

THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF EDUCATION  
IN WATAUGA COUNTY

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
Appalachian State Teachers College

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by  
W. Paul Bingham  
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OF EDUCATION  
IN WATAUGA COUNTY

By

W. Paul Bingham

Approved by:

*Chapel Wilson*

Director of Graduate Study

*D. J. Antener*

Major Professor

*Herbert May*

Minor Professor



## PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to give the history of the development of education in Watauga County, North Carolina, from the beginning of education in the county to 1950. An attempt is also made to compare the development of education in Watauga County with the state as a whole, and to offer practical suggestions for improving and developing the school system.

The chief sources of information are the records in the county superintendent's office, reports of the state superintendents, records of the academies, personal interviews, books, Dr. Daniel J. Whitener's History of Watauga County, and experience and observation of the writer, gained from having lived in the county all his life and having taught in the schools for eighteen years.

In the first chapter a brief sketch of the history of the county is given. The second chapter deals with the history and influence of the most important academies and institutes. The third chapter treats with the development of education in the period before 1870. Chapter four is confined to the period between 1870 and 1900. The fifth chapter continues with development from 1900

to 1920. Progress of the schools from 1920 until the present is discussed in chapter six. The final chapter includes the conclusions and recommendations that should help to continue the improvement of the educational program in the county.

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to all who have, in any way, aided in making this study possible. To mention each individual who has contributed would make up a list too long to put here. However, the writer wishes to particularly thank Dr. Daniel J. Whitener, his counselor, who has guided him along in a patient and an untiring manner.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATAUGA COUNTY . . . .	1
Location . . . . .	1
Description . . . . .	1
People . . . . .	5
Formation . . . . .	7
Towns . . . . .	9
Transportation . . . . .	11
Industry . . . . .	11
Summary of present economic conditions	14
II. ACADEMIES, INSTITUTES, AND APPALACHIAN	
STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE . . . . .	18
Part academies played in the early development of education in North Carolina and the South . . . . .	18
Valle Crucis School . . . . .	19
Skyline Institute . . . . .	29
Walnut Grove Institute . . . . .	34
Appalachian State Teachers College . .	38
Cove Creek Academy . . . . .	43
Other Academies and Schools . . . . .	49
Conclusion . . . . .	50



CHAPTER	PAGE
III. SCHOOLS IN WATAUGA BEFORE 1870 . . . . .	52
Early record of the county . . . . .	52
The first schools . . . . .	53
State laws concerning public schools .	53
School facts . . . . .	57
Conclusion . . . . .	65
IV. DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION FROM 1870	
TO 1900 . . . . .	68
Conditions at the close of Civil War .	68
Reconstruction . . . . .	70
Description of schools and school	
facts . . . . .	71
Conclusion . . . . .	79
V. SCHOOLS IN THE PERIOD FROM 1900 TO 1920	80
Status of the schools in 1900 . . . . .	80
Governor Aycock and Superintendent	
Joyner . . . . .	80
Steps in developing schools during	
this period . . . . .	82
Conclusion . . . . .	90
VI. PROGRESS SINCE 1920 . . . . .	91
Conditions of the schools in 1920 . .	91
Reasons for consolidations . . . . .	93

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COTTON CONTENT

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CHAPTER	PAGE
First schools consolidated . . . . .	94
Progress made in the high schools and elementary schools . . . . .	97
Present status of the schools . . . . .	109
VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION . . . . .	113
Summary . . . . .	113
Looking to the future . . . . .	116
Dr. B. B. Dougherty's conception of a good rural school . . . . .	117
Superintendent Walker's suggested improvement program . . . . .	118
Conclusion . . . . .	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	120

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. School Funds Received by County Treasurer for Schools 1901, 1905, 1910, 1915, and 1920 . . . . .	86
II. Number of Children, Enrollment and Attendance for 1901, 1905, 1910, 1915, and 1920 . . . . .	87
III. Number of Districts, Number of Schools Taught, and Length of Term for 1901, 1905, 1910, 1915, and 1920 . . . . .	88
IV. Average Term in Days for 1919-1920, 1924- 1925, 1929-1930, 1934-1935, and 1939-1940 . . . . .	98
V. Value of High School Property in Watauga County for 1931-1932 . . . . .	99
VI. High School Enrollment and Attendance by School and Grade in Watauga County for 1931-1932 . . . . .	100
VII. The Per Pupil Instructional Cost Per Month in Watauga County for 1931-1932	102



LIST OF TABLES

(Continued)

TABLE	PAGE
VIII. The Number of Size of the Different Types of Elementary Schools in Watauga County for 1931-1932 . . . .	103
IX. Value of Elementary School Property In Watauga County for 1931-1932 . .	104
X. Teacher Improvement from 1933-1934 to 1941-1942 . . . . .	108

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. The First Floor of Walnut Grove Academy . . . . .	36
2. The Second Floor of Walnut Grove Academy . . . . .	37
3. The Graphic Development of Appalachian State Teachers College . . . . .	42
4. The First Floor of Cove Creek Academy . . . . .	47
5. The Second Floor of Cove Creek Academy . . . . .	48

## CHAPTER I

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATAUGA COUNTY

Watauga County lies in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains of the northwestern part of North Carolina. It is bordered by Tennessee on parts of its north and west sides, joins Ashe County on the north, Wilkes on the east, Caldwell on the south, and Avery on south and west sides. The county is rectangular in shape, having its south corner cut off. The area of Watauga is 320 square miles which is smaller than the average county in the state.<sup>1</sup>

The surface has the appearance of a high plateau enclosed by and specked with mountains which have an altitude of fifteen hundred to two thousand feet higher than the valleys below. Snake Mountain, Rich Mountain, and Flat Top almost divide the county into two equal parts. The Boone valley separates Rich Mountain and Flat Top. Watauga has an average elevation of a little more than three thousand feet which is the highest average elevation of any county in North Carolina. There is

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel J. Whitener, History of Watauga (Chamber of Commerce, Boone, N. C., 1949), p. 25. The author is indebted chiefly to Dr. Whitener for the information on the geography of the county.



no other comparable area in the United States east of the Mississippi River with as high an altitude.

The county is unmatched in climate for both summer and winter. Mountains protect the county from the long northern storms in the winter and in the summer they protect it from the southern and western heat. The nearness of the piedmont beyond the mountains softens the more excessive climate of the usual mountain regions in summer and winter. The climate is further conditioned by the high mountains that rise above the valleys. The average temperature for the winter months, December, January, and February, is 36 degrees Fahrenheit; for March, April, and May it is 50.4 degrees; for June, July, and August, 68 degrees; and for September, October, and November it is 52.7 degrees. Another factor in the climate is the rainfall which keeps the atmosphere pure and stimulating. Watauga has an average yearly rainfall of fifty-seven inches.

The mountains belong to the Archean and Cambrian geological ages and are the oldest rock formations in the world. The oldest of these are Rich Mountain and Blowing Rock. Grandfather, for a long time said to be the oldest, is not as old.

For the most part, these mountains are covered with black fertile soil. There are only a few bare spots and these occur only where the mountains are the most upright and the rock formations stand out more prominently. Forests and pasture grass cover the mountain sides for the most part. Many of the highest mountain tops are devoid of timber. Such places are usually covered with native grass that provides fine pasture.

Scientists and historians have long been interested in the origin of these bald spots. There have been many reasons given for their existence. Some of the more common ones are: (1) that the Indians kept them burned off for the purpose of signaling; (2) that lightning burned the forests; and (3) that strong winter winds kept the young trees from securing a foothold. Whatever the reasons, they only add to the attraction of the locality as they provide space from which to view the surrounding country.

Watauga, until a few years ago, had a generous supply of virgin timber. In the last few years most of the timber has been cut. The climate, soil, and rainfall combine to provide ideal conditions for the



growth of white pine, spruce, oaks, poplar, ash, locust, birch, beech, maple, and hickory. The blight destroyed the chestnut which was once one of the most important trees. Recently more interest is being exhibited in the care and importance of forests of the county.

To some it appears that the mountain slopes would be conducive to widespread erosion. Such is not true since the soil is coarse and porous thereby enabling it to absorb much rain quickly and completely. For the most part, the soil of the county is composed of loams, sandy clay loams, and clay. In addition to being able to absorb great volumes of water, the soil is able to absorb quickly heat and light and nitrogen for the rapid growth of vegetation.

There are three river systems in the county. They are unusual in that they, together with John's River which has a head spring in Blowing Rock, flow in all directions.

The largest portion of the county is drained by the Watauga River. It heads under the Grandfather Mountain and flows in a westward direction, draining the western half of the county. It joins the Holston, Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi, and empties into the Gulf of



Mexico. Some of the most fertile soil and most prosperous farms in the Blue Ridge region are to be found along the course of this river and its tributaries.

New River heads at Blowing Rock and flows north to the Kanawha, Ohio, Mississippi, and finally to the Gulf of Mexico. It drains the Boone valley and the central part of the county.

The Yadkin River flows northeast through the Piedmont North Carolina to become the Peedee in South Carolina. The Peedee empties into the Atlantic Ocean. The Yadkin drains the county east of the Blue Ridge. John's River, as already pointed out, heads at Blowing Rock and flows east and joins the Catawba paralleling the Yadkin. The Catawba flows to South Carolina and joins the Wateree and then the Santee to the Atlantic Ocean.

The fact that four great rivers have their head springs within a short distance of each other and flow north, east, south, and west, and the great highlands, called the Appalachian Mountains, have their highest average elevation here, make this area unmatched by any in all eastern America.

Watauga County was inhabited by the Cherokee Indians prior to the time the white man invaded this

region during the Revolutionary War. The early settlers were chiefly of English, Scotch-Irish, German, and French descent.<sup>2</sup> There is no recorded history to give proof that the Cherokee Indians lived here. However, even now remains may be found in different sections of the county to show that they were once here. This once mighty people were related to the Iroquois Indians of New York. Legend has it that the Cherokees were defeated in a great war with the Delaware and Iroquois and were forced to the mountains of the South for safety. Be that as it may, there is little in their recorded history that would show them other than a proud, superior, and intelligent people.

Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg, in 1752, led the first white men into what is now Watauga County. The purpose of the visit was to locate lands already bought from the Earl of Granville for Moravian settlements. After surveying several sections of what is now Watauga, Bishop Spangenberg led his group back east to Wilkes County.

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<sup>2</sup> W. A. Davis, Soil Survey of Watauga County, North Carolina (Washington: United States Department of Agriculture, 1928), p. 1.



Daniel Boone was the next visitor to Watauga. Just when he made the first trip is not recorded, but it must have been before 1761, the time he settled in Wilkes County. It is recorded that by 1761 Boone was familiar with the best routes to Tennessee, and by 1767, to Kentucky.

In 1769, James Robertson led a group of people through what is now Watauga County to a place on Watauga River in Tennessee. Others followed quickly. They negotiated a land lease and purchase from the Indians and named this territory Washington District, and later Washington County. The territory included that part of what is now Watauga County drained by the Watauga River. There were, during the years from 1777 to 1790, a number of land grants issued to people in this area of Watauga River and Beaver Dams Creek from Washington County, Tennessee.

The first settlers came to what is now Watauga County because of their opposition to the Revolutionary War; others were pushed out of the older communities by greedy land seekers; while others came because of their opposition to slavery.

Watauga County was formed in 1849 from parts of Ashe, Wilkes, Caldwell, and Yancey counties by mutual

consent. The General Assembly of North Carolina made the establishment of the county official on January 27, 1849.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Laws of North Carolina, (Session of 1848-49), pp. 66-67.

An Act To Lay Off and Establish a New County by  
the Name of Watauga

Section 1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, that a county be and is hereby laid off and established by the name of Watauga, to be composed of parts of the counties of Ashe, Wilkes, Caldwell, and Yancey, beginning at the State line in Lemuel Wilson's plantation, running with the State line in Northern direction two miles; thence running as near as may be, in a direct line, (so as to leave Thomas Sutherland in the County of Ashe) to the top of Big Bald Mountain, thence to the mouth of Elk Creek, on the South Fork of New River; thence down the river to the mouth of a creek that runs through Samuel Cooper's plantation; thence to the Deep Gap of the Blue Ridge; thence along the dividing ridge between the waters of Stony Fork and Lewis's Fork waters of the Yadkin River, to where the road leading from Wilkesboro to the Deep Gap, crosses the top of Laurel Spur; thence to the Elk Creek at Widow Hampton's; thence to the top of the Blue Ridge; thence along the extreme height of the Blue Ridge to the top of the Grandmother Mountain; thence with the line of Burke County to the corner of McDowell County; thence to the State line where it crosses the Yellow Mountain; thence with the State line to the beginning.

Section 2. Be it further enacted, that Charles H. Doughton and Reuben Mast, be, and



The population of Watauga County in 1940 was 18,114.<sup>4</sup> Of this population, 97.3 per cent is native born white. The majority of the Negroes, most of whom own their homes, live in Boone. There are two incorporated towns in Watauga. Boone is the county seat with a population in 1940 of 1,788, and the other, Blowing Rock, has a population of 640. Boone is the center of trade and the development of the county economically is mirrored in the growth of Boone.

Located in a beautiful valley at the base of Howard's Knob and Rich Mountain on the north, Boone is surrounded on three sides by mountains. Its elevation is 3,333 feet above sea level and the surrounding mountains rise 1,000 to 1,400 feet higher. Only to the

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<sup>3</sup> (Continued from page 8) they are hereby appointed, commissioners, whose duty it shall be to survey and mark out the aforesaid line as above described; and that the expenses of the above survey shall be paid, respectively, one half by the County of Ashe, and the other half by the County of Watauga.

Section 3. Be it further enacted, that the said County of Watauga shall be invested with all rights, privileges and immunities of the other counties of the State.

<sup>4</sup> North Carolina Manual, 1945 (Issued by Thad Eure, Secretary of State, Raleigh, 1945), p. 112.

east are there no mountains, though the highway running west finds a natural route across Hodges Gap.

The first courthouse, built on land donated by Jordan Council, Jr., was erected in 1850 and stood on the hill now occupied by the residences of F. A. Linney and J. M. Moretz. This building was burned along with the records in 1873. In 1875, the lot on the corner of King and Water streets was purchased and a courthouse built for \$4,800. This was replaced in 1904 by the present building, being the third courthouse.

As Boone is recognized as the trading center of the county, so is Blowing Rock recognized as a famous resort town and community. Blowing Rock is literally on top of the world with its elevation of 4,090 feet, it is the highest incorporated town in North Carolina. As an example of the pinnacle upon which the little town is located, the division of the elevated portion of Main Street is the dividing line which determines whether the water falling there will flow into the Atlantic Ocean or into the Gulf of Mexico.

Blowing Rock was incorporated in 1889. The Rock, from which the town takes its name, has a constant current of air flowing over it from the valleys below. It is the only town on the Federal Parkway.



There are no railroads in Watauga County. Transportation is well taken care of by four state highways. The county and private roads have been improved and now almost any community in the county may be reached any time of the year. Further improvements of the rural roads are in the process of being made.

The federal government has built the Parkway through about fifteen miles of Watauga and when completed over Grandfather Mountain, there will be about thirty miles within Watauga, more mileage than in any other county. Proposed connections with East Tennessee promises to make Watauga County a hub of North-South travel. Part of that highway has already been built.

Telephone service is available to more than three-fourths of the county, and eighty per cent of the homes have electricity. Power is supplied by hydro-electric plants on New and Watauga rivers and R. E. A. lines.

The industry of the county is largely agriculture and has been since it was first settled. Of the 18,144 persons in the county in 1940, 11,900 were living on farms.

Watauga County in 1849, and for more than half a century thereafter, was a region of subsistence farming.

Moreover, the people had to provide locally most of their dyes, leather, furniture, clothing, plows, sleds, wagons, and almost every household implement or tool then in use. Commercial farming did not begin until after 1900, and not to a great extent until after 1920. Although subsistence farming has declined considerably since 1920, the present-day farmer is still largely self-sufficient in foodstuffs and feed for his livestock.<sup>5</sup>

The commercial activities of the farmers are chiefly concerned with cattle, tobacco, Irish potatoes, cabbages, and beans. Sheep, for the county as a whole, are relatively unimportant. However, the finest sheep in North Carolina are to be found in Watauga County. Watauga sheep for 1948 and 1949 took first place at the State Fair in Raleigh.

The farmers get 41.7 per cent of their farm income from products used on the farm, 19.9 per cent from field crops, 14.4 per cent from livestock, and 4.1 per cent from dairy products.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> J. C. Yoder, "Agricultural Development of Watauga County," (History of Watauga County, Daniel J. Whitener), p. 51.

<sup>6</sup> Bill Sharp, North Carolina, A Description by Counties (Compiled by the Division of Advertising and News of the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, Raleigh: Warren Publishing Company, 1948).



The construction of modern highways and the coming of the automobile were most important factors leading to the shift from subsistence farming to commercial farming. Many produce dealers, not only from the Piedmont of the two Carolinas, but often from Jacksonville, Florida, or Baltimore, Maryland, and many other distant cities come to Watauga to obtain vegetables, dairy products, beef, and many other items. Also, many of the farmers in the county own trucks. This makes it possible for the farmer to choose his own market and to deliver his products when they are in their most desirable condition.

The production of dairy products and the growth of tobacco has, perhaps, made the greatest gain in the last four or five years. There are about seventy-five Grade "A" dairies in Watauga with two milk receiving plants offering a market for the dairy products. There are also four Burley tobacco warehouses in Boone. These warehouses, not only offer a market for tobacco produced locally, but draw tobacco from farmers of adjoining counties and from nearby sections of Tennessee and Virginia, which means added income to the county.

The tourist industry is rapidly becoming a major economic factor. Watauga is fast becoming a vacation

land. Here is the highest general elevation east of the Rocky Mountains. Aptly called the "Roof of Eastern America," Watauga has many attractions for summer vacationists. The scenery from the top of Howard's Knob, Flat Top, Blowing Rock, Tater Hill, and Grandfather, is as grand and fine as can be found.<sup>7</sup>

There are some lumbering and sawmill operations. Industrial activity is small and is largely confined to the raw materials produced in the county.

#### SUMMARY OF FACTS TO 1946<sup>8</sup>

##### Population

Population: 1930, 15,165; 1940, 18,114; 1950, 18,296

Urban, 13 per cent; Rural Non-Farm, 10.5 per cent;

Rural Farm, 76.5 per cent

Public School Enrollment, 1946: Grade, 3,335; High, 707

##### Physical Characteristics

Total Land Area (acres) 204,800 Forest Area (acres) 95,000

Rainfall (inches) 54.42

Growing Season (days) 158

Average Low (January) 4.59

Snowfall (inches) 24.5

Average High (July) 6.06

Mean Annual Temp. 52.8°

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<sup>7</sup> Daniel J. Whitener, History of Watauga County (Chamber of Commerce, Boone, N. C., 1949), p. 50

<sup>8</sup> Bill Sharp, North Carolina, A Description by Counties (Raleigh: Warren Publishing Company, 1948), pp. 24 ff.



## Agriculture

Number of Farms (1945), 2,601      Average Size (1945), 63.7  
 Average Value of Farms (1945)      Farm Operators (1945),  
     \$3,299                                      2,591  
 Average Tax Per Acre (1946), \$0.31  
 Farm Mortgaged, 21.8 per cent      Farm Tenancy, 16.6 per cent  
 Number of Hogs (1944), 5,394      All Cattle (1944), 15,906  
 Value of Dairy Products,              Milk Cattle (1944) 9,018  
     \$194,330  
 Value of Domestic Animals, \$1,068,775  
 Value of Farm Implements and Machinery, \$243,055  
 Value of Eleven Principal Crops (1945), \$1,888,260  
 Principal Farm Income Source (1945) Value:

1. Vegetables, \$647,189
2. Irish and Sweet Potatoes, \$463,020
3. Hay, \$375,390

## Taxation and Income

Assessed Property Valuation (1946) \$8,463,866  
 Long Term Debt (1946), \$730,000  
 Tax Rate (1942), \$1.25; (1946) \$1.26  
 Income Per Family (1945), \$1,934  
 Increase Per Family Income (Per cent of 1940-45) 136.4  
 Total Wages (1945), \$312,916  
 Average Weekly Wages (1946), \$16.13

## Trade and Finance

Major Industrial Crops According to the Number of Employees (1944):

1. Lumber and timber basic products
2. Furniture and finished lumber products
3. Textile mill products

Number of Employers (1945), 27

Total Number Employed (1945), 373

Employed in Agriculture (1945), 3,000

Employed in Manufacturing (1945), 59

Per Family Retail Sales (1945), \$979.42

Value of Retail Products (1945), \$80,000

Wholesale Trade Establishments (1939), 8

Retail Trade Establishments (1939), 107

Thirty years ago the region in which Watauga County is found was often referred to as the most illiterate, isolated, non-religious group in North Carolina.<sup>9</sup> Others said that it was isolated to such an extent that the people scarcely were able to earn a living.<sup>10</sup> There are others who refer to it as being non-social,

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<sup>9</sup> Rupert B. Vance, Human Geography of the South (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935), p. 32.

<sup>10</sup> James Alfred Stanley, Development of Secondary Education in Watauga County (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1940), p. 20.



backward group of people. While this may be partially true of the early history of this region, it is also true of nearly all of the first settlements of this country.

It is one of the purposes of the writer in giving this short history, to question some of the old traditions regarding the mountain people, and to show that the progress of this section is closely related to the growth in education. It is the writer's contention that the people of Watauga County have never been too far behind the people of other sections of North Carolina when one considers the fact that the Highlands were settled much later than the Coastal Plain and Piedmont Plateau. Watauga County has kept pace with other counties in the state in educational development. The writer tries to point out conclusively in the remaining chapters of this thesis that Watauga has never been a "laggard" in terms of educational development.

## CHAPTER II

### ACADEMIES, INSTITUTES, AND APPALACHIAN STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

The South was slow in establishing an organized system of public schools. North Carolina was no exception. In most sections, missions were responsible for the first schools followed by academies supported by local funds and donations.

Instead of the public school system, education centered around subsidized academies. They were usually private, although chartered by the state. Most of them were sectarian in character. The trustees selected the teachers, gave the examinations, and in some cases, administered discipline.<sup>1</sup>

The General Assembly of North Carolina passed the Literary Fund "Law" in 1926.<sup>2</sup> This fund was designed to be divided proportionally among the school districts of the state. This did not amount to very

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<sup>1</sup> Hugh Talmadge Lefler, North Carolina History Told by Contemporaries (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> M. C. S. Noble, A History of the Public Schools of North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 46.



much and the academies continued to be the chief source of education.

Although the above conditions existed long before Watauga County was established, the same pattern seemed to have been followed here. Although schools existed in Watauga as early as 1835,<sup>3</sup> most of the teaching was done in academies until near the close of the nineteenth century. A short description of some of the more important academies and institutes is given below.

#### Valle Crucis School

Valley Crucis School, although a mission school, had a very important bearing on the development of public education in Watauga County. Space will not permit a detailed description of the development of the school, but an outline of the main characteristics will be given.

The history of Valle Crucis School dates back to 1840 when a mission was established at the present location of the Valle Crucis School. About the year 1840, a New York botanist, after wandering in the low country of North Carolina, penetrated the isolated region beyond

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<sup>3</sup> John Preston Arthur, A History of Watauga County, North Carolina (Richmond: Everatt Waddy Company, 1915), p. 248.

the Blue Ridge in search of rare plants. The botanist explored the valley of the Watauga River. Here he found all types of wild flowers and was well pleased with the country.

Before returning northward, the botanist met Bishop Levi Stillman Ives and dwelt earnestly on the beauty of the country he had visited and the religious privations of the mountaineers. The Bishop was so much interested that at his next visitation of the Diocese, he made his way across the Blue Ridge and on the twentieth of July, 1842, held services in the valley of the Watauga.<sup>4</sup>

Bishop Ives was one of the chief founders of Valle Crucis School. He was born near Meridan, Connecticut, September 16, 1797, and spent his boyhood in the Black River section of New York State. After attending Lowville Academy, he enlisted in the army and saw service toward the close of the War of 1812. The doubt and uncertainty that was to plague him through coming years began when he entered Hamilton College at Clinton, New York, to prepare for the Presbyterian ministry. Ill

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<sup>4</sup> The News and Observer, Sunday, March 12, 1939, Raleigh, North Carolina.



health caused him to withdraw from college within a year and before taking up his studies again three years later, he had become an Episcopalian.

Ordained in 1822 and raised to Priesthood two years later, Ives served at Batavia, New York, as rector of Trinity Church, Philadelphia, then as assistant rector of Christ Church in New York, and later served as rector of St. Luke's, one of the most important parishes in New York.

A militant advocate of education, one of his first steps on being chosen successor to John Stark Ravenscroft, first Bishop of the North Carolina diocese, was to make proposals that resulted in the establishing, one mile west of the Capitol building in Raleigh, the defunct Episcopal Schools of North Carolina, in 1832. Ten years later, St. Mary's College was established. In the same year, Ives became interested in the people of the mountain section of North Carolina and came to Valle Crucis.<sup>5</sup>

Bishop Ives receives credit for being responsible for establishing Valle Crucis School. This is true. However, according to information only recently found,

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<sup>5</sup> The News and Observer, Sunday, March 12, 1939, Raleigh, North Carolina.

the name of George Evans might be put alongside that of Bishop Ives. Since so much has been written about the work of Bishop Ives, it seems fitting to include in this thesis a short sketch of Mr. Evans.

George Neyolian Evans was the son of Peter Evans who was the son of Major George Evans of the Revolution. Peter Evans was probably the wealthiest man in North Carolina. "Piney Prospect," "La Grange," and "Deep River" were his best known plantations. The family came out of a background of strong Church of England leanings. George finished three years of college at Chapel Hill. His father believed in the struggling college and gave liberally to its support. George went to Harvard for the completion of his education. He spent his money too freely to suit his father, and consequently was advised to go into the deep south and make a new start.

With only his body servants and on horseback, George made a long and difficult journey into the Mississippi Delta country. He contracted a serious illness and returned home in bad health. To regain his vigor, he made a trip into the mountains.

In Valle Crucis he found Bishop Ives. Together they visioned a school for the mountain people. Evans



was to carry the book learning. Bishop Ives undertook the spiritual guidance, and a trained worker was to teach the farming.

Bishop Ives and Evans were pioneers in new fields of education. This was one of the first experiments in education where the life situation was brought closely into the school. Bishop Ives and Evans lived together in the large cabin still standing in the valley below the present school.<sup>6</sup>

Valle Crucis School is the outgrowth of one of the earliest missions of the church in America for the isolated. In 1842, Bishop Ives founded the mission for the spiritual benefit of the mountain people of this interesting and beautiful part of North Carolina. For nearly a hundred years, devoted missionaries worked here, changing the special character of the work to meet special needs as they arose. At one time the mission was a theological school, preparing for the ministry men who could not go elsewhere. In 1892, it was transformed into a boarding school for girls and a day school for girls and younger boys. Such a school was an urgent need at that time.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Ruth Evans Mathes, A Letter to Rev. Dargon Butt in reply for information regarding George Evans, February 2, 1940.

<sup>7</sup> Loc. cit.

Valle Crucis School is situated in the north-western part of North Carolina, in Watauga County, near the borders of Tennessee and Virginia, at the eastern end of the Wilderness Road in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The school buildings are on the side of a hill overlooking the St. Andrew's Cross formed by the intersection of two valleys. From the cross in the vale, the name of the place is derived. This land is on the highway between Asheville and the Shenandoah Valley, ten miles from Boone. The altitude of the school is 2,800 feet, although a short motor trip brings one to the foot of the Grandfather Mountain, while Mount Mitchell, the highest peak in the Southern Appalachians, is only three hours distance.<sup>8</sup>

The school program that was organized in 1892 continued to operate until 1920 when the leaders of the school believed that conditions warranted a change. In the school year of 1933 the reason for the change in organization was given as follows:

Now, when good roads and consolidated high schools provide excellent educational opportunities for the boys and girls in the

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<sup>8</sup> Valle Crucis School Bulletin, 1931, pp. 1-2.



district, a different type of school is needed. The school is being reorganized. It will still receive as day pupils those in the immediate neighborhood. The boarding department will be made larger and more important. Valle Crucis will become a church boarding school for daughters of families with limited incomes and other families who wish a simple church school for their daughters, regardless of the size of their income.<sup>9</sup>

The school continued as a vocational school from 1892 to 1934 when a change was brought about to make the school fit the needs of the time. This school seems to have never been a static institution, but always changing to meet the needs of the people whom it was to serve.

When in 1934, the trustees of Valle Crucis School for Girls, headed by the Rt. Rev. R. D. Gribbin, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina, decided that there was no longer a need in Watauga County for mission education, they faced the need of deciding upon the future use of the buildings and equipment. The decision to abandon the educational mission field had been made after a careful survey of improved public educational facilities which convinced the board that this field was finished. After consideration of all these factors, the board decided to continue as a private

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

preparatory school for girls of limited means and also decided that the operation of such a school could be undertaken successfully only with an exceptional person at its head. Keeping these factors in mind, they called Mrs. Emily Toll Hopkins, well-known in middle western educational circles as a progressive, and made her headmistress of the new venture. Thus was assured the continuance of a school founded in 1842 by Bishop Ives under the sponsorship of the Protestant Episcopal Church.<sup>10</sup>

After taking over the school, Mrs. Hopkins and her faculty began to work out a program which they hoped would make Valle Crucis School one of the highest types for the training of girls. Her program had a threefold purpose and attempted to give each student an active part in the life of the student at school.

The aims of Valle Crucis were to furnish at a moderate cost, within the reach of moderate incomes, an environment where creative activities, social equality and sound scholarship could flourish; where the problems of American young girls were met with sympathy and constructive understanding. The life of the school was genuinely simple, in order to fulfill this aim. It was

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<sup>10</sup> The Watauga Democrat, July 7, 1938.



the purpose of Valle Crucis to plan and to maintain a daily life which was truly inexpensive and simple. Participation in household tasks were undertaken primarily in the interests of economy, as they existed in any sensible household. All the girls took part in them. Only thus could the expenses of education at Valle Crucis School be set at a moderate figure. This necessary work taught the girls direct responsibility toward the budget, as well as made them independent of paid servants. It has been well said that work, to be educational must be necessary work, not disguised "practice." No sharp line was drawn between curricular and extra-curricular activities. The place itself furnished all the equipment to be used. For instance, the mountains were the gymnasium, the woods the museum, the school assembly room the theatre, the space before the fire the club room, the school rooms the workshop, and the mission church and school chapel, the religious centre.<sup>11</sup>

In the Valle Crucis School the general high school subjects were offered. However, there was less emphasis placed on foreign languages and more stress on the

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<sup>11</sup> Valle Crucis School Bulletin, 1931, p. 7.

vocational subjects. French and Latin were taught and most of the students took one or both of them. In the bulletin issued by the school each year, the following information was given about the curriculum:

The curriculum at Valle Crucis School includes the subjects customary to a college entrance course. Valle Crucis is accredited by the State of North Carolina. The buildings of the school have been modernized and are in excellent condition. The school stands in the center of a farm of 500 acres. Recreational activities include tennis, dancing, softball, volley ball, badminton, and other outdoor games. Hiking is a feature of Valle Crucis life. Winter sports are the most unusual recreational opportunity at Valle Crucis School.<sup>12</sup>

The following course of study was listed in the catalogue of the school:

The boarding pupils will be admitted to the two principal Divisions of the High School: The Junior Division, Grades VII through IX; and the Senior Division, Grades X through XII. In these divisions instruction is offered in Religious Knowledge; English, including literature and dramatics; Latin and classical civilization; Science, Biology and nature study; Music: group singing, elementary harmony, and piano; arts and crafts; drawing, painting, modeling, home decoration, rug making, etc.; Physical Education, Outdoor games, Natural Dancing, and Posture Correction; and Home Economics, theory and practice of household management, cooking and sewing. For girls who intend to go to college, definite preparation for entrance requirements of the college selected will be given.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Loc. cit.



Valle Crucis School closed to students during the regular school year in 1942. The church considered the need for a mission school no longer was strong enough to justify continuation since the public schools had become common enough to be within reach of nearly every community in the county.

The buildings at Valle Crucis are still in good condition and the church conducts church institutes there during the summer. The Southern Rural Church Institute for 1950 will be under the direction of Reverend Dargon E. Butt, S. T. M., Evanston, Illinois.<sup>14</sup>

#### Skyland Institute

Another academy was Skyland Institute in Blowing Rock. It was established by Miss Emily C. Prudden. The town of Blowing Rock, including Green Park, had at that time only one small store and a few homes in what is now the business section, and probably two houses in the Green Park section. There were no schools at, or near Blowing Rock except the one teacher, three months schools.

After having established a school at All Healing Springs, Gaston County, North Carolina, Miss Emily C.

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<sup>14</sup> The Southern Rural Church Institute Bulletin announcing the institute to be held at the Valle Crucis School, Valle Crucis, North Carolina, 1950.

Prudden of Minnesota came to Blowing Rock for a vacation in the summer of 1885.<sup>15</sup> On her second vacation in 1886, Miss Prudden purchased a large boundary of unimproved land about halfway between what is now the village and the Green Park sections of the town. In 1887 she built a large dormitory on this property and opened school in September of that year.<sup>16</sup> The dormitory was also used for class rooms for some time. This was Skyland Institute. The school was a great success from the beginning. Though the dormitory was built primarily for girls, some of them, who had small brothers, were permitted to bring them in provided the girls could take care of them. The boys, for one winter, were in one large room on the third floor.<sup>17</sup> There was no fire escape except the stairway in the center of the building. Each evening after supper (as it was called in those days) all gathered in the large classroom for devotional services and study hour.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Emily C. Prudden, My Schools (An Autobiographical Sketch, 1914).

<sup>16</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Statement of D. P. Coffey, a student at Skyland Institute, in an interview with author, April 3, 1950.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., April 4, 1950.



By the third year there were about sixty-five students in the house and as many day students. Skyland Institute was the second of fifteen schools built by Miss Prudden in twenty-six years in North and South Carolina for white and colored children.<sup>19</sup> Two of them were in South Carolina.

Miss Susan F. Hinman was the first teacher in the Skyland Institute. By her leadership and that of other teachers many girls and boys and the community have greatly benefitted. It is probable that all the teachers have died except Miss Hinman who was still living February 6, 1950, at Elyria, Ohio.<sup>20</sup> After spending some time in China, she taught in 1899 and 1900 in a school built by Miss Prudden at Hudson, North Carolina.

Miss Prudden built a few cottages which were occupied by teachers and students. She sold a good many lots and several houses sprang up near the school. A two-story building was also erected just across the "turnpike road" from the dormitory. This building had two large rooms. The lower one was occupied for some time by the matron and her daughter, who was a student. The

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<sup>19</sup> Prudden, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> Coffey, op. cit.

upper one was occupied by youths and young men, who had been admitted by that time. Sometimes there were eight to twelve in the one room. One severe winter all the heat furnished that room was a stove pipe running through it from the lower room. Then, too, discipline was, at times, a problem. Soon two more large rooms were added to the building and it was used from then on for class rooms. It was also used for Sunday school and other services.

In 1890, Miss Prudden deeded this property to the American Missionary Association.<sup>21</sup> Following the transfer, Mrs. Ellen R. Dorsett of Pennsylvania, as principal for several terms, assisted by able teachers, operated the school successfully. Miss Agnes Ruth Mitchell of Acworth, New Hampshire, was outstanding as a teacher. Miss Mitchell died at Skyland of diphtheria, December 14, 1896, at the age of 26 years, and was buried at Blowing Rock cemetery.

Skyland Institute was attended by girls from many homes in Watauga County and several other counties.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Prudden, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Coffey, op. cit.



As the district schools improved and other institutions sprang up and Skyland had served its purpose, preparations were made to close the Institute. In 1910, Miss Prudden came back to Blowing Rock, and at the request of the American Missionary Association, took charge of Skyland Institute for two more years. This school completed its twenty-fifth year in 1912.

When the school closed in 1912, Miss Prudden, having reached her eightieth birthday on June 13 of that year, retired from all school work. She had spent most of her first fifty years in New England, but had lived in Minnesota with relatives for a time before coming South in 1882. She was hampered by deafness from the age of seventeen. She was born near New Haven, Connecticut, June 13, 1832, and died Christmas eve, 1917, having passed her eighty-fifth birthday.<sup>23</sup> Thus ended the final chapter of one of our valued institutions.

Later an effort was made by some local citizens of Blowing Rock, assisted by several influential summer residents, to induce Lees-McRae College to take the property and develop it as a branch of that college. A teacher was employed for one term. The school was not successful, and the project failed.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., April 3, 1950.

### Walnut Grove Institute

The only school in the lower Brushy Fork and Sugar Grove communities around 1900 was the elementary school at Willowdale. This school was sponsored by the Odd Fellows Lodge and operated from two to three months each year, the length depending upon the number of students and the seasons. This school was conducted in the Willowdale Baptist Church which was near the present church building.

Several citizens of the two communities became interested in having a better school and a more adequate building. They had meetings and worked out plans for such a school.

In December, 1903, Finley P. Mast agreed to give three acres of the Old Meeting House Hill, where the Cove Creek Baptist Church used to stand, for a school site and campus. This spot is on the hill overlooking the present site of Sugar Grove Post Office. T. C. McBride, J. H. Bingham, D. C., W. H., and J. C. Mast agreed to give \$100 each, and to procure all subscriptions possible. Work was begun and the school house finished in 1904. It was large and convenient. This district then voted a tax of thirty cents on each hundred dollars of



property and ninety cents on each poll for six years without a dissenting vote. In 1910, the same tax was renewed for five years, with but two votes in the negative. Not one dollar was paid to complete the actual work of constructing the institute. W. E. Dugger, Ben Dugger, J. C. Smith, D. C. Mast, W. H. Mast, J. H. Mast, and J. C. Mast did the work themselves.<sup>24</sup>

The Walnut Grove building was one of the best for that day. The figures on pages 36 and 37 will bear this out.

Figure 1 is a drawing of the first floor. There was a large auditorium, 40 feet by 60 feet, including the stage; one classroom 20 feet by 30 feet; and a dressing room with the stairway leading up the second floor.

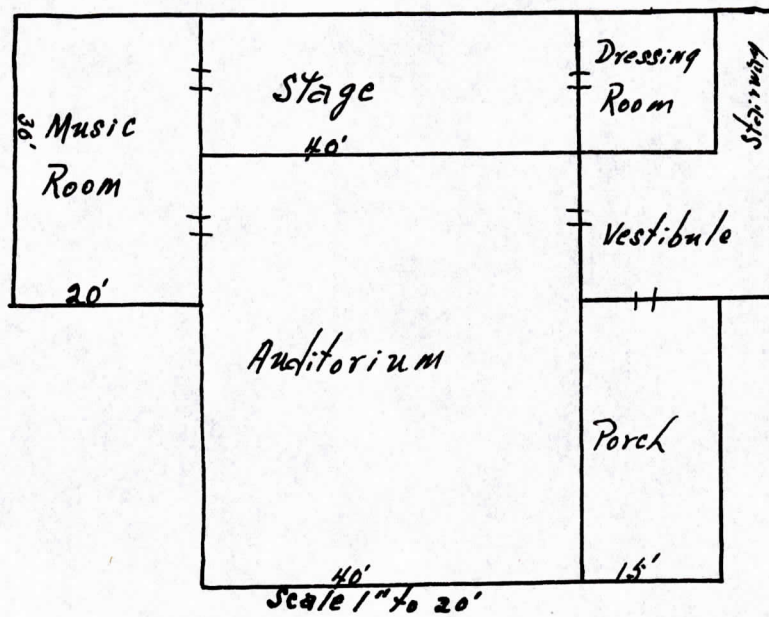
Figure 2 is a drawing of the second floor. There was a large vestibule at the head of the stairs; one classroom 20 feet by 40 feet; one classroom 20 feet by 30 feet; a hallway 10 feet by 40 feet; and the "big room" 30 feet by 40 feet. The so-called "big room" was also a classroom. It was so named because the higher grades were taught in this room.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> John Preston Arthur, A History of Watauga County (Richmond: Everatt Waddy Company, 1915), p. 253.

<sup>25</sup> Statement of D. C. Mast, interviewed by the author on March 12, 1950.

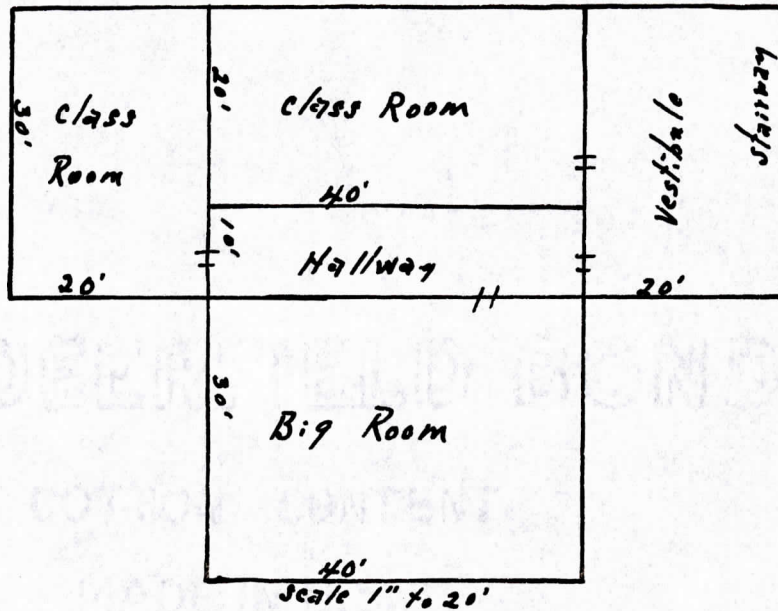
Figure 1



Drawing of the First Floor  
Walnut Grove School,  
1904



Figure 2



Drawing of the Second Floor  
Walnut Grove School,  
1904

The last school taught at Walnut Grove was under the leadership of Alfonso Greer Glenn in the fall of 1922. The school was consolidated with Cove Creek School in 1922, and the building was sold and torn down.

### Appalachian State Teachers College

Many people are connected with the history of Appalachian State Teachers College, however, the history of it is chiefly that of two brothers, Dauphin Disco and Blanford Barnard Dougherty.<sup>26</sup> The Doughertys were originally of sturdy Irish stock that became about half English through intermarriage. They were among the first settlers of Tennessee. At the close of the Civil War, D. B. Dougherty, father of the two college builders, married Miss Ellen C. Bartlett, of Jefferson, North Carolina, and settled there. Later he moved to Boone, bought the Jordan Councill old store building, and remodeled it for a home. The mother died when the daughter and two sons were yet young, and the rearing of the children was left to the father.

D. B. Dougherty was a respected and progressive citizen. He bought part of the land where the town of

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<sup>26</sup> Daniel J. Whitener, History of Watauga County (Chamber of Commerce, Boone, N. C., 1949), p. 74.



Boone now stands, divided it into lots and promoted its sale. In 1899, he and R. C. Rivers, Sr., took over the Watauga Democrat, which was bought by the latter in 1899. His understanding at that time of the value of education and his determination to educate his boys mark him as no average father. He later gave land and lumber to the new college and contributed to the idea of its inception.

Dauphin D., the older son, attended Globe Academy in Caldwell County and then entered Wake Forest College. From this institution he was graduated in 1892 with an A. B. degree. He was immediately employed to teach science and mathematics at Holly Springs College. There he taught until he joined with his brother to found Watauga Academy in 1899.

The younger brother, Blanford Barnard, attended the Cove Creek Academy and the New River Academy in Watauga, and Marshall High School in Lenoir. His stays at those schools were short, not more than two years altogether. When his brother was a senior at Wake Forest, he decided to attend that college.

Successfully completing one year's work at Wake Forest, young Dougherty taught school the next year at Hamilton Institute in Ashe County for \$40 per month, an

unusually large salary at that time. After Christmas he entered Holly Springs College in Tennessee.

The next two years Blanford Dougherty was principal of the Globe Academy in Caldwell County. A boarding department was run and a large number of students from many counties attended. Mr. Dougherty not only prepared students for college entrance, but also got them ready to enter the sophomore class at Wake Forest College.

The next year he went to Carson-Newman College. Having been permitted to "stand off" by examination physics and astronomy, subjects he had been teaching, he was registered as a senior. At the end of the year, 1896, he received his B. S. degree.

Teaching again at the Globe Academy and then, later, Latin at Holly Springs College, he decided to return to college himself. This time he entered, in 1898, the University of North Carolina to study "pedagogy" or education, as the first pupil of Dr. M. C. S. Noble. Here he was graduated in 1899 with the Ph. B. degree.

Many other people, as just explained, have made the history of Appalachian. Some of these will appear and their contribution will be noted.

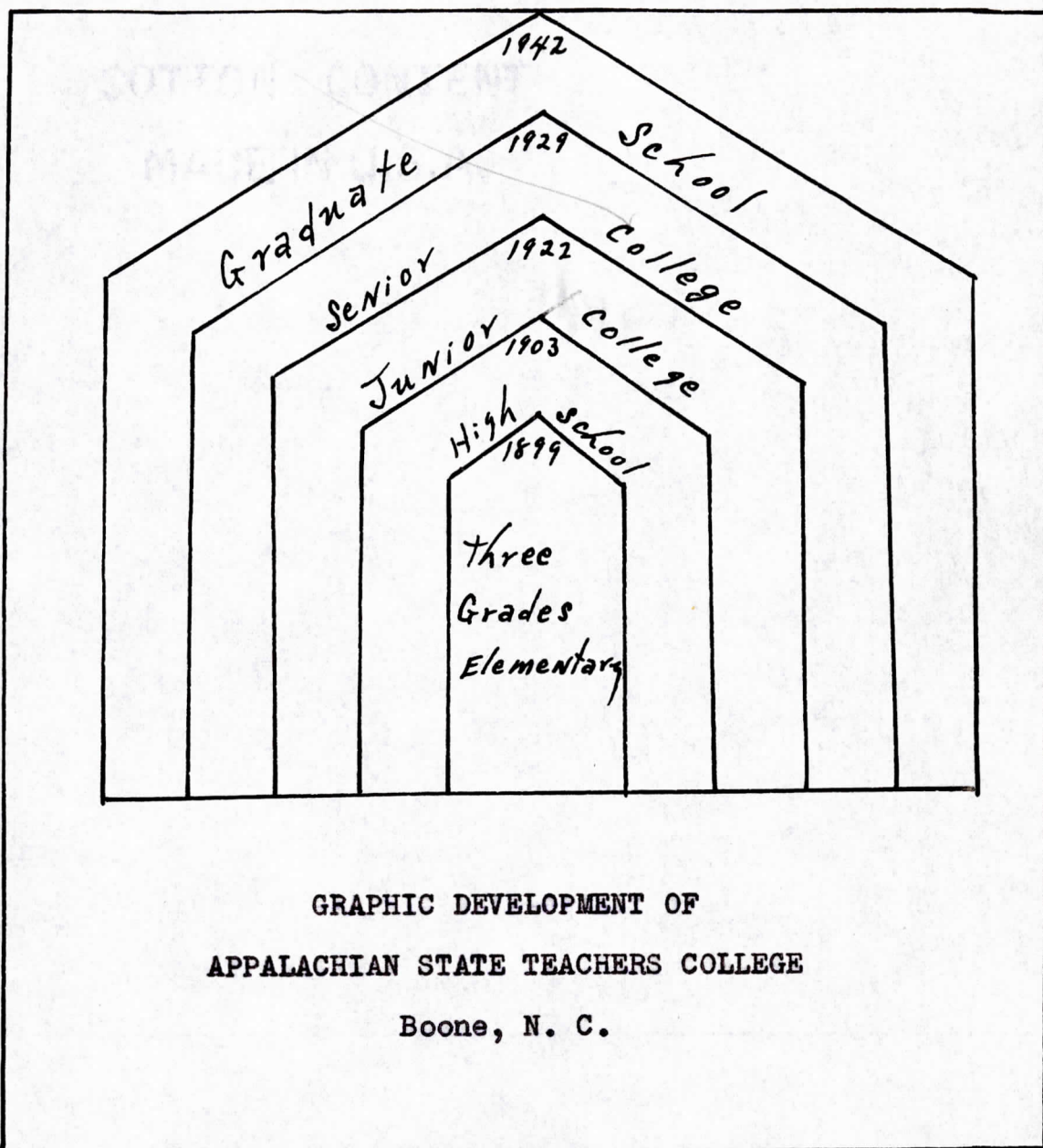


In the summer of 1899 a group of Watauga County citizens, under the leadership of D. D. and B. B. Dougherty began a drive to establish a school in Boone. D. B. Dougherty, father of the leaders, and J. H. Hardin, a prominent citizen of Boone, donated land. A building was erected in the fall and school began. The Dougherty brothers were made co-principals and continued in this capacity until 1903.

In 1903, Honorable W. C. Newland, of Caldwell County, introduced a bill in the House of the General Assembly of North Carolina to establish a state institution for the training of teachers in Boone. The bill passed by only one vote. The school was set up as Appalachian Training School for Teachers.

The school experienced a steady growth and increased in importance far beyond the expectations of many.

The year 1925 was another milestone in the growth of the school. At this time the Legislature changed the name of the institution to Appalachian State Normal School. In 1929, the Legislature again changed the name, and the school became Appalachian State Teachers College. At the same time, the charter was revised, and the school



27 Reproduced by permission of Appalachian State Teachers College. Catalogue Issue 1948-1949. (Drawing by Dr. B. B. Dougherty).



trustees were authorized to confer degrees. Graduate work was offered in the summer of 1942, and Master's degrees were granted in 1948.<sup>28</sup>

### Cove Creek Academy

Cove Creek Academy played a very important part in the development of education in Watauga County. There are those who say that it was the most influential school in the county prior to 1900. An inquiry into the accomplishments of some of the persons who had their first schooling there would be a very strong argument to support this belief.

Four men were principally responsible for the establishment of Cove Creek Academy. These men were Enoch Swift, James Horton, Finley McBride, and John McBride. The first committee was composed of Enoch Swift, chairman, James Horton, and Finley Mast.

The early history of this institution is closely interwoven with the development and growth of Cove Creek Baptist Church. The first church at Cove Creek was organized on December 2, 1799.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Bulletin, Appalachian State Teachers College (Catalogue issued 1948-1949), p. 25.

<sup>29</sup> Minutes of the One Hundreth Annual Session of the Three Forks Baptist Association, August 27, 28, and 29, 1940, p. 66.

This church was the second church established west of the Blue Ridge. The first church building was washed away by high water and a second building, a log structure, served until 1846. At that time, a frame building with an open fireplace and small windows replaced the log building. It was located where the present church now stands. It was during this time that permission was given by the church for a community school to be taught for five months in the church building provided other than Baptist Doctrine was not taught and that the teacher would agree to repair any damage done to the property by the scholars.

In 1882, the church outgrew its building and a larger building was erected on the site where the Baptist parsonage now stands. The old building was used for three years for the school. In 1885, a new two-story building was erected. This building was on the same site that the present Cove Creek Baptist Church now occupies. The building was long and high, almost dangerous on a windy day. It had two rooms, the upper room being used for the advanced scholars.



The year 1885 is the year when the academy actually began. The first school in the new building was taught by Julius Martin of Asheville. It was called the Cove Creek Academy from the beginning of this school. Martin was a well-educated man for that day and the school was immediately successful. It is said that many young men came from quite a distance to attend this school.

Martin taught for two years here and brought his sister, Laura Martin, to teach organ music. A small building was erected near the school to house the organ and to serve as the music room.

Much publicity was given to this school, and in the summer a teacher came and gave instruction in the making of wax flowers.

Martin was followed by E. Spencer Blackburn, who resigned in the middle of his second year to campaign for a political office. Rosendna Sledge of Raleigh, now living in Asheville, was assistant to Blackburn, and after the latter's resignation, she assumed the management of the School. Teachers came and went for several years. Finally the building was declared unsafe and a small building replaced it.

Teachers' salaries were small. On year Mrs. M. L. Shoun was employed at \$15 per month, plus room and board. Fuel was provided by citizens of the community in the form of logs. The students managed to cut the logs into stove lengths.

Any story of the Cove Creek Academy would not be complete without mentioning the part Enoch Swift played in its development and operation. Mr. Swift and his wife supplied board and lodging, without compensation, for most of the teachers. When the Cove Creek School was no longer able to meet the needs of the community, it was he who led the drive for consolidation and necessary taxation to establish the present high school. He served almost continuously until 1936.<sup>31</sup>

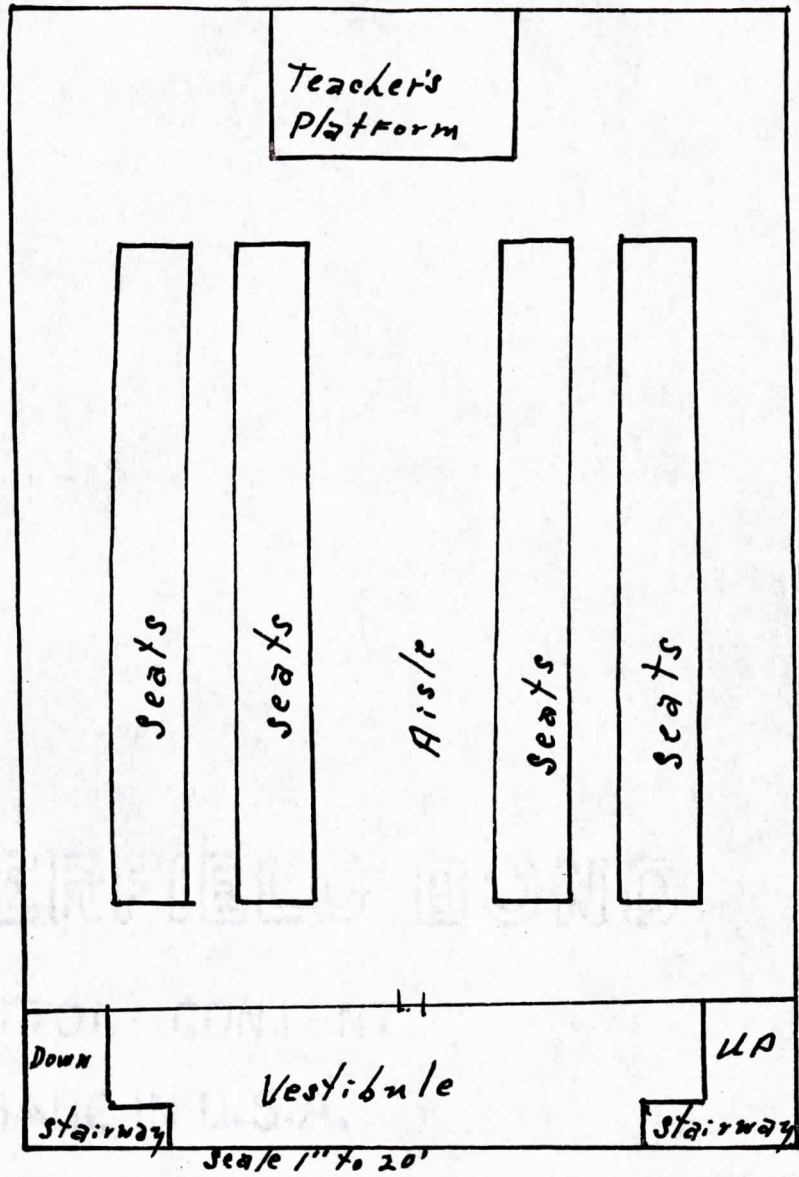
Cove Creek Academy was consolidated with Walnut Grove Academy in 1922 to form the beginning of the present Cove Creek High School. The building was sold by the County Board of Education to the highest bidder and it was torn down. The property belonged to the Cove Creek Baptist Church.

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<sup>31</sup> Where not credited otherwise, the information used in connection with Cove Creek Academy was supplied by Mrs. Selmer Fuller of Mountain City, Tennessee. Mrs. Fuller was a student of the school and a daughter of Enoch Swift.



Figure 4 32

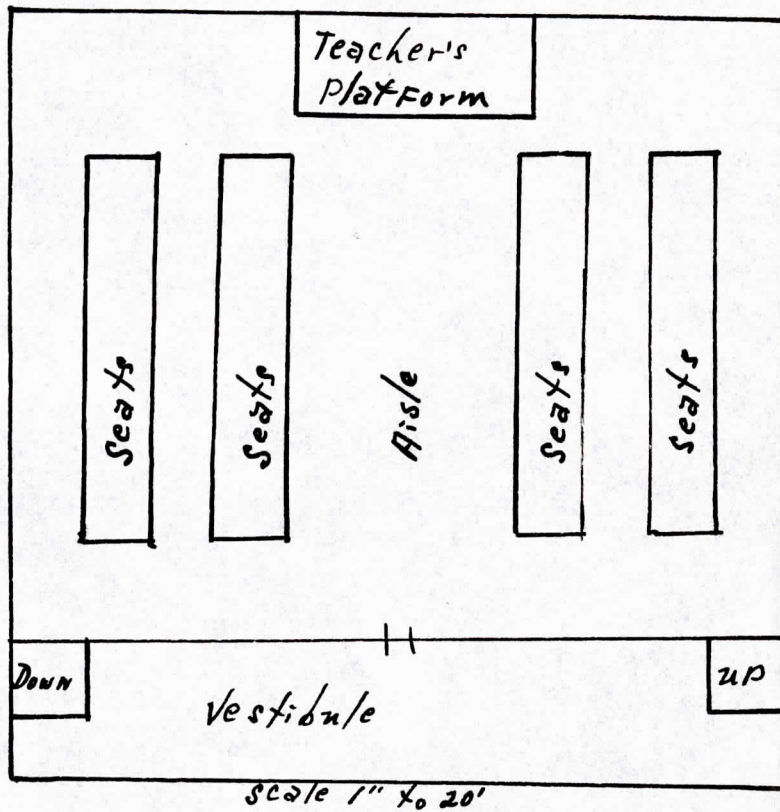


First Floor Cove Creek Academy Building

1885

32 Drawing supplied by Mrs. Grace Sherwood Bingham.

Figure 5 33



Second Floor Cove Creek Academy Building  
1885

33 Drawing furnished by Mrs. Grace S. Bingham



Figure 4 on page 47 is a drawing of the first floor of the Cove Creek Academy building. It was 24 feet by 36 feet from outside to outside, and 14 feet high. There was only one entrance door. There was no door at the rear of the building. It had eight windows all on the sides of the building.

Figure 5 on page 48 is a drawing of the second floor which is only one room. The room was 24 feet by 24 feet with the ceiling 14 feet above the floor. The building was 28 feet high to the roof. The only entrance to the upstairs room was one door in the center leading to the vestibule.

#### Other Academies and Schools

New River Academy was built about the year 1890 and was located about three miles east of Boone on the North Wilkesboro road. Joe Spainhour and his brother, William R. Spainhour, together taught the first school. They taught for two years, in a frame building which was two stories high.<sup>34</sup> The school did not operate very long. However, it was still in operation in 1902.

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<sup>34</sup> Mrs. Emma H. Moore, Librarian, Appalachian State Teachers College, in a statement to the writer on December 10, 1949.

There is a record of \$68 being appropriated for its operating for the year 1902.<sup>35</sup>

A normal school was authorized at Boone in 1885 for the training of teachers, and a sum not to exceed \$500 was appropriated out of the University Normal School fund with which to pay its instructors.<sup>36</sup> This school was taught at the courthouse for one month in 1886. The next year the school was moved to Alleghany County.

The academy at Valle Crucis was built about 1909, and W. W. Mast, T. H. Taylor, T. C. Baird, J. M. Shull, D. F. Mast, W. E. Shipley, C. D. Taylor, W. H. Mast, and D. F. Baird were its principal supporters. This school was located across the creek from the present site of Valle Crucis Elementary School.

The influence of the academies on later educational developments in the county can scarcely be valued too highly. Most of the secondary education for that early period was supplied by them. They were the stepping stones to the later development of the high schools. Much

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<sup>35</sup> Minute Book "A" of Watauga County Board of Education, p. 353.

<sup>36</sup> John Preston Arthur, A History of Watauga County (Richmond: Everett Waddy Company, 1915), p. 252.



of the culture of those early days was supplied and maintained by the academies. Besides the education supplied by them, they were community centers. Most of the entertainment and public meetings, other than religious, were held in the academy buildings.

### CHAPTER III

#### SCHOOLS IN WATAUGA BEFORE 1870

Although Watauga County was officially declared a county by the General Assembly, January 27, 1849, this date does not mark the beginning of education in Watauga. If records had been kept, there would be proof that schools of some sort were inaugurated with the first settlement.

It was pointed out in the first chapter that the people who settled Watauga were chiefly of English, Scotch-Irish, and French origin. A study of the history of any of these nationalities will show a strong tendency toward education. They were folk who loved freedom of worship and freedom of government. Records, to them at that time, did not appear to be important. There were very few records of any kind kept, and mostly what is known about them has been handed down by tradition or has come about by chance. According to history, wherever the early people settled in this country, they established some kind of schools.

There are records of schools as early as 1835. There is still preserved among the many valuable old papers of Colonel Henry H. Farthing of Timbered Ridge,



a contract duly executed between the subscribers and Alfred Fox for a school to commence on the 9th of November, 1835, and to last three months, for which the teacher was to receive \$1.50 for each "scholar" and board for himself, and the subscribers agreed to "tolerate" him with due and legal authority in school.<sup>1</sup>

Then, there are the stories of the so-called "Saturday and Sunday Teachers" who taught on those days when their time was not taken up with their farming duties. There were no free public schools in the early history of this area. Those that did exist were the subscription schools. The pupils or their parents paid a monthly sum to take care of the hire of the teacher. The first established school on record was the Mission School at Valle Crucis that has been discussed in Chapter II.

On January 4, 1826, the General Assembly passed "The Literary Fund Law of 1825,"<sup>2</sup> This was an attempt

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<sup>1</sup> John Preston Arthur, A History of Watauga County (Richmond: Everett Waddy Company, 1915), p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> M. C. S. Noble, A History of the Public Schools of North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1930), pp. 45-46.

on the part of the state government to establish a complete system of schools, but it was not until 1839 that anything definite was accomplished.

On January 8, 1839, the General Assembly passed the first common school law.<sup>3</sup> This law provided for the division of the state into 1,250 school districts, each with its schoolhouses and a proportionate part of the state Literary Fund (then about \$100,000 annually) devoted to its support. The bill provided for county adoption and made it possible for a county to receive from the Literary Fund \$40 for each school district, provided the county raised by taxation the sum of \$20 for each district.<sup>4</sup> The plan was slightly modified in 1844, but remained practically the same until after the Civil War.

Watauga County lost very little time in adopting this plan. In 1850, when Watauga was only one year old, there is a record of a report of the schools. In 1850, there were 520 children enrolled in the common schools, as they were called at that time. There were twelve

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> Edgar W. Knight, Public School Education in North Carolina (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916), pp. 140-144.



schools that were taught by twelve teachers indicating that all the schools were one-teacher schools. A total of \$360 was spent on all the schools making an average of \$30 for each school.<sup>5</sup>

Teachers were poorly paid. The average salary paid each teacher per month was \$10 in 1853. Salaries continued to be low as will be pointed out later in this chapter.

The requirements for a teacher's certificate were very low. The following is a copy of the common school teacher's certificate used in Watauga County.

COMMON SCHOOL TEACHER'S CERTIFICATE<sup>6</sup>

\_\_\_\_\_ County, N. C.

We, the undersigned Committee of Examination into the mental and moral qualifications of such persons as make applications for employment as Teachers of Common Schools in \_\_\_\_\_ County, have duly examined \_\_\_\_\_, and being satisfied as to \_\_\_\_\_ moral character, do hereby certify

<sup>5</sup> Records furnished by Georgia H. Faison, University of North Carolina Librarian, April 19, 1949.

<sup>6</sup> North Carolina Journal of Education, Vol. 3, Chapter 36 (Greensboro: University of North Carolina Library), p. 31.

that \_\_\_\_\_ is qualified as Teacher of Spelling, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar and Geography, as indicated by numbers annexed to each. No. 1 denotes the highest grade of scholarship, and No. 5 the lowest.

Given under our hands this the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_  
A. D., 18 \_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Committee  
of  
Examination

Spelling, No. \_\_\_\_

Reading, No. \_\_\_\_

Writing, No. \_\_\_\_

Arithmetic, No. \_\_\_\_

Grammar, No. \_\_\_\_

Geography, No. \_\_\_\_

Good for one year from date, and in \_\_\_\_\_ County only.

At the head of the state school system was the Literary Board. There was no state superintendent until 1853. The county organization was somewhat similar to the present day administration. Within each county there



was a board of superintendents of from five to ten members. The district committeemen, from three to six members, controlled the schools locally.

The General Assembly in 1852 passed a bill providing for the office of General Superintendent of Common Schools. An election in the General Assembly to fill this office was held on December 13, 1852. Calvin Henderson Wiley of Guilford County was elected over two other contestants.<sup>7</sup>

The early record of the schools of Watauga were burned along with the courthouse in 1873.<sup>8</sup> This caused the history of the schools until that date to be rather vague. However, less complete records of the schools were kept by the state superintendent. These reports had been made annually by the county superintendents of schools.

Superintendent Wiley made his first report of the schools of each county in November, 1853.<sup>9</sup> This report

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<sup>7</sup> Noble, Op. cit., pp. 107-134.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel J. Whitener, A History of Watauga County (Chamber of Commerce, Boone, N. C., 1949), p. 36.

<sup>9</sup> Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1853. Calvin H. Wiley, State Superintendent (Raleigh: William W. Holden, Printer, Standard Office). Digested and calculated from returns made to the General Superintendent, by the Boards of County Superintendents for the school year ending the third Monday in November, 1853. (Editor's note: The Reports of Superintendent of Public Instruction for the administration of C. H. Wiley, will hereafter be cited as, Superintendent Wiley's Reports.)

shows that there were thirty-four school districts in Watauga County at that time and that school was actually taught in twenty-five of them. The census was given for thirty-three districts. The total number of children taught in the thirty-three districts was 890.

Calculated on the basis of the number of districts reporting, fifty-two per cent of the children were enrolled in school. These schools operated for an average time of three months, and the teachers were paid an average salary of ten dollars per month. No new teachers were reported as receiving certificates in 1853.

Superintendent Wiley made a report to Governor David S. Reid of a trip he made to the mountains in 1853 to visit the schools:

I have seen boys going three miles to school, and have talked with them, and I found that they considered two miles and two miles and a half a very moderate walk, even in mid-winter, and when snow and ice and sleet are common. Many of the schools in the mountain counties last only two to two and a half months; and yet, let anyone examine the children as they come, and see how many he will find that are not tolerably keen set for an education.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Superintendent Wiley's Reports, p. 84.



There are no reports available for 1854, but there is a list of books recommended for use in the schools by Superintendent Wiley. The list is as follows:

1. Webster's Spelling Book, Improved Edition
2. The North Carolina Reader, with Parker's First and Second Readers
3. Davie's Arithmetic, consisting of (1) First Lessons; (2) Arithmetic for Academies and for the most advanced scholars; (3) Davie's University Arithmetic
4. Mitchell's Intermediate Geography, Special Edition for North Carolina
5. Bullion's Grammar
6. Worcester's Comprehensive Dictionary
7. Common School Catechism<sup>11</sup>

The average salary of male teachers in 1855 was about twenty-one dollars and that of females was eighteen dollars per month, indicating that men were preferred over women as teachers. There was an increase in number of districts from 1853 to 1855, there being forty reported

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<sup>11</sup>Superintendent Wiley's Report, p. 85.

in 1855 to thirty-four in 1853. However, there were fewer schools--thirteen in 1855 to twenty-five in 1853.

The reports of 1855 also give the census report for that year as being 1,818 and divides them into 955 males and 863 females, but does not give the number attending school. It does give the average time taught in these schools as being two months. There was also an indication of the increase in the teaching profession. There were three teachers reported as having received their licenses in 1855.<sup>12</sup>

The fifth annual report also shows an increase in interest taken in teaching, twenty-two men and one woman being certified. The fact that Watauga County was almost entirely an agricultural area and that the schools lasted only from two to four months enabled a person qualified to teach, to teach as well as farm.

Reports for the year 1857 were as follows:<sup>13</sup>

Schools:

Whole number of districts reported . . . .	53
Number reported taught . . . . .	29

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<sup>12</sup> Superintendent Wiley's Report, p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 44.



Whole number of male children reported . . .	930
Whole number of female children reported . .	856
Number of male children reported	
attending school . . . . .	760
Number of female children reported	
attending school . . . . .	288
Average length of school in the county . . .	3½ months

This report shows a slow but steady increase in the growth of schools in the county. It also indicates that boys far excelled the girls in attending school, eighty per cent of the boys compared to thirty-four per cent of the girls. This may have been due to the distance to school and to the cold weather.

A financial report for 1857 is also significant. It is as follows:<sup>14</sup>

Sum in hands of chairman during the year .	\$2,506.95
Disbursements during the year . . . . .	1,073.74
Balance in hands of chairman . . . . .	1,433.21
Name of chairman . . . . .	Reuben Mast

This shows that less than one-half of the money available for the schools was spent. This may have been due to several reasons. Schools were held wherever a

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

building could be found. Lack of places to teach could have been one reason. The building of schoolhouses was a duty of the county committee. No provision was made in any of the school codes for funds to build schoolhouses.<sup>15</sup> The school buildings could be secured only by donations from individuals, or in the form of materials and labor from friends, or by money apportioned to the district to pay the teacher's salary, thus postponing the school until the next apportionment.

The average cost per scholar of all children educated in the common schools for the state as a whole in 1858 was \$1.66  $\frac{2}{3}$  or 16  $\frac{2}{3}$  cents per month while schools were in session.<sup>16</sup> In Watauga County in 1858 the average cost per scholar was \$1.30  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

The reports of 1858<sup>17</sup> show an increase of school districts and also an increase in the number of schools taught. There were fifty-eight districts reported and forty-one schools taught. The total number of children attending school was about the same as reported in 1857; however, there were more girls and fewer boys attending.

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<sup>15</sup> Noble, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>16</sup> North Carolina Journal of Education, Vol. I, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Superintendent Wiley's Reports, 1858, p. 7.



The average length of school was two and one-half months and the average teacher's salary was \$13.50. Some of the schools must have had more than one teacher. There were forty-seven teachers teaching in forty-one schools. There was a sum of \$2,640.45 available for the schools with \$1,365.57 being spent, leaving a balance of \$1,274.88 in the hands of Reuben Mast, the chairman.

In 1858, William Avery Lenoir deeded five tracts of land aggregating about two thousand acres to Watauga County. The land was to be sold and the proceeds, after taxes were deducted, were to be applied to the education of the children.<sup>18</sup> The Civil War came on, and it was not until 1877 that the lands were sold and the money applied as directed.

The 1859 reports show the number of districts the same as 1858, but a smaller number of schools were taught, as only thirty-nine were reported. These schools operated at different times of the year, since only seventeen teachers were listed. Some of the teachers taught two or more schools during the year. There were fewer children attending school, and more money was spent.

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<sup>18</sup> Arthur, op. cit., pp. 254-255.

There was a total of 1,074 children attending, with \$2,067.35 spent on education.<sup>19</sup> Some of this money evidently was spent on school buildings. John C. Blair was made county examiner. This office was somewhat similar to that of county superintendent.

The enrollment in 1860 had decreased to 902 and the number of schools to thirty-three, but the number of teachers had increased to thirty-one. During the year the sum of \$1,008.08 was spent in the county for public education. The average for each school taught was \$32.51. The amount received by the chairman for education was \$1,738.23. Of this amount, \$344.34 was received from county taxes. The sheriff, S. Deal, was also tax collector, and the clerk of the county court, H. Blair, was responsible for transferring the tax money to the school examiner.

The coming of the Civil War in 1861 almost wrecked the schools.<sup>20</sup> Most of them remained open, nevertheless. The federal population for the county in 1861 was 4,195.

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<sup>19</sup> Superintendent Wiley's Report, p. 40.

<sup>20</sup> Whitener, op. cit., p. 63.



The distribution of money from the Literary Fund dropped severely to \$717.53. The figures for the schools in 1863, almost in the middle of the war, show that schools were still taught. There were fifteen schools with 417 scholars attending. The schools were the shortest on record, with an average length of one and one-half months. Mr. M. C. Harmon had been appointed county examiner in the place of John Blair. The sum of \$243.55 was spent for schools in 1863, making an average of \$16.24 which was considerably lower than the preceding years. This can be easily understood during the war years.

During the last year of the war, 1864-1865, and following, all schools were closed. Not until 1870 were public schools opened in the state, and not until 1874 were records available for Watauga County. However, in the North Carolina Journal of Education,<sup>21</sup> there is a record showing eight schoolhouses in Watauga County in 1878 and listing the name of William F. Shull as county examiner.

An examination of the records show that Watauga was going along at about the same tempo as that of the

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<sup>21</sup> North Carolina Journal of Education, Vol. 3, p.60.

remainder of the State. It seems that one would have to admire the early people of Watauga for their interest and development of education during this early period. It was an area of subsistence farming, and people had to provide locally for most of their needs. In view of this, it seems that Watauga had made a very creditable showing in her start in the field of education.

The people of Watauga exhibited early the fact that they realized education was one of their first needs. The county, as has been pointed out, was only one year old when it adopted the state school plan. This does not support the contention of those who say that education was badly neglected in Watauga and that being isolated from the outside world, the people had only a meager conception of the value of education. There were no high schools in the county, and very few in the state. Most of the higher education in the state was provided by parochial schools up until this time. Watauga had one such school at Valle Crucis.

Watauga had made an excellent beginning in its educational program. Starting with twelve one-teacher schools and an enrollment of 502 students in 1850, it had grown to thirty-three schools with thirty-one



teachers and an enrollment of 902 students by 1860. However, even as courageous as the people were, the War and the Reconstruction period following was more than they could combat. Consequently, the schools closed and the re-opening later was almost the same as a new beginning.

The history of the early public schools in North Carolina leads to the conclusion that cheap buildings, with one poorly prepared teacher, giving instruction only in the fundamentals, within walking distance of the children in the district, was typical of the schools established under the first school law.

## CHAPTER IV

### DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION BETWEEN 1870 AND 1900

In March, 1873, all the records in the county were burned when the courthouse was destroyed by fire. However, during the latter part of the same year, a new courthouse was built, and the records of the schools were more comprehensive than those of the state superintendent. The state school system had been wrecked during the War and the Reconstruction period following, and there is very little to report before 1874.

At the close of the Civil War, the whole system of state government had to be set up and reorganized. The spirit of public education was not crushed in the terrible war years, but the system was. The Literary Fund, main financial support of the state-wide system of schools, was almost completely swept away by repudiation in 1865.<sup>1</sup> This left the state without means of immediately providing for the re-opening of the common schools. Then there was the question of what to do with the Negro. The general

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<sup>1</sup> M. C. S. Noble, A History of Public Schools of North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 272.



belief in the South was that he was incapable of being educated, and even if he were capable, there still remained the old belief that it would be a crime to teach him to read. Despite these old traditions, the Negroes were clamoring for education. Then, too, there were those from the North in Congress and in the General Assembly of the state, after 1868, who were advocating mixed schools.

An examination of the convention of 1868 reveals that the people of the state were determined to regain control of their affairs. The Constitutional Convention met in Raleigh, January 14, 1868, composed of 120 delegates, all of whom were members of the Republican Party except 13 Conservatives. Of the 107 Republicans, 18 were "Carpetbaggers," or men who, following the close of the War, had moved from the North to the South, and 15 were Negroes. The 13 Conservatives and the 74 native white Republicans stood for separate schools. Consequently, near the close of the convention, a resolutions declaring that "the interests and happiness of the two races would be best promoted by the establishment of separate schools" was adopted.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel J. Whitener, Public Education In North Carolina During Reconstruction, 1865-1876 (Essays In Southern History), p. 76.



North Carolina was re-admitted to the Union in 1868 under a new constitution. The School Law of 1869 set up a new system of public education for the state and definitely established separate schools for the two races. It did away with the district schools and substituted township schools. It provided that each township have a School Committee, to consist of three persons, who should establish and maintain schools for at least four months for each year, and to provide sufficient numbers of schools at places that would be convenient for all children to attend.<sup>3</sup>

To raise revenue for support of the schools, the law provided for a poll tax of \$1.05 on all male citizens of the state between the ages of twenty-one and fifty, and that 75 per cent of this tax be applied to support the public schools. In addition to this tax, the legislature appropriated \$100,000 to the support of the schools from any surplus.

On the assumption that the \$100,000 appropriated by the legislature would be paid and that an equal amount would be raised from the poll tax, the state superintendent

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<sup>3</sup> Noble, op. cit., p. 314.

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apportioned to all counties fifty cents for each child of school age as shown by the census returns sent in by each county.<sup>4</sup>

The first report on the new system, sent in by Watauga County, was in 1874. At that time, there were 1,426 children enrolled in 39 schools. The expenditures for that year amounted to \$1,539.44. The county examiner was W. F. Shull.

For the ten or eleven years following 1873, the progress of the school was, as we see it today, very slow. This period was taken up, for the most part, by reconstruction and readjustment to the new state system that had been formulated in 1868. It took a lot of nerve and will-power on the part of a few individuals to carry on the educational program in the face of the numerous obstacles that presented themselves during this period.

Some of the men who were very active in the cause of education at this time were: J. T. Coffey, Chairman of the Watauga Board of Education, J. M. Brown, Thomas Bingham, E. H. Dougherty, E. F. Lovill, D. B. Dougherty,

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<sup>4</sup> This amount was never paid.



and J. W. Farthing. These men were very prominent in the first report of the County Board of Education.<sup>5</sup>

In an interview with William J. Farthing, some very noteworthy information concerning the schools during this period was obtained.<sup>6</sup> He said:

I was old enough to go to school in the year 1873. Then we had about three months of school each year, taught in the winter.

The county was divided into districts convenient to each community. The school houses were built about 20 feet by 30 feet with a large chimney at each end. The boys got the wood at the noon recess. The schools were all one-teacher schools, and were not graded. The courses of study were: spelling, reading, arithmetic, grammar, geography, and history.

The books first used were: Webster's Blue Back Speller, McGuffey's Readers, Davie's Arithmetic, Harvey's Grammar, and Maury's Geographies.

About 1885, they began to make seats with desks in front of each seat. These seats were just long enough for two students to sit on each.

The superintendents I remember were, in order: Sheppherd M. Dugger, John Lipperd, Joseph Spainhour, Rev. J. W. Thomas, Monroe Francum, B. B. Dougherty, and Smith Hagaman.

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<sup>5</sup> Minute Book "A" of Watauga County Board of Education, pp. 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> William J. Farthing was a student and a teacher in the Watauga County Schools from 1873 until after 1900. The information he supplied regarding the county superintendents is not on record.



There is no record of either Dugger, Lipperd, or Spainhour having been county superintendents in the County Board records. They were in the period between 1875 and 1885 and probably were county examiners instead of superintendents. The General Assembly in 1872 abolished the title of County Examiner and established the Board of County Examiners. In 1881 the office of County Superintendent of Public Instruction was created.<sup>7</sup>

In the year 1885, J. W. Thomas was Superintendent. According to the report made by Thomas for that year, the school fund was \$3,488.39 which was apportioned on the basis of 85 cents per "scholar." There were two colored and 45 white teachers examined that year. There were 3,380 white and 178 colored children between the ages of six and twenty-one years.<sup>8</sup> The average length of schools for the whites was two and one-half months, while

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<sup>7</sup> Study of Local School Units in North Carolina, by the State Department of Public Instruction in cooperation with the United States Office of Education, Washington, D. C. (Issued by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Raleigh, 1937), p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Minute Book "A" of Watauga County Board of Education, pp. 11-12.



that for the colored was two months. The number of schoolhouses was forty for the whites and one for the colored.

This is the first year there is any record of special training for teachers. In 1885 there were two Teachers' Institutes, and they were attended by twenty-eight teachers. The treasurer's report shows a balance of only \$2 for the year.<sup>9</sup> This was different from previous reports, indicating that all available funds were being used for the furtherance of education.

Attendance in schools of this period was very poor. The report of 1886 shows that there were 1,870 white children enrolled in the schools with an average daily attendance of only eighteen. The colored schools had a better record. With an enrollment of 140, the colored schools had an average daily attendance of sixteen. The average salary for white teachers per month was, males \$20, females \$18; while that of the colored teachers was much lower. The county superintendent's salary for the year was \$60.

There were no new schoolhouses reported in 1886, but the value of school property was listed as \$3,615.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 32.



Teachers were certified to teach on three different grades and paid according to the kind of certificates they held. The report of the county superintendent for the year 1886 shows that there were 35 first grade teachers, 14 second grade, and 4 third grade teachers examined.<sup>11</sup>

The years 1887, 1888, and 1889 show very little change. The attendance, the number of teachers, the appropriations and expenditures, the number of school-houses, etc., show a small but not a substantial increase.

In 1889 the following were members of the County Board of Education: Tarlton P. Adams, chairman, Mast, North Carolina; James H. Taylor, Moretz Mills; C. J. Cottrell, Deerfield; and J. W. Thomas, County Superintendent, Boone.<sup>12</sup>

The gross school fund for 1889 was received from the following sources:<sup>13</sup>

Poll Tax . . . . .	\$2,085.72
Property Tax . . . . .	1,401.46

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

State Treasury . . . . .	193.80
Fines and Forfeitures . . . . .	152.25
Fines in Sight . . . . .	160.00
County Superintendent for Private Examinations . . . . .	<u>7.00</u>
Total	\$4,000.23

J. W. Thomas was re-elected county superintendent in 1890, and his report for that year reveals a very significant account of the enrollment of pupils of different ages.<sup>14</sup> The largest group was the group six years of age. The enrollment classified in age groups was:

Six years, 229; seven years, 199; eight years, 196; nine years, 224; ten years, 228; eleven years, 215; twelve years, 217; thirteen years, 169; fourteen years, 147; fifteen years, 157; sixteen years, 125; seventeen years, 93; eighteen years, 79; nineteen years, 45; and twenty years, 47.

The number of pupils reported as studying the different branches were:

Arithmetic, 831; geography, 392; English grammar, 357; North Carolina History, 54; History of the United States, 65; physiology and hygiene, 57.

When one considers that the highest courses taught then could not have been any higher than our present day levels of seventh and eighth grades, it is very easy to

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 159.



see how the schools were made up of groups of greatly differing ages, and that students advanced, not by grades, but by completing books.

On October 15, 1891, J. W. Thomas resigned as county superintendent.<sup>15</sup> The reason given was that he had decided to move to another county. The Board of County Commissioners met with the Board of Education in the same month and elected W. M. Francum to fill the unexpired term of J. W. Thomas.

Mr. Thomas had served as county superintendent for eight years. Under his direction the schools had not been too progressive, not due to inadequate leadership, but due to several other factors. The interest of the public had not yet reached the point where the demand for better schools was great enough to solicit the support needed for any great development.

W. M. Francum went before J. E. Funlay, chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, and qualified as county superintendent on the last Monday in October, 1891.

The county treasurer's report for 1891 showed a balanced budget. The receipts had been \$4,641.98, and

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 162.



the disbursements, \$4,641.98.<sup>16</sup> The total amount appropriated to white schools in 1891 was \$3,491.20 and for the colored schools, \$191.80. The census of 1891 showed a combined total of white and colored children between the ages of six and twenty-one to be 4,219. Of this number, 2,697 were enrolled in school.

There was one schoolhouse built in 1891, bringing the total to fifty-nine. The buildings were either of log or frame construction. There were twenty-one log buildings and thirty-eight frame buildings. The average length of school for the colored exceeded that for the whites. The average school term for the colored was thirteen weeks, while that for the whites was ten weeks.

The cause of education steadily increased. The attendance showed a great improvement. In 1888, with a total enrollment of 3,358 white children, the average attendance was 1,877.<sup>17</sup> When this is compared with the average attendance of only 18 for an enrollment of 1,870 in 1886, a good conception of why schools were making progress may be obtained.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 290.



There was very little change in the schools in 1899. There still were no brick schoolhouses; however, there had been five new houses built since 1896, making a total for the county of sixty-four.

B. B. Dougherty was elected county superintendent July 10, 1899.<sup>18</sup> There were still no high schools in the county. Some teachers, who were qualified, assumed the responsibility and taught some high school subjects.

Education in Watauga County for the period from 1870 to 1900 was rather static in its development. Contrary to the assumption of some, Watauga County compared rather favorably with the older and supposedly more progressive areas of the state. An examination of records and reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and of county records makes its progress in education seem substantial enough.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 312.

## CHAPTER V

### SCHOOLS IN THE PERIOD FROM 1900 to 1920

It is true that Watauga did not make any rapid progress in the development of her educational program until after 1920 when good roads and motor driven vehicles began to make their appearance. It was after this date that consolidation and the development of high schools made their advent. Even though the above is true, it is also true that the period of twenty years before prepared the way for this almost spontaneous development to take place.

In 1900, North Carolina, as a whole, saw the dawn of a new era. It was that year that Charles B. Aycock was elected Governor. He has since been referred to as the "Educational Governor." North Carolina had been for almost fifty years more or less static in her educational development. Not since Calvin H. Wiley has North Carolina had a man that was as totally interested in education as was Governor Aycock.

The following is an excerpt from the Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, J. Y. Joyner, to Governor Aycock:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, J. Y. Joyner, 1900, p. III.



In such an age as this, and in such a land as ours, it is scarcely necessary for me to waste words in any argument for education. The power and the necessity of it, and the duty of every state and every community to give man a chance to get it, and the duty of every state and every community to give him this chance. Every age has its spirit, properly called spirit, something born in heaven and sent to earth to direct the destiny of that age. The finite power of puny man cannot avail against the infinite power of such a force. The spirit of this age, as all men must feel, is universal education. Born in heaven, too, and sent to earth with this spirit of universal education, is its twin spirit that men named Democracy, whose irrevocable law is equality of opportunity.

Governor Aycock, together with Superintendent Joyner, was to launch an educational program that was to be the foundation stone of the great development which took place after 1920. Governor Aycock declared in the very beginning of his term of office that it would be his aim to aid the cause of education. He called a conference of the leaders of the state soon after his inauguration to consider public education. Out of this meeting a committee was formed to put on an educational campaign. That this campaign was successful in terms of improvement for this day, is not to be questioned.



The first legislative appropriation of \$100,000 actually given to the schools which was made in 1899, was doubled in 1902. The number of local tax districts was increased from 56 to 181, more than 300 districts were abolished by consolidation, and 676 new schoolhouses were built.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the more important steps in the development of the public schools during the 1900 to 1920 period were as follows:

- I. Provisions were made for a teachers' institute as a means of improving their training, and normal schools were established at Boone and Greenville.
- II. The Legislature of 1913 passed the following laws:
  1. Changed the method of distributing state aid with a view of lengthening the school term
  2. Improved compulsory school attendance law
  3. Permitted counties to issue bonds upon approval by a vote of the people to build schoolhouses.

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<sup>2</sup> North Carolina Almanac and State Industrial Guide (Raleigh: Almanac Publishing Company, 1950), p. 460.



III. In 1917, two important pieces of legislation were enacted.

1. The certification of all teachers was placed in the hands of a central State Board.
2. Provision for the submission to the people of a constitutional amendment extending the minimum school term to six months. This amendment passed and became effective for the first time during the school year 1919-1920.<sup>3</sup>

To say that Watauga County kept pace with the State as a whole would be stretching the truth just a bit. However, the county did make noticeable improvement. At least, it is safe to say that the seeds of development that were swelling and preparing to come through the ground, burst into bloom, and was to shine brilliantly from 1920 on to the present time.

On the surface, it would appear that Watauga County, during the period between 1900 and 1920, had gone along at about the same rate of speed that it had in the twenty to

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 460.

thirty years prior to 1900. The census of 1900 shows that there were 5,050 white children in Watauga County of school age. There were, however, only 3,794 of these children enrolled in school. The average daily attendance was 2,101, or about 41 per cent.<sup>4</sup> While this was a tremendous improvement over the conditions which had existed in 1870, it was ample evidence that there was still much to be done.

The total amount spent for education in 1900 was \$4,711.17. This sum, used to operate 71 schools, amounted to about \$66.35 per school. This was unbelievably low even for that period. The length of the school term was less than four months.

There were 81 teachers in Watauga County in 1900. Certificates were still issued on the basis of examination by the county superintendent. However, in 1901 the county board of education passed a ruling to require teachers to attend a Teachers' Institute for two weeks before they were granted a certificate. This institute was to be conducted by B. B. Dougherty, then county superintendent of schools.

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<sup>4</sup> Minute Book "A" of the Watauga County Board of Education, p. 329.



The salaries of the teachers were low and varied with the districts. Each district was allocated a sum of money with which to operate the schools in that district for the year. The salary paid the teachers in the district depended upon the number of schools in the district and the other necessary expenses. Male teachers were still paid a higher salary than was paid to female teachers. The average salary for male teachers in 1900 was \$19.41, for females, \$16.08.

Since there was such a small amount of money available, and since teachers had to be paid out of that, it is easy to understand why the equipment was extremely poor. When one compares the facilities available at the present time with those existing in 1900, it is hard to see how they did as well as they did.

B. B. Dougherty continued to be county superintendent in Watauga County until 1915 when his duties at the Training School required more of his time. Smith Hagaman assumed the duties of superintendent and served for the remainder of this period.

Under the direction of Mr. Dougherty and Mr. Hagaman, Watauga County made commendable progress. There were no high schools, other than the Training School mentioned



previously, but the county did experience an improvement in the training of teachers. Few other counties had the opportunity for the training of teachers that Watauga had since the Normal School at Boone provided the training at home.

Growth of education in the county might be better illustrated by tables.<sup>5</sup>

TABLE I  
SCHOOL FUND RECEIVED BY COUNTY TREASURER FOR SCHOOLS

Year	Total Receipts	Disbursements	Balance on Hand
1901	\$ 5,855.04	\$ 4,983.04	\$ 872.00
1905	9,983.12	8,072.24	1,911.88
1910	12,316.06	9,970.46	2,345.60
1915	19,528.07	17,985.76	1,542.31
1920	39,200.16	33,755.38	5,444.78

Table I reveals that for the ten year period from 1901 to 1910 the total receipts had increased by more than fifty per cent. The 1920 figures show that the money

<sup>5</sup> These tables were taken from the Biennial Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the years, 1901, 1905, 1910, 1915, and 1920. J. Y. Joyner, 1901 to 1915. E. C. Brooks, 1920.



received for schools was almost seven times as great as that received in 1901. This table also reveals that the amount spent increased proportionally with that received. The development of the schools of this period are very well brought out by this table. The table is a story in itself. The great increase in amounts received and spent certainly was the product of the increased interest exhibited by the people.

TABLE II  
NUMBER OF CHILDREN, ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE

Year	Census	Enrollment	Average Attendance	Number of Teachers
1901	5,050	3,794	2,101	75
1905	5,100	3,726	2,184	78
1910	4,996	3,853	2,426	81
1915	4,267	3,241	2,397	84
1920	4,700	3,823	3,224	97

Table II shows a population decrease of 350 children from 1900 to 1920. This decline from 1900 was caused by two complete townships having been taken from Watauga in 1911 in the formation of the new county of Avery.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Daniel J. Whitener, A History of Watauga County (Chamber of Commerce, Boone, N. C., 1949), p. 67.

The enrollment had increased from 3,794 in 1900 to 3,823 in 1920. This was an increase from 75 per cent to 81 per cent. The increase in average daily attendance was the most notable feature of this period. The average daily attendance in 1901 was 2,101, while that of 1920 was 3,224. This was an increase in per cent of attendance from 56 per cent to 84 per cent. The number of teachers had increased, but not in proportion to the number of students. In 1901, the average number of students for each teacher was about twenty-eight. In 1920, the average was about thirty-four.

These attendance figures include only white children. The census for 1920 shows 77 colored children with 60 enrolled in school.

TABLE III

NUMBER OF DISTRICTS, NUMBER OF SCHOOLS TAUGHT  
AND LENGTH OF TERM

Year	Number of Districts	Number of Schools	Average Length of Term in Weeks
1901	65	65	16
1905	70	70	16
1910	71	71	16
1915	68	68	20
1920	67	67	24



Table III reveals very little change in the number of districts and the number of schools. The average length of the school term had increased from sixteen weeks in 1901 to twenty-four weeks in 1920.

Teacher certification had been completely altered in 1917 by the General Assembly. In 1920, in Watauga County there were 59 teachers holding a County Certificate; 3 holding a Permit and Provisional B; 11 holding a Temporary, 20 holding an Elementary; and 4 holding a Primary and Grammar Grade Certificate.<sup>7</sup> It is hard to compare this with certification in 1901, since the only requirement in 1901 was the passing of an examination given by the county superintendent.

Teachers' salaries had increased from about \$20 in 1901 to \$70 in 1920. This amounted to a difference in the yearly income of from \$80 for four months to \$420 for six months.<sup>8</sup>

Most of the buildings were wooden structures in 1920; however, there were very few log buildings left.

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<sup>7</sup> Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1919-1920, p. 218.

<sup>8</sup> Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1901-1902, p. 177; 1919-1920, p. 109.

There had been very little consolidation, yet, there were fewer one-room schools in 1920.

The progress of education in Watauga County between 1900 and 1920, when measured in terms of figures, appears to be rather conservative, yet, when the highlights of that period are recounted, it will be seen that many things took place which helped pave the way for the period of rapid development which began soon after 1920. The lengthening of the school term, higher teacher pay, better schoolhouses, and the change in teacher certification are a few of the improvements which were made.



## CHAPTER VI

### PROGRESS SINCE 1920

It was not until 1920 that education made any marked progress in the state as a whole, and certainly this was true in Watauga County. The last twenty-nine years, 1920 to 1949, represent the period of greatest progress in the history of public education. The biennial reports of the state superintendent from 1919-1920 to 1947-1948 reveal the progress of this period.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina, 1919-1920 and 1947-1948.

#### Public School Statistics

	1919-1920	1947-1948
Expenditure for current operation . . . . .	\$ 9,568,742	\$72,655,102
From state funds . . . . .	3,409,253	62,655,102
From local funds . . . . .	6,159,489	10,000,000
Value of school property . . . . .	24,057,838	166,067,207
Number of teachers . . . . .	16,854	26,617
Average monthly salary . . . . .	70	224
Average school term in days . . . . .	134	179.9
School enrollment . . . . .	691,249	855,853
Per cent in attendance . . . . .	68.5	87.8
Public high schools . . . . .	420	962
Enrollment in high schools . . . . .	29,294	164,432
High school graduates . . . . .	3,000	26,252
Volumes in school libraries . . . . .	230,000	3,850,000
School buses . . . . .	150	5,214
Pupils transported . . . . .	8,000	348,100

Also see the North Carolina Almanac and State Industrial Guide, 1950-1951 (Raleigh: Almanac Publishing Company, 1950), p. 461.

Even though the figures, as given in the footnote on page 91, show an enormous change, they do not tell the whole story. They reflect the work of preceding years as well as that of the past twenty-nine years. The coming of better means of transportation and the building of roads gave a means of outlet to the pent-up desire for larger schools, offering a better program of training, and the demand for better trained teachers. Before 1920, people in the state as a whole had been rather skeptical regarding the transportation of children to school for any considerable distance.<sup>2</sup>

However, with other progressive demands pressing upon him, with the great shortage of teachers, and with the increasing difficulty of securing teachers of any sort for the small school, the intelligent citizen was asking with increasing seriousness, "What can our community do to make ours a better school?" He was asking what his community could do to enable his school to

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<sup>2</sup> Bulletin Number 36, Educational Publications of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina, 1921-1922.

"Will public transportation of children to a consolidated school work in North Carolina? It is working, the progressive farmers of this state are now realizing with the farmers of other progressive states, that a really efficient country school cannot be built up within walking distance of the pupils."



give his children the education they needed for better citizenship and to fit them for the most effective life in the home and upon the farm. With such thoughts as these in mind, it was not long before ways and means were uncovered to build better schools. The only solution to the problem in rural areas seemed to be consolidation, and so the consolidation movement began in North Carolina.

The purpose of consolidation was twofold: (1) To build up a large central school in each community to serve as a model for the smaller schools surrounding it; (2) To build up a school that would gradually absorb the small schools around it and in that way accomplish consolidation.

The above conditions existed in the state generally and certainly in Watauga County. In 1920, there were no high schools in the county other than the Training School in Boone. The elementary schools were small for the most part. The cost of sending children away from home and paying board was prohibitive for the average parents in the county.

In 1920, a school was started at Valle Crucis offering some high school work.<sup>3</sup> This school was supported

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<sup>3</sup> The school was under the direction of Alfonso Greer Glenn. The writer enrolled in the school but did not attend.

by subscription. However, the County Board of Education, seeing the need for such a school, ordered \$320 to be paid out of the balance of county school funds to Valle Crucis School to extend it to a six months term.<sup>4</sup> This school operated for a period of two years.

On February 21, 1921, a group of citizens presented a petition to the County Board of Education asking for the consolidation of Walnut Grove and Cove Creek districts.<sup>5</sup> This petition was granted and the school committee was ordered to procure a suitable site for the new building near the Watauga Rolling Mill to consist of not more than four acres. The site was selected and bought from H. E. Deal. The new consolidated school was the beginning of the Cove Creek High School, and by 1923 six students graduated from high school there.

J. J. Mast, J. B. Horton, and A. N. Banner made up the first school committee, and G. W. Moody, George Henson, J. H. Bingham, Enoch Swift, and D. F. Horton comprised the building committee. Phillips Branch and Mast Schools were brought into Cove Creek in 1925.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Minute Book "A" of the Watauga County Board of Education, p. 556.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 560.

<sup>6</sup> Minute Book "B" of the Watauga County Board of Education, p. 3. (Editor's note: This reference is hereafter cited as Minute Book.)



This was the first consolidation of any scope in Watauga. Other communities soon followed, and the consolidation movement was on. By 1926, the County Board had tried to make provisions for the teaching of high school subjects in nearly every community.<sup>7</sup> It had provided that the eighth grade be taught at Foscoe School for Foscoe, Shulls Mills, and Grandfather Schools. It required the eighth grade to be taught at Bamboo and the ninth grade pupils to meet a truck at the New River bridge and go to Boone. At Elk and Winebarger the eighth grade was to be taught, while at Green Valley both the eighth and ninth grades were to be taught. One teacher was selected to teach the eighth and ninth grades at Blowing Rock.<sup>8</sup>

Committees were to meet with the county superintendent and work out plans for consolidation of the districts in which the high school grades had been introduced.

The citizens of Blowing Rock lost no time in presenting a petition to the County Board asking for a building so that they might establish a high school. This

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-17.

<sup>8</sup> The eighth grade was, at that time, the first year of high school.

was done on August 2, 1926, and the petition was immediately granted.<sup>9</sup> W. C. Lentz, George Sudderth, D. P. Coffey, E. D. Underdown, and Tom Coffey were some of the leaders in this movement. The school had a good beginning, and by 1930 it had four students in the first graduating class.

Bethel School began as a high school in 1929, and by 1932 it was teaching four years of high school work and had fifteen students to complete the requirements for graduation.

Improvements in buses and roads by 1930 convinced the County Board that further consolidation of high schools was not necessary. The consolidation of elementary schools continued and is still in the process.

The consolidation of these schools made it necessary to build larger and better buildings. The funds for these buildings were secured by local taxation and loans from the Special Building Funds provided by the General Assembly.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Minute Book "B," p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> Study of Local School Units in North Carolina by the State Department of Public Instruction in cooperation with the United States Office of Education, Washington, D. C. Publication No. 99, 1937, p. 89.

The General Assembly made available four Special Building Funds for schoolhouse construction in the state. These funds created in 1921, \$5,000,000; 1923, \$5,000,000; 1925, \$5,000,000; 1927, \$2,500,000, making a total of \$17,500,000.



The establishment of these larger schools by no means settled all the difficulties. The cost of operating the schools was still met mostly by the counties. Watauga County in 1926 had difficulty in paying the teachers and meeting other expenses. Since the county raised its funds from local taxes, collection of those taxes determined the ability to take care of the operating expense. In 1926, \$15,000 was still needed to meet the expense.<sup>11</sup> This forced the Board of Education to limit its obligation of transporting children to school to six months.

The coming of the depression in 1929 further curtailed the building program and made it even more difficult to meet operating expenses of the schools. In spite of the depression and other difficulties, the schools were still able to make a very satisfactory rate of progress.

The General Assembly of 1931 came to the aid of the counties and assumed support of the schools for a six-months term to be taken care of out of state funds and even for a longer term of eight months in special high school districts. In 1933, an eight month state supported

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<sup>11</sup> Minute Book "B," p. 5.

school term was set up by legislative action. Ten years later the General Assembly increased the school term to nine months.

The following tables tell the story of the growth and status of schools in Watauga County for the school year year of 1931-1932.

TABLE IV  
AVERAGE TERM IN DAYS

Year	Days	Year	Days
1919-1920	135.9	1944-1945	178.4
1924-1925	148.0	1945-1946	179.9
1929-1930	159.6	1946-1947	179.9
1934-1935	160.3	1947-1948	179.9
1939-1940	164.0		

Table IV shows the average length of school terms for recent years for the state as a whole. These figures are also applicable to Watauga County.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> North Carolina Public School Biennial Report, Part I, 1946-1948, p. 16.



TABLE V

VALUE OF HIGH SCHOOL PROPERTY, NUMBER OF BUILDINGS  
AND CLASSROOMS IN USE IN WATAUGA COUNTY, 1931-1932 <sup>13</sup>

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Value of high school property (including equipment . . .	\$154,400.00
Average value per school plant . . . . .	\$38,600.00
Average value per child enrolled . . . . .	\$153.02
Average value per brick building (3) . . . . .	\$50,000.00
Number of buildings in which high school work is done . . . . .	4
Number of brick buildings used for high school work . . . . .	3
Number of frame buildings used for high school work . . . . .	1
Total number of classrooms . . . . .	31
Classrooms used for high school work . . . . .	22
Classrooms used for elementary work . . . . .	9

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The figures for 1931-1932, given in Table V, when compared with those of 1920, show a tremendous increase. As already pointed out, there was only one school doing high school work in 1920. There were no brick buildings outside of Boone.

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<sup>13</sup> Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina, 1931-1932, pp. 168-173.

TABLE VI

HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, ATTENDANCE, PER CENT ATTENDANCE,  
AND PROMOTION BY SCHOOL AND GRADE IN  
WATAUGA COUNTY 1931-1932

School	Enrollment				Total Attendance				Promotion				Total	Per cent Attendance		
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4				
Bethel	20	9	18	4	51	13	9	15	0	37	11	9	15	0	35	.79
Blowing Rock	30	25	26	11	92	25	23	22	10	80	18	16	15	10	59	.87
Boone	102	81	79	59	321	82	74	65	51	272	65	73	63	49	250	.86
Cove Creek	67	52	40	31	190	62	48	36	28	174	52	42	33	30	157	.92
Totals	654				563				501				501		.87	

This table was reproduced from A Survey of Public Education in Watauga County, North Carolina, Alfonso Greer Glenn (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1932), p. 36.



Table VI represents the four high schools in the county and reveals that 650 students were enrolled in the schools for the 1931-1932 term. In the period of 10 years since the establishment of the high school at Cove Creek, the high school enrollment outside of the Boone School, had grown from 0 to 329. The number of promotions, 501 out of an enrollment of 650, gave an indication that schools were to continue to grow.

The scholarship of the high school teachers was very creditable. Out of twenty-one teachers, only three did not have college degrees.<sup>14</sup> Seventeen held class "A" certificates, four held class "B" while only one held a class "C."

The average teacher's annual salary had been increased to \$1,168.81. The average monthly salary had risen from about \$70 to \$128.89. These figures are based on the total monthly cost of instruction, \$2,706.76<sup>15</sup> divided by a total of 21 teachers. This shows quite an increase over the figures for 1920.

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<sup>14</sup> Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina, 1931-1932, pp. 168-173.

<sup>15</sup> Alfonso Greer Glenn, A Survey of Public Education in Watauga County, p. 38.

TABLE VII  
 THE PER PUPIL INSTRUCTIONAL COST PER MONTH  
 IN WATAUGA COUNTY  
 1931-1932<sup>16</sup>

School	Total Monthly Cost	Cost Per Month Per Pupil In Enrollment	Cost Per Month Per Pupil In Average Daily Attendance
Bethel	\$216.90	\$4.62	\$5.86
Blowing Rock	324.50	3.20	3.78
Boone	982.50	3.06	3.57
Cove Creek	1182.86	6.00	5.56
Average		4.05	4.67

Table VII reveals an average cost of \$4.05 per pupil enrolled and a cost of \$4.67 per pupil in average daily attendance. This is not the total cost. The cost of transportation and other operating expenses are not included in these figures.

<sup>16</sup> Loc. cit.



TABLE VIII

THE NUMBER AND SIZE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOLS IN WATAUGA COUNTY  
1931-1932<sup>17</sup>

Type of School	Number of Each Type School	Per Cent	Number Enrolled	Per Cent In Each Type School
One-teacher	20	40	704	18.6
Two-teacher	21	42	1424	37.6
Three-teacher	5	10	589	15.5
Four-teacher	0	0	0	0
Five-teacher	1	2	175	4.6
Six-teacher	1	2	224	5.9
Seven-teacher	1	2	300	7.9
Eight-teacher	0	0	0	0
Nine-teacher	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>374</u>	<u>9.9</u>
Totals	50	100	3790	100

Eighteen per cent of the fifty elementary schools in the county in 1931-1932 were still one-teacher schools. Two-teacher schools made up 37.6 per cent of them; however, the nine schools above the one and two teacher type show a decided improvement over the conditions which existed in 1900.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

TABLE IX

VALUE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROPERTY, NUMBER OF BUILDINGS,  
NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS IN USE, AND DEGREE OF STANDARDIZATION  
IN WATAUGA COUNTY, 1931-1932<sup>18</sup>

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Value of elementary property (including equipment) . . .	\$238,300.00
Average value per school plant . . . . .	\$4,766.00
Average value per child enrolled . . . . .	\$60.00
Value of brick buildings (3) . . . . .	\$192,000.00
Average value per brick building . . . . .	\$64,000.00
Average value per child enrolled in these buildings . . . . .	\$194.14
Value of frame buildings (47) . . . . .	\$43,300.00
Average value per frame building . . . . .	\$985.10
Average value per child enrolled in these buildings . . . . .	\$15.75
Number of buildings in which elementary work is done . . . . .	50
Number of brick buildings in which elementary work is done . . . . .	3
Number of frame buildings in which elementary work is done . . . . .	47
Number of elementary schools housed in the same building with the high school . . . . .	2
Number of standard elementary schools . . . . .	1

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<sup>18</sup> Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina, 1931-1932, pp. 168-173.



The value of elementary school property, according to Table IX, was considerably greater than ten years earlier. This is true despite the fact that there were fewer schools. Consolidation had reduced the number of schools, but had fostered the building of better structures and equipment.

The depression that began in 1929 threatened to bring about a general curtailment of the educational program that had started with such momentum during the early 1920's. Building had almost ceased, teachers' salaries had been slashed, and the outlook was very depressing. However, in 1932, the Federal Relief Agencies came into the state contributing a great deal to the building program. This building program seemed to give the schools generally a shot in the arm.

Watauga County profited from the Public Works Administration especially. W. H. Walker was elected county superintendent of education in 1934.<sup>19</sup> A vigorous effort was begun to have building plans approved by the W. P. A. That the movement was successful is shown by the fine buildings that were erected at Valle Crucis

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<sup>19</sup> Minute Book "B" p. 76.

Elementary School, Mabel Elementary School, Bethel High School, and Cove Creek High School. Appalachian State Teachers College sponsored the building of Appalachian High School through the W. P. A. There were several classrooms added to the building at Blowing Rock with the help of W. P. A. funds. These buildings, together with others, almost doubled the value of school property in Watauga County by 1942. The value of all school property in 1942 was \$402,795.<sup>20</sup>

Other phases of improvement in public education during this period included transportation, better prepared teachers, increased enrollment, and school consolidation.

The number of buses had increased from 2 in 1925, transporting 60 pupils daily, with an average daily mileage of 22 miles, to 25 buses in 1940, transporting 2,100 pupils and an average of 1,126 miles daily.

The County Board of Education launched a program in 1937 to promote better schools and higher trained teachers.<sup>21</sup> The resolution adopted by the Board on

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<sup>20</sup> Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina, 1942-1943, p. 121.

<sup>21</sup> Minute Book "B," p. 110.



May 10, 1937, is as follows:

Whereas, the program of constructing new and repairing old schoolhouses is rapidly progressing, it is deemed necessary that the teachers improve certificate rating.

Whereas, a standard teachers college is located in our county, it is believed that any teacher can obtain a degree without giving up the teaching profession.

Whereas, the purpose of this resolution is not to disqualify any person now teaching in Watauga County schools, but that each teacher may keep qualified by improving his or her certificate each year according to this resolution.

The program of improving teacher certification was as follows:

1. That no teacher be employed after July 1, 1937, having a certificate rating less than an Elementary B.
2. That no teacher be employed after July 1, 1938, having a certificate rating less than an Elementary A.
3. That no teacher be employed after July 1, 1939, having a certificate rating less than a Primary or Grammar Grade C.
4. That no teacher be employed after July 1, 1940, having a certificate rating less than a Primary or Grammar Grade B.

5. That no teacher be employed after July 1, 1941, having a certificate rating less than a Primary or Grammar, or High School A.
6. That no teacher be employed after July 1, 1942, who does not hold a degree.

Teacher improvement is shown by the following table:<sup>22</sup>

TABLE X

CERTIFICATES HELD BY TEACHERS IN WATAUGA COUNTY  
1933-1934 and 1941-1942

	1933-1934	1941-1942
Master's certificate	6	13
A certificate	36	118
B certificate	22	0
C certificate	25	0
Elem. A certificate	38	0
Elem. B certificate	5	0
Co. 2nd certificate	4	0
Totals	136	131

<sup>22</sup> Daniel J. Whitener, History of Watauga County (Chamber of Commerce, Boone, N. C., 1949), p. 69.



In 1941, the General Assembly changed the public school program from an eleven year program to a twelve year program. This has greatly enlarged the school program, and as a result, the high school graduates are finishing school better prepared for life and for higher education than formerly.

In August, 1943, a State School Lunch Program was officially set up as a part of the State Department of Public Instruction. Since its organization, the program in Watauga has progressed very rapidly. There are now lunchrooms in nearly every school in the county. For the school year 1947-1948, these schools received a total of \$15,329.45 from the government in cash. In addition, they received surplus commodities valued at \$11,964.00.<sup>23</sup>

There were 133 teachers during the school year of 1949-1950 employed in Watauga County by the state. They teach in eight districts, each of which has a central school, a district principal, and a school committee of three members. These districts had a combined enrollment in 1948 of 4,162 students. There are 30 buses making 63 trips per day. These buses carry 2,519 students daily and have a daily average of 1,126 miles.

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<sup>23</sup> School Facts, reported by W. H. Walker, County Superintendent, and Watauga County Board of Education, 1948-1949, p. 6.

The school districts and the schools in these districts and their enrollment are:<sup>24</sup>

District Number 1

Boone

Schools	Enrollment
Appalachian	329
Appalachian Eighth Grade	117
Boone Demonstration	571
Howard's Creek	20
Rich Mountain	
Rutherford	61
Bamboo	85

District Number 2

Green Valley

Green Valley	108
Winebarger	

District Number 3

Deep Gap

Deep Gap	222
Lower Elk	22

District Number 4

Blowing Rock

Blowing Rock High	81
Blowing Rock Elementary	283
Penley	
Bradshaw	

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<sup>24</sup> Watauga County, Districts and Schools as reported by W. H. Walker, County Superintendent, 1949-1950.



## District Number 5

## Valle Crucis

Schools	Enrollment
Valle Crucis	337
Cool Springs	39

## District Number 6

## Cove Creek

Cove Creek High	259
Cove Creek Eighth Grade	131
Cove Creek Elementary	356
Rominger	35
Windy Gap	22

## District Number 7

## Bethel

Bethel High	83
Bethel Elementary	297

## District Number 8

## Mabel

Mabel	261
Pottertown	56
Watauga Negro	44

There are four modern high schools in Watauga County. All of them except Blowing Rock are constructed of native stone. The Blowing Rock building is of brick.

There are only 8 one-teacher schools and 5 two-teacher schools. All of the others have four or more teachers.

With the state's rural road improvement program, it is only a question of time when these small schools will be past history.

Much of the rapid progress made by the schools in the county can be attributed to the excellent leadership of its own citizens; nevertheless, the accomplishments could not have come about without outside help. Watauga County receives help from other than its own taxes from the state government, the federal government, and Appalachian State Teachers College.

Superintendent Walker reports that the county received \$391,842.40 from the state and federal government in 1947-1948 as compared to \$27,931.54 from county sources.<sup>25</sup>

For every dollar income from the county, the state and federal government spent \$14. The federal money is used for vocational and veteran education and lunchrooms. The state pays the salaries of the teachers and pays for the purchase and operation of the buses.

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<sup>25</sup> School Facts. Reported by W. H. Walker, County Superintendent, 1947-1948, p. 16.



## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

After having followed the growth of Watauga County's system of public schools from the earliest period, when the first schools were secondary to the grim task of providing a livelihood, to the promising educational outlook of today, one must conclude that, at times, the progress was very, very slow. However, if the progress of the state's educational growth is examined, it will be seen that it, likewise, was characterized by slow progress.

It has been pointed out that Watauga County made a very auspicious beginning in the field of education. In 1850, one year after having been established, Watauga adopted the state school plan and made very rapid progress as measured by the state as a whole, until the Civil War and Reconstruction which followed, combined to destroy the schools. In 1870, public schools opened again in the state and here again the people of Watauga showed their determination to keep abreast of the rest of the state, for there are records available for the county in 1874. There is even a record in the North Carolina Journal

of Education showing eight schoolhouses in Watauga County in 1868.

The growth of public education in the county from 1874, the date of the first report, until 1900 was, as calculated by present methods, very slow. However, the records reveal a substantial growth. In 1900, there were 71 schools, showing a great increase as compared to 39 in 1874. The number of children enrolled had more than doubled for the period. Nevertheless, it was not until after 1920 when good roads and motor driven vehicles began to make their appearance that the school system showed any rapid growth.

The period from 1900 to 1920 might safely be referred to as the transition period--changing from the slow moving program of the fifty years before to the rapid development after 1920. No great progress is noted in the growth of the schools in this period. Some of the most notable changes in this period were: (1) the establishment of a Normal School at Boone; (2) the increase in teachers' salaries; (3) the increase in average daily attendance; (4) improvement in the training of teachers; and (5) the increase in the amount of money available for school use.



Beginning soon after 1920, education in the county, along with the rest of the state, began to take its rightful place in the development of progress. Schools, for the most part in 1920, were one-teacher schools. There were few large schools. That situation has now been reversed. Nearly every community in the county is within reach of a large consolidated school. Teaching and public education have been put on a professional basis.

Those people who were living in the county in 1920 and certainly those who were living in 1900, could not possibly have visualized the great change which has taken place since those dates. In 1922 there were those who said the school building at Cove Creek was a waste of money. The building was too large, they said. There would never be enough children to fill that building. Since that time, two more buildings, each with more classroom space, have been constructed. The needs have not yet been completed. The change that has taken place at Cove Creek is typical of the development in the whole county.

## Looking To The Future

That the educational development has not reached maturity, and that there is still much to be done, is self-evident. To say that the people have reason to look to the future rather optimistically is merely to say that they live in Watauga County and in the State of North Carolina. The history of the people of this section reveals the fact that there has never been a time when the people of this region have been content to lead a static life.

There are goals which have already been laid in the course of future progress for public education in North Carolina. The advancement of public education in the state means advancement of public education in Watauga County. Some of the points at which advancement should be made are: (1) legal protection for teachers against dismissal for political or petty reasons; (2) sufficient funds with which to develop and meet the almost universal demand of the people for more vocational education; (4) federal support based upon actual needs of the various states with complete autonomy in state administration; (5) machinery and funds for the



compulsory attendance law; and (6) increase in state funds for the general advance of the whole program as rapidly as economic conditions will permit.

These are only a few of the objectives that the people of the counties of North Carolina may look forward to, that they will come to pass in the not too distant future is certainly to be expected. Some say that very much should not be expected immediately without federal aid. It is the writer's belief that federal aid is not too far away. The affairs of the nation have been influenced too long by public opinion to continue to neglect so pertinent a question as federal aid is fast becoming.

Dr. B. B. Dougherty, President of Appalachian State Teachers College, and also a member of the State Board of Education, in an article prepared for publication in the Winston-Salem Journal,<sup>1</sup> points favorably to the future. He says that there are three things which should ever be remembered in our organization. They are:

1. The efficiency in operating high schools

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<sup>1</sup> B. B. Dougherty, "How to Get Better Rural High Schools in North Carolina," Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel, April 12, 1950.

2. The economy in operating high schools
3. The hearty cooperation of our people

It is the opinion of Dr. Dougherty that the most efficient high school, and the most economically operated high school, is one that has an enrollment of from 250 to 300 students. Such a high school, he contends, would provide a curriculum varied enough, and at the same time attractive enough, to prepare young people for college or to help those who do not go to college to be better prepared for life.

There are four high schools in Watauga County. Only two of them meet the above requirements. The rural road improvement program which the people of the state initiated in the bond election on June 4, 1949, may help the county to further consolidate and to realize this ideal set-up. This certainly does not look as far-fetched as it did just a short time ago.

In the hope that federal and state aid will be forthcoming, the county superintendent has made recommendations for a five to ten year program, which would cost between one and two million dollars. This program would provide for the construction of new buildings and additions to present buildings. Modern equipment would



be installed for all schools to meet standardization requirements. Additional buses would be purchased to further consolidate small schools. Elementary, high school, and lunch room supervisors, and an attendance officer would be employed.

Part of the above program is already a possibility. Western North Carolina can look back on 1949 as the year when education in the mountains reaped its richest gain. The twenty western North Carolina counties together are to receive in all \$8,249,373 from the School Plant Construction, Improvement and Repair Fund provided by the 1949 General Assembly. Watauga County's portion of this fund is \$368,467.29.<sup>2</sup>

Even without federal aid, if the county can enjoy part of the rapid improvement made in the last thirty years, it can still look hopefully to the future and believe its young people will be provided for in their educational preparation, and that they will continue to compare favorably with those of the rest of the state.

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<sup>2</sup> North Carolina Public School Bulletin, October, 1949, p. 5.

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