

History of the Lincoln Colored School

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By Larry W. Roeder., Jr., MS

Not to be confused with the Lincoln Graded School (now Catherine Marshall Center) or the current [Lincoln School](#).

Table of Contents

Opening Dates.....	2
Other Histories.....	3
The Tait School.....	3
The African-American Trustees:	3
The White Trustees:.....	4
Possible High School Education for African-Americans	5
Repairs and Sales	5
Insurance.....	5
Lincoln Instructors.....	6
Bibliography	8

Opening Dates

Several opening dates have been proposed, 1865, 1866 and 1868.

July, 1865 was proposed in a paper developed by a local Lincoln research effort in the 1980's, which identified Lincoln Colored as "down the road a piece: from Oakdale, and near the old Methodist church in Lincoln. The first teachers were identified as Miss Liza Janney, Mr. Samuel Janney and Mr. Rodney Davis. The last instructor was identified as Curtis Ewing. See [lincolnstudy](#). It should also be known that the Quaker's one-room [Oakdale School](#) instructed both white and African-American children between 1815 and 1885.

As for Mr. Ewing, we know he was an African-American who also instructed at Conklin Colored School for the 1923/24 academic year at a rate of \$40 a month. He had a local permit for all topics and operated on a six month contract. He was also supposed to be the instructor for the 1924/25 academic year, but the school was closed, due to lack of attendance. Ewing was also supposed to be from Leesburg. In 1923, he was working as a public school teacher with only one year of experience in Loudoun. His education was at the public school level. Source: Donna Kroiz, (11/23/2013).

June 1866 was proposed by the Quaker newspaper called Friends Intelligencer, a copy of which was provided by Swarthmore College. The citation reads from "Friends Intelligencer" in 1870, pg. 441. "The School for Freedmen: Lincoln, Loudoun Co., Va. was opened in Sixth Mo 1866. Caroline Thomas has been the teacher for the last two years. It has been aided by the "Charity Society" of Jericho, Long Island, from the interest of a fund subscribed by Friends the later part of the last century, for the purpose of aiding colored children in obtaining an education. Elias Hicks was one of its principal promoters. The District Schools being all free in this State, the money has not been needed for them in this vicinity, and for the last year and a half has been appropriated in assisting the freed-people in supporting the school spoken of in the accompanying letter of Caroline Thomas."

1868 was proposed by a study on the Quakers written by Edith Gaines in 1994. In that study, Ms. Gains said the Charity Society in Long Island, NY established by the Quakers had been providing free education to African-Americans up to 1868, the year New York abolished tuition requirements. At that time, African-Americans could attend schools without need of financial assistance. The society then turned its attention to Lincoln and set up a school run by Samuel M. Janney. They also provided 10 dollars a month from the Society's permanent fund to pay the teacher's salary. Supervising the financial support was Joseph Post, Isaac Hicks, Matthew T. Robbins and Edmund Wilets. Evidently the school serviced forty students, "many of whom" walked three to seven miles to school, although a measles epidemic had reduced attendance (Gaines, 1994) (Society Secretary, 1868, Nov 19).

Although the accounts provide different opening dates, they are close. Very likely Thomas was the instructor at Lincoln and then its successor structure from 1868-1870 (as suggested by the Intelligencer) and, depending on the sources of the 1980's study, the first teachers really were the two Janney's and Davis. Very likely as well Rodney Davis was the

same person appointed postmaster in Lincoln on 3 July, 1865. (Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group Number 28, 1971) [LincolnPostOffice](#).

Other Histories

An interview with a former student and a set of contemporary photographs was developed by the [Lincoln Preservation Foundation](#) which said "The Lincoln School B was an early public school for African Americans in western Loudoun County and is located on Cookesville Road in Lincoln. Completed in 1865 and built on land donated by Quakers, the two story, two room school taught children in grades one through seven. " The school was also known as Goose Creek School for Negroes, the Lincoln Colored School, the Lincoln School C (locals imply this stood for "colored"), and the Lincoln School for African Americans over the years. The school was built on land donated by Edward and Eliza Rossum on land they donated to build both the school and the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church. The school taught schoolchildren in grades one through seven, divided into two classrooms.

1867 Freedmen's Bureau Schools opened in Leesburg, [Lincoln](#), and Waterford. Robey's and Steer's became Bureau schools (Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1869, pp. Roll 45, 489-490), (Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1870, p. Rolls 12 and 303).

The Tait School

The Gaines report indicated that in 1869 the Lincoln school was moved to a new building on the property of William Tait, a Quaker. Caroline Thomas was the teacher and paid \$20 a month for her services. The same structure was in operation in 1874 when it was inspected by a member of the Charity Society. By then, the institution had taken on the name Tait School as well. In addition, adults were studying there in the winter and "showed much desire for learning." The inspection went well and further support was recommended (Gaines, 1994, p. 18).

Upon further research, I figured out that the **Philomont/Greggville Freedmen's Bureau school lot** was donated by Quaker William Tate, which is clearly the school mentioned in the Gaines report. Mr. Tate was a retired farmer in Philomont (US Census Bureau, 1870).

The trustees were three African-Americans: Samuel Colbert, Robert Webb and Sandy Smith, as well as three white men, Enoch Fenton, William T. Shoemaker and William H. Taylor (Clerk of the Court, p. Liber 342).

The African-American Trustees:

- **Samuel Colbert.** Mr. Colbert could have been an African-American Black Smith living in Bloomfield (US Census Bureau, 1870).
- **Robert Webb.** Mr. Webb could have been a "mulatto" farm laborer born in 1810 and in 1870 living in the Mercer District (US Census Bureau, 1870).
- **Sandy Smith.** I am unclear about Mr. Smith.

The White Trustees:

- **Enoch Fenton.** Mr. Fenton was a wealthy (worth \$20,000) white farmer in Circleville, which is a community about 2 miles S of Lincoln and an equal distance from Mt Gilead. (US Census Bureau, 1870).
- **William T. Shoemaker** This gentleman was very likely William Tate Shoemaker, an important Quaker in Loudoun County (Marshall, 1947).
- **William H. Taylor.** Mr. William H. Taylor was a farmer in the Philomont area and lived in the household of Mr. Tate. (US Census Bureau, 1870)

The opening teacher was Quaker Caroline Thomas. (Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1869, p. Roll 9); Thomas was a Quaker who died February 22, 1896. Interestingly, she might also have been a Union Army veteran, serving 100 days as a laundress. It's a reminder that not all Quakers refused military service (Historic Fair Hill Staff, 2014,). If so, she is buried in Section E, Lot 321A of Historic Fair Hill in Philadelphia.

There is some question as to whether the school lasted very long or perhaps she instructed at more than one school. I also found one Teacher's Monthly School Report for April, 1870 for Tate, which indicated it opened July 19, 1869 and was due to close June 30th, 1870 (Thomas, 1870, April).

Friends' Intelligencer, Volume 26 referred to Carolyn Thomas having to abandon her school in Leesburg because of the "impossibility of having a School House fit to teach in, and the unwillingness on our part to risk the health, and probably the life of any teacher under such circumstances. Having no other opening, we were very reluctantly compelled to part with her " (Intelligencer Staff, 1869/1870)." I am uncertain that these are the same school and the dates are off. It sounds more like the instructor worked at two schools, one being Leesburg and that [Leesburg](#) was shut down due to danger; however, that needs more research.

According to the Thomas report, each pupil at Tate paid 50 cents a month for instruction. The building was owned by the Freedmen and received no support from the local school board. Assistance was instead provided by the Friend's, Long Island, NY, meaning the Charity Society reported on by Gaines. (Thomas, 1870, April).

Topics Studied	Number who Took Topic
Alphabet	0
Spell and read easy lessons.	18
Using advanced readers.	7
Studied Geography	12
Studied Arithmetic	22

In higher branches (*)	7
In writing.	22

In April 1870, Thomas instructed 25 pupils, 19 males and 6 females. That was down from 31 the prior month. 11 more left in April, but 5 were added, making an average attendance of 16. 10 were always present, 25 were always punctual and 2 were over the age of 16. When asked about public sentiment toward Colored Schools, Thomas wrote the number 0, perhaps indicating a negative attitude. Also, none of her pupils were members of a temperance society.

Possible High School Education for African-Americans

The report on topics studied under Thomas is especially interesting since it referred to seven African-Americans being instructed in higher branches. Is it possible that African-Americans did achieve Junior High or High school training at this stage of the educational system? The Gaines report did indicate the 1870 inspection showed adults learning in the winter. Perhaps they were the ones receiving received high schooling. If so, this might be the first example of High School level education for African-Americans in Loudoun.

Repairs and Sales

- **Repairs authorized for \$45 by Loudoun County School Board on June 10, 1930.** (Staff, 1930)
- **Sale and Current Situation:** The school served local African American schoolchildren until the late 1940's.
- **1950's.** Holmes and Susan Gregg purchased the building and restored it into a private residence in 1980. [It is currently owned by David Williams.](#)

Insurance

- **1924/27: Insured by LCPS system in 1924/27.** (LCPS Staff, 1924/27, p. 32/33 and 54/55)(Found in LCPS Records Office, Round Hill. Black Book with Red Spine and Corners).

Lincoln Instructors

The following information was derived from Freedmen's Bureau Records, Quaker Records, as well as Lists of Teachers, 1892-1975, produced by the Virginia Department of Public Instruction/Education in Richmond. The lists are in hard copy and microfilm format and are available as film for interlibrary loan from the Library of Virginia.

- **1865 or 66/1870:** Very likely Miss Liza Janney, Mr. Samuel Janney and Mr. Rodney Davis.
- **1868/1870:** Very likely Caroline Thomas was the instructor. In 1869 the Lincoln school was moved to a new building on the property of William Tait, a Quaker.
- **1870 – 1893:** No official records found.
- **1893/1894:** Ms. Laurenda Duvall of Lincoln was a “colored” instructor for Lincoln and operated on a 3rd grade certificate. Mr. Chas B. Williams of Roselyn, Va also was a colored instructor and operated on a second grade certificate.
- **1894/95:** Mr/ G.B. (or CB) Williams of Alleghany Springs, Va instructed on a first grade certificate and Miss Laurenda Duvall of Lincoln continued to instruct on Third grade certificate.
- **1895/96:** Mr. W.S. Morgan of Richmond, Virginia instructed on a 1st grade certificate. Miss Luanna Tate of Silcott Springs instructed on a 3rd grade permit and Ms Laurinda Duvall from Lincoln instructed on a 3rd grade permit.
- **1896/97:** Mr. W.S. Morgan, now identified from Lincoln, was still the instructor:
- **1898-1909:** Files Missing
- **1916/17:** No information
- **1917/18:** Ms. Mattie McQuay. Had a seven month contract on a 3rd grade certificate issues in 1917. Was paid \$30 a month.
- **1930/31 Academic Year.** Curtis Ewing was elected instructor by the School Board on June 10th, 1930. (Times Mirror Staff, 1930). We also know that Mr. Ewing was the instructor at the [Conklin Colored School](#) for the 1923/24 academic year at a rate of \$40 a month. He had a local permit for all topics and operated on a six month contract. He was also supposed to be the instructor for the 1924/25 academic year, but the school was closed, due to lack of attendance. See Conklin Study. Ewing was also supposed to be from Leesburg. I didn't find one there; but the 1920 Census for Broad Run showed an 18 year old farm laborer of this name. He would have been about 21 or 22 in 1923, so this is possible; but I've not found another record. **School year 1923-24 for Curtis Ewing.** Address: Leesburg. Grade of Certification: Local permit. When issued or

renewed: 1923. When expired: 1924 Years Experience: 1. Where Educated: public school (Kroiz, 2013)

- Ewing remained the instructor 1931-1934/35. We also know that in 1934, Lincoln Colored was very crowded, so the School Board decided on November 6th, 1934 that the Purcellville primary teacher was to supply half a day at Lincoln (Washington Post Staff, 1934).
- 1935/36. Binns Walker was the instructor, by 1940 a chauffeur with a 4 year degree.
- 1936/37 through 1941/42, Curtis Ewing was the instructor.
- 1946/47. Curtis Ewing returned to Lincoln, having instructed in Lovettsville in the 1942/43 through 1945/46 Academic years. Ewing's tenure at Lincoln for the 1946/47 Academic Year was confirmed by the Washington Post (Washington Post Staff, 1946)

Following the 1946/47 Academic Year, Curtis Ewing instructed at Carver from the 1947/48 academic year through at least 1951/52. The records for 1952/53 records show him still instructing; but don't indicate the specific school. (Note: I plan to interview Lewis Jett on Ewing, as Louis studied under Ewing and remembers him very well.)

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