

# TWO HUNDRED WASHINGTON STUDENTS GRADUATE

**Brilliant Audience Witnesses Joint Commencement of Washington High School—Rev. Walter H. Brooks Orator of the Occasion—Assistant Superintendent Bruce Presents Prizes and Tells What His Graduates Intend to Do For a Living.**

**MANY NOTABLE EDUCATORS PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISES.**

**Held in Convention Hall—Washington Schools at High-Water Mark of Prosperity and Efficiency—Management of Mr. Bruce Praised by Davidson, Blair and Oyster—Dr. Brooks Sounds a Lofty Keynote.**

By R. W. Thompson.  
[Special to The Chicago Defender.]  
Washington, D. C., June 27.—A typical Washington audience, numbering not less than 8,000 persons, crowded spacious Convention Hall to the doors last Wednesday evening to witness the joint annual commencement exercises of the high schools of the District of Columbia, comprising the M Street High School, the Armstrong Manual Training School, the Department of Business Practice and the Cardozo Vocational School. The total number of graduates was 229, and banked upon the immense platform, in tiers behind the speakers of the evening and officers of the public schools, they formed a picture that was beautiful and inspiring. The program, though long, was so intensely interesting that the closest attention of the thousands of parents, friends of the graduates and patrons of the schools generally was maintained throughout. The ready wit and effervescent humor of Counsellor Henry P. Blair, president of the Board of Education, who presided over the exercises, went far to make the evening one of rare enjoyment. The Marine Band, under the skillful direction of Lieut. W. H. Santelmann, played as if they were at the White House, and their well chosen selections embraced every type of melody from the classics to "Here Comes My Daddy Now." The enthusiasm reached a high pitch when the famous band struck up the familiar Sousa masterpiece, "The High School Cadets," and the graduates marched into the hall with stately tread and took their places on the platform, with the precision of clockwork.

**Dr. Brooks Sounds a Lofty Keynote.**  
The principal speaker of the evening was Rev. Walter H. Brooks, the eloquent and scholarly pastor of the 19th Street Baptist Church of this city. His address was practical throughout, and he sounded a high keynote for the educational aspirations of the race. He would have the boys and girls of the Negro race acquire every type of training that would fit them for the duties that would come to them in life. He wanted, first of all, the education that made for character, ideals, courage, self-respect, and power of mind; then, he wished for the training that would assure self-support and capacity to lend a hand in solving the material problems that must confront all of us day by day. It was his desire that one system of education should serve as a supplement to another, but that neither should be regarded as a substitute for the broad culture that bred beautiful lives while a living is being made.

Numerous examples were cited to show that intellectual force has been the lever that has moved the world, and others were given to show how fame and fortune have been won by the knowledge of how to perform capably the things classed as ordinary in the field of industry and service. Dr. Brooks emphasized the saving value of service—a debt owed to civilization and to God—and that it should be the ambition of every graduate to use his talents to the best advantage, whether his lot should be in the professions or in the industrial arena. His tribute to well known colored men who have grown rich catering to the appetites of the wealthy was especially noteworthy. He told of one man who had paid out large sums of money at a New England institution for lessons in the culinary art. Now this colored man is in Washington, enjoying an income of \$1,000 per month, handling high class trade among rich whites, and has been known to receive as much as \$2.50 for a single pie. Another colored man reaped a fortune here in the hotel business, some years ago owning one of the most valuable corners in Washington's business district.

**Capt. Oyster Is Warmly Greeted.**  
There isn't a more popular school man in the capital than Capt. James F. Oyster, until recently president of the board of education. His creed has always been "The best is none too good for the children in the public schools," regardless of race, has been lived up to the letter, and his oft-demonstrated square dealing in all matters affecting the colored schools has made him a favorite with our audiences on all occasions. He was warmly greeted and delivered a speech extolling the work of the teachers and pupils and heartily commending Assistant Superintendent Roscoe Conkling Bruce for his faithful, efficient and productive labors for the uplift of the schools assigned for

the benefit of the 15,000 colored students enrolled during the past year. Mr. Bruce's capable administration and strong executive force, coupled with tact and discretion, were also lauded by Superintendent W. N. Davidson, who later spoke in detail of the plans and purposes of the school officials with reference to the systems of education that were being handled in the Washington schools. It was the purpose of the board, he said, to so vary the training offered that there might be the widest latitude of choice, based upon conditions, aptitudes and temperaments. By mathematical deduction, Supt. Davidson showed the cost of our educational scheme and declared it to be "not an expense, but an investment."

**Assistant Superintendent Bruce Awards Scholarships.**

Assistant Superintendent Bruce, after a felicitous address, awarded scholarships to the graduates as follows: University of Pittsburgh, Avery scholarship, Rayford Whittingham Logan; Howard University, College of Arts and Sciences, Annie Laurie McCary; Howard University Teachers' College, Carrie Olivia Russell; Harvard University, Price Greenleaf Aid, Eugene Leon Coates Davidson; Williams College, John King Rector; Oberlin College, Amy Louise Pendleton; Howard University, Arts and Sciences, Marguerite Minor; and Teachers' College, George Othello Brown. The scholarships offered by Howard University's Medical School and departments of pharmacy and dentistry will be announced later.

Replying in part to the query of Dr. Brooks as to what the graduates of the Washington schools for 1913 would do with their education, Mr. Bruce said:

"I have here a table, carefully worked out, giving figures and percentages, which shows that the bulk of our graduates have decided upon the career they will follow in life. Many will enter the recognized professions, a large proportion will take the normal course to prepare to become teachers; others will take up the business continuation work, with a view of becoming proficient stenographers and bookkeepers. The nurse training school will have two from M Street and others at Cardozo Vocational School will remain for the special apprentice opportunity offered, and to work in the atmosphere generated by this new system of short-cut to actual bread-winning.

"Thirty-eight of the 114 graduates of M Street will continue their education in colleges of arts and sciences, and 33 of the 80 from Armstrong will do likewise, going to such standard institutions as Leland Stanford, Chicago University and the University of Minnesota. Business Practice has 18 graduates and Cardozo has 17—making 229 in all, for the year."

**First Year Girl Wins Humane Society Prize.**

The prize of \$15 in gold offered by the Washington Humane Society for the best essay on "The Humane Treatment of Animals," was won by Miss Frances B. Brooks, of the first year of M Street High School, winning in competition with the students of all the classes. The prize was awarded by Mr. John P. Heap, secretary of the Humane Society. Announcement was made that Frank Anthony Blackburn, a graduate of M Street, in all the twelve years of his schooling, had neither an absent nor a tardy mark on his record, and during his four years of high schooling had walked from Anacostia to the M Street School and return. Standing up at the request of Chairman Blair, the young man was given a round of applause.

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Dr. C. W. Childs, the new member of the board of education, who assumed his duties July 1, was introduced and declared that he would labor in co-operation with his associates on the board for the constant betterment of the schools and that "harmony, with progress," would be his watchword.

#### **Presentation of Diplomas.**

As the names of the graduates were read by the principals of their respective schools, each walked to the front and was handed his diploma. Mr. E. C. Williams called the M Street class, and the diplomas were presented by Mr. R. R. Horner of the board of education; Mr. G. G. Wilkinson called the Armstrong Manual class and the precious skeepskins were presented by Mrs. Caroline W. Harris of the board of education; Mr. W. T. S. Jackson called the graduates of the Department of Business Practice and the diplomas were presented by Dr. G. H. Marshall of the board of education; the graduates of the Cardozo Vocational School were called by Mr. Arthur C. Newman and the diplomas were presented by Supt. W. M. Davidson. Each of the members of the board prefaced his service with pertinent bits of advice to the young people. Mr. Horner's "valedictory" was impressive. The invocation was given by Rev. D. F. Rivers, pastor of Berean Baptist Church, and the benediction was pronounced by Rev. F. I. A. Bennett, vicar of Calvary P. E. Church.

Seated on the stage, in addition to those already mentioned, were: Former Superintendent of Schools A. H. Stuart, Miss M. P. Shadd, supervising principal; Miss Kirkland, assistant principal of M Street High School; J. W. F. Smith, of the superintendent's office; J. Moria Saunders, secretary to the assistant superintendent; W. Calvin Chase, editor of the Washington Bee; R. W. Thompson, president of the National Negro Press Association; F. E. Parks, and Jay C. Clifford, assisting their principals.