

TENTATIVE BIOGRAPHY

WILLIAM BAXTER MATTHEWS.

One cannot compute the efficiency of an electric generator taking into consideration the amount of resistance the current undergoes before it is geared to its task. So with the life of a man like *out* Professor William Baxter Matthews, A. B. Principal of the Central Colored High School at Louisville, Ky. In order to arrive at a proper appreciation of the man and his work, it is essential that we take into consideration the obstacles by which he was confronted and the difficulties he had to overcome as he fought his way up from poverty and obscurity to a place of leadership in the educational life of the race.

am Professor Matthews is a product of Middle Georgia, having been born in that part of Houston County, which is now Peach County. *1864* The date of his birth was July 31, 1865, which nearly coincides with the freedom of the race in America. His Mother Annie Matthews died ~~when her son~~ was only two years of age. Her life illustrates some of the awful tragedies of slavery. She was picked up somewhere by passing slave traders when a little girl and by them brought South and sold in Georgia. She never again saw her parents nor knew whence she came.

Young Matthews was reared by his Stepfather, a Primitive Baptist preacher, who kept the boy in school in order that he might help him understand the Bible. After completing his work in the

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rural schools the boy entered the Lewis High School at Macon, which later became the Ballard Normal school, where he did his preparatory work. When ready for college, he matriculated at Atlanta University where he won his A. B. Degree in 1890.

After leaving public school he supported himself. He was energetic and self reliant, asked no favors but paid all that charged and owed only \$21.00 at his graduation. In Macon he worked at whatever offered and while there learned tailoring which he found helpful through the rest of his course. At 18 he was able to secure teachers license and from that time to his graduation spent his summers teaching in the rural schools of Georgia. His last short term school was at Hampton, Ga. From that he went to the principalship of the Houston Street School

Public

Atlanta, where he remained for twenty years. He had the enduring satisfaction of seeing his pupils grow up and occupy places of prominence in the business and professional life of the race. He was also active in fraternal order, and religious work, and was one of the leaders in Y. M. C. A. Activities in Atlanta, being chairman of the local Com. of management. He was in demand for summer school and institute work, and spent two summers in field work for the International S. S. Association. In 1906 he was made a trustee of his Alma mater and traveled extensively both north and south in the interest of the University.

He was at one time president of the Georgia State Teachers

Association . In 1910 he resigned the principal ship and became ^{the} manager for the N. C. Mutual Insurance Company ^{of the school in Atlanta} in the State of Georgia.

The habits and thinking of a lifetime were not easily broken however, and when in 1912 he was called to the head of the Central Colored High School of Louisville, he accepted and has since been Principal of that school. Here he has a faculty of ^{three} thirty teachers and an enrollment of more than nine hundred students. The Annual for the current year shows a graduating class of ¹⁰² more than half a hundred. He also

belongs to the K. N. E. A. and the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools. After the current news and the books of his profession his favorite reading is history. He has done post graduate work in history at Columbia University.

In Politics Professor Matthews is a Republican.

Among the fraternal and benevolent orders he is identified with the O. F. Masons and K. P. Before leaving Georgia he was Grand Auditor of the K. P. Lodge of that State.

He has long been an active member of the congregational church and is Asst. Supt. of the S. S. ^{of his church}

On January 1 1905 Prof. Matthews was married to ^{Josephine} Miss Ophelia Beale of Atlanta, Mrs. Matthews was educated at A. U. and at Fisk and was before her marriage an accomplished teacher.

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Mr.
Opportunity
Mr.

Louise

They have one child, a daughter, Miss ~~Laura~~ Florida L Matthews

Prof. Matthews has been an intelligent observer of conditions and has had, through his varied activities an unusual opportunity to study conditions. He is of the opinion that the greatest needs of the race when summed up in a few words are education and equality of opportunity along all lines as a citizen.

Prof. Matthews was a Four Minute man during the World War. As previously stated he is a trustee of A. N. and and for ten years has been Secretary of the Board.