

"MEMPHIS EVENING POST"

Wednesday, April 14, 1869.

COLORED SCHOOLS.

Reports Of Committees Appointed By The School Board.

The following reports were presented to the School Board, at its last meeting, by the Committees appointed to visit the colored schools:

To The Honorable Board Of Education Of The City Of Memphis:

Gentlemen:-

The undersigned, who were appointed your committee to visit the Phoenix and Centenary public schools in this city, beg leave respectfully to report we discharged that duty on the 22nd. day of March. We found at the Phoenix school a large attendance of colored scholars, both children and adults. We examined several classes, and tested not only the familiarity of the pupils with their immediate lessons, but also their proficiency generally, with gratifying results. A class of small children, in arithmetic, interested us much by their evident comprehension of some of the primary principles of that science. A large class of both small and large scholars, under the direction and teaching of Miss C.B. Newton gave a very interesting exercise, in reading a difficult dialogue, and exhibited the marked results of that lady's careful training. A small class of adult scholars, under the charge of Miss Anna Lee, showed a proficiency in reading and writing, which was quite gratifying, in view of the advanced years of the pupils and their very limited advantages in the way of schooling and opportunities for study. The entire school was under the supervision of Mr. E. Pierce, who appears a good organizer

Continuation: Colored Schools.

and disciplinarian, though he had been so short a time in the position that we could hardly judge of his government and teaching by results.

The Centenary School we found, under the charge and governance of Miss N.V. Kimball, displaying a high degree of discipline and a commendable attention to study and deportment. The pupils in this school are mostly of the younger class, and pursuing less advanced studies than those at the other school. But the acquaintance of these small scholars with mental arithmetic showed careful training, and a pleasant exercise in reading by the little ones gave token of the care and pains bestowed in this regard by Miss Kimball and her assistant, Mrs. V. Fulton.

Your Committee were pleased to note the great degree of attention which is paid in these two schools to the art of reading-- a simple branch of study, but one too important to be neglected in the education of the young scholars, as is too often done because it is a simple and primary branch of study. The scarcity of good readers among educated men attests the neglect of this art, of which we have spoken. The proper standard of correct reading, which is to read precisely as one would talk in using the same words and phrase upon the subject and under the same circumstances, seems to be assiduously held up before these colored scholars by their teachers. Some of the scholars in the Phoenix school will, with the proper effort, easily make themselves fine elocutionists.

The Phoenix school building is, in its present form, too large and unwillingly to be made of the most use, and should be divided into several rooms. Your Committee are pleased to learn that this plan is contemplated in connection with a proposed removal of the building to another lot of ground.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Joseph Lenow,  
 J.S. Chapin, COMMITTEES.  
 James O. Pierce,

Memphis April, 8, 1869.

Continuation: Colored Schools.

To The Board Of Education Of The City Of Memphis:

Gentlemen:-

The undersigned, one of those who were to visit Collins' Chapel School, begs to offer the following report. Being unable, after several efforts to meet with or receive a report from the gentlemen appointed to act with me, I proceeded alone. I found all the pupils in one room, to the number of about two hundred, male and female. The exercises commenced by singing a hymn, after which a portion of the scripture was read and a prayer made. The male teacher, Mr. Kincaid, led the exercises. The studies appear to be principally spelling, reading and the lower grades of arithmetic.

The younger pupils appear very apt in their studies. The conduct of the pupils is decorous, and there is a general appearance of cleanliness of person. Mr. Kincaid reports the total number of pupils, on the books as two hundred and eighty and a fair average attendance. There is, besides the male teacher, Misses Eaman and Mordz.

The School is entirely without desks, which must greatly retard the progress of the pupils in writing and arithmetic. There was one wrong feature which might be remedied, and which, I think, should be attended to viz: The males and females are in the grades and classes together, without any regard to age. Many of such pupils, if not past the age of maturity-- twenty-one years-- are on the verge of such age. I think the school should be so graded and classified that the males might be taught by a male teacher and the girls by a female. All of which is respectfully submitted.

Samuel Tigue,  
One Of School Visitors of  
Eighth Ward.

To The Board Of Education Of The City Of Memphis:

Gentlemen:-

The Committee designated by you to visit the Lincoln School, have performed the duty assigned

Continuation: Colored Schools.

them, and beg leave to present the following report.

The school is located on Orleans street, a short distance this side of Beal. It was established some three years since, by the American Missionary Association, assisted by the Freedman's Bureau, the grounds and buildings costing about ten thousand dollars. Its objects was, in common with other and kindred efforts, to demonstrate both the practicability and the wisdom of educating and elevating the colored population of the country, so large a representation of which is to be found in this city.

In pursuing this work the happiest results have been made manifest. Your committee believe that they express the unanimous verdict of all fair and candid men who have visited these schools, when they say that the highest expectations of their benevolent founders must have been fully realized. The avidity to learn, the substantial progress made and the deep interest generally taken here, and in so many other places, would seem to have settled the questions relative to the ability and fitness of the masses of the colored people for popular education, and to have demonstrated at once the wisdom and sound statesmanship of that feature of our law which recognizes their rights and accords to them the privileges of the public schools of the State.

On the occasion of the visit of your committee to the Lincoln School, they found, to use a popular expression, a "crowded house". Five hundred and twenty-nine pupils, with their ten teachers, constitute the working force. Graded according to advancement, as far as possible, seven regular school rooms and two small recitation rooms are fitted up for their accommodation.

Your Committee first visited the primary schools in the rear of the main building. That for boys numbering 60, is taught by Miss Trask; the one for girls, numbering 70, is taught by Miss Matson. In each of these were exhibited evidences of rapid progress Little Children were heard reading

Continuation: Colored Schools.

intelligibly in "easy lessons" who did not know the alphabet three months ago. The attention, order and general interest were good.

The next room, to which we were led by Mr. Barnum, was the large hall on the second floor of the main building, adjoining which are the two small recitation rooms. This is known as the Adult Primary and the Second Reader school, and indicates the progress of the pupils.

Here were found Mr. and Mrs. Billsbury, Mrs. Sperry and Miss Maynard engaged at their work. Everything indicated activity and progress. The reading, singing and general earnestness were at once commendable and hopeful. With a few questions and remarks, we passed on to the schools of higher grades. The Third Reader school is taught by Miss Hill; the two Fourth Reader schools are taught respectively by Miss Anderson and Miss Hulsart; The Fifth Reader school, the highest grade, is in charge of Mrs. Barnum. In each of these good order prevailed, and an excellent state of things, in the main, was apparent. Along with good reading and spelling, we heard commendable recitations in geography and arithmetic, the best scholars being, quite as likely as otherwise, the darkest of complexion in the whole school.

We were particularly impressed with the friendly and hopeful aspect of Lincoln School, in all its departments. We see not how any one could witness such a spectacle without emotions of the deepest interest. With the past fresh memory, the change thus presented does indeed appear very great. Without any wish to exaggerate, and knowing full well that the cause of education is yet in its infancy with these people, that they are still far behind our other schools in their standard and attainments, we, at the same time, see much to encourage and prompt to faithful effort in their behalf. Our hope for the future is in this rising generation who are now being educated in our public schools. Without this, the prospect would be dark and appalling. The main-springs of hope, ambition and enterprise

Continuation: Colored Schools.

could never be touched, and with these dormant or crushed, indolence, vice and crime will naturally take full possession of the man.

Every motive, therefore, of philanthropy and self-interest urges to the prompt and faithful fulfillment of our school laws toward this portion of our population, and demonstrates the wisdom of the action of this Board in the adoption and future support of these schools.

At present the Lincoln school is too much crowded. Two more rooms are needed to meet the wants of the large numbers there attending. Experience has long since proved that moneys expended for educational purposes constitute the best police appropriations that can possibly be made. "Prevention is better, than cure."

We should be remiss in what we conceive to be our duty, were we to close this report without a proper recognition of the services of those who through many difficulties and trials, have established these schools in our midst, and are now laboring faithfully in this self-denying field of usefulness. Especially would we make grateful mention of that enlarged Christian philanthropy which founded, and has thus far, in large measure, sustained these schools, by contributions at home and from abroad. Deeply appreciating the good work they have accomplished, we trust that such "shall in no wise lose their reward."

All of which is respectfully submitted,

Wm. McLean,  
T.E. Bliss, COMMITTEE  
James M. Beattie,