College bucks Mississippi woes, brings news skills, hope to area

LEXINGTON, Miss. — Saints Junior College here is a phenomena beyond belief — unless you know how it was born and how it came to grow up.

Until you know the history, it's hard to see how it can be what it is where it is.

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THIS IS where it is:

It is centrally located in Lexington, and is the county seat of this little town at the mouth of the Mississippi Delta. Lexington is 30 miles from Greenwood; 190 miles from Memphis, and 65 miles from Jackson.

Twenty-seven thousand colored people live in Holmes County, with ten thousand Caucasians. The population ratio has created one of the South's most difficult human relations problems.

Holmes is tenth in the entire nation for low income families. The medium family income for colored people is approximately $498 yearly. The total population has an average family income of $1,242.00.

Every conceivable problem and conflict known to the human race can be faced in this atmosphere of mutual fear, intolerance, hatred and despair. These factors in turn breed murder, ignorance, cultural disadvantages and desperation.

In this area many injustices are imposed upon colored people, and in many instances, poor whites, who are sharecroppers of tenant farmers. The lack of education, deplorable housing conditions, lack of job skills in any area except cultivating cotton, automation and unemployment, based on hopelessness, has created abject poverty that has left thousands of victims trapped, hopeless and without the desire to attempt to find an answer. So they merely exist.

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THIS IS what it is:

Services to the county includes a $450,675.00 Migrant Farmers Project for 300 migrant farmers who receive basic education daily, plus training in such job skills as upholstery, painting, carpentry, dressmaking, nurses aide, auto mechanics and small machinery repairing.

These trainees receive stipends of $30.00 per week. They begin their school in the afternoon. During the farming season the classes are arranged accordingly. The Advisory Committee is integrated and represents individuals on all levels, with one-third of the group selected by the trainees from among themselves.

Medical examinations have been made possible for individuals who have never been to a medical doctor. Every trainee needing glasses has received them. Interested individuals from every section of the United States have sent clothing for adult trainees and Head Start children.

The changes in attitudes, grooming, thrift-habits, sanitation and eagerness for tomorrow is a miracle.

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ONE HUNDRED SIXTY deprived Head Start children are in attendance at Saints Junior College under the direction of trained and dedicated teachers. Toys, modern rest rooms, wading pools, and all types of playground equipment, plus other equipment and materials that are necessary for the normal development of children from four year to six are available to Saints Junior College Head Start children. This program is under the Office of Economic Opportunity.

The Work Experience Program under HEW (Welfare Division) has 120 women trainees in Home Management. Each of these trainees are heads of families on relief rolls and receives stipends during their training period to take care of their children and themselves.

All of the W.D. trainees are in training for jobs as housekeepers in motels, hotels, private homes, hospitals, etc. Several of the women are capable of receiving clerical, nurses aide and teacher-aide training, and will be transferred to a MDTA Program for training on a job entry basis.

The faculty was integrated without incident in 1965.

• • •

IN SEPTEMBER, 1966, 300 trainees were given Basic Education training under the Adult Education Act of 1965, an HEW Program.

A second Work Experience Program beginning in September involves 180 men in job skill training for six months in such skils as upholstery, driver education, small machinery repair, masonry, nurses aides, clerical workers and teacher aides.

The College Work-Study Program under the Office of Education makes it possible for several young men and women to receive a college education who, otherwise, would not be financially in position to do so.

A classroom building and library annex is being erected for the College Division, made possible by the Higher Facilities Education Act. It will be dedicated in the early spring.

In September, five hundred high school and college students were enrolled.

THIS SOCIAL and educational miracle, seen against this grave economic and geographical backdrop, is believable only when viewed as the natural outgrowth of Saint College's remarkable beginning.

• • •

IN 1926, Dr. Arenia C. Mallory of Jacksonville, Ill., visited this area, by invitation of the late Bishop Charles Harrison Mason of Memphis, (founder and senior Bishop of the Churches of God in Christ, International), at a little frame school in a cotton field with ten barefoot children. It operated on a local level from three to five months in the year.

There were no high school facilitiets for the 30,000 colored children in the county, but several for whites. Colored children from the plantations were permitted to attend shacks called "school" during the rainy season.

They walked through the mud to classrooms to wood fires, rough boards for benches, no textbooks of blackboards. Oftimes the only source of water was a mile away. Seventy percent of the teachers did not have college training and less than 30 percent were high school graduates. Salaries ranged from $10 to $15 per month.

During Dr. Mallory's visit in 1926, Mr. James Courts, principal of the little school, died suddenly in the night. This young woman accepted the challenge of developing a good high school for the poor children in this area.

Without visible means of support, she told her dream, in churches and civic organizations throughout America, with five girls from the farms, singing the spirituals.

In this manner, during the next 12 years, the little school gradually emerged on a 350 acre campus, with several small but modern buildings, into an accredited high school. In 1941 Bishop Mason recommended the acceptance of "Saints Industrial and Literary School" to the National Churches of God in Christ for support and development.

THIRTY STATES have

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XAVIER UNIVERSITY of Louisiana places emphasis on its pre-college program, maintaining an effective Upward Bound for students from the most economically deprived area of Louisiana. The New Orleans university also has one of the two National Teacher Corps programs, in the Deep South.

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Rust College in project to aid culture-starved Miss. students

HOLLY SPRINGS, Miss. — Little Rust College is giving a big assist to the Federal Government in a project to ease the educational and environmental disadvantages imposed on students of this area.

Rust and four other area colleges are engaged in a federally-sponsored research project which will ultimately result in a study of the educational systems—kindergarten through high-school — of western Tennessee and northern Mississippi.

Hopefully, the result of this study will be to change the environmental factors which contribute to the educational deprivations of young Mississippians.

Also the study hopes its results will enable schools of the area to turn out students better equipped to compete on an equal footing with other college graduates.

• • •

RUST ALSO acted recently to upgrade its faculty and academic standards and to improve its physical plant.

The college has developed cooperative programs with other colleges and universities. As a result 25-30 Rust students spent six weeks at the University of Iowa each of the past two summers.

The program has resulted also in more than 30 students and faculty members from Michigan State University spending several weeks on the Rust campus each summer, working with pre-freshmen in tutorial and remedial programs.

There have been cultural exchanges and consultant programs with Iowa University and Cornell College of Iowa. The Iowa University is reserving places in its professional schools for Rust College graduates.

• • •

RUST IS a Methodist-related college established in 1866 to provide the fundamentals of education for the newly liberated colored people of northern Mississippi. The first classes were held in the little colored church in Holly Springs with pupils of all ages. The first teacher was the Rev. A. C. McDonald, a Methodist minister from the North who became the first president of Rust.

A year or two later the present campus was purchased, a plot of ground that, ironically, had been the site of the Holly Springs Slave Auction and had also served as campground for U.S. Grant's Army. The first building on this site was erected in 1869.

High school and college classes were added as students became ready for them and the first college class was graduated in 1878. The school functioned as a complete educational system until 1928 when the elementary grades were dropped.

IN 1952 the opening in the county of a public colored high school made it possible for Rust to become exclusively a four-year liberal arts college.

This oldest of the Methodist colleges originally established for colored people now has approximately 500 students with 30 full-time faculty members. Bachelor of arts and bachelor of science degrees are awarded to students who satisfactorily complete the prescribed work.

Rust College's motto is "By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them" and she is proud to be judged by her alumni. A large proportion of her graduates have become teachers and preachers.

SOME OF these have risen very high in the ranks of their profession, including some eight or nine college presidents and seven bishops.

But her greatest contribution is probably to be found in the lives of the hundreds of men and women in the everyday walks of life who are serving their communities as responsible citizens.

—Bucks Mississippi woes

(Continued from Page 72)

been represented in the student body and several African countries. More than twenty thousand students have been touched by this unique institution in the past 40 years. Clothing provided for many by the president's solicitations. Almost every Christian faith is represented on the staff and student body. Moslems from Africa have matriculated also.

The advocation of the "New Frontier," by the late President J. F. Kennedy, and the development into the "Great Society," by President Lyndon B. Johnson, involved, for the first time in many areas, an effort to reach the abject poor in the cities and rural areas.

Basic education and job skill training began to develop under the Manpower Development Training Act; Experimental Programs in the Office of Manpower, Automation and Training, asked the questions and gradually developed techniques in program planning that involved the total problem of how to recruit, counsel, train and develop basic education systems for these people.

• • •

IN 1963 Dr. Mallory was appointed as a consultant in the Special Programs Division of OMAT. She attained Civil Service status. Her assignment was the developing of college-based experimental Manpower Programs in Southern Colleges. She served as project officer for these programs at Tuskegee Institute, Florida A and M University, Tennessee A and I University, Austin Peay, North Carolina A and T College and others.

During the government assignment, Dr. Mallory commuted between Washington, D.C. and Mississippi every seven or ten days, maintaining active control of the Institution.

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-Report cites

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the third highest occupational category — craftsmen — at a rate three times that of whites. The percentage increases between 1950 and 1960 were 46 percent for nonwhites and 13 percent for whites.

THE GENERALLY greater mobility of nonwhite men during the 1950s was partly the result of the greater outmovement from agriculture of nonwhites, the report says. Between 1950 and 1960 almost half of the nonwhites in agriculture in 1950 left this sector. Among white males, a little over one-third left agriculture.

The authors, Dr. Jaffe and Mr. Gordon, are director and project director respectively of the Manpower and Population Program of the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia. The report is part of a larger study sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation entitled "Demography of the Middle Years."

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