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Letter from W. T. Johnson to Mr. Robert Romake, Editor of the American Farm Youth

W. T. Johnson

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The Agricultural and Technical College
of North Carolina

GREENSBORO, N. C.

August 21, 1957

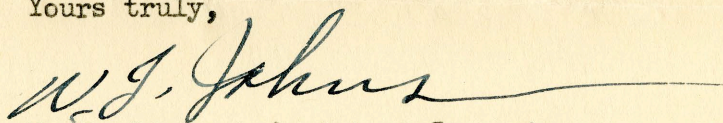
Mr. Robert Romakc, Editor
The American Farm Youth Magazine
American Farm Youth Publishing Co.
Danville, Illinois

Dear Mr. Romakc:

Inclosed is a brief news release and a recent photo of Mr. S. B. Simmons. Also an outline of his contribution to Vocational Agriculture, which I prepared in connection with the Testimonial Dinner given in his honor November 12, 1954.

I hope it will be possible for you to use the inclosed material in the next issue of your magazine.

Yours truly,



W. T. Johnson, Assistant Supervisor
and NFA Executive Secretary

WTJ:w

Inclosure: 3

BRIEF NEWS STORY - PLEASE CONSIDER FOR PUBLICATION

Sidney B. Simmons, age 63, Assistant State Supervisor of Vocational Agricultural Education in Negro schools for 33 years, died here at L. Richardson Memorial Hospital, Tuesday, morning July 30. Death followed an illness of a little more than two months. He had suffered a heart attack last May 8, in Elizabeth City, North Carolina an illness from which he never fully recovered.

A graduate of A. and T. College, Greensboro, North Carolina, in the class of 1914, Simmons had maintained offices on the campus for the position which he held since 1924. Prior to that time he had taught at the Downington Industrial School, Downington, Pa.; the Topeka Industrial School, Topeka, Kansas, and served as teacher-trainer for Vocational Agriculture at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama from 1918-1924, immediately prior to coming to A. and T. College.

A native of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, he had attended Fayetteville State Teachers College, Fayetteville, North Carolina, received degrees in Agriculture from both A. and T. College, Greensboro, North Carolina and the University of Illinois and had done further study at the University of California, Kansas State College and Colorado State College.

Simmons, in point of years of service had the longest record of any Negro in the nation's Vocational Agriculture program. When he assumed the position here in North Carolina, there was just 23 high schools with department of vocational agriculture and 24 agricultural teachers under his supervision.

He was one of the founders of the New Farmers of America, a national farm youth organization sponsored under the Vocational Agriculture program. The organization has a total membership today of more than 46,000 farm boys. He served as its national treasurer until 1955. Simmons is credited with tremendous contribution to its growth and development in North Carolina. He organized the North Carolina Association of New Farmers of America.

Under his direction the Vocational Agriculture training program has been extended to more than 8,700 all day students and more than 4,000 young and adult farmers in North Carolina.

He guided the group in raising funds to build a camp that is worth more than \$80,000.00. The camp is located at Hammocks Beach, near Swansboro, North Carolina.

In other fields of endeavor, the deceased had been cited by both Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman for his service in connection with Selective Service during World War II. He also served as a member of the State Appeal Board for Selective Service.

He was honored by his co-workers in 1949 for 25 years of service to the State and again in 1954 by the same group on the occasion of his thirtieth anniversary.

He served as a member of the board of the Oxford Colored Orphanage, Oxford; chairman of the Trustee Board of the local St. Matthews Methodist Church and member of scores of committees and civic groups in the State.

The deceased is survived by his wife, Mrs. Naomi Hill Simmons, whom he married in August, 1935; mother, Mrs. Julia A. Simmons, Fayetteville; two daughters, F. Bette Simmons, Baltimore, Md., and Sidella Simmons, Washington, D. C.; four sisters, Mrs. Alberta Sims and Mrs. Hattie S. Kelly, both of Tuskegee, Ala.; Mrs. Anne L. Dixon, Chicago and Ester V. Simmons, Fayetteville and a brother, Victor Simmons, Chicago.

Funeral services for the deceased were conducted from St. Matthews Methodist Church in Greensboro on Friday at 4:00 p. m. From 12:30 p. m. until 2:30 p. m. the body laid in state in Harrison Auditorium, and for one hour in the church prior to the service.

Rev. J. E. Brower, pastor of the church officiated with the assistance of Rev. Cleo M. McCoy, Director of Religious Activities, A. and T. College and Rev. G. M. Phelps, pastor of Union Memorial Methodist Church, all of Greensboro, North Carolina.

Teachers and supervisors of the State Vocational Agriculture program attended the services enmasse. Interment followed at the local Piedmont Memorial Park.