

# ALICE VICTORIA WESTON AND HER FAMILY

By C. G. WOODSON

**A**LICE VICTORIA WESTON, one of the most prominent women in Kentucky and one of the most useful in this country, died in Washington, D. C., among her relatives on April 8, 1948. She was buried in Paducah, Kentucky, where she spent the most useful years of her life as a teacher and an influential citizen.

She belonged to a family with important achievements to its credit. Her parents were Henry Thomas and Clara E. (Henry) Thomas. Her father was born in Mississippi, the son of his master, one Magruder, who was a prominent planter in that state. The son, however, took as his family name his half brother's given name and became known as Henry Thomas. At the age of fourteen Henry Thomas left Mississippi with Union soldiers at the close of the Civil War and settled in Buffalo, New York. There he married Clara Henry and moved later to Perry, New York. She was the oldest sister of the late Judge Edward W. Henry who distinguished himself in Philadelphia.



MRS. ALICE VICTORIA WESTON

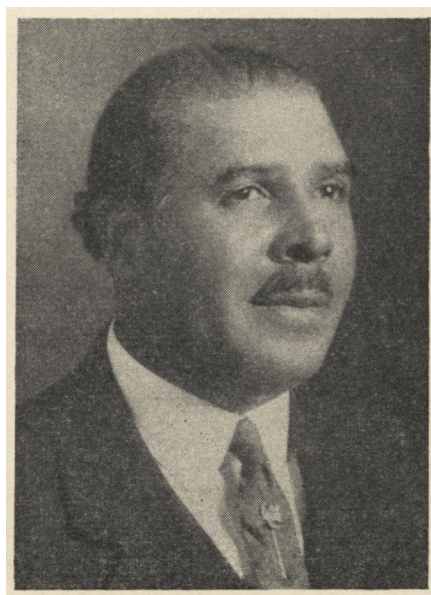
Alice Victoria Weston was born in Perry, New York, but when she was a little girl her parents moved to Washington, D. C., where she had the opportunity to study in the public schools. After completing the work of the elementary schools she entered the Preparatory Department of Howard University. On the completion of that

course she entered the School of Liberal Arts, but left in her junior year to marry William Julius Weston, a native of Henderson, Kentucky. After finishing the high school course of Terre Haute, Indiana, he studied medicine at Howard. She went with him to Kentucky where he practiced with much success at Hickman, Henderson and finally at Paducah. He died in 1936.

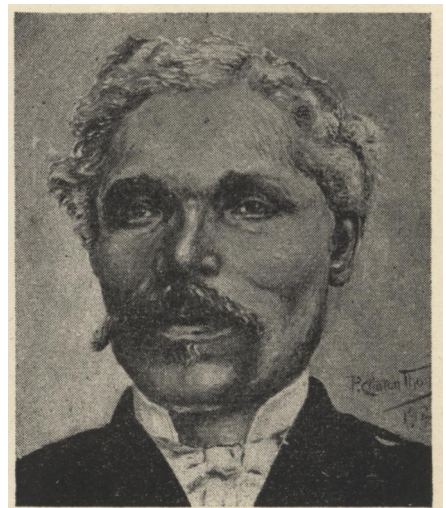
Alice Victoria Weston, however, did not stop her education. While maintaining a home into which came three children, she contrived to complete her college education at the Kentucky State College. She went next into the schoolroom and made herself one of the most efficient and influential teachers in the state of Kentucky. For twenty-four years she taught in the Lincoln High School of Paducah. There she made such a record as to receive the highest praise of her coworkers and the educational authorities under whom she served. Appropriately did the Paducah schools close on the day of her interment in order that the many whom she had so faithfully served might join with the public in paying her the last tribute of respect.



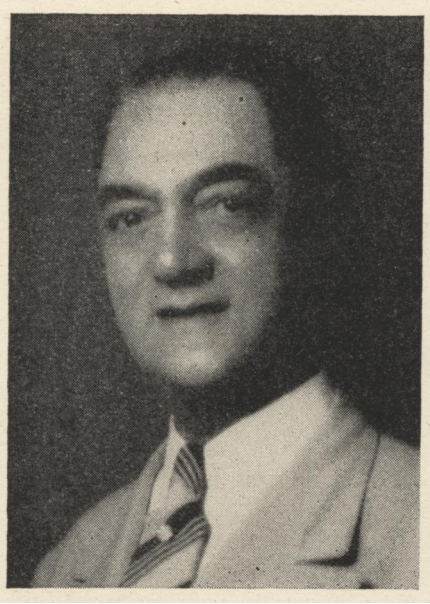
CLARA E. HENRY THOMAS



WILLIAM JULIUS WESTON, SR.



HENRY CLAY THOMAS



JUDGE EDWARD W. HENRY



NEGRO BOOK SECTION OF THE LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL. MRS. ALICE V. WESTON, HISTORY TEACHER (LEFT), MISS MARJORIE M. HODGE (RIGHT), LIBRARIAN

In serving, moreover, she was not restricted by any ties which confined her to a narrow circle. She was ready to lend a helping hand wherever duty called her. She was a religious worker and

accomplished as much among the churches as she did in the schools. In her own church she served as superintendent of the Sunday



BETA OMEGA CHAPTER OF THE ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, COWORKERS OF MRS. ALICE V. WESTON IN PADUCAH, KENTUCKY



MRS. CLARA ELIZABETH BUSH

School, superintendent of the Youth Department, director of the Vacation Summer Bible School, and the guide for numerous activities of young people. She gladly extended her efforts to other churches where they needed her services. She was especially helpful in church festivals and fairs and thus brightened the day for many groups of Christian workers.

Mrs. Weston was deeply interested in the Kentucky State Association of Colored Women, and once served this body as president. She was likewise devoted to the



PERCIVAL CLINTON THOMAS WITH HIS MOTHER CLARA E. HENRY THOMAS (RIGHT), AND HIS SISTER DR. MARGUERITE THOMAS WILLIAMS (LEFT)

work of the Kentucky Negro Educational Association. She attended regularly its annual sessions and warmly supported its measures projected for the progress of the Negro race. In all these efforts she manifested enthusiasm which inspired others to a more faithful performance of their duty. Her greatest eloquence was in her deeds which made her life an example worthy of imitation by the youth of today.

Mrs. Weston was especially inspiring in the dissemination of information about her race. She was devoted to the work of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. She subscribed to its magazines and took the lead in urging other citizens of Kentucky to support the effort. As a teacher she taught history as it has been influenced by the Negro. She was the first instructor in the state to offer a formal course in such his-



WILLIAM JULIUS WESTON, JR.



JOSEPHINE COLEMAN WESTON



MISS ALICE V. WESTON

tory in the schools of Kentucky. As long as she taught in the Lincoln High School in Paducah she offered that course and students were required to take it. She insisted that no one has begun to educate himself until he has learned to know himself in relation to others and others in relation to himself; in other words, out of the Negro's background he must get his inspiration to struggle and achieve or descend to the level of the frustrated and shipwrecked.

Two of Mrs. Weston's children survive her. Her older daughter, Mrs. Clara Elizabeth Bush, lives in Washington, D. C. She was educated at the Lincoln High School in Paducah and at the Western Kentucky Industrial School. She taught two years in Kentucky and then married Henry Bush of St. Louis. She is now the manager of one of the branch establishments of the Kent Cleaners.

Alice V. Weston, her younger daughter, was educated at the Lincoln High School in Paducah and at the Kentucky State College. She studied further at Howard. She taught four years in her native state, and next worked for the United States Government in Washington four years. She is now conducting a dressmaking establishment in this city where she has distinguished herself by her

fine needle work in which her mother also excelled.

Mrs. Weston's only son William Julius Weston, Jr., was born in Henderson, Kentucky. He was educated in the same high school in Paducah, at Howard University and the Terrell Law School. He temporarily abandoned the study of law, married Josephine Coleman, and entered upon service on the Washington Police Force. He distinguished himself as an efficient and loyal guardian of the peace and while thus engaged was killed by a thug in 1945. His tragic



LEROY P. THOMAS

death was a great shock to the community. At the funeral exercises Commissioner John R. Young and Superintendent of Police Edward J. Kelly highly praised him as a man of the highest civic virtue and deserving the plaudits of his fellow citizens.

Mrs. Weston is survived by two brothers—Leroy P. Thomas who figured in the establishment of a town about twenty miles from Chicago; and Percival Thomas who is a commercial artist in New York City. The deceased is survived also by two sisters—Mabel Thomas, a teacher in the Willard School in Chicago; and Dr. Marguerite Thomas Williams, a doctor of phi-

losophy of the Catholic University of America, now serving as professor of geography and geology at Miner Teachers College in Washington, D. C. Surviving also is an aunt, Minnie Henry Berry.

Here the story ends, but the life of this woman remains with us as an inspiration to unselfish endeavor in behalf of the people and the nation. Among those whom she has left to carry on several have already demonstrated their worth to their day and generation. From this brilliant record of valuable service others will be moved to endeavor likewise and thus endear themselves to their fellowmen who will have reason to revere their memory. Some of these days the special service which she rendered her despised people will not be necessary. In the not too distant future will come the rule of brotherhood, but in reflecting upon the workers who have participated in bringing to pass such an era of equality and justice we shall remember Alice Victoria Weston as one of the makers of that new era. Thus she will have some of that immortality predicted by Horace, the Roman poet, who saw himself perpetuated in the schoolmaster by the wayside with a book in hand teaching the youth the right way.



DR. MARGUERITE T. WILLIAMS



MABEL C. THOMAS