

Harlem's Carver School Draws Capacity Classrooms

By **RAMONA LOWE.**
 (Defender New York Bureau)

NEW YORK—People in Harlem are enthusiastic about the George Washington Carver school. It's not yet six months old, but almost everybody knows about it and it will probably be filled to capacity when the second term gets under way this week.

It's an unpretentious school situated "one flight up" in a shabby building on 125th street. It stretches out through what must originally have been eight dreary rooms. But they aren't dreary anymore—partly because the eight rooms have pastel tinted walls.

Artists interested in the school got together and decided on a color scheme and painted the walls themselves. Then they hung pictures loaned by young artists like Spinky Alston, pictures that radiate the vitality of the Negro people.

And the rooms aren't dreary partly because a young minister rolled up his sleeves and glued together chairs for the prospective students to sit on, and McCrory's Five and Ten Cent Store up the block donated a grand piano.

Everybody Helps

The students who came soon saw what was meant by the descriptive "A People's Institute" always used in connection with the school. There were 157 the first term from trade unions, fraternal organizations, youth groups and churches. Poor and rich, black and white were welcome and they came. Tuition wasn't much so those who could made donations of money, others volunteered to help around the place. All who came stayed to become a part of the school by functioning in some way.

It was the students' own idea to organize a student council and to invite their friends to the free current events and music forums. They thought Christmas was a good time to give a party, so they gave one.

The school has caught on because of the idea behind it and the students have helped fulfill one of its aims, that of being an educational and social center for the people of Harlem. Its other aims the teachers have been taking care of: that of helping people to think and to take their place in today's world, and of explaining the role of the Negro in this war and of giving a guide to a "post-war world of peace and equality for everyone."

Notables Teach

The teachers, a distinguished lot, who donated their services included such men as Dr. E. Franklin Frazier and Dr. Alain Locke who journeyed up from Washington to conduct their classes. Next term Dr. Channing Tobias joins the staff to coordinate one of the courses that will discuss current problems of the Negro. Irwin Freundlich of Julliard Institute will conduct a course in music appreciation and Mrs. Dorothy Homer, head librarian at 135th Street Library, will coordinate the course on Current Books and Social Problems.

The Negro History Class had the largest enrollment last term. One white member of the class who had



The young Negro artist, Charles White, gives a little help to one of the students in his art class in the newly organized George Washington Carver school.

been a student at Columbia said she came so that she could get a background for explanations on racial equality to give her friends.

But the most popular class was the one called "How to Make a Dress." It will be repeated and an advanced course added. There will also be a class called "How to Make a Hat."

One of the most important classes for the Harlem community was "Your Dollar and How to Spend It." It helped the women with their buying and spending problems.

Art Classes Too

There were two art classes last term. One in life drawing and one in painting, but they hope to have more. They want a real art workshop where students can come and express themselves in all phases of graphic art.

In keeping with the school's aim to help release expression of a high order was the illustrated lecture, "Opportunity for Enjoying Art in New York City," given at the school this week by Walter Pach, the internationally known artist and critic, who only last year was invited by the Mexican government

to lecture at the National University of Mexico on Modern Art.

Miss Gwendolyn Bennett, director of the school, was formerly the director of the very successful Harlem Art Center. She was selected for her present post by the group of school teachers, Y workers, trade unionists, lawyers and ministers who met in the fall to organize the school.

When it opened good wishes came from such people as Rackham Holt, author of "George Washington Carver," Langston Hughes, New York State Assemblyman Hulan Jack, Michael Quill of the Transport Workers Union and Rev. Shelby Rooks, pastor of St. James Presbyterian church and husband of Dorothy Maynor.

The board of directors boasts such people as Henry K. Craft of the YMCA, Benjamin Davis Jr., city councilman; Judge Hubert Delany, Paul Robeson, Rev. A. Clayton Powell Jr., Ferdinand C. Smith, Rev. Charles Y. Trigg and Dr. Max Yergan.