Feeling Bright
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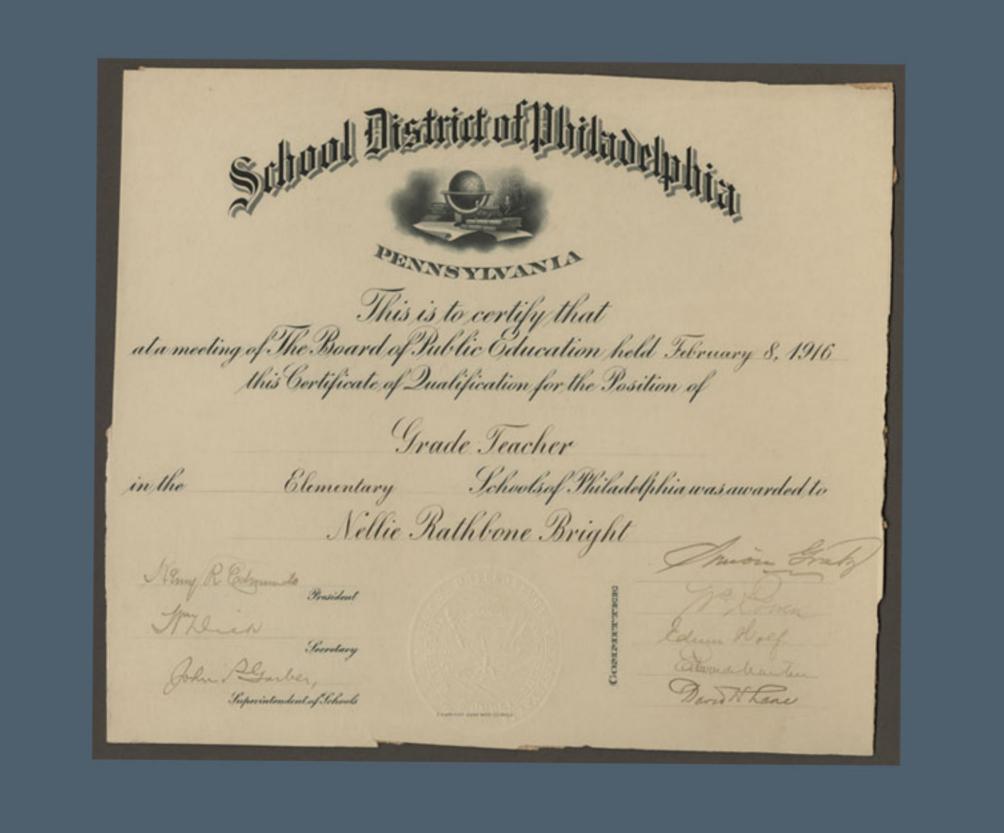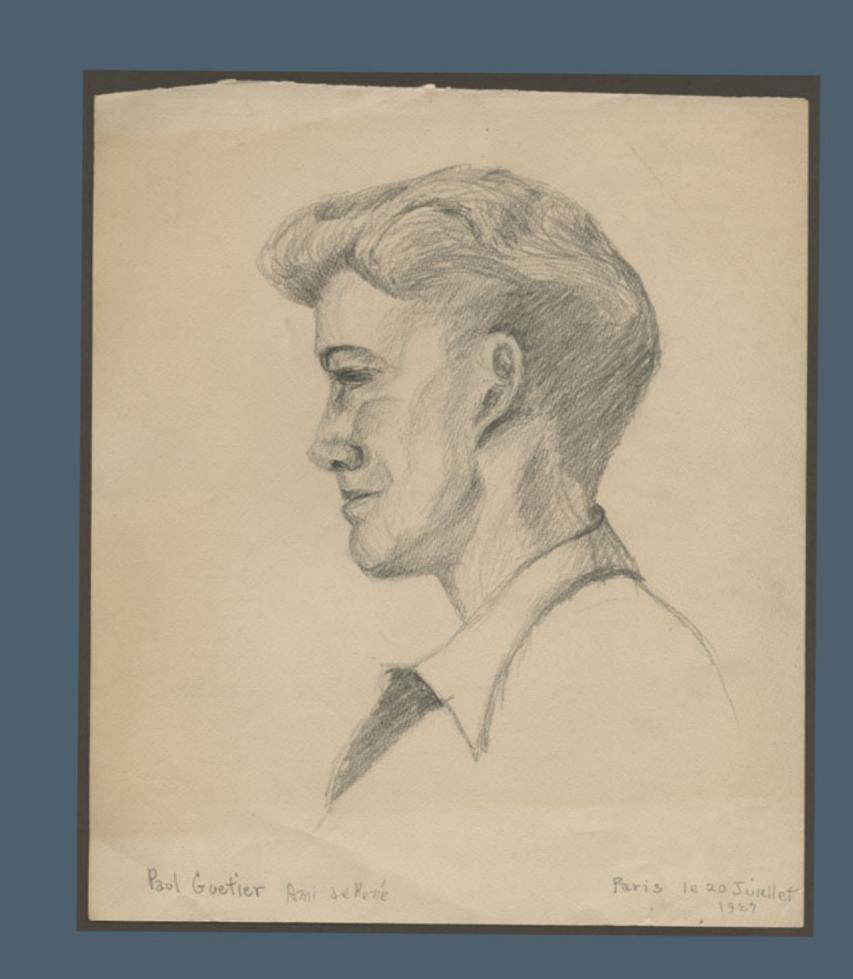

'People Can Work Together'

FOR her work in improving intergroup relations, Miss Nellie R. Bright recently accepted the Philadelphia Fellowship Commission's award proudly but somewhat hesitantly. "It really belongs to the neighbors," she says. "They deserve the credit."

By "neighbors" she means tenants, teachers, business men and community leaders in a 15-block radius around Harrison Public School, 11th and Thompson sts., where she is principal. With their co-operation and that of the Mayor's Committee and other city agencies, blighted areas in the section have been reclaimed. More important, as Miss Bright sees it, democratic participation has been developed among people of all religious, racial, national, social and economic backgrounds.

For more than 20 years Miss Bright has been working with neighborhood groups for just this purpose. "I believe all people can work together, especially to help themselves," she says. "While striving for a common goal, racial and religious differences are forgotten. The result of our clean-up-fix-up projects is an 85 percent improvement in living conditions, healthier and more mentally fit school children."

In the five years she has been at Harrison School, the neighborhood has organized three tenants' groups; planted 20 little gardens on plots once covered by rubble; turned an area once littered with 60 tons of waste into a spick-and-span section with a children's playground.

Tall, modishly-tailored Miss Bright is a brilliant and charming educator who believes the most important lesson a child can learn is social consciousness. She was graduated from the U. of P. in 1923, spent a year at the Sorbonne in Paris, went on to Oxford for another year. She lives at 4304 Kingsessing ave. She spends some of her leisure time sketching, enjoys the theater, traveling, hiking, poetry. But her special enjoyment is people.

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