

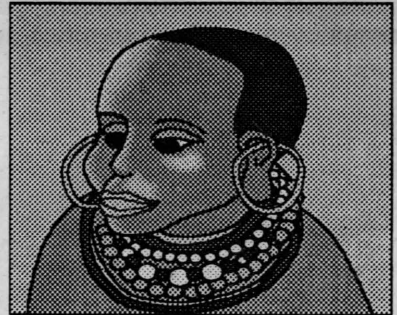
KUUMBA KORNER

by Dorothy Word

Black History She came from River Hill, Va., to Indiana

To — In 1934, in rural southwest Virginia, at the top of a little hill sat the River Hill, one-room schoolhouse. It had the traditional big, potbellied stove, the familiar cloakroom and at the bottom of the hill the customary, "outhouse." (From) this rural setting came Marye Miller Brown, a new, beginning teacher fresh out of Indiana State Teachers College, in Terre Haute, Indiana.

The one-room school had the usual grades of one through eight. What, no kindergarten? To Marye Miller Brown, a school with no kindergarten class was unthinkable—so she started one—to the sheer delight of the youngsters and their parents.



As the new teacher, her unofficial job description was: Teacher of grades K-8, principal, secretary, head custodian and fund raiser (to help pay off the school's debt). Her salary was \$40.00 a month. Her students—all African Americans—walked three miles to their school each day in all kinds of weather. Once during several days of rain, she recalled, that water got as deep as two feet. But the students, including the kindergartners, walked through the water to school anyway. Some of the older children had to miss school at spring planting and fall harvest times.

Today, more than 60 years later, Mary Miller Brown vividly remembers that first year of teaching in the rural South as, "The most fascinating year—never to be repeated! I met children the likes of which I did not ever forget."

(To Be Continued Next Issue)