Carter County 50x # 4

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CARTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM: THEN AND NOW

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Although not a legal right prescribed by the U.S. Constitution, public elementary and secondary education is and should be a high priority in our nation. The process of educating our children has gone through many phases over the years, somewhat parallel to the growth and economic development of our country, including the modernization of industrial and labor intensive extracting industries to computerized and highly mechanized manufacturing procedures.

The historical development of the pubic educational system in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, especially in Carter County, is a microcosm of the national educational system. A brief review of the history of Kentucky and Carter County with a focus on public education, exemplifies the development of our public school system in America.

Kentucky has adopted four constitutions since gaining statehood: 1792, 1799, 1850 and 1891; however, none of the first three constitutions reflected any concern for a public school system. Over the years there have been several abortive attempts to revamp Kentucky's Constitution but elected officials have not accomplished that feat. Even though the Constitution of the United States makes no direct mention of formal education the nation has developed education undertakings without specific benefit from U.S. Constitutional Law. For example, the United States has provided modern grants-in-aid, promotion of education throughout the nation, collected and disseminated specialized information available to all citizens and has provided expert advice in a variety of technical areas.

2. SETTLEMENT OF CARTER COUNTY: THE WESTWARD MOVEMENT

Kentucky became a Commonwealth on June 1, 1792 and took it's name from an unknown Indian source. Kentucky is also known as the Bluegrass State because of the dusty blue blossoms on pasture and meadow grass found in the central and western part of the state. Carter County is located in Northeastern Kentucky in the Appalachian Plateau Region and became a county on May 1, 1838. The "Western Movement" in North America began in 1763 and lasted until 1890 when the U.S. Superintendent of the Census announced that a frontier no longer separated the settled and unsettled parts of the United States.

During the Westward Movement Daniel Boone blazed a trail through the Cumberland Gap, and directed the clearing of a wagon road along the Warrior Path, later called the Wilderness Road, leading into Central Kentucky. He also was responsible for the construction of Fort Boonesboro, Kentucky. In the settlement process many battles ensued between the Native American Indians and the encroaching settlers which earned Kentucky the nickname of "The Dark and Bloody Ground".

Native Indians had already inhabited this general area of America for thousands of years. The Mound Builders, who lived in prehistoric times, probably were the first people to reside and inhabit the Kentucky Region. There were several other Indian tribes that settled in various parts of Kentucky and Ohio many years ago. The Shawnee, Delaware and Iroquois settled in Shawneetown, located on the Ohio River in Greenup County, Kentucky. There was a larger settlement in Southern

Ohio at the mouth of the Scioto River in an area now known as Portsmouth, Ohio.

Indian hunters and warriors who traveled the Warrior Path frequently stopped in Carter County to hunt or do battle with the white man. They also visited the Salt Licks (Salines) in the county for necessary supplies of salt.

Various Kentucky frontier settlements were built, usually by hand and horsepower. Usually, the settlers built a cabin at the head of a hollow which offered some protection from the outside world, at least on three sides of their home. They found that settling near the Little Sandy River and smaller streams throughout Carter County provided some means of travel by boat or canoe and one could walk near the stream more easily than through the underbrush. Streams and springs also provided ample clean water and salt licks provided necessary minerals for food preservation and nutrition. Fertile soil alongside the streams also yielded excellent crops. Because of their seclusiveness and isolation, settlers became clannish and frequently married close relatives. It was not unusual for a person to have the same ancestors on both paternal and maternal sides of the family.

Many of the early settlers in Carter County came from Virginia who had formerly immigrated from England and Ireland. Settlers in Carter County found themselves very much alone in the wilderness and effectively insulated themselves from society as a whole. Being isolated from society and living in thinly populated wilderness areas the pioneers tended to develop their

own personal beliefs pertaining to education and religion. The church and school were closely interrelated because typically the preacher and teacher was the same person.

Locating a suitable building site for a house was one of the first tasks a settler faced in the wilderness. Once the site was chosen the cabin was built of logs taken from the nearby forest. Yellow poplar was a good choice for building materials. The logs were hewn flat on two sides with a broad axe, if available, and notched at the ends so that they would fit together at the corners of the house frame. The spaces between the logs were chinked with mud. Shingles for the roof were rived from short lengths of logs using a froe and a wooden mall. Red Oak and Chestnut trees generally were used for making roof shingles. The puncheon floor was made from logs split lengthwise with the floor surface of the log smoothed with an adz. The fireplace, built of stone, was located at one end of the house. Window openings were covered with greased paper or animal skins and the door was constructed of handmade boards. The door was hung with leather hinges. Most homes contained only one multipurpose room which served as the living room, bedroom, dining room and kitchen. Some settlers built a loft above one end of the room to become a sleeping space for the children.

Hand tools necessary to survive on the frontier included the axe, mall or wooden hammer, froe and an adz. The awl was necessary for making deerskin clothing and moccasins for men and boys. A flint lock rifle and a Bowie type knife were

necessary for protection from marauding Indians or renegade whites, as well as, for providing food for the table. Women and girls made their clothing from material called Lindsey-Woolsey, colored with dye made from leaves, berries and tree sap. A large spinning wheel was used for making woolen yarn and a smaller spinning wheel was used to make linen. A hatchel was used to comb flax fibers after they had been washed, rinsed and dried. Settlers, of necessity, were self sufficient and as a result of their protective seclusiveness they became fiercely independent.

3. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

The Church and school were not always separated because the local preacher frequently was the teacher at the one room schoolhouse. Teaching children was a woman's job, a job not characterized as labor. The settlers generally were of Protestant Belief with many Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians. The church ministers usually were chosen for their religious fervor and enthusiasm as opposed to their formal theology education.

Daniel Boone once stated: "All the religion I have is to love and fear God, do all the good to my neighbors and myself that I can, and do as little harm as I can help and trust on God's mercy for the rest".

The style of religious worship developed by the pioneers involved an informal format allowing the individual to pray directly to God as opposed to confessing to the Pope or the Archbishop of Canterbury. Most church leaders opposed sectarian control of public schools but justified the use of the Bible as the preferred textbook. R. J. Breckenridge wrote: "The Bible is the only book on earth that can teach our children how to be good citizens, faithful parents, true servants of God and so happy and useful men and women".

The "Great Awakening" (1740-1745) was an unusually strong religious revival that swept the American Colonies. The Great Awakening Movement began in New England primarily as a result of the preaching of Jonathan Edwards. His book, Freedom of Will, and his sermons on sin and salvation emotionally stirred the colonists. His sermon, "Sinners in the hands of an

angry God", proved particularly influential among the settlers. Wave after wave of revivalism spread throughout the land. This revival helped develop a new interest in humanitarianism and the rights of the common man in the American Colonies.

The Great Revival (1798-1803) brought about many schisms separating the Protestant Church into many new sects. During this period camp meetings were held which often lasted several days and nights. Passionate preaching lead to emotional singing and other outward expressions of religious faith by members of the congregation. One result of the strong evangelistic fervor associated with revival meetings was the belief that religion was all that people needed in life. Science and mathematics waned in importance; thus, these subjects were not deemed as viable and necessary objectives of the educational curriculum. America still suffers from this major educational and philosophical shortcoming.

4. TEACHERS AND TEACHING

A pioneer teacher, Mrs. William Coomer, opened the first Kentucky school in Fort Harrodsburg, Kentucky (1775). This school was an early beginning of Kentucky's formal education system; however, over 125 years passed before a mandatory state tax was levied to support public schools in Kentucky. The school levy was voted into law by the Kentucky State Assembly (1908) which provided a turning point in the development of the public school system. The Kentucky State Assembly adopted several additional school laws during that year; however, many of these laws became difficult if not impossible to implement.

The development of a free public school system in Kentucky was hindered in part because of the isolated nature of the settlements in addition to the rough geographic terrain. Many of the prevailing attitudes and beliefs that developed in such closely knit groups also tended to stifle the growth of a comprehensive educational system. One firm belief held by many frontiersmen was that education was for the elite and gifted but not necessary for the common men. Many people were satisfied if they were able to sign their name, sometimes with an X, and do a few simple arithmetic computations. Consequently, illiteracy among the settlers was high and there were few internal social pressures for educational and attitude change. Those who did believe in the necessity of formal education generally believed that the Bible as a textbook was sufficient to accomplish all significant learning objectives. The New England Primer began

with the following lines which were memorized by students throughout each settlement:

"In Adam's fall we sinned all, thy life to mend, God's Book attend."

Teachers often boarded with families living near the schoolhouse and received board and keep and in-kind; e.g., coonskins and produce, as part of their teaching salary. In addition, when they could afford it, parents paid one to three dollars a month for the teacher to educate their children. Often one-fourth of this amount was paid in cash and the rest was provided as in-kind payment. The lifestyle of the pioneer by and large was not conducive to formal education because the task of just surviving in the wilderness required an inordinate amount of time and energy. Furthermore, the teacher was a product of the frontier culture and generally had limited academic preparation required to fulfill universally accepted teaching objectives; helping others achieve knowledge and skills, and developing positive attitudes toward learning. A teacher with minimal education usually brought about insignificant learning changes in the pupils. Illiterate parents also provided a very meager educational base necessary for the early preschool preparation of their children for a formal educational experience. Unfortunately, the belief that formal education has only minimal value often has been perpetuated into a lasting family tradition.

The construction of the schoolhouse itself was similar to the construction of the log house. The school building and

handmade school furniture were rough, strong and durable but not user-friendly. In many of the early Appalachian Settlements the shoolhouses had dirt floors and the buildings were heated with a wood burning fireplace. There were some writing tables attached to the walls underneath the windows where there was a better light source. When paper was available students wrote with quill pens dipped in ink made from pokeberry juice, oak galls and maple tree coze (sap). Lack of paper and blackboard made teaching arithmetic and reading difficult; however, spelling could be taught without school supplies and generally became accepted as proof of the effectiveness of the local educational process. Writing slates were used in 1825 and lead pencils were used in 1826. The Spelling Bee was a Social Event which many adults attended for enjoyment and competition.

The Hornbook was one of the first textbooks used by frontier students in the one room school. The Hornbook was made of a piece of flat wood approximately five inches long and two inches wide and was equipped with a short handle. A sheet of paper covered the wood on which the lesson was lettered, usually the alphabet and numerals, zero to ten. A thin piece of transparent horn was placed on the paper to protect it from wear. After pupils completed the Hornbook they were promoted to the primer. The McGuffy Readers and Ray's Arithmetic were used in Carter County (1851) and later Harvey's Reader and Butler's Grammar were added (1869).

Almost always the teacher opened the school day by reading the Lord's Prayer which was repeated in unison by the

pupils. In addition, the teacher read a Bible Scripture. The teacher admonished the pupils to fear the Lord at all times. Additionally, the teachers believed that corporal punishment, swift and severe, should be administered to students who broke any of the school rules. Many held the religious belief: "He that spareth the rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24). Student achievement was assessed on two factors: 1. Discipline and 2. Memorization. Punishment and rigid discipline in the classroom were believed to be the primary motivators for effective learning.

It was assumed by most teachers that pupils attending the early schoolhouse came to school with little previous knowledge (tabula rasa). Some students were aged 14 to 20 and some so young they learned their ABC's while sitting on the teacher's lap. Adjustments were made for physically and mentally handicapped children who also attended school. The school term was short in duration, usually three months, and attendance was approximately 40% on any given day. The teacher was expected to be a "role model" for young people in his/her professional and private life, and therefore, should behave a notch above others in moral and academic standards.

The teacher unfortunately was not able to motivate some pupils to learn for various reasons but many teachers performed an exemplary task under very trying circumstances. In some settlements parents believed that education was an unnecessary frill their children did not need for any future vocation.

There also was public opposition to reading material other than

the Bible; thus, there was some prevailing lack of motivation for citizens to be educated.

5. POLITICAL POWER IN EDUCATION

As the public school system expanded in Kentucky, greater responsibilities were taken by trustees, school boards and school superintendents. Consequently, political power was sought after and used relentlessly in the school system. drive for political power, frequently encouraged the growth and development of attitudes and values of education according to whose side was in or out of the political power network. Individuals supporting specific political groups were referred to as "pros". Those who opposed were referred to as "antis". Money, power and prestige often flowed to educational administrators in office and serious altercations between factions frequently occurred in the struggle for control of teacher placement. Bitter feelings among citizens ran deep and lasted for years. As the school administrative system became more organized, trustees appointed the teachers. Many trustees were accused of favoritism, nepotism and worse motives in making their appointment decisions. General unemployment in the county was very high and teacher salaries were meager; consequently, teacher qualifications often were waived with impunity so that supporters could be employed as teachers. At the turn of the century (1897) Carter County had over 100 school districts and administrators selected the teachers and staff necessary to operate the County's school system. At this time in history incumbent teachers and staff members greatly admired their supervising staff; hence, they contributed money to political incumbents and encouraged friends and relatives to vote for

specific administrators to help keep them in political power.

"You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" helps describe how the early educational political system in Carter County functioned.

EDUCATIONAL CENSUS 1908

The educational structure of Carter County in 1908 was separated into eight Education Divisions. The following table lists the schools in the various subdistricts:

- ED. DIV. #1 GRAYSON
- 1. Grayson Graded School
- Buckeye Springs
- Anglin Curve
- 4. Locust
- 5. Shady Valley
- 6. E.K. Junction
- 7. Leon
- 8. Pope Hollow
- 9. Beech Grove
- 10. Smith Branch
- 11. Fontana

- ED. DIV. #2 BUFFALO
- 1. Carter
- 2. Smith Creek
- Brushy
- Oakland
- Jordan Fork
 Boone Furnace
- 7. McGlone
- Wesleyville
- 9. Stafford Hill
- ED. DIV. #3 OLIVE HILL
- 1. Henderson Branch
- Perry's Branch
- 3. Lower Trough Camp
- 4. Middle Trough Camp
- 5. Upper Trough Camp
- 6. Upper Smokey
- 7. Middle Smokey
- 8. Ben's Run
- 9. Corey Hill
- 10. Ross Chapel
- 11. Providence

- ED. DIV. #4 UPPER TYGART
 - Soldier
 - Enterprise
 - Cedar Grove
 - 4. Union
 - Manning
 - 6. Rock Springs
 - 7. Mocabee
 - 8. Limestone
 - 9. Globe
 - 10. Paint Lick or Reeder
 - 11. Flat Fork
 - 12. Hale
 - 13. Oakdale

- ED. DIV. #5 PLEASANT VALLEY ED. DIV. #6 WILLARD
- 1. Pine Hill
- Cedar Point
- Fire Clay
 Fultz Switch
- 5. King's Chapel
- 6. Hopewell
- 7. Rock Lick
- 8. Aden
- 9. Pleasant Valley 10. James Chapel

 - 11. Sulphur Springs 12. Dudley Ridge

- Lost Creek
- Davy's Run
 Reedville
- 4. John's Run
- 5. McDavid
- 6. Antioch

- 6. Antioch
 7. Maddix
 8. Wolf Creek
 9. Pine Springs
 10. Rattlesnake
 11. Bowling
 12. Riggs or Clifty

 - 13. Gimlet 14. Deer Creek
 - 15. Greenbrier
 - 16. Shell Rock
 - 17. Dry Ridge 18. E.K. Mines
- ED. DIV. #7 GEIGERVILLE ED. DIV. #8 IRON HILL
 - 1. Mount Savage

 - Glancy Fork
 Johnson Chapel
 - 4. Music
 - Geigerville
 - 6. Star
 - Upper Wilson
 Middle Wilson

 - 9. Lower Wilson
 - 10. Upper Stinson
 - 11. Lower Stinson

- 1. The Beech or Iron Hill 2. Salem
- Sutton
- 4. Rock Springs

- 5. Grassy
 6. Fairview
 7. Spicewood
 8. Myrtle Tree or Breckenridge
- 9. Plummer 10. Garvin Ridge

EDUCATIONAL CENSUS 1920

Many of the schools have more recently been consolidated into larger schools; however, the listing of the various elementary and secondary schools in 1920 gives an idea of the early school system.

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SCHOOL	ADDRESS
Aden	Aden
Antioch	Beetle
Antioch (Jordan Fork)	Smokey Valley, Wesleyville, Rooney
Anglin	Pactolus, Hopewell, Curve
Beckwith Branch	Grayson
Beech Grove	Grayson, Hitchins
Brinegar	Soldier
Buckeye	Grayson, Pactolus
Davy's Run	Denton, Partlow
Ben's Run	Olive Hill
Boone	Carter
Bowling	Sophie, Lick Fall
Breckenridge	Everman, Grayson
Brushy Creek	Carter, Eby, Rooney
Carter	Carter
Cedar Point	Counts Cross Roads
Cliffdale	DeEverett, Fontana
Clifty	Bett, Rosedale, Sophie
Corey	McGlone
Corey Branch	Olive Hill
Deer Creek	Rosedale, Beetle, Willard
Denton	Denton, Hitchins
Dry Branch	Soldier, Enterprise
Dry Ridge	Willard, Webbville, Beetle
E. K. Mines	Partlow
Enterprise	Enterprise
Fairview	Kehoe, Charlotte Fce.
Flat Rock	Bett
Fultz	Fultz
Geigerville	Geigerville
Globe	Globe, Limestone
Grahn	Grahn
Gravel Lick	Hunnewell, Seney
Grayson	Grayson
Greenbrier	Cresco, Bruin, Rosedale
Greenbrier (Manning)	Jacobs, Elliottsville, Soldier
Gregoryville	Gregoryville, Grayson
Hale	Emerson, Globe, Upper Tygart
Henderson Branch	Olive Hill
Hitchins	Hitchins
Iron Hill	Charlotte Fce.

SCHOOL	ADDRESS
James Chapel	Counts X Roads, Prater, Olive Hill
John's Run	Reedville, Willard
Johnson's Chapel	Denton
King's Chapel	Grahn
Lawton	Lawton
Leatherwood	Lawton
Leon	Leon
Limestone	Limestone
Little Star	Grayson
Locust	Grayson
Lost Creek	Partlow, Ratcliff
Lower Grassy	Kehoe
Lower Stinson	Grayson
	Olive Hill
Maddix	Saulsberry, Fultz, Sophie, Leon,
	Rosedale
McDavid	Willard
McGlone	Rooney
Middle Wilson	Seney
Music	Music
Norton Branch	Rush
Oakdale	Soldier, Upper Tygart
Oakland	Carter
Olive Hill	Olive Hill
Paint Lick	Upper Tygart
Pennebaker	Upper Tygart
Perrys Branch	Olive Hill
Pine Springs	Bett
Pleasant Valley	Counts X Roads, Grahn, Olive Hill
Plummer	Wolfe, Counts X Roads
Pope Hollow	Leon, Grayson
Prater	Prater, Wesleyville
Providence	McGlone, Bett, Gimlet, Olive Hill
Rattlesnake	Aden, Sophie
Reedville	Reedville, Hitchins
Rock Lick	Fontana
Rock Springs	Sideway, Elliottsville, Jacobs
Ross Chapel	Olive Hill
Salem	DeEverette, Carter
Shell Rock	Leon, Rosedale
Smith Branch	Fontana, Adkins
Smith Creek	Smith Creek, Carter
Soldier	Soldier
Stafford Hill	Eby
Spicewood	Adkins
Star Branch	Kilgore
Sulpher Springs	Grahn
Sutton	Gesling
Tick Ridge	Olive Hill
Union	Jacobs
Upper Grassy	Smith Creek, Ruggles, Carter
Upper Smokey	Smokey Valley

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SCHOOL
Upper Stinson
Upper Trough Camp
Upper Wilson
Wesleyville
Willard
Wolfe Creek

ADDRESS
Stinson
Armstrong, Smokey Valley
Seney
Wesleyville
Willard
Leon, Hitchins

The location of the various school districts are shown on the accompanying map dated 1937.

Throughout the historical development of the educational system in Carter County many conflicts pertaining to both the purpose and the value of education have arisen. Problems and conflicts occurred because of belief differences generated out of isolation of the settlements in the early frontier development and resulting conflicts in the power struggles among politicians, parents and pupils.

Governor elect Wilkinson pledged in his (1988) political campaign to overhaul the educational system in Kentucky so that appropriate educational goals and learning objectives could be achieved. He also pledged major changes in the school governance structure. As a result of the governor's dedication to improved public education, Kentuckians today have the unique opportunity to revitalize their public school system. A recent Kentucky Supreme Court decision (June, 1989) ruled the entire Kentucky school system unconstitutional and mandated the 1990 General Assembly to re-create the school system so it would meet constitutional requirements.

Following the Court's historical decision, a Task

Force on Educational Reform was appointed to correlate and to
integrate the various concepts on school curriculum and school
governance and to develop a viable and comprehensive public
educational plan for Kentucky. The 22 member Task Force is
faced with a monumental task of restructuring an entire school
system, one which may become a model for all states in the

country. Thus, the responsibility of the group of concerned citizens is phenomenal, and begs input from experts in curriculum reform and school governance as well as other concerned individuals. The Commonwealth of Kentucky and its citizens are both beneficiary and sponsor of the improved educational programs.

Much thought has gone into planning the logistics of providing education for all children. The problems of financing the program has received a great deal of discussion and input from many experts in this field. Others have recommended many changes and improvements in governance. Curriculum advisors have suggested that teachers, principals and parents be given a more significant role in the "site based management" program, i.e., more local responsibility for the education of their children. The focus will change from Statehouse to Schoolhouse and from the lawmakers and school boards to the school children.

In addition to the several areas of discussion outlined by Joseph S. Stroud (Lexington Herald-Leader, February 25, 1990) regarding the Task Force recommendations, the writers of this paper believe that strong emphasis should be made on two additional specific topics.

(1) A strong concerted effort should be made to understand the psychological basis of our attitudes toward the importance and value of education in our society, including the public's attitude toward the profession of teaching. The esteem we hold for our teachers is highly correlated with the rewards they receive for their teaching effort. Public school teachers

frequently do not receive the recognition comparable to other professionals in the community. (2) Another area of concern relates to basic fundamental education. Many students, not all, acquire far less than adequate reading and mathematical skills in public school. Those of us in who teach in colleges and universities find that high school graduates have a great deal of difficulty in writing a coherent sentence or in reading and understanding abstract information. Such an individual often is limited vocationally to less than a skilled occupation; consequently, their potential livelihood is significantly limited. In addition, such students often are unable to perform simple arithmetic computations; hence, they are severly limited in their ability to understand the sciences. While the lack of such knowledge is not universal, it is true often enough to create negative attitudes toward our public school sytem. Obviously, other areas of knowledge are very important to the well rounded student. Perhaps the "Readin', Ritin' and Rithmetic" basics are as relevant today as yesterday. We encourage the Kentucky Education Task Force to strongly consider the basic fundamentals of learning in their recommendations. also encourage a thorough analysis of the forces related to the acquisition of a positive self-esteem of the pupil and the teacher.

The quality of our lives can rise no higher than the quality of our education. Kentuckians have a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a vigorous and viable model of public education, one which will benefit all Kentuckians.

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McGlone Creek School was built in 1887 by citizens of Rooney, Kentucky. The building no longer serves as a school; however, it functions as a community meeting house. Funerals, Homecomings and other social events take place at this location.

