

Charles E. Brown, Educator

Charles E. Brown (1889-1976) is remembered for organizing parent support and marshaling resources to realize the dream of a school for African Americans in York County.

In 1914, Dr. Jackson Davis, State Supervisor of Negro Education, brought Brown to York County from Charlotte Court House, Virginia. Brown began teaching in an abandoned storehouse in Lackey. The school soon had 175 students. Brown led community volunteers as they constructed a new two-story, four-room school on land provided by the school board. The old building was used for domestic science and an adjacent building became a manual arts shop.

When the U.S. Government established the Naval Mine Depot in 1918, the school was within the site. Classes were moved to Shiloh Baptist Church until a new school



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could be built. The Rosenwald Fund, established by the president of Sears, Roebuck Co. to help communities establish modern schools, contributed. The balance came from funds received for the old school and local fund-raising efforts.

Brown's work attracted the attention of Dr. Booker T. Washington. The noted educator visited York County and praised the community's work.

When Brown resigned as principal in 1933, he served as a Civilian Conservation Corps educational advisor. From 1942 to 1959, he worked at the Naval Mine Depot. Later, he served as president, treasurer, and board member of the Virginia National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He was president of the York-James City-Williamsburg NAACP as well as many local civic groups. Charles E. Brown died in Lackey at the age of 86 and is buried at Shiloh Baptist Church.

*Courtesy Jackson Davis Collection,
University of Virginia*



Charles E. Brown Park