

Miss Janie Chiles Reminisces Over Forty Years of Teaching

Chrisman Mathematics Instructor, While Admitting the Profession Actually Chose Her, Says She Would "Do the Same Thing Again"—Numbers Hundreds of Successful Business and Professional Men as Pupils.

"Would I choose teaching again, if I could go back and start over?" Miss Janie Chiles, mathematics instructor at the William Chrisman High School, smiled at her questioner and in her eyes was the same youthful twinkle which has sparkled fondly for each of the hundreds of pupils whose careers she has helped to shape in the forty-two years that she has served the Independence school system.

"Of course I would choose teaching again. I enjoy the work and refuse to think too much about the years that have passed, so my contact with the continually flowing stream of young people keeps me at least from feeling old."

"But," she smiled reminiscently, "I really didn't choose teaching, anyway, in the first place. The job chose me. I had thought about the possibility, of course, and felt sure I would like to be a teacher. I had graduated from Woodland College in Independence and had helped to some extent in instructing undergraduates at the school. But it was when President C. A. Wood of Kansas City Junior College wrote Prof. George S. Bryant, the head of Woodland College of his need of an instructor and Prof. Bryant recommended me that I suddenly fell into the profession."

"Miss Janie," as she is affectionately called by her myriads of alumni and alumnae in Independence and all over the country, taught for a short period at Junior College and showed such efficiency in her work that J. N. Patrick, then superintendent of schools in Independence, asked her to come here to teach and she ac-

even a guess as to how many of the city's children she had taught in her years in the school system, but jokingly said, "Why, it seems to me that I have taught at one time or another nearly everyone in town."

She remembers especially some of the members of her first class at the old Ott School. Dr. Forrest C. (Phog) Allen, nationally known director of athletics at the University of Kansas, was a member of that class and while a large number of recalcitrants did find a place in her room, Miss Janie says that he definitely was not one of them. She also remembers that Floyd Burrus, who now lives at the corner of River Boulevard and Van Horn Road, was one of her pupils at that time.

Miss Janie remained at the Ott School only two terms when she was moved to the Central High School in the old Junior High School building which burned a few years ago. During her first year there she taught both English and history but after that term she was assigned to teach mathematics and has been teaching high school students the intricacies of algebra, geometry and trigonometry ever since.

Dr. Paul Rider, professor of mathematics at Washington University at St. Louis for many years and now an exchange professor teaching at the University of Mexico, is among the famous men she has helped along the way. Lawrence Gregg, with the Bethlehem Steel Company, is another of her pupils who has made good.

Marion Crews, representative of the Boeing Aircraft Corporation at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, was one of her finest pupils. He received his high school diploma about the year that the William Chrisman High School was completed and the old building was given over to the use of the board as a junior high school.

sat at her feet and learned the principles which keep their businesses solvent. Among these are C. C. and Albert Bundschu, Melvin and Carl Knoepker, Kenneth Bostian, Renick Jones, a member of the City Council, Harry Sturges, Frank Livesay, and many, many others.

"In fact," said Miss Janie, despairingly, "if I tried to name them all I would be sure to miss someone, so I simply won't try. I am glad to have known them all and to have had the privilege of teaching them and their children."

And then Miss Janie told an anecdote which illustrates one of the realities of life which should lend encouragement to the many pupils who are not quite as quick in mathematical matters as some of their brighter schoolmates.

"In spite of the fact," she said, "that I have seen many of my boys and girls go out and make marks for themselves, a pupil in whose achievements I take especial pride was a big, slow fellow who had a very difficult time keeping up with his work.

"For some reason this boy wanted to study engineering, and as I could see little hope of his success in that field, I tried to dissuade him and advised against his making that his specialty. But he was determined and used to come to my home evenings and together we would wrestle with his difficulty in grasping the fundamentals of mathematics.

"Up to the time of his graduation from the high school he never quite found himself, but he persisted, attending a junior college and later a university, always with his ultimate goal before him.

"And then one day into the office of the principal of the high school came a letter from the university where that slow boy was a student, saying that he had become one of the most outstanding engineering students ever to study at that great state educational institution.

"When you see things like that happen," Miss Janie said, with a satisfied air, "you can't help feeling that the work of a teacher