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Author(s): MARY GILPIN ARMSTRONG

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THE STORY OF CHARL O. WILLIAMS

BY MARY GILPIN ARMSTRONG

[In New York Evening Post]

There is a romantic story in the tale of Miss Williams' climb from her first position in a one-room rural school to the highest office within the selection of American teachers. Born and reared in the little town of Arlington, Tenn., twenty-five miles from Memphis, and educated in the Shelby County schools, she has risen in eighteen years from her first position at \$35 a month to the highest salaried woman county superintendentship in the country and then the head of the greatest professional body. Her rapid success has doubtless encouraged thousands of country teachers who now see beyond their narrow existence the possibility of contact with the important issues of the profession, if luck should turn their way.

It was not luck, however, but a combination of factors, including hard work, which brought Miss Williams to her present position. In addition to her excellent scholarship and tireless energy in whatever she undertook, she was an all-round person with a keen interest in outside activities, blessed with winning manners and a most attractive appearance to boot.

So that when Charl Williams was not running academic races she was riding horseback with the keen zest of a true sportswoman.

After two years in a one-room school and still under twenty, Miss Williams was made principal of one of the most important grade schools in Shelby County, in the larger community of Bartlett. Although the youngest member of the faculty, she ran the school for two and a half years until she left to become a high school teacher in the Germantown High School, one of the first high schools in the county. Her sister, Miss Mabel Williams, was then principal of the school.

Things began to happen in and around the Germantown School from then on. A finer community spirit developed and a new kind of

co-operation was begun. Additions were made to accommodate the increasing enrollment, plays, concerts, and even grand opera found their way into the school building, and no amount of labor seemed too great to be undertaken. Pupils were trained to help in countless ways. By the time Miss Williams left a fine two-story brick building had been erected with a large auditorium.

Always she has gained the hearts of the people wherever she has been by entering into their activities with enthusiasm. From Germantown, where she had become principal following the election of her sister as county superintendent, she went to the West Tennessee State Normal School, Memphis, as assistant teacher of mathematics. Two years later, at the resignation of her sister, she entered the race for county superintendent. Miss Williams scored the highest average in the rigid examination and at the election by the County Court afterwards the other candidates withdrew and she was unanimously elected superintendent of education in Shelby County.

While it is impossible to tell here all that Miss Williams has accomplished for Shelby County since 1914, some idea can be gained from the fact that it is now considered one of the three model counties of the nation. In seven years she lifted its Southern rural schools to a standard much higher than many in the North, gained for them a nine-months' year, for the teachers ten months' salary and a bonus for summer study, all of which seemed impossible at first. By means of consolidation beautiful modern schools with model lunchrooms and playgrounds have taken the place of the dilapidated one-room school. With such a record the educational prospect for America's country child is now most hopeful.

GOOD TIMBER

BY DOUGLAS MALLOCH

[In The Informant.]

The tree that never had to fight
For sun and sky and light,
That stood out in the open plain
And always got its share of rain,
Never became a forest king
But lived and died a scrubby thing.

The man who never had to toil
To heaven from the common soil,
Who never had to win his share
Of sun and sky and light and air,
Never became a manly man
But lived and died as he began.

Good timber does not grow in ease;
The stronger wind the tougher trees,
The farther sky the greater length,
The more the storm the more the strength;
By sun and cold, by rain and snows,
In tree or man good timber grows—

Where thickest stands the forest growth
We find the patriarchs of both,
And they hold converse with the stars
Whose broken branches show the scars
Of many winds and much of strife—
This is the common law of life.