

Hargrave, Janie Carlyle ^[1]

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Janie Carlyle Hargrave, missionary, educator, philanthropist, and humanitarian, was born in Lumberton, the daughter of William Watts and Lillian Ottelia Vampill Carlyle. Her maternal grandfather was German-born Dr. Rudolph Ertel Vampill, who began a medical practice in Lumberton in 1881. [Frank Ertel Carlyle](#) ^[2], a U.S. congressman, was her younger brother. Her dual interest in religion and education manifested itself early in life. She became a Sunday school teacher at age thirteen. At sixteen she was graduated from [Lumberton High School](#) ^[3], after which she attended the State Normal and Industrial College at Greensboro for two years. Her family belonged to the Christian Missionary Alliance Church, and she was eager to become a missionary. Because her father would not permit her to leave home at age eighteen, she began one of her remarkable careers in the 1912–13 school year.

In her first teaching assignment, she taught sixty-three first graders at the three-teacher, four-month East Lumberton School. When it closed she went to teach at [West Lumberton](#) ^[4], thus receiving credit for two years of teaching in one year. In the fall of 1913 her father allowed her to attend [Nyack Missionary Training College, Nyack, N.Y.](#) ^[5], from which she was graduated in 1915. Her first appointment was in Puerto Rico, but illness soon forced her to return home. From this time she combined the careers of teaching and missionary work.

Miss Janie, who did not need her teaching salary, spent her total pay on missions, church work, charities, and the [Woman's Christian Temperance Union](#) ^[6]. At times she paid out as much as \$300 a month on postage alone, not just for missionaries from her own church but also from other denominations that called on her for help. She could spend hours recounting the miracles that had come her way in answer to requests from missionaries. Before the war in Vietnam, for example, missionaries there wrote for new clothes to outfit Vietnamese girls who were to be sent to college—all in size nine. Miss Janie wondered where she could get so many clothes in such a small size. Two days later, the owner of Ida's dress shop in St. Pauls contributed eighty-one dresses and two skirt-and-sweater outfits, all in size nine.

After returning home from Puerto Rico, Janie Carlyle joined the trek of teachers to summer school and at various times did graduate work at [Columbia](#) ^[7] and [Duke](#) ^[8] universities with a major in general education and a minor in religious education. She also acquired a principal's certificate. During this period she taught at Ellerbe and at various schools in [Robeson County](#) ^[9]. In 1932, she became principal of East Lumberton, which was renamed the Janie Carlyle Hargrave School long before her retirement in 1967.

In the mill village of East Lumberton, Mrs. Hargrave included religious training in her school curriculum, taught Christian principles in human relationships, and instructed students and their parents in good health habits and family life. In her methods of discipline, she was an individualist and a psychologist; in her seventies she was still finding new ways to handle problems in the school. She spent much of her time visiting families in the town, teaching them the Bible and taking care of their needs, and she had much influence among them.

During the 1930s a kindergarten teacher visiting from Maryland inspired Mrs. Hargrave to undertake a new project. In due course she persuaded East Lumberton authorities to renovate an old hotel, pay for the utilities, and allow her to use it rent free as a public kindergarten for all the mill children. Then she traveled to Nyack, N.Y., to find five female students who would teach the children without pay in return for food, lodging, and clothing. Over the next fifteen years, forty-four young women, called "Miss Janie's girls," came to teach at the first kindergarten in [Robeson County](#) ^[9].

Mrs. Hargrave also sent students from Lumberton to college. Among them were Dr. Kelly Barnes, vice-president of [Toccoa Falls Institute](#) ^[10] and [Bible College, Toccoa Falls, Ga.](#) ^[10] and Dr. William Watson, founder and president of Florida's [Trinity Bible College](#) ^[11]. Some years after Barnes went to Toccoa he requested Miss Janie's permission to send two of his female students to Lumberton to teach at the Daily Vacation Bible School. The young women taught for two weeks in East Lumberton and then for two weeks in North Lumberton. These also were the first schools of their kind in the county. In addition, Mrs. Hargrave conducted the first Black Vacation Bible School at Sandy Grove Baptist Church.

Among her humanitarian activities, Miss Janie visited jails and helped with services for inmates. For many years she was responsible for arranging to send unwed pregnant girls to an institution where they could be cared for; it often became her duty to inform their parents. She also helped establish a mission among the Lumbee tribe of [Robeson County](#) ^[9], did some work with orphanages, and assisted Miss Grace Garthwaite in the Children's Bible Mission. When a graduate of Nyack who was ministering to Americans in Vietcong prisons contacted Miss Janie, she not only gave him advice but also collected money to send him for the purchase of chewing gum, candy, and whatever else he could take into the prisons.

For most of her life Mrs. Hargrave fought against the use of alcohol. She was associated with the [Woman's Christian](#)

Temperance Union ^[6] for six decades and was president of the Sixth District for much of that time. In 1971, she financed her own campaign against liquor stores in Lumberton. Many Robesonians say that through her efforts Robeson County was dry until the 1970s and Lumberton was dry at the time of her death. In later years she worked with the Good Shepherd Home for Alcoholic Men at Lake Waccamaw.

After her marriage to George Hargrave in 1930, she became a Presbyterian and served that denomination in several capacities. When she retired from teaching at age seventy-three, she received awards from the Civitan Club ^[12], the Lumberton Board of Education ^[13], the Robeson County Board of Education ^[14], and the children of Hargrave School. In 1962 the Civitans gave her a plaque as the "Outstanding Citizen of Lumberton" of that year. On her eightieth birthday, a dinner in her honor was sponsored by the administration of Toccoa Falls Institute.

Until his retirement George Hargrave owned a dairy. The couple lived on the farm, and Mrs. Hargrave worked with Home Demonstration Clubs. The Hargraves had no children.

References:

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