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1968

# Beulah Zant Folder

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2-cols-# 24-pt-clc- Miss Beulah Zant, School Teacher  
For 50 Years, Passes At Age 94

14-bf-clc- Final Impressive Tribute Here Saturday  
Afternoon For Beloved Local Educator

Death at 9 a. m. last Friday, April 19, at the Crestwood Nursing Home in Valdosta, peacefully closed the 94-year earthly sojourn of Miss Beulah Zant, a long-time Cairo resident who was beloved by several generations of former Grady County elementary school students, and countless others, for her distinguished 50-year career as an educator and devoted friend.

and health care  
Enjoying the comforts/of the home for the past several years, Miss Zant had become seriously ill only late the day before, and failed to rally as life ebbed away. News of her passing spread rapidly here Friday as many hundreds of her former students here and all over the world, and a host of/other admiring friends, joined in mourning.

A final impressive tribute to her memory was paid in funeral services at the First Methodist Church here at 4 p. m. last Saturday, April 20, and interment followed in Greenwood cemetery here, with Carson McLane Funeral Home, Inc., of Valdosta, in charge of arrangements. Her body lay in state at the church here for an hour before the rites.

In accordance with plans which she had suggested, her pastor, Rev. Dr. Henry S. Brooks, was joined in the services by Rev. Dr. Albert S. Trulock, a Whigham native and former pastor here, now at Valdosta as a District Superintendent of the South Georgia Methodist Conference. A large choir sang some of her favorite hymns.

Rev. Dr. Trulock recited the 2nd Epistle of St. John from the New Testament as a tribute of love for an unidentified Elite lady to point out that it may well have been written to Miss Zant because of her exceptional womanly qualities, her great devotion to her professional career and the training of so many for the better life, and her exemplary love of people.

Pallbearers were Elmer Bell, Jr., Dr. W. Eugene Blackman of Thomasville, formerly of Cairo, Ira Higdon, Jr., Wm. L. Oliver, Jr., Paul Tyson and J. S. Wight, Jr. An honorary escort was formed by P. Hobson Blackman, Francis Brannon, Earl U. Brinson, S. P. Cain, J. Albert Collins, William Grine, Kenneth F. Leddick, Louis A. Powell, Alvin B. Wight, Sr. and John B. Wight, Sr.



Miss Zant was a direct descendent of the Salzburgers, who came to Georgia during the first year of the colony, and who are recorded as having been considered the "backbone of the colony" during the early days. She was born Jan. 12, 1874, at Ocean Pond, now Lake Park, in Lowndes County, the daughter of the late Josiah Henry and Sarah Ann McCloud Zant. Her father, a crippled veteran of the War Between the States, was a school teacher, and persuaded her to follow his profession, giving her instruction therefor. She began her 50-year career at a log cabin school near her home and had taught in her native county nine years when she chanced to visit Cairo, through church connections, and was invited to come here to teach. She located here in 1904 and then taught here continuously, mostly the third grade, until her retirement in 1945. First a part-time teacher, she continued her professional training on a part-time basis and first became qualified for a teaching license at Old Rock College, about two miles from Athens, Georgia's first Normal School. Early evidencing excellence in her studies, she developed beautiful hand-writing and learned to spell from an old "Blue Back" speller. Her first Georgia teacher's license was obtained in 1892 but she did not start regular teaching until two years later.

Coming here in 1904, upon the invitation of the late John B. Wight, one of this community's early educational leaders, she first taught ~~me~~ in a little wooden three-room building, which had one large room for the higher grades and two small rooms for the lower grades. It stood on a portion of the site of the present Southside Elementary School main building. A two-story brick building that succeeded the original wooden structure, on a portion of the same site, was destroyed by fire some years later, and the present main building of the Southside Elementary School was <sup>then</sup> built there. It served both the high school and elementary school for a number of years until a second elementary school building was added there and the Northside Elementary School was established. The present high school facilities were added not many years ago. Thus, for her 41 years of teaching here, she was located in developing facilities at the Southside Elementary School site.

Upon her retirement in 1945, at which time she received many honors and recognitions, it was estimated that some 1,700 to 1,800 Grady County children had shared her educational and general training, in addition to several hundred others in Lowndes County.

In her memory, many successful men and women still here, and scattered



sewhere, are still third grade students, puzzled over arithmetic problems, or stumbling over reading or other lessons. Since her passing, quite a number have vividly recalled "getting a whipping" from her, but they invariably add that they deserved it!

Because of the high quality of her teaching and her great devotion to her profession and those whom she taught, she was, upon retirement, nominated for the national Teacher Hall of Fame. The Georgia Education Association honored her with a splendid gift and a most impressive tribute in loving appreciation of her fine service to her community, which she rendered mostly at inadequate pay (her salary was once only \$35 a month) and often with difficulty, many times gaining only the satisfaction that comes from one's devotion to one's profession, loyalty to one's ideals and faithfulness to one's friends.

She was also signally honored at Thomasville by the Alpha Delta chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, a teacher recognition organization, at which Mrs. Robert P. Wight presented a biographical sketch of Miss Zant's distinguished career, which included many unusual experiences. The honoree had revealed that one of her most unusual experiences was here in 1906 when she appeared before the late J. S. Weathers, then County School Superintendent, for a renewal of her license. So convinced was he of her fine qualifications that he asked her only one question: "Are you a Democrat?" Now giant ~~oak~~ oak trees stand on the Southside campus here, set out years ago as living memorials to Miss Zant and the late Mrs. Blanche M. Dickey. The Messenger has had several news features on her career.

Upon retirement, Miss Zant acquired a home here and remained here for several years, and the Richard Porters joined her there to provide companionship and ~~to~~ help ~~see~~ see that she was cared for, and that relationship continued. However, some 10 years ago, her health became such that she required full-time care and she went first to a nursing home at Lake Park and then to Crestwood upon its creation at Valdosta.

She continued visits here upon her birthday anniversaries and other special occasions and every time her admiring friends poured out their love in appreciation of all she had done for them and for this community. She was always humble in acknowledging all that grateful admirers did in tributes to her.

Miss Zant's life epitomized a long era of Grady County educational



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story because her contributions so helpfully aided the development of the lives of so many other people in a direct and indelible manner. The value of such a life is incalculable but the qualities of her life are living on and on in the lives of so many others. The memories of her services shall always be richly cherished and the staunchness of her character shall always be a beacon light in those memories.

Surviving her are only nieces and nephews, the following having attended her funeral here Saturday:

Miss Mary Emily Zant, Mr. and Mrs. James Robert Zant and Eugene Zant of Lake Park; Mr and Mrs. Frank Zant of Palatka, Fla.; Mrs. Douglas Zant of Jennings, Fla.; Douglas Zant, Jr. of Gainesville, Fla.; Mr. and Mrs. Steve Zant, Mrs. Joe Zant and Mrs. Stephens of Ocala, Fla.; Mrs. Larry Bookman, ~~and~~ Mrs. Felix Brunot and ~~Dr.~~ Dr. and Mrs. C. O. Templeton of Valdosta.

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FOUR-SCORE AND TEN

To Miss Beulah Zant, Cairo, Georgia

Four-score and ten, the years you have lived  
And served beyond the span  
Of years are given once, is said,  
To live a normal man.

Four-score and ten, we mark the date,  
The swiftly passing years  
Full many there are who reach such point,  
But few whom man reveres

With few the awe, respect, and love,  
That hundreds hold you dear,  
Who for three generations have  
Taught them, and theirs each year.

A record such as this is rare!  
True, many a teacher serves,  
But I am sure you would say yourself  
No merit she deserves

For doing, what she likes to do  
In helping guide her youth  
Forever toward that guiding star  
Which is both God and Truth.

But you have led so many well,  
Of you, your friends would say:  
You have followed not just books and rules,  
But the Master Teacher's Way.

Evelyn S. Rineer