

**Charlotte Hawkins Brown and  
the Palmer Memorial Institute  
Teacher Materials for the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum**



**Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum at Historic Palmer Memorial Institute**  
**P O Drawer B ♦ 6136 Burlington Road/Hwy 70 ♦ Sedalia, NC 27342**  
**I-40/85, Exit 135 – Rock Creek Dairy Road**  
**336.449.4846 ♦ e-mail *chb@ncmail.net***  
***www.chbrownmuseum.nchistoricsites.org***



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♦ **The Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum at Historic Palmer Memorial Institute**

The Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum is North Carolina's first and only official State Historic Site to honor an African American and a woman. The site is the location of the former Palmer Memorial Institute, an African American preparatory school established by Brown in 1902. Over the next 50 years of her presidency, Dr. Brown raised almost \$1.5 million to make PMI into one of the most renowned schools for African American youth in the nation. The school closed in 1971. The historic site opened to the public in 1987. Five of the former school buildings have been designated as Official Projects of Save America's Treasures, a public-private partnership between the White House Millennium Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum is an agency of the North Carolina Division of State Historic Sites, Department of Cultural Resources. The Museum is located at 6136 Burlington Road, Sedalia, 10 miles east of Greensboro off I-40/85, exit 135.

♦ **Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown**

From 1902 until shortly before her death in 1961, Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown influenced North Carolina's role in the development of African American education, interracial cooperation, and women's rights. In the fall of 1902 at age 19, she founded the Alice Freeman Palmer Memorial Institute in Sedalia. She set an example for her students by being an active, influential member of many African American and women's groups throughout North Carolina, the South and the nation. She became a popular speaker and civic leader, constantly in demand to deliver speeches on education, racial uplift, and interracial cooperation.

♦ **Palmer Memorial Institute**

Beginning as a primarily agricultural and industrial school, PMI evolved into an elite preparatory school equipping its students with a classical education, discipline, high standards, poise and ambition. PMI and its graduates exemplified Dr. Brown's hard work and dedication to African American achievement. The school continued after her death under three successive presidents and closed in 1971.

♦ **The Museum today**

Visitors can explore and learn about a unique environment where many African American boys and girls lived and learned during the greater part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Tours of Dr. Brown's residence and wayside exhibits highlight the history of the site, and museum exhibits tell the story of this remarkable woman and North Carolina's African American educational heritage. A typical visit consists of orientation video (14 minutes), exhibits in the Visitor Center museum area, guided tour of Dr. Brown's residence, and a self-guided or guided tour of the campus. A walking tour brochure is available or visitors may simply tour the campus on their own using convenient wayside information panels as a guide. Allow 45 to 90 minutes for a site visit. Admission is free.

♦ **Directions**

The Museum is located one mile from the I-40/85 corridor in Guilford County. From Interstate 40/85, exit on Rock Creek Dairy Road (exit 135) between Burlington and Greensboro. Follow the directional signs north on Rock Creek Dairy Road to U.S. 70. Turn left on U.S. 70 and travel approximately one mile. The site is on the left.

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♦ **Planning a Field Trip**

School groups should schedule a time to visit by calling the Museum during business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 5:00. Museum staff will ask for information regarding size of group, number of teachers and chaperons, time allotted for visit, special needs and physical disabilities of any participants and so forth. A confirmation will be mailed to the contact teacher or group leader. A typical visit consists of orientation video (14 minutes), exploring exhibits in the Visitor Center, guided tour of Dr. Brown's residence, guided tour of the campus, and browsing the gift shop. The entire visit usually requires 90 minutes if the class takes a full campus tour, but can be tailored to your schedule.

♦ **What to expect when visiting the Museum**

*Video*

The orientation video is an edited version of a documentary filmed in 1981 as part of the efforts to preserve the PMI campus as a State Historic Site. The video is approximate 13 minutes long and gives a general overview of history of school and of Dr. Brown with photographs, song, and interviews with former students and faculty.

*Visitor Center & Museum*

Smaller groups (up to 30 visitors) are oriented at the Visitor Center. Visitors may also pick up the self-guided walking tour brochure and other information here. Restroom facilities are available at the Visitor Center, and the Museum Gift Shop is also located in the Visitor Center.

The Visitor Center contains a small museum area with panel exhibits, photographs and artifacts related to Dr. Brown, African American education in North Carolina, and student life at Palmer.

*Tour of campus*

Scheduled groups may choose to take the guided walking tour around the campus. The emphasis of the guided tour is about student life at Palmer and the daily functioning of the school. This is especially effective for school-age children who are able to compare and contrast their own school experiences with those of a typical Palmer student. (See section on Student Life.) The walking tour can take as long as 45 minutes, depending on the size of the group and the number of questions asked. A guided tour can be tailored to the amount of time the group has scheduled.

Approximately 90% of the main campus is accessible to the physically handicapped, but visitors should be aware that the main walking tour area covers nearly a quarter mile. Groups with physically disabled students are encouraged to take a driving tour of the campus. Most of the buildings can be seen by this method, and a staff member can ride along. Arrangements for the driving tour should be made in advance when making the group reservation.

### *Guided Tour of Canary Cottage*

Canary Cottage, Dr. Brown's home built in the 1920s, is accessible to visitors only through a guided tour. It is a historic house museum and contains many of her personal furnishings and possessions. Large groups are usually divided into smaller groups to tour Canary Cottage. Small groups are usually taken through the main areas of the house including the kitchen and upstairs bedrooms; larger groups may only see the larger, downstairs rooms due to the small size of the upstairs rooms and time allotted for the visit.

### *Other facilities*

Larger groups receive their orientation in Stouffer Hall, the former science building located in the center of campus.

The Main Parking Lot can accommodate tour buses for parking and for turn-around. Some drives through the campus can also accommodate large buses. Staff will assist drivers as to the best place to park or drop-off visitors.

When scheduling your group tour, please ask staff about the Picnic Shelter and the unsheltered picnic areas if you would like to have lunch at the Museum. Staff can also assist you with directions to restaurants nearby.

### ◆ **Special events and activities**

*See the Calendar of Events for upcoming activities. The Museum organizes many programs to complement our daily mission:*

Lectures, workshops and music programs for **African American History Month** (February) and **Women's History Month** (March)

**African American Heritage Festival** is a celebration of music, dance, and craft & commemorates the birthday of Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown and held on the second Saturday in June.

**"It's About Time"** is the annual fall program designed for school children showcasing museums and historic sites from across the state and allows students to experience many aspects of NC history and heritage in on trip. Interested teachers may sign up for this program by calling the Museum at anytime.

**Christmas Open House** is the annual music program to celebrate the season. Canary Cottage is decorated for this event and the month of December as it would have been in the 1940s.

### ◆ **More information about the museum, tours, directions and activities on the website** **[www.chbrownmuseum.nchistoricsites.org](http://www.chbrownmuseum.nchistoricsites.org).**

### ◆ **Preparing students to visit and follow-up activities**

A brief history of the school and biography of Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown are included in this packet along with information from original school documents. Pages without numbers at the bottom are original documents or are taken from the originals; these can be easily copied for student use. The Suggested Activities section in the Teacher Information gives ideas on using these documents in the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to use these materials and suggested topics for discussion prior to the field trip. Other activities may be more appropriate after the students have toured the Museum.

Many topics and related subjects correspond with NC Standard Course of Study competencies and objectives in Social Studies. (A brief matrix is included.) The materials can also be useful for other areas of study including technology skills, reading, writing, research skills, character education, and math.

# Contents of the Teacher Material Packet

*Teacher information:* North Carolina Standard Course of Study and Grade Level Competencies Matrix & Character Education information

*Teacher information:* Segregation and education in North Carolina

*Teacher information:* The Story of Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown  
*Student Handout:* Text from Charlotte Hawkins Brown's gravestone

*Teacher information:* The Story of Palmer Memorial Institute  
*Student Handouts:* The Story of Palmer Memorial Institute  
Fact Find Activity Sheet  
Field Trip Fact Find Activity Sheet  
**(Please call the Museum for a copy of the Teacher's Answer Keys to the Fact Find Activity Sheets.)**

*Teacher information:* Student Life at Palmer Memorial Institute

*Teacher information:* Applying to Palmer Memorial Institute  
*Student Handouts:* Three original documents related to the application process at Palmer

*Teacher information:* Curriculum  
*Student Handout:* Course offering for freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors (1959)

*Teacher information:* PMI Bell Schedule & Duty Work  
*Student Handouts:* Typical bell schedule (1940s)  
Original weekend schedule (1940-41).

*Teacher information:* Extracurricular Activities & School Events  
*Student Handouts:* Two pages listing activities and special events with descriptions  
Alice Freeman Palmer Day Program (1944)  
Junior High School Graduation Program (1947).

*Teacher information:* Rules for School

*Teacher information:* Dress  
*Student Handout:* Dress regulations (1935-36 and the late 1950s)

*Teacher information:* Cost  
*Student Handout:* Schedule of student fees (1917, 1920, 1935, 1955 & 1964)  
**(Please call the Museum for a copy of the Teacher's Key for the Cost Activity Sheet.)**

# North Carolina Standard Course of Study and Grade Level Competencies - Social Studies

Many activities suggested by the materials in this teacher packet or the field trip experience will assist the teacher in meeting some competency goals and objectives outlined in the Standard Course of Study. The Standard Course of Study is online in PDF format (Adobe Acrobat Reader is needed), [www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/socialstudies/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/socialstudies/). There are excellent resources, answers and links available for curriculum and instruction, including NC Wise Owl, available through the NC Department of Public Instruction home page, [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org) - look under Educators and Students link buttons. Links to North Carolina historical, cultural and educational information are also available through the website, [www.itpi.dpi.state.nc.us/connectusa/ncweb.html](http://www.itpi.dpi.state.nc.us/connectusa/ncweb.html).

## Third Grade

*Citizenship: Making a Difference*

- Competency Goal 1
  - Objective 1.04
  - Objective 1.06
- Competency Goal 3
- Competency Goal 5
  - Objective 5.07

## Fourth Grade

*North Carolina: Geography & History*

- Competency Goal 4
  - Objective 4.05
- Competency Goal 7

## Fifth Grade

*United States History*

- Competency Goal 4
  - Objective 4.06

## Eighth Grade

*NC: Creation & Development of the State*

- Competency Goal 5
  - Objective 5.02
  - Objective 5.04
  - Objective 5.05
- Competency Goal 6
  - Objective 6:04
- Competency Goal 9
  - Objective 9.02

## Tenth Grade

*Civics & Economics*

- Competency Goal 5
  - Objective 5:06

## Eleventh Grade

*United States History*

- Competency Goal 5
- Competency Goal 7
- Competency Goal 8
  - Objective 8.03
- Competency Goal 9
  - Objective 9.02
  - Objective 9.04
- Competency Goal 10
  - Objective 10.03
- Competency Goal 11
  - Objective 11.02
  - Objective 11.03
  - Objective 11.06

## African American Studies

- Competency Goal 5
- Competency Goal 8
  - Objective 8.01
  - Objective 8.04
  - Objective 8.06
- Competency Goal 9
  - Objective 9.06

## Character Education

See information related to character education goals and the Student Citizen Act of 2001 on the NC Department of Public Instruction website, [www.ncpublicschools.org/charactereducation/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/charactereducation/). There are also links to the NC Center for Character Education and about the NC Character Education Partnership.

## Segregation and education in North Carolina

### *“Jim Crow”*

The 1863 Emancipation Proclamation gave enslaved African Americans their freedom; the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution in 1868 made African Americans citizens of the United States; and the Fifteenth Amendment (1870) ensured them the right to vote. Despite these assurances of their civil rights, African Americans were denied full access to jobs, voting, and education in North Carolina and other states simply on the basis of race. In 1896, the US Supreme Court ruled on the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* case, which enabled states to enact “separate-but-equal” laws, often called “Jim Crow” laws. (“Jim Crow” was first used in a song, and later became a negative synonym for Negro.) These laws separated - or segregated – black and white citizens. Most public facilities, from restrooms and trains to schools, were segregated. Even though those facilities were supposed to be equal in quality, separate usually meant *unequal*.

Laws and practices of segregation also meant limited job and educational opportunities, political disenfranchisement, legal discrimination, social prejudice and, often, physical terror for African Americans. Opportunities that were available to African Americans usually were inferior to those of white citizens. For example, black women and children were not permitted to work in textile mills, one of the fastest growing industries in North Carolina during the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Black men, if a mill permitted them to work, were paid less than other workers. At a time when most of the South and nearly 90% of North Carolina was considered rural, it was difficult for African Americans to own their own farms or to earn higher wages. During the Jim Crow era, large numbers of African Americans migrated away from the South to other parts of the United States in search of greater opportunity.

### *Public Schools*

In the mid-1800s, North Carolina established one of the best common school systems in the South. By 1850, every county in the state had at least one public school and over 100,000 school children were enrolled in more than 2500 schools. The schools were free, but open only to white children. Enslaved African Americans during the Colonial and Federal Periods rarely had access to education, and in 1835, the State of North Carolina enacted a law which forbade the education of slaves.

After the Civil War, public schools did not re-open mainly because white leaders feared the schools would be required to educate black and white children together. There were many private schools for the newly-freed slaves, however, mainly sponsored by Northern religious organizations and the Freedman’s Bureau. The American Missionary Association, a New England religious organization, established many schools and colleges throughout the South. By 1867, there were over 170 schools in North Carolina for African Americans. Private colleges and training schools, like St. Augustine’s College, Shaw University, Bennett College and Scotia Seminary (now Barber-Scotia College), were also founded during Reconstruction. The 1868 North Carolina Constitution authorized a free, tax-supported public school system for all children, however little money was allocated to fund it. Before long, an amended constitution allowed for separate schools for African Americans.

Poverty, few taxes and a general apathy for public education led North Carolina to have one of the worst school systems in the nation by 1900. School terms were only 12 weeks long and less than 60% of the state’s school age children attended school at all. Children worked on the farms and in the factories. North Carolina had the second highest illiteracy rate in the nation in 1900 and, in 1910, had the lowest per-child spending on education in the nation. Only a few

towns had real schools; rural areas had even fewer schools, and most of North Carolina was rural. Guilford County was among the more progressive educational areas in North Carolina in 1900. There were a few private schools, mainly for whites, and separate public schools for both races. Greensboro's city schools provided 10 grades for whites, seven for African Americans.\*

Although all public education in North Carolina was very poor, African American schools became increasingly unequal for a generation under the Jim Crow system. To be African American and living in a rural area was a double handicap. If there were schools at all for African Americans, they usually lacked books, trained teachers or adequate facilities.

Despite limited access to education and few opportunities to earn a better living, African American citizens maintained families and communities, built churches and schools, and created social institutions under the most difficult circumstances. African Americans struggled to find ways to improve education, housing, livelihoods and their communities even if it had to be in a segregated setting.

The educational institutions created by forced segregation and a separate-and-unequal society were important steps toward securing equal rights as citizens. One of these institutions was Palmer Memorial Institute.

**Suggested activities or topics of discussion:**

Research other African American schools and colleges in North Carolina and the Southeast.

Discuss what actions African Americans took to improve their lives and opportunities in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Who were some of the leaders? How did these people influence the better-known "civil rights movement" of the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

Many teachers already have a repertoire of African American History Month activities. Students typically research, do projects, or learn about prominent African Americans. Research and report on notable people who led or participated in achieving civil rights and integrated schools in North Carolina and the United States. Suggest researching less well-known people. Are there citizens in your community who can come to your classroom to talk to your students?

Visit the NC Museum of History's upcoming civil rights exhibit, *A Change Is Gonna Come: Black, Indian and White Voices for Racial Equality*.

African Americans took advantage of philanthropist Julius Rosenwald's generosity to match funds raised in local black communities to build thousands of new schools. The Rosenwald Fund helped local governments and citizens build about 5,000 schools for African Americans in 15 states. North Carolina had approximately 800 Rosenwald schools, more than any other state. It is very possible that you have a Rosenwald school nearby. Students can interview former students or talk with preservation experts or local historians about the school.

For older students, you may wish to link this time period with the mid-century desegregation of schools due to *Brown v. Board* (1954). Students can research their local school systems efforts to desegregate or not to desegregate (the Pearsall Plan passed in 1956 and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg busing lawsuit in 1969 are good examples). There are many people who were active in these efforts that students could interview about how these events impacted your local community and their own lives.

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\* Even 20 years later, according to 1921 records, 35 of North Carolina's 100 counties had no accredited high schools at all, for white or black students; 85 counties lacked accredited rural high schools.



### Other Resources:

*A History of African Americans in North Carolina* by Crow, Escott and Hatley; Office of Archives & History, NC Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, 2002.

*The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow* television series and companion book by Richard Wormser, 2002-2003. Visit the comprehensive website <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/> for additional materials, activities and information related to the television series.

*The Civil Rights Movement for Kids: A History with 21 Activities* by Mary C. Turck; Chicago Review Press; Chicago, 2000.

*The Century for Young People* by Peter Jennings and Todd Brewster; ABC, Doubleday Book for Young Readers, Random House; New York, 1999.

*Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans Tell About Life in the Segregated South* book with 2-hour CD of interviews edited by William Chafe, Raymond Gavins & Robert Korstad; The New Press, 2001. This book of photographs and companion interviews is taken from “Behind the Veil: Documenting African American Life in the Segregated South,” a project housed at Duke University’s Center for Documentary Studies. Some interviews may not be suitable for younger students; a transcript is included as an appendix.

The website [www.rosenwaldplans.org](http://www.rosenwaldplans.org) has very detailed information about the Rosenwald Schools. Also see the website, [www.rosenwaldschools.com](http://www.rosenwaldschools.com).

Interview of citizens involved in a preservation effort to save a NC Rosenwald school can be heard at [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org), September 14, 2004, “All Things Considered”: *Groups Seek to Save First Black Schools in US*.

Selections from a 1910 document on African American education, “An Era of Progress & Promise-1863 to 1910,” is available on-line from the State Library of NC at <http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/iss/EraofProgress/EraofProgress.htm>.

See a study of the rise of private schools in North Carolina, “White Freedom Schools: The White Academy Movement in Eastern North Carolina, 1954-1973” by Christopher Myers in *The North Carolina Historical Review* (NC Archives & History publication), October 2004 (Volume 81, Number 4), pages 393-425.

*The Way We Lived in North Carolina* edited by Joe A. Mobley, UNC Press, 2003. Visit the companion website [www.waywelivednc.com](http://www.waywelivednc.com). The website has maps, photographs and information about various time periods and subjects in NC history. More information about the Jim Crow era and African American education can be found under the subject heading “1870-1920 – From Jubilation to Jim Crow.”

# The Story of Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown

Lottie Hawkins was born in 1883 in Henderson, in Vance County, North Carolina. Her grandparents had been slaves on the Hawkins' plantation. In 1888, her family moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts. Lottie was a leader in her church and enjoyed the many cultural and social aspects of the Boston metropolitan area. She attended elementary school at the Alston Grammar School, then attended the Cambridge English High School, where she changed her name to Charlotte Eugenia Hawkins upon graduating.

In 1900 shortly before her graduation from high school, Charlotte met Alice Freeman Palmer, former president of famous Wellesley College. Mrs. Palmer was at that time well-known for her work in reform, humanitarian, and educational causes. One of her particular interests was in the elevation of standards in the normal schools. Normal schools in Massachusetts were training schools, mainly to train women as teachers. Charlotte and Mrs. Palmer first met in a park in Cambridge near Harvard University while Charlotte was baby-sitting to earn extra money. Mrs. Palmer took an interest in Charlotte upon finding out she wanted to go to college to become a teacher and volunteered to pay her expenses to any one of the State Normal Schools in Massachusetts. Charlotte chose nearby Salem Normal School.\*

In 1901, while still at Salem Normal School, Charlotte met a representative from the American Missionary Association (AMA) who was recruiting teachers for AMA schools in the South. After making arrangements to complete her studies during the summer, 18-year-old Charlotte accepted a job teaching at Bethany Institute in a rural community near McLeansville outside of Greensboro, NC. Bethany Church held classes during the week in the sanctuary for children from the surrounding area.

Miss Hawkins was a big shock for Bethany – they knew a teacher was arriving from the AMA, but they did not expect it to be such a young woman. Charlotte in her turn was also surprised: Bethany Institute and Sedalia were very different from her urban Massachusetts upbringing, and she soon found that the students were receiving a basic education at best. She was able to make many improvements at the school, including boarding a few girls at the church during the winter months. The school closed at the end of term in the spring of 1902 because the AMA decided to put more money into its colleges and training schools. The people of Sedalia were dismayed, and asked Charlotte to continue the school for the next year. Inspired by the community's pleas, she returned to New England in the summer of 1902 to raise money by singing at beach resorts and speaking at churches. Mrs. Palmer introduced her to several wealthy individuals who donated to the school.

Helped by local African Americans and Northern white donors, Miss Hawkins re-opened the rural school in 1902 in a converted blacksmith's shop. Mrs. Palmer died in December 1902, and Hawkins named the school the Alice Freeman Palmer Memorial Institute in her honor. Students again boarded, this time both girls and a few boys.

To maintain the school, Miss Hawkins traveled north to raise funds each summer and during the year, the students would write letters to potential donors. She was able to hire a few

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\* Originally, Charlotte had wanted to attend a four-year college. At this time only a good high school education was required to be a public school teacher, and her mother believed she needed no further training. Charlotte compromised by applying to several normal schools. Normal schools provided two years of teacher training. Alice Freeman Palmer was a member of the Massachusetts Board of Education at the time she met young Charlotte Hawkins; this organization oversaw the governance of the Massachusetts normal schools. Visit the excellent website on Salem Normal School, now Salem State College, at [www.salemstate.edu](http://www.salemstate.edu). Go to the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary link to find a history by decades and links to information on Horace Mann, often called the “father of American Public Education,” who established the normal school system in Massachusetts. Students will enjoy the “What Was It Like” section featuring music, cost of living, events and entertainment of each period.

qualified teachers and soon, the first classroom building was constructed and the first three students graduated. Helen Kimball, of Brookline, Massachusetts, gave land for a school farm to grow food and teach farming. In 1907, a formal charter for the school was completed. Before long, Palmer Memorial Institute (PMI) boasted a 300-acre farm and four new wooden buildings, all but one of which students helped to construct.

Because no public school existed for African Americans in this part of Guilford County, local children attended Palmer and Miss Hawkins was paid a subsidy by the county for serving these students. However, PMI also provided a high school curriculum which was not usually offered in public or private African American schools at this time. In 1911, when Miss Hawkins married, students from many parts of North Carolina were finding their way to Sedalia.

Charlotte Hawkins Brown did not restrict her activities to Palmer. She actively developed Sedalia's churches, community and civic affairs, and assisted local families in purchasing their own farms. In 1909, she helped to found the North Carolina Federation of Negro Women's Clubs. Among its members were women leaders from across the state. She served as president of the Federation from 1915 to 1937. Through the Federation, she directed a statewide campaign to register black women to vote after ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution (1920). Brown joined the North Carolina Negro Teachers Association and also served as its president. She was member of many regional and national organizations including the Inter-Racial Club of the South, the National Urban League, the NAACP, and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and became the first black woman in Boston's Twentieth Century Club. Brown became cofounder with Mary McLeod Bethune of the National Council of Negro Women, and she helped establish the *Negro Braille Magazine*. She was the first black woman to serve on the national board of the YWCA. In 1940, NC Governor Clyde Hoey appointed her to the NC State Council of Defense. For her many educational and civic services, she received numerous honorary degrees and awards including doctorates from Wilberforce, Howard, and Lincoln Universities.

As the reputation of both Palmer and Dr. Brown grew, she also became a popular speaker. Dr. Brown was constantly in demand to speak at schools, colleges, churches and social organizations. She spoke on the national CBS radio broadcast, "Wings Over Jordan," in 1940 and at the International Congress of Women in Paris in 1945.

As she traveled throughout the country to attend meetings and give lectures, Dr. Brown was often subjected to the restrictions and indignities of Jim Crow. In 1920, on the way to a meeting of the White Woman's Missionary Convention in Memphis, Tennessee, she was forcibly removed from the Pullman (sleeper) car to the day coach designed for black passengers. She later sued the Pullman Company for her mistreatment and won.

Palmer Memorial Institute, however, remained the focus of Dr. Brown's attention. Although she continued to seek support and donations from some of New England's wealthiest families, Dr. Brown assembled a Board of Trustees of black and white leaders from both the North and South. Galen Stone of Boston became one of the largest contributors to the school in the 1910s and 1920s. He is reputed to have told Dr. Brown, "I am not interested in educating and advancing Negroes, but in making American citizens." With this encouragement and Stone's financial backing, Dr. Brown began to move PMI away from the agricultural focus of its early years. By the late 1930s, the school had evolved into a college preparatory school widely known for rigorous academics, strict discipline and character development. Over 90% of its graduates attended college, and many became leaders in communities and organizations across the nation.

By 1952 when Dr. Brown retired after 50 years as president of PMI, the school had a long waiting list of applicants for every school year. Dr. Brown's years of hard work, however, had taken their toll: her health declined rapidly in the 1950s, and she died in 1961. At her request, she is buried on the PMI campus.

## Charlotte Hawkins Brown's Grave

*Dr. Brown is buried to the west of the site of the Alice Freeman Palmer Building. A memorial plaque bears the inscription:*

DR. CHARLOTTE HAWKINS BROWN  
FOUNDER AND BUILDER  
OF THE  
ALICE FREEMAN PALMER MEMORIAL INSTITUTE  
LEADER OF WOMEN IN THEIR QUEST  
FOR FINER AND MORE PRODUCTIVE  
LIVING – MENTOR, BY HER WRITINGS,  
OF THOSE SEEKING TO LIVE MORE  
GRACIOUSLY – BY HER ELOQUENCE,  
INSPIRED YOUTH TO NOBLER  
ACHIEVEMENTS - BY HER VIGOR OF  
MIND AND FORCE OF CHARACTER,  
CHAMPIONED A DISADVANTAGED  
RACE IN ITS STRIVING FOR HUMAN  
RIGHTS AND ADULT RESPONSIBILITIES.  
SHE GAVE 58 YEARS COMPLETELY OF  
HER UNIQUE ENERGIES AND TALENTS  
TO THE BUILDING OF THIS INSTITUTE  
FROM ITS HUMBLEST OF BEGINNINGS  
IN AN OLD BLACKSMITH SHOP. HER  
VISION, DEDICATION, SINGLENESS  
OF PURPOSE, AND UNDAUNTED FAITH  
MADE THIS SCHOOL POSSIBLE IN HER  
NATIVE STATE – NORTH CAROLINA.  
MAY HER MEMORY IN TURN LEND  
INSPIRATION ALWAYS TO THIS PLACE  
AND ITS PEOPLE.

## The Story of Palmer Memorial Institute

*The history of Palmer Memorial Institute intertwines with Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown's own story. Through her dedication and perseverance, Palmer was founded and became a nationally-recognized school for African American youth. The school was the focus of her life, a testimonial to "what one young black woman could do."*

In 1901, Charlotte Hawkins, only 18 years old, accepted a job teaching at a school for African Americans run by the religious American Missionary Association (AMA) in a rural community near McLeansville outside of Greensboro, NC. She was able to make many improvements at the school, struggling against the tradition of inadequate public education at that time. The school closed at the end of term in the spring of 1902 because the AMA decided to put more money into its colleges and training schools. Inspired by the community's pleas to keep the school open, Hawkins returned to New England in the summer of 1902 to raise money by singing at beach resorts and speaking at churches. Mrs. Alice Freeman Palmer, mentor of Charlotte, introduced her to several wealthy individuals who donated to the school.

Helped by local African Americans and Northern white friends, Hawkins re-opened the rural school in 1902 in a converted blacksmith's shop. The roof leaked, and there was not much money for books and food. Mrs. Palmer died in December 1902, and Hawkins named the school the Alice Freeman Palmer Memorial Institute in her honor. Hawkins traveled north to raise funds each summer. Soon, the first classroom building was started, and, in 1905, the first three students graduated. Helen Kimball, of Brookline, Massachusetts, gave land for a school farm to grow food and teach farming. Before long there were four new wooden buildings, all but one of which students helped to construct. Many of the Northern white donors at this time heavily supported the domestic and industrial training curriculum of PMI. They also encouraged Hawkins to continue to teach basic manners and religion and to maintain strict discipline. By 1916, the school taught traditional academic subjects as well as industrial and farm training and had produced 55 graduates.\*

After 15 years, Charlotte Hawkins Brown had a large number of supporters, many from Guilford County as well as those from New England. One of these, Galen Stone of Boston, became the largest contributor to the school over the next 10 years. In 1917, fire destroyed two wooden buildings at the school. Citizens in Greensboro and New England began raising funds to rebuild as classes continued. The Sedalia Singers, talented PMI students, gave a sold-out performance in Greensboro to raise money. Donations fell short of the amount needed, but Mr. Stone gave sufficient funds to meet that shortfall and provided more money for school operating funds. Students helped with the new building by making bricks and sawing lumber, and in April 1922, the Alice Freeman Palmer Building was dedicated. A few days later, fire destroyed Memorial Hall, one of the school's first wooden buildings.

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\* "Nearly a third were teachers, and two were public school principals. One in seven was a housekeeper. Others were engaged in industrial work, farming, and skilled trades. Several went on to study theology and medicine. Palmer's graduates reflected well on the growing institution. Brown announced with pride that not a single graduate had ever been 'arrested or accused of misdemeanor' and that all were gainfully employed. Nearly a decade later, by which time the roster of graduates would reach 100, most of the women were elementary teachers or housekeepers, and farming was the predominate male occupation. Girls always outnumbered boys at Palmer, and as late as 1921, nearly all the students were from rural areas. Over half were from Guilford County, and three-fourths were from Guilford and four adjacent counties. One-fourth were from fourteen other North Carolina counties. Seven students were from South Carolina and Virginia. Forty-two of 259 students were in the high school in 1921." [From *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute: What One Young African American Woman Could Do*, page 84.]

Despite the loss, Brown expanded PMI. There was growing emphasis on academics. Enrollment in elementary and high school averaged 250 students a year, about half boarded and most were still from nearby counties in North Carolina. All students worked at jobs on campus and on the school farm, keeping costs down for all. Deserving students who could not afford to pay tuition and board could work on the campus in exchange, and many scholarships were offered through Brown's fundraising. The high school was accredited in 1922, a time when even few white schools achieved such a rating.\*

Many supporters of the school, including Mr. Stone, felt PMI should become part of a larger organization in order to expand and maintain financial stability. In the 1920s, at Dr. Brown's request, the AMA offered to help PMI if the school first raised \$300,000 for new buildings. With the support of many of her New England friends, Charlotte Hawkins Brown met the goal and the AMA took over operation of PMI. In 1927, construction began on two buildings on campus, Kimball Hall (dining hall) and Galen Stone Hall (girls dorm), both honoring two of Brown's most generous supporters. Mr. Stone died in 1926 before the girls' dorm was completed, but his wife and son remained dedicated to PMI for many years following his death. Canary Cottage, Dr. Brown's campus home was also constructed in 1927. In the next decade, other new buildings were constructed including Charles W. Eliot Hall (boys dorm), a gymnasium, and two small houses for married faculty.

Becoming an AMA school meant Brown no longer had to spend a great deal of her time raising funds. In 1928, she vacationed in Europe and studied at Wellesley; both experiences led her to strengthen the academic curriculum at PMI. Brown started a junior college on the campus, emphasizing fine arts and physical education.

In 1934, AMA aid ended. The campus had been much improved, but PMI was on its own once more. Brown again built support and income for the school. The Sedalia Singers toured cities in the Northeast, giving concerts to raise money including giving a performance at the White House for President and Mrs. Roosevelt in 1933.

The school's academic and fine arts reputation grew nationwide under an interracial Board of Trustees. Brown began to focus on developing PMI into a preparatory boarding school, and through her efforts, a public school for local African American elementary and high school students opened in 1937. The Junior College closed in 1940. Although enrollment at PMI was by this time chiefly those whose families could pay tuition and help with expenses, scholarship awards continued and students still worked on campus to keep operating costs down. Each year, PMI had a long waiting list of applicants. Students came to Palmer from across the US and from the Caribbean and Africa.

Dr. Brown had already raised almost \$1.5 million during her 45 years as president to make PMI one of the finest schools in the nation, and in 1947, she and the Board of Trustees planned an endowment fund-raising campaign to ensure the long-term financial stability of the school. In the spring of 1950, the girls' dorm burned while the students were on a trip to Greensboro. As in the past, Dr. Brown immediately raised money to rebuild, and the dorm was ready when school opened in the fall. Her health was weakening, however. She resigned as president in 1952 and chose Miss Wilhemina Crosson of Boston to replace her.

Miss Crosson kept Palmer operating in much the same manner as Dr. Brown but also started new programs. PMI aided children with learning problems, and a summer program began for poor students who wanted to go to college. A new, larger boys' dorm was constructed

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\* With the lengthening of the school year and the addition of a science lab in the new Alice Freeman Palmer Building, Palmer's high school became the first accredited rural high school, black or white, in Guilford County. The high school also offered courses through Grade 12; at that time, only to Grade 11 was required.

as well as a science classroom building. Miss Crosson, however, was not the fundraiser that Dr. Brown had been and did not have her personal contacts from whom Dr. Brown had relied on for money in years past. By the mid-1950s, students were no longer working on the school farm and doing chores around campus, so tuition costs began to increase. Where in 1929, yearly tuition and board totaled around \$250; by the late 40s, it had barely doubled; but in just half that time, tuition was almost \$1000; in another 10 years, it was over \$1500.

After Miss Crosson retired in 1966, PMI began to experience money problems due to rising costs, decreased enrollment and little fundraising. An inexperienced president served from 1966 to 1970, but was unable to turn around Palmer's fortunes.\* In February 1971, fire destroyed the Alice Freeman Palmer Building. The AFP Building contained nearly all the classroom space, the offices, the auditorium and chapel, and the library. PMI leaders decided not to open in the fall of 1971, and subsequently decided to close Palmer and sell the property.

In 1987, through the efforts of former students and Sedalia neighbors, the campus of PMI became a State Historic Site in honor of Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown.

### **Suggested Activities:**

A summary of the history of Dr. Brown and PMI is provided as a handout to students. "Fact find" activity sheets for the handout and for a field trip are also provided for reading and listening comprehension. Some terms and words may be unfamiliar to students; encourage the use of the dictionary and context clues to determine meaning. For example, many students may not know what a "college preparatory" school does and this is not a term often found in a dictionary. Context clues may help define these words. **(Contact Museum for keys.)**

Use the provided inscription on Dr. Brown's gravestone as a handout for students. Discuss what actions in her life and qualities of her personality contributed to this epitaph.

Ask students to imagine being 19 years old, far from home, and starting a school.

Ask students to identify two or three important facts about Dr. Brown and about Palmer Memorial Institute in order to establish their historical significance.

Use the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum website, [www.chbrownmuseum.nchistoricsites.org](http://www.chbrownmuseum.nchistoricsites.org), for photographs of the school, Dr. Brown and other faculty through the years.

### **Other Resources:**

*Charlotte Hawkins Brown-One Woman's Dream* by Diane Silcox-Jarrett; Bandit Books, Winston-Salem, 1995. [Written for young people in a narrative style]

*North Carolina Women Making History* by Margaret Supplee Smith and Emily Herring Wilson; University of North Carolina Press; Chapel Hill, 1999.

*Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute: What One Young African American Woman Could Do* by Charles W. Wadlington and Richard F. Knapp; University of North Carolina Press; Chapel Hill, 1999.

*Sedalia and the Palmer Memorial Institute* by Tracey Burns-Vann and André D. Vann; Black America Series, Arcadia Publishing; Charleston, SC, 2004.

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\* When school opened in the fall of 1970, Charles Bundrige, a long-time faculty member, was named acting president. Mr. Bundrige, trained under Brown and Crosson, carried on in their tradition but before any permanent financial solution could be found, the Alice Freeman Palmer Building burned. Students were able to complete the school year using all available space on campus, and graduation was held in June.

# Charlotte Hawkins Brown & Palmer Memorial Institute

*The history of Palmer Memorial Institute intertwines with Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown's own story. Through her dedication and perseverance, Palmer was founded and became a nationally-recognized school for African American youth. The school was the focus of her life, a testimonial to "what one young black woman could do."*

Lottie Hawkins was born in 1883 in Henderson, N.C. In 1888 her family moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts. Lottie was a leader in her church and went to the Cambridge English High School, where she changed her name to Charlotte Eugenia Hawkins upon graduating. In 1900, Charlotte met Alice Freeman Palmer, president of famous Wellesley College. Soon Charlotte entered college to train as a teacher at the State Normal School of Salem, Massachusetts. Mrs. Palmer paid her expenses.

In 1901, Miss Hawkins, only 18 years old, accepted a job teaching at a school for African-Americans run by the religious American Missionary Association (AMA) in a rural community near McLeansville outside of Greensboro, NC. She was able to make many improvements at the school, struggling against the tradition of inadequate public education at that time. The school closed at the end of term in the spring of 1902 because the AMA decided to put more money into its colleges and training schools. Inspired by the community's pleas to keep the school open, Hawkins returned to New England that summer to raise money by singing at beach resorts and speaking at churches. Mrs. Palmer introduced her to several wealthy individuals who donated to the school.

Helped by local African Americans and Northern white friends, Hawkins re-opened the rural school in October 1902 in a converted blacksmith's shop. The roof leaked, and there was not much money for books and food. Mrs. Palmer died in December 1902, and the next year, Hawkins named the school the Alice Freeman Palmer Memorial Institute in her honor. Hawkins traveled north to raise funds each summer. Soon, the first classroom building was started and the first three students graduated. Helen Kimball, of Brookline, Massachusetts, gave land for a school farm to grow food and teach farming. Before long there were four new wooden buildings, all but one of which students helped to construct. Many of the Northern white donors at this time heavily supported the domestic and industrial training curriculum of PMI. They also encouraged Hawkins to continue to teach basic manners and religion and to maintain strict



discipline. By 1916, the school taught traditional academic subjects as well as industrial and farm training and had produced 55 graduates.

Hawkins was briefly married to Edward Brown, a teacher studying at Harvard. During these early years, she also founded the NC Federation of Negro Women's Clubs and joined the NC Negro Teachers Association, two organizations in which she would continue to play a leading role for decades.

After 15 years, Charlotte Hawkins Brown had a large number of supporters, many from Guilford County as well as those from New England. One of these, Galen Stone of Boston, became largest contributor to the school over the next 10 years. In 1917, fire destroyed two wooden buildings at the school. Citizens in Greensboro and New England began raising funds to rebuild as classes continued. The Sedalia Singers, talented PMI students, gave a sold-out performance in Greensboro to raise money. Donations fell short of the amount needed, but Mr. Stone gave sufficient funds to meet that shortfall and provided more money for school operating funds. Students helped with the new building by making bricks and sawing lumber, and in April 1922, the Alice Freeman Palmer Building was dedicated. A few days later, fire destroyed Memorial Hall, one of the school's first wooden buildings.

Despite the loss, Brown expanded PMI. There was growing emphasis on academics. Enrollment in grades 1 through 12 averaged 250 students a year, about half boarded and most were still from nearby counties in North Carolina. The high school was accredited in 1922, a time when even few white schools achieved such a rating. Many supporters of the school, including Mr. Stone, felt PMI should become part of a larger organization in order to expand and continue. In the 1920s, at Dr. Brown's request, the AMA offered to help PMI if the school first raised \$300,000 for new buildings. With the support of many of her New England friends, Charlotte Hawkins Brown met the goal and the AMA took over operation of PMI. In 1927, construction began on two new buildings on campus, Kimball Hall (dining hall) and Galen Stone Hall (girls dorm), both honoring two of Brown's most generous supporters. Mr. Stone died in 1926 before the building was completed, but his wife and son remained dedicated to PMI for many years following his death.

Becoming an AMA school meant Brown no longer had to spend a great deal of her time raising funds. In 1928, she vacationed in Europe and studied at Wellesley; both experiences led her to strengthen the academic emphasis of PMI. Brown started a junior college on the campus, emphasizing fine arts and physical education.

In 1934, AMA aid ended. The campus had been improved, but PMI was on its own once more. Brown again built support and income for the school. The Sedalia Singers toured cities in the Northeast, giving concerts to raise money. The school's academic and fine arts reputation grew nationwide under an interracial Board of Trustees. Brown began to focus on developing a preparatory school. Through her efforts, a public school for local African American elementary and high school students opened in 1937. The Junior College closed in 1940. Although enrollment at PMI was by this time chiefly those whose families could pay tuition and help with expenses, scholarship awards continued and students still worked on campus to keep operating costs down. Each year, PMI had a long waiting list of applicants. Students came to Palmer from across the US and from the Caribbean and Africa.

By 1947, Brown had been running Palmer for 45 years, during which time she raised almost \$1.5 million to make it one of the finest schools in the nation. Students were taught to be “educationally efficient, culturally secure, and religiously sincere” and nearly every graduate went on to college. Brown herself had become a popular speaker and civic leader, speaking on national radio in 1940 and at the International Congress of Women in Paris in 1945. She received three honorary doctorate degrees and wrote a book of etiquette, *The Correct Thing To Do, To Say, To Wear*.

Although the school was strong, Brown's health was weakening. She resigned as president of PMI in 1952. She chose Miss Wilhemina Crosson of Boston to replace her. She died in 1961 and is buried near the Alice Freeman Palmer Building. Miss Crosson kept many things the same but started new programs. PMI aided children with learning problems. A summer program began for poor students who wanted to go to college.

After Crosson retired in 1966, PMI had money problems. In February 1971, fire destroyed the Alice Freeman Palmer Building, and PMI leaders decided not to open in the fall. Today the school is a state historic site - the first North Carolina state historic site honoring a woman and an African American.

## Fact Find

*Read the handout about the history of Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute. Use the information to find answers to the questions below.*

1. Name two New England supporters of PMI in its early years.
2. Who was the second president of Palmer Memorial Institute?
3. Mrs. Alice Freeman Palmer was president of what college?
4. What was the title of Dr. Brown's book of etiquette?
5. Dr. Brown retired in what year? How many years had she been at Palmer?
6. What building was the girls' dormitory?
7. The Alice Freeman Palmer Building was built in what year? In what year did it burn?
8. What group gave a concert in Greensboro and toured cities in the Northeast to raise money for PMI?
9. By 1916, Palmer had graduated how many students?
10. Palmer Memorial Institute is located in the town of Sedalia. What other towns are near this rural community where Miss Hawkins first came to teach?
11. PMI students helped construct three of the first wooden buildings on campus. With what other campus building did the students help?
12. Dr. Brown was a member of two important North Carolina organizations. Which two?
13. Miss Crosson was from what city and state?
14. What college did Miss Hawkins attend before coming to North Carolina to teach?
15. Which state was Lottie Hawkins born in?
16. In the 1920s, PMI taught what grades?
17. What was the name of one of the school's first wooden buildings? What year did it burn?
18. The school for African Americans at which Miss Hawkins first taught in 1901 was held at Bethany Church in Sedalia. What organization ran that school?
19. What year did Miss Hawkins name her school the Alice Freeman Palmer Memorial Institute? Why?
20. The national radio show on which Dr. Brown appeared was called "Wings Over Jordan." In what year did she appear?

## Field Trip Fact Find

*While touring the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum campus, find the answers to the following questions. Answers may be found in the Walking Tour Brochure or on the wayside panels if you are touring on your own or may be answered by a Museum staff member if you are taking a guided tour.*

1. What is the name of the church where Charlotte Hawkins first taught school in 1901?
2. Charles W. Eliot Hall, the old boys' dorm, is named for the president of which university?
3. Name a building that Palmer teachers lived in.
4. How do you think Canary Cottage got its name?
5. What shape is the top of the Meditation Altar?
6. What are the dates of birth and death shown on Dr. Brown's gravestone?
7. How old was Dr. Brown when she died?
8. What were some of the activities that took place in the Alice Freeman Palmer Building?
9. Mrs. Alice Freeman Palmer had been president of what college?
10. In front of which building did each class have its graduation photograph taken, standing in the "Triangle of Achievement"?
11. Girls and boys entered the Alice Freeman Palmer Building and the dining hall from different sides of the building. On which side did the girls enter and on which side did the boys enter?
12. What year was Galen Stone Hall built?
13. Massachusetts Congregational Cottage was the dorm for which class of girls?
14. Name some sports played at Palmer?
15. What building housed a business run by Palmer students?

## Student Life at Palmer Memorial Institute

The tour of the grounds at the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum focuses on the daily life of students at Palmer Memorial Institute. Visiting students can see where Palmer students slept, ate, had recess, etc. Wayside exhibit panels placed along the walkways show photographs of Palmer students engaged in activities at the various buildings. The tour guide or the walking tour brochure (if the group is self-guided) will give more detailed information.

The following pages outline many aspects of a student's life, from applying to the school to joining clubs and working on campus. Included are several original documents or excerpts from original publications that can be springboards or reference materials for classroom activities.

### **Suggested activities:**

Many students may not have any experience or reference points to understand the concept of a "boarding school." Students can discuss or write about what it might feel like to be away from parents, home, friends, etc. Would they be homesick? What would it be like to be away from home for the first time? What things would they miss? How would they handle having roommates and making new friends? And, after visiting the campus and learning about Dr. Brown and student life, what would they like the most? or dislike?

Students can write a narrative [4<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Test] about a typical day or activity. What might be their favorite part of the day or day of the week? their favorite club or activity?

An argumentative response [problem/solution or evaluative essay, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Test] or an informational response [definition, cause/effect or problem/solution, 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Test] could be written on any number of subjects drawn from the original documents, the handouts, or the tour. One prompt can ask students to imagine being a seasoned Palmer student and assisting a first-year student to feel at home.

The school's motto - symbolized by the "Triangle of Achievement" - was "Academically Efficient, Culturally Secure, Religiously Sincere." Although typical of other high schools and private schools, Palmer's activities and coursework were designed to contribute to this ideal. Upper grade students can write about how the various aspects of student life contributed to the Triangle. Find photographs of PMI graduating classes posing in the Triangle of Achievement on the website or at the Museum.

Using the various original documents provided, students can make their own Palmer bulletin or Student Handbook. [8<sup>th</sup> grade Technology activity-desktop publishing]

After learning about the various aspects of student life at PMI, pupils can create multimedia projects using photographs from the Museum website or other sources. They can focus on their favorite aspect of student life. Or they can create a presentation (with today's technology) that serves the same purpose as the old Palmer promotional brochures (yesterday's technology). [4<sup>th</sup> Grade Technology activity-multimedia projects]

### **Other Resources:**

*The Correct Thing To Do, To Say, To Wear* by Charlotte Hawkins Brown; reprinted by the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Historical Foundation, Inc., 2003.

*Sedalia and the Palmer Memorial Institute* by Tracey Burns-Vann and André D. Vann; Black America Series, Arcadia Publishing; Charleston, SC, 2004.

# Applying to Palmer Memorial Institute

## *The Bulletin*

From as early as 1917, a promotional brochure was published about Palmer Memorial Institute in order to attract students. This bulletin, or academic catalog, contained all the basic information about the school including costs and fees, the school calendar, curriculum and student activities, as well as photographs of the buildings, teachers and student groups. The bulletin also outlined the goals of the school and what was expected of each student. Often, the bulletin also contained the application form; students returned this form with a deposit for a room to be considered for acceptance.

Excerpts from a typical bulletin (1959) and an application (1950s) follow. An acceptance letter (1966) is also included.

## *Interviews*

Interviews by the President, faculty members or Palmer alumni were a usual part of the application process, but a student's teachers, principal or minister would also be contacted. If a satisfactory report was given about a student by these individuals, he or she would be considered for admission. In 1966, a post card was sent to one young lady's parents:

*Dear Mr. & Mrs. Smith,*  
*Miss Wilhelmina M. Crosson, president of Palmer Memorial Institute, will be in New York on the evening of June 29<sup>th</sup> at the Manhattan Hotel to interview students with their parents.*  
*We hope you will be able to see her at this time.*  
*Yours truly,*  
*(Miss) Ruth Harmon*

## **Suggested Activities:**

Using photos off the website, students may make their own promotional brochure using the excerpt provided. Can they make one for their own school?

Fill in the application form. Students can discuss whom they would ask to recommend them to Palmer. Which persons do they know who would likely be interviewed and what would those persons say about the student?

Read the acceptance letter. Write a letter to a student who did not get accepted.

On the student handout, the section "When and How to Apply" includes the address of the school with the telephone number of the school also listed: "Gibsonville – 2501." This will look to students like it should be a ZIP code that has been mis-typed. Questions about this will provide opportunities to talk about a telephone system that wasn't wireless and relied on operators, about the advent of the ZIP code by the US Postal Service in 1963, and reasons why these conveniences became necessary and commonplace in the last few decades while they were not in 1961 when this document was printed. See the US Postal Service website on the ZIP code, [www.usps.com/history/his1.htm](http://www.usps.com/history/his1.htm).

# THE PALMER MEMORIAL INSTITUTE

## SEDALIA, NORTH CAROLINA

### General Information

Palmer Memorial Institute offers to our youth an unusual opportunity for cultural and religious training along with academic proficiency. The students are divided into small circle groups with a teacher as leader; each individual student thus receives personal training in behavioral development.

The institution seeks to have students maintain high academic standards on the Junior and Senior High School level and gives such training as will enable the graduates to enter any higher institution of learning in the United States. It also offers cultural training in drama, music and art, along with wholesome outdoor activities. It is a school of high Christian ideals, caring for the needs of “teen age” youth. Its motto is “Educationally efficient, culturally secure and religiously sincere.”

### Location and Equipment

Among dogwood and Judas trees, on three hundred and fifty acres of rolling hills of North Carolina, in the fifty family town of Sedalia, nestles Palmer Memorial Institute. Its buildings are well-situated, remote from crowded neighborhoods, with good drainage and excellent water. There are two large dormitories, Galen Stone Hall for girls and Eliot Hall for boys; the Alice Freeman Palmer Building, which house the administrative offices, library and classrooms; a recreation building, the Tea House; Kimball Hall, the dining room; the Bright Gymnasium; the Massachusetts Congregational Cottage, the Home Economics practice cottage. Other buildings are for farm, residential or service purposes. Ten miles west of the campus is historic Greensboro, and five miles east is the quaint town of Gibsonville.

### Concerning Admission

**Selective Admission to Palmer** – The institution has a large number of applicants. In selecting an applicant, the Committee of Admissions investigates previous records and the type of family from which the applicant comes and tries to make up its student body with those who are interested in achieving the school’s goals. Recommendations from school principals, headmasters, teachers and people of standing in the community, concerning the applicant’s qualifications are given careful consideration by the Committee of Admissions. **NO INCORRIGIBLES NEED APPLY.**

**Examinations** – The Committee of Admissions expects every applicant to take a general aptitude or intelligence test. A battery of tests is given to every entering student regardless of classification.

**Interviews** – An interview is not required for admission but is helpful. It is hoped that a majority of applicants will have an opportunity to have an interview with the President, Administrative Dean, Advisor to Girls, Dean of Boys, or a Palmer Representative in the major city areas. Applicants from North Carolina are urged to visit the school.

### When and How to Apply

If you have decided upon Palmer as the private school you wish to attend, request an application blank from the Director of Admissions. If, after reading the bulletin, you have any questions about the school, write or telephone the Director of Admissions, Palmer Memorial Institute, Sedalia, North Carolina, Gibsonville – 2501.

In order to ensure the most favorable consideration, you should submit your application for admission at least by May 1<sup>st</sup> of the year in which you wish to enter. Applications received later will be considered as long as placing in the entering classes remain open.





# THE PALMER MEMORIAL INSTITUTE

INCORPORATED  
IN MEMORY OF ALICE FREEMAN PALMER  
DR. CHARLOTTE HAWKINS BROWN, FOUNDER

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDENT

SEDALIA, NORTH CAROLINA  
(10 MILES EAST OF GREENSBORO)

August 8, 1966

M \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

We are happy to inform you that the Committee on Admissions has voted to accept you for matriculation at Palmer Memorial Institute for the school year 1966-67.

Palmer Memorial Institute places great emphasis upon character, personal appearance and scholarship, and we hope you will realize that the way you study and the way you behave will be a determining factor in your continued success in this college preparatory school.

We will expect one or both parents to accompany you to Palmer on our opening day in order that you might have an interview with the key persons on our staff.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Palmer campus.

Approved:

Very sincerely yours,

PALMER MEMORIAL INSTITUTE

(Miss) Wilhelmina M. Crosson  
President

(Miss) Ruth Harmon, Registrar  
Committee on Admissions

# Curriculum

Required courses in the curriculum did not change much over the years at Palmer. The classes offered, however, did reflect the changing needs of the students and the goals of the school. Palmer's initial focus was to serve the rural community: bulletins and promotional catalogs stated, *"Educating a boy or girl in one of these schools and sending him back home ready to live educates a community"* (c. 1916-17 pamphlet). As Palmer developed into a college preparatory high school, more emphasis was placed on higher academics and cultural training.

The 1917-18 bulletin outlined a curriculum which reflected the needs of the students attending during those years. Four-year high school courses of study were offered for a "Teachers' Course," a "Domestic Science Course" [homemaking], a "Domestic Art Course" [sewing], "Manual Training & Carpentry," and "Agriculture." Required classes each year were English (composition, rhetoric, grammar and literature), General History, Mathematics (including Plane and Solid Geometry and Algebra), Science (natural and physical), and Latin (including one year of study of Cicero's *Orations*). Students in the Teachers' Course were also expected to participate in classes of the other courses and take five classes in Pedagogy. Eight years of graded courses were also offered beginning with the first grade for younger students. In these early years, music lessons were listed separately and were an added expense.

By 1935, classes at PMI were much like any standard high school of the day. The school offered two tracks of courses: the "classical" (college preparatory) track and the "scientific" (vocational) track. Students studied the Bible for at least one hour each week and attended church every Sunday. Music lessons were again listed as separate from the general curriculum and required extra fees. The high school curriculum in classical studies was:

## FRESHMAN

English: Literature  
Mathematics: Arithmetic, Algebra  
Science: General Science  
Civics: Civics  
Language: Latin

## JUNIOR

English: Literature  
Mathematics: Plane Geometry  
Language: Advanced Latin or French  
History: Ancient and Medieval  
Science: Chemistry

## SOPHOMORE

English: English Literature  
Mathematics: Advanced Algebra  
Language: Latin or French  
History: World History  
Science: Biology

## SENIOR

English: Literature  
Language: French or Latin  
History: United States  
Geography: Commercial  
Science: Physics

The courses for the scientific track were the same except for available vocational classes, which offered training for students not planning to attend college.

## FRESHMAN

English: Literature  
Mathematics: Arithmetic, Algebra  
Science: General Science  
Civics: Civics  
Language: Latin or French  
Vocations: Agriculture, Home Economics,  
Industrial Arts

## JUNIOR

English: Literature  
Mathematics: Plane Geometry  
Language: Advanced Latin or French  
History: Ancient and Medieval  
Science: Chemistry  
Vocations: Agriculture, Home Economics,  
Industrial Arts

### SOPHOMORE

English: English Literature  
Mathematics: Advanced Algebra  
Language: Latin or French  
History: World History  
Science: Biology  
Vocations: Agriculture, Home Economics,  
Industrial Arts

### SENIOR

English: Literature and Life Book IV  
Language: French or Latin  
History: United States  
Science: Physics  
Vocations: Agriculture, Home Economics,  
Industrial Arts

Music was always an important component in student life, though it was not always a required course. Dr. Brown was a fervent believer in “the appreciation of the finer things in life” – music and art being two of those finer things. Some of the earliest PMI photographs show students gathered around a Victrola, listening to classical music. Students who were interested in music were encouraged and taught by talented faculty members, and the Junior College specialized in fine arts training. Students were exposed to music of all kinds through off-campus concerts and on-campus performances by touring musicians.

Included as a student handout is the suggested academic course load for a student in 1959. The required courses in 1959 were all college preparatory classes, and each student took six courses. Spanish was not offered for foreign language study until the 1950s. More advanced math and science courses were also added in the 1960s. Stouffer Hall was built in 1966 to accommodate these specialized science courses; it had multiple, modern lab stations for Chemistry and a greenhouse for Biology.

#### **Suggested Activities:**

Many students may not have any experience or reference points to understand the concept of a “prep school” or “college preparatory” curriculum. Students can discuss or write about the differences in their own courses with the ones taught at Palmer. They can also consider what it means to prepare for college while in high school. Why would taking certain subjects better prepare a student for college than other subjects?

Use the 1935 curriculum provided in the teacher materials and the 1959 curriculum (provided as a student handout) to discuss how the focus of the school changed over the years. Why would there be a greater need for vocational training for students in 1935 than in 1959? Visit the website [www.waywelivednc.com](http://www.waywelivednc.com) to see how various populations earned a living during this time period.

From information provided in the teacher materials, discuss how the 1917 and 1935 curricula served the needs of the students attending in the 1910s, 20s and 30s.

How did the curriculum of the 1950s and 60s differ from that of the earlier years, and what were the needs of the students in those years? How did the 1959 curriculum reflect PMI’s change to a “prep school”?

Students can discuss what they like best and least about each curriculum. What electives would they choose and why?

# Curriculum

*The required courses in 1959 were all college preparatory classes, and each student took six courses. Students had several courses they were required to take in a year. Other subjects were ones they chose; these are called electives. Each student chose their courses according to the suggestions and requirements below.*

## FRESHMAN

English I: Language and Literature  
Mathematics I: Basic Math  
or Elementary Algebra  
Foreign Language: Latin, French  
Physical Education and Health  
Home Economics  
Electives, one or two:  
Social Studies I: Civics  
Science I: General Science  
Foreign Language: Latin or French  
Other electives: Ballet, Art, Ceramics,  
Typing, Music

## JUNIOR

English III: Language and Literature  
Social Studies: U. S. History  
Electives, two:  
Science III: Chemistry  
Mathematics: Geometry  
Home Economics III  
Physical Education and Health  
Foreign Language: Latin, French  
Other electives: Ballet, Art, Ceramics, Typing,  
Music

## SOPHOMORE

English II: Language and Literature  
Science II: Biology  
Electives, two:  
Mathematics II: Algebra, Basic Math  
Social Studies II: Ancient History  
Home Economics II  
Physical Education and Health  
Foreign Language: Latin, French  
Other electives: Ballet, Art, Ceramics, Typing,  
Music

## SENIOR

English IV: Language and Literature  
Electives, three:  
Social Studies: Problem of Democracy  
Science IV: Physics  
Mathematics: Geometry, Advanced  
Math, Algebra II  
Foreign Language: Latin, French  
Physical Education and Health  
Home Economics IV  
Other electives: Ballet, Art, Ceramics, Typing,  
Music

## The PMI Bell Schedule & Duty Work

A day in the life of a student at PMI did not change very much over the years. Palmer students were expected to abide by the bells and be on time or face punishment. Students late to the dining hall would not be seated and would miss that meal and the next. In earlier years when more work had to be done by students on the school farm, students arose earlier to take care of chores.

Work for the good of the school was always required of students in some form. In the early years, student work was a necessity for the functioning of the school and the school farm. It offered a way to lower the cost of running the school, provided a way to defray tuition and board for poorer students, and provided hands to work on the school farm -- which in turn provided food for the school and cash crops. In 1917, students performed two hours per day of duty work; if a student was already receiving a break in fees by working on campus, they still had to do the required two hours per day. By 1935 and through the 1940s, one hour of work per day was required; the 1940 bulletin stated, "*No student need apply who is not willing to cooperate with the authorities in making the school a medium of greater appreciation of labor of the hands.*" In later years, less daily work was required, but students were assigned weekend chores around the dorms, on the grounds and on the farm.

Throughout the years, students always took turns waiting on their fellow students in the dining hall. Meals were served "family style," and boy and girl waiters attended the tables during meals. (Girls were allowed to be waiters in the 1960s, until then only boys were waiters.) A Head Waiter was chosen from among the senior boys to serve the head table (faculty and special guests) and to supervise the other waiters. Waiters also assisted the dining hall staff.

### **Suggested Activities:**

Using the bell schedule (typical for the 1940s, 50s & 60s) and the curriculum and extracurricular activities information, students can map out a typical day at Palmer and include the classes and activities in which they would want to participate.

Students can compare a Palmer student's day to their own day, comparing times of days certain activities take place and the amount of time given over to class, study and leisure. Looking at the bell schedule, when did Palmer students have free time? Note that the daily bell schedule is not specific; after class on Friday afternoons was not as structured as other weekdays and often, hours designated for leisure was when students participated in organized extracurricular activities or did duty work.

Discuss working "for the benefit of the school." What tasks can student think of that they might do today as duty work for their school? Duty work was completed during students' limited free time on school days and during work periods on weekends.

Ask students to think about waiting on each other during mealtimes and about the differences between this style of dining and a cafeteria line. At Palmer, table manners were strictly observed. How do these differences compare with their usual mealtimes?

When visiting the museum, trace the footsteps of a student through the day using the bell schedule. Remember that a Palmer student had to enter all buildings from his or her side of campus (from the direction of his or her dormitory) and remain on the pathways at all times.

# The PMI Bell Schedule

## *School days*

Rising Bell.....	6:30
Housekeeping Duties .....	6:45
Warning Bell .....	7:10
Morning Prayer (voluntary) .....	7:20
Breakfast Bell.....	7:25
Singing of Grace.....	7:30
Breakfast.....	7:35
Getting Ready for School .....	7:50
Teachers' Bell and Students' Warning Bell.....	8:05
School Bell—Report to Library or Home Room.....	8:10
Late Bell (outside) .....	8:20
Bell (to march into chapel) .....	8:25
Chapel .....	8:30
First Period.....	9:00
Second Period.....	10:00
Recess.....	11:00
Third Period.....	11:15
Home Room .....	12:15
Rest Period.....	12:20
Lunch and Tea House Recess .....	12:25
Fourth Period .....	1:00
Fifth Period.....	2:00
Sixth Period.....	3:00
Tea House Hour and Recreation .....	4:00
Dinner Bell (warning).....	5:40
Dinner Bell.....	5:55
Grace.....	6:00
Dinner.....	6:05
Leisure (optional—program to be announced) .....	6:45
Study Hour Warning Bell.....	7:10
Study Hour Begins .....	7:25
Study Hour Bell (end).....	9:30
Lights Out .....	10:00

A.M.

*All students must be at their places.*

P.M.

*All students must be at their places.*

*The 1940-1941 Student Handbook contained the weekend bell schedule:*

*Saturdays*

Rising Bell.....	6:30	A.M.
Warning Bell .....	7:10	
Breakfast Bell.....	7:30	
Work Bell (warning).....	8:50	
End of Work.....	12:00	Noon
Dinner Bell (warning) .....	1:10	P.M.
Dinner.....	1:30	
Supper Bell (warning) .....	5:25	
Supper.....	5:45	

*Sunday*

Rising Bell.....	7:00	A.M.
Breakfast Bell (warning) .....	7:40	
Breakfast.....	8:00	
Sunday School .....	10:00	
Church .....	11:00	
Dinner Bell (warning) .....	1:10	P.M.
Dinner.....	1:30	
Supper Bell (warning) .....	5:25	
Supper.....	5:45	
Study Hour Bell.....	7:30	
Study Hour Bell (end).....	9:30	
Lights Out .....	10:00	

## Extracurricular Activities & School Events

PMI offered many extracurricular activities and clubs to keep students busy outside of their classroom work. Rehearsals and club meetings took place on specified evenings during the week and on weekends. A student council and other student government organizations provided an opportunity for leadership in the student body and in the residence halls. Speech, debate and drama clubs were also popular along with producing the school newspaper and yearbook. Several clubs organized special programs for the other students, while the musical clubs performed at school functions. Many activities that students helped organize or participate in were integral parts of the school calendar. Alice Freeman Palmer Day was celebrated annually on her birthday (February 21) with a pageant and banquet and was considered one of the school's few "holidays." Special concerts and programs and a Baccalaureate service were held in the weeks prior to graduation in celebration of that event.

Physical education (PE) played an important, daily part of student life. There was always some type of PE taught at PMI, though, through the years the make-up of the activities changed. In 1938 the sports organizations included intramural basketball, baseball, volleyball, tennis, quoits and track for boys; girls participated in basketball, tennis, indoor baseball and formal calisthenics. Hikes supplemented organized sports. The Annual Field Day pitted the classes against each other in track events. Palmer did play organized games against other African American schools in nearby towns and usually fared well. Students on the school teams were required to have good grades.

Religion was a major aspect of a student's life. In their application to attend PMI, students had to list their denomination, and in the 1950s and 60s, students were taken one Sunday a month to the church of their preference. All students attended Sunday School in the chapel and church at Bethany Church across the street from PMI on Sundays. There were YMCA and YWCA clubs on campus, and short vesper services were held at the close of every evening meal. On Wednesdays, students planned and conducted the vesper service.

Getting together with faculty and other students for parties, or "socials" was an exciting part of Palmer student life. School-wide socials were held on a monthly basis, and dormitories often held weekly get-togethers on Wednesday evenings. There were various dances held in the gym throughout the year including one for Valentine's Day and a Junior-Senior Prom. End-of-year parties were held for graduation, including a party given by the teachers for the senior class. Dr. Brown hosted some of the most important social occasions at Canary Cottage, her campus home. To kick-off the school year, students and faculty would gather on the lawn of Canary Cottage for a large reception, and throughout the year, Dr. Brown would invite groups of students to her home for afternoon tea parties.

Off-campus activities such as trips to Greensboro and Gibsonville for movies or shopping and visits to the general store across the street from the school were scheduled, chaperoned and considered a privilege. Times to visit the school's canteen, the Tea House, were also regulated and required students to be in good standing with their grades, their work and their teachers.

The student handout lists some of the many activities offered to Palmer students and some of the special events held during the school year. The descriptions are from yearbooks, bulletins and student handbooks in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. Also included as student handouts are the 1944 Alice Freeman Palmer Day program and the 1947 Junior High School graduation program. The names given are those of Palmer students; during most programs at PMI, students performed, recited or spoke. If students were behind in their work or misbehaved, the privilege of participating in many of these activities was revoked.

**Suggested Activities:** Students can discuss or write about which club or team they would like to join and why. Which activities would they most enjoy? Would they have liked the assembly programs?

Students can use *The Correct Thing To Do, To Say To Wear* to plan and give a social, tea or reception for their own class, for another class, or for their parents. .



## Extracurricular Activities & School Events

*Below are listed some of the many activities offered to Palmer students and special events held during the school year.*

**Student Council** The Student Council is made up of a group of eleven students elected by the students. The purpose of the organization is to promote a mutual understanding between the students and the administration in the matter of student governance and student welfare.

**Stone Hall Council** The Stone Hall Council was formed to bring about better fellowship among the girls. It consists of representatives from each class whose main purpose is to aid the director in solving problems which arrive in the dormitory.

**Eliot Hall Council** The purpose of this council is to become acquainted with the problems of the boys in the dormitory. This group of young men is selected from four classes. The President works earnestly with the director and the Dean of Boys. The Council stands ready to aid the boys by helping them become an integral part of the dormitory.

**Glee Clubs** Membership in the glee clubs for boys and girls is voluntary. Rehearsals are held twice weekly. Those who are interested in music, but are unable to join the Sedalia Singers, will find the association pleasant and profitable.

**The Sedalia Singers** Membership in this organization comes as a result of try-outs. This group represents the best in musical ability which the school affords. The Sedalia Singers organization is subdivided into trios, quartettes, quintets and octets for both girls and boys. The Male Quartette travels extensively on behalf of the school, and the entire organization will present a program at Town Hall, New York.

**Orchestra** The orchestra is composed of members of the faculty and student body. Their repertoire consists of classical and popular music, so that their services are used for programs, religious services, or campus socials.

**The Grace L. Deering Literary Society** In keeping with cultural atmosphere of this Institution, this society presents to the entire student body various forms of cultural material. The Music Department, the Physical Education Department, and the Art Department all contribute programs to make them enjoyable as well as educational.

**The Junior Town Meeting League** The Junior Town Meeting League encourages students to discuss current affairs. This league consists of students of all classes. Here the students are able to discuss a topic which is presented by a panel of two or three students and tends to provide a medium through which public speaking can be exercised.

**“Le Cercle Francais”** “*Le Cercle Francais*” is comprised of those students in French maintaining a certain scholastic standing. The main purpose is to acquaint the students with the civilization, customs, and language of the French people.

**Get Acquainted Party** Held on the first Friday of the school year. All students look forward to this affair at the beginning of school.

**Talent Night** This is held during the first week of school. Only new students participate in this program.

**Formal Opening** Girls don white dresses and boys, blue suits, to participate in this service which marks the formal opening of the school year. Held annually in October.

**Birthday Dinner** Held monthly to celebrate all students' birthdays occurring during that month. A special menu is served, a special table for the "honorees," an individual lighted cake, a program, and fun make this a very happy evening.

**Halloween Party** This is a gala event given by the Freshmen.

**Thanksgiving Day Services** All classes are represented on this program of worship and praise given on Thanksgiving Day. Reminiscent of home is the dinner that follows in the afternoon.

**Christmas Candlelight** The main participants are the Sedalia Singers with the Sub-Freshmen and Freshmen girls, but the whole school takes part.

**Valentine Party** The Sophomores sponsor this event where the "King and Queen of Hearts" are crowned.

**Declamations** These are competitive by classes with three finalists chosen at the end of the year. What oratory!

**Annual Field Day** Held the first Saturday in May.

**May Day** A Senior girl is May Day Queen with attendants chosen from each class. The Sub-Freshmen wind the May Pole.

**PALMER MEMORIAL INSTITUTE**  
Presents  
**THE ALICE FREEMAN PALMER DAY PROGRAM**

Prelude .....	<i>Ave Maria</i> Bach Gounod.....	Orlo Bright
What Alice Freeman Palmer Day Means.....		Joan Washington
Prayer* .....		David Weaver
Response .....		Mixed Octette
	<i>Lead Kindly Light</i> .....	Mixed Octette
Selections from Poems written by Alice Freeman Palmer		
	<i>The Butterfly</i> .....	Earnestine Aughtry
	<i>The Crisis</i> .....	Julian Allen
	<i>The Present Heaven</i> .....	Barbara Robeson
	<i>A Communion Hymn</i> .....	Henry Michaux
Scripture Reading* .....		Durward Nabors
	<i>Come, Ye Blessed</i> Scott .....	Mixed Octette
Excerpts from ALICE FREEMAN PALMER by George Herbert Palmer		
	Her Childhood.....	LaVerne Speight
	Her Girlhood .....	Evelyn Francis
	As a College Student.....	Elaine McEachin
	As a School Teacher .....	Jean Cox
	As a Wellesley Teacher .....	Frances Maize
	As President of Wellesley.....	Rayonette Rivera
	Her Married Life .....	Jean Warrick
	The Sabbatical Years .....	Virginia Colvin
	Her Life in Cambridge.....	Lelia Hunt
	Her Last Year.....	Viola Smith
	<i>Crossing the Bar</i> Barnby.....	Mixed Octette
<i>The Tempest</i> Alice Freeman Palmer .....		Viola Smith and Ensemble
	<i>Goin' Home</i> Dvorak .....	Mixed Octette
Benediction .....		Dr. John Brice

Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown, President

\* Taken from service in memory of Alice Freeman Palmer held at Harvard University, January 31, 1903.

**PALMER MEMORIAL INSTITUTE**  
Presents  
**THE GRADUATION EXERCISES**  
of  
**THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**  
Wednesday Evening, May 28, 1947  
Seven o'clock

CLASS OFFICERS

Betty Jean Mack ..... President  
Edna Avis Banks ..... Vice-President  
Patricia Mayme Flowers ..... Secretary  
Ralph Benjamin Barry ..... Assistant Secretary  
Robert Lee Barnhill ..... Treasurer  
Helen Irene Plater ..... Chmn., Program Committee

CLASS COLORS

Red ... White

CLASS MOTTO

If you've any task to do  
Let me whisper, friend, to you,  
Do it.

PROGRAM

Song ..... "Welcome Sweet Springtime"  
Poem ..... "*About Ben Adhem*"  
Piano Solo ..... "The Juggler"  
Marsellette Baker  
Valedictory Address ..... Helen Plater  
Song ..... "Lovely Night"  
Group  
Poem ..... "*My Native Land*"  
Harold Hutton  
Piano Duet ..... "The Waltz Song"  
Harriette Branche - Sara Long  
Poem ..... "*Ship of State*"  
Ralph Berry  
Song ..... "The Lost Chord"  
Group

**Awarding Certificates and Prizes**

Song ..... "At Prayer Time"  
Mercedes Mitchell, Soloist  
Benediction ..... Avis Banks  
School Song ..... "Tell Me Why"  
Audience

## Rules for School

Dr. Brown's expectations and standards of student behavior gradually became codified. She began including certain instructions as to general behavior, table manners and dress in the student handbooks. In 1940, she published an etiquette book for young people. Although available for sale to the general public, *The Correct Thing To Do, To Say, To Wear* became a Palmer student's textbook, issued to each student as any textbook would be. Dr. Brown expected students to learn the "social graces" outlined in the book and to abide by those rules constantly. Good manners, once they were second nature through constant practice, would result in a confident, poised Palmer graduate.

*The Correct Thing* is modeled on popular etiquette books of the day, but it focuses more on activities and issues more likely to be encountered by young people than other publications such as Emily Post's *Etiquette*. One of the chapters naturally deals with school and how a student should conduct himself or herself while attending school. The chapter "At School" from *The Correct Thing* is available at the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum's website, [www.chbrownmuseum.nchistoricsites.org](http://www.chbrownmuseum.nchistoricsites.org) or a reprint of the entire 1948 edition of the book is available at the Museum.

### **Suggested Activities:**

Students may enjoy reading aloud the rules for school. Explaining or talking about them might make for interesting discussion.

Ask students to discuss or write about which rules they follow everyday in their classroom or school? Which rules are new?

What does the statement "Don't be a carpenter without tools" mean?

What does the statement "Don't mistake the classroom for a lunchroom or a bedroom" mean?

Pairs of students can demonstrate poor behavior and correct behavior in role-playing activities.

## Dress

From the very beginning of the school, personal appearance was an important part of the cultural training of a student. Dr. Brown early on defined a dress code that did not change much over time: tasteful, practical and modest, in both appearance and cost. Girls were advised in 1917 that silks or velvets or lace dresses were strictly forbidden and told to bring two, large gingham aprons for work. Although the need for aprons declined, students were reminded in 1955 to be “suitably dressed at all times.” Dr. Brown’s book, *The Correct Thing To Do, To Say, To Wear*, contained several chapters outlining tasteful appearance: Dress For Girls, Grooming, and Suggestions As To Dress For Men And Boys. Girls wore skirts to class; boys usually wore dress shirts, ties and jackets. Casual dress was allowed but with similar restrictions: good taste, appropriate for the circumstances, neat and clean. Students were required to change clothes for dinner each evening: dresses for girls, coats and ties for boys. High-heeled shoes and make-up for girls gradually became accepted for formal school events, but girls were strictly advised in the student handbooks what was considered appropriate and what was not. For many years, only senior girls had the privilege of wearing moderate high-heels and lipstick.

The annual bulletin or other correspondence from the school informed students about what clothes items made up the school uniform. Through the 1930s, girls wore the middy-type [sailor collar] blouse-either blue or white-and tie with a navy blue skirt. Boys were required to have a dark suit, white shirt and dark tie. When middies went out of style, it was replaced by a white dress shirt and tie. By the 1960s, a maroon blazer with the school crest on the breast pocket had been adopted for all students with a navy blue skirt and tie for girls, gray or black pants and a maroon or black tie for boys. Certain school days and events were designated for students to wear the school uniform, and they were usually required to wear the school uniform when off campus or on a field trip.

### Suggested Activities:

Use the website [www.chbrownmuseum.nchistoricsites.org](http://www.chbrownmuseum.nchistoricsites.org) or publications about the school to find photographs of the students through the years. Use the student handout provided for written guidelines. Students can describe the changes and similarities that they find in the students’ dress. Have students research unfamiliar terms such as middies, rubbers, sneakers, and oxfords.

Students can discuss or write about having a dress code or uniform. Has your school adopted a uniform or dress code? How does it compare to Palmer’s? Ask students to consider why a dress code might be important or desirable?

Read the chapters mentioned from *The Correct Thing*. Do those guidelines still apply today? What do students think about these guidelines? Have students research unfamiliar terms such as stockings, stocking seams, foundation garments, cutaway and dinner coats, and men’s pumps.

Using old magazines and catalogs or books on period fashions, copy and cut out pictures of clothing that would have been considered appropriate or inappropriate for a student during those years. Students may have fun researching some of the outmoded styles such as men’s stiff collars, ladies’ hairstyles, handkerchiefs, and the wearing of hats and gloves by both men and women. Students can discuss reasons why styles change and why things considered proper in years past are not worn today.

Two good websites to explore on clothing: the Kent State University Museum <http://dept.kent.edu/museum/> or the Shippensburg University Archives [www.ship.edu/%7fashionarch/](http://www.ship.edu/%7fashionarch/) for photographs and information on 20<sup>th</sup> Century clothing.

## Dress

*The list of necessities students needed to bring from home changed over the years as school activities and fashions changed.  
For the 1935-36 school year:*

### WHAT TO BRING

2 Quilts	4 Sheets	1 Pair rubbers
or	4 Pillow slips	1 Raincoat
2 Blankets	4 Towels	1 Umbrella
2 Bed Spreads	1 Laundry Bag	

### DRESS REGULATIONS

#### *Dress*

- 1 White Dress
- 1 Blue Wool Skirt
- 1 Black Middy Tie
- 2 White Middies
- 2 Large Colored Aprons

#### *Underwear*

- 1 Regulation Black Sateen Bloomer  
(for gym above 5<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Rubber Cap for Shower Bath

#### *Shoes*

- 1 Pair Black Shoes
  - 1 Pair Bedroom Slippers
  - 1 Pair Tennis Shoes (for gym)
- #### BOYS
- 1 Navy Blue Suit or Black (for dress occasions)
  - 1 White Shirt (for dress occasions)
  - 2 Pairs Overalls
  - 1 Pair Black Shoes
  - 2 Work Shirts

The above articles are special requirements, but students may bring anything else that can be worn at home in keeping with good taste to be generally worn here.

All girls must wear medium shoes for school.

*In a late 1950s Student Handbook, these were the guidelines:*

#### Boys School Attire

On Monday and Wednesday, dress shirts and ties are worn during the school hours. On Friday, a white dress shirt is worn. On Tuesday and Thursday, conservative sports shirts can be worn inside of trousers. If a dress shirt is worn on a Tuesday or Thursday, then a tie must be worn. Ties are not to be removed until the student returns to the dorm and changes.

Under no circumstances are fads to be allowed such as dark glasses worn indoors, trousers hiked up, sneakers worn to school or suspenders worn without a coat, etc.

#### Girls School Attire

Girls are not to wear the following to school: heavy make-up, eye shadow and mascara, extreme hair styles, tight, short clothing, dangling earrings, jangling bracelets, bells on shoes, cut-out shoes, and excessive crinolines.

Girls must wear socks or stockings at all times.

Girls must wear oxfords during school hours.

Students must change clothes before going to dinner each day. Boys must wear coats and ties.

The school uniform must be worn on Fridays.

GIRLS: white blouse, blue skirt, blue tie (tied), black shoes, blue or black belt

BOYS: blue suit, white shirt, dark tie, black shoes

## Cost

Palmer was a private school. Fees for tuition, boarding and student activities were not always collected from students, however; Dr. Brown raised monies for the operation of the school because, particularly in the earliest years, students or their parents might not have cash to pay. Guilford County gave the school money until 1937, because Palmer served as the public school for African Americans in that area. When trying to raise money for PMI in 1928, Dr. Brown told prospective donors:

*\$10.00 will pay for a student's desk.*

*\$10.00 will buy an outfit for one student taking manual training, cooking or sewing.*

*\$12.50 will support the school for one hour.*

*\$20.00 will pay for a teacher's desk.*

*\$50.00 will give some deserving student an academic scholarship*

*\$150.00, a sustaining scholarship.*

*\$125.00 will support the whole school for one day.*

As the school developed into a boarding and prep school, fees became necessary. Dr. Brown still raised money to keep costs low for all students and provide scholarships for deserving students, but the burden of funding Palmer increasingly fell on the student fees and tuition. In 1929, yearly tuition and board totaled around \$250; by the late 40s, it had barely doubled; but in just half that time, tuition was almost \$1000; in another 10 years, it was over \$1500. In the last school year, it cost almost \$2000 to attend Palmer, not counting expenses for travel, clothing and school supplies.

A schedule of fees is included as a student handout. Drawn from school bulletins, it outlines expenses over several specific years.

### **Suggested Activities:**

Teachers may need to explain some terms to students or have students research unfamiliar terms like “room,” “board,” “breakage,” and “tuition.”

The schedule of fees provides a chance to do math problems. Have students figure total costs for each year. Compare fees for the same activities over the years. Note that a school year was nine months long by the 1920s. **(Contact Museum for key to student handout.)**

After learning more about the history of Palmer and changes in the curriculum, students can discuss or write about why some fees were necessary at some times and were no longer charged at others; for example, no tuition charged until the 1930s, or the girls not paying a laundry fee in 1917. From the handout alone, students should be able to make inferences about the changes the focus of the school and in student life through the years.

Use the Internet, library or other sources to research how much everyday items cost in the years mentioned; or, with how much an average person earned at that time. Compare those costs to the cost of attending Palmer. For example, in 1965, a new Ford Mustang cost about \$2,500; according to the fee schedule, it cost \$1,025 to attend Palmer. Visit the US Census Bureau's amazing website, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). Information about the 1930 US Census is now posted as well as teaching tools.

Students can make a list of the things they might need to bring to Palmer from home including sheets, uniform clothes, school supplies. Using the same sources for prices as noted above, figure out expenses for a specific year and compare them to present day. Are some things cheaper now? See [www.salemstate.edu](http://www.salemstate.edu) (look under 150 Anniversary) for excellent comparisons of prices and earnings.



## Cost

*Students and their families paid for the student to attend Palmer. How much they paid changed over the years.*

<b><u>1917</u></b> (six-month school year)		<b><u>1929</u></b>	
Room Fee	\$ 2.50	Registration	\$5.00
Incidental Fee	1.50	Board & room (per month)	13.50
Concert Fee	1.50	Concert Fee	2.50
Laundry for boys per month (girls do their own laundry)	.75	Laboratory Fee	5.00
Board (per month)	7.00	Cooking, sewing or shop	5.00
Music (per month)	2.00	Athletic Fee	2.50
Use of instruments (per month)	.25	Music (per month) (includes use of instrument)	2.50
		Art (per year)	25.00
<b><u>1935</u></b>		<b><u>1955</u></b>	
Registration Fee	\$ 2.50	Registration	\$10.00
Room Fee	2.50	Room fee	25.00
Board, Room, & Laundry (per month)	16.50	Board (9 months)	405.00
Laboratory Fees	5.00	Laboratory fees	8.00
Concert Fee	2.50	Concert fee	5.00
Athletic Fee	2.00	Athletic fee	5.00
Breakage Fee	1.00	Breakage fee	1.00
Medical Fee	2.50	Health supervision fee	10.00
Library Fee	2.00	Library fee	5.00
Tuition (for one semester)	17.50	Tuition (one semester)	200.00
Music (optional) Voice Culture, one year	36.00		
Pianoforte, one year	36.00		
General Music, per month	2.50		
<b><u>1964</u></b>			
Registration Fee	\$ 10.00		
Room Fee	25.00		
Board, Room, & Laundry (per month)	75.00		
Laboratory Fee	8.00		
Concert Fee	5.00		
Athletic Fee	5.00		
Breakage Fee	2.00		
Health Supervision	10.00		
Library Fee	5.00		
Tuition (one semester)	230.00		
Deposit for Books & Incidentals	50.00		