Prince Edward County could not be closed to avoid desegregation while schools elsewhere in Virginia remained opened. This violated equality of opportunity for all Virginians. In the fall, Judge Lewis issued a formal decree implementing his summer opinion but postponed enforcement pending an appeal by the counsel for the county.

Since the 1961 decisions by Judge Lewis, the Prince Edward case has been continually delayed by endless legal details and technicalities. Issues in the case have been before both federal and state judges, but for one reason or another, final decisions have not been forthcoming. As of this writing the question is still before the United States 4th Circuit Court of Appeals. The case is likewise pending before the

Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia which refuses to hand down any decision before January of 1964. A decision from this state court is considered to be of profound importance in influencing the direction of the Prince Edward school issue and, indeed, the destiny of 14,000 people.

The U.S. District Court clerks at Richmond observe that "Civil Action No. 1333," the Prince Edward case, is the longest and most involved case they have ever seen. The opinions of judges in the case in the District Court alone when stacked on top of one another, would stand almost four feet high. Entries in the lower court's massive docket book span more than a dozen pages while no other case covers more than three pages.

As of the summer of 1963, litigation came to the end of its twelfth year and school closing to the end of its fourth. The length and the hardships endured by the various Negro plaintiffs and other Negro residents as well as many whites in the county, have pretty much exhausted patience and confidence in legal solutions to this problem. In the year that marks the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, Negroes find it hard to understand why simple questions regarding equality of educational opportunity must take twelve years to solve and must visit upon their youngsters irreparable social, psychological and educational damage. Militance is encouraged by a situation like this. Confidence in white solutions to the problem has been completely exhausted. Faith in local and state leadership and their interest in seeking possible solutions in the Negro interest has been completely shattered. White control of the political machine and economy in Prince Edward County and thus control of the educational system has driven a wedge between the races which, without immediate and far-reaching solutions, may never be dissolved. White claims of "continuing harmonious race relations" are but a verbal facade for the combustible tinder tempting those who would indulge in extremism.

Throughout the school issue, state level leaders have either vigorously supported the design of the county oligarchy or have condoned the county action by apathy. Included in an endless list of Virginians who are Prince Edward supporters are U.S. Congressmen Watkins M. Abbitt and William M. Tuck. Tuck was governor of Virginia from 1946-1950.

The entire history of events relative to school closing unfolds endless accounts of white advocates of public schools remaining open, most of whom were segregationists, who experienced endless incidents of economic and psychological coercion to conform. Some businessmen report that their businesses were boycotted to the brink of financial doom. Some white parents reported that their children were embarrassed or harassed in the private schools by the private school teachers and other officials. Meetings of county residents opposed to school closing were under watchful and covert surveillance. The names of participants in these meetings were carefully circulated throughout the community in order to encourage reprisal. Ceaseless attempts at trying to get various individuals fired from their jobs has occurred. Some ministers, who dared to speak in favor of opening schools, lost their jobs. This is only a partial list of both the obvious and subtle conditions incurred upon whites.

Of course, Negroes were not excluded from harassment. They experienced not only the inequities and indignities which was their social inheritance, but also the added animosity and resentment born of the school issue.

Both Negroes and whites in the county who wished to discuss the school issue in a way unfavorable to the oligarchy's view, soon learned that they could not use their telephone for such a conversation. The substance of these phone chats soon found their way to the oligarchy or its lieutenants and some undesirable consequences invariably resulted. The oligarchy was apparently intent on carrying out its plan regardless of the measures needed.

The summer of 1963 has given little encouragement to those school age youngsters who have roamed aimlessly about the roads, fields and farms of Prince Edward County for four years. In July a 2.5 million dollar experimental reading program, prematurely announced by the press, fell through because it failed to secure necessary financing. Also on July 9, in the Farmville Democratic primary, E.M. Pairet, a young businessman who advocated school opening, was beaten almost two to one by incumbent John C. Steck, the managing editor of the Farmville Herald and a transplanted Pennsylvanian. This victory, of course, means little as a test of popularity for the policy of continued school closing because Steck received the endorsement of only 799 voters in a county of 14,121 people of which 8,021 are twenty-one years or over.

And finally, for the fifth consecutive year, the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors in early July approved a county budget without a provision for public schools. The only money in the budget for education was for \$375,000 allocated for local tuition and transportation grants in the case that its use may become lawful under future developments. At this time, county residents cannot use this money.

CHAPTER III

WHITE EDUCATION

Without public schools the question arises - what kind of education do Prince Edward County youngsters have? Except for 492 Negro children who attend schools outside of the county, there is no educational provision for Negro children. But for white children there is an all white private school organization known as the Prince Edward School Foundation.

The launching of the private school idea, of course, began long before school closing. Some close to the county oligarchy tell of wishes and theoretical plans for the abandonment of public education as early as the 1940's. Many whites felt no responsibility for educating the Negro and sought measures to escape paying for any part of Negro education. School closure and private education was to become the means by which the white could avoid his responsibility for Negro education in wake of 300 years in which the white man had run from his guilt as an oppressor.

School closure then did not just happen. It was in the thoughts and capacities of the oligarchy for at least fifteen years.

It was not, however, only the cost of Negro education which the economically successful white was determined to avoid, but it was also the burden of educating poor whites. This is readily seen by the reluctant concessions made in the forms of scholarships by the School Foundation. The oligarchy was searching for the day in

which only white children of adequate means would be afforded the educational tools to become a class of economic and leadership elites.

When the School Foundation was originally operated in 1959, it housed its classes in fifteen different buildings including a theater, churches, the woman's club, a Moose organization, and three private buildings. Locations of these schools have been changed from time to time in order to consolidate or to move into structures built onto the backs of churches and other buildings which have been especially prepared to house the private school classes. For the 1961-62 session, a new Prince Edward Academy building was opened in Farmville for white high school students from the entire county. This building was reported by whites to be valued at \$400,000 and built at cost because of generous gifts. Two members of the county's leadership oligarchy, both owning or sharing the ownership of large contracting firms, reportedly constructed the building at cost. Many of the other structures built for use by the Foundation were erected with free labor volunteered by proponents of school closing and with materials given by contributors from as far away as Richmond.

At present most of the grammar or lower schools are of cinder block construction and are built onto a church or some other building. The class rooms are relatively modern in appearance, but the schools are without lunch facilities and for the most part equipped with inadequate toilet and other plumbing facilities. One lower school at Worsham had at the time of this writing only one decayed and crumbling outdoor privy for all the children enrolled in that particular school.

Private school students in some cases use public school property for their recreational activities.

The curricula at the Foundation schools are similar to that in the public schools of Virginia. In fact, the Foundation schools have been accredited by the state Department of Education each year that they have been in existence. Accreditation by the state is, however, not mandatory in Virginia.

The total Foundation budget for 1959-60, the first year of operation was about \$305,000 for 1,446 pupils. The cost of operating Foundation classes has steadily increased while the number of pupils has decreased over the four years of operation. For the 1962-63 school year, the tuition fee was \$240 for lower school students and \$265 for upper school students or high school students. The total enrollment during this year was 1258 pupils, 480 in the upper school, and 778 in the six lower schools which are located in each of the six magisterial districts. A magisterial district is the political subdivision of a county in Virginia comparable to the township in other states.

The School Foundation each year, except during 1960-61, has had to raise all of its operational and capital funds without the known aid of public money. During 1960-61, however, the School Foundation received from the parents of their pupils some \$250,000 in state and local tuition and transportation grants and tax credits. During this 1960-61 school session parents received state tuition grants amounting to \$150 for each high school student and \$125 for each elementary school student. In addition, parents received for each child a \$100 tuition grant and a maximum of \$35 for transportation from the county.

During each year of operation the United States Internal Revenue Service has declared all contributions to the School Foundation deductible for federal income tax purposes.

Overt public support of the School Foundation was short-lived, however. For on August 24, 1961, U.S. District Judge Oren R. Lewis declared tuition grants and tax write-offs unconstitutional on the grounds that since public schools in Prince Edward did not remain open there was no freedom of choice between public and private schools. This however, did not make it unlawful to receive tuition grants in other localities in the state of Virginia since their public schools were open. Therefore, the Foundation Schools have been without state tuition grants since the 1961-62 school year. Despite this, it is said by many white individuals in the county that they know of specific white families who have established additional or bogus residences in neighboring counties in order to qualify for state tuition and transportation grants given in that county.

There are now many reports testifying to the precarious financial situation of the School Foundation. Some say that the School Foundation sometimes fails to pay their teachers. Others claim that the Foundation is near bankruptcy. Still others report difficulty encountered by the Foundation in attempting to secure pledges and collect contributions. Several dozen court suits are currently in progress in which the School Foundation is pressing hard to enforce pledges and collect unpaid tuition fees. The School Foundation also finds it difficult to provide enough scholarships for youngsters whose parents are unable to pay the high cost of private education.

Some indication of the economic situation which parents must overcome in Prince Edward County is seen by the fact that in 1959 the median annual family income in the county was \$3,043, while for the United States as a whole, it was \$5,660. Also, 49.5% of the families in Prince Edward County earn under \$3,000 each year, as compared with 21.4% for the nation. Thus private education is an extremely heavy burden on the people of a rural county such as Prince Edward.

A specific illustration of these hardships is seen in the case of a career soldier whose three school age children in 1962 were barred from private school classes for non-payment of his \$720 bill at the School Foundation. This amount represented one-sixth of his total annual pay. The Foundation did award him a \$480 scholarship and demanded he pay \$240. As a small landowner with four children, deeply in debt, and even with his wife's small wages from the local shoe factory, he could not pay the \$240. The Foundation told him to borrow the money at one of the three local banks or he would not be allowed to have his children registered for classes. He chose to sink even deeper into debt with the bank note as they instructed.

It is believed by most observers in the county that the School Foundation is making every effort to see that every white youngster possible gets an opportunity to attend private classes so that they will not be tempted to attend public schools if they were to open on a desegregated basis in the county. However, few believe that the School Foundation has the means to continue to provide an education for 1,200 white children for any sustained length of time. Resources in the county are too limited and now that their segregationist supporters elsewhere tend to be more preoccupied with problems closer to home, Foundation officials find it difficult to raise money outside the county.

CHAPTER IV

THE FATE OF THE NEGROES

While whites, holding the balance of economic power established themselves private schools, the Negroes were left with no choices. They could neither afford to establish private schools nor could they return to the old inferior public schools as had been the alternative in other desegregation cases elsewhere in the South.

Most observers felt that the school issue would be resolved in only a short time in the traditional "token desegregation" fashion, which has been the general pattern throughout the country. Many people, including most whites, thought that this was just a temporary situation which would end in a year at the most. After the first year came and passed, most people again thought that by September of 1960, public school doors would surely be opened. Most observers underestimated the complexities of the problem in Prince Edward and few could predict that the schools would have remained closed as long as they have. Meanwhile, Negroes were extremely alarmed about the fate of their children. Under the leadership of a local minister, Reverend L.F. Griffin, they established the Prince Edward County Christian Association (PECCA) to operate "training centers" for their unschooled children. The "training centers" were not attempts at private education because Negro leaders had hoped that their existence would be temporary and would not affect their legal position in the courts which held that Negroes were receiving no formal education. This argument assumed that if the Negro families devised their own make-shift school system, the question of discrimination in favor of whites in public education would never be squarely faced.

Indeed, the fact that the "training centers" were not "formal education" was obvious. The resources at the fingertips of Negroes, who for two and a half centuries had been relegated to a dark and dusty corner of the county's economy, were far too few.

The "training centers" were located in homes, churches, shacks or any structure available to Negroes and the "teachers" were adults who for the most part were housewives without college training. In the beginning, however, about half of the leaders were school teachers from the former Negro public schools.

In the early days it was reported that almost all the Negro children in the county attended one of the fifteen various "training centers" located throughout the county. But attendance soon began to drop off because of a shortage of adult leadership and also because of critical supplies, equipment and facilities were not available. The absence of leadership was related to the fact that few teachers and professional people with leadership experience had the resources to remain behind without any income. They found themselves leaving the county and, in most cases the state, to seek other employment.

A typical situation in the early days of the "training centers" saw some seventy-five Negro youngsters, ranging from ages five to eighteen years crowded into the basement of a Negro church, most of them sitting on the floor because there were only a few chairs. The one, two or three "teachers" or "leaders" commanded the attention of only a few of the students while the great majority talked among

themselves, read aloud or played. Many however, just waited for the time to come when they could go outside and play or until it was time to go home.

During the earliest months of school closing, a number of attempts were made to place students in other schools outside the county. PECCA, The America Friends Service Committee, the Virginia Teachers Association, the state Negro professional teachers organization, and Kittrell College in North Carolina working separately and/or cooperatively, placed some two hundred and ninety students over a period of four years of school closing in schools outside the county and outside the state of Virginia. Some 200-300 other Negro youngsters during the four years entered schools outside the county under their own or family influence. Most all these 500-600 students were of junior high school age and above.

In addition to student placement, there were a number of educational, instructional, recreational and citizenship programs conducted in the county throughout the past four years of school closing. The NAACP, The American Friends Service Committee, The Virginia Teachers Association, The Richmond Volunteers to Prince Edward County, The Summer Education Project, and several others made a number of different kinds of attempts at offering Negro youngsters and adults some awareness of their rights as Americans or to offer some kind of basic instruction.

An intensive drive to increase voter registration is also been promoted by PECCA and the NAACP. Despite the fact that registration in Virginia is impeded by several procedural obstacles, this program to increase the number of Negro voters has shown considerable gain. In Virginia a person, in order to be eligible to vote, must pay a poll tax of \$1.50 six months in advance of the election and also shall have paid that tax for the three years preceding the election in which the registrant wishes to vote. Voter registration is permitted by the state constitution and law to be largely at the discretion of the registrar, who is always white. Even under these circumstances, there has been no reported illegal obstructions of voter registration in Prince Edward County.

CHAPTER V

OPINIONS IN PRINCE EDWARD

Attitudes of Prince Edward County residents toward the school issue could be said to fall into seven categories, four white and two Negro.

First, among the whites, are the white oligarchy, their lieutenants and a number of close followers of the oligarchy, who all together, make up only a small minority among the total 8,500 whites in Prince Edward County.

Although this group is a small numerical minority, it is the dominant segment among the county's residents by virtue of its control of the economy and the communications media in the county. Most of the influence of this group is directly attributable to the great strength of the oligarchy and its ability to control petty leadership and government officials.

The aggregate opinion of this group is a creed which can best be described as "White Conservatism" but should not be confused with the so called "race free" doctrine of conservatism of the Barry Goldwater stripe. Rather "White Conservatism" is a hybrid credo combining a cautious white supremacy with an extreme "states rights" view of the U.S. Constitution.

The proponent of "white conservatism" goes to great lengths to substantiate his doctrine, and over the years since the 1954 Supreme Court decision, many pamphlets, books, and other publications have been published expounding upon the virtues of white "conservatism". Pseudo-works in law, history, anthropology, genetics, biology and psychology, such as Carleton Putnam's Race and Reason, A Yankee View and W. C. George's The Biology of the Race Problem have become the revered scriptures for white "conservatism". These works and the words of others are on the tongue of hundreds of the county's deeply prejudiced white residents.

This doctrine is also an important part of the education of the student who attends Prince Edward School Foundation classes. Dr. Henry F. Garrett in a June 12, 1963 address to the seventy-four seniors at the fourth commencement of the Prince Edward Academy, concluded a tirade against the "forces of integration" with these sepulchral words: "You are facing a dictatorship. You are eternally right (in this resistance). Emulate your parents. Stand steady Prince Edward. God Bless You."

The second group of white opinion in the county includes a large number in the white population who despite their objection to school closing should be described as "segregationists". Of this group, many, despite their white supremacist views, opposed school closure from the very beginning of the controversy. The remainder of this group, after experiencing school closure as the alternative to desegregation, would choose desegregation. Most of these people, although opposed to the dictates of the oligarchy, found it impossible to weather the harassment and intimidation which were the certain consequences of opposing the school closing policy.

The third white group of opinion includes a considerable minority of the county population who are impoverished, poorly educated, culturally deprived, and who are uninformed about most of the issues in the school question. By default they do not take part in elections or government, and thus are never a party to any of the decisions which relegate them to remain in poverty. The fourth and final category among the whites is that of the "egalitarian." This category is small. The most optimistic estimate would be two dozen people, found mostly among the faculties of Longwood College, a state teachers college for women in Farmville and Hampden Sydeny College, a Presbyterian college for men some seven miles from Farmville. Their view is the traditional view of the essential equality of the races and the necessity for desegregation. Only about a dozen of these individuals have insisted publicly on the reopening of schools.

Among the 5,500 Negroes in the county, opinions, of course, vary but two major categories are immediately apparent. First is a small minority of the Negro populace which like lower class whites are impoverished, largely illiterate, and culturally depressed. They are unaware of the significance of the school issue and in the main can not be mobilized in seeking a collective solution to the problem and like their white counterparts, never participate in the decisions which are of preeminence in their lives.

But for the vast majority of Negroes, the situation is much different. This large majority appears solidly together for the re-opening of schools. Much of the desegregation content in the Negro argument has failed to weather the twelve year battle to improve educational conditions for Negro children. The commanding issue in this Negro's opinion, weary and impatient from years of endless social chaos is the question of when public schools will be opened?

Disenchanted by local and state government and disillusioned by federal apathy, they find it impossible to reason why millions of dollars should be spent on getting a lone Negro into the University of Mississippi while 1,700 of their own youngsters in 1963 enter their fifth year without any schools! They have completely lost all confidence in the local and state governments and see these officials as simply spokesmen for white people. After pleading in the courts for twelve years to have the question settled, Negroes are fast losing confidence in the judicial system as a means by which solutions to their grievances can be sought. They feel that their backs are against the wall and out of these many grievous years of inequity they are beginning to see more clearly this whole conflict as a case of race pitted against race!

CHAPTER VI

THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL CLOSING

Although comprehensive studies have not yet been done on all of the suspected consequences associated with closure of the public schools, preliminary findings hint at many undesirable effects. Prince Edward has and is today suffering economic, psychological, educational and social lacerations which are expected to scar that Virginia county permanently, and with each new day of school closure these problems are compounded even more seriously.

The following is a brief enumeration of some of these problems and their ramifications.

A. Illiteracy

The first and most obvious of all the problems which a county without public schools must face is that of illiteracy. Using the current definition by the U.S. Office of Education, it is estimated that one out of every four persons in Prince Edward County is expected to be illiterate by the time he is eighteen years old. In addition this percentage is expected to be increased by at least 2% of the county's total population for each year that schools remain closed.

No one needs to point out what massive problems result from a situation in which 25% of a population are illiterate and in which that percentage is expected to grow to 33% in less than five years. This effect alone could conceivably paralyze this county for years to come.

This obviously is not just a problem with Negro illiteracy. Informed estimates have it that at least one-fourth of all the white children of school age in the county are not in any school.

B. Loss of Population

While the United States and Virginia from 1950 to 1960 were growing sizably in population, Prince Edward County and the town of Farmville were losing population.

Although it is dangerous to venture any certain conclusions from the 1960 census material, it is fair to say that the absence of public schools may be the antecedent of at least some portion of these population losses, both for the total county and the town of Farmville. Some of this loss may be attributed to the fact that it is a predominately rural county, but population diminution appears unusual along side the fact that the county is a predominantly commercial and industrial center for the entire "Southside" area.

Farmville's loss is also unusual in light of population developments in other "Southside" towns. In fact, Farmville has been the only Southside urban place within fifty miles which has lost population. In addition, it experienced the heaviest loss of population of any urban place in the twenty-two county area.

It is interesting to note that both the county and the town of Farmville have both lost not only in percentage of Negroes, but also in number. This is an atypical trend even for "Southside" Virginia.

C. Public Welfare

Since public school closing, both the cost and number of cases in certain public assistance categories have increased at a rate which appears somewhat unusual when compared to neighboring counties, and the state and nation as a whole.

These increases in A.D.C. (Aid to Dependent Children), A.P.T.D. (Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled), and G.R. (General Relief), are the categories which are most often associated by most public welfare officials with depression in the economy. These figures, although in themselves not conclusive, allude to some depressing factors in the Prince Edward economy.

It is interesting to note that A.D.C. cases should have diminished considerably since school attendance is a prerequisite for eligibility for all recipients of ADC sixteen years and under in the state of Virginia. It has been reported that a number of Negro recipients have been dropped from public assistance rolls because they could not meet this requirement since there were no public school to attend. And unfortunately in Virginia, as elsewhere, most A.D.C. children depend solely on their grants for sustenance while attending school.

D. Juvenile Court Cases

Since school closing there has been a rather dramatic increase in the number of children's cases disposed of by the Juvenile Court of Prince Edward County. Although we can not ascertain the exact significance of this phenomenon, we can see here some suggestion that school closing may be associated with an increase in problems with youth in the county. Of course, these figures do not consider the cases of children from Prince Edward who have been disposed of by the courts of one or more of the seven counties bordering Prince Edward County. In addition, these figures are

no index for that delinquent behavior which does not come to the attention of law enforcement officials, but is still a serious and ever-increasing problem.

E. Alcohol Abuse

No specific survey has yet been conducted, but an atypical trend in the use of alcoholic beverages seems to be developing among Negro unschooled minors in Prince Edward. Many cases have been documented in which idle and bored teenagers, without jobs or schools open to them, have resorted to the habitual use of alcoholic beverages. A few cases have even been reported of the use of narcotics by youngsters. All reports indicate that this is a new phenomenon among the county's youth.

F. Illegitimacy

Sometimes promiscuous sexual behavior, like excessive alcohol consumption, is a product of boredom and limitations in employment opportunity. Without public schools, unusual numbers of Prince Edward Negro and white youngsters in their early teens have been drawn into those conditions which lead to marked increases in births out of wedlock. From all available evidence, it is suggested that this problem could prove to be one of the most crucial threats to social stability in the county.

G. Depression in the Economy

Although there has continued to be some growth in gross retail and wholesale sales since school closing, most businessmen in the county contend, and most do so only in strict confidentiality, that business has failed to keep pace with normal business growth elsewhere in similar communities. Several businessmen estimate the failure to grow properly to be a loss to the county ranging from one to five million dollars for the four years in which school doors have been barred. All of these businessmen testified to the fact that losses were linked in causation to public school closure and unusual for a county which before school closing was continually becoming more and more a commercial center and less and less an agricultural one.

The only thing which makes it possible for commercial interests in Prince Edward to survive at all is the fact that Farmville, representing about 85% of the total business in the county, is a commercial center for some eight counties in the region. Therefore, much of the county's income is derived from sources outside the county who have no direct stake in public school closure.

At the same time that retailing, wholesaling, contracting, banking, tobacco marketing and other enterprises are failing to keep pace, agriculture, too, is falling short of gains needed to meet the ever increasing demands of higher costs in farming and inflation of the dollar.

Grandiose claims by proponents of school closing have been made regarding the half dozen small enterprises which have opened in the county since school closing which, it is insisted, attest to the absence of a relationship between business success and public schools. This is unconvincing evidence, however, because none of these businesses really make a significant impact on the economy. All hire less than twenty-five employees and turn over less than a few thousand dollars each. Six or so enterprises of this description means little in an economy of \$30,000,000 in total

gross sales for all goods and services in the county and which depends most heavily on 80,000 people in eight counties for economic survival.

This, of course, is only a sketch of the state of the economy, but the obvious implications are still enough to remind us of the unequivocal interrelationship of one institution, such as public schools, to the success and stability of all other institutions and, indeed, the viability of the community as a whole.

H. Health and Mental Health Problems

Public schools, especially in southern rural areas, play an important role in the health and hygiene of the families of public school pupils. Often the teacher or other school personnel are the only individuals in a given rural community who can recognize conditions which pose threats to the physical and mental health of people in the locality. Therefore, since school closing, large numbers of the Negro youngsters, particularly in those areas outside Farmville, have not come in contact, some for years at a time, with any adult who is likely to spot medical or social problems or who can offer assistance or advice about solving such problems. As a result, many serious maladies go undetected or ignored by those who are uninformed.

All of the volunteer and professional projects in the county since 1959 report the discovery of severe problems associated with poverty, neglect and ignorance. Great numbers of cases of malnutrition, decayed teeth, eye trouble, respiratory disease and social and psychiatric disorders have been too voluminous for the county's public health nurse to uncover and resolve.

There are, of course, many other educational, economic, psychological and social consequences directly attributable to school closing which have not yet been fully studied or explained. Some of these problems are currently under study at this writing in a research project headed by Dr. Robert Lee Green of Michigan State University College of Education. This \$75,000 project financed by the U.S. Office of Education is engaged in examining some of the educational, psychological and sociological factors related to public school closure.

However, many of these problems will not be fully disclosed until schools are opened and the problems of educating the human products of a school-less sub-culture are faced. Some may never be known except by those who suffer from them.

I. Stigma

Closely linked to economic stability and total community equilibrium is the county's ability to not only attract new business and industry, but also its ability to lure individuals with important skills and who provide essential services. No community can do without professionals and others who perform one or more of the hundreds of special services on which Americans in the twentieth century depend.

Prince Edward has lost this ability because it is a locality which has a reputation for instability. The county has lost well over half of its elementary and secondary teachers. It has lost physicians, farm agents, dentists, and many other sorely needed skilled and trained people. What is more, it has not attracted and cannot under these circumstances attract young people to occupy these crucial positions as fast as older people vacate them. Professionals and technically prepared individuals do not go to

communities where the future is uncertain and few for this reason will go to a locality where, of all things, there are no public schools and where there is little prospect for having any for some time to come.

J. Racism

Situations such as the one in Prince Edward where a line between the races is arbitrarily drawn by a small but powerful oligarchy is a situation which encourages the growth of the irrational and self-seeking behavior of racial extremists.

The school issue and the oligarchy's demagogic maneuvering of this issue has in Prince Edward thrown salt into the wound of already poor race relations. The white south was gradually learning its lesson in acknowledging the shortcomings of democracy in the United States. All evidence indicates that whites were prepared to make many overdue concessions to Negroes had it not been for the radical actions of racists on the state and local level. One member of the county oligarchy is quoted as saying that "the race issue is the only thing we could get everybody here excited about in our attempt to stop this socialism".

Notwithstanding code words like "state sovereignty", "private property" and "individual liberties", the oligarchy has very consciously and directly stoked the fires of racism. On the lips of many whites are the names of the contemporary protagonists of the pseudo-science of modern white supremacy. Promulgated by the FARMVILLE HERALD, the RICHMOND NEWS LEADER, the RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH and other magazines and newspapers, the names, W.C. George, formally of the University of North Carolina, Carleton Putnam, and Henry Garrett, currently at the University of Virginia, have suddenly become the heroes of white "conservatism" in Prince Edward County. Even the nationally circulated U.S. News and World Report has made contributions toward gaining acceptance for these men in the eyes of prejudiced white Southerners.

Such antagonistic propaganda conjured up in Prince Edward County by the oligarchy, not only promote irrational behavior among whites, but it also encourages militance among Negroes. One such reaction has been the recent efforts by representatives from the Nation of Islam, the so-called Black Muslims, to recruit support among the Negroes in Farmville.

K. Cost to the Commonwealth of Virginia

There are, of course, innumerable costs which have, because of the Prince Edward County school crisis, become the burden of taxpayers elsewhere in Virginia. Also the events in Prince Edward have stained the reputation of Virginia as a whole. We cannot go into details about these many costs here, but we can mention the fact that Virginia taxpayers outside Prince Edward County, as well as taxpayers outside the state, can look forward to picking up the bill incurred by the avalanche of social problems troubling Prince Edward. We can anticipate this bill to mount at a geometric ratio until some adequate solution can be introduced.

It is obvious that money is by far the smallest price paid by both Negroes and whites in the Prince Edward school issue. The animosities, the ignorance, the heartaches, the tears, the fears, the sustained separation of loved ones, the ulcers, the

aggravated high blood pressure, and the thousands of other painful expenditures in human misery have nearly torn this small Virginia county apart.

L. The Saddest Fact of All

The most depressing consequence of all in the Prince Edward school issue is the breakdown of the democratic process. Here a small handful of men of influence have established a reign of fear. They have made a farce of representative government. Local government officials have arrived at a dead end street. They can enact only the wishes of the oligarchy. The county government officials today can no longer speak for the people. When one questions public officials about the will of the citizenry, one discovers that these elected and appointed officials can no longer speak freely. Instead they are compelled to refer the questioner to a member of the oligarchy.

The voice of the people in Prince Edward has been silenced. The county cannot turn back nor can it go forward. It can neither open schools or keep the doors barred without losing face. It can only hope for some outside force to open schools and save it from further humiliation and shame for committing such a misdeed. Even while whites stand to gain by opening public schools, which would once again allow them to receive state and local tuition grants, the oligarchy continues to sell them a worthless bill of goods.

The county has lost. It has lost its principle of local control. It has lost its reputation. It is losing its economy. A handful of selfish and presumptuous men have lead them down a long, blind alley with no exit. The oligarchy has failed the good people of Prince Edward County.