

EDUCATION IN PENNS VALLEY SIXTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

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It is proposed to give an account of the situation of educational matters in Penns Valley 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 Penns Valley 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 influences 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 Ike, 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 sometimes 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 North-west 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, he guessed it was a good book, "For my part I never see'd one 'afore." 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. A generous rivalry among the housewives of the district made the boarding quite respectable. Among other luxuries we had buckwheat cakes twenty-one times a week.

There were no other schools in the valley in those days, save an occasional summer, or subscription school, usually taught by young girls, who were generally more incompetent than the public-school teachers. It is true there may have been one or two small select schools in the valley, but their advantages were available to but few.

Some of the Sabbath Schools of that day held very erroneous views as to their proper mission, and design. In the first school the writer ever attended, he in common with other primary scholars, was given lessons in spelling and reading. There was very little, if any, religious instruction given. The adult Bible classes usually passed the time in reading "verse about" without any comment or explanation by the teacher. Lesson leaves were entirely unknown. Each school made its own lesson plan,

if they had any.

It would be unjust not to give due credit to the ministry of those days for their earnest and self-denying labors to instruct and elevate the people. They did much to mold and control public sentiment. Many of them were devout and godly men, some of them were above the average in point of ability. They were the most efficient educators of that day. The people respected the ministry and generally attended faithfully upon the means of grace. The morals of the respective communities were fully up to the standard of the present day, if we except the drink habit and its consequences—it was much more prevalent than at present. Many farmers kept a barrel of whiskey in their cellars, and all the family had free access to it. Beer was but little used, perhaps because it could not be had. Whiskey was the universal beverage. It was cheap and there was little legal restraint upon its use. The best could be had for twelve and a half cents a gallon.

Much is said in the present day about drugging modern liquors, especially whiskey. Strychnine whiskey is nonsense, alcohol is the intoxicating principle in all liquors used as a beverage. The fighting propensity so common among men in those days was largely the result of the drink habit. Men generally settled their difficulties with their fists. On the days of the militia training it was a common thing for two men to meet and settle their former grievances in a pitched battle.

Few of the people ever saw a daily paper. The weekly papers contributed but little towards instructing the people, and they were poorly patronized. The writer recalls the Centre Berichter published at Aaronsburg in his boyhood days. It was printed in German, with one page in English. The Centre Reporter is its lineal descendant. Many of the people never went outside of the valley, so they had little opportunity of mingling with more intelligent and enlightened communities.

Under such meagre and imperfect educational advantages it is not surprising that some of the people were both ignorant and illiterate. The superintendent of a prominent Sabbath school, when addressing the children told them that the world stood on "four grosse elephants," (four big elephants). They probably wondered what the elephants stood on.

The above is a brief description of the situation of educational matters in Penns Valley previous to the year 1850. The writer has endeavored to give a candid and impartial account of the same. The masses were either indifferent or opposed to it because they did not know of its advantages.

Yet in pleasing contrast with this sombre view of the situation it is refreshing to know that there always had been a respectable minority of intelligent and public spirited citizens throughout the valley, who were the ardent friends of education, and had long felt the want of better schools for their own and their neighbors' children. Many of them were people of culture and refinement, and fully realized the deplorable situation. The truth is Penns Valley has produced many worthy and reputable men, who stood high in the church and state.

A new era was now beginning to dawn in the cause of education, and many people began to realize its importance and value. The County Superintendent and the County Teacher's Institute had been established. These greatly helped to arouse the people to the importance of better schools, and led the teachers to realize the necessity for more thorough preparation for their work. Schools for that purpose had become an absolute necessity. During the next three or four years Academies had been established at Aaronsburg, Potters Mills, Boalsburg, and Pine Grove Mills; all of these schools flourished for several years. They drew patronage from the surrounding country, and also from adjoining counties. All their principals were college graduates. While they were not strictly Normal schools, yet they greatly aided in preparing more competent and efficient teachers for the public schools. The Teachers' Institutes, both County and District, also did much to elevate the standard of teaching and teachers. Their efforts were also greatly promoted by the aid of the County Superintendent, who was ex-officio President of the County Institute.

The Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania, (now State College,) was organized about the same time (1855). It also did much to promote the general uplift in the cause of education. The original intention of the writer

(Continued on last page.)

FARMERS' INSTITUTE THIS WEEK.

Pine Grove Mills is having School Tr.-Day and Institute Will be Held at Pleasant Gap Friday and Saturday.

Local Farmers' Institutes are being held in the county this week. Monday and Tuesday meetings were held in Millheim; today (Thursday) Pine Grove Mills is having the institute, and on Friday and Saturday the Department of Agriculture will supply Pleasant Gap with speakers for a similar institute.

John A. Woodward, of Howard, the county chairman, has charge of the meetings and is assisted by Daniel A. Grove, of Lemont, and W. F. Reynolds of Bellefonte. The Department of Agriculture has assigned four able experts and speakers for the Centre county meetings. D. H. Watts, of Kermor, is speaking on apple and peach culture, farm education, alfalfa and farm buildings all important subjects to the farmer. W. Theo. Wittman of Allentown, one of the recognized poultry experts of the State, covers the poultry subject thoroughly and speaks especially upon increasing the winter yield of eggs and shows in an illustrated talk many of the poultry houses in Pennsylvania.

Fertilizers and farm management is being discussed by M. H. McCallum, of Wernersville, and S. I. Bechdel, of State College, will take up the dairy subjects of clean milk and better butter as well as the silo and silage. The morning meetings are being held at 9:30 o'clock; afternoon at 1:30 and evening at 7:30.

At Pine Grove Mills the local committee consists of G. B. McC. Fry, W. E. Gos, J. D. Tanyer, Dr. R. M. Kreb, W. K. Cor, Capt. W. E. Fry and J. H. Bailey. At Pleasant Gap the local committee will consist of Elmer D. Swartz, chairman; W. Kerstetter, W. H. Noll and Harry V. Hill.

Report of High and Grammar schools.

The statistical report and honor roll for the third month of school in the Grammar and High schools is as follows:

Grammar school—Number in attendance during month, males 18, females 18, total 36; average attendance during month, males 11, females 17, total 28; average attendance during term, males 12, females 17, total 29; per cent. of attendance during month, males 94, females 96, total 95; per cent. of attendance during term, males 96, females 97, total 97. Those in regular attendance during month are Miriam Huyett, Beulah Foe, Ruth Barter, Ruth Parson, Catharine Bradford, Adaline McClellan, Pearl Rubin, Beatrice Kreamer, Gertrude Rubin, Harold Keller, Shanon Sozzer, Frederick Lucas. Those in regular attendance during term are Miriam Huyett, Beulah Foe, Ruth Barter, Ruth Parson, Catharine Bradford, Adaline McClellan, Pearl Rubin, Beatrice Kreamer, Gertrude Rubin, Harold Keller, Frederick Lucas.

High school—Those present every day during month: Esther Parson, Rebecca Kreamer, Verna Franz, Catharine Rubin, William Arney. Those present every day during term are: Esther Parson, Verna Franz, William Arney and Rebecca Kreamer have not missed any time since they were admitted to school. Sixty-two tardy marks during month. Average daily attendance during month: girls, 11; boys, 6. Percentage of attendance, girls, 93; boys, 84.

Will Lecture at Spring Mills.

Mr. Thompson, connected with the Dairy Department of the School of Agriculture, Pennsylvania State College, will deliver a lecture in the Grange Hall at Spring Mills, Friday evening of this week. His subject will be along the following lines: How to select the best cow; how to take care of the cow; how to balance a ration on the farm; how to produce the cheapest milk.

Wise Farm in Brush Valley Sold.

The farm owned jointly by Samuel Wise and William Trager, in Brush Valley, and at present occupied by the latter, was sold some time ago to Bruce Hettlinger, on the Snively farm west of Spring Mills, for \$3500.

It is planned to have the necessary legal papers prepared before the close of the year, giving Mr. Hettlinger possession of the place. The farm contains one hundred acres, seventy-six of which are in a good state of cultivation, and the remainder timberland.

Samuel and Claire Horner, sons of Mr. and Mrs. George Horner, of Pleasant Gap, who for almost three years have been located in Illinois, sprang a surprise upon their parents by their arrival at the parental home one day last week, without any notification of their coming. Thus the Yule-tide season will be especially happy one in this home.

Bunkie-Weaver.

On Saturday evening at the Reform-ed parsonage in Centre Hall, Wilbur S. Runkle and Miss May E. Weaver, both of Tusseyville, were married by Rev. R. R. Jones. After the ceremony the young couple were entertained for the night by Mrs. Elmer Miller, at the John Lusa residence. The following day they drove to the home of the groom's father, John L. Runkle, at Tusseyville, where they will make their home until spring when they will commence housekeeping.

The groom is one of Potter township's most worthy young men and is at present engaged in teaching the Fleisher Gap school. He is scholarly and has fine musical attainments. The bride for many years made her home with the family of C. W. Swartz and is esteemed highly by her many associates. Both have the best wishes of their many friends for a peaceful voyage on life's sea.

Insuring Parcel Post.

Uncle Sam asks all postmasters, including the 45,000 of the Fourth Class, to encourage the insuring of Parcel Post packages. The purpose is to insure to the sender safe delivery of the package and in case of loss indemnity. When a package is insured the sender, if he asks for it, may have a receipt returned to him from the person addressed indicating that the package was received. This feature alone is worth the fee charged for insurance. An insured package can be traced, as there is a record of it on the books at the office of mailing and at the office of address.

The fees for insuring Parcel Post packages has been reduced very materially within the past year. The fees for insuring a package in addition to the regular postage, and are as follows:

3-cent fee Value up to \$ 5

5-cent fee Value up to 25

10-cent fee Value up to 50

25-cent fee Value up to 100

There is but one class of matter that can be insured, and that is the fourth class, or Parcel Post, which in a general way includes all merchandise, and in weight 20 pounds anywhere, and 50 pounds in the first and second zone, provided the package is not more than eight-four inches in length and girth combined.

Within the past six months the Post Office Department has worked out a plan whereby the senders of Parcel Post packages may obtain a receipt setting forth that on a certain date a package was mailed to a certain individual or firm. This receipt is a special convenience to parties returning packages for exchange or credit. This receipt costs but one cent, a one-cent stamp being affixed and cancelled.

"It is very important," because it so materially aids in the delivery of all "classes of mail," for patrons on Rural Routes to use the number of the route in connection with their address.

Fresh meats cannot be mailed from points in one state to that of another state without being accompanied with a certificate of inspection or exemption.

The laws of Pennsylvania prohibit the transportation of game through the mail.

Packages so wrapped or boxed so their contents can not be easily inspected by the postmaster, must be stamped at the first-class postage rate, or two cents for each ounce. Parcel Post packages cannot be sealed, nailed, or so inclosed as to prevent examination.

To Pension Old Citizens.

Congressman Focht has introduced a bill in Congress providing that all American citizens having an income of less than \$200 per annum and are sixty-five or more years of age and unable and incapable of manual labor shall be allowed an annual Government pension at the rate of \$10 per month.

"Let's trade at home this Christmas," would be a good slogan for every citizen in Centre Hall. Not only because the dollars will stay where they were earned and continue to benefit the whole community—but also for the reason that the economic reason would be sufficient alone—but also for the reason that a look through the stores in Centre Hall will convince one that just as pretty, just as good, just as low priced, goods are procurable here as out of town. The local stores have put on their holiday attire and an observer cannot fail to notice that it appears as though the merchants have made extra efforts and purchased larger quantities of goods for the Christmas trade this year than for many years past. Show them your appreciation of their enterprising business methods by giving them your patronage.

MEETING OF STATE GRANGE AT STATE COLLEGE, DEC. 21 TO 24

Every local arrangement has been completed for the meeting of the State Grange, so far as is possible at this time.

The Woman's Building and College Dormitory will be used for headquarters for the officers and committees of the State Grange. Only a limited number of rooms are available in the Woman's Building, and it has been arranged to use a college dormitory, which is nearby, for rooming purposes, with boarding in the Woman's Building, which has a large dining room and will amply accommodate the Officers and Committees.

Delegates and members who expect to attend the State Grange should make application to the local committee immediately for rooms and board, so that they may receive location cards before they leave home, which will enable them to go direct to their rooms from the station.

Delegates and visiting members should report at the Armory immediately upon arrival and register their names.

Guides and automobiles will be at the stations to assist everybody to find their rooms.

Committee of Arrangements,
JOHN DALE, Chairman,
FLORENCE RHONE, Secretary.

THE PROGRAM.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21

10:00 A. M.—Assembling of the State Grange in the new Auditorium.

11:00 A. M.—Annual address of Worthy Master John A. McSparran. Doors open to all.

2:00 P. M.—Business Session, appointing of committees and receiving reports of State Officers.

EVENING SESSION.

7:30—Public Meeting.

MUSIC
Address of welcome in behalf of the College Dr. E. E. Sparks
Response John A. McSparran, Master of State Grange
MUSIC

Address of welcome in behalf of the School of Agriculture Dean R. L. Watts
Response Dr. Hannah McK. Lyons
Address of welcome in behalf of the town by Burgess R. L. Holmes
Response Rev. H. G. Tesgarden, Chaplain
MUSIC

Address of welcome in behalf of Centre County Pomona Grange Prof. C. R. Neff
Response E. B. Dorsett
MUSIC

10:00 P. M. to 12:00 P. M.—Reception in Armory.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22.

Morning—Business Session.
Afternoon—Conferring of fifth degree by Centre County Pomona Grange, Viewing College buildings, and Experimental Farm.

Evening—8:00 P. M.—Conferring of sixth degree, exemplifying first, second, third, fourth and fifth degrees.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23.

Morning—Business Session. Receiving reports of committees.
Afternoon—Business Session. Address by visiting patrons.

Evening—Closing session of the State Grange.
All sessions will be held in the new auditorium.

The Hon. C. M. Gardner of Massachusetts, High Priest of the Assembly of Demeter, Seventh Degree of the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry, will be in attendance during this session of the State Grange. Mr. Gardner is the custodian of the esoteric work of the National Grange and will exemplify the unwritten work.

All 4th Degree members can attend these meetings and receive the Degrees of Pomona and Flora. The Degree of Pomona will be conferred in the hall of the Horticultural Building on Wednesday, at 2 p. m., and on that evening at 8 p. m., the Degree of Flora will be conferred in the Auditorium. These degrees will be highly interesting and impressive.

At the close of the afternoon meeting on Wednesday, about 3:00 o'clock, all delegates and visitors will be shown over the college grounds by guides and given the opportunity to inspect the buildings and equipments.

Over 1000 persons, who expect to be in attendance, have registered. The attendance will likely exceed 1500 persons, as these annual meetings are of great interest to the members of the Order.

TOWN AND COUNTY NEWS.

HAPPENINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST FROM ALL PARTS

The annual election of officers for Progress Grange will be held at a meeting of that order on Saturday afternoon.

E. M. Huyett had a storm vestibule erected on the front porch of his residence last week. Similar additions were also made to the rear of the dwelling by the Lucas carpenters.

Lower Penns Valley continues to hold the championship for big hogs. Last week J. L. Winegardner of Millheim butchered two porkers which weighed 482 and 482 pounds, respectively, when dressed.

Milheim is again agitating the question of municipal ownership of the water plant in that place. The Millheim Journal is right in arguing that there is no chance of losing anything on the plan, no matter what they are obliged to pay for it.

Dr. E. L. Miller of Johnstown, well known to many Reporter readers, last Wednesday left Johnstown for Mount Dora, Florida. His household goods, horse, etc., were shipped a few days previous, which indicates that Dr. Miller expects to make his future home in the sunny south.

One year ago this month Harry Houser came east from Denver, Colorado, to visit home folks and assist his father, David Houser, at Houserville, on the farm. On Wednesday of this week he again left for the far west, after first spending a day at the home of his cousin, Mr. Robert W. Bloom, near this place. Mr. Houser is employed the greater part of the time in the Corbin sugar works near Denver. Expecting to remain west for an indefinite length of time he took advantage of the comparative low price of clothing in the east by buying in several suits and furnishings.

John Coldron on Saturday sold his lot of ground, situated on Main street, to Lawrence Runkle, the carpenter.

The dwelling house of John A. Williams, at Port Matilda, was completely destroyed by fire Saturday evening a week ago, while the house was void of its occupants. The house was partly covered by insurance.

To cope with the belt-and-ham problem, Thomas C. Barter, at Earlsville, last week purchased a tractor engine which will reduce the need of horses on the big farm from six head to two. The engine will burn either kerosene or gasoline and is easy of manipulation. Mr. Barter says the engine from the local depot on Friday morning with no trouble whatsoever. The tractor has revolutionized farming in the great west and its more general use in the eastern sections appears to be but a matter of time. Mr. Barter contemplates a sale of four of his fine farm horses, besides farm machinery, some time in February.

When Harry Armstrong, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Armstrong, filled his pipe from some loose tobacco which he carried in his coat pocket, Thursday evening, he failed to notice that a .22 calibre cartridge passed along with the tobacco into the pipe bowl. He enjoyed a few puffs when there was a bang, and a pipe and tobacco went flying through space. It all happened in the restaurant connected with the Pennington bakery in the Bartholomew building, where a circle of young men had gathered. The shell was a "short," and the lead ball only fell to the floor, having no force, owing to the lack of resistance which is offered when fired into a rifle barrel. Besides a slight jar and a few burnt fingers, young Armstrong suffered no injury. The tobacco was not "loaded" for a practical joke, but in emptying a supply of the stuff into his pocket he failed to remember that he had a number of loose shells in it.