THE KENT SCHOOLS

Present Condition And Prospects Of Our Institutions Of Learning

The school population of Kent Co., or rather that part of it in actual attendance upon the schools, is reported by the School Board as 3243 children—white pupils, 2030; colored, 1213.

The present article concerns the white schools only.

Of the thirty-one white schools now open, twenty are of the old-fashioned one-room and one-teacher variety, and eleven have from two to eight schoolrooms each. In most cases the high school is housed under the same roof with the elementary grades, but where the population justifies it, namely in Rock Hall and Chestertown, there are high school buildings in which the two towns may well take pride. Such buildings speak of the regard which the community has for its own young people, and the value which it places upon education.

Undoubtedly the tendency here will be still further to centralize high school classes, and to consolidate or centralize elementary schools, as this is the prevailing tendency throughout the country. The movement has proceeded so far in some states that there are but few of the pioneer type of one-room schools left. Where, as in the more thinly populated of the western states, the one or two-room school still meets the local need best, very practical and handsomely designed small buildings are in use, planned by architects who specialize in this work, and so are acquainted with the school and its needs. But the superintendent of Ohio schools has just stated at a conference of teachers that the large number of old-type small school buildings still in use in his state are operated at a heavy annual loss to the state itself.

Economy in heating and janitor service, together with the better lighting, freedom from dampness, and better appearance and accommodations of such a building, strongly recommend the centralized school.

The cost of teacher service for a centralized building is not greater than for the corresponding number of little school, while it is easier to secure well-prepared teachers for such a school. Teachers are right in preferring a good environment in which to carry on the important work for which they have been trained.

It should be noted also that a school which can employ a teacher for each one or two grades affords the groups of children far more careful attention and more suitable oversight with reference to their stage of growth, than they can receive from a teacher who is concerned with the extensive subject-matter and the differing ages of the one-room group.

With other American communities which have not yet completed the modernizing of their schools, it can scarcely be doubted that Kent County will eventually have modern school centers, well-placed, throughout its entire territory, increasing the number already in existence, some of which are even now models of what such centers should be. There will then be, necessarily, district transportation with regular routes coming within a half-mile of every home in the district where there are children of school age, and carrying them to and from the school center. We shall in time bid farewell to the "little school" which was to the everlasting credit of our pioneer ancestors, but which is not in any way a credit to present-day knowledge or needs, and does not compare in comfort or appearance with the most unassuming of modern dwelling-houses. The feeling of affection for the little school is part of our past which we must cherish, just so long as it does not put a serious stumbling block in the way of our children's progress.

While having the little schools in considerable number, our own county has rightly sought, for several years past, to bring them into a system by the elementary supervisor's work, so that each teacher and each pupil-group shall feel itself in touch with the others during the year, in studies and all educational activity. The supervisor, by personal acquaintance with all groups of pupils and their teachers, and by regular correspondence, reports, conferences with teachers, and a "service of supplies," knows the needs, the steps in progress, the aims, of every school, large and small.

It is the supervising teacher who can judge whether progress is being made, and can secure for the whole group of schools a general advance, leaving none lagging ingloriously in the rear. This teacher, who has general oversight, can recognize the most faithful and the most intelligent work on the part of the teaching staff, thus giving teachers an incentive, and an understanding sympathy which they need in their delicate, difficult and fundamentally important task.

The supervising teacher has a record of individual pupils, follows their progress through the grades, deciding questions of proper promotion and grading, and conducting examinations, in co-operation with the superintendent, who gives his own time especially to teachers' certification appointments and examinations, and to the work of the high schools.

In cases of special need, the teacher can call upon the experience and judgment of the supervisor for suggestions or advice. Teachers welcome this opportunity, and the consensus of opinion in the state is that it strengthens the work of the schools. The services of the supervisor are immediately available for all types of schools in the county. The school management of the larger centers is a totally different problem from that of the small schools and supervision can supply the help needed by each.

Love for children, fairness in dealing with them, and high standards in reference to their training are essential qualities of a modern teacher. Such a teacher can never forget that education is for the individual child, that he may live up to the best possibilities God has given, and that it is for the community as well, that it may rise to "new occasions" and "new duties," and may "keep abreast of truth." In this she will have the enthusiastic support of the supervising teacher, who seeks, with other leaders of the local community, to see that childhood in their midst is protected, and given the full benefit of all the education which the people through their state government have provided. In carrying on this work any man or woman who has accepted the duties of school supervision must look for the help and support of all the citizens, and all the towns and villages in the county. Every citizen should be clearly aware of the geography of his own school district and should discuss school matters at church gatherings, and other places where citizen can meet citizen, in a spirit of making the home district lead in all good things if possible, but of joining whole-heartedly in matters which are "county-wide," and require the united support of the districts.

It should be said also that it is well for the people of a county to be wide awake to the progress being made in other parts of the state, that they may engage in a healthy sort of competition.

It may be observed that the real leaders in every part of Kent county are constantly studying the best that has been done, in means of transportation, in road-making, and, most vital of all, in the conduct of schools and in teaching. If all should agree to act on this principle, ours might easily become the leader among the counties in certain definite ways which would increase the influence of the educational "good name" we now possess.

A community without a church and Sunday School is one in which the home life and school life both suffer. Have we any such in this county—one where the small children cannot attend Sunday School? The question deserves study by citizens of the county. Our schools could do more effective work if the condition of all children, in their homes, were more deeply the concern of us all.

There are some subjects taught in the schools, which require immedaitely and constantly to be practiced, as well as studied and recited. Some of these are hygiene, agriculture, nature study, English "language and grammar." The need of continued practice makes two things absolutely necessary to success: (1) the homes should help, co-operating with the child in this school-assigned task and projects, and (2) the school should give extensive opportunities for practice, encouraging excellent use of English speech both by teachers and pupils, not only in the grammar-class, but at the noon-hour and on the playground; directing study of "the world's work," in newspapers and weeklies, as well as in the geography; and creating public opinion about observance of hygienic rules. Our schools now give instruction in all the subjects, and practice in a few, but the field of practice must be extended, for it constitutes real preparation for living.

Those who assist and direct teachers, as well as those parents who have a thoughtful interest in their work, realize the good results that may arise, where the community has formed a working partnership with the teacher for the children's sake. At its best, the teacher's relation to the homes may be—and in many a quiet corner of our land is—like that which Phillips Brooks describes as the ideal relation of pastor and people: "It has much of the intimacy of the family, with something of the breadth and dignity that belongs to the state. It is too sacred to be thought of as a contract; it is a union which God has joined together for purposes worthy of his care."

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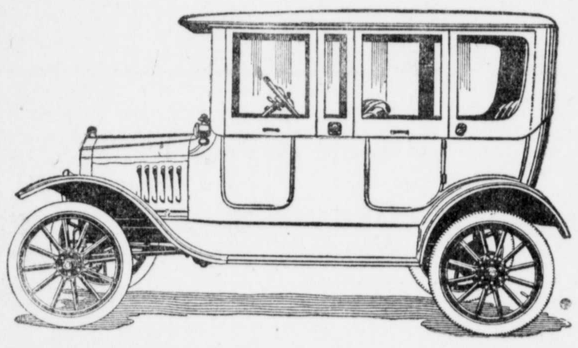

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HARRY F. JEFFERSON

THIS SPACE

BELONGS TO

H. F. JEFFERSON

whose adv. will appear

in due time.

ROCK HALL

Mrs. Frank Hartman is spending some time in Baltimore the guest of her daughter, Mrs. Lawrence Friedhoff.

Last Friday evening a number of the young men of this place held a dance in the K. of P. Hall. The young people spent quite a pleasant evening. It is said that they contemplate holding another dance next Tuesday evening.

The Love Point fishermen have been catching quite a great many fish this week, catching as high as a ton to a boat.

Miss Mary Coleman, who has been visiting in Worton, has returned home.

Mrs. Ella Middleton, who has been on a visit to her son, Mr. Charles Middleton since Christmas, has returned home.

Mr. and Mrs. Marion Downey have had as their guest the past week their son, Mr. Percy Downey, of Baltimore.

Miss Kathleen Urie, of Baltimore, was the week-end guest of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Urie.

Mr. Benj. Durding, Jr., was the guest of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Durding over Sunday.

Sallie Brown, a colored woman of this place, died in Baltimore and was brought over to Rock Hall on Saturday for burial.

CLIFFS

On Tuesday evening of the past week an enjoyable surprise was given at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gus Startt, of Cliffs. Music and games and a general good time were the order of the evening and at a late hour their many friends were invited to the refreshment table, to which all did justice. After a pleasant evening we all started for home. Those present were:

Mr. John Jacquette, Mr. Albert Chairs, Edward Stafford, Leroy Faucett, Edgar Walbert, Harry Goodman, Lister Crouch, J. W. Brown, Clarence Hadaway, Arthur Burris, Franklin Faucett, Simon Jacquette, Leslie Simms, Harry Kirby, Sam Crouch, Gus Startt, Charlie Brown, Gilbert Slagle, Capt. Fred Simpkins, Charlie Slagle, Emory Crouch, Capt. Thomas Bland, Nathan Chaires, Fred Herbert, Master Stanley Goodman, Master Gustavus Startt, Jr., Mrs. J. W. Brown, Mrs. John Jacquette, Mrs. Harry Goodman, Mrs. Howard Hadaway, of Broad Neck, Mrs. Edward Greenwood, of Broad Neck, Mrs. Charlie Brown, Mrs. Arthur T. Legg, Mrs. Fred Herbert, Mrs. Albert Chaires, Mrs. Clarence Hadaway, Mrs. Gus Startt, Miss Rebecca Brown, Miss Helen Dickerson, Miss Helen Goodman, Miss Graham, of Virginia, Miss Catherine Dickerson, Litle Miss Thelma Chaires, Little Miss Naomi Goodman, Doris Legg, Miss Marian Hadaway, Mrs. Legg.

KENNEDYVILLE

Mr. Dewey Whiteley, of Philadelphia, spent the week-end with his parents.

Mr. Robert VanDyke is spending some time in Philadelphia.

Mrs. Charles Holding left on Saturday for New Castle, where she expects to make her home.

We are glad to report Mrs. Hyde Wiltbanks is improving.

Services at Presbyterian Churches are as follows: Grace Presbyterian Church at 11 o'clock and Georgetown at 3 o'clock. Rev. B. B. Stats, pastor.

Worthy Master Harry S. Redmile urgently requests as many members as can to be on hand Monday evening at 7.30.

Mr. Frank and Mr. Walter Hill, of Baltimore, attended the wedding of their nephew, D. Raymond Hill, on Saturday last.

Those on the sick list are Mrs. L. A. Pennington and Theodore Dempsey.

Register of Wills Robert R. Hill and wife have moved into the house recently purchased from the Bennett estate. We welcome Mr. and Mrs. Hill to our community.

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