

# THE POTTER JOURNAL

AND

## NEWS ITEM.

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Report of the Superintendent of  
Common Schools for Potter  
County.

**I. PERSONAL AGENCIES.—Parents.**  
—Educationally considered, there is among these such a variety of opinions and actions that no attempt will be made to classify them. While it is true that of all the personal agencies connected with our schools there is none who should be so much interested as parents, it is also true that not more than two-thirds of them in this County manifest this except by words. Such, whether somewhat intelligent or ignorant, are foremost in finding fault with the school law, with either directors, superintendents or teachers, and often with all.

With this class taxes are too high, teachers are not more than half as good as they should be, and are paid too much, are too strict or not strict enough, use partiality or teach by methods not like those in which they were instructed years and years ago; directors are nuisances and the superintendent is no better.

But fortuna, by the power of these educational agencies, who are wise only in their own estimation, is generally controlled by those who are much wiser in counsel and more efficient in good deeds.

While many at times are too active, mostly in talk only, there are those as many who are almost entirely indifferent as to school matters. Strange as it is, only a very few parents visit our schools at all. If they would generally do this, instead of leaving it for the directors and superintendent, there would be far less dissatisfaction of parents, the schools would be stimulated, the teachers encouraged and the good object of our schools would be far more readily realized.

**Directors.**—In former reports I have said many things in commendation of these officers. All might be truly said now. But in this report I will say only the same things, the following statements contain the particulars wherein they often fail to do their official duty:

1. In not having the secretary make out in time the annual report, audited and certified.
2. In not keeping a correct account of the pecuniary matters of the district, and in not publishing a financial statement of their annual receipts and expenditures.
3. In not expending teachers in time, and in not giving them salaries according to their certificates and known skill and experience in teaching, in selecting the poorest qualified teachers for the backward schools, in not having a correct agreement with all teachers at the time of employing them, in not visiting once a month the schools of their district, either as individuals or by the secretary appointed by them for that purpose; in accepting school houses not constructed according to contract, and in allowing the destruction of school houses, furniture and out-buildings by heedless scholars and others who are so. While it is indeed difficult to do all of these duties, some of our boards are greatly deficient in trying.

**County Superintendents.**—The summary of his work may be found in his monthly and annual statistical reports. To most interested are request to compare these reports with those of former years. Such, by so doing, can judge whether he did more or less work than before. But as to the manner of his doing it, these best acquainted with it can decide.

It may properly be added that in visiting he continued his efforts made in previous years to cooperate with and to encourage teachers, to induce the scholars to attend more regularly, to obey their teachers, to study more and in the right way, and to be ambitious to excel only in well doing.

All his intercourse with directors and parents was pleasant and harmonious. The many kindnesses and hospitalities received from our people are gratefully remembered and will be gladly reciprocated as opportunity affords.

**Teachers.**—Comparing these with those of the last two or three years, no remarkable difference in age, experience, qualification and success in teaching is found. Several more attended the institute; more had read books on teaching and educational periodicals, and more taught by better methods, but their knowledge of text-books and their practical skill in governing were, on the whole, not much better.

Several of our best and some of our poorest teachers taught in adjoining counties. Higher salaries generally invited the former and lack of employment at home usually induced the latter to seek work elsewhere. While there are so few schools in and near this County where our young men and women can qualify themselves for teaching; while directors are obliged to offer such low salaries to teachers; while our young men can get more working at lumbering and at nearly all the ordinary trades than teaching; while there is such a demand for those who can do housework, just so long our educational interests will suffer for the want of better teachers.

**Scholars.**—Our boys and girls are generally fair specimens of "Young America." With their restlessness of mind

and body predominates. Comparatively few of them are "dull scholars." Having strong wills and nuns of a rigid restraint they are more easily led than driven. They do few things "by rule." The combativeness of the boys is large and their destructive propensity is almost a ruling passion. This is shown in the way they resent real or imaginary insults and by the reckless destruction of their toys, clothes, books, seats and desks. Still they are usually kind-hearted. Whenever our young men and women attend schools of a higher grade than the common, in other counties, they generally rank among the best of their classmates, both in scholarship and deportment.

**Institute.**—This was held at Coudersport, in October. Prof. F. A. Allen was the chief instructor. Mrs. A. A. Randall Diehl and Anna Stevens, Esq., were the others. The former confined her instruction mostly to elocution, and the latter, his to penmanship.

During one or two of the evening sessions Mrs. Diehl related several interesting things, mostly of an educational character, in connection with her recent European travels. Prof. Allen's instruction to teachers, concerning "school work," was so well classified and generally so practical, and his "Talks," at the evening sessions, to parents and school officers, were so plain, and yet so full of kind feeling, that the attendance, both of teachers and spectators, increased in the adjournment.

The large attendance of teachers and parents at our institutes, and the interest manifested in them by all, are not only very encouraging to those who have labored for these results during the last few years, but make these educational meetings of great importance as a personal agency of our school system in this county.

**II. PECUNIARY AGENCIES.—Debtors and Expenses.**—Not having received the annual reports of the districts for last year, I do not know just what these have been. But the average receipts from all sources for the three years next preceding last year, were \$20,471.75, and the average expenditures for the same time were \$24,417.25. The average State appropriation for these three years was 1433.91, or only 1.67 per cent. of the total receipts. The average yearly salary of the County Superintendent, \$3,400, received from the State, is not included in the above statements. The salary last year, (\$1000) added to the State appropriation for the same year make \$14,418, which is only 70.11 per cent. of a fair proportion of the amount paid last year to the judges of this county. This shows that the State pays almost as much to our judicial officers as it does towards the support of the common schools of this County. How is this in other parts of the State? Is this wise statecraft?

**School Property.**—A fair estimate of this, made by the directors last year, was nearly \$60,000. Our county buildings, including court house, jail and the property belonging to them, could not probably be replaced for less than this amount. How do these things compare with other counties? Is this good economy on the part of this County?

**School Houses.**—My statistical report shows the number, kind and fitness of these in this County, and also the nature of their furniture and apparatus. During the last year eight have been built: two in Hector and one in each of the following districts, viz: Genesee, (Ind.) Oswayo, Sharon, Sweden, Ulysses and Wharton. The two in Hector park among the poorest of our new houses; but the board of directors did the best it could. The one in Wharton ranks among our third class, those in Genesee, (Ind.) Sweden, and Ulysses among our second, and those in Oswayo and Sharon among our first. While all of these should have been better planned and constructed, in some respects, each will probably answer quite well the purpose for which it was built.

The one in Oswayo is, on the whole well constructed and well arranged. This, with good out-buildings, cost \$1100. While the board of Oswayo deserves credit for building this house, if it seems to it that this property is preserved it will deserve more credit hereafter.

The house in Sharon is better in size and plan than in construction. The cost of it was \$900. In order to have a first class house the citizens living near it raised, by subscription, \$200 of this amount. Such liberality is indeed commendable.

**Recommendations.**—The statements made at the close of my report two years ago concerning the "obstacles in the way of improvement," and also the measures to promote improvement," are respectfully re-submitted.

**Conclusion.**—At the close of another school year we have, on the whole, no reason for discouragement. It is true that in some localities the machinery of our school system has not always worked well. Probably so long as we have schools personal interests and selfish feelings will more or less interfere with them. Still educational progress will be made.

J. W. ALLEN,  
Co. Sup't.

[The following story is from Denmark's Young America. It is an old story, never too often told, of one of the best of misanthropes.]

John Pounds, the Shoe-Mender.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

"Why, Bennie, what's the matter?" inquired John Pounds, the shoe-mender, of his little nephew, a child of about four years of age, who was sitting on a broken cricket in the little yard where he lived, crying bitterly.

"The boys laughed at my crooked feet, and I can't play like other children, and have a good time," sobbed Bennie.

"I am sorry for you, Bennie," rejoined Uncle John in a kindly tone, "but cheer up, little man, and I will see if I cannot help you. If I were a rich man you would soon be all right, but patience and perseverance can accomplish a great deal, and maybe a shoe-mender can be as clever as the doctors. Come, suppose I carry you down to the shop, I want to measure your feet and see if I cannot make them whole again, so that you will be able to run about as much as you want to. Will you be a brave boy and not mind a little pain, in order to get well?"

"Yes," answered Bennie, not knowing what he promised.

"I am not sure that I can cure you, Bennie," Pounds added, fearing to increase the boy's miseries if he failed in his attempt; "but I will try, and trying sometimes works wonders. And you must try also, and be a good boy, and mind what I say while I am at work." So the kind uncle lifted up the boy and took him down to his workshop, a room six feet by eighteen, in a weather-boarded tenement. He gave Bennie an old knife and some bits of wood with which to amuse himself, while he laid aside his own employment of mending shoes to pursue some mechanical design similar to one which he had heard physicians made use of to remedy the distortion. He became so absorbed in his occupation that he forgot the presence of the child until, on rising to get a tool from a drawer, he saw the little fellow had crept behind his workbench and was fast asleep.

"Sleep on, Bennie," he murmured, "and take what rest you can, for poverty and toil await thee, on still wretched, helpless and want, if I succeed not; but I must and will, for your sake." He had just finished his first attempt at mending himself, when he was surprised to find the child awake, complaining of being hungry, and wishing to be taken home.

"This is a lesson for you, Bennie," said John, "and you must try to amuse yourself a while longer until Uncle John can get you home. You know you cannot get well unless you help me by being a good boy. Here are some pieces to look at," he added, handing Bennie a torn illustrated paper. "But what are they about?" inquired Bennie, after he had looked at the pictures. "More work for me," thought John; "the best must be taught to read. I cannot stay now, Bennie," he said aloud, "to explain them to you, but if you will be patient I will teach you to read some day, and then you can understand the pictures yourself. Would you like to learn?"

"Yes," replied Bennie. "Can I go to school?"

"Your father is to poor to send you to school," answered John; "but if you get well, so as to run about, you can come here every day and learn from me. But play now by yourself and let Uncle work."

And thus good John Pounds plodded on a century ago, while angels looked down on his benevolent toil, must have rejoiced. He succeeded to his heart's content. Bennie was cured, and ran about as well as any boy. Then commenced the task of teaching him, for the novelty of play and exercise made it doubly difficult for Bennie to stay indoors and learn; but by coaxing and perseverance, John succeeded likewise. It occurred to him, however, that the child would learn fast and be happier for a companion. So he hunted up another ragged, neglected child, and these sat, with list and sile on his knees, mending shoes and John Pounds teaching these children. And the work grew on his hands. Daily he felt stimulated to assist others, until his room was crowded. Some sat on the table, one climbed upon a shelf, others brought legs with them for seats. Debs, too, were equally scarce. But John taught the children to gather up the mud-bills from the street, from which they could learn their letters. When this was done he taught them to spell orally.

"Bennie," he would say, "look up at the window; what is it that binds you so, that you wink?"

"The sun," answered Bennie.

"Spell sun," said John, and then followed this lesson, until all the children could spell sun.

"Tommy, what is it I am mending?" he would ask of another.

"A shoe," answered Tommy.

Then the class were taught to spell shoe. Ofttimes the recitations would be interrupted by children knocking at the door with the request, "Please, sir, may we come to your school?"

John's big heart was pained to refuse, but there was no more room. So he had to limit his number and select the most ignorant, and those who were most likely, from neglected circumstances or vicious influences, to lose all chance of improvement, if he turned them away. As soon as they were able to read he begged clothes for them, that they might attend other schools; keeping the garments at his own house, and requiring the children to come there and dress, and return the clothes at night, as his means were so scanty it required the utmost care and diligence on his part to eke out sufficient for his benevolent projects. Thus year by year he labored on, without any pecuniary reward.

Moments that he could snatch from sleep were spent in making toys for the little children as rewards, or inducements to them to learn.

Besides mental instruction, he taught them practical knowledge, showing them how to mend shoes and cook their food. When they were sick he would prescribe for them; persuading the older scholars to nurse the younger.

Thus in every way he labored for the elevation of the place where he lived, which was Portsmouth, England, setting an example of rare benevolence.

One winter's evening, about fifteen years after the commencement of this gratuitous school, a well-dressed, intelligent-looking man knocked at the door of John Pounds' dwelling toward night-fall.

John opened the door and saw a stranger standing there, who greeted him with the friendly exclamation:

"Well, good neighbor Pounds, do you not know me?"

"No, I do not," replied John; "but if I ought to know you and memory tells me, walk in and reveal yourself." The man entered, and taking a seat, said:

"Well, master, do you not recognize Peter Watkins, your old scholar, who sat many a day in your workshop learning to read?"

"Why, Peter, is it you?" cried John, rising and taking him by the hand. "How altered you are! Who would have recognized my little scholar?"

"Will I should not be this day what I am if I had not been for your interest and faithful instructions. I might today be in power for crime, or leading the wretched life of a beggar, had you not rescued me from temptation and ignorance."

"Do you remember the letter you wrote to Mr. Filbert, asking him to take me as clerk in his store?"

"Yes, yes, Peter, I remember you well enough now," replied John.

"Well," continued Peter, "your words of encouragement, 'Be honest and industrious, and try to rise in the world,' sound many a time in my ears. I obeyed them, and today I am the thrifty owner of a saw-mill, with a nice wife, who had a little property of her own. I have come to beg you to accept forty pounds as a small return for all I owe you," handing Mr. Pounds a bank-note as he spoke.

"No, no, Peter, keep your scrip," cried John; "my labors are works of love. I do not sell for money."

"Well enough I know that," continued Peter, "but it would be a satisfaction to think I had given you some return, master. You are growing old, and may find it well to lay by some thing for sickness. Pray take it, for I think you do wrong to refuse all recommendations."

But John was inexorable, and the mill-owner was compelled to depart, taking his money with him. About a month after a young woman, called at Pounds' shop, likewise entreating him to receive her unbounded thanks and a sum of money she had laid by for him in return for all she owed to his instructive and good influence. She had walked, she said, three miles from the town in which she was residing, that she might find him and give him this token of gratitude. Pounds, as before, refused all compensation, and told her to expend part of the money in riding home instead of going on foot. So she said she was living with a farmer and getting good wages, and owed all her prosperity to his teachings and advice. Thus from time to time did the old man gain tidings of the result of his labors for others. But hundreds were named by him from misery and vice, whom he never met again on earth.

One winter morning in the year 1833, groups of children could have been seen on the streets of Portsmouth weeping as if they were broken-hearted indeed. John Pounds weened. Then teacher, sympathizer, guide was gone, and well they knew it would be long ere they looked upon his face again.

Grandma had the apples for preserves in her bureau drawer, to keep them safe from Percy's prying fingers; but when she brought them out there were the marks of four little teeth on each apple, and Peep's mouth exactly fitted the marks.

Owing to her constant devotion, poor Snip had but two kittens left. One came to an untimely end by being wrapped in a shawl and left in grandma's chair with the stern charge to go "sit still to sleep." Grandma, who weighs nearly two hundred, had been rocking back and forth for nearly an hour before Peep remembered the kitten, and then she shook out of the shawl a kitty that would never need to be put to sleep again. Percy buried it after Peep had gone to bed, and she never missed it. The second was drowned by Peep's holding it so long in water "to be washed all pitty and not ky." Snip was almost exhausted tugging the remaining two from barn to cellar, from cellar to garret, yet a kitten was constantly dropping from somebody's pocket, or rolling from under a cushion.

It was Peep who scrubbed the floor with a damask napkin and bowl of gravy. Peep who filled the tea canister with water to "see 'e little flos swim." And Peep who poured water into the meal barrel and made "zhoncakes."

But this was the first time she had found the front door open. She had beat her head till it was black and blue against the door, she had pinched her fingers in the cracks, and kicked holes in the toes of her slippers, without opening it; but now it was wide open and nobody near.

She slipped out on the side walk. There was a lovely little brown dog running up street, and Peep ran after him. Up the street, down an alley, across a square, ran the little dog, and the backmen stopped their horses, and the young dandies drew up to let the little white dress and tiny blue boots flutter after him. A big man caught her just as she reached the side-walk. "Where are you going little wail, eh?" he said.

"I isn't a wail," said Peep stoutly; but the big man held her fast.

"You're best," he said.

"No, no," said Peep, "papa yite down here."

The man looked very doubtful, but somebody called him, and telling Peep to stand still, he stepped across the street.

"I'll get in 'e calldge," said Peep, as the horse-outs stopped at the corner. They were changing horses, so she had time to scramble up the steps, and the car moved on, away out of town where the great houses stand in gardens or green fields.

"Who is that?" asked the conductor, seeing Peep. Nobody knew. The driver said they must carry her back and give her to the police; but everybody was getting out and Peep followed them, and the conductor forgot her.

Nobody noticed her, and Peep was hungry. Peep was tired. She cried a little and sat down by a high wall calling for mamma. Her head drooped on her shoulder, and she lay beside the wall asleep, and it was growing dark.

Mamma came in from shopping and asked for Peep. "I haven't seen her," said grandma; "I suppose Florence took her with her." So mamma sat mending a tiny frock, and grandma knit little blue socks, and into every stitch went a prayer for or a thought of the darling who was sleeping behind the fence alone. It was nearly night when a boy brought in a note from Florence saying she was not coming home for the night.

"But she must send Peep home," said mamma.

Ten minutes after, Florence came running in asking, "What do you mean by bringing Peep home? She hasn't been with me."

Peep came home from the office—Percy shouted in the street—Grandma searched the house—mamma and Florence cried wringing their hands, but here was no Peep.

Tasso taking a look about to see if everything was ready for night, found a funny little heap behind the wall. He growled at it, he smelled it, he found—Peep. Tasso knew it was not just the thing for babies to be sleeping under fences after dark, but how could he get her in? He looked, but Peep didn't wake, he shook the little dress, but it was of no use, so he turned soberly around and trotted into the house.

"What is the matter, Sally?" asked Miss Carrie, coming into the kitchen, "he keeps bawling and tugging at my dress."

"We'll go and see," said Sally, "them dogs knows a powerful sight."

She gave the little heap a push with her foot and peered through her spectacles. "Mercy on us! it's a baby," she cried, catching it up and carrying it into the house.

"You poor little creature, who left you here?" cried Miss Carrie.

"This child's lost, she wan't left," said Sally decidedly, "see her white frock and little blue shoes, she's run away most likely."

After Peep had disposed of a good deal of bread and milk, they proceeded to question her, but it was small satisfaction. "What's your name, dear," cried Sally.

"Peep."

"What else, darling?"

"No, and darling, I see Peep."

"Now tell me, pretty, your name, and you shall have some sugar," said Sally.

"Pence."

"Pence what?"

"No, Pence Zocker, don't oo know?" said Peep, with great indignation.

"What is papa's name?" said Carrie.

"Shan't tell any more," said Peep, eating sugar coolly.

"Oh, yes," said Carrie, supplying more sugar, "what does mother call papa?"

"Pam."

"Well, other people call him Mr.—"

"No, 'er don't call him Mister—er—er, call him 'daddy'."

"Now we can tell; just get the directory and see if there is a doctor with a name anything like Hocker."

"Fa, it might be anything," said Sally, "you can't tell nothing by her."

There was no such name, and Peep was getting sleepy again.

"Where does papa live," asked Carrie, as a last resort.

"Done 'way."

"Where has he gone?"

"To 'dit a pulbit stin, to yep a baby 'untin' in," was the slow manner, and they concluded to let her go to sleep.

"I would like to keep her," said Carrie to herself, "but I suppose somebody is suffering terribly on her account."

"Which folks would sew labels onto their young ones, or put collars on 'em some's dogs," muttered Sally, hounding a little night gown, yellow with age, out of a bureau drawer. "Here's Mr. Bruce gone, and Miss' Bruce gone, and what Miss' Collins and me's to do with her I doo know." But Sally softened when she went back a d took another look at the little creature lying in Carrie's lap.

They took off the dainty little garments and just as Sally lifted the night dress over the bright head, Carrie saw a small oval round her neck.

FLORENCE A. RICHMOND,  
DR. ALBERT RICHMOND,  
1239 1/2 Street.

A woman with a bundle in her arms followed by another woman and a big black dog, went up the steps at 132 Sidney street, just behind Dr. Richmond.

"Is there any news?" asked a woman's voice in the hall, oh, so anxiously.

"Yes," said Miss Curdie, stepping forward and putting a bundle in the woman's arms.

On the hugging and kissing and the bundle set up and laughed, and screamed and jumped from one to the other, and hadn't the least bit of what all the fuss was about. Old Tasso, who let strict watch over Peep, was fed within an inch of suffocation, and Carrie and Sally came near not getting home until morning.

Peep has been to make then so many visits since that she calls the place "mamma's grandma's," and if any day you see a big black dog trotting across the city, you may know it is Tasso going to Sidney street for his daily beef-steak.

**A California Story.**

In the slantly which, in California's early days, did duty as office for the banking, postal, and express business of Wells, Fargo & Co., in Marysville, there sat, one Saturday evening, a misanthropic and dejected looking individual, whose long and unkempt hair and beard, cowhide boots, and rough dress bespoke the miner. For over an hour he had sat there, the picture of despair, with not a word or look for any one present. Miners came, left their "dust," took their coin in return, and exchanged greetings with all present, save the one morose man who sat apathetically; it seemed could disturb a finely dressed, once a young miner, with a shining beard, who, after completing his business at the counter, turned to the agent in charge and remarked that on the previous Saturday he had some dealings with the bank, and thought that some mistake had been made in his account.

"Guess not," said the agent. "Your coin was all right, and I reckon we kept our books pretty straight."

But upon the request of the miner that the account should be examined, the account was looked at, and it was found that a rough a checked error, the miner had been paid just fifty dollars too much.

"That's just what I make it," said the letter, "and here's the money." With this, he threw down the gold on the counter, and received the thanks of the agent.

While this conversation was in progress, the misanthropic miner had preserved his look of utter indifference; but when he saw the money actually returned, his face brightened up, he rose slowly, walked toward the honest miner with a slow and almost solemn step, and said:

"Young man, don't you feel awful lonesome in this country?"—*Con. Bulletin.*