

Taken from the Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, W. N. Sheats, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1896.

### ALACHUA COUNTY

In obedience to your request, I hereby make you a brief report on the condition of educational affairs in this county, for two years ending June 30, 1898.

During the period of time embraced in the report, the schools have had a steady growth and development. All the school houses and furniture demolished by the cyclone have been rebuilt and replaced, in almost every instance better buildings and equipments being the result.

The Gainesville Graded and High School.--The Gainesville Graded and High School which, on account of the financial stringency incident to the freeze and other disasters, had been reduced to a term of six months, has again been extended to an eight months' term. The last two months of this school serve as the County Normal School, where every white teacher, prospective or otherwise, may attend free of charge. By this plan we are to some extent independent of your generosity in furnishing us a State Normal School; however, we always accept this supplement to our efforts with pleasure.

Union Academy.--Union Academy, the colored graded school in this city, has recently been enlarged by the addition of another story. It is now one of the most imposing school structures in the State. It will comfortably house 700 pupils. This school also runs eight months, the last two of which serve the same purpose as the white school referred to above.

Takes a Hopeful View of the Future.--We take a very hopeful view of the future when we are constrained to say that, with few exceptions, perhaps no county in the State has a more loyal, enthusiastic and self-sacrificing body of teachers than has Alachua. The most difficult problem for solution at our hands is how to make our salaries commensurate with the just demands of our teachers.

Some Legislation Imperatively Necessary.--Notwithstanding the fact that some years have elapsed since the freeze, and that various enterprises and industries have sprung up since, which should in a large measure, if not entirely, offset the loss sustained by this calamity, we are annually confronted by a decline in our valuations. Now, if something be not speedily done in the way of a more just and equitable plan of assessment, or if the constitutional tax limit of five mills be not removed, our schools in this county must inevitably retrograde.

Resolutions of Teachers.--The following resolutions were passed by the Alachua County Teachers' Association:

Whereas, The school law of our fair State was intended to establish a uniform system of examination--a system by which the certificates of each grade should be uniform throughout the State; and

Whereas, The law in practice has largely failed to accomplish this end, for which it was passed; and

Whereas, We feel that the slackness of the authorities of some counties in granting certificates works an injustice on the teachers of other counties in the State where the authorities are more strict; and