

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY by the VERMILION COUNTY (ILLINOIS) MUSEUM SOCIETY



Busey, IL Store
McKendree Township, Vermilion County, Illinois



Don Richter

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Presidentially Speaking

Volunteers and volunteer groups are an important part of the success of the Museum Society. It is impossible to estimate the tremendous value of their donations of time and material to this organization.

Recently the Golden K Kiwanis of Danville built a number of storage shelves in the basement of the Lamon House in Lincoln Park. The construction of this needed storage space gives additional room for Museum Society acquisitions.

An extra treat to anyone visiting the Museum at this time of the year will be a stroll through the gardens on the Museum grounds. The Danville Garden Club maintains an award winning herb garden with many of the same herbs that were grown by Doctor William Fithian when he owned the property in the 1800s. This garden, planted in 1967, represents countless hours of planting, weeding, tilling and harvesting by volunteers of this group. The Garden Club also maintains the unique Shutt Memorial Scent Garden on the premises. The landscaping and beautification of the Museum premises and the Lamon House grounds in Lincoln Park have been an ongoing project of the Danville Garden Club since the properties were acquired by the Museum Society.

To these groups and all other volunteers and benefactors, I say a heartfelt thank you.

There are volunteer opportunities for those who would like to spend some time helping the Museum Society. If you would like to become a Museum volunteer stop in an explore the possibilities. You could be spending time in this beautiful mansion help visitors and tour groups explore Vermilion County's rich past. You could also help a special events, displaying Museum Society artifacts and videos. You might even have an idea for a special project or exhibit that would be carried out by the Society. Shirly Nesbitt, volunteer co-ordinator, is chairing a committee that is organizing a volunteer program for the Museum Society, I'm sure this committee would have a place for you.

Come and visit the Museum and Lamon House this summer and when you do, bring a friend or two.

Don Richter, President

Coming Events

July Midwest Quilt Show

October 2, 1988 Mann's Chapel Memorial Service

New Acquisitions . . . Preserving Our Heritage

WW I Photographs and booklets: James Keller.
Photograph of Albert Leins: Vaun Flors.
Wheelchair: Robert M. Lindsey.
Mining drill: Richard A. Bowman, Sr.
Wooden Cigar Box: Charles Unger.
Photograph of Two Rivers Coal Co., Partlow Insurance
Agency deed box: Mrs. R. Cashman.
The Family of Daniel Fairchild, Sr: Pat Wyman.
1916 Maroon and White: Margaret Whitman.
Photograph of PTA: Frances Dettman.
New Testament belonged to Rev. J. Black: Helene Marsh.
Anesthesia Machine: Dr. Edmund Andracki.
Stained Glass Window: Pat Cockrell

Art Gallery

July Midwest Heritage Quilt Show Winners

> August, September Mildred Hemick Paintings

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EDITORS Donald G. & Susan E. Richter TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reading, Writing and 'Rithmetic by Donald G. Richter	2-9
Catlin Historical Society Establishes Museu by W. David Baird	m 10-11
Memorles of Our Rural Schools by Marilyn Campbell	12
Reflectionsby Donald G. Richter	. Inside Back Cover

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In This Issue

Records from the Lake Shore School were used to complete this brief history of the one room school. From the 1860's until it closed in 1957, the school was the community center for the rural area that came to be known by the school's name, Lake Shore. The records do not tell when the school was built but they do give a glimpse into the operations of a one teacher, one room country school.

W. David Baird gives a brief history of the historic Woodin House, one of the earliest homes in Vermilion County. A fund drive is now underway by the Catlin Historical Society to purchase and restore this landmark house.

About The Cover

The picture on the cover was donated by Delbert H. Brown of Georgetown, Illinois.

The store was the Busey, IL store and was located north east of Georgetown. It stood about one half mile north of the McKendree church at the northwest corner of the T intersection. The store building was used in later years as a blacksmith shop.

The people in the picture are Lydia and Lon Jenkins and their children and Albert Brown and William Morgan.

The store served as a post office and was also a community meeting place where weddings and other events took place. The front of the store prominently displays two tobacco signs. One to the side of the porch roof reads Star Tobacco, the one over Lydia Jenkins' head advertises what looks like Newsboy Plug. Also of note is the official looking printed bills affixed to the front of the store.

The rocking chairs the two men are sitting in were probably moved from the store porch for the picture. Chairs and benches were a standard fixture in front of early general stores as people would often "sit a spell" when they picked up their goods and mail.

Reading, Writing and 'Rithmetic

by Donald G. Richter

One room schools instilled more in students than just the basics.

When I entered the first grade at Lake Shore School in the autumn of 1945 the school operated very much as it did when the first records were recorded in the "record book" in 1864. It was a small country school with a large room for teaching, two small cloak rooms, an alcove library and a small coal room to square out the structure. It was the second building on the site as the first had been destroyed by fire in 1910.

The building was heated with a coal furnace which was situated in the southeast corner of the brick building. In winter the furnace would pop and hiss and occasionally belch smoke as it poured out its heat in unregulated fury, roasting the small children who were placed near the stove for warmth. The older students, placed the greatest distance from the heat, would wear all the clothes they could and would still find it too cold for comfortable working conditions on those cold winter days.

Children were admitted to the building through a front door that opened into a short hallway with double swinging doors which then opened into the classroom. Over these double doors was an old school clock and when the room became very still you could hear the steady ticking of its heart as it counted off the seconds.

The school was lit with hanging kerosene lamps but these were only used for activities that were held at night. Most of the natural light was admitted from a row of large windows on the west side of the building. These windows were low enough for students to look through while sitting at their desks. They gave a view of the fields near the school yard and the line of woods that edged the western horizon. During Halloween parties and Christmas programs the lamps would fill the school with a soft light which seemed sufficient until the advent of electricity.

Desks were arranged in eight rows facing north, they had folding seats and the desk top was fixed over a compartment that books could be slid into for storage. The desk top was equipped with a pencil slot and an inkwell space. Mr. Ball had not yet made the fountain pen obsolete when the desks were purchased. Many of the desk tops were decorated with the art work of past students who in their spare (unobserved) moments had dexeriously carved their initials and other works into the hard wood of the desks. This pocket knife art was often embellished by inking the area from which the wood was removed to give the final product depth and contrast.

The teacher's desk was at the north end of the school and faced south, this also gave the instructor a view into the small library area to the left. The alcove library held open and glass fronted bookcases that were lined with books and also held the school's supply of holiday decorations and other extracurricular activity items. A fascinating world globe with a brass base rested on a small table

in front of the library section. It was an old globe and the events of the early and mid 40's had made it obsolete. Reams of colored construction paper were also stored in the library and students discovered early on that the course, brittle composition of the paper was not condusive to the manufacture of airworthy paper airplanes. One student was permitted in the library at a time for short periods.

Restroom facilities consisted of two wooden priving situated to the west of the school at the backside of the lot. One student at a time was permitted to be excused to use these facilities during class time.

When Illinois became a state in 1818 it had no delimite policy for promoting schools. The constitution of 1828 ans silent about schools as a public institution. Due to this, most of the schools in Vermilion County were subscription schools. (See page 4.) In 1818 the U.S. Congress page 4 law which granted "Section 16" of every Congressional Township in Illinois to the State for use of the residence of the Township for school purposes. This law compatible the legislature to do something about schools, but it would be several decades before any constructive program would be enacted. At the time it became a state, Illinois was cort of the western frontier of the expanding nation. Resident and new settlers were faced with all the problems of settling a new territory. Land needed surveying, roads had to be built. the Indian population had not yet been completely removed from their homeland and survival was the first thing the newcomers were concerned about in their area. Though education was a concern, it was not enough of a worry for the limited population to make strong demands on the legislature

The subscription method required 18 pupils in order for the school to receive state funds from the income of "Section 16," the subscribing patrons employed the teachers in these early schools

In 1825 a provision was made for the election of three Congressional Township Trustees for each Township. The duties of these trustees included superintending the schools, leasing of school lands and to carry on any other pertinent school business which might come before them. They did not have the authority to hire teachers in subscription schools, this was still left to the subscribers.

In 1829 the Illinois General Assembly took away the 2% Revenue which was to go for the support of public schools and reduced education to a subscription basis. The same year a County School Commission Office was created with limited duties, it would be 1847 before these duties were made more definite. On June 7, 1831 James Clyman was appointed "School Commissioner" of Vermilion County, Illinois but he declined to serve. Dan Beckwith, the man for

whom Danville was named, become Vermilion County's first School Commissioner in 1832.

For the young children who could not tell time on the old wall clock as it ticked away at Lake Shore School the sound of the whistle of the C & E I freight train was a welcome sound in the afternoon. The train steamed by the school about 3:30 P.M. and usually the sound of the whistle could be heard when the engineer would blow the warning for the Bronson Crossing a mile north of the school. If the wind was wrong or there was noise in the classroom the whistle might not have been heard until the train came to Route 10 (now Route 150) crossing just north of the school a few hundred feet. For the first and second graders the coming of the train meant it was time to go outside and play until school was dismissed. Whether the teacher went by the train or the clock was never known by the students.

A nomentous occasion occurred when the train actually stand one day directly across the small field east of the students on lunch hour watched as one of the crew there climbed down from the engine cab and walked the field to the school. He asked to use the phone of course there was none. The school would eventually receive electricity before a phone was installed. He then maked the teacher's car and drove to the tower at Broncon where the Big Four and C & E I crossed. He returned about time later and the train went on without the crew giving any explanation for the stop. The fact that the incher had loaned her car to this stranger was also the subject of student wonder as Jessie Gossett took exquisite care of her pre World War Two vehicle.

In 1864, when records begin for Lake Shore School in the board Sccretary's book, the area was made up of small farms. Many of the residents of the area were off fighting the Civil War. The State Road, now known as the Old State Road, formed the northern border of the school lot and was the main route of travel and commerce from east to west. The nearest and only town in the area was Conkeytown, located to the west on the Salt Fork River. It would be three years before a bridge would be built across this meandering stream linking the north with the south in central Vermilion County. The only other bridges were located at Danville and Homer, in Champaign County.

John Gesher was clerk of the three man board in 1864 and he recorded that a special meeting was held in August of that year and it was decided to extend the school term to eight months; to fence the school lot and to build a coal house. The building of the fence and coal house were to be "sold to the public." In October of that year Miss A. A. Yapp was employed to teach a five month term of school at a salary of \$26 per month.

The fact that Illinois passed a tax supported free public school law in 1855 made the operation of these small country schools possible.

Drinking water was obtained from a well in the front yard of the school property. A tin cup was attached to the cast iron pump by a wire, a bucket with drinking water and a dipper were kept in the entryway of the school. The well was noted for not going dry and people in the neighborhood would fill milk cans with water for use in their homes when there was a dry spell. This was always a beneficial aid if it occurred in the late summer because it kept the drop pipe in the well clean and the pump in good working order. If the pump was not used all summer the first few days of school were not remembered for the good tasting water from the well. Students were encouraged to bring their own drinking vessel but few ever did, those that did were looked upon with distain by the other students. A wash basin was kept on a low stand in the entryway and youngsters would occasionally rinse their hands. A more common practice for washing was for one youngster to hold his or her hands under the pump while another worked the handle. Of course this usually resulted in wet feet for the smaller children. The water was not wasted though, as it usually ran back down into the well. It was not unusual to find frozen water in the wash basin on cold winter mornings. At one point liquid soap dispensers were placed on the wall near the wash basin and the stout soap Reading, etc. (continued to page 5)



Lake Shore School 1942. Standing: Harold Richter, Marjorie Eldridge, Ethel Mac Richter. Sitting; left: Norma Richter, Lloyd McVey, Reva Richter, Eddie Farnum, Marjorie Dearth, Gladys Eldridge, Richard Richter. Right: Jerry Rowe, Jim Eldridge.

Article of agreement entered into between Thomas Chenowith (Jeacher) of The one part and The subscriber article on this other hare !! said party of the first party agrees to teach English School (to wit) Reading, writing The 24th day of December 1838 Saturdays excepted, he will endeavor to Reep good order in said and The Said party of The Second pass agrees and render comfortable, and furnish the Too occupied by Bent Smith on The lands of in which the said school is to be Rept, and that er furnish plenty of good firewood cut of a a pay the said Leachy hod dollar 25 cents for each show surgh conscious it is fairly between The parties that The weeks including the 120 mm of January & march are rederved by The parties as holledays be un force as soon as 20 schollars are Subscribed witness where of The parties have hereundo unlerch Their hands This 14th day of December 1838 Thomas Chenowith Subscribers names 1/2 1/2

This agreement between Thomas Chenowith and the subscribers to a subscription school is dated December 14, 1838 and is typical of such agreements.

The place of the school was Vermillion County, Indiana where Chenowith was Clerk of the Probate Court. His family later moved to Fithian, Illinois in Vermillion County where his son was a partner in the first grain elevator in that town in the late 1800's.

Reading, etc. (continued from page 3)

dispensed from these twentieth century marvels removed about everything but the fingernails. The detergent was especially effective on those with poison ivy or poison oak, it along with the coarse brown paper towels used for drying hands would turn a mild rash into a raging inferno.

There was no lack of heroes for students in those golden years of the 40's. In 1945 servicemen were coming home, victorious over the Germans and the Japanese and their supporting cast in the ill-fated Axis Books that were pagsed down at Lake Shore were decorated with drawings of planes, tanks, ships, and other machines of war that had been drawn by students during the long war years. Most students had relatives or friends who had particiand of in the war, many knew someone who didn't return. Others knew of soldiers who had returned but died of their wounds later. Many "souvenirs" were brought back and brothers and other relatives let students bring them to school for display. One of these was a German luger which students viewed as awesome when they were informed that it could shoot through a railroad tie. It was in more wable in 1945 that the Japanese and German namanid ever be considered anything but enemies

in the 1870's the first train crossed Vermilion County on the tracks of the Illinois, Bloomington and Western Rail-road. This line crossed the county from east to west and was located a mile north of Lake Shore School. It gave birth to the towns of Fithian, Muncie and Oakwood and brought decline and oblivian to the small river town of Conkeytown. The I B & W also brought jobs to the area and a number of Lake Shore residents worked on the rail-road during its construction.

In April of 1880, my Great Grandfather Jacob Richter was elected to the board of the small country school. He

would be the first of four generations to serve as a director over a period of seventy plus years at the one room school. He had moved his family to Vermilion County two decade earlier from Missouri because of northern sympathies at the time of the Civil War. Ironically, at the time he moved north, my Great Grandfather and Great Uncles on my mother's side of the family were fighting for the Confederacy in an Arkansas unit.

In 1880 the Lake Shore School board insured the school with the Rockford Insurance Company for a period of five years. The premium was \$3.70 per year and the face value of the policy was \$400. The tax levy for the district in 1880 was \$275.

The aroma of cleaning materials always permeated the school those first days of September when school would resume after summer vacation. Prior to opening day the school building would be given a cleaning by someone hired from the district. This would usually be a parent or parents of the children. The floor would be scrubbed and waxed, windows washed, walls wiped down, desks cleaned and other furnishing wiped and waxed. The only thing that detracted from the view out the clean windows was the wavy lines of the old glass and the safety wire placed on the outside to guard against balls, rocks and other errant missiles. The outhouses would also be given a thorough scrubbing at this time and on rare occasions a fresh coat of paint and new lettering marking the boys and girls.

After the initial cleaning the teacher became the janitor and was responsible for cleaning the building, taking care of the furnace and any other duties that might be required in the daily operation of the school. These duties included but were not limited to: being the school nurse, music teacher, art instructor, physical education specialist, coach, counselor, disciplinarian, etc. In addition to this, Reading, etc. (continued to page 6)



Collison School; Teacher William Acton, Danville Attorney, 17 years old.



4th Grade, Lincoln School, 1895.

Reading, etc. (continued from page 5) eight grades were to be taught all their subjects. A teacher truly wore many hats.

In those first days of autumn in 1945 there were nearly thirty of us in the eight grades at Lake Shore School. There were five or six in my first grade class, depending on when a student moved in or out of the district. There was no preschool or kindergarten so Jessie Gossett had her work cut out for her when she seated these few first time students at their small desks. Amazingly, in a few months, we were able to recognize groups of letters as words and numbers began to assume their proper place in the order of things. Listening to the other seven grades recite each day was an added learning experience which would not have been available in a large school. There were advantages to not being relegated to a single class in each room.

In April 1885, Jacob Illk was elected President of the Lake Shore School board. Just twenty-one years prior to this he had been a new immigrant in the United States who did not speak a word of English. He followed his brother Abraham from their native Germany, where they had lived near Wittenberg. Their father, Daniel had been a soldier under Napoleon Bonaparte and had served in the disasterous Russian campaign. The experience left him with a lasting hatred for the European military and its strict regimentation and lack of individuality. These feelings were passed on to Abraham and Jacob and both men were fiercely independent in all their affairs in their new country. Both men owned land near the school where both would serve on the board, at different times. At the age of twenty-eight Jacob entered the army and saw fighting in the Civil War under the command of General Canby in the 11th Illinois Infantry. He worked on the railroads as they pushed across Vermilion County and was one of the first to implement extensive drainage in the Lake Shore community. A great-nephew remembered Jacob's love for the rich earth of Vermilion County. He reportedly would dig his toe in the dark soil and look at others with a smile and remark in thickly accented English, "Is good, is good."

The tax levy for the operation of the school in 1885 was \$175 and the teacher was to be paid \$42.50 per month for a five month term. The term was to begin on September 28 and was known as the winter session. This was usually followed by a two or three month term beginning in late winter or early spring. The school board spent \$11.30 for fence repair and \$1.00 building the steps for a stile. The fence repair was due to livestock damage incurred when animals were driven on the roads bordering the school and were crowded into the school enclosure. This was a problem that persisted into the early 1900s.

There was no bus service for Lake Shore in 1945 and the students either walked to school or were brought by their parents. Some children walked all term because their parents did not own a car. No one lived more than two miles from the school so it was not a long walk but it was harsh during cold or inclement weather. Many who walked followed the tracks of the C & E I spur line during the fifty plus years of its existence. It was often a contest to walk the rail to see how long one could balance on the slender band of steel. An adventure of sorts occurred one day when two boys from Bronson "discovered" a two man section car on the siding near their homes. In a few moments they were sailing down the tracks, shirt tails flying in the breeze, as they were cheered on by their fellow students. The section crew foreman failed to share in the mirth when he and a member of his "section gang" removed the car from its abandoned home near the school. Children's memories being what they were, no one could remember how the car came to be where it was

On rainy or snowy days the coal furnace would serve as

a giant clothes dryer and makeshift drying racks would be posted at strategic spots to catch the radiating heat. Gloves, socks, caps and other soaked items of apparel would be placed on chair backs, broom handles and other innovative hangers and in a short time the school would be filled with the aroma of warm cloth as it shed its moisture. Occasionally one of the makeshift drying racks would be too near the heat and an item would begin to smolder. An overshoe tossed on top of the stove one day treated the students to the penetrating scent of burning rubber. This was no competition for the gassing the school took when a plastic eraser met its end on the red hot surface of the furnace. School had to be dismissed and there were terrible things promised by the teacher if the culprit who had thrown the dooned eraser was ever apprehended.

It was a civillenge for the teacher and usually some of the o'der girls to keep the younger children's feet dry and warm during the cold, wet weather. This was a duty assumed along with teaching them to tie their shoes, fortunate was the younger or who could tie a good bow knot.

A considerable meeting of the Lake Shore School board of 1866 and Archerson was employed to teach the spring section of \$25 per month. This was a \$2 per month archerson over the salary that Margaret Fellows was paid after the taught the spring session in 1865 for \$23 per month.

The based employed their first attorney in 1890 to represent the coissol in a dispute with a supplier. The controversy involved "meps and charts purchased illegally" by former directors. The company withdrew the suit, which was in the amount of \$40, before the decision was issued in favor of the school district. This was also the first mention of any educational materials in board minutes.

One of the extra pleasures of country children walking to school was the fact that it was nearly impossible to keep their dogs from following them. Thus there was usually a dog or two on the premises for at least a part of the day. This number fluctuated with the weather and parent's efforts to restrain these trusty companions. Dogs were almost always of the Heinz 57 variety. Any animal that appeared to be of one breed was viewed by the students with suspicion and pity because it was assumed that the mixed breeds had the most savvy. It always took the dogs a few days to become accustomed to each other. There would be growling and manifestations of independence. then the dogs would settle down and tolerate each other. The canines usually became adept panhandlers at lunchtime and it was hard for student to ignore them unless they had had the unfortunate experience of crossing paths with a skunk or had rolled in a dead carcass on their way to school

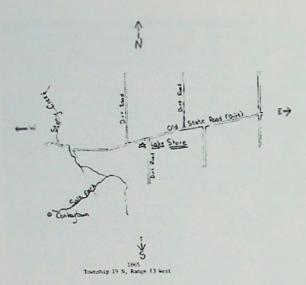
It always took a few weeks for the novelty of wearing shoes on feet that had been bare all summer to pass. It was not considered strange to see a student wearing a shoe on only one foot while a summer "wound" healed on the other foot.

New students who moved into the district were unavoidedly referred to as living on the place that had been affixed with a previous owner's name. It was often the name of a person or family which had been gone for generations. Families that owned their homes and lived in the community for decades were still referred to as living on the "old Smith place," etc. Adult "natives" allowed early residents to live on in name long after they were gone by this practice.

In 1895 there was change taking place in the Lake Shore community at an accelerated pace. The mining boom in the Reading, etc. (continued to page 8)



Franklin School 1900, J. R. Forden, Principal. Teachers: Sily A. Berry, Maud Tuttle, Maud Zerse, Mary Gohn, Flavilla Grant, Frances Mann, Grace Benedict, Jenny Green.



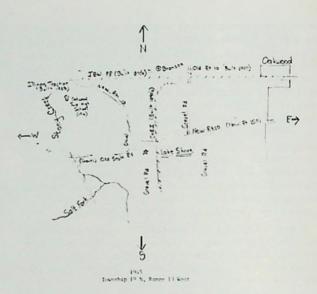
Reading, etc. (continued from page 7)

county had produced a market for mine props and timber that lay in and near the district was being cut and sawed by the residents for this purpose. The mines also provided a ready job market for the young men from large families who could not stay on the farm. The transporting of coal and mine supplies was also a task that involved men from the district who until this time had worked mainly with livestock and crops. The invention of the first successful gasoline tractor by John Froelick in 1892 was a harbinger of even more change that was awaiting just around the turn into the twentieth century.

The Lake Shore Board of Directors held three meetings in 1895 and employed Alida O'Hern to teach both the winter and spring school sessions. Her salary was to be \$30 per month for the spring session and \$40 per month for the winter term. The other business was the levying of a school tax on the district of \$325.

Punishment was swift and sometimes painful to those caught by the teacher disrupting school or in some way not behaving according to the accepted norm. Jessie Gossett chose the green willow switch as her favorite instrument for carrying out these sentences. The fact that the school was located near a swampy area, probably these same swamps had inspired the name Lake Shore, gave her an endless supply of fresh willow branches. On occasion she would have the condemned pupil go to the swamp and cut the instrument to be used for his punishment. Though the "rod" was used often I do not recall a time when it was used without a good reason. Usually if there was a bit of a case for clemency it was overshadowed by some transgression that had gone undetected. Other punishment handed out was standing in the corner, being detained at one's desk during recess and lunch hour and standing at the blackboard on tiptoe with one's nose placed in a small. chalk drawn ring. Being detained was one of the least popular punishments. Most offenders would just as soon have "taken their licks" and had it over with

An oily sweeping compound was stored in huge drums and was used on the floor for dust control. It was also rumored that it helped pick up dirt. A few handsful would be scattered on the floor at strategic points and then swept



vigorously into piles that were picked up with the shovel that was used for scooping coal into the furnace this process gathered up some dirt and dust from the floor and what it did not remove it firmly plastered in place. It was usually an occasion when one of the drums was finally emptied because they were used by the smaller children for play things. Because of this, the nearer the drum was to being empty, the more compound the students "nelped" the teacher apply to the floor.

Larkin A. Tuggle, County Superintendent of Schools in 1945, would periodically pay a visit to the country schools. On one visit he brought with him an aide, the purpose not really being known by the students. It was usually customary for Superintendent Tuggle to say a few words to the student body on these visits. On this occasion the aide was permitted to speak to the gathering instead of the Superintendent. Of course this captive audience gave these visitors their full attention as they had given the students a break in their daily routine. The men were impressive in their suits as most of the pupils associated this dress with funerals, weddings and church. The aide ended his remarks by telling a couple of jokes which were not exceptionally funny but when he began to laugh at his own joke he had a habit of inhaling. This odd sound brought a resounding chuckle from the students. The more the man laughed, the more the students joined in. Tuggle and the aide left feeling they had told some very humorous stories

On another occasion Superintendent Tuggle visited the school to see if Jessie Gossett was using phonics to teach spelling. This was at a time when the use of phonics was banned from schools because they were considered an inappropriate teaching tool. Those pupils asked if they were being taught by this method gave a negative response. It wasn't exactly an untruth because at the moment they were not being taught by the use of "sounds," but when school was in regular session they certainly were. It was not long before this rule was reversed and phonics was again in use in all the schools. By continuing to use phonics, even when it was against policy, Jessie Gossett gave an outstanding example of a professional educator trusting to instincts and convictions.

On October 21, 1899 the Lake Shore School Board met in special session to consider purchasing charts for the school. It was decided to purchase the teacher's normal series charts of J. W. Lathrop for the sum of \$37.50.

As the school district entered the 20th century the salaries paid men and women came closer together but men were still paid more for teaching the same hours and carrying out the same tasks. Ann Flynn was employed to teach the 1900-01 school year at a salary of \$40 per month.

A former student reported that Flynn had a good arm but not much "wind" as he was able to outrun her after she started whipping him for "sassing." She reportedly broke the willow switch twice as she delivered whacks as the race sped south on the dirt road which fronted the school property. The backer broke off the endurance contest after a short distance but finished the punishment properly the next mercang when the youth returned to school. She had also procured a new switch which stood up to the task testings breaking.

The spar line the C & E I had completed in the 1890s real from Rossville to Sidell and passed a few hundred feet east of the school. A large trestle spanned the Salt Fork cloud a mile south of the school. The building of this line provided many days of work for the residents of the school district. The tracks became an immediate "pathway" for students walking to school.

At the end of each school year the teacher would be given either good marks or criticism in the secretary's record book. Not every teacher was "graded" in the first thirty-six years of recorded history for Lake Shore School but those that were received a short line in the book. The best and longest remarks were "Taught a good school and kept good order." The most caustic was "Poor school, teacher dismissed."

In 1900 the school district residents were enjoying an added service from their government, rural free mail delivery had been started by the U.S. in 1896

The coal furnace that provided heat for the school also provided a valuable by-product, cinders. These were used to make the paths to the outside privies, to build a walk around the building and for any other areas where solid ground was preferable to mud. By 1945 these areas were covered with a buildup of decades of clinkers from the stove as generations of students were warmed by Vermilion County's own black gold. Countless students carried home bits of this used up coal in their knees from the many falls they took while running on these makeshift walks. The use of cinders was not unique to the school as nearly every farmstead in the community made some use of this readily available material.

A heavy slate blackboard was built into the north wall of the schoolroom and extended all the way across the room. Above the blackboard were the letters of the alphabet in their large and small forms. When chalk was applied with just the right amount of pressure the slate would produce musical squeels that would immediately draw the attention of the teacher. George Washington looked sternly down on the students from a framed picture on the north wall. Lincoln faced the pupils from the east wall, his face sad but calm, his features fading as the decades passed by.

A pencil sharpener was attached to the west wall just to the right of the teacher's desk. One was not expected to

make many trips to this shiny little pencil eater. On a table in the northeast corner of the building was the paper cutter. One of the first things made clear to the first graders was "stay away from the paper cutter." Because of this, the iron and wooden tool with the spring loaded blade was regarded with a bit of awe. This awe promptly disappeared when it was discovered that the instrument wouldn't cut anything but paper. It would break wood but as a cutter it proved next to worthless.

Jessie Gossett seldom made students come to the front of the room as a class to recite. Instead, she would move to the area of the school where the pupils were seated and teach from that point. At times she would have individuals stand and on occasion they would go to the blackboard and write answers or spell words. If a student had trouble learning, she gave them extra time until the problem was worked out. Flash cards were used extensively and for those that were a little slower these were used more aggressively.

By 1945 the recitation bench had disappeared from the front of the school and when the class did come to the front to recite they would sit on the seats that were attached to the front of the desks. These seats were kept folded up against the desks when not in use. The teacher's desk had the usual equipment on it including a brass school bell. The only thing kept near at hand that might have been a little unusual was a trusty flyswatter. In warm weather the school doors were propped open and there were no screens to keep out insects. House flys did not disrupt school much with their high pitched droning, which was nearly inaudible to the human ear. It was the occasional horsefly that ventured into this hall of learning that was attacked with a vengeance. It was like the solitary drone of a B-29 bomber when one of these unfortunate creatures would lazily circle the assembly below. The teacher would instantly spring into action and in a few short minutes would bring the unwelcome intruder down.

In 1905 School District Number 5 had been changed to School District Number 131, this was the result of the renumbering of the districts in 1901. The numbering system started in the northeast corner of the county and ran from east to west and north to south.

The estimated value of the school property in 1905 was \$1,470 and was broken down into the following categories: buildings and furniture \$1,300, school apparatus \$135, library \$5.

Also by 1905 the stile which had been used by the students for crossing into the fenced in school yard had been replaced by a series of posts. These posts were set in the ground in a pattern that allowed the students to wind their way through but denied passage to any cattle that happened past

In 1903 the Illinois Traction System had been completed from Danville to Champaign. This line paralleled the tracks of the Big Four a mile north of Lake Shore School. Many residents rode the cars of the Traction to Danville, Champaign and points beyond.

John Randall was the teacher in 1905 when Les and Wes Richter decided to hunt rabbits on their way to and from school. The first snow of the year had inspired the twins Reading, etc. (continued to page 13)

Catlin Historical Society Establishes Museum

By W. David Baird

The Catlin Historical Society is seeking members, memories and money to help preserve pieces of its past.

The group's recent acquisition of a museum and growing collection of materials have sparked local interest and increased the society's need for additional human and financial resources.

"Our purchase of the Herschel Ingram family home to use as our museum now gives us a place to showcase local historical artifacts, books and other data," said society president Nancy Dolan. "And we are accepting memberships and donations to help us support our effort."

The two-story, brick and masonry home is the second oldest building standing in Catlin. Amos Woodin, a cooper by trade, built the home in 1827. Originally, there were five fireplaces in each of the rooms. Four remain. The cooking fireplace in the kitchen was removed several years ago. However, original hardware still graces the doors, cabinets and closets of what Woodin operated as an inn.

Local history indicates that Abraham Lincoln was a frequent guest at the inn during his travels through the area. Lodging for a week cost \$1 50. That amounted to six day's wages at the saltworks, the area's anchor employer at the time. The saltworks were situated along the Salt Fork River north of Catlin.

Rising from a large corner lot on North Paris Street, the museum stands like a sentry, guarding memories of a bygone era. Its silent walls, holding secrets of the past, now provide a repository for remnants of previous and future generations. An old iron pump pokes its rusty head from the north grounds - a symbol of a different time.

"Catlin and the township are rich in Vermilion County History," said Dolan. "And that's one reason we thought it was so important to preserve as much of our local heritage as possible."

A small group of enterprising Catlin folk first met on a cold Sunday afternoon in February at the village hall where they conceived the idea of a historical society. Within a week, they learned that the Ingram home was for sale.

"We called an emergency meeting, toured the place and decided to buy it," said Dolan. She admitted there was apprehension within the group - "especially when the \$60,000 purchase price was announced."

Within minutes, however, those at the meeting were convinced the price was within reach. "So, we decided to go for it."

During subsequent meetings, the group drafted incorporation papers, selected a board of directors and officers and launched a fund drive. Pledges and memberships along with a lot of sweat, determination and dedication are now paying off. The rest is history.

Charles McGee, vice president of the society, said the group hopes to raise an initial \$150,000 within the next



The Woodin House in Catlin, Ill. as it appeared in History of Vermilion County Illinois by Lottic E. Jones in 1911.

few months. The figure includes purchase price of the museum, operating costs for the next three years and establishment of an endowment fund. He said the society's budget includes a part time manager for the museum.

Although no firm date has been established for opening the museum for tours, "We're shooting for this fall," said Dolan.

Society members are restoring the interior of the museum to reflect the way it may have looked 161 years ago. The rooms will be furnished in early to mid 1800s decor. Showcases will house books, documents, artifacts and other data.

The society plans to build a parking lot on the south side of the museum and develop an herb garden and other landscaping on the north side.

McGee and Dolan said that anyone who may have information, photographs, documents, history accounts or other artifacts, is urged to share it with the society.

The Vermilion County Museum in Danville houses much material - some from the Catlin area - and the local society is hopeful some of that can be placed on temporary or permanent loan at the Catlin facility.

"This would enable the Catlin Historical Society to rotate and change some of your displays periodically," said Don Richter, president of the Vermilion County Museum Society.

Catlin has been the home for many whose names are synonymous with local history including James Millikin. A sheepherder, Millikin later moved to Decatur and established a bank that bears his name. He also donated \$500,000 toward the establishment of Millikin University.



Woodin Home as it appears today. (Photo by Bob Schife)

One of the county's legends - Lura "Grandma" Guymon - left her reark in the township. She and her husband, Noah Guymon, migrated from Ohio in 1830. She became a leger 4 in her time by practicing midwifery throughout the area, Local historians credit her with assisting in the birth of more than 1,000 Vermilion County residents. One account refers to her as "the patron saint of the rising generation." She has been recognized by the Illnois State Historical Society as one of the 17 outstanding women in the development of the state. Those who came before the Millikins and the Guymons are credited with establishing Vermilion County's first settlement. Among those was James Butler.

Butler was the first settler to build a cabin here in 1820 on what is now the western outskirts of the village. The settlement drew about 200 others within 18 months and the community was known as Butler's Point. A group of men established the political boundaries of the county in Butler's cabin in 1826. And Butler's Point became the county seat. One year later, the seat of government moved to Danville.

Butler donated a one-acre tract of land for use as a burial ground for early settlers. Known as God's Acre, the cemetery is Vermilion County's oldest. Like watchmen, a grove



Woodin Home from north side. (Photo by Bob Schifo)

of trees towers over the immaculate graveyard, located about three-fourths of a mile southwest of the present village. Elaborate epitaphs are etched in headstones marking the final resting places for the county's first pioneers.

Another earlier settler of Butler's Point was Asa Elliott, who became the county's first justice of the peace. The first circuit court in Vermilion County convened in his home.

Amos Williams, the county's first county clerk, served in a similar capacity in Edgar County before moving to Butler's Point. Williams later served as Vermilion County Circuit clerk, probate justice of the peace and postmaster in Danville.

Since those early days, scores of other families have settled in Catlin and the township. They have contributed to and perpetuated much of the rich heritage found here.

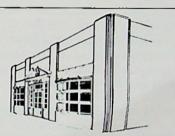
All that remains of these early settlers of Butler's Point are recorded historical accounts, their spirit and memories of a way of life alien to the late 20th century.

Today's settlers are recapturing bits of the past in their local museum - slices of life frozen in time - preserved for future generations.



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Memories of Our Rural Schools

by Marilyn F. Campbell

Do you remember Squankum, Science Hall, Partlow, Knight's Branch or Wait? How about LeNeve, Archie, Locust Grove, Mission Field or Welcome? Or Cottonwood, Shellbark, Pond, and Wide Awake?

What do all of these names have in common? They were all rural schools in Vermilion County! Before the first efforts at consolidation, in the 1940's, there were more than 200 small schools dotting the countryside. Many had only one room, where the teacher taught students in all eight grades.

Red Oak School, southeast of Collison, was a typical one-room school. When the district consolidated with Newtown, classes no longer used the picturesque old building, with its old-fashioned hand pump and iron merry-go-round in the front yard. Fortunately, Red Oak fell into caring hands, and was spared the fate of many of its counterparts. (A vast majority of the rural schools are now just history.)

Due to a happy chain of circumstances, Red Oak School will soon be moved to a new location in Kennekuk County Park, where it will be refurbished and dedicated as a memorial to all Vermilion County teachers--past, present and future. A successful "Honor a Teacher" campaign has raised more than \$12,000 toward this project, and donations have come in from near and far. Many of the donors wrote letters to share special memories of their days in one-room schools--some were students, some were teachers, and more than a few were both!

Interesting notes tell of three generations of some families who have carried on the teaching tradition. Others point out the good instruction and patient understanding received in the rural schools. Many expressed joy that a sample of life "as it was" is being saved. Here are a few of the many thoughts that have been shared with us:

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to honor my father in a manner that was very close to him--schools! He had two daughters, and his influence resulted in both of them becoming teachers."

"Mrs. Milburn drove in from Danville in all sorts of weather, built the fire so that it was warm for the students when we arrived, taught all eight grades besides having Christmas programs, Halloween parties, etc. Anyone who completed eight years as Blakeney was proficient in reading, writing and arithmetic."

"Altogether, I taught 23 years in the one-room schools of Vermilion County."

"Ms Runyon taught 32 years in one-room school, most of those at Milner. She prepared all of her pupils so well that going on to Danville High was no problem."

"Anyone who knew Zela Graening knew the most special person who ever lived. What a teacher she was! She loved to recite James Whitcomb Riley poetry and no one did it better. What expression and enthusiasm she displayed! She held us in the palm of her hand."

"I am interested in your project because my heritage is in the one-room country school." (This writer went on to say that her father and mother both were teachers in one-room schools, she attended the same, and eventually taught for six years in a one-room school herself.)

"Please accept this donation from my sister and me in memory of our mother, who taught 37 years in Vermilion County schools, including #10, #7 and Centennial."

"Good luck with the Red Oak project. I intend to visit to see if it is authentic!"



Maple Grove School, May 10, 1899.

Reading, etc. (centinued from page 9)

to undertwise this brilliant action to replenish the family larder. The boys took their father's trusty old Powell & Son shotgun, a twelve gauge muzzle loader, and marched off to school. As soon as the teacher observed the antique weapon, primed and ready in the hands of one of the nine year olds, he promptly confiscated the weapon and instructed the hapless hunters to bring their father with them to school the next day to recover his firearm and to discuss the "incident."

At afternoon recess that day the twins crawled into the attic of the school while the teacher was outside. A fellow student dutifully told the teacher that they had gone home to tell their father about the gun. When school let out and the teacher had left, the twins crawled down from the attic, recovered their gun and let themselves out of the building. The next morning when the conspirators returned to school Randall gave them both a memorable "hiding" with a hickory stick. This punishment, as the twins described it, was not nearly as bad as hiding in the dirty, hot attic of the school all afternoon.

Lake Shore School never had a band but it did own a few pieces of musical equipment. An upright piano, which made the floor creak and sag when moved into a new position, was the centerpiece of any musical activity at the school. But what gave school's musical endeavors a cosmopolitan aire was the possession of triangles and tamborines by the "musical department". Though always slightly out of tune the old piano did yeoman service during special events and occasionally for the morning singing sessions. It was often played by someone who "took lessons" or "played by ear". The triangles and tamborines were less challenging and any student who was willing could bang the triangles and shake the tamborines. At one time there

had been a couple of harmonicas among the school instruments but these had disappeared by 1945.

Musical instruction consisted of singing a few songs in the morning and preparing for special events like the school Christmas program. Usually the songs would be patriotic in nature and would include "America" and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic". An idea that was quickly discarded by the teacher was the practice of having the students stamp their feet in rhythm to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic". The pupils "trampled" with such zeal that the floor shook from their efforts.

For special occasions a curtain was pulled across the front third of the schoolroom, forming a stage of sorts. Though the area was not raised the curtain did give the "stage" a certain professional quality. The teacher's desk would be moved to one side and the center of the school was used for the children's performances. The curtain shut off the left and right third of the front of the school and these areas would be used for storing the rearranged furniture and as an area for the characters to make their "entrance" in school skits. Kerosene lamps provided the light for these events and lanterns were hung in front of the school to light the steps of the porch. A highlight of the school year was the preparation for the annual Christmas program, practice for this night began after Thanksgiving and continued until the big event.

On the morning of February 3, 1910 disaster struck the school district when the schoolhouse and all its contents were destroyed by a pre-dawn fire. The cause of the blaze was never found but the practice of "banking" the stove with coal to retain a fire through the night was considered

Reading, etc. (continued to page 14)

Reading, etc. (continued from page 13) the prime possibility. Fortunately, the school record books were at the Board Secretary's house.

At a special meeting with the insurance adjuster on February 15, a settlement was reached in the amount of \$743.74. This was recorded in the school record book as a "skin game on insurance company".

The teacher asked the board at a May meeting to pay \$56 for time lost due to the fire but the board voted unanimously not to pay "said sham".

After the fire destroyed the school, classes were held at the Lake Shore Church for the remainder of the term. The church was located about a quarter mile west of the school on the "Old State Road".

A new school was constructed by S. P. Blue of Oakwood at a cost of \$1,955. V. E. Garrett served as architect and was paid \$75 for the blueprints of the building and for serving as construction superintendent. Among items purchased for the new building were: a new pump \$4.50, a school clock \$4.50, new seats \$56.47 and a new dictionary from Woodbury and Co. costing \$10.80.

The new brick building was finished in time for autumn classes to begin on time and was equipped with a new coal furnace that one of the older students said "burned coal like a hog ate corn". Coal was delivered that year for 10¢ a bushel

To the south of the school building was a shed which served as a coal and cob house. The dry cobs furnished not only the highly flammable material for "getting the fire going" in the coal furnace but also the missiles for many "cob fights" that were usually interrupted at some point by the teacher.

The school yard was not kept well mowed during the summer months but was given a "good cutting" just prior to the return of the scholars. This resulted in numerous stubs sticking up from the growth that had become rank during vacation. The fact that most feet were as calloused and tough as leather from going barefoot all summer prevented injuries when pupils removed their shoes to play barefoot in the school lot.

One thing remained constant in that one room school, the teaching of the basics. Jessie Gossett taught reading, spelling and arithmetic in such a way that they seemed easy to learn. History and geography were not only made



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interesting but dates, places and events assumed added importance in the wake of the tremendous war which had inflamed the world after December 7, 1941.

At the front of the schoolroom, above the middle of the blackboard, was a number of maps that pulled down out of a wooden map case. It was in the space that these maps covered on the blackboard that school tests would be written and then hidden from view by pulling down one of the colorful charts. When students arrived at school and found a map pulled down in front of the board they were always suspicious and a bit apprehensive about what was obscured from their view.

The second decade of the twentieth century still found the Lake Shore community traveling on dirt roads but the horse and buggy was in competition with a growing number of "gasoline buggies". Henry Ford had formed his Ford Motor Company in 1903 and was speedily putting the horse out to pasture with his innovative marketing and manufacturing methods. Ford's revolutionary ideas of profit sharing for workers and assembly lines to speed production we successful beyond even his expectations. His early auto, the model T, would sell in excess of 20,000,000 before being replaced by an improved model. Lake Shore residence judged the auto by its ability to "go through the mid" at that was a prime ingredient of the neighborhood road much of the year. It was discovered that the vehicles, with their high clearance, would go quite well once a "good track" was established.

On February 15, 1915 the Lake Shore School board met with the Boards of Webster, Independence and Pleasant Grove to employ attorneys "to fight the petition of the Oakwood District to take in more land". On April 15 the Township School Trustees met in Oakwood and voted to enlarge the Oakwood District by taking part of the Lake Shore District. This decision was appealed by the Lake Shore Board to County Superintendent Otis P. Haworth who found in favor of the Township School Trustees. On May 20 the Superintendent's decision was appealed in court before Judge Kimbrough who found in favor of the Lake Shore District, reversing the previous decision. This was the beginning of a consolidation move among the school districts that would continue until all the township schools would belong to one district.

James Jones was employed to teach an eight month school term in 1915 at a salary of \$75 per month. He has the distinction of being the teacher who remained at the



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107 West Williams Street Danville, Illinois 61832 217/442-0171 school for the longest period during its first sixty years of operation. Jones taught school at Lake Shore for four consective terms. Prior to 1915, no teacher had stayed more than two terms and most only taught one session, either winter or spring.

Serious injuries were rare at school but when one did happen it was the teacher's responsibility to handle the problem. There was no phone to call for assistance and no other adult on the premises to assume control when the teacher would take the victim to the hospital or doctor. The usual procedure was for the teacher to load the child needing medical attention into a car and stop at the first house to send an adult to look after the school.

Two injuries that did occur during my tenure as a pupil in the one room school were of a serious nature. During a taffy making project one spring a boy plunged both hands into the near boiling taffy to begin "pulling it". The hot material adhered to his hands and candy and skin peeled off together where the teacher removed the coating of taffy. Remarkably after a few weeks his hands healed and there were no parameter to scars from the burns.

Another in the ni occurred when a student walked in the path of a single and it struck him in the head. He received a serious into and required hospitalization. The teacher had one of the older pupils start the car and move it to the front of the school while she applied a cold cloth to clean the wound and to try to stop the bleeding. It continued to pump of stream of bright blood as the boy was placed in the car for the trip to the hospital.

Rarer than almost anything that happened in the school was for the teacher to miss a day because of illness. Jessie Gossett seemed to be immune to all illnesses that from time to time would sweep through the students, incapacitating some of them for a day or two.

A great improvement in educational opportunity came to the Lake Shore students when the Oakwood Township High School was opened in 1916. Prior to this, students had to be sent to places like Fithian and Danville if they wanted to continue their education beyond the first eight grades. The school district would pay a tuition to the school that the student decided to attend if the board of directors approved of the higher education. Tuition to the high school in Fithian was \$35 per year and Danville was \$40 per year. Doctor Oscar J. Michaels was the architect of the high school district which was one of the first consolidated units.

The high school experienced tragedy that first year when the entire staff of three teachers was struck and killed by an Inter Urban car as they walked to work. The teachers were crossing the bridge over Stony Creek to the west of the school and either didn't hear the car coming or couldn't escape its path.

The year 1916 also saw the single slab pavement completed from Danville to Champaign. Known as Route 10 (Now Route 150) the road passed a mile north of the school through the small village of Bronson. The route was made up of numerous curves and no less than thirteen railroad crossings as it snaked its way between the two major cities of the area. It represented a milestone for transportation in the area because it was "so much better than anything we had before" a Lake Shore resident remembered

In the autumn of 1918 the school was closed for a month because of the influenza epidemic that was sweeping the community and the nation. That same year the boards of Lake Shore, Pleasant Grove, Webster and Independence fought an annexation battle with the Oakwood School District. The small schools again won their battle with the larger school and were able to keep their districts intact but this second such action by the larger school in less than five years made the directors of the country schools aware that change was coming for the smaller school districts.

On January 22, 1920 the four school districts again held a joint session and started proceedings to consolidate the four districts. On February 28 the four schools were joined under the name Pleasant Grove Consolidated District No. Reading, etc. (continued to page 16)

Check the cover of this magazine. If your name does not appear, it should. If you have not received your last issue, please notify us. Send check for your membership to the Vermilion County Museum today...

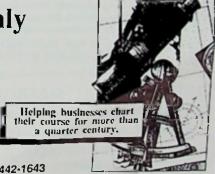
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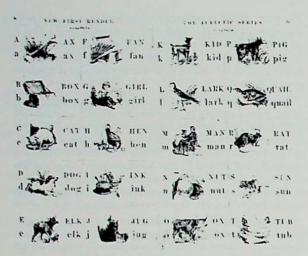
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Alphabet Page from McGuffey's New First Eclectic Reader; copyright 1863.

Reading, etc. (continued from page 15)

122. Though the schools were now part of a consolidated district they continued to operate as they had in the past, with all eight grades from their former district attending each school. This continued for the next twenty-eight years, when at that time the four lower grades were sent to Pleasant Grove and the upper four grades were sent to Lake Shore. By this time, the 1948-49 school year, the schools of Webster and Independence had been closed and their students absorbed by the two operating schools.

By 1945 nearly half the students who attended Lake Shore School lived in families whose income did not come from agriculture.

The roads that passed on the east and north side of the school lot had been rocked, as had all the other roads in the district.

There had been no bridges across the Salt Fork within twelve miles of the school when it had been opened. Now there were three bridges within three miles.

We still played some of the same games children played through the years: Fox and Goose, Andy Andy Over, and softball on a very rough ball diamond to name a few.

Three big events stood out on the school calendar in that Victory year of 1945. The Halloween Party, the Christmas Program and the Annual School Picnic. These were attended by everyone in the community, those without children as well as parents. The rural gatherings at the little schoolhouse seem more precious after so many years.

THE COLONIAL PARKWAY BOWMAN AT EAST MAIN

Sandwiches -- Dinners -- Pizza Delivery & Carry-Out 442-2698 But time does play tricks with the memory when it recalls those long ago days of youth. The humorous things that happened seem more so after all these decades, the winters probably weren't any colder, but in memory they grow icier as the years pass. The scent of fresh cut clover in the fields around the school grows sweeter each time it is remembered. One thing that time does not alter is the fine quality of education that a dedicated teacher gave children in those one room citadels of learning

Jessie Gossett was paid \$204 a month for teaching a nine month term in 1945, this gave her an annual income of \$1,836. For this she not only taught all eight grades in one room at Lake Shore School but also served as administrator of the Consolidated District.

On June 20, 1945 the Illinois General Assembly and a House Bill No. 406 which called for the election of a County School Survey Committee of nine members. The following November a County Committee was elected for Verrico County. This group surveyed the schools of the county found that there were 188 school districts with 668 for members. The total enrollment in the county was taken students. This compared with 19,693 students in 1860.

This County Committee drew up recommendations for the consolidation of many of the schools and school distributed as they existed at that time. This action was necessificated by declining enrollment in certain schools in the county and rising costs of education. The comments of the committee on District No. 122, of which Lake Shore was a particulated the following, "the consolidation (of Lake Shore. Webster, Independence and Pleasant Grove) didn't do any good to benefit the boys and girls because the School Board members continued the one room schools." Perhaps, but I would have to agree with a small notation that a Lake Shore School Board member, George Jones, wrote in the record book at the end of the 1886-87 school year: "This 'ere was a good School, Boys."

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Reflections



There always sentences are carved on a stone pedestal that holds the bronze statue of a man on the campus of Miami University as Oxford, Ohio.

Here is John.
And there are Ann and Jane.
Ann has got a new book.
It is the First Book.
Ann must keep it nice and clean.
John must not tear the book.
But he may see how fast he can learn.

William Holmes McGuffey, the man whom the statue honors, was a man with an idea. He wanted to write textbooks that would fit the needs of American school children. The lines preserved in stone on the pedestal were also printed in countless textbooks. In their simplicity they told children three things, they should keep their books clean, they should not damage them and most importantly, they could learn from them.

The success of the McGuffey Reader is now a part of the history of American education. It was in 1836 that this college professor, who was also an ordained Presbyterian minister, had his first books published. It is estimated that one hundred and twenty two million McGuffeys were sold in the last century.

These books were sold across the young, expanding nation. They found their way into the public and subscription schools of the rugged frontier. They were packed and transported with other treasured possessions on the long treks across the plains and mountains to California and Oregon. Not only did these books teach "reading" but they also made students aware of right and wrong and good and bad.

McGuffey books contained subjects children could identify with, everyday things like farm animals, homes, toys, games and grandparents. They also contained poems and fables and pictures. The pictures were perhaps the most fascinating part of these books that introduced hundreds of thousands of youngsters to learning.

Katherine Stapp, late editor of the *Heritage* and a professional educator, stated that "in teaching, first and foremost interest must be created." William Holmes McGuffey and Katherine Stapp lived in different centuries but they shared the same ideas about education.

"Shellbark" was written on the inside cover of a "McGuffey's" that sold in a box of well used books at a recent auction in Danville, Illinois. A number of pages were missing from this "third reader" but looking at the old book and seeing the famous name was like looking upon a retired veteran. At one time, a very long time ago, this book had been used by a child in Pilot Township, Vermilion County, Illinois.

The McGustey Reader is as much a part of the educational heritage of America as is the one room school and frontier teacher. These elements are far removed from the modern educational system but they are a part of the bedrock foundation that the system is built on.

Recently the Vermilion County Conservation District conducted a successful fund raising campaign to preserve the one room Red Oak School. This small, frame school building will be moved to Kennekuk Cove County Park and restored and furnished as it was in the early 1900's. This important artifact of the educational system will be preserved in honor of all educators and will be used for living history presentations.

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