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Marvin Pittman Laboratory School 1924-1940

By: Virginia Richards

Auspices
Bulloch County Historical Society
Post Office Box 42
Statesboro, Georgia 30459
INTRODUCTION

The Bulloch County Historical Society is pleased to present this history of the early years of the Marvin Pittman School at Georgia Southern.

Older Society Members will recognize many of the names and events recorded here.

Mrs. Virginia Richards conducted the research and prepared this report as part of her doctoral study at the University of South Carolina under the direction of Dr. Craig Kridel, Director of the Museum of Education at the University of South Carolina.

An oral report of this study was favorably received by the Parent-Teacher-Student Organization of Marvin Pittman School.

Mrs. Richards is an Instructor in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at Georgia Southern University.

N. Kemp Mabry, Ph. D.
Executive Vice President
Bulloch County Historical Society

Statesboro, Georgia
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INTRODUCTION

The Marvin Pittman Laboratory School has been a part of the teacher education curriculum at Georgia Southern University since its inception as a normal school in the 1920's. Johnny Tremble, current principal, stated that, "... [the] 'Pittman Spirit' is reflected in the belief of the entire faculty and staff that our [466] young boys and girls deserve the best possible experiences we can provide. In striving constantly toward that goal, the teacher-education component of our mission has benefited; the exposure and practice that the College of Education’s majors receive in our classrooms is invaluable." (Mandes, 1993, p.1) The school currently is planning a new building and soon will discontinue the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Because of these changes, it would be instructive to look at the origins of the school and its early mission and curriculum. Can we learn from the past? Is it possible that knowing about the traditions and beginnings of the school can add to the "Pittman Spirit?"

When was Marvin Pittman Laboratory School established? The persons consulted in this study could not remember the exact date. Typical answers to queries were, "It has been here since the twenties," or "It goes back to the normal school days." Many remember the history of the school for the last 20 years, but few have any recollection of the years when Marvin Pittman was president of the college, 1934-1948. Pittman was a dynamic leader who "... jerked a glorified high school into a college." (Averitt Interview, 1993, p. 1) He was a renowned teacher educator and dynamic leader who profoundly influenced teacher education in Georgia. What did his leadership bring to the Laboratory School? Why was his name chosen as the name of the school?

The purpose of this study was to discover as much as possible about the history of the Laboratory School and its connection with the teacher education program at Georgia Teachers College immediately preceding and during Marvin Pittman’s tenure as president of the college. A major component in the research was to discover the curriculum taught there. A third goal of the project was to discover the educational philosophy of the laboratory school faculty and the college faculty through clues gleaned from documents and oral interviews.

HISTORY OF GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

In order to understand the Laboratory School, one must comprehend the development of the institution with which it is associated. Georgia Southern University was established in 1908 by an act of the Georgia Legislature, but it was not originally a university. It was The First District Agricultural and Mechanical High School. According to the Alumni Quarterly of June, 1952, in the early part of this century, there were few rural high schools. The creation of the District Agricultural and Mechanical schools in Georgia was a legislative way to address this problem. They were high schools designed with curricula especially applicable to the needs of rural youth. (p. 3)

During the 1920's, an increase in the number of high schools eliminated the need for the District A. & M. school, so its mission was changed. The Bulletin of South Georgia Teachers College of May, 1933 explained the transition in this way,

From 1918 until August 19, 1924, the school continued to operate as a District A. & M. School. During the greater part of this time the school maintained a special course for teachers. Seventy percent of the girls who graduated from the school became teachers. During the four years immediately preceding August 18, 1924, there was considerable agitation throughout Southeast Georgia for the location of a state normal school in this section of the State. Members of the State Department of Education and The University of Georgia agreed that there was a vital need for such
The new normal school was created to raise the educational level of South Georgia’s rural teachers. The need was great. J. O. Martin, Georgia’s Supervisor of summer schools, was quoted in chapel, "There are 1600 teachers in the normal schools of the state this summer. . . . There are 2000 teachers in Georgia who have not had high school training." (George Anne, June 29, 1927, p. 2). Because there were so many inservice teachers who needed further education, summer school was planned to address these demands. Enrollment figures for 1927-28 indicate that while the regular enrollment was 488, summer enrollment was 540. (George Anne, August 13, 1928, p. 2) These enrollment figures give us an indication of the commitment of the regional inservice teachers and the normal school faculty of that time.

The First District A. & M. school was a high school from 1908 until 1924. In 1924, the Georgia Normal School was created, but there was a high school department until 1929 when the diploma was phased out. George Anne articles indicate that there was no division among all "grades" including high school and post-secondary departments. The high school grades gave programs in the daily chapel. During the first years of the normal school, teachers could enroll in summer school and complete the high school diploma. After that, they could complete a normal degree.

September, 1929, brought the end of the normal school because the institution became South Georgia Teachers College. (George Anne, September 28, 1929) In 1934, the training school initiated the high school curriculum, offering tenth grade for the first time. In 1936, the eleventh grade was added.

The laboratory or training school was probably a part of the Georgia Normal School curriculum as early as 1924 although no documents have been discovered to verify that assumption. Apparently, the operation of training or laboratory schools was a traditional practice which was expected of teacher training institutions of the time. Williams (1942) stated that “... practice departments, sometimes called 'experimental' or 'practice' schools, were provided from the time the first state normal schools were established by legislative action in Massachusetts, April 19, 1838.” (p. 3) The American Association of Teachers Colleges adopted a standard in 1926 requiring each teachers college to operate a training school for observation, demonstration, and supervised student teaching. (Williams, 1942, p. 12) If an accrediting body was requiring a training facility, it is safe to assume that most normal schools and teachers colleges operated some form of laboratory school.

Georgia Normal School was no exception. As early as 1925, the school’s Bulletin listed training school faculty from the Statesboro Public School, a large city school, and the Sunnyside School, a rural school. (p. 13) The training faculty from Statesboro Public School included Mattie Lively and Sallie Zetterower, two women who contributed so much to public school education in Bulloch county. These two schools were used for observation and practice teaching in the elementary grades. High school practice teaching was done in the High School Department of the Normal School. (p. 67) The laboratory facility was considered fundamental in order for students to practice the theories learned in class. “There must be a close and vital connection between the College classroom work and the actual teaching problem.” (Georgia Normal School Bulletin, 1925, p. 67).

What was the degree of cooperation between the training school
and the normal school faculty? Van Til (1969) said of the cooperation between the college faculty and the laboratory faculty, "In some cases, the street on which the laboratory school was located was the widest street in the university world, for it separated the laboratory school from the rest of the university." (p. 4) Most available documents indicate that this was not the case at Georgia Normal School. Since the sole mission of the normal school at that time was the training of teachers, all faculty were involved. Guy Wells, president of Georgia Normal School, supported the use of the training school. (George Anne, June 19, 1929, p. 1) The laboratory school teachers were a part of the regular faculty of the college.

This involvement continued through the 30's and 40's during Marvin S. Pittman's tenure as president of the institution. Dr. Jack Averitt (1993) stated that Dr. Pittman expected all faculty to assist in supervision of student teachers.

His philosophy of higher education and teacher preparation was that the entire faculty was involved in the training of teachers, and when I joined the faculty in the fall of '45, part of our work was to visit the student teachers in our discipline. . . . Now, the division of education had its own supervision of the practice teaching group, but every quarter, I made visits to Savannah, Metter, wherever our students were, to see them work in the discipline. And then we met with the proper people in the school of education and reviewed these. (Averitt transcript, 1993, p. 1)

Dr. Pittman also encouraged faculty to visit county school superintendents and gather information that would be useful for training teachers. (George Anne, Feb 27, 1939, p. 1)

Donaldson (1942) found however that coordination problems had arisen as a result of growth of the college. (p. 1) In interviews with faculty, he found that the laboratory school was under-utilized in all areas. "Few college instructors make consistent use of the campus school for demonstration purposes." (p. 16) He found that faculty at the college believed that coordination problems could be improved if the responsibility for coordination were assigned to a specific administrator. (p. 14)

The Bulletin of Georgia Teachers College of June, 1940 indicated a well-articulated philosophy of the laboratory school. "The teachers college in its best service must be regarded as a technical school. Possibly the outstanding characteristic of such an institution is the facilities for laboratory work. . . . A student cannot learn to teach except by getting into the classroom of children, finding out their needs first hand, and then, out of their experiences, supplying that which meets their needs." (p. 38)

From its inception, Georgia Normal School utilized more than one training school. In addition to the Sunnyside school, the Warnock Rural School, Ogeechee School, and Statesboro Public School were used. These practice teaching opportunities were considered to be typical of the varied teaching situations the students would most likely encounter when they went out into the profession.

THE LABORATORY BUILDING AND MYSTERY OF SUNNYSIDE SCHOOL

The campus laboratory school has been housed in several buildings. The first building was called the Sunnyside School, but there had been a Sunnyside School in Bulloch county since the early teens. A photograph of the Sunnyside school in the Educational Survey of Bulloch County Georgia indicates it was in existence from as early as 1915. (Duggan, 1915, p. 65) How did the Sunnyside School come to be on the Georgia Normal School campus? The Georgia Normal School Bulletin for April, 1925, provides a partial answer, "The College is located in the Sunnyside School District, a rural school district of Bulloch County. The authorities have a cooperative arrangement with the trustees of this
school to do practice teaching at Sunnyside which is located close by the school. Plans are underway to move this rural school building to the College campus. When the permanent building is moved to the campus, this practice school will form a part of the permanent equipment of the College." (p. 22)

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact date the school was moved to campus, but documents indicate that it was moved between August 30, 1926, and July, 1927. On August 30, 1926, the Bulloch County Board of Education made an agreement with Georgia Normal School to redraw the boundaries of the Sunnyside School District and to pay $50.00 per month for a teacher to be employed by the Georgia Normal School. Georgia Normal School in turn pledged to move the old Sunnyside school to campus, to renovate it, and to provide for the upkeep of the school. (Bulloch County Board of Education Minutes, p. 79) The Sunnyside school was moved sometime after the 1926 entry in the Board of Education minutes. Bulletins of the normal school indicate that the Sunnyside School was moved to campus and being used as early as 1927. "We have a typical rural training school on the campus." (Catalogue and Announcement, July, 1927, pp. 22-23)

A 1927 article from the George Anne describes the school:

Georgia Normal School: 'little village [sic] has opened its doors to everyone. It is not a magnificent building, adorned with majestic pillars. It is just a small, plain wooden structure, standing on the east side of our campus. In shape it resembles an affectionate mother stretching out her arms to the little one. Its simple features with the two small front entrances, are a pleasing and inviting sight. This building has neither lecture halls nor scientific laboratories. It is a 'little home' of the Georgia Normal School. The entire building is partitioned into two large rooms on either side, in which new and interesting things can be found. The whole

presents a fine appearance and produces an atmosphere conducive to both play and study. We are inviting and expecting a visit from you—a real visit, not a drop in and drop out. Won't you come? (p. 1)

Although this description does not mention that it is the Rural Training School, it is an accurate description of the photo labeled "Rural Training School" in the Bulletin. (July, 1927, p. 21). The same photograph is labeled "Sunny Side [sic] Training School" in the Bulletin (July, 1928. p. 21)

Apparently, the Sunnyside school became overcrowded soon after it was moved to campus, because the George Anne noted in 1933 that the new training school facility was going up rapidly. (April 17, 1933, p. 1) The new building had six large classrooms, four small classrooms, and four offices. The second floor had two large rooms and seven small rooms. One large room had equipment for a "society hall and assembly hall." The other large room was to be used for social activities of students and faculty including teas and dances. The building also had a cook room and equipment for dinners, banquets, and alumni meetings. (George Anne, May 29, 1933, p. 1) Subsequent bulletins indicated that the new Training School was completed sometime in 1933. The old Sunnyside school remained in the same location, but was bricked and changed to the Science Hall. (George Anne, March 26, 1934, p. 1).

As the Training School grew and added more grades, the building again became too small. Plans were made for another new building for the school. In 1936, the George Anne reported that students in the high school would share with the College's laboratory facilities in industrial arts, home economics, and science to alleviate the overcrowding. (May 4, 1936, p. 4)

In 1937, architects Edward and Sayward were hired to draw plans for the new laboratory school. The cost was estimated at $82,000, and
It was expected to accommodate 400 children. (George Anne, Oct 4, 1937, p. 1) The new laboratory school was dedicated on December 6, 1938. (George Anne, December 5, 1938, p. 1) Only the high school portion of the laboratory school was completed at this time. The elementary school remained in the facility which had been built in 1933.

In 1951, the last phase of the laboratory school was built and the elementary department moved in with the high school. In 1954, Marvin Pittman died and subsequently the school was named for him. (Averitt Interview, 1993, p. 1)

LABORATORY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

During the early part of the Twentieth Century, several educational reform movements sought to change the stagnated traditional recitation curriculum of the Nineteenth Century. In the 1920’s and 1930’s, the progressive curriculum reform movement was being attempted in many school districts. The progressive movement had several factions, so it is difficult to give an explicit definition of it. Therefore, an attempt will be made to determine the curriculum reform group(s) with which the faculty most probably had aligned. In order to discern the curricular reform with which this faculty may have been experimenting, certain words and phrases were sought in the documents. These key words have been italicized in the text so that it will be easier to ascertain relationships.

John Dewey and William Heard Kilpatrick were prominent progressive educators. They believed that education was life and that the child should be able to determine the curriculum with a minimum amount of guidance from the teacher. They, like most progressive educators, were advocates for children’s needs. Subject matter was not as important as the interest of the learner. Kilpatrick (1918) synthesized Dewey’s ideas in the "Project Method" published in the Teachers College Record. (p. 319-335) This method suggested allowing the child to determine the curriculum through projects planned according to the child’s interests. There were several key words which indicated a project or activity curriculum. Whole-hearted, purposeful activity according to Dr. Kilpatrick indicated interest in the project. (p.322) He felt that the child learned information that could be used later as a result of being completely absorbed and interested in a project. In addition, he expected the project to lead on to other projects. The project method meant giving up the power to plan the curriculum in advance.

Was the Laboratory School Faculty at Georgia Normal School/South Georgia Teachers College influenced by Kilpatrick? Did they follow his ideas? The Bulletin for Summer, 1926 carried a course description for Advanced Primary Methods in which the Project Method was specifically listed as being presented. (p.10) The Bulletin for the year 1926-1927 indicated that the Philosophy of Education course would use Kilpatrick’s textbook, Philosophy of Education. (p. 60) So it is safe to assume that Kilpatrick’s ideas were being presented to the students in the normal school. Dr. Kilpatrick was revered in Georgia, his home state. He was invited to speak on several occasions, and did address the student body twice, at the 1929 commencement and in 1939 for Georgia Progress Day. (Faculty Minutes)

Walter Downs, Director of the Laboratory Schools, reported to the faculty that when he went to the American Progressive Association meeting in Atlanta, he had attended Dr. Kilpatrick’s meetings. (Faculty Minutes, 1938) The faculty minutes were usually very succinct, and this entry was longer than most, so one can speculate that Kilpatrick was respected by the faculty.

A 1940 faculty self-study stated that "the curriculum of the Laboratory School is close to the life of the child. Special emphasis is put upon the teaching of the tools of learning, citizenship, and good health. There is much elasticity to the program. The development of the whole child is the ultimate goal." (p. 3) A. A. Singley, an education professor,
must have studied the *Project Method*, because his article in the *George Anne* in June, 1928 stated, "Our big purpose in this school is to keep every pupil busy every minute with some *worthwhile activity*." (p. 1)

From 1934 to 1940, articles in the *George Anne* indicate that the *project or activities method* was being used in the curriculum. W. L. Downs, Director of Training Schools, discussed the primary grades, "The work of the primary group is centered about *activity* designated as 'circus life.' The work of these three grades is *integrated* about this one activity." (*George Anne*, June 25, 1934, p. 1) The words, *purposeful* and *meaningful activities* and *meeting the needs of children and youth* used in various documents give us further evidence that the student body was being taught to use this very progressive device in planning curriculum.

On November 29, 1934, the *George Anne* described the curriculum being taught in all grades. It was called the *activity program*, and the children in every room were said to be engaged in *meaningful activities*. Grades one and two were building a barn and supplying the products of the farm. Farm animals were constructed and placed in proper places in the farm yard. Grades three and four were studying all types of transportation by visiting the docks in Savannah and by building ships. The fifth grade was reported studying food and all activities for securing food. The sixth grade was studying stars and the seventh grade was planning an early American pageant for social science. Eighth grade was planning a puppet show based on Treasure Island and ninth grade was dramatizing parts of Silas Marner. (*George Anne*, November 29, 1934, p. 6)

The same article continues and discusses the curriculum being attempted in the high school classes. According to the article:

> It is not as easy to develop an *integrated unit* in the high school as in the elementary grades. Regardless of this difficulty there are many activities going on in these grades to enrich the subject matter and stimulate enthusiasm among the pupils. The social science teachers are making the textbook material most vital by engaging the students in such a program as will encourage wide reading. Out of this material becomes a significant factor in *citizenship development*. (p. 6)

Other high school activities included special projects and activities within each subject matter. Although the article discussed an integrated curriculum, the document indicates that the subject matters were intact. The high school curriculum seemed to be an Alberty Type Two Core, in which there was no combining of classes, but the teachers correlated their units. (Alberty, 1962, p. 207). A faculty self-study report from 1940 confirms the Type Two curriculum of the Laboratory school as follows,

> The program of the school had been greatly enriched through the *integration* of the subject matter courses. The departmental teachers work together in making the experiences of the children result in one unified whole instead of a division into different areas of learning. Industrial arts, music, health, recreation, drawing, dancing, citizenship, good language habits, and appreciation of good literature, an acquaintance with nature, and good business principles are of concern to every instructor as these contribute to the growth of children. (p. 4)

According to Pat McCormack (1993), the project method was being utilized in the elementary grades. (McCormack Interview, p.3) Among her curriculum documents are unit plans which combined several disciplines under one subject. She had units on shelter, clothing, Australia, and the desert. She particularly recalled the desert unit, because they had an extra room into which they brought sand and live cactus. Then, the children made the desert animals and plants.
McCormack remembered the color of the paper mache grapes, "... but I can see the purple ones now ... the color. And that was just a ... great fun for them [students]" (McCormack Interview, p. 6) Mrs. McCormack said, "We were doing the basics all the time, plus this extra, interesting way, trying to make life more interesting at school." (p. 6)

She related the following story about a unit:

We had studied snakes. And we had brought in some snakes from the outside. . . . This was to build an attitude about snakes—that you don’t need to be scared to death of every little snake. . . . So one day, we had a snake in a cage. . . . and something just told me the snake was out. We had already done all this study about snakes—trying to build good attitudes about it. And I very calmly said, 'Children, I think the snake's got out and I believe he's on me.' And nobody moved, nobody got excited. I was real pleased about that. And I looked, and I saw the snake crawling in front of me and through and under the desks somehow. And Paul Hendrix . . . got up just as calmly as you please; he didn’t say anything. He just went behind the snake, picked him up properly, brought him back, put him in the glass thing. (p. 7)

The desert unit plan was organized according to "aims" and "generalizations." The "approach" that Mrs. McCormack used to interest the children in the subject was to paint a frieze on the board. "Much interest was manifested from the beginning and the children seemed to enjoy the work through out the year." (Roberts, p. 6) The "procedure" section showed how the children organized themselves into reading, building, painting, writing, sewing, and drawing committees. The committees rotated each week so the children could get experience in every area. Each day, the children had a "show and tell" conference with the teacher and planned their next day's activities. The "correlation" section of the plan included methods for incorporating the subjects of reading, geography, writing and English, spelling, health, science, art, industrial arts, home economics, arithmetic, music, and dancing.

"Outcomes" included development of a cooperative spirit, initiative, creativity, and a spirit of inquiry. A lengthy bibliography was included to show the references pupils could utilize in order to learn about the subject. There is no date on the document, but a third and fourth grade desert unit was reported in the George Anne on June 12, 1937, so it is probable that this unit was taught at that time.

The evidence indicates that while teachers were utilizing projects to integrate subject matters in the curriculum, they were not giving pupils free rein in planning. Projects were planned by student teachers to be completed in about three months. Projects were being completed so that the "slate will be clean" for a new set of student teachers who will take charge after Christmas. "Most of these projects were devised by the teachers as methods of putting across particular phases of the work in three months, but they were completely carried out by the students themselves." (George Anne, December 6, 1935, p. 6) Further evidence that the faculty at Georgia Teachers College was not in favor of allowing pupils to plan curriculum was found in a George Anne article by W. L. Downs in 1939. He explains that the college students were required to develop a curriculum unit which grew out of recognition of the needs of the children involved. The content was organized, procedures considered, activities anticipated, and goals set up. "The student is then ready to begin working with children to meet their needs and interests. . . . Every unit has many things added and subtracted as teachers and pupils proceed to engage in those activities that become meaningful and purposeful to pupils." (George Anne, November 20, 1939, p. 8)

Although, the activity/project curriculum was being used, Kilpatrick was not the only educational leader who influenced the faculty. The social meliorists were progressive curriculum reformers who were
interested in using the school curriculum to improve society in a
normative way, that is, they were looking at what ought to be taught in
schools. They felt that it was important that schools should teach
students the best ideas and values that society had to offer, not reflect
society. These reformists, including Boyd Bode, Harold Alberty, and
George Counts, wanted to see democracy taught in our schools. They
wanted democracy to be modeled in schools so that children should have
an opportunity to make decisions about their school life through
democratic methods. The social meliorists seemed to be represented in
the course, "The School and the Social Order" described in the Bulletin in
May, 1935. (p. 47) Taught by Mr. Singley, the course was designed to
study the "place and function of the school in society." In addition,
democratic values and citizenship were mentioned in the documents
throughout the period.

Franklin Bobbitt, W. W. Charters, and C. H. Judd were interested
in a more efficient type curriculum in which curricular decisions were
made to facilitate schools which were more proficient in teaching tasks
needed for the real world. Activities such as counting grammatical errors
and attempting to scientifically measure student behavior were advocated
by these educational leaders. Were these ideas embraced by the faculty
at Georgia Normal School? They were at least exposed to social
efficiency. In 1930, the George Anne carried a story of a curriculum
class counting grammatical errors and tabulating them, an activity
advocated by Bobbitt. In 1932, Dr. C. H. Judd visited the campus.
(George Anne, November 28, 1932, p. 1) Judd was an educational
psychologist who was known "... for bringing scientific respectability
to the study of education." (Kleibard, p. 214)

The George Anne and faculty minutes contain several reports
through the years of faculty's attending Progressive Education
Association meetings. In addition, visits were made to the Parker School
and Omega School in Georgia, both reputed to be "progressive schools."
In 1936, student teachers observed at the Parker School. The George
Anne report stated that Parker School was the "... South's leading
school of progressive education... The school curriculum is made up
of units of study and the children themselves decide upon the units they
desire to study." (November 23, 1936, p. 9) Mr. James S. Tippet,
curriculum consultant of Parker School District, spoke to the group. "A
summation of Mr. Tippet's discussion was that "we must use a
curriculum that is based upon the real interest of the children." Mr.
Tippett also emphasized the difficulty of installing a workable curriculum
of the same sort because of the conflicts with the college entrance
requirements. (p. 9)

Although there was some evidence of other influences, the most
dominant influence seems to be the Dewey-Kilpatrick group of reformers.
However, the faculty seemed to be interested in synthesizing many ideas
in their curriculum Mrs. McCormack said, "I don't know if we were
trying to be as progressive [as the Parker School], but I think we were
just trying to do a good job and a better job making the best better... What
I think is, and we still have to do it, I believe, is take the best of the
old and what's good in the present and look to the future. If I were
teaching school today, I'd do some of those same things. I don't think
you can improve on some of these things." (McCormack Interview, 1993,
p. 7) "There was a general feeling in the community that it was a
different approach to education than the public schools.... In fact, the
expression was used that it was not a traditional school--and I can't tell
you why." (Averitt interview)

THE PITTMAN YEARS

Marvin Summers Pittman came to South Georgia Teachers College
in the Fall of 1935. His education included a Ph.D. in Education from
Teachers College, Columbia University. Dewey and Kilpatrick had been
professors at Teachers College, so it is possible that Dr. Pittman was a progressive educator who believed in their teachings. According to Dr. Averitt, Pittman came to South Georgia Teachers College from Michigan State Normal School in Ypsilanti, Michigan, where he had been director of teacher education. (Averitt Interview, 1993, p. 1) Williams (1942) indicated that the first state-supported normal school west of the Allegheny mountains was there. Dr. Averitt indicated that he had "... developed many innovative programs at Ypsilanti." (Averitt Interview, 1993, p. 1) He was also a rural education scholar, having published several articles and research projects on rural education.

He was a dynamic leader who was highly successful in building rapport and enthusiasm among the faculty. Dr. Averitt explained, "His leadership merits acclamation. ... He never lost that warm, personal touch. ... He knew exactly where the next step was going. ... He communicated beautifully within any situation. ... He was very versatile in this respect." (Averitt Interview, 1993, excerpts).

Although there are no documents to tell us of his personal philosophy of education, Dr. Averitt related a practice of his that was revealing. "He felt that there needed to be interdisciplinary interests. And so, with the faculty club, each faculty member had to enroll in a study in another division that was as nearly foreign to his own as possible. ... Not for credit. ... and then they would, at the end of the year, each exhibit or demonstrate what they learned. ... It brought a rapport to the faculty. It brought an appreciation of the discipline of one's colleagues." (Averitt Interview, 1993, p. 3) This practice would indicate that Dr. Pittman was possibly dedicated to interdisciplinary curriculum development at the Laboratory School as well.

Soon after Pittman's arrival at the college, the student teaching standards were raised. In the George Anne of October 8, 1934, it was mentioned that requirements to student teach were inadequate. At that time, only two years of college work and one term at the training school were required. A proposal was made that four years should be required before student teaching could begin. (p. 1)

Dr. Pittman insisted that faculty be involved in the process of teacher education. "His philosophy of higher education and teacher preparation was that the entire faculty was involved in the training of teachers." (Averitt Interview, 1993, p. 2) All faculty were required to visit superintendents in Georgia counties and gather information that would be useful to the college in better training teachers. (George Anne, February 27, 1939, p. 1) His commitment to Laboratory School education is evidenced by the fact that he built the Laboratory School Building during the depression.

Possibly one of the greatest contributions that Dr. Pittman made to the college was the securing of a large amount of grant money from the Rosenwald Fund, an organization founded by Julius Rosenwald. This fund's original mission was to upgrade and establish Afro-American schools in the south. In 1936, the fund began a project to train rural teachers, and South Georgia Teachers College was chosen to receive teacher training grants. This was achieved not only because South Georgia Teachers College was in the center of a rural part of the state but also because Dr. Pittman was a nationally recognized rural education scholar. The Rosenwald Fund gave $30,000 over a five year period from 1936 to 1940. The purpose was "... to shift money from building negro school houses to the stimulation of training teachers, both white and colored." (George Anne, April 20, 1936, p. 1)

Rural teachers were given scholarships to take a year off from teaching and complete a baccalaureate or supervision degree in residence at South Georgia Teachers College. "Rosenwald Scholarships of $250 for training in rural supervision at South Georgia Teachers College will be awarded this spring. Twenty-one teachers who have had at least four
years' teaching experience, and who may be classed as senior students will be eligible to fill the vacancies of those graduating this spring."

(George Anne, January 31, 1938, p. 3) Dr. Averitt indicated that the "Rosenwald Scholars" were very outstanding teachers and students. They were welcomed and highly respected on campus and in the community. (Averitt Interview, 1993, p. 4) Because the Laboratory School was an integral part of the training of teachers, the students enrolled there probably benefited from having these experienced and exceptional "student teachers."

It can be concluded that the Laboratory School was influenced by Dr. Pittman's leadership through the faculty and students at the college. He was committed to the best education possible for the teachers in this area. He most probably was a progressive educator and encouraged others to implement progressive curriculum at the laboratory school and in the schools of Georgia.

CONTINUING MYSTERIES

Although many facts have been discovered about Marvin Pittman Laboratory School and its history during the '20's and '30's, there are some continuing mysteries which have not yet been solved. Much evidence was found about the curriculum of the elementary school, but information about the high school curriculum is sketchy. What was the high school curriculum like? Even though Statesboro Public School had a viable high school, the Georgia Normal School only used its own high school department as a training facility. The Statesboro Public School was only utilized for the first through seventh grades. According to Lumbees and Lists, there were 63 graduating in 1925 from Statesboro Public School. Why wasn't this large city school used as a high school training facility to give students a variety of experience as was done with the lower grades?

Why did Sunnyside School change its appearance from the 20

photograph in Duggan's Educational Survey (1915) to the way it looked in 1926-1927 when it was moved to campus? Did the original building burn? Was it renovated during the intervening years?

How and when was the Sunnyside building moved? The Georgia Normal School Bulletin of April, 1926, makes no mention of the Sunnyside school. Is it possible that it was not used as a training facility that year? Had the school closed in anticipation of the moving plans mentioned in the 1925 bulletin? Or did the consolidation movement cause it to close?

The story of Marvin Pittman Laboratory School during the years of 1924-1940 is incomplete. We are dependent upon witnesses and documents to learn the story of the life of the people involved in the school during those years. It is like a kaleidoscope, ever-changing and beautiful. It is like a novel which never ends--never stops unfolding its story to those who will listen and learn from the past.
References


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Georgia Teachers College. Self-survey report. Compiled report of a two-day conference held by the faculty. September 17-18, 1940. Housed in Georgia Southern University Archives in the faculty minutes.


Time Line: Important Facts About Marvin Pittman Laboratory School which I discovered in my research:

August 18, 1924--The First District A & M School became the Georgia Normal School--source--Alumni Quarterly--p.6-June, 1952.

1925 - "Training School"

2 schools in Bulloch County were used. They were the Sunnyside School and Statesboro Public School.(Source: Bulletin-Georgia Normal School, April 1925)

August 30, 1926: Bulloch County Board of Education meeting minutes. New school district created from the old Sunnyside school district. Board agreed to pay $50 to Georgia Normal College to take care of the new Sunnyside school district for the 1926-27 term for 6 months. The $50 was to be used to pay teacher employed by the GNC. Board also agreed to give Sunnyside school house to GNC provided they move it to the grounds of Georgia Normal, repaint and improve building.

September 1, 1926-GNS Board of Trustees minutes: "Since Sept. 11, the following building has been done and equipment provided: Model Training School-$1,000.00" What does it mean? Was this work done since Sept 11, 1925? Was this a misprint? Was the school being renovated before the agreement was made with BCBOE?

Dec 15, 1926-GNS Board of Trustees minutes: Training school enrollment was 17. Only elementary--no high school since the GNS still had a high school division.

Sept. 23, 1927: "Little Village" described in George-Anne. Description matched photos of the Sunnyside and Rural Training School. Article indicated it was on campus.

Nov. 21, 1928-GNS in Board of Trustees minutes: Enrollment of Training School on Campus-51; Warnock Training School: 249.

1928-29-The last year we accepted high school students. In 1929, became a senior college. (source: 75 years-Shurbutt, p. 53)

May 29, 1933--The George Anne describes the new Training School building. [This is the one located behind Rosenwald] New building built behind Rosenwald on what is now the parking lot between Herty and Hollis buildings. Description in bulletins indicate it was built in 1933.

March 26, 1934--George Anne described renovation of Sunny Side school to be bricked and made into Science Hall.

1935-Original school building was bricked and made into science laboratories. It remained in this location until Rosenwald Building was built in 1938(source: Shurbutt-75 yrs book) p. 140

1935- W. L. Downs first year as Director of Training School

May 4, 1936 George-Anne announcement of addition of standard high school(through 11th grade) at Training School. Plan outlined for sharing laboratory facilities with college

1936-Nov. faculty meeting—Downs reporting on activities of High School Division of Laboratory School.

Dec., 1938-Downs reported his attendance at a meeting of the American Progressive Association in Atlanta. He attended Kilpatrick’s meetings.

1938: Laboratory School Building was finished. This was high school part only. Building came out of WPA and County funds. According to Betty Lane, the school’s purpose was to bring in children from the rural areas of the county. Faculty also was interested in having their children attend the Laboratory School.

Jan 2, 1939--Faculty minutes: The high school would transfer activities to new Laboratory School building January 3.

April 29, 1940--Lab school faculty attended a Progressive Education Association meeting . Members of group gave a report to Faculty meeting.

1951: Laboratory School Building was finished. Elementary section. (Source Dr. Jack Averitt)
1955: School was named Marvin Pittman Laboratory School after Dr. Pittman's death in 1954. [Interesting note: Charlton Mosely graduated in 1955 and his diploma says "Georgia Teachers College High School"]

1972--High school portion closed. School began only K-8