

Biographical Sketch of Mr. S. B. Simmons

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A. T. COLLEGE.

This biographical sketch was prepared by a special committee appointed by Dr. W. T. Gibbs, President of The Agricultural and Technical College. These members were selected because of their affiliation with Mr. Simmons and his work.

Mr. Arthur P. Bell, former N. F. A. member, teacher of vocational agriculture, and a present member of the Agricultural Education Department at the College, was appointed chairman. Other members of the committee were Messrs. C. E. Dean, Teacher-Trainer, Agricultural Education; W. T. Johnson, District Supervisor of Vocational Agriculture and Executive Secretary of the New Farmers of America; and Lee Alan Yates, former N. F. A. student and member of the Agricultural Engineering Department at the College.

This sketch was prepared by the committee during the school year of 1958-1959.

Biographical Sketch of Mr. S. E. Simmons

Sidney Britton Simmons, 1894-1957, son of a presiding elder, was born in Hecklenburg County, North Carolina, but spent his early boyhood days and received his first training in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Later he attended Lincoln Academy in Kings Mountain, and was among the first students to study at Fayetteville State Normal School, now Fayetteville State Teachers College. Having received degrees in Agricultural Education from both the Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina at Greensboro and the University of Illinois, he did further study at the University of California, Kansas State and Colorado State Colleges.

He held teaching positions at Dowington Industrial School, Dowington, Pennsylvania, the Topeka Industrial School, Topeka, Kansas, and he served later as Teacher-Trainer for vocational agriculture at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama; Itinerant Teacher-Trainer at the Agricultural and Technical College from 1924 to 1930; and Assistant State Supervisor of Agricultural Education in Negro Schools from 1930 to 1957.

Simmons, having the longest record of service of any Negro in the nation's program of Agricultural Education, brought this wealth of training and experient to North Carolina when he accepted his position

in 1924 at which time there were only twenty-three (23) departments of vocational agriculture with twenty-four (24) teachers in the state. Through his efforts and close cooperation with county and state officials, at his death in 1957, there were 144 teachers in 142 departments in the state, many with modern facilities and equipment for the training of rural youth and adults.

One of the early enthusiastic founders of the New Farmers of America, he participated actively in planning the first meeting and rendered outstanding service as the National Executive Secretary from 1935 to 1955. He was one of the motivating forces responsible for the development and growth of the National NFA Organization. He organized also the North Carolina Association of New Farmers of America. The Annual New Farmers of America Conventions held at the Agricultural and Technical College were highlights of his work with rural youth. Through the teachers of vocational agriculture, he brought NFA boys from the high schools of the state to participate in the various contests on the state level. These contests helped develop boys into good citizens and worthy leaders.

Under his supervision the program of vocational agriculture in the Negro schools of North Carolina was rated as one of the best in the nation. The NFA Summer Camp at Hammocks Beach, North Carolina, valued at \$80,000.00 and named the S. B. Simmons Camp in his honor, was one of his latest accomplishments. His camping ideas date back to 1927 when the first camp was held at the Pitt County Training School at Grimesland under his leadership. Having no NFA Camp for the boys, he

made arrangements to hold temporary camps at different points in the state from time to time. His interest in a camp for the NFA boys continued to grow and his efforts were devoted to securing a permanent camp site. In 1949 Dr. William Sharpe of New York City deeded 4,500 acres of land on Queen's Creek in Onslow County to the Hammocks Beach Corporation which represents the North Carolina Teachers Association and other educational groups. Mr. Simmons succeeded in securing a 50-year lease on 27 acres for the establishment of the present NFA Camp.

He served as a member of the Board of Directors for the Colored Orphanage of North Carolina for many years, and during that time the Home made rapid progress, and more nearly approached the standard for work with children than at any other similar period in the seventy-five year history of the Orphanage. It was through his efforts that the vocational building was constructed and equipped. His labors in behalf of the Orphanage were worth close to \$100,000.00.

With the passing of Public Law 346 by the United States Congress, following World War II, the Institutional on-Farm Training Program for Veterans came into existence. Mr. Simmons was instrumental in promoting this phase of the vocational agricultural program, and North Carolina's program was the largest in the South. Through this program and Mr. Simmons' efforts, many veterans secured homes and became progressively established in farming.

In addition to his work for the promotion of vocational agriculture in the State, he was quite a national figure and was a great

asset in getting increased appropriations for the vocational program from the Federal Government.

Among his contributions on the national level to agricultural education was his appearance, with two teachers of vocational agriculture in 1946, before the Committee on Education of the United States Congress which greatly influenced Congress in passing the George-Barden Act. His public relations program on local, state, and national levels was always of the highest type.

Mr. Simmons' contributions and services were not confined exclusively to agricultural education. Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman honored him with certificates and medals for his service with the Selective Service during World War II. Governor R. Gregg Cherry appointed him to serve on the State Appeal Board and each succeeding Governor reappointed him.

The teachers of vocational agriculture of the State of North Carolina honored him in 1949 for his twenty-five years of successful service. Subsequently in 1954, he was honored by teachers of vocational agriculture, former students and friends in a testimonial dinner for his thirty years of distinguished and outstanding service to the State and Nation.

In an executive capacity, he served on a number of committees in the interest of the State, and was a member and Chairman of the Trustee Board of St. Matthews Methodist Church, Greensboro, North Carolina. He was a member of a number of professional and educational organizations and made contributions to many leading educational magazines.

As a great sport fan, he often attended athletic events with his family, and on several occasions planned trips in order to give teachers under his supervision, the New Farmers of America, and others an opportunity to witness some of the nation's top sport events. He felt that inspiration of this type would inspire a number of youth to take advantage of any available opportunity in sports for advancement of life.

The educational tours planned and conducted by Mr. Simmons for the teachers of vocational agriculture for professional and technical improvement carried them into many sections of the country.

Mr. Simmons will long be remembered for his accomplishments and for his sincere friendliness to people in all walks of life.