

## Education in Pennsylvania, Sixty-five Years Ago.

An Interesting Article on the Educational Facilities of That Time, and the Establishment of Improved Schools and Academies.

COMPILED BY DR. THOMAS C. VAN TRIES.

It is proposed to give an account of the situation of educational matters in Pennsylvania previous to the year 1850, and to supplement this statement with a brief sketch of the history of the several Academies which sprang up in some of the villages of the Valley about that time.

The term education as here employed implies more than a mere knowledge of the studies named in the curriculum of the schools. It is here used in a more comprehensive sense, and relates rather to the standard of intelligence prevailing in the community. What is here said applies also to Brush and George's valleys, adjacent to it.

The only apology offered for presenting such an article is that the majority of the young people, and many of maturer years, are entirely ignorant of the situation of affairs in those days.

The school, the pulpit, and the press have always been regarded as the main sources of information for the masses of the people, they largely mold public opinion, and regulate the standard of citizenship in every community.

The public school system of Pennsylvania was adopted in 1834. For several years after its introduction it met with decided opposition in some of the rural districts of the State. This dissatisfaction was largely due to the prevailing ignorance of its design among the people, and their opposition to the taxation which the system imposed. Some parts of Pennsylvania were not entirely guiltless in this matter but their opposition was not as formidable and persistent as in some other parts of the State. Yet in one or two of the townships it is said they actually voted against its adoption. This was no doubt due to their want of knowledge of the advantages of an education, and their erroneous conceptions of the purposes and intentions of the system. They knew nothing of the great necessity there was for some latent influence that would inspire the young people with higher resolves and nobler aims in life. They were satisfied if their children knew as much as their parents. When Mrs. Partington enjoined upon her precocious son like the duty of his walking in his father's foot-steps, he very promptly replied, "Blame it marm, do you think it would be any harm if I some times got a little ahead of the old man."

It has already been intimated that the school system was very unsatisfactory and inefficient during the first 10 or 15 years of its existence. The teaching was largely rudimentary, imperfect, and incorrect, its greatest defect lay in the utter incompetency of the great majority of the teachers. They were deficient in both scholarship and methods of teaching. They lacked culture, and had low conceptions of the duties and obligations of their calling. The writer's first experience in going to school was at the Musser school house in the northwest end of Gregg township. On the first day of school, two young girls brought with them an English grammar. The teacher gave it a very hasty examination and then said, "I never see'd one afore." "For my part I guess it'd be a good book." The outlook for the young ladies learning grammar was not very promising.

The incompetency of the teachers is not so surprising when we consider that their wages were from \$15.00 to \$20.00 a month, the teachers paying their own boarding. There may have been an occasional district which paid \$25.00. If so, they were like angel visits. The annual school term was from 3 to 4 months, boarding round had been abandoned in Centre county before the writer became a teacher. Yet he was permitted to enjoy some of its luxuries during a winter term taught in Butler county. Pennsylvania. So it evidently was organized about the year 1846 or 1847. From the testimony of several of the older citizens it seems to have originated at Oak Hall, in Harris township, about the year 1846 or 1847. William G. Waring, Thomas Hollahan, John H. Orvis, and Orrin T. Noble, were likely the originators of that movement. Their efforts were heartily endorsed by Christian Dale, Henry Keller, and other citizens; it has been a most potent factor in promoting the educational uplift of the last sixty years. District Institutes were instituted soon after it in different parts of the county, and also did much to awaken public sentiment on the subject of education. The County Superintendent was not established until 1854. Rev. Dr. Wm. J. Gibson being the first County Superintendent.

The first County Institute the writer attended was held at Milesburg just before the holidays in 1857—just fifty-eight years ago. J. Ilgen Burrell was County Superintendent, an excellent man and fine scholar.

We now return to the history of the Academies. The school year of all Academies in those days consisted of two terms of five months each. The summer term usually began the first of May, and the winter term the first of November. These terms often closed with an exhibition given by the students. There was much friendly feeling between the schools, and they attended their respective exhibitions. The writer well remembers when a boy of fourteen or fifteen years, of riding back and forth on a two horse road wagon from Potter's Mills to Boalsburg and Pine Grove for this purpose. The home trip was generally made after the close of the exhibition. The roads were not as smooth then as now.

MONT VIEW ACADEMY.  
Mont View Academy, at Potters Mills, was founded by Dr. Wm. I. Wilson and Samuel Van Tries in the spring of 1852. They secured the principal, and before the school was opened obligated themselves to pay him a salary of \$500.00 a year. John Williamson was the first principal; he was a raw Irishman, a good scholar, but not a successful teacher. He taught one term, and was succeeded in the fall of 1852 by Mr. John S. Love, a graduate of Jefferson College. Mr. Love was an excellent teacher, a man of pleasing personality, and executive ability. Under his management the school flourished and saw its palmiest days. He taught three terms, and then resigned to study medicine. He was succeeded by Mr. John B. Davidson in the spring of 1854. He was also a graduate of Jefferson College, a good scholar, but lacking in some of the essential qualities of a successful teacher. The school was very much hampered by the want of a suitable building, and the patronage began to fall

off. He taught two terms, and was succeeded in the Spring of 1855, by Mr. S. S. Orris. He was a most excellent man, a fine scholar, and had few equals as a teacher. The state of his health unfitted him for the work, and he only taught one term. Mr. Orris was afterwards professor of Greek in Princeton University for 25 years. While this school had a patronage of from seventy to seventy-five scholars under Dr. Love, yet all the other Academies outlived it. At that time the village contained quite a number of cultured, refined, and intelligent families, yet the community did not encourage the school as much as they ought to have done. Social antagonisms sometimes interfere with, and blast business projects.

BOALSBURG ACADEMY.  
The Rev. David McKinney, D. D., pastor of the Pennsylvania Presbyterian church, opened a select school in the village in the year 1836. It continued in successful operation until 1841. It was well patronized. After an interval of eleven years it was revived in the year 1852, with Rev. James G. Austin as principal. In the Spring of 1853 the academy building was erected by a joint stock company. The lower story was occupied by the Reformed congregation as a house of worship, Rev. Austin being their pastor. The upper story was used for school purposes until the building was torn down in 1892, and the present Presbyterian church was erected on its foundations. The school flourished under Mr. Austin's administration. He closed his labors as principal in 1856. He was succeeded by Theophilus Weaver. After him the principals were as follows in the order named, viz: Capt. James J. Patterson—1858-1862. Rev. L. Kryder Evans—1863. Rev. D. M. Wolf—1863-1865. The school continued under sundry principals during the year 1892, when the building was torn down. It had a large patronage and did a good work.

A reunion of its students was held September 9th, 1897, and an account of it published in the Bellefonte papers. It contains an extended history of the school.

PINE GROVE MILLS ACADEMY.  
William Murray, William Burchfield and Thomas F. Patton interested themselves in establishing a school at Pine Grove in the year 1852. They secured as the first principal Mr. B. F. Ward, a graduate of Jefferson College, an energetic, scholarly man, of genial manners and pleasing personality. The writer remembers him well although it is more than sixty years ago. He taught two years, and the school was a decided success during his administration. He was followed by Mr. Joseph W. Shoup, who taught one year. He was succeeded by Mr. Kennon and a Mr. Davis, each of them taught one term. In the fall of 1855 the citizens formed a joint stock company and proceeded to erect an Academy building which is still standing (1915).

The school opened in this building in the fall of 1856 under the charge of Prof. J. E. Thomas, a graduate of Jefferson College. It continued under his care until 1862 when he, along with a number of his students, enlisted in the army. After his return he again took charge of the school, and continued to be its principal until his death October 28th, 1872. He was a good man and did a good work. He was succeeded by other wise men, but I cannot now give their names just when the Academy was abandoned. I think the building is now used for public school purposes. A reunion of the old students was held June 18th, 1897, when Mr. D. F. Fortney gave a very complete history of the school in an historical address. The school sent out quite a number of men who attained eminence in church and State. It and time space permitted it would be interesting to give reminiscences of some of them.

AAKONSBURG ACADEMY.  
This school was organized in 1854, the men chiefly interested in its origin were the Rev. M. J. Alleman, D. D., pastor of the Lutheran church; Rev. Martin Smith, pastor of the Reformed church; Henry S. Gross, John B. Holloway, Thomas Yearick, and George W. Shoup. The first principal was Ezra Shield-Knecht. He taught one year. The second principal was John Ilgen Burrell, who taught two years, and then became County Superintendent. J. W. Schwartz had charge of the school for a time. The third principal was Rev. J. R. Dimm, who took charge in the fall of 1857. The academy building was erected in 1856. The school flourished under Dr. Dimm. He had from 70 to 75 students. A number of men who afterwards became prominent as ministers were students under him. Mr. Spangler Kieffer probably succeeded Dr. Dimm. Dr. Jeremiah Hoy, and Rev. Wm. H. Gotwold, D. D., were also principals for some time. All of the men who were at any time principals of this Academy were graduates of Pennsylvania College at Gettysburg, Pa. The school was very prosperous, and ran up as high as 130 students at one time. The writer cannot say how long it continued, or when it suspended.

Space and time are too limited to give a detailed statement of the history of these schools and those identified with them. Each school would afford abundant material for a separate article.

I am specially indebted to Rev. Dr. H. C. Holloway, of Harrisburg, Rev. J. R. Dimm, D. D., of Selinsgrove, and Rev. W. H. Schoch, of Lilly, Pa., for the facts as given above.

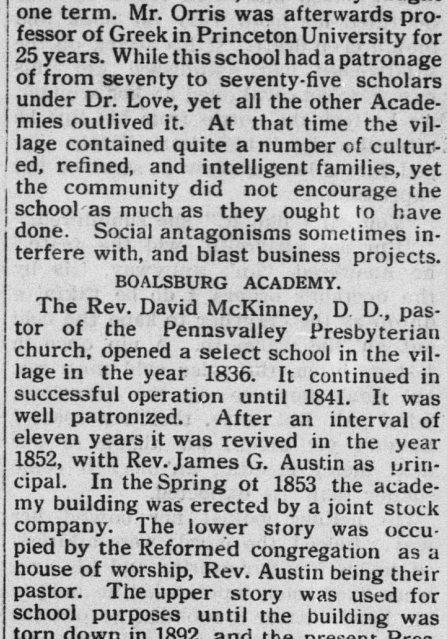
THE SITUATION TODAY.  
The writer trusts he may not be misunderstood or his motives misconstrued in publishing this article. In writing the early history of the Valley he had to deal with facts as he found them. While he has spoken plainly, he meant no disrespect to the worthy and estimable people of that day. He lives among them and knows them well. They were a kind, accommodating, and hospitable people. The masses of them were good neighbors and upright citizens.

The thoughtful reader, as he has gone over this narrative, has doubtless been instinctively led to compare the situation in those days with present conditions. There has been very marked improvement in everything relating to school affairs. The standard of scholarship, methods of teaching and school government, along with teachers wages have all undergone a radical change. Perhaps the greatest change has been in public sentiment. It has been completely revolutionized, no man now dares to oppose education. He knows better. He wants his children to have all the advantages of it. He realizes that it promotes their interests.

Some of the best schools and teachers of the county are now found in Pennsylvania. All the County Superintendents, except two, have come from it. It is not

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## Christmas



Candles on the tree aglow,  
Holly red and mistletoe;  
Radiant faces, rapturous cries,  
In the nursery wondering eyes,  
Stockings full and bulging out,  
Toys of every sort about;  
Music, joyous, glad and gay;  
All of Christendom at play;  
Season of the Holy Child,  
Dearest gift, divine and mild,  
Angel songs, dispelling fear,  
Yule, the blessed Yule is here!  
—Rose Mills Powers, in Youth's Companion.

### MANNER OF GIVING PRESENTS

Simple Little Embellishments Such as Ribbons, Seals and Holly Count for Much.

At no time does the manner of doing a thing count for so much as at the time of Christmas giving; and while in a few instances there are those who overdo the outward embellishment of gifts, none of us now live to offer the simplest little remembrance unless wrapped in spotless paper, tied with gay ribbons and adorned with bright seals expressing merry greetings.

And this is as it should be for the holiday season gains a great deal of cheerfulness and zest from the multiplicity of beribboned white parcels whisking to and fro, and we do not regret the passing of the yellow paper bundle of our grandmother's day.

But the attractive appearance of the gift is not all that counts; we must be careful of the how and when and where of presenting it.

The time that custom more and more sets apart for the exchanging of gifts among friends is Christmas eve, any time from dusk to midnight; but Christmas day itself is sacred to presenting gifts within the family circle.

Some families put all the gifts in the library or living room, in separate piles, and then, after a deliberate breakfast, they all walk in and open the packages in the presence of each other.

Never give a gift in person if you can contrive to send it or put it where it will be found awaiting the recipient when he or she is alone, for when received in this way the gift makes its strongest appeal to one's appreciation.

In giving money, even to near relatives, the utmost care should be taken to give it in the most delicate way possible; especially if you know the money is needed.

### WHY YOU HANG STOCKINGS

Popular Christmas Custom Said to Have Come Down to Us From Old Italian Practice.

There is a story from Italy which some suppose to be the beginning of the present idea of the Christmas stocking. Years ago good old St. Nicholas of Padua used to throw knitted purses with money in them in at the windows of the poor. These knitted purses were not unlike a stocking without a foot, and later it became the custom of the people to hang this knitted sack just inside the window that St. Nicholas might put something in as he passed. When these purses went out of use the stockings were substituted. In the northern part of Italy it was a little too chilly to leave the windows open and the stockings were hung by the mantel place so that they might be filled from the chimney.

claimed that all this elevation of the standard of intelligence has resulted entirely from the improved schools. A knowledge of the outside world greatly enlarges our conceptions of life and its duties. Railroad facilities and travel add vastly to our store of knowledge.

The Grange has also done much to improve the social condition, and promote intelligence, among the farmers. They have become a reading people, many of them take the daily papers.

In conclusion, it may be truthfully said that Pennsylvania in all these particulars, will today compare favorably with the best of rural communities. In some things it surpasses them.

## HOLIDAY AILMENTS

How to Avoid Condition Brought About by Overeating.

Plenty of Vigorous Outdoor Exercise Will Help Digestive Organs Assimilate Food—Better Than Doctor's Prescription.

By IRENE WESTON.

SO MANY people habitually feel more or less out-of-sorts for the few days following Christmas that Christmas ailments have come to be recognized as a necessary aftermath of the festivities.

Of course, the children will always overeat themselves; if they were not allowed to eat all sorts of indigestible things, they would feel they were being cheated out of half the joy of the gay Christmas season. As a matter of fact, it is not the children at all who make up the bulk of sufferers from Christmas complaints. It is the grown-ups who, simply through carelessly neglecting to subscribe to one simple rule of health, frequently find themselves more or less unhappy inside, and more tired and run down physically at the end of the Christmas holidays than before them.

With grown people, after-Christmas ailments are not so much due to indigestible eating of indigestible foods as to an utter neglect of any precautions to adapt their systems to the new conditions which reign during the Christmas holidays.

Take the case of the average father of a family who leaves all office work behind. How does the change affect him? In the first place, the dull monotony of his days is broken in upon and his brain can relax from the high pressure of the office. This much, of course, is a change in the right direction. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy physically as well as mentally. At the same time, however, staying at home has drawbacks of its own, for it means less exercise, which in its turn should suggest a cutting down of the food supplied to the body.

Too much food and too little exercise are almost certain to upset the digestion and clog up the various organs whose duty it is to separate the waste matters from the good in the food we eat and rid the body of those poisonous products.

The remedy is perfectly simple. There is no need to stint yourself of the good things of the table. Eat, drink and be merry, within fair moderation, of course. However, you must help your digestive organs by taking plenty of vigorous outdoor exercise.

A two hours' walk before the midday meal, a round of golf or some other outdoor game with the children in mid-afternoon, and a brisk two-mile walk in the half-hour before the evening meal will be found worth more than any amount of doctor's prescriptions directed towards relieving the first symptoms of biliousness, the mental irritability, disturbed sleep, sour taste in the mouth, loss of appetite, etc., which are such a common aftermath of the Christmas holidays.

Unselfishness is the key to Christmas happiness.

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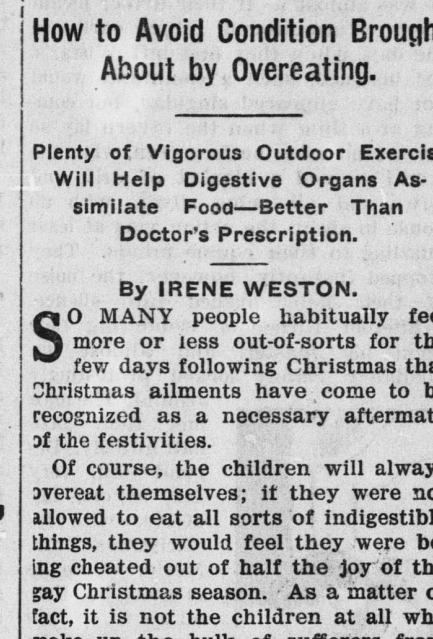
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## AN IRREPRESSIBLE BOY



WORRIED the cat, he played rat-tat-tat  
On the roller skates a full hour by the clock,  
He tried roller skates where dishes and plates  
In jeopardy lay, till some fell with a shock.

With an Indian yell on the doll's house he fell,  
And added poor doll's scalp to his belt;  
Then knocked off its toes and its fair Grecian nose  
Which some was of wax—how proceeded to melt.

Two tubs he upset without one regret;  
He stood on his head till his face it turned blue;  
A curtain he tore and then sighed for more  
Inventively mischievous things he might do.

He hid granny's specs, but that didn't vex;  
Her face brightened up with his fun and his noise,  
"One sweet kiss repaid all," so she said,  
Resignedly adding that "boys will be boys."

But strangest of all at night's quiet fall  
How meekly, how placidly, this rogue would say:  
"Good-night, mamma dear. Good-night, papa dear,  
"I've tried hard to be such a good boy to-day!"

### EAT REMAINS OF CANDLES

Christmas Services Among the Eskimos of Labrador—Part Most Enjoyed by the Children.

Somebody has said that when the world was being made the Creator gathered up all the waste material he had left over and made Labrador out of it. Some people say the Creator never intended it to be inhabited. But inhabited it is with a sturdy, taciturn band of Eskimos, who, thanks to the Moravian missionaries who have penetrated to that country, celebrate Christmas in their own peculiar way.

As service time in the church draws near all the inhabitants, old and young, the men on one side and the women on the other, are waiting in eager expectation. It is quite dark by four o'clock and the bell rings. All come trooping in clad in the best clothes they can muster.

No one stays at home from these services unless he is sick or lame, and whenever it is possible sleighs are used to bring these disabled ones to church.

For the little children the happiest part of the services comes later when each child receives a lighted candle, symbolizing the light of the world. Each candle stands in a white turnip which serves as a candlestick. Most of the candles are made from deer tallow which the Eskimos bring to the missionaries. After the services the children eat not only the turnip, but what is left of the candle as well.

One year only about ten persons, mostly men, could come from the nearest island. The ice had been driven together, and rather than miss the Christmas service they had risked their lives in crossing over on that moving, heaving, broken ice to the mainland. Then they had to climb the mountains and walk through the deep snow until they reached the mission station after twenty-three hours of danger and a fearfully exhausting march through the snow.

How happy they were to be in time to celebrate the Christmas festival in the house of their God! About six days later, when the ice had formed, all the rest of the people came, but oh! so sad and downhearted. Like little children they told the missionaries their tale of sorrow. They described how sad they all had been when they found that it would be impossible to come to the mission station for the Christmas service.

"Christmas Past."  
It was indeed a gracious time, and as we read of the revels and ceremonies and find foolish beliefs of Christmas Past, we might regret what we have lost in this tamer and less picturesque age, if we did not know that never before in history was Christmas kept so truly and heartily in the spirit of the day as it is now. We have dropped a good many rude and some pretty customs, but we have gained a broadening spirit of almost universal charity, a feeling of real brotherhood, that is perhaps none the less real that it is held in check a good deal during the rest of the year.

—Charles Dudley Warner.

A French Custom.  
In France children place their shoes before the mantelpiece, in anticipation of a visit from Father Christmas.

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