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## One-room schools and their role in the development of the Appalachian hills of West Virginia: 1863–1940s

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**One-room Schools and Their Role  
in the Development of the Appalachian Hills  
of West Virginia: 1863-1940s**

**James Seth Caudill**

**Thesis submitted to the  
Eberly College of Arts and Sciences  
at West Virginia University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of**

**Master of Arts  
In  
History**

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**Morgantown, West Virginia  
2010**

**Keywords: One-room Schools; West Virginia; Industrialization;  
Coal Town Schools; Rural Communities  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **One-room Schools and Their Role in the Development of the Appalachian Hills of West Virginia: 1863-1940s**

**James Seth Caudill**

One-room schools provided the educational settings for the majority of West Virginians until well into the twentieth century. The distribution of the population throughout the rural, rolling, and mountainous terrain resulted in the location of schools within walking distance for most students. The school population consisted of students of various ages and different grades contained in one room. Teachers required diverse skills, in order to perform as academic instructor, nurse, custodian, and entertainment leader at recess. The rural schools gave students in these communities an opportunity to achieve an education, offering both academics and life lessons. The thesis will examine three stages in the history of West Virginia's one-room schools. First, what was the role of one-room schools in the development of human growth and opportunity for the population of a predominately-rural state? Second, West Virginia experienced an industrial development beginning in the 1880s, but one that relied principally on resource extraction in rural areas. How did one-room schools adapt to the state's industrial transformation and the attendant demographic and social changes? Lastly, one-room schools were a fixture in many of West Virginia's communities. Whether up the head of a hollow, near a creek, or in the grassy bottom of a mountain valley, these facilities existed and became important community institutions and social centers. When the state moved toward rural school consolidation in the twentieth century, what was the loss to the community by the closing of one-room schools in West Virginia? The investigation of these questions will allow for a better understanding of the role of the one-room school in West Virginia's educational past.

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First, I would like to thank the professors in the history department for their guidance and direction during my graduate studies. Their talents for historical study provided me an excellent learning model. During the research process, I spent numerous hours in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection. The research assistance provided by the curators and entire staff was exemplary. Whether searching for sources, or making suggestions, their help was significant, and eased the stresses involved with my first major research project.

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Finally, I want to thank my first and beloved teachers, my parents, mom and dad. I inherited from them the internal drive of persistence, for which I am grateful. They have always loved, supported, and provided me the opportunity to pursue my goals, and it is rewarding to share with them the completion and accomplishment of this project.

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## In School Days

By John Greenleaf Whittier

Still sits the school-house by the road,

A ragged beggar sunning  
Around it still the sumachs grow,  
And blackberry-vines are running

Within, the master's desk is seen,  
Deep-scarred by raps official;  
The warping floor, the battered seats,  
The jack-knife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;  
Its door's worn sill, betraying  
The feet that, creeping slow to school,  
Went storming out to playing!

Long years ago a winter sun  
Shone over it at setting;  
Lit up its western window-panes,  
And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,  
And brown eyes full of grieving,  
Of one who still her steps delayed  
When all the school were leaving.

For near it stood the little boy  
Her childish favor singled;  
His cap pulled low upon a face  
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow  
To right and left, he lingered;---  
As restlessly her tiny hands  
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt  
The soft hand's light caressing,  
And heard the tremble of her voice,  
As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word:  
I hate to go above you,  
Because,"---the brown eyes lower fell,---  
"Because, you see, I love you!"

Still memory to a gray-haired man  
That sweet child-face is showing.  
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave  
Have forty years been growing!

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,  
How few who pass above him  
Lament their triumph and his loss,  
Like her, because they love him.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Prominent West Virginia educator and historian, Charles H. Ambler wrote, “The social, economic, political, and even the spiritual life of a people are perhaps best reflected in their educational institutions and programs.”<sup>1</sup> The truth of these words resonates in the development of West Virginia as a state, which became independent during the days of the Civil War. The establishment of a free school system was one of the first steps in separating from Virginia and uniting the people of the western counties during the formation of West Virginia. An integral part of the free school system was made up of one-room schools, a necessary reflection of the rural character of the state. The initial steps taken by the political leaders of the time were to establish a defining role for the one-room schools and set concise standards so the new school system of the state had a chance for success in its infancy.

Education in western Virginia during the first half of the nineteenth century was sorely underfunded and the number of schoolhouses was insufficient. The first school buildings were crude, log structures with greased paper for window glass and poplar slabs for writing desks.<sup>2</sup> After statehood, in his Second Annual Report, West Virginia State Superintendent of Schools William R. White, reported, “The log structures were poorly equipped, and poorly located.”<sup>3</sup> An example of the lack of quality school facilities is evident through an 1850 class roster from the Cockayne House, a privately owned

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<sup>1</sup>Charles H. Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia: From Early Colonial Times to 1949* (Huntington, WV: Standard Printing and Publishing Company, 1951), preface.

<sup>2</sup>Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 8.

<sup>3</sup>Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 142.



Marshall County home used as a classroom for at least a portion of the 1850 school year.<sup>4</sup> The use of a private home as a school is only one example, but it is evidence that the people of western Virginia, such as the Cockayne family, improvised as necessary to provide at least some form of education for their own children, as well as those of the community.

The advancement of the large plantations devoted to slave labor blurred the vision of Richmond politicians. The tidewater elite influenced government decisions and tilted the political landscape heavily in favor of a plantation economy. The population of the area determined the number of representatives selected for a particular section of the state. The eastern half of Virginia was much more populated because of being able to count slaves as three-fifths of a person. Thus, the western counties were unable to secure funding for infrastructure, economic, and educational development that they needed to participate in a modernizing economy. The more dominant eastern counties would not vote in favor of free schools, because they did not want to pay more taxes to fund the education of the poorer population in the state.<sup>5</sup> As late as 1850, a political representative from Taylor County criticized the Virginia school system as “a poor system calculated to create and keep up distinctions.”<sup>6</sup> The years of sectional conflict about multiple issues eventually pressed the western counties of Virginia to the decision of secession from their mother state.

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<sup>4</sup>“1850 School: A Complete Record of School Attendance,” An 1850 school attendance record from the archives of the Cockayne Farmstead Preservation Project, Marshall County Historical Society, Glen Dale, WV. Provided courtesy of Tom Tarowsky, Director, and transcription of original record.

<sup>5</sup>Velma Carpenter, “History of Education in West Virginia, 1863-1875” (master’s thesis, West Virginia University, 1940), 8.

<sup>6</sup>Carpenter, “History of Education in West Virginia,” 8.

The Civil War provided the opportunity for westerners to create a state more in line with their economic futures. On June 20, 1861, Francis H. Pierpont was elected governor of the Restored State of Virginia.<sup>7</sup> Pierpont argued, “History, geography, and social attitude had created the need of separation from Virginia.”<sup>8</sup> West Virginia began the process of independence in May of 1862 with approval from the General Assembly of the Restored Government of the State of Virginia. One year later, the new state elected its first governor, Arthur I. Boreman. The approval of both houses of the United States Congress soon followed, and on April 20, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the proclamation.<sup>9</sup> On June 20, 1863, West Virginia officially became the thirty-fifth state to join the Union. Political leaders made education a paramount issue in the development of human growth and opportunity for West Virginians.

Individuals have their own ideas about the role of education in the development of one’s life. In *The Thread That Runs So True*, these sentiments are visible through the heart-felt advice of Mitchell Stuart to his son: “Since I didn’t get an education, I don’t want my youngins to grow up in this world without it. You must have book-learning son. You must not grow up like a weed. You must not grow up like I have.”<sup>10</sup> Mitchell, the father of Appalachian author Jesse Stuart, summed up the educational role of rural Appalachia’s one-room schools quite well.

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<sup>7</sup>Vicki Wood, *West Virginia: The History of an American State* (Montgomery, AL: Clairmont Press, 1998), 228.

<sup>8</sup>Wood, 231.

<sup>9</sup>Wood, 233.

<sup>10</sup>Jesse Stuart, *To Teach, To Love* (Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Company, 1970), 11-12.

Similarly, in the *West Virginia Educational Journal* from October 1872-September 1873, Governor W.E. Stevenson wrote of “The Wants of the Public Schools in West Virginia.” His focus was to encourage West Virginia’s schools to strive for “the perfection of those of New England, which were established more than two hundred years ago.”<sup>11</sup> Stevenson recognized the need for well-organized teachers’ institutes, the development of an educational journal, schoolhouse improvements, and proper mental and physical health care for the children, in order to compete with the older, northern school systems.<sup>12</sup> Nearly seventy years prior to Stuart’s writing, the same basic roles for Appalachia’s one-room schools were expressed by Governor Stevenson. Improvement in educational and personal development would allow individuals to compete in the job market and provide them with an opportunity to improve their qualities as citizens as well as their standard of living. In short, an education would prohibit the inhabitants of Appalachia from “growing as a weed.” These facilities, though small, provided a quality education through increased levels of teacher and student interaction, firm discipline, open classrooms, and creating a homey environment for the local students.<sup>13</sup>

Rural, one-room schools were not innate only to Appalachia, so it is important to compare West Virginia with other areas. In *Small Wonder: The Little Red Schoolhouse in History and Memory*, Jonathan Zimmerman examined one-room schools in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Minnesota, and various other states. He wrote that “Observing Minnesota’s last one-room school in 2002, a reporter raved about its

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<sup>11</sup>W. E. Stevenson, “The Wants of the Public Schools in West Virginia,” *West Virginia Educational Journal* 1, (October 1872 – September 1873): 19.

<sup>12</sup>Stevenson , “The Wants of the Public Schools in West Virginia,” 20-22.

<sup>13</sup>Jonathan Zimmerman, *Small Wonder: The Little Red Schoolhouse in History and Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 3-4.

many “family touches;” students' heights were penciled on the doorjamb, children at times brought their dogs to school and sometimes went fishing during the lunch hour.<sup>14</sup> These acts created a familiar and comfortable feeling for the students. Zimmerman used memories of America’s one-room schools in order to examine their role as a discipline oriented educational facility, as well as an open educational setting. *Small Wonder* discusses relevant one-room school topics and provides a comparison to sources from the *West Virginia Educational Journal* that described everyday operations, educational standards, and the needs of the one-room schools of the Mountain State.

Likewise, it is important to examine how one-room schools adapted to new circumstances. During West Virginia’s industrial development of the late nineteenth century, extractive industries such as coal, timber, and salt, were responsible for creating a diverse economy in the state.<sup>15</sup> As West Virginia’s industries became profitable, outside capital investments increased, bringing new technology and a growing labor force. It was crucial for West Virginia to educate its own population in order to compete for jobs in an industrialized economy. George D. Torok's *A Guide to Historic Coal Towns of the Big Sandy River Valley* elaborated on the differences between the coal towns through the size, quality of structures, and construction of the coal town’s schools. The model company towns constructed beautiful schools of stone and brick, unlike lower quality facilities found in standard coal towns across West Virginia and Appalachia. The better schools in model company towns served as a means to attract quality teachers, and

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<sup>14</sup>Zimmerman, *Small Wonder*, 6.

<sup>15</sup>Ronald L. Lewis, “Industrialization,” *High Mountains Rising: Appalachia In Time and Place*, eds. Richard A. Straw and H. Tyler Blethen, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 59-60.

provided a facility which served the coal community as a meeting and social center.<sup>16</sup> In model coal towns, the movement toward better facilities and improved schools was an effort by coal companies to attract workers and keep them content within the community.

One of the tropes of Appalachian history concerns the supposed lack of ambition that characterizes mountain people. This thesis will explore what one-room schools can tell us about this stereotype, and whether or not ambition was present in West Virginia. Initially frowned upon, ambition began to be more accepted nationally in the nineteenth century. The growth of capitalism and the ideas of educational reformers to provide a quality education to all laid the groundwork for positive ideas of ambition to take root.<sup>17</sup> Industrialism and ambition had an impact on education. Industrialism brought changes in the economic landscape of West Virginia as more people left farms for work in cities and coalmines. Children realized that there was more opportunity and different choices for their future than remaining attached to the family farm. One example outlined in this thesis is the story of William Woodson Trent. In *Mountaineer Education*, Trent speaks of the important roles of West Virginia's one-room schools during this time. Trent was educated in a one-room school, taught in a one-room school, and in 1932, rose to the position of West Virginia State Superintendent.

This study will focus on the role of West Virginia's one-room schools in the development of the state's citizenry and human capital. West Virginia's early political leaders had the task of establishing a credible school system in a rural, mountainous state

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<sup>16</sup>George D. Torok, *A Guide to Historic Coal Towns of the Big Sandy River Valley* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2004), 86.

<sup>17</sup>J. M. Opal, *Beyond the Farm: National Ambitions in Rural New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), vii.

with little educational infrastructure. State leaders were determined to overcome these obstacles, and one-room schools became a part of the solution. Chapter 2 will look at the efforts of such leaders as W.E. Stevenson, A.L. Wade, and William R. White. The statements, ideas, suggestions, and decisions of these men are available in the *West Virginia Educational Journal*, *West Virginia Educational Monthly*, Governor's Speeches, and the West Virginia Public Papers section at the West Virginia and Regional History Collection. County by county education reports, produced by the county superintendents, also reveal the educational efforts in the state. David H. Sutton's oral histories of schoolchildren, who grew up in Helvetia, West Virginia, in the 1880s and 1890s, help establish a sense of the early one-room schools as a learning facility and as a part of the overall community.

Chapter 3 will examine how the one-room schools evolved during the coming of industrialization to West Virginia. The arrival of the railroad and river travel brought life to West Virginia's coal, timber, salt, and glass industries. What effect did this industrial transition have on the one-room schools of West Virginia? Secondary works will provide a sufficient foundation for the understanding of West Virginia's industrial development.

Chapter 4 will investigate the role of the one-room schools at the community level. What were some of the alternate uses for the structures? How did West Virginia's small, rural communities react to the loss of their one-room schools due to modernization and school consolidations? The consolidation of schools saved the counties and state thousands of dollars. Early research provided evidence that economic issues, improved roads, and school bus transportation all played a role in the demise of one-room schools.

Interviews with individuals who grew up during this time and experienced their community's reaction to these decisions will add a human element to this work.

Investigating West Virginia's one-room schools, their role in developing human capital, their adaptability during the industrialization of the state, and their importance in West Virginia's rural communities, is a worthwhile study. Researching the educational ideas of West Virginia, and how they changed over time, will allow the examination of what was lost with the disappearance of the one-room schools, and what was gained by their replacement with modern facilities. It is important that we understand the educational past of the state, in order to move forward with positive educational development in the future.

## Chapter 2

### The Creation: 1863-1880s

The development of one-room schools within the free school system of West Virginia was a significant component of the human growth, personal development, and the encouragement of ambition within the state's population. West Virginia formally established public education in 1863, when the western counties gained independence from Virginia and became the thirty-fifth state.<sup>1</sup> Since that time, West Virginians have sought to ensure a quality education for children. West Virginia governors and political figures had expectations and goals for educational growth in the new state. One of the first missions was to establish a system of free schools, and during the first legislative session in 1863, Governor Arthur I. Boreman directed the Committee on Education to "provide for the establishment of a thorough and efficient system of free schools."<sup>2</sup> One-room schools became an initial and integral part of the free school system.

The legislature also appointed William R. White as the first state school superintendent, with the enormous responsibility of directing the creation of the state's public school system.<sup>3</sup> In his role as state superintendent of schools, White was one of the most prominent promoters of education in West Virginia. He vigorously faced the challenges of establishing free schools in all counties, and his efforts during the first year

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<sup>1</sup>West Virginia, *200 Years of Public Education in West Virginia: A Bicentennial Account of the Public Schools* (Charleston: West Virginia Dept. of Education, 1976), 4.

<sup>2</sup>Benjamin Stephen Morgan and Jacob F. Cork, *Columbian History of Education in West Virginia* (Charleston: M.W. Donnally, printer, 1893), 17.

<sup>3</sup>Thos C. Miller, State Superintendent of Free Schools, *History of Education in West Virginia* (Charleston, WV: The Tribune Printing Company, 1904), 52, and Morgan and Cork, *Columbian History of Education in West Virginia*, 18.



in office resulted in twenty-two of the then fifty counties creating a free school system, with eleven more counties in the process.<sup>4</sup> White recognized that a top priority of the free school system was the quantity, location, and condition of the state's one-room schools. He set forth an agenda that included improvements to existing schools and the construction of new one-room schools.

In 1864, State Superintendent White proposed the replacement of the decaying and outdated log structures from the early educational system in Virginia. White's idea was to institute buildings that would foster an appreciation of education across the new state. He met opposition over the costs of the project, as the people were opposed to paying more taxes. He maintained that "the people must be educated up to the point where they will see the great advantage of being taxed to build schoolhouses and properly remunerate the teachers of their children."<sup>5</sup> White recognized the importance of funding education through taxpayers' money. The conflict over finances slowed progress initially, but records indicate that the public school system in West Virginia grew with steady progress from the formation of the state through 1900.<sup>6</sup>

The new free school system brought construction of one-room schools within walking distance for most of the population, and the iconic structures dotted the rural landscape of the state. The students consisted of various grades contained in one room. C. D. Wells, a Wyoming County newspaper publisher, praised the schools and school officials for maintaining high standards. He reported that the community kept abreast of

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<sup>4</sup>James Morton Callahan, *History of West Virginia: Old and New* (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1923), 628.

<sup>5</sup>Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 142.

<sup>6</sup>Miller, *History of Education in West Virginia*, 58.

the outside world through an abundance of periodicals and newspapers.<sup>7</sup> The free school system provided an increased number of one-room schools in the rural areas of the state. A Wetzel County resident wrote in 1873, “The new school houses are beautiful structures, capable of seating comfortably from fifty to sixty scholars with good desks and blackboards, showing that the people of Wetzel appreciate the free school system.”<sup>8</sup> These statements demonstrate that the people of West Virginia recognized the importance of educational progress in the state and appreciated the work put forth toward improvement of the one-room structures, improved educational standards, and the employment of quality teachers.

Statistics illustrate the growth of schools between 1865 and 1900 in West Virginia. In the decade 1870-1880, the number of common schools, most of which were rural one-room schools, increased from 2,441 to 3,680. By 1890, they increased to 4,784, and in 1900, the number rose to 5,186, while the number of teachers employed increased respectively (see appendix, table 1).<sup>9</sup> The data do not indicate a decline in growth, because the construction of modern facilities continuously replaced the older, inadequate structures. As time progressed, there were fewer structures to replace, and fewer areas left without a school. As more teachers were hired, fewer positions were available. These statistics support the link between the increasing industrialization of West Virginia's economy and the important role of one-room schools in achieving a higher level of education and advancement of human capital. During the initial years of

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<sup>7</sup>C.D. Wells, *Something about the County of Wyoming: State of West Virginia 1849-1889* (Mullens, WV: The Mullens Advocate, Charles V. Stewart, 1963), 5-6.

<sup>8</sup>Silver Hill, “Letter From Wetzel County,” *West Virginia Educational Journal* 2, no. 3 (December 1873): 123-124.

<sup>9</sup>Miller, *History of Education in West Virginia*, 7, 59.

statehood, it became apparent that in order for one-room schools to prove successful, “the great need of the public school system was trained and educated teachers.”<sup>10</sup> The third governor of West Virginia, William E. Stevenson, recognized the problem of the lack of training facilities for teachers and the ability to attract those who desired to make teaching a profession.<sup>11</sup> West Virginia needed to educate its teachers, who would then educate its youth, who would then teach a new generation of students. He realized that schools in West Virginia “did not show the perfection of New England Schools,” but presumed that “in a few years our schools will at least equal, if they do not excel those in States north of us.”<sup>12</sup>

West Virginia politicians recognized that to provide a quality education in the public schools, the state required trained and educated teachers. As early as 1867, state leaders established three Normal Schools, which were training facilities for teachers at West Liberty, Fairmont, and Guyandotte (now Huntington), and by 1872, they added three more at Shepherdstown, Glenville, and Concord.<sup>13</sup> The West Virginia normal school properties consisted of impressive facilities with outstanding equipment, libraries, and amenities, and the graduates went on to become teachers, principals, county superintendents, and instructors in institutes. As a result the number of teachers

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<sup>10</sup>Morgan and Cork, *Columbian History of Education in West Virginia*, 18.

<sup>11</sup>W.E. Stevenson, “The Wants of the Public Schools in West Virginia,” *West Virginia Educational Journal Volume One* (October 1872 to September 1873): 20.

<sup>12</sup>Stevenson, “The Wants of the Public Schools in West Virginia,” 19-20.

<sup>13</sup>Miller, *History of Education in West Virginia*, 52.

employed by the state increased from 387 in 1865, to 7,067 in 1900 (see appendix, table 2).<sup>14</sup>

Stevenson's conclusions regarding the training facilities of teachers and the desire for a future, "perfect" school system provide the foundation for its role within West Virginia. He desired a system that would educate the population of West Virginia and allow them to compete for jobs with others who had been educated from anywhere in America. Stevenson's ideas included high, ambitious standards for such a rural land where recruiting quality teachers and constructing quality one-room schools proved difficult in the 1860s and 1870s.

In the antebellum period, students enrolled in and attended school each year without a prescribed course of study and continued until they learned the basics.<sup>15</sup> In the 1870s, however, West Virginia initiated an important change. Monongalia County Superintendent A. L. Wade introduced the "Graduating System" into primary schools. This system divided pupils into separate classes with a preset time for completion. Students were required to pass examinations at the end of the school year before entering the next highest grade. They participated in commencement exercises and received diplomas upon completion of the grade level. The Graduating System put into place in primary schools what was already in place in high schools and colleges. Several other counties in the state, along with various places in western Pennsylvania, adopted Wade's System as well.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Miller, *History of Education in West Virginia*, 10, 52.

<sup>15</sup>West Virginia, *200 Years of Public Education*, 5.

<sup>16</sup>A. L. Wade, *West Virginia Public Documents 1879-1880: Third Annual Report of A. L. Wade, County Superintendent of Free Schools of Monongalia County, West Virginia, for the Physical Year Ending August 31, 1878* (1878): 46.

The *Second Annual Catalogue of the Free Schools of Monongalia County, West Virginia, for 1876-1877* included a report on the county's one-room schools by the county superintendent A.L. Wade. His report focused on a variety of topics, including retaining quality teachers, schoolhouse and school ground maintenance, and the possible dispersion of educational aids such as globes, dictionaries, and outline maps.<sup>17</sup> Wade commented that when students had the means necessary to complete as many studies as they could effectively pursue, successful achievement occurred. "Nothing short of this outline can be called success."<sup>18</sup>

Superintendent Wade and Governor Stevenson identified similar concerns and plans for the development and success of a free school system with quality one-room schools in West Virginia. Both expressed the need for qualified teachers and proposed establishing quality teaching academies throughout the state. Both men also identified necessary construction and improvements to the one-room school facilities themselves. However, Governor Stevenson desired to set the future standard of West Virginia's schools on a level with those of New England, which were older, well-established schools, and regarded as the best learning facilities in America. In the initial stages of establishing the free school system of West Virginia, the importance and direction of one-room schools emerged as a primary factor.

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<sup>17</sup>A. L. Wade. "Second Annual Report of A. L. Wade, County Superintendent of Free Schools of Monongalia County, West Virginia, for the Year Ending August 31, 1877," *Second Annual Catalogue of the Free Schools of Monongalia County, West Virginia, for 1876-1877* (Morgantown, WV: Morgan & Hoffman, 1877. Monongalia County Historical Records A & M 3582, Box 52, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, Guide to Archives and Manuscripts, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV), 4-8.

<sup>18</sup>Wade, "Second Annual Report," *Second Annual Catalogue of the Free Schools*, 6.

The diverse skills needed to teach in West Virginia's one-room schools made the job of the teacher quite difficult, and the effort to attract and keep quality teachers continued to be an obstacle. Itinerant teachers moved continuously and the lack of stability created a difficult learning environment. In 1867, the state superintendent of schools proposed that a homestead be provided near the school for teachers in rural districts, and commented, "A good teacher will command a good school; a good school will insure a good school-house, and a good school-house invariably advertises the thrift, the enterprise, and the culture of the society that is its patron."<sup>19</sup> It was the superintendent's hope that the provision of a home in close proximity to the one-room school would entice teachers to remain in rural districts for an extended teaching duration, thus attracting the population and providing a stable and permanent learning environment.

The certification of teachers was in itself a complex problem. Based on examination scores, counties issued teachers certificates on a graded system from number one, the highest level of certification, through number five, the lowest level of certification. County school superintendents controlled the certification process, including private examinations, which were fraudulent in numerous cases (see appendix, table 3).<sup>20</sup> In 1873, in an effort to control corruption in examination standards, the state approved normal schools to issue lifelong diploma certificates to graduates without a

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<sup>19</sup> Ronald L. Lewis and John C. Hennen, Jr., *West Virginia: Documents in the History of a Rural-Industrial State* (Dubque, IA: Kendall-Hunt Publishing Company), 142.

<sup>20</sup> Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 154.

required examination.<sup>21</sup> Once again, this was an effort by political leaders to increase the quality of teachers and teaching standards in West Virginia Schools.

The certificate level and teacher qualifications did not correlate with salary. In 1875, the Mason County Superintendent requested that the trustees make a more careful selection of teachers. He also made the suggestion to raise the salary of better-qualified teachers. “It is evident that a competent teacher hired for three months at \$50, is a far better investment than a drone hired for five months, at \$30 per month.”<sup>22</sup> In a letter to the *West Virginia Educational Monthly*, a woman questioned trustees as to why teachers’ wages did not correspond with teachers’ work. She criticized the trustees for not providing a better system to ensure that quality teachers were paid for quality work. She also questioned the difference in pay for men and women teachers.<sup>23</sup>

The same year, Randolph County raised the advanced qualification of teachers by gradually increasing the examination difficulty. The Randolph County Superintendent reported the case of a teacher who initially scored a number four certificate. Four years later, the same teacher scored a number one certificate. The Superintendent identified “the increased interest on the part of the people, in the case of public education.”<sup>24</sup> In 1879, legislators reduced the number of teacher certificates from five to three and declared a number one certification from an examination equivalent to a Normal school

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<sup>21</sup>Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 155.

<sup>22</sup>D. P. Guthrie, Mason County Superintendent, *West Virginia Educational Monthly* 3, no. 6 (March 1875): 303.

<sup>23</sup>Mary R. McGwigan. *West Virginia Educational Monthly* 3, no. 8 (May 1875): 371-372.

<sup>24</sup>Jacob I. Hill, Randolph County Superintendent, *West Virginia Education Monthly* 3, no. 5 (Feb. 1875): 241.

certificate.<sup>25</sup> The elimination of the lower number four and five teacher certificates indicated an attempt by legislators to improve teacher quality and standards, and as a result improve the quality of education for West Virginia children.

The development of West Virginia's one-room schools intertwined with the culture of the state, a relationship apparent in the oral histories with various individuals who grew up during the 1890s in Helvetia, a community in Randolph County, West Virginia. These firsthand accounts provide extensive information about daily life and school activities during the early years of West Virginia's educational system. Interviewer David Sutton wrote of Helvetia, "The family, church, school, and cultural organizations structured community life, giving it meaning and direction amid social and economic change."<sup>26</sup> The vivid descriptions provided by the Helvetia interviewees demonstrate the centrality of the one-room schools to this rural community. The inhabitants were a close-knit group that engaged in recreational activities such as hunting, attending church, and community dances. Recollections of working and helping to maintain their families' farms are present throughout the interviews as well. The educational day consisted of the three R's—reading, writing, and arithmetic—along with lessons on everyday life and work ethic. The combination of culture and traditional curriculum promoted a family atmosphere and created a sense of unity within the educational environment of the Helvetia one-room school. Students of former one-room schools across America shared similar sentiments as described by Jonathan Zimmerman.

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<sup>25</sup>Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 155.

<sup>26</sup>David H. Sutton, "One's Own Hearth is Like Gold: A History of Helvetia, West Virginia." (master's thesis, West Virginia University, 1985), 98. The David H. Sutton Collection includes five bound transcriptions of eight interviews between the interviewer, David H. Sutton, and various individuals who grew up in the 1890s in Helvetia, West Virginia. The interviews reveal the school experiences and everyday lives of the Randolph County community.



A man from Michigan “praised the one-room school for representing individualism, and fostering a work ethic in students both in the classroom and on the farm.”<sup>27</sup>

Tucked away in the steep, rugged terrain of Randolph County, the geographical landscape of Helvetia was in many respects a typical Appalachian settlement. The majority of settlers were Swiss or German immigrants who relied heavily on an agrarian society, for survival as well as for a means of income.<sup>28</sup> The transition from this pioneering lifestyle to a “modern” environment had not yet taken place throughout all of West Virginia.<sup>29</sup> Sutton’s interviews with Mary Metzener Morris and Mary Huber Marti demonstrate the relevance of education in the lives of these two young West Virginians.

Mary Metzener Morris attended the Hollybush School in Helvetia during the 1890s. Morris described the learning environment, but one particularly interesting aspect of her recollections stood out. Morris, a Swiss immigrant, reflected, “School was awful hard for me to learn because I couldn’t talk English and I didn’t understand English either.”<sup>30</sup> This cultural characteristic is easy to overlook, yet it was important in the assessment of the educational experience of the students in the Helvetia community. Morris explained, “I tried to study so hard and bring all my books home that I had, and mom helped me as much as she could.”<sup>31</sup> Morris declared that her mother and father knew how to read and write, but did not express how or when her parents had learned to

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<sup>27</sup>Zimmerman, *Small Wonder*, 8.

<sup>28</sup>Sutton, “One’s Own Hearth is Like Gold,” viii, 3.

<sup>29</sup>Sutton, “One’s Own Hearth is Like Gold,” 16.

<sup>30</sup>Mary Metzener Morris, interview by David H. Sutton, Helvetia, WV, November 18, 1979, transcript, David H. Sutton Helvetia Collection, A & M 3687, Box 3, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, Guide to Archives and Manuscripts, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV, 8.

<sup>31</sup>Morris, interview, 8.

do so. Morris' statement illustrated that the initial desire of early West Virginia leaders to motivate students in one-room schools to grow personally and intellectually, had taken place.

Imagine a child toting her books home every evening and studying for hours because she feared that she would not learn English. Her fear of failure is reminiscent of the fear of failure present in America throughout the nineteenth century as described by Scott Sandage. Americans viewed the economic ambition and success of big business and American capitalism as the standard for success. In turn, they based their individual success on self-reliance and financial gain. The fear of failure was present in every era, and Sandage provided accounts of several everyday Americans who failed at business ventures or ended up in financial ruin through other means. Individual success or failure became a measure of human worth, and their failure at financial self-sufficiency deemed them worthless.<sup>32</sup> In this instance, Morris linked everyday attitudes of failure to her personal ability to conquer the English language. She was willing to put forth extra effort to prevent personal failure and achieve individual success at mastering the language. Morris's interview statements provided evidence that her family was not financially set for life. "There was no high school at the time. The superintendent sent tests from the high school to our school, we took them, and we all made them. We could have attended high school, but it was in Buckhannon. Dad and mom didn't have the money to leave us there, so I never got to go to high school."<sup>33</sup> The disappointment expressed by Morris confirmed that she was ambitious and aspired for human growth.

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<sup>32</sup>Scott Sandage, *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 37-39, 225.

<sup>33</sup>Morris, interview, 9.

The fact that Mary's mother made time to assist her daughter with studies demonstrated the value and importance she placed on education. As industry and improved transportation brought the timber industry to Helvetia, parents realized that the ability to speak English effortlessly was crucial to advancement in society.<sup>34</sup> Ambition has always been present at some level in American society. Historian J. M. Opal asserts that as far back as the fifteenth century, young people in Europe became competitive with each other's accomplishments in academic classes. The trend continued in American academies throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as students longed for praise and feared failure. The most accomplished students presented exhibitions to the rest of the class and this social distance signified status to their peers. Anyone could become superior to their classmates through ambition, talents, and study. The idea of ambition took hold in America and the intent was to propel students from a local into national market society. The belief was that the more knowledge people acquired, the wiser they became, and society reaped the advantages. Students were prepared with skills needed to succeed in society, rather than with skills needed for the farm.<sup>35</sup> In addition to time spent working on the family farm, churning butter, and sewing clothes, Mary's mother made time to help her daughter learn English. Education ranked high on the scale of importance with this family.

The interview with Mary Metzener Morris described the tragic incident when the Hollybush one-room schoolhouse burned down, and all of the books in the school were

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<sup>34</sup>Sutton, "One's Own Hearth is Like Gold," 111.

<sup>35</sup>J. M. Opal, *Beyond the Farm*, 100-101, 110.

lost.<sup>36</sup> The school was later rebuilt, but Morris lost all of her personal books in this disaster except for her “Guffy’s Reader.”<sup>37</sup> The popular *McGuffey Reader* was issued as a first reader, second reader, and so on, as the child advanced through reading and writing studies. *The McGuffey Reader* taught students the alphabet, penmanship, handwriting, and basic reading skills through stories that related to people, nature, and animals. Many of the McGuffey Readers included illustrations along with the stories. The illustrations depicted landscapes, children, and various animals such as birds, kittens, puppies, and horses. The pictures reinforced the child’s reading with art, as well as a visual representation of the story. The curriculum of the Helvetia schools did not include art at this time. An illustration of a bird perched on a tree branch was included with the following poem:

Little Robin Redbreast has a nest in our garden.  
If you listen any time in the day, you can hear him sing.  
On warm days, he likes to sit in the shade among the green leaves.  
He can see the busy bees when they fly to the flowers to get honey.  
He sees the green apples about him, but he does not like them.  
He would not eat them if they were ripe and sweet.  
At night he can look up from his place in the tree and see the bright  
stars in the sky.  
Sometimes he can see the moon, too, as it shines above him.<sup>38</sup>

The above poem stressed a style of learning literacy that appealed to the minds of rural children. The poem meshed with the existing culture of West Virginia during this time. The agrarian lifestyle and outdoor farm work exposed children to nature and wildlife. They were accustomed to a garden, and recognized a robin and its song. The

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<sup>36</sup>Morris, interview, 9.

<sup>37</sup>Morris, interview, 9.

<sup>38</sup>*The New McGuffey First Reader*, (New York: American Book Company, 1901), 83-84.

entire poem evokes a vision of a nineteenth-century farm with the mention of bees, apples, leaves, flowers, and honey. The familiarity of the subject matter promoted interest and learning among the youth.

Students could practice writing or penmanship skills on blank spaces periodically dispersed throughout the book. Similar layouts and outlines are present in advanced McGuffey Readers. It is quite ironic that the single book saved in Morris' collection was the book used most frequently in one-room schools for reading, writing, and language arts. The survival of the McGuffey Reader was one positive outcome for a child who struggled with learning English during the tragic loss of the Hollybush School.

Morris communicated the undeniable feeling of disappointment and sorrow at the loss of her books and the Hollybush School. Completing the school year in the private home of Ruth Fahrner, Morris recalled, "We had a room upstairs where we finished our school, it must have been close to the ending of the school season, so we finished there."<sup>39</sup> The Fahrner House, along with the Cockayne House mentioned earlier, provided two examples of West Virginia's youth being educated at private residences. Although the circumstances were different, the use of private homes as alternate locations for educational purposes alluded to the resourcefulness of the people in these communities. More importantly, such actions demonstrated the high priority placed on education in the Glen Dale and Helvetia communities in the nineteenth century.

The recollections of Morris demonstrated the presence of ambitious children who desired and viewed obtaining an education as the first step toward success. This interview also provided a sense of how this family prioritized education through the

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<sup>39</sup>Morris, interview, 10.

painstaking efforts of her mother. The unfortunate lack of finances prohibited Mary from attending high school. At the age of fifteen, Mary moved to Cleveland, Ohio, with her Aunt “Lizzie” in an effort to find work. Later in life, Mary moved back to Helvetia, the community where her memorable childhood years took place.

One-room schools typically had to be flexible and adapt to community needs. In Helvetia agriculture was the primary occupation as was emphasized in an interview with Mary Huber Marti. Marti described farming as a difficult and laborious means of making a living, and recalled that the Helvetia school she attended incorporated agricultural education into the curriculum.<sup>40</sup> Marti regretted the loss of diversity in the curriculum of her one-room school; “the school added agriculture ... and we took off ancient history.”<sup>41</sup> The curriculum change disappointed Marti as she later stated, “I wanted ancient history, and I didn’t get it.”<sup>42</sup> Her desire to learn ancient history indicated her ambition to surpass the basic studies of the current curriculum, something beyond the subjects that composed the remainder of the school curriculum, which included geography, United States history, West Virginia history, arithmetic, and penmanship.

The insertion of West Virginia history into the curriculum hoped to incorporate the identity of the state into the development of each child’s education. After the Civil War, as railroads opened up the timber, coal, and other industries in the state, an influx of immigrants and migrants arrived seeking work. The mixed cultures, attitudes, religions, agricultural techniques, and ideas of the European immigrants and African Americans

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<sup>40</sup>Mary Huber Marti, interview by David H. Sutton, Buckhannon, WV, July 13, 1979, transcript, David H. Sutton Helvetia Collection, A & M 3687, Box 3, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, Guide to Archives and Manuscripts, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV, 13.

<sup>41</sup>Marti, interview, 13.

<sup>42</sup>Marti, interview, 13.

produced a diverse, heterogeneous people. In the one-room schools across the West Virginia landscape, the increasing populations of students acquired education in remote locations. Schools taught students how to read and write, and they learned a system of moral principles. The inclusion of West Virginia history in the curriculum provided an additional outlet to develop an identity around the social, cultural, and economic progress of West Virginia and the nation as a whole. The schooling of each generation of people would continue, as long as individual states provided a common education to everyone. Eventually, educators believed, the entire country would come together as informed citizens with common values. The ravages of the Civil War left the country bitter and disillusioned. There was a need across the nation to reinvigorate a sense of patriotism in Americans. By incorporating state and national history in the school curriculum, the political leaders hoped to establish state and national identity in West Virginia, as well as the feeling of American loyalty.

Marti, who was of German descent, also discussed her attendance at the Helvetia summer German School. She remembered that ministers taught during the summer school.<sup>43</sup> Marti said, “We didn’t have anything to do and we went to the German School, learned to read, write, and everything else. We had to learn.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, Marti, as a ten-year-old, not only attended school during the year, but also during the summer. This undoubtedly defined a child striving for success as well as a child who possessed the valuable trait of ambition.

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<sup>43</sup>Marti, interview, 14.

<sup>44</sup>Marti, interview, 14.

The interview between Sutton and Marti suggests several conclusions. First, even as late as the 1890s, agriculture remained a vital component of the economic, cultural, and educational identity of the Helvetia community. Second, the educational development and diversification of the curriculum of the area's one-room schools is evident. The addition of agriculture classes within the curriculum of the Helvetia one-room schools was in some respects an innovative educational scheme. The idea behind the curricular addition was a direct response to the economic importance of agriculture in the Helvetia community. Of all the curriculum developments, this addition truly adapted to the culture of West Virginia and Helvetia. Finally, the German summer school allowed students to remain in cultural contact with their ancestral heritage. In the 1880s, one-room schools of Helvetia provided a diverse educational curriculum for the community's youth. The opportunities to learn agricultural techniques and attend a German summer school are not the ideas one typically considers when thinking about the West Virginia one-room school experience.

Another example of a child educated in a West Virginia rural one-room school during this time was William Woodson Trent. Trent is an example of a child who opted for an educational future instead of employment in the timber or coal industry. In *Mountaineer Education*, W. W. Trent told of growing up in a rural atmosphere near the Nicholas and Greenbrier County border and discussed his childhood during the 1870s. Trent worked on his family's farm, hoeing rows of corn and butchering hogs. He remembered his family making sure that the crops were adequate, as they depended on the farm to supply all of their needs. They grew crops for both human and livestock consumption. Trent hunted squirrels and fished in order to provide extra food for the



family. He cut and carried firewood, milked the cows, and fed the horses. The family sheared sheep, washed wool by hand, picked it clean of foreign matter, and then the women of the house spun it into cloth. The wool provided blankets, hoods, shawls, sweaters, and socks. Trent's shoes were made of tanned cowhide by one of his neighbors. They transported excess corn and flax by horseback to local mills located some three miles from the Trent farm.<sup>45</sup> Agriculture was of primary importance to rural West Virginians' economy and survival, as demonstrated by the near self-sufficiency of the Trent family. He humbly remarked, "We had to work to keep the wolf from the door."<sup>46</sup> The autonomy displayed the unparalleled work ethic exhibited by Trent.

In 1885, Trent enrolled in a one-room school located one mile from his home for a term of three months. A neighboring community, located approximately four miles away, started the school term earlier in the year than the local school.<sup>47</sup> Trent walked the four miles to attend the school with the earlier opening date. Trent's determination to attend school exemplified a young man who prioritized education, dedicated himself to learning, yearned for success, and struggled for a better economic future.

Trent's school curriculum included the "Three R's," United States History, Mitchell's Geography, and the always-present McGuffey's readers and spellers, and "parsing and diagramming were emphasized."<sup>48</sup> Parsing was to describe the grammatical role of a word or grammatical structure of a sentence, and diagramming was the

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<sup>45</sup>William Woodson Trent, *Mountaineer Education: A Story of Education in West Virginia 1885-1957* (Charleston, WV: Jarrett Printing Company, 1960), 1-3.

<sup>46</sup>Trent, *Mountaineer Education*, 1.

<sup>47</sup>Trent, *Mountaineer Education*, 3.

<sup>48</sup>Trent, *Mountaineer Education*, 4.

identification of basic sentence parts, phrase configurations, sentence types, and clause configurations. The curriculum was versatile and provided many children of southern West Virginia, including Trent, with a quality education. When Trent was ready for high school, there was no high school for him to attend, and he completed his studies in a one-room school. Trent made his number two-teaching certificate in 1895, and began his teaching career at Big Laurel one-room school, in 1896.<sup>49</sup>

Trent both attended and taught at one-room schools between the years of 1885 and 1896.<sup>50</sup> He gained experience as an educator and realized the importance of one-room schools. Trent's philosophy was that "schools should be conducted for the sake of the child," and "must be so developed that the child, living on a farm in the country, will have the same chances as the one living in the largest city in the State."<sup>51</sup> These country schools provided the setting to educate the rural population of West Virginia, and offered the opportunity for social and cultural advancement. Trent rose to a high position in the West Virginia educational system when he achieved the position of State Superintendent in 1932. His story is an excellent example of how education should inspire ambition in children and nurture individuality. His autobiography proved that children of humble, rural upbringing could achieve success, and ambition existed within the hills of West Virginia as it did in the slick city streets of New York or Boston. The story also affords an example of how the one-room schools of West Virginia provided a quality education to one individual and allowed that child to develop educationally and personally to

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<sup>49</sup>Trent, *Mountaineer Education*, 6.

<sup>50</sup>Trent, *Mountaineer Education*, 3, 8.

<sup>51</sup>Trent, *Mountaineer Education*, 226.

achieve a successful life. In areas devoid of industrialization, such as the Trent story above and the Helvetia community, education in a one-room school provided an outlet for the development in human capital and the merit of improving one's standard of living.

West Virginia initially aspired to increase the educational and character development of its people through one-room schools. However, as the state's plans moved forward, a new era of development emerged. The iron horse rolled through America, Appalachia, and West Virginia. The new economic development utilizing railways, affected nearly every realm in the mountain state and education was no exception. The timber, salt, glass, and most notably West Virginia's coal industry, affected the roles of the one-room schools. Would these children strive for educational success and personal human growth, or go to school until they could work underground with their father in a coalmine? Would they become that new, young man on a timber cutting crew? As a new era dawned, West Virginia found itself at an economic and educational crossroads, and it was not at all clear what role the one-room school would play.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Dawning of Industrialization: 1880s-1920s

As early as 1876, as America commemorated her centennial, many foreign travelers arrived to participate in the celebration. One visitor was M. Ferdinand Buisson, the French commissioner of Education. Buisson traveled across America, visited schools, and met with numerous American educators. Buisson recognized that “economic growth and development were clearly linked to the American educational system.”<sup>1</sup> Buisson noted that political, commercial, and individual success, were dependent upon the advancement of the public schools in America.

West Virginia, in comparison with America in general, was moving slightly slower in connecting industrial development with educational advancement. Initially, in early statehood and during the Reconstruction, political leaders strived for educational progress, but during the era of industrialization, the primary interest was marketing the state’s natural resources. Education thus became a secondary concern, as nonresident corporations led the industrial economy.<sup>2</sup> In 1900, Thomas C. Miller became the new West Virginia State Superintendent of Schools. Miller realized that, “intellectual development must keep pace with material development in the state.”<sup>3</sup>

Although West Virginia and other areas of rural Appalachia were becoming more industrialized, agriculture remained present within the economy. Industrialism brought advancements in science, technology, and mass production techniques, affecting even

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<sup>1</sup>H. Warren Button and Eugene F. Provenzo, *History of Education and Culture in America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1983), 154-155.

<sup>2</sup>Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 205.

<sup>3</sup>Miller, *History of Education in West Virginia*, 53.

farm life. For instance, one such company that produced modern farm equipment was Case International Harvester, which produced the first gas-powered tractor in 1892.<sup>4</sup> The new labor saving machinery allowed farmers to work their land with fewer workers. The long-established way of life throughout the rural country began to disappear, and brought the need for increased intelligence and knowledge to understand and operate the new technological innovations. Traditional educational influences of “the home and the farm began to disappear, along with the customary passing of instruction from father to son.”<sup>5</sup> Country boys and girls with ambition left the farm for the city, and very few envisioned farming as a life career.<sup>6</sup>

All across America urban centers presented women employment in new areas such as laundries and hat shops, and professions for men such as engineering and police detective work. Urban life offered new opportunities and a freedom of choice in careers that was unavailable in rural areas.<sup>7</sup> Case Construction produced machinery for non-agriculture uses in the construction industry. They manufactured steam-powered rollers and graders, and states across the nation utilized the new machines for use in early highway construction work.<sup>8</sup> In the early 1900s, Joseph Frances Joy designed a

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<sup>4</sup>Case IH Agriculture, “International Harvester – Case IH History, History Overview,” 2010, <http://www1.caseih.com/northamerica/AboutUs/Pages/CaseIHistory.aspx> (accessed May 8, 2010).

<sup>5</sup>Ellwood Patterson Cubberly, *Rural Life and Education; A Study of the Rural-School Problem As a Phase of the Rural-Life Problem* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1922), 90, <http://books.google.com/books?id=AkVMAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=elwood+patterson+cubberly&lr=&cd=11#v=onepage&q&f=false> (accessed May 23, 2010).

<sup>6</sup>Cubberly, *Rural Life and Education*, 24, 25, 26.

<sup>7</sup>John L. Rury, *Education and Social Change: Themes in the History of American Schooling* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2002), 136.

<sup>8</sup>Case Construction, “Heritage,” 2010, [http://www.casece.com/wps/portal/casece/aboutus/heritage?brandsite\\_brand=CaseCE&brandsite\\_language=en&brandsite\\_geo=NA](http://www.casece.com/wps/portal/casece/aboutus/heritage?brandsite_brand=CaseCE&brandsite_language=en&brandsite_geo=NA) (accessed May 8, 2010)

mechanical coal loader in an effort to create a better way to perform the laborious work of hand loading coal, and by 1919, established the Joy Machine Company (known today as Joy Mining Machinery).<sup>9</sup> The new machines and technologies created by manufacturing companies allowed industrial development to flourish in West Virginia. In a state still relying on one-room schools, how would the educational system adapt to the challenges of industrialization? For West Virginia, economic growth and development was only about to begin.

Meanwhile, local color writers such as Mary Noailles Murfree and William Goddell Frost also exploited Appalachians. Stories by these writers influenced a literary movement that depicted Appalachians, including West Virginians, in a negative fashion. The authors portrayed the mountain population as “homogeneous, lazy, drunkards, uneducated, ignorant, and physically isolated from the rest of America,”<sup>10</sup> characteristics borne of Appalachian economic dependence on farming, the absence of urban centers, and an embrace of rural lifestyles. Murfree also used attributes such as the Appalachian dialect to add color and interest to her work. Many Americans read Murfree’s short stories, and in so doing participated in the creation of a fictitious stereotypical image of West Virginia. The changes ushered in by the new industrial era would create new challenges for West Virginia's public school system.

The industrialization of West Virginia posed unique problems. According to Appalachian historian Ronald L. Lewis the population of West Virginia was becoming increasingly industrial, but unlike other regions, the industrial development occurred in

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<sup>9</sup>Joy Mining Machinery, “Our History,” 2010, <http://www.joy.com/Joy/About-Us/History.htm> (accessed May 8, 2010).

<sup>10</sup>David C. Hsiung, “Stereotypes,” in *High Mountains Rising*, 103.

rural, not urban, settings.<sup>11</sup> Industry and commerce played important roles in the countryside as agricultural manufacturers such as gristmills and tanyards, and extractive industries such as coal, timber, and salt, were responsible for a strong market and trade in the region.<sup>12</sup> These markets created a more economically diverse population.

Initially, capitalism and industrial development occurred along waterways such as the Kanawha River, and river ports in Wheeling, Morgantown, and Charleston, where the development of transportation by roads and railroads ultimately connected the goods of rural interior West Virginia to the urban markets.<sup>13</sup> Coal, salt, iron, timber, and agriculture processing were primary factors in the economy of Appalachia, and in 1832, salt exports from this area were estimated at \$250,000.<sup>14</sup> The Kanawha River provided the means of transportation for salt from the Kanawha Valley to the Ohio River Valley, allowing the industry to reach outside of Appalachia. As West Virginia's industries became profitable, outside capital investments increased. Industry brought new technology and individualized labor to the state.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, railroad expansion occurred on a massive scale in West Virginia and was an important development for industry and transportation. The two major trunk lines in West Virginia were the Baltimore and Ohio in the north, and

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<sup>11</sup> Ronald L. Lewis, "Appalachian Restructuring in Historical Perspective: Coal Culture and Social Change in West Virginia," *Urban Studies* 30, no. 2 (1993): 299.

<sup>12</sup> Lewis, "Industrialization," *High Mountains Rising*, " 51, 59-60.

<sup>13</sup> Ronald L. Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside: Railroads, Deforestation, and Social Change in West Virginia, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 51-52.

<sup>14</sup> Lewis, "Industrialization," in *High Mountains Rising*, 59, and Lewis and Hennen, Jr., *West Virginia: Documents in the History of a Rural-Industrial State*, 45.

the Chesapeake and Ohio in the south.<sup>15</sup> By 1873, the C & O Railroad connected Richmond, Virginia and Huntington, West Virginia.<sup>16</sup> The rail link allowed tidewater ports to move their goods through Appalachia and onto the Ohio River and connect the East to the Midwest. In 1888, Collis P. Huntington sold the C & O Line to Melville E. Ingalls, who constructed branch lines along tributary streams of the New and Kanawha Rivers.<sup>17</sup> The expansion of the rail system in West Virginia resulted in the development of a network of independent rail lines, and track mileage doubled in the 1880s, doubled again in the 1890s, and by 1917, covered 3,705 miles.<sup>18</sup> Outside capitalists took advantage of the growth in railroads and began to takeover Appalachia's resource rich land.<sup>19</sup> West Virginia natives lost control of their acreage to northeastern industrialists, and by 1923, nonresidents owned over one-half of the private land.<sup>20</sup> The vast network of railroads connected the previously untapped resources of the state's interior with large-scale markets, thus propelling West Virginia into the industrial boom of the late nineteenth century.

The advancements in industry and railway expansion made shipment of West Virginia's rich fuel resources possible, and connected the state to the national market. The additional railway lines provided transportation for the timber industry, and opened

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<sup>15</sup>Ronald L. Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 46.

<sup>16</sup>Lewis, "Industrialization," in *High Mountains Rising*, 63.

<sup>17</sup>Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 59.

<sup>18</sup>Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 46.

<sup>19</sup> Gordon B. McKinney, "The Civil War and Reconstruction," in *High Mountains Rising: Appalachia in Time and Place*, eds. Richard A. Straw and H. Tyler Blethen, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 55-56.

<sup>20</sup>Lewis, "Appalachian Restructuring in Historical Perspective" *Urban Studies*, 300.



the region's plentiful coal seams for other industries. Glass factories migrated to areas where coal and natural gas were easily accessible to fuel the furnaces used in the glass making process.<sup>21</sup> Coal operators created mine sites near railways from the 1880s until the 1920s and established numerous coal company towns along the coal rich Big Sandy River Valley and Kentucky borderland.<sup>22</sup> By 1882, West Virginia ranked sixth nationally in coal production with two million tons per year, and by 1905, ranked third with thirty two million tons, behind Illinois and Pennsylvania respectively.<sup>23</sup> Coal production increased nearly every year from 1883 through 1940 (see appendix, table 4).

The influx of industrialism in West Virginia brought an increase in the population. Between 1890 and 1914, fifteen million immigrants arrived in the United States, more than any other period in history.<sup>24</sup> Immigrants came to work in West Virginia in the timber, salt, glass, railroad, and coal industries. Between 1890 and 1907 a large number of Swedes and Austrians arrived to work in the timber industry, and by 1910, the foreign-born workforce in even the remote Pocahontas County reached 16.1 percent.<sup>25</sup> In the glass industry, immigrants of German, French, English, or Irish heritage made up three out of every ten workers in tableware production.<sup>26</sup> In the southern West

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<sup>21</sup>Ken Fones-Wolf, *Glass Towns: Industry, labor, and Politically Economy in Appalachia, 1890-1930s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 6.

<sup>22</sup>Torok, *A Guide to Historic Coal Towns*, 71.

<sup>23</sup>State Inspector of Mines, *First Annual Report to the Governor of the State of West Virginia for the year 1883* (Wheeling: Chas. H. Taney, State Printer, 1884), 14, and James W. Paul, Chief Mine Inspector, *Twenty-third Annual Report, Coal Mines in the State of West Virginia, U.S.A. for the year ending June 30, 1905* (Charleston, WV: The Tribune Printing Company, 1906), 14.

<sup>24</sup>Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (Paw Prints 2010), 77.

<sup>25</sup>Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 166.

<sup>26</sup>Fones-Wolf, *Glass Towns*, 12.

Virginia coalfields, the population increased from 93,000 in 1880 to 446,000 in 1920, the majority of whom “became part of an economic system controlled by the coal industry.”<sup>27</sup> During the same time, native farmers also began to leave the mountainous unproductive farms of West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, in an attempt to gain prosperity for their families in the vast coal industry of Appalachia.<sup>28</sup> The rich Appalachian coalfields lured numerous outside coal investors and eventually gave rise to company-run coal mining towns throughout the region.

Beginning in the 1880s, investors and coal entrepreneurs acquired the mineral rights to an area and then moved in to build the mine and the company town, which changed the character of rural West Virginia. The quality of housing and town facilities depended upon the desires of the operator, and some towns were inferior to others.<sup>29</sup> “In no other area of the country was the influence of the company town more profound than in the soft coal fields of the southern mountains, where at the height of the coal boom, 78.8 percent of the mine workers in southern West Virginia and over 64.4 percent of the miners in eastern Kentucky and southwest Virginia lived in company-controlled communities.”<sup>30</sup> Along with housing for the miners, the coal mining towns contained a church, post office, and school. The coal operators provided teachers for the company school, and the school building sometimes served as a place for social gatherings when

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<sup>27</sup>Lewis, “Appalachian Restructuring in Historical Perspective,” 300, and West Virginia State Archives, “West Virginia’s Mine Wars,” *West Virginia Division of Culture and History*, under “West Virginia Archives and History,” <http://www.wvculture.org/history/minewars.html> (accessed May 8, 2010).

<sup>28</sup>Crandall A. Shifflett, *Life, Work, and Culture in Company Towns of Southern Appalachia, 1880-1960* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), xi.

<sup>29</sup> Shifflett, *Coal Towns*, 33.

<sup>30</sup>Ronald D. Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 162.

school was not in session.<sup>31</sup> The center of the town was the company store, which provided essential food and other necessities, served as the location for numerous social activities such as dances, pool hall games, and some stores housed a library.<sup>32</sup> The miners and their families in these company towns shared a social and cultural existence through similarities in their jobs, church, school, entertainment, and values.

The coal companies printed scrip, which was a system of paper money or coins, and issued it to the miners as a form of payment for their work. The coal company distributed the scrip at the company store, where they automatically deducted rent, medical fees, and utilities, from the miners' wages.<sup>33</sup> The miners could only use scrip at the company store or within the company town, creating a monopoly for the coal company. Even when wages increased, the coal companies increased prices at the company store to offset the revenue they lost by paying higher wages.<sup>34</sup>

The unjust practices of many of the coal companies generated financial burdens on the miners and their families, and as a result, negatively affected the lives of their children. Families needed additional income and this monetary support came in the form of child labor. At the turn of the century, boys left the one-room schools of the coal towns and began to work with their fathers, some as early as age eight, where they worked picking the rock and debris from the coal.<sup>35</sup> Many young boys worked

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<sup>31</sup>Shifflett, *Coal Towns*, 150, 153, 169.

<sup>32</sup>Shifflett, *Coal Towns*, 168.

<sup>33</sup>Torok, *A Guide to Historic Coal Towns*, 88.

<sup>34</sup> West Virginia State Archives, "West Virginia's Mine Wars."

<sup>35</sup>United States Department of Labor, Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), A Pictorial Walk Through the Twentieth Century, "Little Miners," <http://www.msha.gov/CENTURY/LITTLE/PAGE2.asp> (accessed April 23, 2010).

underground as trapper boys, where they opened and closed wooden ventilation doors that controlled air into and out of the mines.<sup>36</sup> The job required the boys to sit and open and close the door as necessary. Sometimes, the boys sat idle for long periods, “learning practically nothing that will fit him for usefulness in time to come, besides being deprived of all the benefits of education.”<sup>37</sup> A National Labor Report from 1908 indicated that in one West Virginia coalmine, a young boy who looked about twelve years old had been trapping for six years, and in another place, a boy of about thirteen had been employed for three years.<sup>38</sup> The tragic reality of child labor in mines was dangerous work in an unhealthy environment and deprived the children of attending their local one-room school.

A 1911 photo titled, “No time for School,” confirms the young age at which boys entered the coalmines (see appendix, figure 1).<sup>39</sup> The faces of young boys reflect the grim work environment that they encountered on a daily basis. A second photo illustrated a young boy running a trip rope at a coalmine in Welch, West Virginia (see

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<sup>36</sup>J. Davitt McAteer, *Monongah: The Tragic Story of the Worst Industrial Accident in US History* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2007), 61.

<sup>37</sup>E. N. Clopper, Secretary for the Ohio Valley States, National Child Labor Committee, Pamphlet No. 86, National Child Labor Committee, 1908, “Child Labor in West Virginia” West Virginia Division of Culture and History, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/labor/childlabor05.html> (accessed June 15, 2010).

<sup>38</sup>Clopper, “Child Labor in West Virginia”.

<sup>39</sup>National Child Labor Committee, Washington, D. C.; “No Time for School in 1911- Child Miners Group before Child Labor Laws,” West Virginia History On View, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries, Morgantown, WV, JPG file, [http://images.lib.wvu.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?rgn1=ic\\_all;op2=And;rgn2=ic\\_all;q1=child%20labor;size=20;c=wvc;back=back1274396620;subview=detail;resnum=8;view=entry;lastview=thumbnail;cc=wvc;entryid=x-030160;viewid=030160.JPG](http://images.lib.wvu.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?rgn1=ic_all;op2=And;rgn2=ic_all;q1=child%20labor;size=20;c=wvc;back=back1274396620;subview=detail;resnum=8;view=entry;lastview=thumbnail;cc=wvc;entryid=x-030160;viewid=030160.JPG) (accessed April 23, 2010).

appendix, figure 2).<sup>40</sup> The tripper was a mechanism operated by a pulley system that turned a small section of a conveyor belt upside down to release the coal into a side chute.<sup>41</sup> These are all examples of elementary age children at work, as opposed to studying in a one-room school of Appalachia. Soon after the turn of the century, many states adopted compulsory education laws that set statewide standards for school attendance, including coal town schools, and in West Virginia, children up to the age of fourteen were required to attend school.<sup>42</sup> The creation of such laws was an effort by political leaders to curtail underage child labor in the industrial sector, especially the coalmines and prepare them for other opportunities.

In an article for *Goldenseal*, Bert Hudson recalled his days in Bullpush Hollow, a coal town community owned by the Cannelton Coal and Coke Company. The community was located on the Kanawha and Fayette County border, and consisted of approximately thirty company houses, a one-room school, and a dirt road.<sup>43</sup> Hudson described the people of the community as “Conservative individuals who respected professionals, and believed in traditional social values. Teachers were held in high esteem and had the respect and support of the community.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Hine, Lewis, Credit National Archives 102-LH-70, “Boy Running Trip Rope, Welch Mining Company, Welch, W. Va.,” West Virginia History On View, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries, Morgantown, WV, JPG file, [http://images.lib.wvu.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?rgn1=ic\\_all;op2=And;rgn2=ic\\_all;q1=child%20labor;size=20;c=wwcp;back=back1274396620;subview=detail;resnum=2;view=entry;lastview=thumbnail;cc=wwcp;entryid=x-002965;viewid=002965.JPG](http://images.lib.wvu.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?rgn1=ic_all;op2=And;rgn2=ic_all;q1=child%20labor;size=20;c=wwcp;back=back1274396620;subview=detail;resnum=2;view=entry;lastview=thumbnail;cc=wwcp;entryid=x-002965;viewid=002965.JPG) (accessed April 23, 2010).

<sup>41</sup>United States Department of Labor, Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), A Pictorial Walk through the Twentieth Century, “Little Miners,” <http://www.msha.gov/CENTURY/LITTLE/PAGE10.asp>

<sup>42</sup>Torok, *A Guide to Historic Coal Towns*, 86.

<sup>43</sup>Bert W. Hudson, “Respecting Miss Skaggs,” *Goldenseal* 34, no.3 (Fall 2008): 46-47.

<sup>44</sup>Hudson, “Respecting Miss Skaggs,” 46.

Hudson explained that most miners' families were large, poor, and very few children attended school past the age of sixteen. Many boys dropped out of school to go to work in the mines to provide a source of extra income for the family, a common scenario. Parents valued the one-room school and the teacher, and wanted to instill these same values in their children. It is ironic that a community placed such respect on the teacher and the one-room school, yet the constant struggle of poverty and life in a coal town prevented many miners' children from continuing their education beyond the one-room schools.

What exactly was the agenda of the coal town one-room schools? It was common for a one-room school to be present in a company town, but were these one-room schools truly an educational facility to help provide children with a quality education? Or, were the coal town one-room schools merely a day care until the miners' children were old enough to enter the labor force? The treatment and lack of respect directed toward the miners and their families reflected the company's desire for profit. Placing such financial burdens on coal town families, to the point where elementary age children would stop attending school and begin working in the mines, shows that coal town schools were established for other purposes than the welfare of families and the development of citizens. However, some companies developed model company towns, which brought better schools and better-qualified teachers. As time progressed, this illustrated an accommodation of the coal companies toward the basic educational needs of the children who inhabited the town.

According to David Corbin in *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, many coal companies put forth great effort and financial support toward education in southern West Virginia.

Initially, coal companies supported education for miners and their families because they required a more literate workforce to increase efficiency and productivity of the mine operations, reduce mining accidents, and preserve socioeconomic order to prevent union related violence.<sup>45</sup> They provided space, built schools, equipped schools, and subsidized school budgets. Coal companies supported consolidations of small, outdated, schools, and recruited better quality teachers.<sup>46</sup> Before the railroads brought transportation and industrial development to the coalfields, there were a few, crude, rural one-room schools. In McDowell County, for example, in 1885, there were nine log cabin schools valued at less than \$100, each with a school term of three months. By 1904, there were seventy-eight schools valued between \$300 and \$600 each, with a school term of eight months.<sup>47</sup> The coal companies also subsidized teacher salaries by \$20 per month, provided nice housing, and in Logan County, they paid a monthly bonus amounting to \$6,000 over four years.<sup>48</sup>

As the development and structure of the coal companies improved, their managerial workforce did as well. One example is Cabin Creek Consolidated Coal Company, who in 1914 hired Josiah Keely, whose credentials included degrees from West Virginia University and Harvard University, service as principal of a West Virginia preparatory school in Morgantown, and membership in the West Virginia State Board of

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<sup>45</sup>Corbin David, *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields: The Southern West Virginia Miners, 1880-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 127.

<sup>46</sup>Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion* , 70, 128.

<sup>47</sup>Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, 71.

<sup>48</sup>Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, 71, 127.

Examiners.<sup>49</sup> Higher educated administrative personnel arrived in the coal towns, with a keen interest and high expectations for quality education there.<sup>50</sup> In 1914, at Glen White in Raleigh County, school courses included properties of mine gases, mine ventilation, and mining methods, in addition to the regular curriculum, and in 1929, the West Virginia State Board of Education added a course in coal mining to the public school curriculum.<sup>51</sup>

The quality of facilities, quality of teachers, and quality of education in general would not have improved as quickly if industry had not reached the interior hollows of West Virginia. Railroad development brought the coal boom and employment opportunities for the rural inhabitants. The coal companies improved the educational conditions in the coal towns, even if they did so in pursuit of their own interests. However, in many coal towns, the struggle with poverty still existed, especially in large families, as sons were forced into mining jobs at an early age to supplement income. Ultimately, the situation contradicted the initial goals of the coal companies to produce employees that were more knowledgeable and to improve the socioeconomic conditions in the coal town.

Appalachian historian Ronald Eller suggests, “We have come to believe that progress means technological development, industrial expansion, and growth in material wealth. Modernization has become synonymous with progress and we tend to ensure the improvement of any nation, society, or region in terms of its modernization.”<sup>52</sup> When

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<sup>49</sup>Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, 128.

<sup>50</sup>Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, 128.

<sup>51</sup>Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, 129.

<sup>52</sup>Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers*, xv.



West Virginia formed as a state, the establishment of quality learning facilities and the provision of educational opportunities for its children was an initial priority. As industrial progress crept to the forefront of the state's agenda, the focus shifted from education to the promotion of the state's natural resources. Modernization spread across America, Appalachia, and West Virginia. Progress brought about new jobs, new roads, new transportation, and new educational facilities. Consolidations, budget cuts, and the development of school buses, which provided transportation to larger urban schools, all combined to supply the progression of modernization. The era of the rural one-room school appeared to be drawing to a close and on the brink of becoming obsolete. The question became, how long could the rural one-room schools remain open, and if left operational, what reasons were behind their continued existence?

## CHAPTER 4

### The Demise and Response: 1930s and 1940s

In the early 1900s, America was in the midst of the progressive movement and West Virginia was involved through the marketability of its abundant natural resources. The gradual change from an agrarian to a more industrialized society not only altered the economy of America, but the future of the country's educational systems as well. West Virginia was no exception. One-room schools multiplied on the landscape through the 1920s and into the early 1930s. The one-room school was not only an educational facility, but also an integral component of the social and cultural climate of the community. The rural inhabitants named the schools after people, places, and geographical features from nearby surroundings. For example, Black Jack School was named for a black oak; Joel's Branch in Wayne County was named for a nearby creek; while, Upper Madison School in Cabell County, took its name from a nearby road and the Lewis school took its from a Mr. Lewis who built and started the school.<sup>1</sup> The names indicate the close ties of the schools and the communities. The school served as a venue for local meetings, social gatherings, spelling bees, and picture-taking day, all of which were community events.<sup>2</sup>

From the 1920s through World War II, the significance of the one-room school on rural communities became paramount, as families left the countryside for jobs in urban cities and carried in their memories sentimental recollections of time spent in the one-

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<sup>1</sup>Tony L. Williams, "A Salute to the West Virginia One-Room Schools," *Journal of Rural and Small Schools* 1, no. 2 (1986): 30.

<sup>2</sup>Williams, "A Salute to the West Virginia One-Room Schools," 31.

room school.<sup>3</sup> Teachers also expressed an attachment to the one-room schools, described well in Paul F. Lutz's, "One Room was Enough." The article appeared in the Fall 1996 issue of *Goldenseal*, and provided a valuable oral history of the personal and community issues of West Virginia teachers who taught in one-room schools. In the article, Ed and Julia Viers, both former Wayne County teachers, provided insight about teachers' salaries and credentials as well as the tardiness of payment during the Depression and the tactics used to ensure funding for a specific political party. Ed expressed that he was required to donate a fifty-dollar fee to the Wayne County Democratic Party in order to remain as teacher of his current school. Viers continued, "After contributing for several years, I decided to take a stand. I refused the bagman's request, and I found myself teaching at Horse Creek the following year, way out in the boondocks."<sup>4</sup> Julia added, "It didn't hurt being Methodist either."<sup>5</sup> These stories appear colorful and amusing today, but tactics such as these are primary examples of how the county and state can negatively influence one-room schools through irresponsible methods. Although the Vierses did not recollect any trouble, employment based on preferential political and religious backgrounds could possibly create disputes within a community.

Mary Asbury, another retired one-room schoolteacher, was also interviewed for the same article. She recalled, "We had to be the proverbial jack of all trades. We were the teacher, principal, janitor, nurse, guidance counselor, and more, all rolled into one."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Zimmerman, *Small Wonder*, 59.

<sup>4</sup>Paul F. Lutz, "One Room was Enough: Ed and Julia Viers, Wayne County Educators," *Goldenseal* 22, no.3 (1996): 28.

<sup>5</sup>Lutz, "One Room was Enough," *Goldenseal*, 28.

<sup>6</sup>Lutz, "One Room was Enough," *Goldenseal*, 31.

Every problem of every day fell squarely on their shoulders and the effectiveness of the solutions depended on their responses. The teachers of the one-room schools needed diverse skills in order to perform as a quality educator. One facet of the teacher's day was to monitor games at recess. There were no extra-curricular activities such as athletic teams or clubs in the one-room schools. Children played many games that are foreign to today's students such as Go Sheepy, Go, Drop the Handkerchief, Fox and Dog, and Marbles.<sup>7</sup> The school population consisted of various ages and different grades contained in one room, which is in direct opposition to modern educational standards. These recesses of mixed ages were essential, especially for younger age students, to provide a mental rest and physical activity.

The daily teaching and study routine within the one-room schools occasionally varied by combining games with lessons. Jesse Stuart provided an example of one such scenario in *The Thread That Runs So True*. Stuart cut up a calendar and had the students glue the numbers to cardboard to construct number cards. He designed several creative games with the number cards that sparked learning in the minds of the young students.<sup>8</sup> In an interview with Nell Hatfield, she described how teachers at the Mill Creek School, in rural Wayne County, West Virginia, used academic games to inspire learning. Hatfield recalled a class spelling bee and climbing the arithmetic "Greasy Pole," where students, kept adding, subtracting, or multiplying numbers until they missed, and fell off

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<sup>7</sup>Carl E. Varney, *Birch Bark ad Sassafras Tea* (WV: C.E. Varney and the Appalachian Study Class of Crum High School, 1974-1975), 36, and Lutz, "One Room Was Enough," 32-33.

<sup>8</sup>Jesse Stuart, *The Thread That Runs So True* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 39.

the pole.<sup>9</sup> These stories illustrate what a normal day of study encompassed in Wayne County, as well as most of Appalachia during this time.

One-room schools were versatile and served many purposes during this era throughout the country and the state. Hatfield recalled, “The Mill Creek School was used as a station to pick up rations, such as meal, flour, sugar, and shoes during the early stages of the war.” She went on to say, “The Mill Creek School was also a post for children to receive immunizations.”<sup>10</sup> The one-room school signified community importance, not only through the forced persuasion of political donations as described by Viers, but also through roles of necessity as described by Hatfield.

In an interview with Dr. Connie Rice of West Virginia University, she described another use for one-room schools. Rice spoke of the Harmony Grove School, which was located in Morgantown, West Virginia. She said, “Harmony Grove was used in conjunction with the Harmony Grove Church during summer Vacation Bible School. After the bible lessons were over, the children were allowed to play on the swings and other playground equipment for the remainder of the evening.”<sup>11</sup> This is another example of how family, friends, and community utilized the one-room school for alternative purposes.

In 1928, Walter S. Gedney, a rural New Yorker proclaimed, “The Little Red School House has been part of the very vitals of American institutions.” As a result, many accused Gedney of being “too sentimental,” to which he pleaded, “guilty.”<sup>12</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup>Nell Dora Hatfield, oral interview by author, March 28, 2010, Fort Gay, WV.

<sup>10</sup>Hatfield, interview.

<sup>11</sup>Dr. Connie Rice, oral interview by author, May 4, 2010, Morgantown, West Virginia.

<sup>12</sup>Zimmerman, *Small Wonder*, 59-60.

Vierses' stories of using one-room teachers as a political outlet, the secondary functions of the one-room school, such as those recollected by Hatfield and Rice, and the strong feelings of sentiment expressed by Gedney, explain the attachment rural communities felt for their local one-room schools. However, the attachment and community involvement not only existed in West Virginia and Appalachia, but throughout all of rural America.

Even though one-room schools served various functions within the communities, the quality of these facilities did not satisfy everyone. One-room schools epitomized rural personification and feelings of homey sentiment across America. The *Omaha World Herald* reported, "Schools in Nebraska had never resembled the pretty, bright building on campaign posters and buttons; they were dirty, damp, and cramped. The schoolhouse so fondly alluded to sounds very sweet when juggled about in a great collection of sentiment. The city wants real progress and not red paint; it wants science and not sentiment."<sup>13</sup> The Nebraska newspaper's attitude toward America's one-room schools began to gain momentum throughout the country. The one-room schools lacked this ideological, new, futuristic appearance, and during the progressive movement throughout the mid twentieth century in America, image was everything. It was common belief that new, larger, consolidated schools would improve the educational standards of the youth. Or, would it? Despite the cries of sentiment and the desire of many to hold on to their beloved one-room schools, the modernistic ideology continued to spread, and the demise of the one-room schools was upon America.

The 1924 West Virginia State Board of Education Report outlined the education funding dispersion for the 1925 school year. The largest portion, 62.91 percent, of the

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<sup>13</sup>Zimmerman, *Small Wonder*, 57.

funding went toward the state's elementary schools. Although not all of these schools were one-room facilities, nearly all one-room schools encompassed the elementary age students of the state. The allotted funds dwarfed all other educational sectors, as funding for the state's high schools, normal schools, universities, and colleges combined for only 35.13 percent.<sup>14</sup> Although many West Virginians viewed the one-room schools as outdated, they still received the majority of funding. The continuation of such skewed finances, gave the perception that the state and its taxpayers were paying for sentiment, not science. In West Virginia, during the 1920s, those in favor of consolidation cited improved roads and financial and educational efficiency, and those against used the sentiment of "the little red schoolhouse" as their campaign to hold off consolidations.<sup>15</sup>

Over the decade, the discussion of consolidating West Virginia's one-room schools into larger, modernized schools transformed into a reality. The primary topics discussed in the *Report of the State Board of Education for the Biennial Period July 1, 1932, June 30, 1934*, were consolidations and transportation. The State Board of Education cited several advantages for school consolidations:

- More efficient schools
- More adequate facilities and equipment
- Improved school organization
  - Provide better supervision
  - Provide better trained teachers
  - Provide an improved learning environment for the pupils involved
- An enrichment of the course of study in both elementary and high school consolidations

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<sup>14</sup>State Board of Education under the Direction of George M. Ford, State Superintendent of Free Schools, and Lorimer V. Cavins, *The Financing of Education in West Virginia*, (Charleston, WV: 1926) 33.

<sup>15</sup>Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 436-437.

Initially, consolidations began in existing one-room schools with small enrollments, and those within close proximity, regardless of county or district boundaries. However, the report indicated that the State Department of Education conducted surveys in Boone, Mason, Fayette, Raleigh, and Ritchie counties, in order to study the most favorable options for consolidation.<sup>16</sup> The Department of Education acted in a responsible manner by performing surveys in the areas where school consolidation seemed inevitable. The survey included rural areas of West Virginia, which naturally exposed a higher percentage of one-room schools to the threat of consolidation.

The *Report for the Biennial Period 1932-1934* emphasized the decrease in one-room schools throughout the state. The report pointed out the number of one-room elementary schools decreased by 606, from 4,446 in the 1932-1933 school year, to 3,840 in the 1933-1934 school year. In the same year, 34 junior and senior high schools consolidated with schools of larger enrollments.<sup>17</sup> The consolidation movement gained popularity in most sectors of state governments and state boards of education. As a result, this left the population of rural areas, such as in much of West Virginia, with the key problem of transportation.

Transportation was the second major issue discussed in the *Report for the Biennial Period 1932-1934*. Since the turn of the century, the roads in West Virginia and its neighboring Appalachian region had improved in the more populated and commercial areas. Still, the concern of safely transporting 57,444 schoolchildren to and from school for the 1933-1934 school year raised concern for the Board of Education. Therefore, the

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<sup>16</sup>State Board of Education, *Report of State Board of Education for Biennial Period July 1, 1932, to June 30, 1934* (Charleston, WV: 1934) 17, 18.

<sup>17</sup>State Board of Education, *Report for the Biennial Period 1932-1934*, 17.



State Board of Education, the State Department of Public Safety, and the State Road Commission established rules and safety regulations to ensure proper and safe transportation of the children.<sup>18</sup> However, the fact remained that rural areas, where a majority of one-room schools were located, lacked quality transportation routes, and the state could simply not reach all of the elementary age children. Those who lived in the mountain hollows or deep in the countryside would still walk five, eight, or possibly in excess of ten miles to a road for a bus pick-up. If the one-room schools in these areas closed or consolidated, what would the children do for their education? It was not practical for the state to expect, or require, youths to overcome such distances to catch the bus for school. Interviews with individuals who lived during this time provided evidence of the pivotal roles transportation played, and how transportation issues of the region affected the students and community.

Transportation was a legitimate concern for inhabitants of West Virginia and neighboring areas, as roads in Appalachia were extremely poor, often times consisting of dirt or gravel. Going to work and transporting the children to the “town schools” were not always easy tasks for the rural population. In an interview with Opal Caudill, she recalled the time when she began attending the “town school” in Louisa, Kentucky. Caudill completed first through eighth grade at the Pine Grove one-room school in Needmore, Kentucky and was ready to attend high school. The lack of transportation developments in this area presented a monumental obstacle in Caudill’s educational future. She said, “It just was not feasible for me to walk eight miles into Louisa to attend high school and then walk eight miles back home. For five days a week.” Caudill went on, “The buses did not pick up the children who lived way out of town, way out in the

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<sup>18</sup>State Board of Education, *Report for the Biennial Period 1932-1934*, 18.

country. It was truly a tragedy that this prohibited me from continuing my schooling.” When asked about the quality of education she received at the Pine Grove School, Caudill responded, “I believe it was equivalent to that of the children who went to the “town school” in Louisa. This could probably be attributed to our teacher, Mrs. Vessey Boggs. She was good, strict, and rode a horse to school each day.”<sup>19</sup>

Transportation played a role in Nell Hatfield’s educational experience as well. Hatfield noted, “From first to sixth grade, my walk to the Mill Creek School was three miles one way. Children who attended the Mill Creek, Paddle Creek, and Thompson one-room elementary schools did not have bus transportation. All bus transportation was limited to students attending high school in downtown Fort Gay, West Virginia.”<sup>20</sup> Hatfield’s father was close friends with the principal of Fort Gay High School. The principal informed him that the Mill Creek School was going to close the following school year, and it would be best to go ahead and send his daughter to the seventh grade at Fort Gay High School, where she could begin her high school education. The personal relationship and inside knowledge of the future school closing allowed Hatfield to enroll one year early at Fort Gay High School, from which she eventually graduated. The instances described by these women, one from West Virginia and one from Kentucky, confirmed the importance of transportation in attending school past the sixth or seventh grade.

The fact that transportation was a problem intensified the rural community’s feelings of sentiment toward their one-room schools. Rural students who were unable to

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<sup>19</sup> Vivian Opal Caudill, oral interview by author, October 12, 2008, Louisa, KY.

<sup>20</sup>Hatfield, interview.

ride buses to school had a firm connection with the school. Those students who traveled paved roads with bus transportation perhaps sometimes took the advantage for granted. If the students and their families knew that transportation problems would prevent them from attending school beyond the seventh grade, it would only be natural for those particular families to cling to the existence of one-room schools and desire their preservation. This is merely one possibility as to why the small, rural communities in areas of Appalachia desired to keep the one-room schools functioning well into a time when consolidations were taking place.

A second possibility explaining why rural West Virginia held on to the traditions of their one-room schools had to do with the merits of the school. A starting point in describing the internal operations of a one-room school involves the methods the teacher used to deliver lessons to students of various ages and the number of students who received the lesson. In an interview compiled for the *Marshall University Oral History of Appalachia* project, Bertha May Asbury began with a description of when the Ivydale School in Kanawha County, burned down. She recalled, “The school burned down and burnt my primer up, and I cried all night long, and they threatened to whup me if I didn’t shut up.”<sup>21</sup> The expressions of the devastated child in this interview are eerily similar to the interview describing the burning of the Hollybush School in Helvetia. In both circumstances, the school term ended with lessons conducted in a private residence. Students lost personal belongings but the community rallied to replace the one-room school. Each interview exposed the love, desire to learn, and human emotions directed toward the one-room school. Asbury described her school: “Just one-room and a big old

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<sup>21</sup>Bertha May Asbury, interview by Barbara Redman, Charleston, WV, March 5, 1973, *Marshall University Oral History of Appalachia* (Glen Rock, N.J.: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1977), 1.

pot belly stove. A coal stove and we had a good school, and there was about 20 or 25 people.”<sup>22</sup> The teacher was responsible for instructing 20 to 25 students of various ages and learning levels, and sometimes maintaining a schedule proved a difficult task.

In an interview with Raymond J. Adkins, he described the procedure his teacher used to deliver lessons to students of different ages in the one-room school. Adkins began by explaining the seating arrangement, “What you did in a one-room school then you had the big seat up front that you called the recitation seat. Usually you had small desks where you put the first graders and larger desks where the seventh and eighth graders wound up.”<sup>23</sup> The teacher instructed each group with a particular subject, and then moved on to the next age level while the previous group worked on a lesson. The teachers of the one-room schools used this method in order to create a sense of direction, organization, and guidance for the students, as well as create a schedule for themselves.

The wide age gaps and varying attention spans of the students offered opportunity for disruption in the learning environment, but sometimes worked in the teacher’s favor. Adkins added, “Another brilliant thing about a one-room school is the fact that when the fifth-grade geography is reciting there’d be a brilliant first or second grader who was bored with his work. Doing nothin’. There isn’t anything you can do, because you are reciting. So, he listens, and you’d be surprised how much he picks up from the fifth-grade geography class.”<sup>24</sup> In a larger school, this same child would participate in classroom lessons with other children the same age and grade level. He or she would not

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<sup>22</sup>Asbury, interview, 1.

<sup>23</sup>Raymond J. Adkins, interview by Guy Sutphin, Welch, WV, August 11, 1974, *Marshall University Oral History of Appalachia* (Glen Rock, N.J.: Microfilming Corporation. of America, 1977), 8.

<sup>24</sup>Adkins, interview, 8.

have an older group reciting geography or some other subject and would not have the advantage of learning from listening as in the one-room school.

The oral histories of the Sutton Collection, the *Marshall University Oral History of Appalachia*, and recent oral interviews for this project, all contained a common thread. First, all interviewees were products of the one-room school learning environment. Second, there were strong feelings of attachment to their particular community one-room school. In order to understand the connection between community and school, one must understand the location of the one-room school as well as the close knit community in which they were located. In the cases of both Caudill and Hatfield, the children who attended their schools came from a scarcely inhabited creek or hollow. Growing up in an environment such as this would place the same children together, year after year, attending church, attending school, and participating in extracurricular activities such as fishing and hunting, until their adult years. The familiarity of these children often extended to the parents as well, thus creating a close-knit community with feelings of sentiment toward the one-room school. In Zimmerman's *Small Wonder*, he identified sentiment as a critical factor attaching American people to their one-room schools.

Connie Rice expressed these same feelings of familiarity and comfort, which existed within the Harmony Grove community one-room school. Rice recalled a lunch cook at the school who always removed the beans from her chili. Rice explained, "That always made me feel so special while I was in school. For a child, to have a cook make a special order for you makes you feel good."<sup>25</sup> Later in life, Rice coincidentally encountered the cook on the street in Morgantown. The two women chatted for a

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<sup>25</sup>Rice, interview.

moment, and Dr. Rice remarked, “I want to tell you how special I always felt when you used to take the beans out of my chili at the Harmony Grove School.” The cook replied, “Honey, I never took those beans out of your chili, beans are good for you. I just mashed them up so you could never tell the difference.”<sup>26</sup> There was a connection, a comfort zone, a familiarity, and in some cases a friendship, between teacher and pupil, pupil and pupil, and in Rice’s story, cook and pupil. Relationships such as these were lost when America abandoned the one-room schools for modern schools of today. The one-room schools usually consisted of smaller classes, and provided the teacher more opportunity to connect with and know each student as an individual, an issue with which Rice agreed. The chances of such relationships existing in the larger, modern schools are far slimmer. Children are at a higher risk of becoming simply another kid in another class in another school, instead of being Connie, the girl who does not like beans, and attends the Harmony Grove School in Morgantown, West Virginia.

The opportunity to experience education in the actual atmosphere and setting of a one-room school does not exist today. However, during the first half of the twentieth century, Dr. Maria Montessori studied, experimented, and developed a new approach to educating children known as the Montessori Method, or Montessori School. In many ways, the Montessori Method resembles education in a one-room school, which primarily consisted of one teacher, in a single classroom, teaching various aged children with multiple ability levels. The Montessori classroom is a large, open space where children

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<sup>26</sup>Rice, interview.

are grouped in three-year age differences, and in smaller schools, all six years of elementary are mixed.<sup>27</sup>

The Montessori classroom is divided into areas by subject matter and materials,<sup>28</sup> and this separation somewhat resembles the practice in one-room schools of dividing students by age and subject for lessons. It was common in the one-room school for one group of students to work on mathematics, while the teacher listened to reading recitations from another group, while yet another group worked on spelling. The Montessori Method provides lessons to children, as they are ready in ability for them.<sup>29</sup> A similar routine took place in one-room schools when older children with lower skill levels completed reading or math lessons with younger children at the same ability level.

Montessori observed that younger children learned from watching older children and they became interested in concepts and activities previously thought too advanced for their understanding.<sup>30</sup> In an interview mentioned earlier, this same practice took place in one-room schools as younger students learned geography from listening to the recitations of older students during their lesson.

Montessori believed that sensory stimulation such as touch was a primary factor in the development of a child's intelligence and devised a systematic hierarchy, with sensory materials, to teach writing and reading, with touch and repetition as a key

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<sup>27</sup>Angeline Stoll Lillard, *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 18, 20, [http://www.montessori-science.org/Montessori-Genius/Lillard\\_Montessori\\_Science\\_Genius\\_Ch1.pdf](http://www.montessori-science.org/Montessori-Genius/Lillard_Montessori_Science_Genius_Ch1.pdf) (accessed June 1, 2010).

<sup>28</sup>Angeline Stoll Lillard, 20.

<sup>29</sup>Angeline Stoll Lillard, 21.

<sup>30</sup>Angeline Stoll Lillard, 21.

component.<sup>31</sup> In the Montessori Method, tactile materials such as alphabet letters cut from sand paper, allow students to trace and feel the shape with their fingers as they practice the alphabet sound.<sup>32</sup> Montessori students trace leaves and different geometry shapes with orange sticks, to practice finger and wrist movements associated with writing.<sup>33</sup> Although one-room schools lacked the materials and the plan that Montessori implemented, teachers commonly used repetition as an instructional method. In addition, many students owned their own individual slate and chalk to practice letters, spelling, or calculations. The regular task of holding the chalk and forming the letters or numbers on the slate is a simple representation of the systematic tactile plan developed by Montessori.

Montessori classrooms are neat, clean, and organized with each material housed in its own specific area.<sup>34</sup> Children return each object to its proper place after use, so it is ready for the next child, thus reinforcing the idea of respect for others.<sup>35</sup> In the one-room school, this care for one another was demonstrated by completing tasks such as taking turns filling the water bucket from the outside well or hand pump. The older boys also rotated the job of carrying firewood or coal to fuel the pot-bellied stove in winter. Many one-room schools were small and organization was valued. There was usually an area with pegs for each student to hang coats, and shelves on the wall to set their lunchboxes, an idea similar to the Montessori plan of housing materials in their designated place.

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<sup>31</sup>Paula Polk Lillard, *Montessori: A Modern Approach* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 71.

<sup>32</sup>Angeline Stoll Lillard, 26.

<sup>33</sup>Angeline Stoll Lillard, 23.

<sup>34</sup>Angeline Stoll Lillard, 20-21.

<sup>35</sup>Angeline Stoll Lillard, 21.



In Montessori education, the development of community is paramount. The students learn to maintain daily order and to respect one another, and as a result, they foster social concern and a sense of ownership of the classroom, a sense of community.<sup>36</sup> One-room schools also played an important role in the value of community. The school was the venue for community events, such as picnics, dances, Election Day affairs, and various other occasions. All of these activities brought the community together with a common goal, and a feeling of camaraderie and community ownership. The same sense that Montessori achieved with the Montessori Method.

The significance communities placed on their one-room schools is a common thread visible in many oral histories. The community attachment represents the primary reason West Virginia held on to its one-room schools well into the twentieth century, before they finally succumbed to the “progression” of America’s schools. The debate over keeping one-room schools operational was not simply a conflict over the locale where children would attend school. The one-room schools were not just educational facilities; they were pivotal institutions that fostered sentimental feelings and pride within each community. West Virginian Thomas W. Yoke summarized his feelings on the loss of the one-room schools:

“My classmates, while none have amassed great material wealth or fame, have all developed into the good solid citizens that are the backbone of our nation, able to cope with the everyday problems of life, which is the primary purpose of education, and was accomplished successfully by the one-room schools that served so well the generation, and will soon be remembered only in a short paragraph in histories of the period.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Paula Polk Lillard, *Montessori*, 74.

<sup>37</sup>Thomas W. Yoke, *Monongalia County School Papers 1840-1966*, (interview undated) West Virginia and Regional History Collection, A & M 2744, Guide to Archives and Manuscripts, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV, 5.

In general, most people in rural communities more or less went along with the consolidation movement. They had visions of new and improved structures, and the belief that their children would receive a better education in the larger facilities. As one-room schools vanished, so did the feelings of familiarity and community that had existed. Later, the people began to realize that they had lost a special time in the history of education, as shown in the numerous interviews and oral histories reported. Perhaps the nostalgia and sentiment exaggerates the quality of education that took place during this time, or perhaps the people were more appreciative of their educational opportunity. For whatever reason, it is obvious that the generations who attended the one-room school truly believed in the education that they received, hold the one room schools in high esteem, and did not realize what they had lost until the changes were implemented.

Communities created individual identities with the varied and specific uses of the one-room schools. Nevertheless, sentimental attachment did not survive when consolidations reduced operating costs, conserved finances, and polished the rural image into a more “progressive” one. As the one-room schools began closing their doors, a crucial loss was the homey feelings of comfort and attachment, a variable that you cannot capture in a bottle and release into a glossy, new, multimillion dollar school in downtown Omaha, Nebraska, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Morgantown, West Virginia, or Louisa, Kentucky. Children from large metropolitan areas, average size cities, and small rural communities, all lost the opportunity to experience the familial environment of a one-room school, and many became just another kid at just another school.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

In the first thirty years of West Virginia's statehood, many challenges and changes took place. A state government was established, education was embraced, and industrialization followed in the years after the creation of the state. Initially, West Virginia's economic system relied on agriculture, but it became diversified by the 1870s with the coming of railroads through the state. The advancements in railway transportation provided the opening for America's capitalist market to siphon West Virginia's natural resources such as coal and timber. West Virginia's political leaders realized that the state needed to provide a quality education for its people in order to keep pace with the industrial development. The state used one-room schools, both existing and the construction of additional facilities, as the instrument to educate a large number of the primarily rural population.

West Virginia educational reformers such as A.L. Wade, William R. White, and Governor William E. Stevenson established better training facilities and identified the problem of retaining quality teachers. During the same time, state educational journals developed, and the foundation of a structured curriculum began to take shape. Original ideas such as Wade's Graduating System allowed West Virginia's one-room schools to gain notoriety and place their own stamp on the educational development of the state.

As industry moved in, agriculture began a decline and farm children were less apt to follow the example of their parents. These children possessed ambition and a desire to be educated, and they strived to learn in order to achieve economic success. The stories of W.W. Trent, Mary Huber Marti, and Mary Metzener Morris, all illustrate these

ambitions and the ways in which the education received in a one-room school provided young people with opportunities to realize them.

One-room schools reflect the history of rural education in America. “In 1940, there were approximately 200,000 one-room schools in the United States. Today, there are fewer than 800.”<sup>1</sup> Long distances to the schools created burdens for the students and teachers alike. In some instances, children walked miles to reach the school. In addition, it was common for teachers to ride a horse to and from their workplace. The challenges of outdated facilities, low pay, and difficult commutes, interfered with the ability to attract and retain teachers.

School finances, road improvements, development of highway systems, and the availability of school buses were all factors that eventually led to school consolidations. Policy makers viewed larger schools more economical and efficient, and judged rural schools as deficient. The rise of business and industry at the turn of the century also contributed to the school consolidation movement, and thus the decline of one-room schools. In the 1930s, International Harvester emerged as a major promoter of school consolidation. The company produced a catalog that promoted their new line of school buses. These political, economic, and financial decisions eventually led to the demise of the one-room schools that were once such an important part of rural education in West Virginia.

Although one-room schools have disappeared from the landscape, they are the link from the educational past to the present educational system in West Virginia. The

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<sup>1</sup>Frank W. Lutz. “Trends and Options in the Reorganization or Closure of Small or Rural Schools and Districts.” *ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools Charleston WV* (September 1990): 1, ED321964 <http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-9217/options.htm> (accessed June 3, 2010).

recollections of long lost days in the state's one-room schools will preserve the memories for future generations, and serve as a source of pride and appreciation for our Appalachian educational heritage. Perhaps Tony L. Williams said it best, "The one-room school will forever stand out in West Virginia's state history as the great equalizing force in providing educational opportunities to a diverse people, in a diverse land, and as a motivating force in fostering people with hope, promise, and opportunity."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Williams, 31.

## Appendix



Figure 1. Image of child miners in 1911, “No Time for School.”

Source: National Child Labor Committee, Washington, D. C.; “No Time for School in 1911- Child Miners Group before Child Labor Laws,” West Virginia History On View, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries, Morgantown, WV, JPG file, [http://images.lib.wvu.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?rgn1=ic\\_all;op2=And;rgn2=ic\\_all;q1=child%20labor;size=20;c=wwcp;back=back1274396620;subview=detail;resnum=8;view=entry;lastview=thumbnail;cc=wwcp;entryid=x-030160;viewid=030160.JPG](http://images.lib.wvu.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?rgn1=ic_all;op2=And;rgn2=ic_all;q1=child%20labor;size=20;c=wwcp;back=back1274396620;subview=detail;resnum=8;view=entry;lastview=thumbnail;cc=wwcp;entryid=x-030160;viewid=030160.JPG) (accessed April 23, 2010).



Figure 2. Image of child miner, "Boy Running Trip Rope."

Source: Lewis Hine, Credit National Archives 102-LH-70, "Boy Running Trip Rope, Welch Mining Company, Welch, W. Va.," West Virginia History On View, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries, Morgantown, WV, JPG file, [http://images.lib.wvu.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?rgn1=ic\\_all;op2=And;rgn2=ic\\_all;q1=child%20labor;size=20;c=wwcp;back=back1274396620;subview=detail;resnum=2;view=entry;lastview=thumbnail;c=wwcp;entryid=x-002965;viewid=002965.JPG](http://images.lib.wvu.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?rgn1=ic_all;op2=And;rgn2=ic_all;q1=child%20labor;size=20;c=wwcp;back=back1274396620;subview=detail;resnum=2;view=entry;lastview=thumbnail;c=wwcp;entryid=x-002965;viewid=002965.JPG) (accessed April 23, 2010).

Table 1. Comparative School Statistics (West Virginia)

Number of School Houses						Number of Schools			
Year	Frame	Stone	Brick	Log	Whole No.	High	Graded	Common	Total
1865	--	--	--	--	133	5	39	387	431
1866	--	--	--	--	412	--	--	935	935
1867	342	2	26	332	702	2	26	1,112	1,148
1868	653	7	51	595	1,306	--	20	1,731	1,758
1869	936	10	68	614	1,618	7	38	2,153	2,198
1870	1,124	17	58	904	2,113	1	74	2,441	2,516
1871	1,127	10	63	859	2,059	3	48	2,272	2,323
1872	1,290	9	74	843	2,216	3	64	2,497	2,546
1873	1,412	10	73	1,097	2,612	2	71	2,785	2,857
1874	1,540	9	72	1,009	2,880	2	85	2,936	3,021
1875	1,630	10	83	1,236	2,959	8	78	3,148	3,233
1876	1,753	11	79	1,284	3,137	5	67	3,269	3,343
1877	1,829	7	84	1,296	3,216	5	65	3,320	3,390
1878	1,905	11	89	1,292	3,297	10	82	3,419	3,514
1879	2,035	6	90	1,342	3,479	8	105	3,612	3,725
1880	2,142	6	93	1,316	3,557	8	103	3,680	3,811
1881	2,260	6	94	1,344	3,704	11	93	3,796	3,912
1882	2,362	8	93	1,376	3,839	10	79	3,920	4,028
1883	2,506	--	110	1,329	3,945	6	124	3,986	4,116
1884	2,648	--	113	1,336	4,097	7	125	4,120	4,254
1885	2,819	--	128	1,212	4,159	13	117	3,918	4,078
1886	2,933	--	114	1,214	4,260	15	98	4,324	4,437
1887	3,162	--	122	1,181	4,465	19	100	4,484	4,603
1888	3,299	--	116	1,152	4,567	25	215	4,578	4,819
1889	3,510	--	124	1,021	4,655	17	130	4,721	4,868
1890	3,680	--	127	1,007	4,814	20	161	4,784	4,784
1891	3,849	--	124	926	4,899	14	150	4,862	5,026
1892	4,022	--	140	836	5,004	17	145	5,005	5,167
1893	4,266	--	140	792	5,192	18	173	5,099	5,290
1894	4,456	--	140	706	5,302	20	192	5,175	5,387
1895	4,606	--	140	643	5,389	20	244	5,331	5,595
1896	4,750	--	148	577	5,475	22	180	5,425	5,617
1897	4,949	--	150	486	5,524	27	142	5,607	5,776
1898	5,059	--	172	463	5,675	38	289	5,593	5,940
1899	5,224	--	152	408	5,689	37	489	5,380	5,906
1900	5,387	--	184	345	5,916	39	813	5,186	6,058
1901	5,510	--	176	309	5,995	40	262	5,854	6,156
1902	5,598	--	186	237	6,021	42	308	5,858	6,208
1903	5,707	--	188	217	6,112	42	621	5,686	6,349

Source: Thomas C. Miller, West Virginia State Superintendent of Schools, *History of Education in West Virginia* (Charleston, WV: The Tribune Printing Company, 1904), 7.



Table 2. Number of teachers, average length of term, total teachers' salaries, and average monthly salaries by years. (West Virginia)

Year	Total No. Teachers Employed			Average Length of School Term in Months	Amount paid for Teachers' Salaries	Average Monthly Salaries of Teachers
	Males	Females	Total			
1865	171	216	387	2.70	47,006.00	--
1866	525	382	973	3.12	96,203.00	31.44
1867	818	404	1,222	3.00	140,465.00	36.00
1868	1,290	520	1,810	3.50	288,690.00	37.66
1869	1,680	603	2,283	3.55	277,131.00	34.11
1870	1,764	641	2,405	4.12	220,753.00	34.25
1871	1,951	517	2,468	3.84	328,347.00	33.50
1872	2,095	550	2,645	4.04	376,982.00	31.01
1873	3,443	639	3,082	3.86	402,418.90	31.46
1874	2,541	801	3,342	4.12	480,400.00	32.62
1875	2,677	784	3,461	4.20	541,358.00	32.90
1876	2,797	896	3,693	4.32	538,387.00	31.52
1877	2,818	971	3,789	4.13	539,273.00	31.86
1878	2,822	925	3,747	4.38	501,704.00	28.97
1879	3,142	989	4,131	4.34	504,096.00	26.64
1880	3,104	1,030	4,134	4.50	522,483.00	28.19
1881	3,079	1,208	4,287	4.45	539,647.00	28.22
1882	3,045	1,315	4,360	4.50	568,509.00	28.77
1883	2,961	1,494	4,455	4.43	603,556.00	30.22
1884	3,036	1,607	4,643	4.55	641,575.00	30.39
1885	3,145	1,666	4,811	4.37	667,852.00	31.70
1886	3,240	1,685	4,925	4.64	674,505.00	30.71
1887	3,357	1,732	5,089	4.95	707,539.00	31.52
1888	3,380	1,858	5,238	5.10	780,742.94	33.00
1889	3,444	1,897	5,341	4.80	805,429.46	31.38
1890	3,483	2,008	5,491	4.85	782,961.51	31.20
1891	3,461	2,139	5,600	4.95	834,879.89	31.54
1892	3,463	2,284	5,747	5.59	885,731.39	32.26
1893	3,459	2,478	5,937	4.90	928,441.01	33.63
1894	3,585	2,530	6,115	5.00	975,766.76	34.10
1895	3,705	2,534	6,299	5.00	997,703.47	34.70
1896	3,828	2,626	6,454	5.55	1,112,512.55	35.87
1897	3,924	2,698	6,652	5.65	1,152,878.99	31.66
1898	4,096	2,712	6,808	5.60	1,149,598.92	31.33
1899	4,094	2,787	6,881	5.40	1,179,851.30	31.74
1900	4,095	2,972	7,067	5.30	1,213,490.68	32.39
1901	4,018	3,215	7,233	5.80	1,275,920.97	30.41
1902	3,972	3,334	7,306	5.90	1,381,250.22	32.04
1903	3,854	3,508	7,362	6.15	1,457,606.56	32.99

Source: Thomas C. Miller, West Virginia State Superintendent of Schools, *History of Education in West Virginia* (Charleston, WV: The Tribune Printing Company, 1904), 10.

Table 3. List of questions for the third West Virginia public teacher certification examination, November 20, 1873

### Reading-Orthography

1. Spell *precision* and *rescission*.
2. Write- The Bishop's right to write a rite for the church was unquestioned. (Given orally)
3. Define Orthography.
4. Write words containing each sound of *e* and *a*.
5. Define a *simple* and a *derivative* word.
6. Define a *diphthong* and an *aphthong*
7. What do you understand is the basis of a syllable?
8. Define a *prefix* and state its use.
9. Define a *primary* and *secondary* accent.
10. Analyze the words *thought* and *withal*.

### Grammar

1. Define English Grammar.
2. What is Language?
3. Of what does Etymology treat?
4. Name the general divisions of the pronouns, and define each.
5. Give the person, number and case of nouns, and the mode and tense of the verbs in the following: A variety of pleasing objects that charm the eye, lives in our memories.
6. How many and what are the different elements used in the construction of sentences?
7. Define Analysis and Synthesis.
8. In how many ways and by what general words are the members of a compound sentence united?
9. Correct the following:  
It is him that I seen yesterday. Neither George or his brother love their books.
10. Punctuate correctly the following sentence:  
What if in pursuing the course of teacher you may not at the close of life have so much money by a few hundred dollars.

### Penmanship

1. What is the first step in teaching Penmanship?
2. Define principles.
3. Make principles used in small letters.
4. Make principles contained in capitals.
5. What is the length of loop letters?
6. How are principles combined to form letters?
7. Of what does a loop consist?
8. What is the standard of space in measuring letters?
9. Analyze the letters *h*, *f*, and *v*.
10. Analyze the Capitals *E*, and *U*.

Table 3 continued.

### Arithmetic

1. Define Arithmetic.
2. What is the unit of numbers?
3. On what does the value of a figure depend?
4. Denominate the answers in the Fundamental Principles of Arithmetic.
5. Are the numbers used in the United States Money abstract or concrete?
6. Define Percentage and Evolution.
7. Give the results of  $3 \frac{2}{3}$  of  $2 \frac{1}{7}$  ---  $5 - 6 - : - 2\frac{1}{2} - 8 \frac{3}{4}$  , and 00000001 :- 100.
8. Point Pleasant is in  $5^{\circ}$  West longitude and Salt Lake City is in  $35^{\circ}$  ;  
When it is 15 min. past 12 a Point Pleasant, what time is it at Salt Lake?
9. What is the bank discount of \$1600 for 11 mos. at 9 per cent?
10. What is saved by following the diagonal instead of the sides of a rectangle,  
which are respectively 79 and 102 rods?

### Geography

1. Define Geography and state the exact shape of the earth.
2. What is the *axis* of the earth?
3. Through what grand divisions of the earth does the Equator pass?
4. How many and what are the places from which the English reckon Longitude?
5. Why are the Tropic of Capricorn and the Antarctic Circle placed where they are?
6. Name two of the largest rivers west of the Rocky Mountains.
7. What are the capitals of Holland, Spain, and Russia?
8. Why is New Orleans in South Latitude?
9. Bound Europe, and name three of the largest rivers in it.
10. Bound Massachusetts and West Virginia, and name and locate their capitals.

### History

1. Why is knowledge of history important?
2. Why was America called the New World?
3. Of whom did the Europeans colonists obtain the title to their lands?
4. When, where, and by whom was the last battle of the Revolution fought?
5. What effect had the Revolutionary war on the *morals* of the people?
6. What led to the second war with Great Britain?
7. When and how was J. Q. Adams elected President?
8. What was the leading event of Polk's administration?
9. Name the Presidents who served for a shorter term than four years.
10. Give the leading events of Lincoln's Administration, and state the time and manner of his death.

Table 3 continued.

### Theory of Teaching

1. What should be made the opening exercises of a school?
2. Why should the teacher enter upon the organization of a school with well matured plans?
3. What would you do to arouse and develop the energies of the mind?
4. What is the difference between *teaching* and *talking*?
5. Give your idea of *emulation* in the schoolroom.
6. How do you govern a school?
7. What do you regard as the highest motives as incentives to study?
8. What is the advantage of having as few classes as possible?
9. Give what you would consider a natural order of presenting any subject.
10. What importance do you attach to the purity and integrity of the teacher's own life and conduct?

Source: West Virginia, "List of questions for the third public teacher certification examination held in a room of the Academy at Weston, West Virginia, November 20, 1873," *West Virginia Educational Journal* 2, no. 5 (February 1874): 201-204.

Table 4. Total coal production of West Virginia from 1888 to 1940 (Tons 2000 lbs.)

Year	Production	Year	Production
1888	4,983,490	1915	71,812,917
1889	5,223,520	1916	89,165,772
1890	6,321,218	1917	89,383,449
1891	8,155,199	1918	90,766,636
1892	8,710,876	1919	84,980,551
1893	10,930,030	1920	89,590,271
1894	10,559,431	1921	90,452,996
1895	11,063,468	1922	79,394,786
1896	13,509,965	1923	97,475,177
1897	13,110,527	1924	103,325,960
1898	16,010,241	1925	176,306,656
1899	18,200,166	1926	144,603,574
1900	21,153,341	1927	146,088,121
1901	22,725,910	1928	133,866,587
1902	26,162,171	1929	139,297,146
1903	25,663,343	1930	122,429,767
1904	30,222,881	1931	102,698,420
1905	35,283,394	1932	86,114,506
1906	41,891,780	1933	94,130,508
1907	44,845,147	1934	98,441,233
1908	44,091,053	1935	99,810,908
1909	46,697,022	1936	118,134,202
1910	59,274,353	1937	118,965,066
1911	60,517,167	1938	93,511,099
1912	66,731,587	1939	108,515,665
1913	69,182,791	1940	126,619,825
1914	73,666,981		

Source: West Virginia, U.S.A., N. P. Rhinehart, Chief of Department of Mines, Annual Report of the Department of Mines, (Charleston, WV, 1936), 97-101, and West Virginia, U.S.A., N. P. Rhinehart, Chief of Department of Mines, Annual Report of the Department of Mines, (Charleston, WV, 1940), 113.

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