

AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTION

A Means of Establishing Better Racial
Relations in Southern Communities

E. H. Shinn



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Extension Service.....C.W. WARBURTON *Director*

Office of Cooperative Extension Work.....C.B. SMITH *Chief*

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E. H. Shinn,
Agriculturist in charge,
Division of Agricultural Instruction,
Office of Cooperative Extension Work

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INTRODUCTION

The solution of the southern racial question may be found in the soil.

The white man and the colored man can live together better when they work together better. When white men and colored men work together to improve economic and educational conditions the results will mean better racial conditions.

I approach the discussion of this important subject with a feeling that my judgment may be influenced by my interest in agricultural education. I have faith in the permanent value of agricultural instruction on rural life improvement for both white and negro peoples, and the ultimate influence it will have in establishing better racial relations in Southern States.

I was born and reared on a farm in the South, where I was privileged to enjoy many of the numerous advantages as well as to share some of the disadvantages relative to education common to rural life in one of the Southern States.

More attention has been given to negro education in the South in recent years than ever before. The funds available from public and private sources have encouraged negro leaders in their educational programs. The negro race is more interested in education. The progressive white people of the South are realizing that the greatest development can be attained when greater encouragement is offered to remove the large percentage of illiteracy now existing. The welfare of all demands that the campaign to eliminate illiteracy and inefficiency be carried on with each race bearing its relative share of responsibility. The chief responsibility of race adjustment in the South rests with the black and white peoples in that section. Their efforts should be supplemented, wherever possible, by further financial and moral assistance from outside sources.

Closer Cooperation Needed

To train a negro to be of greater use to himself is to train him for community usefulness as well as for national citizenship. The education of two distinct races so they may properly adjust themselves to the social and economic conditions in a democracy involves more than the instruction ordinarily offered in our schools and colleges. The active enlistment of all agencies, both in the schools and out, working for educational, economic, and social improvement is necessary to establish racial relations on a satisfactory basis. No greater problem facing the Nation to-day offers such a supreme challenge to our democratic

institutions as that of making a wise social adjustment of the hopes and aspirations of the negro and the ideals, traditions, and standards of the white population of the Southern States. To meet these situations successfully, wise counseling, patience, sympathy, and encouragement from the ablest leaders of both races are essential. Those familiar with Southern conditions recognize that racial relations are improving. Negro and white peoples are understanding each other better. Each race is giving more consideration to problems of mutual benefit. White people are manifesting greater interest in the welfare and general improvement of the negroes. Leading southerners of both races are cooperating and counseling with a view to establishing better educational, economic, and social relations.

Agricultural Instruction a Valuable Asset

Agricultural instruction has made worth-while contributions in establishing better racial relations in the South and will continue to do so if wisely administered. It is in reality training for specific vocations. Leading white and colored peoples are convinced that agricultural instruction helps farmers earn a better living for themselves and their families. Statistics show that about 57 per cent of the negro race and about 45 per cent of the white race in the South are engaged in agricultural pursuits. It is very evident that agricultural instruction offers many opportunities for adjusting racial relations through a variety of contacts necessary in carrying out the programs of work.

Effective Agricultural Agencies

The effectiveness of agricultural instruction in improving economic and social conditions will be determined by the efficiency of the agencies that assume responsibility for the programs of work. There are at present three agencies that are responsible for agricultural instruction among negroes. They are (1) negro agricultural colleges, (2) the Smith-Hughes schools, and (3) the Extension Service. It is very important that these organizations work harmoniously and in close cooperation if the best results are to be attained. Each organization should also maintain high standards of efficiency for its particular kind of work.

Each of the Southern States has an agricultural college for the preparation of leadership in agriculture, home economics, and the trades for negro youth. In addition there are the valuable services rendered by both Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes. The work of negro land-grant institutions in the past has not been of so high a standard as one would like to see. The weakness of these institutions has been due mainly to the lack of proper financial support. They have also been handicapped from the lack of a sufficient number of potential leaders trained in scientific agriculture. Under these conditions it has been difficult for the vocational departments to carry on their work effectively. In most instances, the negro land-grant institutions have not been able to maintain standard four-year college courses. Only a few years ago some of these institutions were nothing more than high schools; others were of the junior-college type, while a limited number could probably be classified as senior

colleges. It is gratifying to know that during the past decade conditions have been improving.

Negro Land-Grant Colleges Improve

In recent years interest in higher standards for negro land-grant colleges has been stimulated through conferences on negro education. The United States Commissioner of Education called a conference on negro education in Atlanta, Ga. in 1920, which was attended by a large number of leaders of both races in the South. The purpose of this conference was to stimulate interest and to encourage greater support for high technical and vocational education, and to endeavor to bring about a higher degree of southern consciousness with reference to the importance and value of agricultural instruction in the economic and social betterment of the negro race. This movement was carried forward when Dr. J. J. Tigert, the present Commissioner of Education, called a conference to meet at Nashville, Tenn., February, 1922. The conference was attended by presidents of both white and negro land-grant colleges in the South, State superintendents of education, members of the Federal Board for Vocational Education, the United States Bureau of Education, the United States Department of Agriculture, and various southern leaders, who worked together and made recommendations regarding the fundamental needs of those institutions. The different committees, composed of members of both races, worked on definite problems, such as standard curricula, standards of equipment, teaching standards, and finances for negro institutions of different rank. As a result of these recommendations, the curricula of the negro land-grant colleges have been gradually improving. The leaders of the colleges have seen new visions and now realize more than ever the importance of standardization and the need for a definite program for training agricultural and trades leaders as well as leaders in other fields. The negro land-grant colleges, together with Tuskegee and Hampton Institutes, have broad fields to serve in training leadership for all phases of negro life.

Need for Greater Efficiency

The efficiency of an agricultural teacher depends upon two things: (1) Training in subject-matter content and (2) training in methods of teaching subject matter. The requirements of the vocational education act relative to training agricultural teachers for secondary schools have aided considerably in raising the standards of these colleges. The establishment of vocational departments in negro public schools has greatly encouraged many negro students to study agriculture in the college course with the aim of becoming teachers of agriculture. Prior to this, graduates in agriculture did not feel that they had equal opportunities with other graduates in procuring desirable positions. Since the enactment of this law the demand for teachers of agriculture in high schools and colleges has been so great that the qualified teachers have encountered no difficulty in procuring desirable positions. When this movement began some of the negro land-grant colleges were offering little more than elementary agriculture and sometimes high-school courses in agriculture with a small percentage of the students taking the courses. Since the vocational

teachers must have training in technical agriculture, as well as related science courses and methods courses, all of these institutions are now offering some college courses in agriculture, some two years, and others four years of college work.

The vocational education act, providing for cooperation between the Federal Government and the several States in the promotion of vocational education in agriculture, home economics, and trades and industries in the high schools, was another important event in the advance of public education in the United States. Provisions are made for the following funds relating to agricultural instruction: (1) for salaries of teachers, supervisors, and directors of agricultural subjects; (2) for training of teachers. The aim of vocational education in agriculture is to prepare persons of less than college grade, who have entered upon or who are preparing to enter upon the work of the farm, for proficiency in specific farming occupations.

The census of 1920 showed that there were 1,541,381 negroes, 10 years of age and over, engaged in agricultural pursuits. The census further showed that only 23.6 per cent of negro farmers were landowners, whereas 76.2 per cent were tenants, and .2 per cent managers. There were 60 per cent of white farmers who owned land and 38.9 per cent who were renters, and .7 managers. If the vocational schools adhere to their program of training for proficiency in agricultural pursuits, the results should show a gradual increase in the percentage of negro farm owners, which in itself would indicate increased efficiency, a relative increase in the number of managers, and a corresponding decrease in the number of tenants.

Home ownership is one of the surest and safest indications of good citizenship. When the family owns its home, the members are more likely to interest themselves and devote their efforts to the improvement and development of the community. Booker T. Washington, Robert R. Moton, and other able negro leaders have constantly urged negro farmers to acquire some land, even though a small acreage, and establish their own homes.

Vocational Education in Agriculture

Since the passage of the vocational education bill in 1917, agricultural instruction in negro schools has made rapid progress in spite of the fact that the land-grant colleges were poorly equipped for training teachers in these subjects. The negroes have shown their appreciation of the services rendered by the Federal and State Governments to help establish vocational agricultural courses within reach of negro youth who desire to prepare for farming occupations. Only a few negro teachers were adequately prepared to teach vocational agriculture when this work was established. These and the less trained teachers showed interest in better preparation and immediately began to prepare for greater service by increasing their knowledge in both professional and technical subjects. The results of this attitude on the part of negro teachers with the sympathy and intelligent guidance of white and colored leaders have been gratifying to all those interested in the general improvement of negro life in the Southern States.

The number of Federally aided all-day negro agricultural schools in the South has increased from 39 in 1917-18 to 254 in 1924-25. The enrollment in these schools has increased from a total of 1,025 to a total of 6,374 for the same period. The census of 1920 showed that there were in the Southern States about 146,000 negro farm boys between the ages of 14 and 20 attending school. With only 6,374 negro farm boys being reached by the vocational department, only a fraction over 4 per cent are coming under the influence of agricultural instruction in these schools.

Evening schools organized to give special instruction to adult farmers are being conducted among negroes. Bulletin III, "Vocational Education in Agriculture for Negroes," issued by the Federal Board for Vocational Education, reports that in 1923-24 there were 99 classes in such schools, with an enrollment of 2,388 persons. Part-time instruction has been developed to some extent among negro boys who have dropped out of school but who are still of school age.

The supervised farm practice conducted on a basis of economic production has had considerable influence in stimulating greater interest in vocational agricultural instruction, not only among the negro boys of school age but among the older people of the communities. White people in the communities where these schools are conducted have been amazed at the interest this work has stimulated in other school subjects and the large financial returns received by certain boys in their supervised practice work.

Those responsible for vocational education in agriculture are indebted to private agencies for the remarkable services rendered to the negro schools of the South. The large sums of money contributed by these agencies have stimulated both colored and white peoples to contribute more liberally to negro education. Obviously they have aided much in creating a common interest and better relation between the two races. The various county training schools are doing a commendable work in preparing teachers for greater service. The State agents for rural schools are rendering a much needed service for negro education. The financial assistance given by Julius Rosenwald of Sears, Roebuck & Co., Chicago, Ill., in the construction of standard school buildings for negro children has resulted in the raising of sufficient funds to erect 2,371 buildings distributed in the different Southern States. All these agencies are worthy of mention in this discussion as their agents have worked in close cooperation with the State and Federal authorities in the program of agricultural instruction carried on in the public schools, colleges, and through the extension service. This cooperation with school authorities and local boards of education has been a means of bringing about a better understanding between the two races.

Extension Education in Agriculture

Extension education in agriculture began in the South as early as 1904. The first negro agent was appointed in 1905, to work in cooperation

with Tuskegee Institute, Alabama. Soon afterward another negro agent was appointed to work in cooperation with Hampton Institute, Virginia. These men are the representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture and work in cooperation with the State colleges of agriculture. This work developed gradually with the appointment of other agents to work within each State.

These special agents maintain contact with negro extension leaders, negro colleges, and organizations within the States in developing negro extension work. They assist negro State supervisory agents in planning programs of work, making reports, establishing contact, and so forth. These field agents in their travels study different methods of extension teaching in different sections and carry this information to other sections where it is most needed.

The number of negro extension agents has increased each year. In 1908 the number of agents was seven. When the Smith-Lever Act became effective in 1914, about 100 negro men and women were doing extension work in 11 Southern States. In 1923 the number had increased to 294, distributed throughout the 16 Southern States. In addition to the work of these negro agents considerable extension work is done among negroes by the various white extension agents in this section. This form of cooperation is exerting considerable influence in problems of racial adjustment. James A. Evans, assistant chief, office of Cooperative Extension Work, United States Department of Agriculture, says, "The work of negro extension agents is of special significance and promises to be a possible means for the solution of some of the economic and other problems arising through the presence of negroes in such large numbers on southern farms."

How Negro Extension Work is Carried On

Much of the extension work is done through demonstrations. They are simple and directed to the solution of important local problems. The aim is to carry this information to negro farmers and their families and to instruct them in better farm and home practices, to increase their earning power, and to improve their home and living conditions. Another aim is to instruct negro boys and girls in these activities. During 1926 there were approximately 22,000 negro boys enrolled in club work.

Extension work has been an effective means of improving farm and home conditions among thousands of negro families in the Southern States. This work, as defined in the Smith-Lever Act, provides for instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture and home economics to persons not attending or resident in colleges in the several communities, and imparting to each person information on agricultural subjects through field demonstrations, publications, conferences, and otherwise.

The aim of extension education in agriculture and in home economics is to improve conditions on the farm and in the home by improving farm

and home practices. In order to carry on this work effectively the agents solicit the aid of local leaders who have succeeded in their own work, who are willing to serve, and who have the ability to instruct rural people in problems of the farm and the home.

Extension work also encourages negroes to organize community organizations, to deal with problems of local interest, and to stimulate better social conditions in the various rural communities. These community organizations have been influential in developing interest in local social clubs among boys and girls as well as among adults. These community clubs create interest in local county and State fairs where contests are held and premiums offered for skillful production of farm crops and animals. These community organizations are assisting in conducting fairs, campaigns and tours, and other community activities. Such agencies have enlisted the interest of local white people, who aid in raising funds for premiums and take pride in observing the exhibits and displays of agriculture and home products produced by negro people.

There is no doubt that the extension work conducted by efficient negro agents has had considerable influence in checking the movement of negro farmers to the cities. The agents make no special campaign to hold negroes on the farm but endeavor to convince them of the great opportunity for a profitable and contented life in the open country where modern methods and practices are adopted on the farm and in the home. The unrest among negro farmers in certain localities in the Southern States has been less in States having negro agents. In a brief message it is impossible to relate the far-reaching effect that extension education in agriculture is having upon the improvement of negro life in these States. Through the various meetings, such as those for training local leaders, demonstration meetings, extension schools and short courses, and junior club encampments, many thousands of negro men, women, and children are being reached each year by the extension service.

Movable Schools Aid Negroes

Another form of remarkably effective extension education is the so-called movable school conducted under the supervision of Tuskegee Institute by a group of men and women specialists in the rural sections of Alabama. This group aims direct at the heart of local rural problems by going into the communities, making certain demonstrations, holding group meetings, talks, and distributing publications. The plan of these schools is to seek the cooperation of both races in advance through their local leaders. They are arranged to meet the convenience of the people of the community with reference to farm work. Care is taken to avoid covering too much territory, as this would make it inconvenient for farmers and their families to attend. The extension teachers carry with them simple equipment to make demonstrations on the farm or about the home. Such equipment includes paint, whitewash brushes, farm implements, milk testers, and such other equipment as may be useful in the demonstration of needs of the farm and home. Leading white farmers in certain sections have given their

whole-hearted support to help promote this kind of instruction on the farm and within the home. The results of the movable school are widely known in southern communities. Their influence in establishing better racial relations is well recognized.

Greater Knowledge of Farm and Home Management Needed

One of the outstanding needs in negro rural life to-day is improvement in the economic side of the farm and the home. The negro farmer, as well as the white farmer, needs to know more about the principles of managing his farm business. He needs to know more about the fundamentals of cooperative marketing. The program of agricultural instruction up to the present has placed emphasis upon the productive side of farming to the neglect of the marketing side. Economic production must, of course, be emphasized along with the more effective ways of distributing and marketing agricultural products. The farmers' business has been conducted to a great extent on an individual basis. Other industries are organized not only for group production but for group marketing. Both negro and white farmers must give more attention to the cooperative marketing of their products. Cooperative marketing organizations have developed rapidly in recent years. Of the 6,000,000 farmers in the United States, about 2,000,000 are members of some sort of cooperative-marketing association.

Trained Leaders Essential

The negro land-grant colleges must give more attention to training leaders for service in agricultural economics. Many of such leaders will be Smith-Hughes teachers, extension teachers, and marketing specialists. Such leaders trained in economics can render service to farmers by supplying them with sources of information available at the negro and white agricultural colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture. Economic conditions of southern farming have had considerable influence in negro migration to southern and northern cities. The worth-while negro farmer is no longer content with a mere existence. He wants a living for his family, educational opportunity for his children, social advantages in his community, and the opportunity to live and to enjoy life in its fullest sense. Educational, economic, and social inadequacies drive both white and black farmers from the land.

The leaders of both races with the direct aid of the educational institutions must adjust their programs to meet more fully the needs of farm life. A larger number of prosperous, happy, and contented negro and white people on southern farms will establish better racial relations in the South.

Does Education Pay

A study of economic conditions in any line of business will show that ignorance and poverty go hand in hand. The ignorant people of our country are often those who find difficulty in earning a living. There is a close

relationship between educational training and earning capacity. In a recent survey made by the division of agricultural instruction, Office of Cooperative Extension Work, United States Department of Agriculture, it was clearly shown that the farmer with an education had the greatest earning capacity. A survey made in Georgia in 1925, to determine the effect that agricultural instruction had upon the earning capacity, revealed these results:

Farmers with no schooling earn around	\$240.00 a year
Farmers with common-school education earn around	565.50 a year
Farmers with high-school education earn around	664.00 a year
Farmers with short-course agricultural education earn	895.00 a year
Farmers with agricultural college education earn around	1,254.00 a year

These figures show that the earning capacity of the agricultural college graduate is five times as much as that of the farmer without schooling. Farmers with a high-school education have an earning capacity about three times as great as those without schooling.

The Kansas State Agricultural College made a study of 1,237 farmers and the average labor earnings were indicated as follows:

Education of Farmer		Labor income
Common-school education		\$ 422.
High-school education		545.
College course (partial).		859
Complete college course		1,452.

These figures show that the college graduate earned more than three times as much as the farmer with only a common-school education, and nearly three times as much as the farmer with a high-school education.

An investigation of the incomes of 656 farmers in one county of Missouri, made by the Missouri College of Agriculture showed that the educated farmer's income was 71.4 per cent larger than that of the uneducated farmer.

The Kansas State Agricultural College has made a survey of the incomes of 635 farmers in 7 counties and found that the trained farmer has a larger income by nearly \$1,000 a year than the farmers with a common-school education.

The United States Department of Agriculture reports a survey of three representative areas in Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa. It is shown that tenant farmers with a college education received an average labor income of \$453 more a year than farmers with a high-school education, and \$979 more a year than farmers with only a common-school education.

Cornell University reports that the man with more than a high-school education received \$225 more a year than the man with a high-school education, and \$529 a year more than the man with a common-school education.



It also reports that 5 per cent of the farmers with a district-school education had labor incomes of more than \$1,000; that 20 per cent of the farmers with a high-school education had labor incomes of more than \$1,000; and that 30 per cent of the farmers with more than a high-school education had labor incomes of more than \$1,000.

The Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Nebraska reports a survey of 409 farmers in Nebraska in 1914. The farmers who attended high school increased their labor incomes 32.1 per cent over the farmers with a common-school education, and the farmers who attended college increased their labor incomes 51.8 per cent over the farmers with a common-school education.

Remarkable Industrial Development in South

The industrial development of the South is growing by leaps and bounds. Some recent figures taken from an article entitled "In Manufacturing, Mining, and Agricultural Output the South Now Exceeds the United States of 1900," in the Manufacturers Record of July 7, 1927, show the following increases for the period 1900 to 1926:

The South of To-day Compared with the United States of 1900

	Percentage
Population.....	44.7
Wealth.....	346.4
Manufactured products.....	563.1
Lumber manufacturing.....	184.8
Cotton manufacturing.....	839.8
Farm products.....	234.5
Public-school expenditures.....	941.3

There have also been corresponding increases in other lines of business.

In 1900 the population of the United States was about twice the population of the South to-day, but the total wealth of the country at that time was only 10 per cent larger than the wealth of the South of to-day. The value of the farm products of the South in 1926 exceeded by \$500,000,000 the total for the country in 1900.

Every southern citizen of this country, whether a farmer, a merchant, a banker or manufacturer, should view with pleasure the phenomenal industrial and agricultural development of this section during the past quarter of a century. A most valuable contribution to this rapid development has been made by the colored people of the South.

Outstanding Negro Progress

The educational and economic progress of the negro race presents some amazing figures. The negro yearbook of 1925-26 states that the number of homes owned by negroes in 1866 was 12,000, as compared to 700,000 in 1926.

The number of farms operated in 1866 were 20,000, as compared with 1,000,000 in 1926. Business transactions conducted in 1866 were 2,100, as compared to 70,000 in 1926, and the wealth accumulated in 1866 was \$20,000,000, as compared to \$20,000,000,000 in 1926. In this rapid agricultural and industrial development negroes should avail themselves of the opportunity to prepare for useful employment.

In educational progress, the results have been very encouraging. The number of negro children in public schools has increased from 100,000 in 1866 to 2,150,000 in 1926. The annual expenditure for education was \$700,000 in 1866, as compared to \$3,700,000 in 1926. Illiteracy had decreased from about 90 per cent in 1866 to less than 25 per cent in 1926.

Agricultural instruction as it is conducted in the land-grant colleges, the Smith-Hughes schools, and through the Extension Service has served to establish better racial relations in southern communities. These land-grant colleges are officially connected with the same type of institution for white people. The growth and development of the white land-grant colleges in the South have been reflected to some extent in the improvement of the colored land-grant colleges. The appropriations for both institutions have been on the increase. In recent years more funds have been appropriated for building and equipment for negro colleges. Leading white people have commented favorably on the general improvement in the standards and quality of work in the negro colleges. They are actively supporting programs for improved educational opportunities for the negroes. Many leading white farmers are desirous of seeing the time when a larger number of negro farmers will be less dependent and better able to manage their own business enterprises. Hence, the economic independence of the negro will be a step forward in the improvement of the race in both economic and social stability.

The greatest factor in the improvement of education in any aspect is the teacher. When boys and girls come into contact with a sufficient number of inspiring teachers professionally and technically trained with broad visions, sympathy, and understanding, leadership will be developed to handle the perplexing problems that arise in the educational, economic, and social relations of these races.

National Interest in Agricultural Instruction

The interest manifested in agricultural instruction by the Federal Government during the past sixty-odd years in a series of Federal acts granting aid to the States to assist in this kind of education is ample proof of the faith this Nation holds in rural development. Agricultural instruction holds a place of national importance in our educational system. A sound basis for progress through scientific research and extension education has been developed through a series of Federal acts providing for cooperation between the United States Department of Agriculture and the

State agricultural colleges. This work has been supplemented by the Federal Vocational Education or Smith-Hughes Act.

Both Races Have Faith in Agricultural Education

The leading farmers of both races in the South welcome the emphasis that is being placed upon agricultural education through these acts. They have faith in agricultural education as a means of improving the economic and social relations and are looking to the leaders for the solution of some of the problems vital to this question. Agricultural instruction is not only showing farmers and farm youth how to make a better living, but it is teaching them how to improve living conditions through the schools, roads, health, and farm life. The work of the land-grant colleges in training teachers and other rural leaders is one of the greatest services being rendered to the economic and social improvement of rural life. The service rendered by these agricultural and extension teachers is establishing better racial relations. In all sections these workers are improving the economic conditions of the farm, which is an important factor in the social improvement of the two races.

In formulating the program for the improvement of the intellectual, economic, and social conditions of negro life in the South, the leaders should renew their faith in the ideals and philosophy of life so ably exemplified in the teachings of Booker T. Washington, who believed in the kind of education that trains the hand as well as the mind and the heart. One of his frequent sayings was "We shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify labor and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life." Doctor Washington had faith in the ultimate effect that agricultural instruction would have on the educational, economic, and social well-being of the negro race and the influence it would exert on the improvement of racial relations in southern communities.

Obviously, it is the duty of the Nation to provide educational opportunity for the negro -- education of the character that will develop his native abilities and fit him for the kind of useful service which he can render best. A worthy educational objective for any race is to train young men and women in the principles of integrity and honest self-support, so that they will serve their race and community creditably and finally come to a better understanding of the value of friendly cooperation with all peoples and learn to discipline themselves for worthy citizenship.

Better racial relations will be established in proportion as the negro agricultural institutions provide the necessary leadership for training farmers, home makers, teachers for colleges, secondary schools, and for extension work, who understand the problems and desire to give instruction in agriculture to the millions of negro farm men, women and children residing on farms and in villages in the Southern States. In this undertaking the negro land-grant institutions must have the hearty cooperation of other kinds of negro educational institutions which are engaged in



training leadership. Since we are convinced that we are on the right trail let us give the movement our moral and financial support. Let us call upon the leaders of our Southland to raise the banner of whole-hearted support in a great and beneficent movement.



