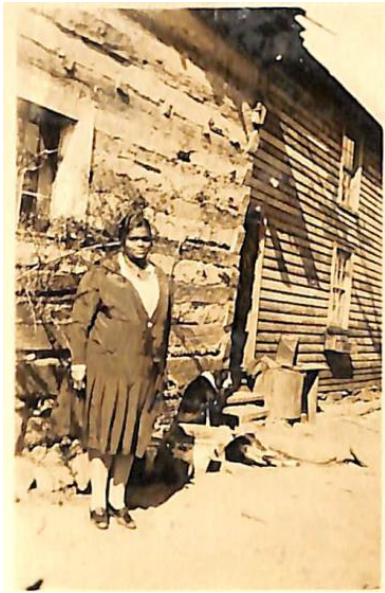




THE EDWIN WASHINGTON PROJECT
26128 Talamore Drive, South Riding, Virginia 20152

Preliminary Biography on Edythe Harris



**Edyth Harris Official Photo, perhaps
1930/31. Location Unknown¹**



**Edyth Harris in background, photo from
about 1935 in front of her school in
Leesburg²**

Born October 30, 1905

Permanent Home 1307 12th Street, Lynchburg, Va.

Baptist Marital Status Single

Educated:

- University of Pittsburgh AB Degree
- Sewickly High School
- Virginia State College

¹ Photo, Edwin Washington Archives.

² Photo, courtesy of Virginia State University.

Early High School education in Loudoun for African-Americans.

Edythe was not the first African-American high school teacher in Loudoun County; but is interesting because she instructed from 1930 to the change over in 1940/41 when high school students migrated to Douglass High School. Because of her efforts, the second floor program she ran at the Training Center has bragging rights as Loudoun's first accredited high school for Blacks, one year before Douglass which was the first high school building for Blacks. We also have an example of her philosophy, through a letter she wrote in 1930 to Superintendent OL Emerick.

Prior to Edythe was certainly Mr. John C. Walker, if we consider the 8th grade as the first level of high school, as it was back then. Walker was born Aug 31, 1868 and graduated from Virginia Normal and Industrial in Petersburg, later known as Virginia State University. Mr. Walker lived in Leesburg and instructed 6th and 7th grades (elementary), and the 8th grade from 1918/19 through to 1930, when he focused on the 6th-7th until 1936, then 5 through 7th from 1936 to 1940/41, according to his Teacher Record.



Figure 1 Photo by Larry Roeder, 2016. The second floor was reserved for high school education.

Capabilities. English, Math, French, History, Social Studies

Instructed: 1930/31 to 1940/41 Leesburg High School, Leesburg, Va. otherwise known as Loudoun County Training Center. The schooling was not accredited until its last year. Second floor was for secondary education, whereas first floor was for elementary schooling. No employment records shown before 1930, though her file shows five years

experience. No employment after 1940/41. In 1941, secondary schooling was moved to Douglass High School in Leesburg, Va.

1920 US Census for Lynchburg indicated an Edith Harris, age 19 and working as a public school teacher. At the time, she was living on Wise street with her brother Gilbert (chauffer), Father Gilbert, a warehouse trucker, Mother Ida, Brother Charles and Sister Ida, neither of whom were employed. Note. The age appears to be off.

1930. US Census for Lynchburg indicates an Eddie Harris of the right age and enumerated on Palk Street worked as a servant for a private family with uneven hours.

1930/31 - Probably first year teaching in Loudoun County.

1930's Harris signed a petition requesting buses to transport children from various location to the Loudoun County Training Center where she worked.

Feb 7, 1931. Harris wrote to the Superintendent noting that she had been teaching a double load, apparently two grades of high school. A third class was needed, as the load then was 39 pupils and more were expected. To handle this, she requested more salary for herself and an additional room and teacher in the building.

May 16, 1932, joined 80 other colored petitioners to support employment of Mary E.R. Waters and Annie E. Harris. Edythe was signature 78.

AY 1933/34 School Records indicate that Edythe had 8 years experience, which would mean she began about 1925, five years before appearing in Loudoun Records.

AY 1934/35. A second High School teacher was added to the roster. This appears to be Welton Henderson. His permanent home was 723 Marshall Street, Richmond. At the time, Edythe operated on a Special Elementary certificate; but Welton operated on a College Professional certificate for English, French, History, Social Studies, Math and Elementary studies. His certificate was issued in 1932, due to expire 1942. He came with three years of experience and graduated from Virginia Union University. He lived in Leesburg.

AY 1935/36. Edythe was shown as educated at Virginia Seminary College, which is in Lynchburg. Henderson no longer appears in the files.

1940/41. Employment at LCPS appears to have ended when students began to study at Douglass HS

Cards for Harris's school. This has been called variously Loudoun County Training Center, Leesburg High School (upstairs), Leesburg Elementary (down stairs – also known as Graded school A) and Douglass Elementary after 1941 when the high school classes moved to the Douglass High School.

Until 1941 at the fresh Douglass High School, secondary education was held on the second floor of the training center.

Three grades, 8-9-10, were initially offered, then 8-11, but never 12th at Harris's school.

Session	No. Teachers	Enrollment	Av. Att.	Term
1930-31	1	39	34	170
1931-32	1	36	30	170
1932-33	1	23	19	160
1933-34	1	34	26	160
1934-35	2	42	35	160
1935-36	2	45	37	160
1936-37	2	60	48	160
1937-38	2	66	49	160
1938-39	2	57	52	180
1939-40	2	71	59	180
1940-41	2	85	69	180
1941-42	4	106	87	180
1942-43	5	127	111	180

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