

## The Schools of Starke County from 1883 to 1897

By W.B. Sinclair



By request of the Republican, I attempt to give a synopsis of the condition of the schools of Starke County at the above dates: of the growth of school interests between those dates.

Upon assuming the office of County Superintendent in June 1885, I found a school population of 218x children and the enrollment for the year just closed was 1708, with an average attendance of 1098 pupils. There was required 58 teachers to fill the schools and the record showed 94 people holding licenses. The average wages was only \$1.4x per day.

My first visit and inspection to the schools convinced me that the schools were ungraded. Pupils were studying the few subjects they liked best and allowed to go as fast or slow as they chose. Many schools had no Grammar, History, Physiology and even Geography taught in them. The prejudice against some of those subjects was so intense among pupils and patrons that we had to teach them in some instances without books for a time and call them some other names. We had to call Grammar Language and Physiology Hygiene. Many a loyal teacher had to look for some other school the next year because of animosity engendered in attempting to teach all the branches. Under the old system of text books many pupils were without books on account of the high price of them. Pupils had to get their lessons on the installment plan; two or more having to use same book.

...at the present time, but of congratulation that they were no worse, for in them was a healthy germ of growth and improvement which have rendered subsequent advancement possible.

This would not be complete without a brief synopsis of the present stated county school affairs.

There are now ... children of ... age... average...

... schools last year was \$3xx and the average wages of the teachers was \$1.9x per day. Last year ... licensed teachers and of the ... but two taught during the year leaving a surplus of but two. The grades of license were as ... Sever held exemptions ... three

held 36 months license; 24 held 24 months license; 40 held 12 months license ; five held six months license and one a State license.

Through the cooperation of all interested, libraries have been established so that each district has a collection of books. We have now about 5,000 volumes worth at least \$2,000. These books are read much by pupils and have proven very helpful. Our schools are about as well graded and systemized as the conditions will admit, but there is vast room for improvement, and past achievements will only render future progress easier and more certain. If there has been lasting good accomplished it has been due to the loyalty of patrons and the united efforts of Superintendent, Trustees and teachers, backed and encouraged by the progressive people of the County.

*Transcribed by Marvin Allen from an undated early 1898 newspaper clipping.*