

Marshall University

## Marshall Digital Scholar

---

Theses, Dissertations and Capstones

---

1949

### Educational development of Preston County

George P. Ayersman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://mds.marshall.edu/etd>



Part of the [Appalachian Studies Commons](#), [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#), and the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Ayersman, George P., "Educational development of Preston County" (1949). *Theses, Dissertations and Capstones*. 1414.

<https://mds.marshall.edu/etd/1414>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses, Dissertations and Capstones by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact [zhangj@marshall.edu](mailto:zhangj@marshall.edu), [beachgr@marshall.edu](mailto:beachgr@marshall.edu).

**EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRESTON COUNTY**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Education of Marshall  
College in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts**

**By**

**George P. Ayersman**

**Marshall College  
August, 1949**

THIS THESIS WAS ACCEPTED ON August 26 1949  
Month Day Year

as meeting the research requirement for the master's degree.

Adviser Roy C. Woods  
Department of Education

A. C. Davis  
Dean of Graduate School

81705



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION                                    |      |
| History of Preston County . . . . .                | 1    |
| Situation and Extent. . . . .                      | 1    |
| II. EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT . . . . .              | 8    |
| Early Education in Virginia . . . . .              | 8    |
| The Dark Age in Education Before 1790 . . . . .    | 12   |
| III. THE LITERACY FUND . . . . .                   | 18   |
| IV. EARLY SCHOOLS . . . . .                        | 22   |
| V. THE KINGWOOD ACADEMY AND NORMAL SCHOOL. . . . . | 27   |
| VI. COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS. . . . .                | 35   |
| VII. EARLY TEACHERS. . . . .                       | 38   |
| VIII. DETERIORATION OF TEACHING CORPS . . . . .    | 42   |
| IX. PRESTON COUNTY SCHOOLS OF TODAY . . . . .      | 44   |
| X. PLANS FOR FUTURE. . . . .                       | 48   |
| Bond Issue and Special Levy . . . . .              | 48   |
| W. Va. School Building Program. . . . .            | 49   |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .                             | 54   |

LIST OF TABLES

| TABLE |   | PAGE |
|-------|---|------|
| I.    | Comparison of School Buildings, Pupil Enrollment,<br>Number of Teachers and Teachers' Salaries in<br>Preston County from 1869 to 1948 . . . . . | 37   |
| II.   | Enrollment and Pupil-Teacher Ratio Study, 1948-49   | 44   |
| III.  | Building and Improvement Expenditures Authorized<br>by Special Election. . . . .  | 52   |

## CHAPTER I

### History of Preston County

#### Situation and Extent

Preston County is one of the important counties of the State of West Virginia. It borders on two states, Pennsylvania and Maryland, and four counties of West Virginia, Tucker, Barbour, Taylor and Monongalia. Preston County was formed from Monongalia in 1818. It has an area of seven hundred square miles, being one of the larger counties of the state. It extends along the full eastern Maryland line, a distance of thirty-six miles and along the Mason and Dixon line twenty-two miles. There are eight magisterial districts. Passing from north to south they are Grant, Pleasant, Portland and Union. To the east of the Cheat are Valley and Ringwood; Lyon and Reno on the west.

The county was named in honor of James P. Preston, an American officer of the War of 1812 and governor of Virginia from 1816 to 1819. He was the son of a Scotch-Irish immigrant who was born in 1774 and died in 1843. Several others of the Preston family have won renown as statesmen and lawyers.

More than a century and a half ago, Preston was an uninhabited wilderness. The white man had not come and the red man used the valleys of the Cheat only as a hunting ground.

In 1767 Mason and Dixon were making their celebrated survey. Along our north boundary they cut an opening, twenty-four feet wide.

through the forest and this lane was used as a road by the settlers.

Two years later James Clark, the first permanent settler, crossed from Pennsylvania and established a home near the present site of Clifton Mills. He was quickly followed by several other families, all settling near the Mason and Dixon line. In 1773 several families came to the Dunkard Bottom on the right bank of the Cheat, close to the very center of the county. In 1774 the danger of Indian hostility caused the building of two blockades to protect these one hundred settlers. Morris Fort was near Glade Farms and Butler's Fort at the mouth of Roaring Creek.

Until this same year Preston was a part of Augusta. It now formed a part of Monongalia, the county seat being at Morgantown in 1782.

During the war of the Revolution only a few more families came over the mountains. From 1778 to 1783 hostile Indians made several raids and murdered a number of settlers. But with the return of peace in 1783 the savages were held in check, and the white population, now two hundred, began rapidly to expand.

The region east of the Blue Ridge was already an old finished country. Many localities were as populous as now. All the land was under private ownership and it was not easy for a person of little means to gain a foothold. So there was a steady tide of people flocking across the Alleghenies to settle on the virgin land of the "back country". Many of these immigrants were Revolutionary veterans and



the migration is comparable to the movement of the soldiers of the Civil War into the northwest to avail themselves of free land under the Homestead Act. In both instances the returned soldiers were impelled to seek a new country, through its promise of better opportunities for him.<sup>1</sup>

The state of Virginia had indeed a Homestead Law known as "settlement right". Any settler building a log cabin and growing a crop of corn before 1778 could secure a title to four hundred acres, and he could also preempt one thousand acres adjoining. The cost of a certificate of title was only forty cents. There was a further payment of \$1.67 for each one hundred acres. Prior to this time a settler would deaden a few trees around a spring, cut his name in the bark of others and claim the land. This, which was called a "tomahawk right", had no standing in law, although some men would pay a squatter to quiet his claim.<sup>2</sup>

When the idea of county organization was first debated by the people of what is now Preston County the following petition was presented to the Virginia legislature:

Your Petitioners humbly sheweth, that it is inconvenient for the inhabitants of the East Side of Laurel Hill, to attend at the Court House, at the time of election, or on any other account whatsoever, occasioned by the extensive distance to the amount of forty miles for some, and having to cross that ridge of mountains where there is no inhabitant, nor never

---

<sup>1</sup> Oren F. Morton, A Handbook of Preston County, West Virginia (Kingwood: The Journal Press, 1904), pp. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> Loc.cit.

can be. Therefore your petitioners humbly prayeth, for that part of Monongalia County, eastward of the Laurel Hill to be struck to compose a new county.<sup>3</sup>

The petition was dated July 25, 1792. Thomas Butler, Thomas Chipps, Russell Potter, Andrew Ramsey and one other man, were to be the justices for the new county. The petition was signed by two hundred thirty-five people. This petition was not granted but from that time on, until the county was actually formed, the Virginia legislature was literally deluged with similar petitions.

Finally on the 19th day of January, 1818, the General Assembly, after having given the subject due consideration, gratified the anxious wishes of its petitioners, and declared the division of Monongalia County and the erection of a new county out of the north-western part of it.<sup>4</sup>

Upon the organization of the county in 1818, the number of people had increased to three thousand. The great National Road, a few miles beyond the Mason and Dixon line, caused the north end of Preston to be more populous and progressive. Goods were now brought across the Alleghenies in immense Conestoga wagons.

The census of 1850 gave the county a population of 11,708, inclusive of eighty-seven slaves. Two academies and forty-two minor schools gave insufficient educational privileges. Of the 22,727 inhabitants county in the census of 1900, only 162 were colored and only

---

<sup>3</sup> S. T. Wiley, History of Preston County (Kingwood: The Journal Printing House, 1862), p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 322.

362 were not American born. By 1904 there were one hundred seventy schools with an enumeration of 7,439 pupils and an enrollment of 6,033. A force of 198 teachers was required. Seventy-eight held first grade certificates and received an average salary of thirty-six dollars. Portland and Kingwood districts paid forty dollars. The yearly cost of maintaining the schools was \$33,000. and the value of school property was \$150,000.<sup>5</sup>

Preston County is served by the main line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and has several good highways, among which are U. S. Route 50, going into Taylor County and into the neighboring state of Maryland; U. S. Route 219, going into Tucker County and into Maryland; W. Va. Route 7, going into Monongalia County and into Maryland, and W. Va. Route 26 going into Pennsylvania.

It will be noted that there are very few references used in the following pages of this thesis. This is due to the fact that all of the records of Preston County were destroyed by fire in 1869.

On Sunday morning, March 7, 1869, about two o'clock, the citizens of Kingwood were awakened by the cry of fire to find their court house in flames--the work of destruction being so nearly completed that nothing could be saved. The buildings around the court house were saved by great exertion. Peter Voltz was living in that part of the court house termed Town Hall, and though on the first floor, barely had time to escape, so rapid had been the progress of the flames.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Morton, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

<sup>6</sup> Wiley, op. cit., p. 180.

The most careful investigation could find no carelessness on the part of those who had access to the offices in the building, and general sentiment pronounced the fire to be the work of an incendiary. The people of the county were in perfect consternation at the destruction of the legal records for fifty years which alone contained the proceedings of the civil and criminal doings of the county. There was no clue pointing directly to the incendiary, though suspicion quickly rested on Elihu Gregg, a man of quarrelsome and revengeful nature.<sup>7</sup> There was on record a judgment against Gregg of one hundred dollars, and from this he had no escape save through the destruction of the official records. This fact, in connection with the bad reputation which Gregg possessed, was the ground upon which this suspicion against him of burning the court house rested. Gregg's whereabouts on the night of the fire could not be accounted for by any one, until just about daylight, when he was seen riding, coming from the direction of Kingwood, with beard covered with frost and ice.<sup>8</sup>

Gregg fled to Pennsylvania, was arrested there, and brought to Kingwood for trial. The evidence of one witness was that Gregg swore he would burn Kingwood, and of another that the prisoner attempted to bribe him to swear that he (Gregg) had stayed with him on Saturday night. This and other strong circumstantial evidence proved everything the State desired and Gregg was sentenced to be hanged, the

---

<sup>7</sup> Morton. op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>8</sup> Wiley. op. cit., p. 182.

death penalty for such an offense being at that time permissible.<sup>9</sup> Before the punishment could be inflicted, Gregg and two fellow prisoners broke jail through a tunnel they had excavated. After eight years, it was found that Gregg, now an old man, was in Greene County, Pennsylvania. He was again arrested and the old sentence reaffirmed. It was not executed and in 1861 Gregg received an unconditional pardon from Governor Mathews and returned to Greene County.<sup>10</sup> The pardon was viewed with indignation by the citizens of Preston County. The death penalty was no longer desired, but it was generally felt that a life imprisonment was none too much for the vindictive burning of the county records.

---

<sup>9</sup> Morton, loc. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Loc. cit.

## CHAPTER II

### Educational Development

#### Early Education in Virginia

The counties east of the Blue Ridge had patterned their first schools after the schools in the mother country, England. In reply to a query from the crown in 1671 about the course he had taken in concerning schools, Governor Berkeley replied: "The same course that is taken in England out of town, every man according to his ability instructing his children."<sup>1</sup>

The first efforts on the part of these counties to provide free public education were in the form of apprenticeship laws passed to provide training for orphans sent from England. Virginia received the first group of orphans from the hospitals and asylums in England in 1619. In 1643 the first apprenticeship law, patterned after the Poor Laws and Apprenticeship Laws of England, was enacted by the Assembly. The law provided:

And all overseers and guardians of such orphans are enjoined . . . to educated and instruct them according to their best endeavors in Christian religion and in the rudiments of learning and to provide for their necessaries according to the competents of their estates.<sup>2</sup>

In 1743 an apprenticeship law was passed which was to some extent a compulsory education law. According to this law:

---

<sup>1</sup> Cornelius Jacob Heatwole, History of Education in Virginia (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916). Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Pleasants, Jr., Henings Statutes at Large. Vol. I (Richmond: Printer of Commonwealth, 1809), p. 260.

Any person adjudged by the county court incapable of supporting and bringing up their children in honest courses or to take due care of the education of their children and their instruction in the principles of Christianity, in any such cases it shall be lawful for the warden of the church parish, where such children inhabit, by order of their court, to bind each child apprentice, in the same manner as the law directs for poor orphan children.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the parents of the poorer children were compelled to submit their children to the church warden to be educated.

The Virginia Company of Lands, whose charter was dissolved in 1624, had shown an interest in establishing a free school in Virginia. In 1619-1620 the company had attempted to establish a free school on the bank of the James in Henrico County for the purpose of instructing Indian children in the art of reading. However, the school and the iron works, established to support it, were discontinued after the Indian massacre in 1622.

In 1622 the Rev. James Copeland, chaplain of the East India ship, Royal James, collected a sum of almost eighty pounds to establish the East India school at Charles City for the education of the white children of the colony.

Some men in the colony had also shown an interest in establishing free schools. In 1634 Benjamin Symms bequeathed two hundred acres of land for the establishment of a free school in Elizabeth City County. Soon after this, Dr. Thomas Eaton died and left five hundred acres of land for a school in Elizabeth City County. In 1675 Henry

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 32.

Pensley bequeathed six hundred acres of land for the maintenance of a school in Gloucester County. These schools served as models for many other schools of the same type in Virginia at the beginning of the 18th century. They later became known as charity schools.

The number of these charity schools increased after the Revolution when the titles to the globe lands and other properties were turned over either to the states or the counties. When these lands were disposed of, the proceeds were used by some counties to establish free schools. In other counties the proceeds were used to erect buildings and hire teachers for the education of the poor children.

In addition to these more or less privately endowed free schools, many children in the colony received their education from two other sources. These were the Old Field schools and the private tutor.

The Old Field schools were the outgrowth of a community cooperative for the purpose of educating their children. These schools were established on some spot--usually a worn out and deserted field--convenient to all the children in the neighborhood. The teacher was employed by the community and was paid by means of a fee collected from each pupil. The establishment and control of such a school was in the hands of the local community, and was separate from the church and state.

Often the clergyman for the parish were teachers in the Old Field school. They were the best educated and most qualified men in



the community. The teachers were licensed by either the governor or by the bishop in London. Their salary usually amounted to about twenty-five dollars per pupil. In speaking of these Old Field schools, Bruce says: "Perhaps the greatest proportion of the children who during the 17th century received an education obtained it in what became known as the Old Field school."<sup>4</sup>

One of the most effective forms of instruction, however, was by means of tutors. The large plantation owners employed a tutor for their children and provided a place where school could be held. Children from neighboring plantations would come and board with his family while school was in session. These schools were also free of interference from the church and state, and were supported by the planters.

In the eastern section of Virginia, however, the desire for universal education was slow to take form. This may be accounted for by two reasons. First, the colony still adhered to the traditions of England. Second, there were two distinct classes in colonial society, the aristocrat or large landowner and the very poor of the colony.

The aristocrat looked upon universal education as being intended for paupers and the poor classes resented having the state provide training for their children. "Thus public education in

---

<sup>4</sup> Philip Alexander Bruce, Institutional History of Virginia, Vol. I (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), p. 331.

Virginia could find no place in the social fabric of Virginia, until a strong and powerful middle class developed a true democracy in which public education could best prosper."<sup>5</sup>

#### The Dark Age in Education Before 1790

When and where the first school appeared in Preston County seems to be a lost fact of the local history. Prior to 1790 there appears to be absolute silence along this line. In 1790 the density of population was only one household to each four square miles of surface. This was too sparse a showing to have enabled schools to exist, unless in the Whetsell Settlement, the Sandy Creek Glades, and the more recent colonies established about Brandonville and Carmel by the Quakers and Germans.<sup>6</sup>

Until 1790, goods were brought in almost exclusively by pack-saddle. When there had to be a severe weeding out of what were deemed the non-essentials, it is certain that books and writing materials were scarcely seen at all in the baggage of the average settler. In 1794 there was no postoffice in the Preston area, and only one weekly mail to Morgentown from the east. Until the close of the Revolution there had doubtless been no more than chance opportunities to receive letters and send them.

---

<sup>5</sup> Kentwale, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>6</sup> Oren P. Morton, A History of Preston County, West Virginia (Kingwood: The Journal Publishing Company, 1914), p. 180.

"It does not seem that the majority of settlers were illiterate. Neither does it seem that more than a few possessed a serviceable education. The intermediate number could neither read nor write with much freedom, and even where they may have desired to exercise this knowledge, they could scarcely have been able to give even a rudimentary training to their children."<sup>7</sup>

The general conditions of the frontier were positively adverse to the work of the school, and illiteracy was more common in the generation growing up than among the immigrants themselves. Deeds and other papers were very often acknowledged with a mark, especially on the part of the women. "A turn in the tide had to await a greater density of population, a greater stability of local institutions, and an abatement of the frontier disinclination to submit to restraint."<sup>8</sup>

A compulsory school law in this region a century earlier would have caused a mighty uproar.

From this, it is almost certain that previous to 1790, the only approach to real scholastic training was in the families of those settlers who had come here with an efficient education and with an appreciation of its value. No head of such a household would have been willing for illiteracy to reign among his children, even if he had to step into the breach himself as best he could.

---

<sup>7</sup> Morton, loc. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Morton, op. cit., p. 181.

East of the Blue Ridge teaching was done by ministers of the established church. But, according to Morton,<sup>9</sup> in Preston County the preacher was almost an entire stranger until close to the above date.

The first schoolmaster of whom there is definite knowledge was August Christian Whitehair, who was teaching at Carmel in 1790. He probably began teaching a year or two earlier. It is more than probably that by this time a school was maintained among the Quakers on the Big Sandy. Whether this is true of the people at Glade Farms and Whetsoll's is less certain.<sup>10</sup>

Until quite a while after this, the spirit of Virginia had never been truly cordial toward free public education. Before the Revolution there were schools attached to the parishes of the established church, and therefore, under the supervision of the church. The proceeds of the church lands were to some extent used to support charity schools and even free schools. However, what was then named a free school was not under state supervision, except in so far as the teacher was paid out of funds held by the state. Sometime a school of this character was maintained by a private individual.

Until 1796, there was no state school law which in any way affected the western counties. The few schools taught in Preston County prior to 1796 were, without doubt, the result of private effort.

---

<sup>9</sup> Morton, loc. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Loc. cit.

In 1776 Virginia adopted a constitution which failed to mention provision for public education. However, there was a feeling on the part of many leading Virginia citizens that education for the masses was necessary in order to avert tyranny. Among these men were Thomas Jefferson and George Wythe who, in 1779, were selected as members of a legislative committee to report to that body a system of public education for Virginia. Their recommendations were adopted by the legislature in 1796 when the following law was enacted:

1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly, That in every county . . . there shall be chosen annually . . . three of the most honest and able men of their county, to be called aldermen of the county.

2. The said aldermen, or any two of them, annually on the second Monday in May . . . shall meet at the court house of their county, and shall then and there proceed to consider the expediency of carrying the subsequent parts and provisions of this present act into execution . . . the said aldermen are hereby empowered and required to proceed to divide their said county into sections so as they may contain a convenient number of children to make up a school, and be of such convenient size that all the children within each section may daily attend the school to be established there.

3. Householdors residing within every section shall meet on the first Monday in September next after the aldermen of their county shall have determined that it is expedient that the provisions of this act shall be carried into execution within the same. The householdors, being so assembled, shall choose the most convenient place . . . within their section, for building a school house.

4. At every one of these schools shall be taught reading, writing, and common arithmatic; and all the free children, male and female, resident within the respective section, shall be entitled to receive tuition gratis, for the term of three years, and as much longer at their private expense, as their parents, guardian, or friends, shall think proper. The said aldermen shall from time to time appoint a teacher to each school and

shall remove him as they see cause. They, or someone of them, shall visit every school once every half year, at the least, examine the scholars, and superintend the conduct of teachers in everything relative to the school.

5. The salary of the teacher, with the expense of building and repairing a schoolhouse, in each section shall be defrayed by the inhabitants of each county in proportion to the amount of their public assessments and county levies to be ascertained by the aldermen of each county respectively, and shall be collected by the sheriff of each county.

6. Provided always, and be it further enacted, That the court of each county . . . shall determine the year in which the first election of said aldermen shall be made, and until they so determine no such election shall be made.<sup>11</sup>

This last provision of the law nullified the effects of its other provisions. The members of the court of each county were naturally the wealthier men in the county. Therefore, since the expenses of the school were to be defrayed by the inhabitants according to their public assessments, they would have to pay most of the expenses of the school. The courts in the majority of the counties of Virginia never determined the year in which aldermen were elected.<sup>12</sup>

This law was advisory rather than mandatory. It does not appear that any use was made of the statute in the Preston County area.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Alfred James Morrison, The Beginnings of Public Education in Virginia, 1776-1860 (Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Davis Bottom, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1917), pp. 22-23.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> Morton, op. cit., p. 182.

The select school, maintained by a few certain families, was the customary school east of the Blue Ridge. "It was the Virginian theory that education should be a private interest, and that it should be treated like an ordinary interest of pecuniary nature; that it was something to be bought and paid for by the parent concerned, just as the parent would purchase his clothes or furniture."<sup>14</sup> Yet, in drawing this line the Virginians were inconsistent, because they believed that religion should be supported by the state. Their antagonism to a school free to any white child came through the aristocratic completion of their social structure. Such is the inveterate force of inbred customs, that although Virginia has now a quite good system of free schools, the private school is somewhat common in its older counties.

---

<sup>14</sup> Morton, loc. cit.

## CHAPTER III

### The Literary Fund

In 1809 the "Literary Fund" was called into being by Act of Assembly. Article VIII under Education stated: "The General Assembly shall set apart as a permanent and perpetual literary fund, the present literary funds of state, proceeds of all public lands donated by congress for public school purposes, of all escheated property, of all waste and unappropriated lands, of all property accruing to the state by forfeitures, and all fines collected for offences committed against the state, and such other sums as the General Assembly may appropriate."<sup>1</sup>

The year before Preston was organized, the legislature passed a new school law. It authorized boards of school commissioners appointed by the county courts and consisting of not less than five persons and not more than fifteen. A majority of the board was a quorum, and it chose a treasurer from its own number. These trustees were to ascertain the number of indigent children, how many of these would attend school, and for how many of the latter number it was able to supply the tuition fee. Then with the consent of the parents, the board was to send those children to school, furnishing also the necessary books and other materials. To make this law

---

<sup>1</sup> George W. Hunford, compiler, Code of Virginia (Richmond: Printed by James E. Goode, 1873), p. 93.



efficient, the trustees of the Literary Fund were instructed to set apart yearly the sum of \$45,000, this sum to be apportioned among the counties according to their respective number of free white inhabitants.

When Preston assumed political individuality, its schools were those known as the common primary schools. The settlers of a neighborhood would put up a building at their own expense and employ the teacher. The school was open to all who were able and willing to pay tuition, and the support was helped out by the county's apportionment of the Literary Fund. In 1833, the population of the county was about 5,500 and the children of school age were somewhat in excess of 2,000. Preston had then a board of seven commissioners under the law of 1817. There were twenty-three common primary schools attended by 190 of the children classed as indigent, the total number of such in the county was 230. Each child at school was in attendance forty days on an average. The tuition was three cents a day and the contribution from the Literary Fund was for all purposes \$306.14.<sup>2</sup>

The absence of caste feeling in the western counties and the consequent greater cordiality toward the common school is evident from the fact that the census of 1840 report more illiteracy east of the Blue Ridge than on the western side. In Preston County the number of illiterates above the age of twenty years was 431, or about thirty

---

<sup>2</sup> Cron P. Morton, A History of Preston County, West Virginia (Kingwood: The Journal Publishing Company, 1914), p. 183.

per cent of the adult population.<sup>3</sup> It will be noticed that school attendance was voluntary. Neighborhood opinion was the only compelling power. The time was not ripe for any compulsory law. The free spirit of the thinly settled frontier was still too strong to look kindly on what it would have deemed an encroachment on personal liberty.

In 1846, there was a remodeling of the school law--a petition by a third of the voters required the county court to lay the question before the people whether or not they should have schools under the law. A two-thirds affirmative vote was required. If the county availed itself of the law, the court then laid the county into districts, and appointed a school commissioner for each. Collectively, these men constituted a county board, with power to select a county superintendent. This official was clerk of the board, and also treasurer. The business between each district and the board was transacted by the commissioner thereof. He registered and reported to the superintendent the names of all children between the ages of five and sixteen, contracted with teachers to teach indigent children as many days as the allowance from the Literary Fund would permit, and required the teacher to keep an accurate account of these matters. The compensation of the superintendent was two and one-half per cent of the money passing through his hands and actually applied according to law. "Therefore, the

---

<sup>3</sup> Morton, loc. cit.

superintendent was little more than clerk and treasurer, and what he had for his services was something like the salary of a district clerk under the present system."<sup>4</sup>

Otherwise, such schools were kept up by a uniform rate of increased taxation. For each school the board appointed one trustee, and the people elected two others. The trustees built the house, and could employ or discharge a teacher. They were to visit the school once a month, examine the pupil, and address them if they saw fit, "exhorting them to prosecute their studies diligently, and to conduct themselves virtuously and properly".<sup>5</sup>

The mountain counties seem generally to have made use of this law. If the records prior to 1869 had not been destroyed by fire on May 7, 1869, in which nothing was saved, it would be possible to give the number and the boundries of the school districts in Preston County in 1846, and also the names of the school board.

In 1850, Preston County had forty-two common schools, forty-two teachers, 340 pupils, and received \$675. of public funds. The adult illiterates were 859, including 159 of foreign birth. The ratio of illiteracy had dropped to about twenty per cent.

---

<sup>4</sup> Morton, loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 184.

## CHAPTER IV

### Early Schools

Here is a specimen of the early school. "The building itself is no larger than is absolutely necessary. It is of logs, and is more rudely constructed than the average dwelling of the settlers. The logs were cut when green, and the chinking between them is not so tight as to cause much bad air to accumulate within. The floor is of puncheons, dressed with an adze, although a floor of nothing more than the naked earth was not unknown. The roof is of clapboards and heavy weight poles. The plank door creaks on wooden hinges. Opposite is a cavernous fireplace opening into a low 'cat-and-clay' chimney inclining at an angle of several degrees. On either side of the room a log is left out of the wall, and the space is filled with paper greased with hog's lard. Below this long and narrow window are pins driven into auger-holes and supporting a slab leaning downward. This is a writing desk. The seats, which have no backs, are of puncheon slabs, with pegs driven into the convex side. Wood is the fuel, and the demands of the insatiable fireplace are supplied from the forest which lies around the small, briery opening. The cutting was done by the older boys, who took turns in bringing in at the close of school the supply for the next day, and they also took turns at building the fire."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Oren F. Morton, A History of Preston County, West Virginia (Kingwood: The Journal Publishing Company, 1914), p. 184.

The term of school was three months. The teacher was nearly always a man and was called "master". Teaching by the gentler sex was not unknown, but it was not in favor, the cash salary of the schoolmistress being only six dollars a month. The male teacher got a salary of ten dollars a month, in addition to boarding around among the patrons. There was no thought of diploma or certificate. The only bar to his engagement would have been that he could not "keep school". He first went from house to house with an article signed by the patrons, binding them to the payment of tuition. Then he went to the school commissioner and entered into a contract for that share of the Literary Fund which would fall to the indigent children of the settlement. This share and the private subscriptions were counted on to supply the thirty dollars for which he was striving. This mass of wealth was not diminished by attending a county institute, or a summer normal, or by subscribing for a school journal. These and other inroads upon the teacher's salary were modern devices.

The hours were from eight until twelve in the morning, and from one until four in the afternoon. When "books" were called, the room was filled with a flock of boys and girls who were clad in homespun, and whose chip baskets containing the noon lunch were at the rear of the room. Instruction was largely individual, and studying aloud was customary. The subjects taught were few, and consequently, the books were few. Any kind were used, though the "English Reader", the "United States Speller", and "Pike's Arithmetic", were prominent. The writing was done on paper that was rough, unruled, and with traces

of the straw from which it was made. The pens were of goose or turkey quills, and the ink was of maple bark or pokeberry juice, with the addition of alum and vinegar.<sup>2</sup>

During this old regime, academies sprang up over West Virginia, so as to afford some advantages in secondary instruction. Two of these were in Preston County. Preston Academy, at Kingwood, was chartered in 1841, and Brandonville Academy followed in 1843. Both buildings were modest brick structures which still exist, though long since converted into private dwellings. But until the advent of the free school these little institutions did good service, and were useful supplements to the work of the common schools. In 1850 they employed three teachers and had a patronage of seventy pupils. These schools will be discussed more fully in a later chapter.

When West Virginia gained her statehood, free schools were at once inaugurated. Under Article XII of the Constitution "The Legislature shall provide, by general law, for a thorough and efficient system of free schools."<sup>3</sup> The change was particularly welcome in the northern counties. The log schoolhouse was now rapidly displaced by a small, plain frame building, painted white, and furnished with a blackboard. The school curriculum was

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>3</sup> John A. Worth, compiler, Code of West Virginia, p. 54.

enlarged and ruled paper was already in use. The School Fund provided for in the Constitution stated:

The existing permanent and invested school fund and all money accruing to this state from forfeited, delinquent, waste and unappropriated lands; and from lands heretofore sold for taxes and purchased by State of Virginia, if hereafter redeemed or sold to other than this State; all grants, devices, or bequests that may be made to this State, for purposes of education or where the purposes of such grants, devices, or bequests are not specified; this State's just share of the Literary Fund of Virginia, whether paid over or otherwise liquidated; and any sum of money, stocks or property which this State shall have the right to claim from State of Virginia for educational purposes; the proceeds of estates of persons who may die without leaving a will or heir and of all escheated lands; the proceeds of any taxes that may be levied on the revenues of any corporations; all moneys that may be paid as an equivalent for exemption from military duty; and such sums as may from time to time be appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose, shall be set apart as a separate fund to be called the "School Fund", and invested under such regulations as may be proscribed by law, in the interest-bearing securities of the United States, or of this State, or if such interest-bearing securities cannot be obtained, then said "School Fund" shall be invested in such other solvent, interest-bearing securities as shall be approved by the Governor, Superintendent of Free Schools, Auditor and Treasurer, who are hereby constituted the "Board of the School Fund", to manage the same under such regulations as may be proscribed by law; and the interest thereof shall be annually applied to the support of free schools throughout the State, and to no other purpose whatever. But any portion of said interest remaining unexpended at the close of a fiscal year shall be added to and remain a part of the capital of the "School Fund": Provided, That all taxes which shall be received by the State upon delinquent lands, except the taxes due to the State thereon, shall be refunded to the county or district by or for which the same were levied.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

"In 1866 three-fourths of the teachers in Preston County were from Pennsylvania and other states. Now seven-eighths of the teachers are West Virginia citizens."<sup>5</sup>

In 1908 the sub-districts of Kingwood, Tunnelton, Newburg, Rowlesburg and Terra Alta increased their school term to eight months.<sup>6</sup> In 1912 two consolidated schools were established, one of six rooms at Albright and one of four rooms at Denver. Five one-room schools were abandoned. In 1913, five more one-room schools were abandoned, and a two-room school was established at Manown. Two wagons transported pupils to the Manown school.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> A. C. Baker, Superintendent, Preston County. State Superintendent Reports, 1869.

<sup>6</sup> A. W. Carr, Superintendent, Preston County. State Superintendent Reports, 1908.

<sup>7</sup> State Superintendent Reports, Preston County, 1912.



## CHAPTER V

### The Kingwood Academy and Normal School

Educational matters had started to receive considerable attention by the people of the county. Parents, realizing its needs and appreciating its benefits, made efforts to give their children the advantages of an education that they had failed to receive themselves. And while this move was made throughout the county to impart to the rising generation a good practical English education to fit them for the agricultural, mechanical and mercantile pursuits, an effort was put forth to secure for the people of the county the advantages of a higher education at home, not attended with the great expense of sending their children to leading schools of learning at a great distance away.

The idea was to establish an academy at the county seat and employ competent instructors to impart a scientific and classical education, that would lead to a far higher degree of culture and refinement than existed, and establish for the county a reputation of being one of the advanced and enlightened counties of the state. This effort of some of the public-spirited and ambitious men of the county took shape in a petition to the General Assembly, presented by the Honorable William G. Brown, the representative from Preston to that body. On the 11th day of December, 1840, on motion of Mr. Brown, the committee of schools and colleges were instructed to

bring in a bill to incorporate the Trustees of the Preston Academy in the county of Preston. An act was passed by the General Assembly on the 2nd of January, 1841: "That for the purpose of establishing an academy for the instruction of youth in the County of Preston, Elisha M. Hogans, Israel Baldwin, Thomas Brown, Solomon P. Herndon, William Sigler, John P. Byrne, John Magee, John R. Stone, William Elliott, Buckner Fairfax, William Brown and William B. Zinn, be and they are hereby constituted a body politic and corporate, by the name and style of 'The Trustees of the Preston Academy'.<sup>1</sup> These trustees and their successors were empowered to purchase, receive and hold lands, tenements, rents, goods and chattels to the amount of thirty thousand dollars, and were to have power to dispose of the same in any manner that might seem conducive to the interests of the academy. After the passage of the act, measures were taken to erect the academy building, which, however, was not finished until some two or three years later.

Petitioning the assembly, an act was passed on the 27th day of March, 1843, "That for the purpose of establishing an academy for the instruction of youth in the town of Brandonville in the County of Preston, William Brandan, John King, William Conner, Harrison Hogans, John Scott, A. C. Leach and James H. R. Donora,

---

<sup>1</sup> S. T. Wiley, History of Preston County (Kingwood: The Journal Printing House, 1882), p. 91.

be and they are hereby constituted a body politic and corporate by the name and style of the 'Trustees of Brandonville Academy'.<sup>2</sup> The value of property to be held by the trustees was not to exceed twenty thousand dollars. After their appointment the trustees proceeded to the discharge of their duties, and in 1844 the academy was erected.

School in the Preston Academy building was not started until 1845, but between 1841 and 1845 it was held in some other building, the exact location of which could not be determined. The site for the building was purchased from Israel Baldwin and David C. Miles was awarded the contract for its construction. Dr. Alexander Martin, who afterwards became the first president of West Virginia University, was the first director of the school. One of the first teachers was the Reverend John Howell.<sup>3</sup>

The school operated on a tuition basis under the name "The Preston Academy" until 1867. The by-laws of the academy fixed the following rates per term of twenty weeks: Primary Department, \$5.00; Junior Department, \$7.50; Senior Department, English division, \$10.00; Senior Department, classical and mathematical division, \$15.00; French, Spanish, German or Italian, each extra, \$10.00; Free hand or mechanical drawing or painting in water colors, \$10.00; Oil painting, \$20.00; Piano or melodeon, \$20.00; Vocal music, \$5.00. These charges were to

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> Kingwood High School Handbook, 1943, p. 6.

be paid to the treasurer as follows, viz., one-half at the commencement of the term, the other half at the end of the first half of the term.<sup>4</sup>

In 1867 the Board of Trustees turned the academy building over to the newly created Board of Education for use as a public school. The members of this board were John S. Murdock, president, Robert McCafferty and H. C. Ravenscroft. About the same courses were offered after the school was taken over by the board as had been offered when the school was an academy. They were reading, writing, arithmetic, English, grammar, geography, philosophy, history, chemistry, botany, algebra, geometry, surveying, trigonometry, rhetoric, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Spanish, civil engineering, drawing, painting and music.

From 1867 to 1873 secondary subjects were offered in the old academy building. In 1873 the district Board of Education erected a new school building on High School in Kingwood which was used for the purpose of providing a place for instruction in both elementary and secondary subjects. This building was constructed by McCafferty and Hughes, contractors. To the original structure of four rooms, Leroy Bucklew built four additional rooms and halls in 1906.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Handbook, loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

During the first part of the school year of 1883 a well attended normal school was taught at Kingwood by Prof. W. H. Shahan; also one at Cranberry (Terra Alta) by Mr. A. J. Elliot. In the latter part of the same year select schools, having in view the education of teachers, were taught at Masontown by Messrs. Millard Fell and W. A. Mashbarger; at Evansville by Mr. V. W. Showalter; at Reedsville by Mr. Martin O'Gorman and at Terra Alta by Mr. W. H. McDaniels. Besides these, schools were taught at Rowlesburg by Mr. A. F. McMillon; by Miss Julia Bonafield at Fumelton; Mr. W. D. Sinn at Rowburg; and by Mr. R. C. Collins at Rodaxer.<sup>6</sup>

An act of the 1915 legislature in West Virginia originated ten short course normal training schools in West Virginia. One of these schools was established in Kingwood and granted one year's college credit in preparation for education teaching.

This school was held in the old Kingwood Academy building, which is now used for the Kingwood Elementary School, and the first teacher was Miss Ethel Anderson of New York.<sup>7</sup>

The act for the establishment of normal training high schools provided that the State Board of Education should designate ten high schools in the state to receive state aid in the establishment and maintenance of a normal training department. In compliance with

---

<sup>6</sup> A. W. Frederick, Superintendent, Preston County, State Superintendent Reports, 1883.

<sup>7</sup> Interviews with Edward R. Anderson and Gladys Bolyard, former students of the academy, May 1, 1949.

this statute, the Board at its annual meeting in Charleston, held June 18, 1915, named the following high schools to receive state aid: Tyler County High School, Nicholas County High School, Clay County High School, Spencer High School, Mt. Hope High School, Kingwood High School, Sutton High School, Parsons High School, Hinton High School and Webster Springs High School. Normal training departments were established in all the schools designated by the Board. The Board then proceeded to prepare and publish a program of studies for these schools, which was followed in the main, and in June, 1916, upon the recommendation of the Board, certificates were issued to about one hundred twenty-five persons graduating from these schools.

The Legislature found it expedient to grant to each of the ten training schools the sum of four hundred dollars.

The following is the course of study as prescribed by the State Board of Education:<sup>8</sup>

Required Subjects

Group I

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| English                                    | 108 weeks |
| English History or Modern European History | 36 "      |
| American History and Civics                | 36 "      |
| Agriculture                                | 36 "      |
| Manual Training for Boys                   | 36 "      |

---

<sup>8</sup> Morris P. Shankey, State Superintendent, State Superintendent Reports, 1915-16.

|                                 |                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Home Economics for Girls        | 36 weeks           |
| Drawing and Music               | 36 "               |
| Rural Sociology                 | 12 "               |
| Physical & Commercial Geography | 12 "               |
| Applied Arithmetic & Accounting | 12 "               |
| General Science                 | 36 "               |
| Total                           | <u>36</u> 10 units |

#### Group II

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| Child Study   | 18 weeks          |
| Principals of Education & School Management   | 18 "              |
| Principals of the Studying & Teaching in Connection With a Review of the Common School Branches | 36 "              |
| Sanitation and School Hygiene   | 18 "              |
| Observation & Practice Teaching   | <u>18</u>         |
| Total   | <u>18</u> 3 units |

#### Elective Subjects

Three units elective from following list:

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| English                    | 36 weeks |
| Botany                     | 36 "     |
| Chemistry                  | 36 "     |
| Physics                    | 36 "     |
| Entomology                 | 13 "     |
| Horticulture               | 12 "     |
| School Gardening           | 12 "     |
| Poultry Raising            | 12 "     |
| Algebra                    | 36 "     |
| Geometry                   | 36 "     |
| Ancient & Medieval History | 36 "     |
| Home Economics             | 18 "     |

#### Regulations<sup>9</sup> for High School Normal Department

1. That there be not fewer than four teachers, including the principal and training teacher.

---

<sup>9</sup>

Shawkey. loc. cit.

2. That only such teachers be employed as are acceptable to the Board.
3. That the training teacher have special training for his work and be given ample time and favorable conditions for doing the work.
4. That the school have first rank in West Virginia classification of high schools.
5. That a school to receive state aid shall enroll not fewer than twenty in the normal department.
6. That the classes graduated be passed on by the Board.
7. That the school shall have a training school for observation and practice teaching and should have one or more rural schools for this purpose.
8. That a limited amount of credit may be given for work done out of residence if properly supervised and adequately tested when completed.



## CHAPTER VI

### County Superintendents

In 1871, the compensation of the county superintendent was only \$215. This office has long been wretchedly underpaid in West Virginia, but of late there has been considerable change for the better, so that it is becoming possible to command suitable requirements for a position that is very responsible.

The following persons have filled the office of county superintendent since the coming of the free school:

|                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| James P. Smith      | 1864-5  |
| Asbury C. Baker     | 1865-9  |
| Thomas Portney      | 1869-71 |
| John H. Feathers    | 1871-77 |
| Peter R. Smith      | 1877-79 |
| Winfield B. Baylas  | 1879-81 |
| Joseph H. Hawthorne | 1881-83 |
| Aaron W. Friedrich  | 1883-85 |
| B. M. Squires       | 1885-89 |
| Benjamin H. Elsey   | 1889-91 |
| William C. Conley   | 1891-3  |
| Lorain Portney      | 1893-5  |
| Horatio S. Whitsett | 1895-9  |
| Frank W. Gandy      | 1899-03 |

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Arthur W. Carrico  | 1903-11            |
| Willis Portney     | 1911-16            |
| M. E. Martin       | 1916-17            |
| Willis Courtney    | 1917-18            |
| D. K. Mason        | 1918-31            |
| Justus A. Deahl    | 1931-35            |
| Paul W. Watson     | 1935-43            |
| Kenneth W. Shaffer | 1943-46            |
| Paul W. Watson     | 1946- <sup>1</sup> |

At the time of his election, Mr. Hawthorne, a native of Monongalia County, held the degree of Master of Arts from the state university. During his incumbency, he raised the standard of teachers' examinations to a high level. As compared with the average county of the state, the administration of the school interest of Preston has occupied advanced ground.

Some years no reports were made by Preston County superintendents and there are no data in tabular form later than 1879. However, I have prepared a table with data taken from the State Superintendent Reports which, though not complete, will give some idea of the growth of schools in Preston County.

---

<sup>1</sup> Files of Preston County Board of Education.

TABLE I

COMPARISON OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS, PUPIL ENROLLMENT, NUMBER OF TEACHERS  
AND TEACHERS' SALARIES IN PRESTON COUNTY FROM 1869 to 1948

| Yr.       | No. of Schools | Enumeration of Youth Between 6-21 |      | No. of Pupils Enrolled |      | No. of Teachers |      | Av. Monthly Salary Irrespective of Certificate |
|-----------|----------------|-----------------------------------|------|------------------------|------|-----------------|------|--|
|           |                | Wh.                               | Col. | Wh.                    | Col. | Wh.             | Col. |  |
| 1869      | 87             | Not Available                     |      | 5563                   | 16   | 112             | --   | 37.40  |
| 1873      | 110            | "                                 | "    | 5684                   | 33   | 116             | --   | 34.91  |
| 1883      | 138            | 5156                              | 1518 | 5775                   | 24   | 151             | 1    | 30.39  |
| 1893      | 154            | 5157                              | 1904 | 5612                   | 20   | 170             | 1    | 33.78  |
| 1903      | 179            | 7290                              | 25   | 6019                   | 14   | 196             | 1    | 34.00  |
| 1913      | 169            | 8384                              | 30   | 6486                   | 18   | 230             | 1    | 46.37  |
| 1923      | 190            | 9628                              | --   | 9210                   | 33   | 307             | 1    | 113.00   |
| 1933      | 175            | 9565                              | --   | 7685                   | 17   | 301             | 1    | 94.53  |
| 1943      | 127            | 8303                              | 18   | 6684                   | 9    | 276             | --   | 160.66   |
| 1947-1948 | 105            | Not Available                     |      | 7058                   | 14   | 288             | --   | 244.44*  |

\* Compiled from State Superintendent Reports.

## CHAPTER VII

### Early Teachers

Beginning with the year 1877, county institutes have been held regularly, and have often been conducted by very experienced educators. Interesting local institutes were also held during the later 70's, and in later years this excellent feature again became fairly prominent. In his report to the state superintendent in 1881-82, Joseph H. Hawthorne said:

While I found that a liberal and generous public sentiment had opened the public treasury of both county and state, supplying the county with 136 comfortable school houses, in which 151 teachers were teaching the 5910 youth enrolled out of the 6674 enumerated in the county as between the ages of 6 and 21 years, and while I found that a great and benevolent work was going on, and much being done to advance the great work of popular education, yet, I am compelled to admit that from my observations during the past year, my deliberate conclusion is that the money invested and the vital interest involved ought to render our common schools more efficient than they are at present.<sup>1</sup>

The teachers of the early days often pursued their calling far into middle life, and some of them are not only well but kindly remembered by the older of the living citizens.

Benjamin Payton was a highly esteemed teacher in Grant. Perhaps a little later came Absalom Brandon, a book-loving bachelor of Pisgah, and Robert Arnold, an immigrant from Ireland. Around Kingwood, the first of whom we hear mention is a man named Murphy. Robert White was an able teacher of

---

<sup>1</sup> Joseph H. Hawthorne, Superintendent, Preston County, State Superintendent Reports, 1881-82, p. 52.

the same locality, and so was the eccentric Nicholson, a native of England. In the Crab Orchard district were Isaac P. Martin and also John Brosius, a stern disciplinarian. Martin O'Gorman, a native of Ireland and trained for the priesthood, imparted some of the strength of his superior culture to the people of Kingwood, Valley and Lyon.<sup>2</sup>

The work of the old field school was practical, so far as it went. Books were about as few as could well be the case, yet the few were thoroughly mastered, and the disciplinary value of such drill was by no means inconsiderable. Since the teacher was very often a man of maturity, experience, and recognized standing in his neighborhood, he in consequence carried with him a certain prestige, and also an atmosphere that compelled respect. The net result of these conditions was to impart a fairly serviceable knowledge of reading and writing, and a mathematical drill that would meet any ordinary need. By having to master his task, instead of merely playing at it, the pupil was thereby advanced in the highly necessary habit of steady application. The stern discipline of the schoolroom was calculated to imbue the pupil with a wholesome respect for law and order. As for manual training and calisthenics, there was no occasion for these matters whatever. The former was covered by the resourcefulness necessary in and about the farmhouse, and the latter was covered by the labor at home and by the rough and tumble sports of the playground.

---

<sup>2</sup> Oren F. Morton, A History of Preston County, West Virginia (Kingwood: The Journal Publishing Company, 1914), p. 187.

Yet, the old system had its serious defects. The teacher, through the fault only of his meager advantages, had in most cases an equally meager acquaintance with general knowledge and could not impart a very decisive uplift to a promising boy or girl. On the part of the pupil there was little or no access to history and geography, and he could thus gain no true perspective of the world without. Though his patriotism toward his county was sincere, it was necessarily ignorant, because it rested on tradition rather than on substantial and orderly information. Even his acquirement of the art of reading could be used but little. Letters were rarely written or received. Papers and books were alike scarce. In many a home there were practically none, and the bookishly inclined youth was in hard case, unless he could make some shift to send away to procure volumes that in any case were relatively dear, or unless he could borrow of the exceedingly few persons who had private collections of any consequence. The influence of these conditions is still very apparent.<sup>3</sup>

Several county institutes have been held in Preston since the origin of the free school system. A county institats was held in 1877 by County Superintendent P. R. Smith at Kingwood. A Peabody institute was held in 1878 at Kingwood under the supervision of Professor E. C. Bundy. A. L. Cox, of Morgantown, conducted the

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 188

county institutes of 1880 at Kingwood and Cranberry, now Terra Alta. In 1881 the county institutes were held in Kingwood and Newburg. At the former place it was held by Professor Ulysses S. Fleming, an excellent teacher, who taught a normal school at Masontown in 1878, and was principal of the Kingwood school in 1879. He later was connected with the state normal school at Fairmont. The other institute was held at Newburg by Professor A. L. Furinton, principal of the Parkersburg city schools, and the Republican nominee for state superintendent in 1880.<sup>4</sup>

The close of the transition period found the supply of teachers more equal to the demand and despite an increasing ratio of female instructors, the latter element was yet in minority. The personnel of the teaching force was naturally good. There were many instances of long-continued service and there was more latent ability in an institute membership than the verbosity of the visiting instructors permitted them to call out.

---

<sup>4</sup> Kingwood High School Handbook, 1943, p. 8.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Deterioration of Teaching Corps

The next and present period brought with it an undeniable deterioration in the teaching corps. There were still competent and conscientious instructors, both old and young, yet the tendency of the new industrial conditions was to draw out of the ranks the brightest and most ambitious, and to keep others of like temperament from taking their place. The tendency went so far as to produce an educational famine, and in not a few instances the schoolhouse remained closed until the arrival of spring enabled some teacher to add a second term to the one he had already taught.

Toward the middle of the last century there was a manifest desire on the part of the people of Preston to share in the larger intellectual life that was arising in America. It was shown in the founding of the two academies, in the prevalence of debating societies, and in the formation of one or more chartered literary associations. In the present period we see on the one hand a steady replacing of shabby school buildings by more presentable structures, and the more or less complete furnishing of the interior with equipment now termed necessary by those who are looked upon as authorities. On the other hand, we see in the commercialization of the age, a tendency to neutralize in the forum of actual life the results which the school-room was feeling its way to secure.



Books and periodicals now appear to a far extent in some of the homes of Preston, and while the higher educational institutions of this and other states have enrolled and continue to enroll some of the younger Prestonians, the proportion of such to the entire population is not what the situation and general rank of the county might lead the observer to expect. "There is to be noted a decadence of the appetite for the more substantial results of the debating society, and the local journalism of the day exhibited less in the way of contributed articles of leisurcly make-up than when people were moving in the less feverish pace of prior decades."<sup>1</sup> It is to be added that these manifestations are by no means peculiar to Preston County. They are a symptom of the general tendency of the day, and possibly it is a passing symptom.

Despite all the obvious limitations in the educational record of the county, such results as have been wrought out in its schools have enabled the people born and bred in these valleys to enter well into the spirit of the modern industrial era, and to secure for themselves a large share of its material possibilities.

---

<sup>1</sup> Oren F. Morton, A History of Preston County, West Virginia (Kingwood: The Journal Publishing Company, 1914), p. 189.

CHAPTER IX

PRESTON COUNTY SCHOOLS OF TODAY

TABLE II  
ENROLLMENT AND PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO STUDY  
1948-49

| Name of School          | Net Enrollment | No. Teachers<br>Now Employed | Pupil-Teacher<br>Ratio |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Arthur Dale High School | 102            | 7                            | 14.5                   |
| Aurora High             | 193            | 9                            | 21.4                   |
| Bruceton High           | 180            | 8                            | 22.5                   |
| Fellowsville High       | 104            | 6 1/2                        | 16                     |
| Kingwood High           | 398            | 16                           | 24.8                   |
| Mason town High         | 258            | 14                           | 18.4                   |
| Newburg High            | 188            | 8                            | 23.5                   |
| Rowlesburg High         | 249            | 12 1/2                       | 19.91                  |
| Terra Alta High         | 290            | 13 1/2                       | 21.48                  |
| Tunnelton High          | 222            | 11                           | 20.1                   |
| Average . . . . .       |                |                              | 20.259                 |
| <u>Elementary</u>       |                |                              |                        |
| Albright Elementary     | 221            | 7                            | 31.5                   |
| Arthur Dale Elementary  | 116            | 5                            | 23.2                   |
| Aurora Elementary       | 113            | 4                            | 28.2                   |
| Beech Run Elementary    | 39             | 2                            | 19.5                   |
| Bretz                   | 64             | 2                            | 32                     |
| Bruceton                | 155            | 5                            | 31                     |
| Bull Run                | 50             | 2                            | 25                     |
| Cascade                 | 54             | 2                            | 27                     |
| Church                  | 117            | 3                            | 39                     |
| Corinth                 | 59             | 2                            | 29.5                   |
| Cross Roads             | 62             | 2                            | 31                     |
| Denver                  | 93             | 4                            | 23.2                   |
| Egion                   | 45             | 2                            | 22.5                   |
| Ervin                   | 49             | 2                            | 24.5                   |
| Fellowsville            | 172            | 6                            | 28.6                   |
| Gladesville             | 62             | 2                            | 31                     |
| Howesville              | 57             | 2                            | 28.5                   |
| Independence            | 52             | 2                            | 26                     |

TABLE II (continued)

ENROLLMENT AND PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO STUDY  
1948-49

| Name of School    | Net Enrollment | No. Teachers<br>Now Employed | Pupil-Teacher<br>Ratio |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Kildow            | 45             | 2                            | 22.5                   |
| Kingwood          | 483            | 13                           | 37.1                   |
| Manheim           | 123            | 4                            | 30.7                   |
| Manown            | 68             | 2                            | 34                     |
| Manontown         | 201            | 6                            | 33.5                   |
| Nowburg           | 175            | 6                            | 29.1                   |
| Reedsville        | 154            | 5                            | 30.8                   |
| Rowlesburg        | 215            | 7                            | 30.7                   |
| Terra Alta        | 311            | 10                           | 31.1                   |
| Tunnelton         | 304            | 8                            | 38                     |
| Average . . . . . |                |                              | 29.23                  |

One Teacher Schools

|                |    |   |    |
|----------------|----|---|----|
| Accident       | 18 | 1 | 18 |
| Bethlehem      | 19 | 1 | 19 |
| Beverly (W)    | 13 | 1 | 13 |
| Birds Creek    | 37 | 1 | 37 |
| Blaser         | 28 | 1 | 28 |
| Bonafield      | 22 | 1 | 22 |
| Brandonville   | 20 | 1 | 20 |
| Center         | 10 | 1 | 10 |
| Cherry Grove   | 23 | 1 | 23 |
| Chestnut Ridge | 30 | 1 | 30 |
| Chidester      | 38 | 1 | 38 |
| Clifton Mills  | 24 | 1 | 24 |
| Crane          | 16 | 1 | 16 |
| Craneville     | 14 | 1 | 14 |
| Colebank       | 20 | 1 | 20 |
| Enterprise     | 24 | 1 | 24 |
| Forman Gate    | 16 | 1 | 16 |
| Friendship     | 20 | 1 | 20 |
| Grange Hall    | 32 | 1 | 32 |
| Green Valley   | 16 | 1 | 16 |
| Greenville     | 19 | 1 | 19 |
| Gusoman        | 19 | 1 | 19 |
| Hazelton       | 28 | 1 | 28 |
| Herring        | 22 | 1 | 22 |

TABLE II (continued)

ENROLLMENT AND PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO STUDY  
1948-49

| Name of School  | Net Enrollment | No. Teachers<br>Now Employed | Pupil-Teacher<br>Ratio |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Hopewent        | 25             | 1                            | 25                     |
| Hoyo Run        | 21             | 1                            | 21                     |
| Irona           | 24             | 1                            | 24                     |
| Kanes Creek     | 24             | 1                            | 24                     |
| Lantz Ridge     | 18             | 1                            | 18                     |
| Lick Run        | 21             | 1                            | 21                     |
| Lime Plant      | 15             | 1                            | 15                     |
| Locust Grove    | 13             | 1                            | 13                     |
| Long Hollow     | 20             | 1                            | 20                     |
| Lynn Dale       | 14             | 1                            | 14                     |
| Meadowview      | 22             | 1                            | 22                     |
| Mt. Grove       | 25             | 1                            | 25                     |
| Mt. Rebo        | 22             | 1                            | 22                     |
| Mt. View        | 14             | 1                            | 14                     |
| North Union     | 14             | 1                            | 14                     |
| Poll            | 24             | 1                            | 24                     |
| Pino Grove      | 20             | 1                            | 20                     |
| Pisgah          | 24             | 1                            | 24                     |
| Plainview       | 12             | 1                            | 12                     |
| Pleasant Valley | 20             | 1                            | 20                     |
| Rhodes          | 10             | 1                            | 10                     |
| Roadside        | 12             | 1                            | 12                     |
| Rodamer         | 10             | 1                            | 10                     |
| Salem           | 14             | 1                            | 14                     |
| Salt Lick       | 15             | 1                            | 15                     |
| Sell            | 5              | 1                            | 5                      |
| Shahar          | 11             | 1                            | 11                     |
| Sigley          | 21             | 1                            | 21                     |
| Sinclair Ridge  | 20             | 1                            | 20                     |
| South Avenue    | 19             | 1                            | 19                     |
| Stemple Ridge   | 25             | 1                            | 25                     |
| Stevenburg      | 20             | 1                            | 20                     |
| Triune          | 18             | 1                            | 18                     |
| Union Grove     | 19             | 1                            | 19                     |
| Victoria        | 23             | 1                            | 23                     |
| Watkins         | 24             | 1                            | 24                     |
| White           | 11             | 1                            | 11                     |

TABLE II (continued)

ENROLLMENT AND PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO STUDY  
1948-49

| Name of School           | Net Enrollment | No. Teachers<br>Now Employed | Pupil-Teacher<br>Ratio |
|--------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| White Oak                | 21             | 1                            | 21                     |
| York Run                 | 23             | 1                            | 23                     |
| Zinns Chapel             | 21             | 1                            | 21                     |
| Average . . . . .        |                |                              | 19.7                   |
| County Average . . . . . |                |                              | 22.4*                  |

\* Files of Preston County Board of Education.

## CHAPTER X

### Plans for Future

#### Bond Issue and Special Levy

Shall the Board of Education of the County of Preston, a West Virginia corporation, incur debt and issue bonds to the amount \$947,000.00, to run not less than two or more than thirty-four years from the date thereof, with interest not exceeding the rate of two and one-half per centum (2 1/2%) per annum, for the purpose of providing funds toward the construction, equipping and furnishing of the following improvements and buildings, the following approximate amounts: An addition to the Albright Elementary School Building to provide for an auditorium, \$6,000.00; improvements to building and grounds at Aurora School, \$3,000.00; an addition to the Bruceton Elementary School Building to provide additional classrooms and thereby relieve the overcrowded Bruceton High School Building, \$11,000.00; a new elementary school building at Denver, \$12,000.00; a new building at Fellowsville School, \$14,000.00; a new building to provide additional classroom space and an auditorium at the Kingwood Elementary School, \$12,000.00; a new elementary school building at Masontown, \$74,000.00; a new gymnasium at Newburg High School, \$15,000.00; a new gymnasium or improvement of present gymnasium at Rowlesburg High School, \$14,000.00; a new elementary school building at Terra Alta, \$74,000.00; a new building to provide additional classrooms and a combination gymnasium-auditorium at the Tunnelton School, \$74,000.00; which amounts include architects and engineering fees; for improvements to twelve (12) two-room school buildings, \$2,880.00; for improvements to sixty-six (66) one-room school buildings, \$7,920.00; for improvements to eliminate fire hazards in certain existing buildings, \$6,000.00; for repairs to existing buildings and the replacement or repair of heating systems, \$21,200.00; and the cost of the issue and sale of bonds shall be paid from the proceeds of the sale of bonds; and levy taxes sufficient to pay the interest on and the principal of such bonds, all according to the order of the Board of Education of the County of Preston, entered on the 10th day of February, 1947.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Files of Preston County Board of Education.

Special election to authorize additional levies for the years beginning July 1, 1947, July 1, 1948, and July 1, 1949, and for the purpose of obtaining funds to provide toward the construction, equipping and furnishing of the following improvements and buildings, the following approximate amounts: An addition to the Albright Elementary School Building to provide for an auditorium, \$14,000.00; improvements to buildings and grounds at Aurora School, \$3,500.00; an addition to the Bruceton Elementary School Building to provide additional classrooms and thereby relieve the overcrowded condition now existing in the Bruceton High School Building, \$7,000.00; a new elementary school building at Donvor, \$2,000.00; a new building at the Fellowsville School, \$6,000.00; a new building to provide additional classroom space and an auditorium at the Kingwood Elementary School, \$23,000.00; a new elementary school building at Hasontown, \$14,000.00; a new gymnasium at Newburg High School, \$20,000.00; a new gymnasium or improvement of the present gymnasium at Rowlesburg High School, \$16,000.00; a new elementary school building at Terra Alta, \$13,000.00; a new building to provide additional classrooms and a combination gymnasium-auditorium at the Tunnelton School, \$14,000.00; which amounts include architects and engineering fees for improvements to twelve (12) two-room buildings, \$4,360.00; for improvements to sixty-six (66) one-room school buildings, \$7,640.00; for improvements to eliminate fire hazards in certain existing buildings, \$3,760.00; for repairs to existing buildings and the replacement and repair of heating systems, \$28,500.00; and for an increase in the salaries and wages of certificated and non-certificated employes of the Board of Education over a period of three years the total sum of approximately \$108,000.00; aggregate for all purposes \$284,760.00; according to the order of the Board of Education of the County of Preston entered on the 10th day of February, 1947.

The additional levy shall be on Class I property 11.475¢ per One Hundred Dollar valuation; on Class II property 22.95¢ per One Hundred Dollar valuation; on Class III property 45.9¢ per One Hundred Dollar valuation; on Class IV property 45.9¢ per One Hundred Dollar valuation.<sup>2</sup>

#### W. Va. School Building Program

The sum of \$10,000,000.00 appropriated by the 1949 session of the State Legislature for school building repair and construction

purposes is only a little more than one-half the amount required to meet emergency needs now existing in West Virginia. It is estimated that between \$125,000,000.00 and \$150,000,000.00 will be needed in West Virginia during the next ten years to provide adequate buildings for the boys and girls enrolled in the public schools.

In an attempt to solve in part the problem of providing the funds which will be required for the long term building program, Senate Resolution No. One (1) was approved by the Legislature. This resolution provides that a proposed amendment to the state constitution be submitted to the voters for approval or rejection at the General Election in 1950. The amendment is known as the "School Bond Amendment".

The School Bond Amendment proposes that school districts (counties) be authorized to vote new bonds up to three per cent of the assessed valuation of the district. The purpose of the amendment is to permit such bonds to be serviced by using rates over and above those established under present constitutional limits. If adopted, this amendment will increase the potential bonding power in the state by approximately \$72,000,000. The adoption of the amendment would increase the potential bonding power in Preston County by \$1,061,000.

It is to be remembered that the adoption of the amendment does not in itself authorize the issuance of bonds; it merely provides an opportunity for each county to apply the principle of



local option and bonds may be issued if sixty per cent of the voters in the county approve such action.

Two other amendments to the state constitution will be submitted to the voters in the General Election of 1950. It appears to be the duty of the school people of the state to become thoroughly familiar with the "School Bond Amendment" so that they may be able to explain it to the voters and avoid the possibility of losing support for the amendment because it is not understood or is confused in the minds of the voters with the other amendments.

The amount asked for emergency purposes was \$20,000,000. Each county gets \$50,000, the remaining amount being distributed according to enrollment. Seventeen dollars is allowed per pupil on matching basis. Preston County has on deposit almost \$347,000.00 through bond issue to match the above. The amount cannot be used before July 1, 1949, due to a ruling of State Attorney General.

In 1946, \$900,000. was needed for building purposes; \$347,000. was raised through bond issue and \$270,000. raised through special levy, making a total of \$617,000. Some of this was used for emergency needs and an increase of ten dollars was made in each teacher's salary. The remainder was insufficient to do any building due to the increase in building costs.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Files of Preston County Board of Education.

TABLE III  
 BUILDING AND IMPROVEMENT EXPENDITURES  
 AUTHORIZED BY SPECIAL ELECTION

| New Building  | Amount Allocated |                  | Total             |
|---|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|   | Bond Fund        | Special Levy     |                   |
| Albright Elem.  | \$ 6,000         | \$ 14,000        | \$ 20,000         |
| Aurora Building   | 3,000            | 3,500            | 6,500             |
| Bruceston Elem.   | 11,000           | 7,000            | 18,000            |
| Denver Elem.  | 12,000           | 2,000            | 14,000            |
| Fellowsville School   | 14,000           | 6,000            | 20,000            |
| Kingwood Elem.  | 12,000           | 23,000           | 35,000            |
| Masontown Elem.   | 74,000           | 14,000           | 88,000            |
| Newburg High School   | 15,000           | 20,000           | 35,000            |
| Rowlesburg High School  | 14,000           | 16,000           | 30,000            |
| Terra Alta Elem.  | 74,000           | 13,000           | 87,000            |
| Tunnelton School  | 74,000           | 14,000           | 88,000            |
| Improvements to twelve<br>two-room buildings                                    | 2,880            | 4,360            | 7,240             |
| Improvements to sixty-six<br>one-room buildings                                 | 7,920            | 7,640            | 15,560            |
| Improvements to eliminate<br>fire hazards in buildings                          | 6,000            | 3,760            | 9,760             |
| Improvements to buildings &<br>replacement or improvement<br>of heating systems | 21,200           | 28,500           | 49,700            |
| Increase in salaries  | -----            | 108,000          | 108,000           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>\$347,000</b> | <b>\$284,760</b> | <b>\$631,760*</b> |

\* Files of Preston County Board of Education.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Annual Reports to State Superintendent of Free Schools of West Virginia.
- Files of Preston County Board of Education.
- Interviews with Edward R. Anderson and Gladys Bolyard, May 1, 1949.
- Morrison, Alfred James, The Beginnings of Public Education in Virginia, 1776-1860. Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Richmond, 1917. 183 pp.
- Munford, George W., compiler. Code of Virginia. Richmond: James E. Goode, 1873. 1,546 pp.
- Pleasants, Samuel, Jr., Henings Statutes at Large, Vols. I & VI. Richmond: Printer of Commonwealth, 1809. 206 pp.
- North, John A., compiler. Code of West Virginia. Charleston: Mail-Tribune Book Room, 1900.

Secondary Sources

- Bruce, Philip Alexander, Institutional History of Virginia. Vol. I. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1919. 636 pp.
- Heatwole, Cornelius Jacob, History of Education in Virginia. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1916. 373 pp.
- Kingwood High School Handbook, 1943.
- Morton, Oren F., A Handbook of Preston County, West Virginia. Kingwood: The Journal Press, 1904. 56 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_, A History of Preston County, West Virginia. Kingwood: The Journal Publishing Company, 1914. 564 pp.
- Wiley, S. T., History of Preston County. Kingwood: The Journal Printing House, 1882. 529 pp.