

# Education

-by-

Alvin D. White

-1992-



Speeches and Articles on Education

by

Alvin D White

1. Commencement Oration - May 9 1913
2. Teachers Institute - January 1916
3. Waynesburg K of P Lodge - June 9 1939
4. Eldersville Methodist Church - April 4 1941
5. Retirement of Janet Bemis & A D White - May 1959
6. Retired Teachers Association - May 22 1969
7. The Teachers Job
8. Whose Responsibility - Education
9. The Public School as a Partner in the Community
10. High School Musical Group - May 12 1960
11. Sixty years in the Public Schools - May 7 1961
12. Reunion of One Room Schools - June 3 1962
13. Retirement of Mrs Brownlee and Mrs McNelly Sep 1962
14. Retirement of Mr Caldwell and Mr Wetzel - May 1963
15. Eldersville P T A - Nov 3 1966
16. Retirement of Mrs Ilah Smith - Dec 7 1966
17. Senior Class Avella High School - May 22 1960
18. Garden Club of McDonald - Sep 14 1980
19. Trinity U P Church of McDonald - Sep 14 1980
20. North Franklin School - April 9 1981
21. P T A Meeting - Feb 26 1985
22. Reunion of Buffalo School - Aug 23 1986
23. Sons of American Revolution - Feb 19 1987
24. Apple Festival - Hickory PA - Oct 7 1989
25. Avella School - May 20 1990
26. Response to Hall of Fame Award - Jun 3 1990
27. A tribute of Mike Panjuscek
28. Response to Testimonial Dinner - Sep 28 1991

126

**The Value of an Idea**  
**The Commencement Oration of Alvin D. White**  
**Cross Creek High School**  
**May 9, 1913**

We, the people of the Twentieth Century, are the heirs of all the past. Man, that noblest of God's making, has, for ages uncounted, been striving to gain for himself, that position which we, his posterity, now enjoy. When man was placed on the Earth, he was given dominion over all other creatures; he was made a little lower than the angels. Other creatures were placed with man who excelled him in strength; other animals more fleet of foot surrounded him; but nothing else in all the universe was given that power which it was his lot to receive; nothing else was permitted to enjoy the highest gift of God to living creatures; nothing else was endowed with that most powerful of all organs, a reasoning mind. This supreme gift of God is the power which man has always used in bringing all other creatures under his control.

When we consider the intellectual achievements of man we cannot refrain from a feeling of surprise and wonder. The part which the mind of man has played in the world's progress is absolutely inestimable.

Whittier says:

The riches of the commonwealth  
are free strong minds and hearts of health,  
And more to her than gold and gain  
The cunning hand, the cultured brain.

It has been authentically calculated that two-thirds of all the wealth produced in the 19th century was due to mental ability and only one-third to manual labor. On considering this fact, we obtain some idea of the greatness of the human mind, of its essentiality to the progress of mankind. Everywhere about us we see the fruits of man's intellect. When we are enjoying the modern conveniences in our daily lives, we must not forget the part which it has played in procuring for us our many commodities. As we walk through the streets of our large cities, on every hand we see the inventions of

man: paved streets, electric lights, sky-scrapers, automobiles, trolley cars - all call to us to stop and consider the cause of their being.

As we stand near our great railway lines and watch the fiery monsters of steel dashing madly along their endless paths, hauling after them immense loads of freight or passengers, we are charmed with their mighty power. As we see them majestically steaming over miles of country, we almost feel that they are monsters of flesh and blood, instead of dumb prodigies of steel. And we are apt to forget ourselves in this reverie, and fail to remember that within the cab of that locomotive, there is an engineer, who has under his control the wild steed which if left to itself would rush blindly on and soon might dash itself to pieces on some unseen danger. But as it goes on mile after mile of its endless journey it is controlled by that same power that has subdued the universe; and so instead of the power of several tons of steel, the real power which we see in that locomotive is that of a small mass of living matter, no larger than man's two fists, the brain of the engineer. As the locomotive rushes madly on, unconscious of all danger, unmindful of possible disaster, blind to all obstructions, the keen eye of the engineer is scanning unceasingly the track ahead and, if possibly he sees danger in the way, instantly that same powerful organism is again demonstrating its infinite power, as the engineer by closing the throttle and applying the brakes at the proper moment brings the wild steed safely to a stop and thus escapes destruction.

As those of us who have been fortunate enough to visit the great falls of Niagara have stood, possibly for hours, charmed by the mighty flow of the raging waters, we have doubtless felt that there was in that marvelous phenomenon, an enormous waste of energy, as ton after ton of the roaring elements swept over the awful precipice. For year after year, century after century, yea, for uncounted millenniums, that monstrous natural cataract has been flowing on and on and will still continue to flow on for millenniums yet to come. The same spectacle which today greets the eye of the modern tourist, centuries ago, filled the mind of the barbarous savage with a feeling of dread and wonder. Impossible as it seems

to the casual observer to transform the energy of Niagara into power useful to man, yet today, over 500,000 horsepower, one-tenth of the total energy of Niagara, are being changed into useful work. For this important fact, we are indebted to the geniuses of such men as Sir William Thompson and other eminent American and European engineers, who, carefully studying the great problem under consideration, at last found a way to bridle the great falls and adapt them to the use of man.

As we have thus briefly reviewed some of the labors of the human mind, let us now pass on and consider for a little while the value of the ideas of the minds of men. We might mention the names of some of the world's greatest religious and political reformers and consider the value of the ideas which they employed in making this world a better and happier place for the home of man.

We might spend considerable time dissertating on the deeds of Luther, Knox, Calvin and Wesley, or on those of Lycurgus, Caesar, Cyrus the Great, Alexander, Gladstone, Washington or Lincoln; but as these topics admit of lengthy and perhaps rather uninteresting discussion, it is probably more fitting that in this age of science, we direct our thoughts to the more popular field of invention.

The study and discoveries of science date back to several centuries before Christ. In the time of Homer, the natural magnet was known. A few centuries later, the loadstone was put to ingenious uses. In 212 B.C., the great Greek geometrician, Archimedes, by shrewd devices, such as condensing mirrors and grappling levers, assisted the Greeks of Syracuse in defending the city against the depredations of the Roman Army.

It was the great Italian physicist, Galileo, who first maintained that falling bodies have the same velocity regardless of their weight. The grand old man was sneered at, he was disgraced by his friends, he even lost his position as Professor of Mathematics and the University of Pisa; but he recognized the truth with his master mind and he gave to the world one of the most valuable of the fundamental principles of Physics.

In the year 1665, while resting under a tree in his orchard, Sir Isaac Newton was startled by an apple falling and striking him on

the head. Immediately an idea was suggested to Newton, which aroused him to investigate the cause of this common phenomenon, and the result was Newton's Law of Universal Gravitation, shortly followed by his three laws of motion, all indispensable and invaluable in the modern study of Physics.

Two hundred years before the Christian era, the great Hero of Alexandria employed steam to run a primitive steam engine. For nearly eighteen centuries after that the subject was practically forgotten and hence failed to be fully investigated. As civilization began to broaden and greater freedom began to appear in the more highly civilized countries, men began again to open their eyes to the possibilities of steam as a motive force. One day as poor sickly James Watt at musing by the fire in his mother's kitchen, he noticed that some mysterious power was continually disturbing the lid of a boiling tea-kettle. His mind, naturally precocious and alert, began at once to ponder over the cause of this common, though certainly wonderful sight. After fully investigating the subject, young Watt decided that the steam generated by the boiling water was responsible for the phenomenon.

A few years later, having become a mathematical instrument maker, Watt was asked to repair a piece of apparatus which was used to show the knowledge of steam of that day. While engaged in this task, Watt conceived the idea of a practical steam engine and soon afterwards he invented the double acting condensing Steam Engine which made the name of James Watt immortal and which today enables man to turn heat into useful and available energy in a thousand ways.

Moreover, the invention of the steam engine by Watt led up to the invention of two more vastly important factors in modern industry, viz: the steamboat and the steam locomotive.

One day in the latter part of the eighteenth century, a certain young Irish lad and his friend were engaged in fishing on a New England lake. The method of propelling the flat-bottomed boat was cumbersome and inconvenient. The young man whose name was Robert Fulton, contrived a way of propelling the boat by means of paddle wheels placed one on either side of the boat and fastened to a

shaft and by which the boat could be quickly and easily moved from place to place. Fulton soon afterward went to England to study painting and for several years had forgotten all about his invention. However his attention was finally turned to the subject of navigation, and by means of a boat fitted with his paddle wheels and a steam engine, Robert Fulton was able to travel on water regardless of wind. During these experiments, the inventor was in France. He made an offer to the French government to supply them with steam-propelled boats to fight their English enemies. A committee was appointed to investigate the value of the invention and the advisability of accepting the offer. But the steam-boat was condemned. It was considered of no practical value in warfare and Fultons offer was turned down. The French continued fighting in their sailing ships and met disastrous defeat.

Disheartened but not despairing, Robert Fulton returned to America. In 1807 the Clermont, the first steam boat to sail on American waters, was launched on the Hudson River. Thousands of curious people crowded the shore ready to jeer at failure or to cheer at success. Under the critical gaze of the astonished multitude, the little craft steamed triumphantly up the river - the steamboat was a success.

The value of this invention cannot be computed. The vast importance of the modern steamship could be realized only if, perchance, the great modern steamship lines were, for a time, crippled. Ocean greyhounds today penetrate to every navigable portion of the globe. International commerce is increased, thousands of passengers are transported and civilization is universally spread by the modern steamship.

About the time Robert Fulton was experimenting with and inventing his first steamboat, a young man by the name of George Stephenson was struggling to make a living for himself as fireman in a British colliery. He began studying at odd hours by the light of his boiler fire. He also spent much of his leisure time tinkering with his engine, taking it apart and putting it together again. It was while doing this that the idea of steam vehicles was impressed upon his mind. "Why cannot man use steam as an agent in land



transportation?" thought he and he set to work on his first steam locomotive.

When Stephenson applied to Parliament for funds to perfect his plans, the unsympathetic masses sneered. Twelve miles an hour by steam they thought impossible. Yet when the first steam railway was constructed and tested the people were convinced of its possibility as the new machine traveled at the astonishing rate of thirty miles an hour. This idea has made possible the great railway lines of today, covering the faces of all marshes of Siberia, conveying hither and thither tons of freight and thousands of passengers yearly and making possible international and interstate commerce at a nominal cost and a great saving of time.

One day as Benjamin Franklin saw the sharp lightning in the sky, he became convinced that it was an electrical discharge in the air. With this in mind he performed his famous kite experiment which proved the truth of his supposition. Out of this simple experiment grew the invention of the lightning rod, and invention which has been instrumental in protecting millions of dollars worth of property and thousands of lives. As the great genius, Franklin continued to experiment with this newly discovered and practically unknown force, he made many important discoveries about it which have been indispensable to its study in later generations. True it is that today many of Franklin's theories concerning the electric fluid are obsolete, but they all led up to a better understanding of electricity, and today although electricity is still looked upon as a mysterious force yet the applications of it are so prosaic that they almost cease to be objects of wonder.

When we think of the modern electrical conveniences, we are amazed at the debt which the world owes to its inventors. On investigation, we find ourselves indebted to Samuel F. B. Morse for the magnetic telegraph. Struggling for many years, in poverty and amid privations, to make his invention successful, he at last in 1843, gained the attention of Congress and \$30,000 were appropriated for its development.

The success of this invention was doubted, the people were unsympathetic, and the inventor was almost despairing. But finally

a bright day dawned; the first telegraph line was built; the first message: "What hath God wrought?" had been transmitted and humanity was convinced. Today the telegraph stands, a perpetual monument to the name of the great Morse, who sacrificed time, money, yes and friends, for its success. Today the telegraph lines link together the remote parts of the world: America with Europe; England with her scattered colonies; civilization with the uncultured East. Thousands of miles of telegraph wires form, on all countries, a veritable network of communication and the ocean cables bridge the great deep in a moment. All honor to the man who made this possible; may in his name live perpetually in the minds of his countrymen on whom he bestowed this indispensable factor of modern life.

We find ourselves under great obligations also to Alexander Graham Bell for that useful instrument, the telephone. Bell was a young Scotchman, a Professor of Public Speaking in a Boston School. he was interested for some time in inventing a musical telegraph, but he later gave up the idea and spent his whole time on the telephone. He was urged time and again to cease his labors on something which was considered impossible. He was advised to spend his time and talents in the field of elocution in which he was most proficient. In spite of urgings of friends and scantiness of finances, Bell persisted and, together with an assistant, spent many anxious days and sleepless nights, working unceasingly on his telephone in the basement of a Boston tenement house. Here early in the year 1875, was invented the first telephone. Crude as it was, yet it was doubtless a success. It pleased all who saw it except the inventor, who worked for years to bring it to the highest state of perfection. The inventor was successful in obtaining the privilege to exhibit his invention at the Philadelphia centennial in 1876; as the judges were making awards to the exhibitors, they were about to pass by the booth of Graham Bell, when he was suddenly recognized by Dom Pedro, the emperor of Brazil, who turned the attention of the judges to the exhibit. Soon the Bell telephone had been thoroughly tested and pronounced a success. It was praised by Joseph Henry Lord Kelvin, Dom Pedro and other great men who realized the value

of such an invention. Today as a monument to the success of Bell's telephone, there are over 14,000,000 miles of wire in the Bell Telephone System and thousands of homes in America and other civilized nations are joined together in rapid and easy communication.

For these things which we have mentioned, as well as for a thousand and one other things no less wonderful, we are indebted to the men who had ideas and who turned them into a material form. Doubtless thousands of men have had ideas, but the glory all goes to the men who put their ideas into a useful application and have thus proven to the world their respective values. All honor to those men: to Watt; to Franklin; to Faraday; to Bell; to Morse; to Gutenberg; to Agassiz who have passed by, who have given to the world their best efforts and have gone to their reward.

At the present time, there are thousands of men laboring along a hundred or more different lines of work, all groping in the inpenetrable darkness for the elements of truth. All honor to these men: to Thomas A. Edison; to Sir William Ramsey; to J. J. Thompson; to Alexis Carrell and to the other great men of our own day, who are now working unceasingly in the great movement of scientific development.

As to the future we cannot say. Tennyson conjectures thus:  
Man as yet is being made, and ere the crowning age of ages,  
Shall not aeon after aeon pass and touch him into shape?

It is an admitted fact that during the modern age of History, since the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492, each century has been better than its predecessor. The growth and progress of mankind in the 15th century was stunted greatly by the degrading influences of Catholicism; but in the 16th century we see the great stars of the Protestant reformation slowly emerging from behind the dense clouds of papal darkness and at last casting their light over all succeeding generations. We see the

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*part of the original manuscript has been lost or destroyed  
some reference is here made to the development of the art of flying  
by the Wright Brothers.*

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The twelve years of the Twentieth Century have doubtless been permitted to observe greater strides in all lines of development than any equal period in all the history of man. And the future lies before us, dark impenetrable, containing we know not what. But come what may it is safe to predict that the mind of man will continue to march on in its quest of truth and will impress on ages to come even more forcibly than on ages past, its unlimited greatness. For,

Naught can stay the human mind  
'Tis upward, onward ever!  
It yet shall tread the starlit paths  
By highest angels trod  
And pause but at the farthest world  
In the Universe of God.

Notes at the end of original manuscript:

By J.D. Sellers: My expectations are realized.

By the writer: Finis, Exit & Wild Applause (This by J.D. Sellers)

**Speech delivered at a Teachers Institute at  
Cross Creek PA by Alvin D. White  
during term of 1915-1916 (Probably January 1916)  
James D. Sellers,  
Principal of Cross Creek High School, Chairman**

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, it seems very much out of place for me to get up here tonight and lecture to you who are my superiors in age, intellect, and experience, on how to teach the subject which I am to discuss I am sure I am not. I feel like the young man who was playing ball on Sunday. The preacher came along and said to him: "Young man, does your father know that you play ball on Sunday?" "Well," said the young man, "He art to, he's shortstop." So I think that you people ought to know me well enough not to expect much of a speech from me. But I believe it is the duty of everyone engaged in the great profession of teaching to do all he can to help his co-laborers and if anything I say tonight will help anyone here I shall be glad and if anyone differs in any way with anything I say, I hope they will feel free to express themselves.

I have chosen the subject "Teaching Primary Reading" for several reasons; chief of which are 1st, that it is this line of teaching that I am most interested in and which appeals most to me, and 2nd, if there is any line of my teaching this term which has taught me anything it has been in my work of teaching Primary Reading.

There is one great principle of education which I think we as teachers, should always hold in mind, viz, that education is a growth of the child's mind from within, not an accretion from without; i.e.

we must, or should, strive to develop the child's mind, not try to "plaster" slabs of knowledge on the outside. He comes to school full of experiences of his short life; the average child of six years has a vast kind of knowledge about his pets, toys, playmates, etc. Are we going to disregard all of these things which render his mind a promising organism for development and begin plastering the ABC's on the outside of his mind? I admit that with my class of beginners this year I did spend the first three or four days of the term trying to make them familiar with the "bare" letters of the alphabet but with slight success; some of them knew them already, learning them from older brothers or sisters and the others did not seem capable of mastering such uninteresting things as ABC etc. So to the pupils who already knew the letters I began teaching them words, names of their pets at home such as cat, dog, pony, doll, etc. and as this was material which interested them all, even the ones who didn't know the letters learned to recognize the words and the first thing I knew, they were beginning to learn the letters too. I also had learned something. What had I been trying to do? I had been trying to plaster the ABC's on the outside of those children's minds and they wouldn't stick. But after I had started the embryos of their experiences growing by presenting to them something in which they were interested I had the letters "inside" their minds from which place there is little danger of their escaping.

At first I did not attempt to give them anything in the way of sentences, but I strove to get them to learn to spell words, names of things with which they were familiar, and to recognize them when they were written on the blackboard. I would get them to give

names of things with which they were familiar. One day I would tell each of them to come back next day with a new word and then I would have them spell it and I would write it on the board. In this way they soon had a vocabulary of some forty or fifty nouns and next I started giving them sentences which of course necessitated the introduction of verbs which seemed much harder for them but after a good bit of drilling, they seemed to acquire them more easily. The sentences I wrote on the blackboard, and I regretted that I did not have a chart on which were similar short sentences printed as in this way the pupils could be learning to read print and script together. But after the pupils had learned to read these sentences easily, I gave them the primer books. The first lessons in these are script followed by the same lessons in print which helped the children to learn to read the printed words.

I believe in a good bit of drill in teaching children to read. Every new word should be so drilled into the child that he will not forget it before he has an occasion to use it again. Write it on the board for him, have him spell it, have him count how many times the new word occurs in the lesson, etc.

Another feature which I have found successful in connection with this teaching of reading is that generally known, I believe as word building. I take such simple words as cat and have the pupils tell me how many words can be built by the addition of letters. In the word cat, an s will make cats, meaning more than one cat; the addition of ch will make catch, to catch the ball, etc. Here is another word I have selected; and e will make here, and a t before here makes there or a w makes where etc.

**Speech to Waynesburg Lodge  
Knights of Pythians  
by A.D. White on January 9, 1939**

Chancellor Commander, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Pythians.

I assure you it is a very real pleasure to bring you the Greeting from Hickory Lodge Number 125. We have been looking forward with joyous anticipation for sometime to this opportunity to visit Waynesburg Lodge and to assist you in your work as we have done tonight.

It is with some trepidation that I attempt to speak for the brothers of my Lodge. Over at home, they very seldom give me an opportunity to speak my mind, but some how when they get me away from home, they seem usually to gang up on me and put me forward to speak for the other brothers, most of whom are too modest and retiring to get up and make a speech among these whom they don't know very well.

I assure you that I have no prepared address to deliver - any remarks that I shall make will be entirely informal. I would like to take this opportunity to say some things about Hickory Lodge and its membership, with I hope will be helpful to Waynesburg Lodge and any other lodges, which are represented here tonight. We have at the present time at Hickory a membership of between 80 and 90 - we have two applications, one candidate who has taken the rank of page, and last Tuesday night we conferred the Knight Rank on a class of five fine young men.

Hickory Lodge is a very active organization. Hickory is a very fine residential village situated in one of the finest rural



communities in southwestern Pennsylvania. Our membership consists of men in every walk of life - we have farmers and dairymen, mechanics, telephone linemen, railroad men, mill workers, truck drivers, salesmen, practically all of the professional men, one doctor, one dentist, one minister, one funeral director, most of the school men of the community, and including also four of the five members of the local school board, all active community workers, and all active in Pythian affairs.

Among the activities which our Lodge has been actively engaging in recently - on October 18, we were host to our Grand Chancellor, Brother W.L. Gussman - that event was the opening gun in a series of intense activity for Hickory Lodge. It has been my privilege to know Brother Gossman intimately for several years. My personal admiration for him as a Pythian leader became the admiration of the whole Lodge at Hickory once they met and greeted Brother Gossman in our own Lodge rooms. Brother Gossman imbued us all with a desire to strive for a greater membership and more real Pythian activity in our Lodge that we have had before. We were impressed with Brother Gossman's humility, his sincerity, and his burning zeal for a greater Pythian in the Grand Domain of Pennsylvania. We were made to realize that this is a Pythian year and we at Hickory are anxious to get back of our Grand Chancellor and help him to achieve his goal of a sharp increase of membership, and an increase of real Pythian friendship and fraternity among the man of this great state.

I mentioned that we have in our membership one minister. I refer to Reverend C.S. Thomas of the Mt. Prospect Church at Hickory.

Rev. Thomas is typical of the type of men, when Hickory Lodge has been imitating during the past several years. We find in him a real Pythian he is now going through the chairs of our Lodge, is very active in its work, and is prevented from attending this affair tonight only through the press of matters in connection with the church to which of course he gives first allegiance. On November 20, the members of Hickory Lodge were guests at an evening service at Mt. Prospect Church at which time Reverend Thomas preached a fine sermon on Pythianism and its value to the Hickory community. We hope to make such a service an annual affair.

During the Christmas season, Hickory Lodge in cooperation with the business men and citizens of the community, had the streets of Hickory lighted with strings of colored lights, we had a community Christmas tree, and on Christmas eve, we sponsored a treat for all the children of the Hickory community. This has already become an annual affair, and we feel is a real contribution to our community life, and it has made the Knights of Pythians a very popular organization at Hickory especially among the younger folks.

As I stated before we have completed one class of candidates already this season, and we are looking forward to a great deal more active degree work during the rest of this winter season.

**A.D. White speaking at Eldersville Methodist Church  
April 4, 1941**

Dr. Beck and Friends of Eldersville Church.

I appreciate very much this opportunity of speaking on behalf of the school group at this special church service being held in our honor. I have no authority to speak for anyone but myself, but I believe I will be expressing the feeling of all of the school group when I say we feel honored in this service and are all glad that we are here.

Personally I think it a fine custom which you are developing here in the Eldersville Church in connection with your special services of having different groups as your special guests on different evenings. It gives an opportunity of extending some much deserved recognitions to many of your faithful workers. I was interested in hearing of your services last Monday evening on which you honored the memory of some of your faithful workers whose names are now recorded in the church triumphant. I am sorry that I was not present at that service.

In regard to the attendance here tonight of the group representing the public school system. I feel like voicing my sentiments on the importance of the church and the home and the school working together for the good of our communities. I believe that, fundamentally, we have much in common in the solution of our problems. I believe that our country has become great, primarily because of the existence side by side of our good American homes,

and our Christian Churches which have been free from the interference of government and with them our free public schools.

I have always thought of the Methodist Church as being an exceedingly friendly church, of course, because it is composed of friendly people. That was my first impression of the Methodist Church in general and from my experience in this Church, I have never had reason to change my opinions. Years ago, some branches of the Christian Church looked with disfavor on other branches. I don't know whether there was ever a time when a Presbyterian layman would have been denied the right to speak in a Methodist Church or not. However I am glad to know that, if so, those days are definitely past. In these days we are thinking more about Church union; in the older days, Christians of different denominations magnified their differences, but I am glad to know that in these times, Christians of different faith are recognizing more and more their likenesses which are many and are fundamental, and are forgetting to quibble about their differences which are few and often not basically important.

Do we not all worship the same God? Do we not all recognize the same Christ as our Saviour? Should we not therefore stand united under his banner and against the forces of evil and unrighteousness in the earth?

The Christian Church as an institution has existed for more than 19 centuries. Do we have another such institutions in all the earth? What about the institutions which the perverse doctrines of the totalitarian nations of Europe are now trying to establish? Will they supplant the Church? Will they exist in the hearts of men for

centuries? One should be extremely cautious about uttering a prophecy, but as Christians, at least, we can hope. And what did the Master say to his staunch disciple? Thou art Peter! and upon this rock I will build my Church! and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

And then I was reminded of the old hymns which went something like this: O where are kings and empires now, of old,  
that went and came

But Lord they Church is praying yet, a thousand years the same.

Yes, my belief is that out of the present crisis, the Church will emerge more glorious and more forceful than it has ever been before.

Now my time was limited and I have already exceeded that limits I realize that possibly my discussion has taken me onto dangerous ground for a layman; with such a minister as you have you of course don't expect me to preach a sermon, so I must stop. So I shall again express our appreciation for the courtesies of this hour and I pray God's blessing upon all your services of this pre-Easter and Easter Season.

## **Retirement for Janet Benis and A.D. White**

**May 1959**

I have not been advised that I was expected to speak on this occasion. I have always expected to attend my own funeral, but I never expected to hear the eulogy. The guest of honor at a funeral is usually expected to lie still and be quiet. I once heard of a negro funeral in which the corpse was a hump-backed individual whom the undertaker had trouble laying out straight in his coffin. Finally, he decided to tie the corpse down by putting a cord around the neck and fastening it to the bottom of the coffin. When the colored minister was about halfway through the service the neck cord broke and the corpse sat up. That was all that was needed to cause a speedy exit of the congregation. Every colored person in the place started for the door at once, and when the preacher got about two blocks down the street, he passed two of the sisters who noticed that he had the door frame around his neck, but he was still going fast and one of the sisters heard him say "God darn a church what only has one door."

Well, I suppose this isn't really a funeral, or if it is, I believe I should remark that in the persons of Miss Benis and myself, you have what one might call two rather lively corpses. Personally, I hope that we can remain lively for some time to come.

This is quite a celebration which you have put on for us, and I am sure we are both deeply grateful. I shall attempt to speak only for myself, but I am sure in the case of both of us, we have reached the decision to retire from active duty in public school work only after long, careful, and prayerful consideration. We are not lightly laying aside our duties in our school system. Public school work has been our way of life and our living for more years than we really like to admit, and it goes without saying that we shall greatly miss all the fine contacts with fellow teachers and pupils, with our loyal and sympathetic and helpful School Board members, and with parents who, for the most part have been understanding and cooperative, as we have been working with their children. It may seem easy to the rest of you, but I venture to say there will be a lot of loneliness in our hearts next September when the rest of you go back to work and we will be left out of it all.

I have been asked many times in the past several weeks what I am going to do with all my time when I retire. I have given so many different answers to this question, that I am beginning to feel like the world's champion procrastinator.

When one of my children asks me this question, I usually say that I am going to visit each of them for a month each year. Well, having ten children, that will consume ten months each year, leaving me only two months to spend in Florida, for instance.

Really, I don't know exactly what I am going to do, and when I try to be truthful and tell anyone so, then I am asked, "Well, don't you have any plans?" and my answer to this has to be "Yes, I have plans, but I also have a planner, in the person of Mrs. White, of course," and from the samples of plans which she has already announced to me, it would seem that time is not likely to hang heavy on my hands, and please, don't anyone give Mrs. White any suggestions, her head is busy enough, thank you, and, I might add, like Riley, my head is pretty well made up too.

It would seem that you folks, in selecting this lovely gift which has just been presented to me, were thinking up something for me to do, so in thinking it over the past few minutes, I believe it is possible that I may become a photographer. I have already received a bona fide offer of a job selling school pictures, but I just might go in to business for myself, so Mr. Lunger, if you will save me the job for next school year, I will go down and take all your pictures. I will practice up on some of the faces I know best, and I will see that Mrs. Caldwell and Miss Kennan get their pictures taken every year. I have found them a little camera shy on one or two occasions.

Well, to be a bit more serious for a moment: I do want to take this opportunity to thank you all for this farewell dinner, for this fine and useful gift which you have given to me, but more than that for all you kindnesses during the years when we have been associated together in school work. These kindnesses to which I refer are not only the small acts of courtesy in our everyday contacts, but many of you have done me honors in many other ways, which I need not enumerate here but for all of these courtesies and kindness, I assure you that I am sincerely and wholeheartedly grateful. With many of you I have been associated in various ways over many years, with some others of you a relatively short time, but if I could only feel that I have helped you folks half as much as each of you have helped me, I would feel much better satisfied with my efforts over the years.

I firmly believe that a school man can have success only if those working with him have been successful, and if I have had any measure of success, it has been only because you folks have upheld my hands many, many times, especially when the going was rather rough.

I have no farewell message. School is not closed yet, we have several days of hard labor left, and I hope that none of us breaks down now until it is all over for another year.

But to you folks who will continue, I want to extend my best wishes for your success. The days ahead are going to pose problems for supervisors and teachers and school directors, problems which I shall probably be viewing only from afar, but I assure you that I shall be with you in spirit, and if my physical presence is needed at any time, I hope that you will call on me, and I hope that I can in some way give help if it is needed.

And so, as Tennessee Ernie would say "Good Bye and God Bless your Little Pea-Picking Hearts."

Note - At the time of my reviewing this article for possible publication (on December 5, 1991) I want to add that Miss Janet Benis and I who retired at the same time, in June 1958, are still both living after 32+ years of retirement.

Miss Benis lives in the Presbyterian Medical Center at Washington, and she recently observed her 100th birthday. On November 10, 1991 A.D. White observed his 97th birthday.



**Speech Delivered to Washington County  
Retired Teachers Association  
May 22, 1969**

How do retired teachers regard conditions in the educational world of the present day? As you know, things are in a sort of ferment among two groups with which we, as retired teachers, are fairly familiar: I mean in student groups, and among many teachers still in service.

In students groups in some High Schools and in many institutions of higher learning, it almost appears that student protests and student riots are the rule, rather than the exception: What is your attitude toward this situation? I believe that one of the natural reactions of retired teachers is a sense of relief and satisfaction that we are no longer involved in this explosive situations. We have largely left the mainstream of the educational movement and can stand on the wayside and then be in a position to wait and see what happens.

And maybe, too, there is a feeling of frustration with this situation: These young folks who are protesting and revolting are of the same generation, at least, of those children whom we were teaching in the public schools a couple of years, or five years, or ten years ago. Did we as teachers fail that generation and push them on into institutions of higher education, with this militant spirit so dominant a part of this thinking and of these actions. Of this I am not sure, but some observations might be made regarding what is going on among these restless students today. One thing which we notice in almost every situation is that these student protests and revolts are usually movements of a minority of the students in the school involved, so if we failed as teachers when we had them in our classrooms, we did not fail all of them; the lessons of decency and propriety and consideration for others which we tried to impart to them rubbed off on a great majority of our students, and so they are carrying on as we expect good students to do.

There may even be a feeling of an attitude of sympathy for these dissident groups. Things are changing so rapidly in the world today that some folks argue that education is not keeping up with

the changes in general so there is some justification for some of these things, at least, which the younger generation is demanding. I listened just a few days ago to a conversation between a professional man and a student in one of our state colleges and they agreed that at least some of the demands of student groups are valid and reasonable, and that attention should be given to what they are asking for. In this discussion, I mean to leave out one consideration; the racial issue and civil rights protests, since, to use a poor pun, they are a horse of a different color. But in the conversation just referred to, I recall the statement of this professional man, when he said that the four years which he spent in college were largely wasted, since the courses which he took in college had little relevance to his professional career, and even to life itself. If this is so to any great degree, then surely we should give attention and consideration to what the young people are trying to bring to our attention.

Perhaps our greatest concern in this movement is for the tactics which some dissident groups are using to achieve their ends. I refer, of course, to extreme measures which are being taken in many cases, where the laws are flaunted or broken, where property is confiscated and damaged or destroyed. We note here a serious breakdown in morals and in discipline, which we might be prone to declare that we would not permit, if we were in active service in the schools of today, but again, we are on the side lines and maybe could not actually predict what we would do if we were there in the midst of all that is going on.

Those of you who, during your active years, worked with younger children, did not or do not sense these problems as acutely as those who have worked with older children or young adults, but apparently, all along the line in very recent years, there has been a breakdown in discipline in the schools as most of us construed that term, as more permissiveness on the part of both parents and teachers has entered into the picture, and has almost reversed school control. The progressive school of several years ago allowed children to follow their own inclinations in what they would study or what they would learn or do in a school situation. Our generation wanted our schools to be progressive and up-to-date, but we still wanted to remain in the driver's seat. We can all still recall, I believe, what usually happened to a youngster who got out of line, and I imagine that most of you folks here today still think of that as being the better way.

In spending a little time on my old college campus a few weeks ago and observing the sort of characters who seemed so much in evidence there with this long hair and unkempt features, I could not help thinking how such a looking character would have been dealt with in my days on campus. He would have received a quick involuntary haircut at the hands of his fellow students and the faculty would have, at least secretly, approved the action; and if he really needed decent looking clothing, his fellow students would have quickly supplied that, too.

In an age on ages telling, to be living is sublime.  
What kind of age is this in which we are living?  
This time is out of joint: O cussed sprite  
That ever I was born to set it right.

-from *Hamlet*

Yes, things are a bit mixed up these days, but probably it will not be our job to set them right, but as long as we live, we must be concerned.

The other educational group, which I mentioned and with whose plight and conditions we are a bit familiar is the present generation of teachers. I think we might well ask ourselves. What do they have which we did not have, when we stood in their place in the classrooms of Washington County? One claim often advanced is that they are a better prepared group than were those teachers of yesteryears. In defense, we retired teachers may well question this claim: I for one do not believe that our schools of an earlier day suffered too greatly because they were staffed by teachers whose preparation was not adequate. It is true that formal education requirements are higher now than they were in our day, but it is almost a truism that mere formal educational preparation does not necessarily instill in an embryo teacher all the qualities which are desirable in one who is to instruct our children. This is not to deny the very good formal preparation which our modern teachers are getting - it is fine and many of us could well wish that we, too, had had such advantages as they are getting today. But the real qualities of good teaching, I insist, were as prevalent in the classrooms of a few years ago as they are in the classrooms of today.

If modern teachers are better prepared, it would appear from what is going on all around us, that they are more aggressive these days than we were in our generation: Why just think, if we had only been smart enough to strike in our day, we might have gotten a

beginning wage of \$600.00 a year, I mean, not a month, instead of the \$300.00 or \$350.00 which some in this room probably received as a starting salary fifty or more years ago. But things have changed, we are told, and times are better, and the quality of education has improved so much that our state soon will have a mandated salary for all qualified teachers of \$6,000.00 per year - that is fair, and we old fogies ardently hope that they are worth every cent of it.

These benefits of the teaching profession of the present day are coming too late for us to enjoy and I think it is not good form for us, either to yearn for the good old days or to deplore our inability to "cash in" on the benefits of these better times. As we observe what is happening all about us these days, one of our concerns, I believe, is for the image of the teaching profession which is being created on the modern scene. In our time, financial gains came slowly; for us, the rewards were in a job well-done and in nurturing a generation of young people, who were willing and able to make a contribution to life which would be as meaningful, or better than our own.

Is the image which we helped to mould for our profession being maintained by the present generation of teachers? Again, we note extreme measures which are being taken to secure ever-increasing benefits for the profession. And how can these be justified? Only, I believe, by keeping the quality of the service performed commensurate with the financial benefits received. And do you approve the methods presently being used by the profession to accomplish these ends? Measured by the standards which we adhered to in our day, it is hard for me to justify a "walk-out" of teachers in our public schools and the making of demands after the manner of a labor union. So recently has the image of the teaching profession been changed. The line between human decency and human violence, between charity and aggression, yes between truth and error, has become so thin; we can hardly distinguish the difference. Our people are performing on ever lower levels of propriety, that, in desperation, we can only ask, "What next?"

Yes, the times are out of joint and we are standing on the sidelines and can do nothing to remedy the situation. Can do nothing did I say? Yes, things are bad, but I hope they are not that bad. Many retired teachers are keeping their hand in, so to speak, and are doing some substitute teaching in the schools and are rubbing shoulders with those actively in the profession, and you are finding that there

are still good teachers in our school, and that there are still children eager to learn. And by those contacts you can still help maintain that teacher image which I think is so important to the profession. And for the rest of us, we are still citizens, we still have a vote, a very sacred privilege which I hope you are exercising. As long as you live you can exert influences for good among those with whom you mingle.

What doth the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

Micah 6:8

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if these be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Philippians 4:8

There are perhaps three stages in retired life: the active stage, the rocking chair stage, and the stage of real old age. Let us stay in the active stage, and be concerned about what is going on around us as long as we can, and then enter into the other stages only where we have to.

## **The Teacher's Job**

### **by A.D. White**

It is not my intention or purpose to point out everything that a teacher should do. It is a forgone conclusion these days that a teacher who wishes to maintain his (or her) professional standing must be constantly on the alert to improve his mental equipment. Our educational system as heretofore constituted has been the cause of most teachers, especially in the rural schools, entering the profession as practically novices in the science and art of teaching. Then as professional experience has been gained, opportunity has usually presented itself for increased mental training. Thus many of our best teachers have come up through the ranks and learned in the hard school of experience those principles which are of most value to a present day teacher.

Also it goes without saying that every teacher should be faithful in his membership in his county, state and national educational associations, should keep his dues paid up in these organizations, should be a subscriber and reader of the best educational publications of our country, should take part in every teachers institute, in fact, should do these and all others like acts which the ethics of the profession demand.

But it is not these things which I wish to discuss this afternoon. No doubt they are commendable and exist for the highest edification of all of us. No one will deny that we should do all in our power to better equip ourselves for our daily duties.

Since the school exists primarily for the welfare of the pupils, will it not be more important for us to direct our attention to our relations with our pupils? Is it not true that greater success will attend our efforts if we enter into a more sympathetic attitude with those whom we are endeavoring to instruct?

What is the most outstanding characteristic of the successful teacher? Is it scholarship? or strength? of personality? Is it not rather the ability of the teacher to adapt himself to the personalities of the pupils under his charge. The average teacher has from 25 to 40 pupils with whom he daily comes into contact. If the teacher fails to enter into sympathetic relation with each one of these 40 pupils, how extensive are going to be his results? A common criticism of teachers is that a large part of what they teach is not understood by their pupils. Should this state of affairs continue? Would it not be more in line with the purpose of teacher if we should teach the pupils rather than the subject matter?

Granting this point then the teacher's first duty is to know his pupils; his second duty is to get them going; and his last and most important keep them hungry.

How may he accomplish these?

First know his pupils: daily contact with them in person, by frequent written work in the early part of the term should result in the teacher's soon lining up his pupils so that he will know each one's peculiarities. He will realize their special needs, will find their strong points and weak points, in fact will have taken a mental inventory of those 30 or 40 personalities which appear before him daily in the classroom.

Get them going is more easily said than done. Having got to know them though is certainly a big step in the right direction. Not necessarily knowing a pupil's personal likes and dislikes for we cannot mold our curriculum to suit the whims and tastes of all of our individual pupils. Our courses of study have perhaps been well enough tested in the crucible of time to be at least fairly suitable to the average pupil. Nearly all pupils like some courses and dislike others. Do they dislike the subject matter or do they dislike our way of presenting it?

When history becomes a mere mental exercise of remembering dates, wars, etc the average child reacts unfavorably toward it and can you blame him? If on the other hand the historical events are made alive and interesting the skillful teacher usually finds the bugaboo of disinterest and dislike to have fled. For this purpose the type study of historical characters had done a great service in the teaching field. Every normal child reacts favorably to such a study of the life of Washington or Lincoln, of Jackson or Roosevelt. Having this favorable reaction it becomes surprisingly easy to interest the child in the cold hard facts of history.

Related to the type study of history is the project method which enables us as teachers to put ourselves and our pupils into the situation of Washington at Germantown or of Meade at Gettysburg and thus appreciate more genuinely the outstanding facts of our national history.

Geography is more than learning the countries of the world or the states of our country and their capitals. Primary reading is more than learning the letters of the alphabet and the order in which



they come. Put the child into a situation where he can use his present stock of knowledge, let him look around him and see what use he can make of those elements nearest him: in other words proceed from the known to the unknown. Have a child memorize the names of the states which bound Pennsylvania and your efforts will in most cases be disappointing: but put him on the map and let him look around him, have him draw the map of his own state or his own country and your results will be a distinct step in the child's mental growth. Skillfully guide him around in an interesting way and these facts which you have striven so hard to teach will have become a part of his equipment just as surely as a child will learn the letters of the alphabet from using them in words.

The matter of correlation of subject matter is also something which the teacher should not overlook. Abundant chance is given for the correlation of the subjects of history and geography. If the teacher overlooks this he is throwing away one of his most effective instruments of teaching.

For added interest in historical events and geographical projects what better aid do teachers have than boys' and girls' story books? And here is where I would like to take the liberty of pointing out to our august body of school directors one phase of their job: aiding and encouraging a (small) library in every school. The better homes of our land are usually well supplied with books for the younger members of the family; but how many homes are there with many children and few books? Is it not clearly the duty of society to see that these unfortunate youngsters are supplied with suitable

reading matter so that they will not grow up without a liking for that best of all good habits, the habit of good reading?

My experience with children in both common schools and high school has shown a lack of systematic reading in the grades. The live teacher will not allow this situation to continue and, school directors, don't turn a deaf ear to supplications of teachers who want to provide suitable reading matter for their pupils.

Third and last keep them hungry: a business man whom I heard of, spent a good deal of his time with his family: he was continually stuffing his children with good things to eat and was always saying "Johnny, don't you want a cookie?" or "Mary, don't you want a piece of pie?" this much to the detriment of his family who grew up a sickly dissipated lot.

It will be well for us not to try the stuffing process in any branch of study in our schools. True, there is much of it done but what are the results?

Skillful baiting will result in the child saying with Oliver Twist "I want some more." Skillful questioning will result in the pupils' paying more deeply into the realms of knowledge and before we know it we shall have the fulfillment of the desire of every true and earnest teacher, a group of eager, interested boys and girls who are getting somewhere in their journey to the celestial city of knowledge and enlightenment.

## **Whose Responsibility Education**

State School Board, Teachers, Parents, Tax Payers, Community.

It is not my intention in this talk to give a history of education in our state, or even in our Township, but mention of a few historical references may be in order. It was in 1834 that the Pennsylvania State Legislature passed the first operative Free Public School Law. Since that time education in Pennsylvania has been pretty carefully regulated by Laws enacted by the State Legislature. Since that time also, the state has discharged its responsibility for education by sharing in the cost of an educational program. The first state appropriation to all the school districts in Washington County amounted to \$2397.73 issued on June 12, 1835 - this was paid after a majority of the districts of the County had voted to accept the provisions of the law of 1834. The amount of the states share of the cost of public education in Pennsylvania has increased almost every biennium for the last 120 years until now this amounts to more than 50%. In Cross Creek Township last year, the state paid into our district treasury about 67% of our entire revenue. Along with this generous state support has come a certain amount of state control, but by and large this had consisted in the creation of minimum standards which local districts must meet to qualify for increased state support, and many, if not most, elements of state control have been beneficial to the public school.

In this early legislation already referred to local district school boards were set up and it was their responsibility to see to

the establishment and operation of the local schools. One of the early champions of the free public school was Mr. William Patterson of Cross Creek Township a member of the State Legislature, Speaker of the House of Representatives and President of the first convention of School Directors of Washington County. He was delegate from Cross Creek Township at a meeting held at Burgettstown to vote on acceptance or rejection of the new school law. He advocated acceptance and the "friends of the law prevailed." It was due to the foresight and perseverance of such men as Wm. Patterson that our public schools were established, and it has been due to the faithfulness of our local school boards that schools have flourished and prospered in this locality. I venture to say that in all America there has never been a type of voluntary public services which surpasses that rendered by numbers of the local school boards of our many school districts. They serve without pay, except the meager remuneration doled out to the Secretary and the Treasurer. They are charged with the responsibility of securing local financial support for our school, it is their duty to hire employees for the school district, to erect and maintain buildings to purchase supplies and equipment to provide transportation for pupils and for all monies which they handle they must give a strict accounting. In an earlier day, school visiting was accepted as a sacred duty of school directors, so it was the custom at monthly school board meeting to assign to each board member a school or schools which they were to visit during the next month and report at the following meeting.

Although some of the functions of the School Board have changed somewhat over the years, we still find a great deal of

responsibility for the educational program to rest with the Board of School Directors of each local, or reorganized school district.

At the present time our school directors are obligated to attend at least 12 local school board meetings each year, one each month, and as members of a Joint Board, there is an additional monthly meeting to attend. I believe there is provision for the payment of mileage for attendance at joint board meetings; but none for meetings of the local school board.

While many of the standard regulations for our schools are designated by the State Department of Public Instruction yet it is the duty of the local board to see that these regulations are complied with. At one time the school board examined the prospective teacher to determine his or her fitness for the job of teaching; now the school board must see that each prospective teacher has a valid certificate to teach issued by the State Department.

### **The Teachers Responsibility**

As is the teacher, so is the school is an old adage but admitting that it is still true today, is an indication that the teachers responsibility in the operation of a school program is of the utmost importance. The school board can furnish the teacher a place to teach, a group of pupils is assigned to the teachers case, a minimum of supplies and equipment is furnished, and the teacher is expected to take over from these and to make of success of the situation. If he or she does succeed, the credit does or should go to

the teacher - if failure is the result, usually the blame goes to the teacher also, regardless of any contributing causes of the failure.

But let me analyze the teacher's situation in the school a little more closely. Leaving out the element of some physical conditions such as heating and lighting, etc. over which the teacher usually must exercise some control, what is the situation which almost every teacher in almost every public school has to fare in beginning a new public school term. You have heard that our public schools must teach all the children of all the people of our community and that is almost literally true. Some few subnormal children are no longer admitted to the public school but all children of normal or near normal abilities are admitted, and then being an unrelated group consist of children of both sexes, of all races and religions which exist in the community, of all economic levels, and of course of all levels of ability, except the very lowest as I have just stated. This group, if they are coming to school for the first time, in other words our First Graders, will present to the teachers all gradations of readiness for the work of that First Grade. In another meeting, later this school term, there will be a discussion on the topic *Is Your Child Ready for School*, so I shall not dwell on that topic at any length here, but the point I wish to make is that whether in Grade One, or in any other grade in our public schools, our teachers have usually thirty or more individual personalities to deal with in their classes, and while not every child in school is a problem, individual differences among children in any grade are great, and I would like to impress you who are parents with this thought, that if the teachers of your child is successful with your child, it is so because

the teacher has learned how best to deal with that child in a group learning situation. I hope none of you parents have the idea that education is something that can be dished out "to all children alike." No indeed, it is the responsibility of the teacher to discover individual differences of children as to abilities and attainments, principally, and then to go on from there to continue the successful education of that child.

In this analysis, I don't want to ignore the ability of the child to adjust to the school situation. For most of our children do cooperate very well in school, but as you must know, some present real problems.

Now what is the parents responsibility in the education program? What different parents expect of the school sometimes differs widely, but what does the school expect of the parents. Well, we of course expect you to house and clothe and feed your child well enough that when he comes to school he will be healthy and happy and in such a frame of mind that he will respond in the best way to the program of the school. I am glad to say that most of our homes furnish in our children in this condition, but again there are exceptions. Some children come to school in winter weather ill-clothed to protect their little bodies from the chilly blasts, and when a child comes to school sleepy or hungry or crying with the toothache, we must assume that the home is not providing all the care and protection which is its responsibility to do.

Also we expect you to send your children to school regularly. Other conditions being good, the child who attends school regularly is the one who will do best work in the school program. I have been

told by persons who ought to know that our attendance in Cross Creek Township Schools is very good. I guess any insistence on this point over the years may have borne some fruit. We, of course, don't want pupils to come to school if they are ill, but illness is an excuse which must be watched - illustrated by telling of Mary Ann Korpos.

But it is in the realm of character training in which I believe the school should make their greatest demands on the home and parents, if our job of educating your children is to be wholly successful. There are those who insist that our public schools should be character training institutions. As it was expressed recently in a newspaper editorial, some parents expect the school to take a dirty child of six years of age, or thereabouts, and put him through a sort of dry cleaning process so that 8 or 10 or 12 years later he comes out clean, polished and pressed and ready to take his place in the world. Well with the parents help, we can almost do that. I am proud of most of the young folks whom we graduate from our Eighth Grade here in this school, because they have many good qualities in which their teachers and I may take pride, but I dare say if they have been sent to us with habits of dishonesty and carelessness and disrespect and disregard for authority, they will still exhibit these qualities to a considerable degree when they leave school. On the other hand, if the parent and teacher at each end of the school line let it be known to the child that he is expected to exhibit right habits of conduct at all times it is remarkable what a change can be wrought in a child while he or she is attending school.



**The Public School as a Partner in Community  
Development  
Probably at a meeting of Hanover Twp. PTA**

The school has ever been a partner with the Grange and the Church in the task of community development. Yes, the Public School even antedated or preceded the Grange in the great task of American development. You will probably excuse an ex-school man, who is somewhat interested in local history if he indulges that interest a bit, by tracing the History of the Public School in this area.

Crummins History of Washington County states that the first school of which there is any knowledge in Hanover Township was taught in 1805 on the DC Fulton farm. This was not the Doc Fulton farm of recent years, but the old Fulton Homestead farm in Hanover Twp not far from the town of Bertha and near where old school #13 or the Miller school of recent years was located. School was next reported at this location 1810, and then in other parts of the Township regularly over the next several years.

What were the early school buildings like - they are described in an early report of the Supt. of Public instruction as being of very rude construction, having clapboard roofs (greased), paper windows, earthen floors, punchen seats, and writing tables, and no chimneys, the smoke being left to find its own way outside between the logs or through the holes in the roof. AND what of the teacher: One is described as a tyrant, another could not write, another could not cipher beyond the double rule of three, another gave his pupils whiskey for their Christmas treat. But there were some who could be more favorably described as "a good instructor - had a good

education, wrote a beautiful hand - was a fine mathematician - was a good classical scholar. This typical teacher would receive in pay about \$12.00 per month and the usual term was four months in length. This early school was known as a subscription school, supported by contributions by those able to pay, and attended as well by those children whose' parents wee unable to pay.

When the first Pennsylvania public school law was passed in 1834, regular districts to the number of 14 were set up in Hanover Twp. and the so-called district schools came into being. Better buildings were erected, qualified teachers were employed and for the next approximately 110 or 115 years, this was the educational system for Hanover Twp, with adjoining school districts having about the same type of public school organization. The schools were under the direct supervision of members of the Township School Board, and whether there were good schools or poor ones in any certain area depended upon the vigilance of the members of the Township School Board.

But, it must be remembered that the school officials of that day had their problems. It was not easy to convince the citizens of a school district that a new building was needed, even if it was to cost only a few hundred dollars, of that a better teacher should be sought if he or she was to cost a few dollars more for the school term. Teachers also had their problems: 1st, the class rooms were usually crowded. In 1863, 14 teachers in Hanover Twp. had 602 pupils, an average enrollment per room of 43 pupils, and these, of course, represented all the grades in the elementary school. \$2218.00 was the amount of money raised for school purposes which

**A.D. White**  
**Talk at Avella School**  
**May 20, 1990**

When I was asked some time ago if I would have something to say on this occasion, I felt that I should decline, not because of not wanting to put in a good word for Dr. Gersna, but frankly because I have thought for some time that my public speaking days should be about over. I was one of the predecessors of Chuck in the office of Elementary Supervisor in the Avella Schools - in fact, I was the first one to hold that position, for I was working in the Avella Area, or in a part of it, when the Avella School District was first formed, but that was nearly 35 years ago.

Soon after he came into the position, he recognized me as one of his predecessors, and consulted me on a good many occasions, and that is how I came to know of his value to this area and to its public Schools.

Since this is a time of remembering, and of giving tribute to the memory of Dr. Chuck Gersna, I offer the opinion that this Memorial which has been chosen is a most appropriate one. Chuck honored and respected those with whom he worked, as well as the families and children for whom he has worked. He was interested in seeing things grow; the minds of children in the public schools, as well as all other things in Nature.

The poet has well said, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." With that thought in mind, we can enjoy the Beauty of the Memorial Today, and as this garden comes into newness of Life each succeeding year, we and those who come after us can be reminded of

family although it took a long time - 36 years in fact - from the time the oldest son entered school until the youngest graduated.

I resent a bit references to my age. Last year, as my birthday was approaching, if someone asked me how old I was, I refused to tell them, but instead told the year when I was born and then let them figure out my age for themselves.

As my birthday is again approaching I feel like Charlie Brown in last Sundays papers: He said, "Before you know it you are old and you haven't really done anything." and then when he tried to do something significant and failed he said, "On the other hand, maybe it's better to just let the years go by."

Thank you.

would be about \$158.00 per school to pay for teachers salary, books, supplies, fuel, etc.

Few textbooks were available, school supplies, as we know them, were virtually non-existent, so with a large group of pupils, with poor equipment and surroundings, and under poor conditions generally, the teacher was expected to bring the advantages of learning to those under his or her care.

We have come a long way since those days of 60 or 100 or 210 years ago, and with our modern buildings, our excellent equipment, with fully qualified teachers still probably under paid, our modern school boards and school officials have their problems, and I don't need to emphasize that point in Hanover Twp or the Avella Jointure or the Burgettstown Area School District. But as long as intelligent people who have the welfare of our people, our children and our country uppermost in the minds are in charge of our schools. I am confident these problems will be solved. It is not my intention to dwell any further on these problems at this time.

But I do want to ask, if those directing our schools cannot take some lessons from the old time school. What were its outstanding characteristics? At its best, two things stood out: (1) Classroom control and (2) Scholarship. The good teacher of the old days was a good disciplinarian. Long before the modern John Birch Society, whatever it is, the teachers of America had their own Birch Society and usually they were not slow about applying its principles to the "seat" of learning. The schoolmaster was in control of the situation, and being in control, he could then proceed to the real task of the school, the imparting of knowledge to those under his instruction,

and we know that whatever the limitations of learning in that early school situation, what was learned was learned well and by and large the product of that early institution of learning was not one of which to be ashamed.

I do not wish to bring any indictment against the modern public school. To do so would be to reflect upon an institution with which I have been associated most of my life. It will be 60 years next September since I entered the public school for the first time and I left it less than two years ago, not all of this time did I spend as a student however, even if I did spend three years in Fourth Grade.

What I want to suggest is this: With all the emphasis which is being given at the present time to fine school buildings and costly equipment, should not equal attention be given to the act of teaching and the act of learning. As standards are being imposed regarding the water supply and sewage disposal, as is the current hurdle in the Avella District Jointure building program for example, should someone not be insisting that real teaching and real learning be carried on in these fine modern school plants. That is obviously the job of the local school officials.

It is encouraging to note that many of our rural school directors are members of the Grange. It is also a fine thing to know that many of them are men and women of the Church as well. With this combination and the assurance that there are still folks on the local level who are interested in these agencies for the good of our communities, we believe that the Church and the Grange and the public school will continue to be Good Working Partners for Community Progress.

**Cross Creek Church  
to High School Musical Groups  
May 12, 1960**

Young people are always getting advice, so I am going to give you some too.

First, I know you are already following this "advice": Look ahead, I am sure you are all looking to the future, wondering what is in store for you. While I cannot tell any of you, either as individuals or as a group, what the future holds, yet I do believe that it has a great deal in store for you. I am no prophet of crystal gazer myself, and I doubt if you will actually get very far looking into a crystal ball, but by and large, I do earnestly believe that your future will be largely what you make it. Someone, much wiser than I, has said that your future will depend largely on your preparation for it. All your lives you have been preparing for life, continue that preparation just as long as you can, either in school or in less formal ways, so that you can get from life all the bounty which it holds for you, and remember, life does not consist only in what you can eat and drink and in the clothes you wear, but there are social and spiritual opportunities as well which I hope you will accept and use.

Second, I would say to you: Look about you - not alone to the future, but in the present. It is perhaps hard for you young folks to realize, but it is true that you are living right now in the greatest age which mankind has ever known. O we hear about the Golden Age of Greece, and the great days of the Reformation and the Renaissance, of the good old days that used to be: They were good

old days, and I want to speak a bit later on the good old days of our own communities, but just for a moment, let us pause and look and appreciate what we have today which we should appreciate and enjoy right now.

All the advantages which we now enjoy, and I don't mean alone educational advantages, but also the advantages of transportation which enable us to get about over and to all parts of our country with the utmost ease, and the advantages of communication by which we can talk and correspond literally with people in all parts of the world. We have our spiritual advantages which enable us as free people to worship when and how we please and that is a right in America which many people in other parts of the world do not have, we have our cultural advantages which enable us in the fields of art and music and history and education to keep abreast of the rest of the world in the good things which life affords.

And then I would like to ask you to look about you just now in the world of nature. The beauties of the spring season are upon us, the poet said, O what is so rare as a day in June, or he might have added also, in May, for, even if we didn't have many April showers this year, we do have May flowers, as well as trees, and beautiful expanses of our green fields over the countryside, up the hills and down the valleys as far as the eye can see. And don't forget we have these beauties right here in Washington County and all over Pennsylvania in case you can't travel further. But I assume that all of you will be traveling further in the years ahead, so always remember to look about you and to drink in to the fullest these beauties which God and nature have so lavishly supplied for you.



And then young folks, lastly, I am going to ask you for a few minutes in this evening hour to Look Back. Yes, like an old fashioned traveler as I suppose I am, I am going to ask you to submit to a History Lesson, before we adjourn here tonight. I suppose some of you don't like history in school, but I shall try to make this history lesson interesting enough that you can stay awake anyway.

We are standing tonight on historic ground. The Cross Creek Presbyterian Church is one of the oldest churches organized in Washington County or Western Pennsylvania, 181 years old, and I realize that only a few of you belong to this church - some are from the Upper Buffalo Church which is just the same age as Cross Creek or from the Lower Buffalo Church which is only a few years younger, or from the West Middletown U.P. Church now at least 150 years old, or from some of the younger churches in Avella or the Avella area. What I will say briefly about this church could be said similarly about any of the older churches in the Avella District Jointure Area. On June 21, 1779, this church and Upper Buffalo issued a call to their first pastor, Joseph Smith and he came here late that year and preached at this church until his death in 1792. Then the next pastor, the Rev. Thomas Marquis, was known as the Silver Tongued Marquis because of the powerful musical voice in which his sermons were delivered. He died about 1826, and from 1827 to 1877 Rev. John Stockton D.D. preached here for exactly 50 years. Other notable men have followed in the pastorate here down to the present time and Mr. Buterbaugh who has been serving here for some time will soon become the 19th Pastor of this church - I have been privileged in my short life time to know all these men except the first four.

When this church observed its 180th Anniversary last summer, one of your school mates James Hazeltine had constructed pictorial models of the first five churches which were erected here at Cross Creek - the first two were log structures, the third was of stone and the fourth and fifth of brick. The present brick church was erected during the period of the Civil War in 1864. These models I hope have been preserved, for they were real works of art, in my opinion, and gave all of us a good idea of what these early church buildings might have looked like.

Going outside the church here at Cross Creek, we of course first see the Village. Just when it was first started I cannot find out, but I have the idea that it is as old as the Church and Cross Creek is typical of the county villages which we had growing up around these old churches such as Buffalo Village, West Middletown, and Independence. At first the people who lived in these villages were principally older farm folks who moved into the village to be near to church when the younger members of the family took over the farming operations. Then gradually these villages became real trading centers: seventy-five to 100 years ago, Cross Creek, for example, had three stores, two black smith shops, a wagon makers shop, a saddlemakers shop, a tailor shop, a shoe makers shop, an ice cream parlor, a hotel, an Academy as well as two churches and one public school, at least two post offices, and an undertaker. So while one was living in those olden days, he would purchase most anything he wanted in Cross Creek and when he died there were facilities here to take care of his burial.

I said there was a tailor shop - it was operated by one Andrew McFarland who lived in the home that stood where Mr. and Mrs. Harry Byrd now live. In order to get a suit of clothes made, all you had to do was to stop at Andy McFarland's, get measured up and in a few days your new suit would be ready.

Craig Lee ordered Andrew McFarland to make him a pair of new trousers and he said he wanted them made "skin-tight." So Mr. McFarland made the trousers, but when Mr. Lee tried them on he said they were too tight. Mr. McFarland reminded him that he had ordered them "skin-tight" and this was the way he made them, to which Mr. Lee replied "I can sit down in my bare skin, but I can't sit down in these trousers."

Then there was an undertaker, Mr. Henry Donahoo whose home was at the turn at the head of town - the home is now in ruins. But this was not a funeral home - in those days when a person died, the body was laid out and remained in the family home - the undertaker was sent for, he came and embalmed the body, then measured it for the coffin, and then went back home and built a coffin to fit the body. These days, you know, they take the body to the funeral home and if the coffin is too short, they just cut off the feet and make the body fit the coffin - then the time came when the undertaker began buying manufactured coffins from Pittsburgh.

The story of H.W. Donohoo, Ann Miller, and Joe Ritchey, in Burgettstown.

Then, I said there was a hotel. It was on the lot now occupied by Albert Yeager's home here in town. It had a sign out in front on a board nailed to a post. I used to see this sign when we would be

coming to the village about the time when I was learning to read. About this same time we had rural mail routes in this community for the first time and I used to work away at the the names of mail boxes: we would pass the homes of R.J. Lyle and R.C. Vance and W. Craig Lee on the way into town and I gradually learned who lived where from learning to read the names off the mail boxes - so I kept looking at this sign in from of the Cross Creek Hotel and finally one day I said to my mother, I know who lives in that house. It is Cross Creek Hotel - but mother was then quick to tell me it was the Cross Creek Hotel. Why a Hotel in Cross Creek. It was used as an overnight sleeping place for traveling salesmen, who traveled from town to town in horse-drawn vehicles.

Then I mentioned two post offices. Why two post offices in a town the size of Cross Creek - well, it was a political arrangement here at one time. When we had a Republican president, the Postmaster was also a Republican and if a Democrat was in the president's chair, then the Postmaster was a democrat also. The two aspirants for the Postmastership were Mr. Sam Crummins a thoroughgoing Republican and Mr. Henry Donahoo, the Undertaker, a Democrat. Mr. Donahoo was postmaster from 1885-89 when Grover Cleveland was President - then in 1889-93, Mr. Crummins moved the Post Office to his store where Yeagers now have their store, then 1893-97 Grover Cleveland was again President and Mr. Donahoo again moved the Post Office to his store room, but he lost it again to Mr. Crummins in 1901 when Wm. McKinley was elected President and since there wasn't another Democratic President elected during his lifetime, Mr. Donahoo never again served as Post Master. However he

did live in hopes and maintained a little store room where he sold candy and a few small articles, so that if he ever again became Post Master he would have a room to occupy. He died in 1909.

Then to speak briefly of the schools of Cross Creek. This town has always had a school or schools. Rev. Dr. Stockton started Cross Creek Academy in 1828 - the school was held in houses around the village until 1858, when the Academy Building was erected. It stood near the Memorial Arch, on the triangle, near the old cemetery. This was on Church land, since the Academy was a private school under the care of the church. The building was used by Cross Creek Township High School from 1896 until 1929 when the school was closed, and the building torn down in 1934.

The earliest school here was kept in a log house which had been built as a tool shed for men building the stone church about 1804. This was a rough log building and after attending school in it for several years, some boys, thinking of the building as a disgrace to the village, met one night and, using some ropes and pulleys, they pulled the logs of the building loose at one end and made the building unsuitable to use in cold weather. They kept school in it the following summer and then had to abandon it.

After public schools were established, there were about 10 in Cross Creek Township. The school here at Cross Creek Village was known as Bunker Hill. The building was located near where John Lee and his mother live east of the new parsonage, and later, when an additional room was needed another school building called Cemetery School was built near Leal Oviatt's residence. The school at Patterson Mills bore the renowned name of West Point. The other

schools in Cross Creek Township were nearly all named for trees of the forest, such as White Oak, Beech Knob, Willow Valley, and Buckeye Valley.

Another famous feature of this community and also of the other Village communities of the Avella District Area is the old graveyard lying right here near the church, traditionally the church and the burial ground going together and usually being located together. I would like to tell some stories about the early settlement of this community and of the old pioneers and their families who are sleeping their last sleep just across the road here, but lest I put you all into your final sleep here on this joyous occasion I must draw this harangue to a close. But before doing so, I want to pay my tribute to all those good people, the pioneers, the early settlers, the frontiersmen, their brave wives and their sturdy children who came into these communities and carved homes out of a wilderness and left for us the homes, the schools, the churches and all the other fine advantages which we have today. We owe a great debt of gratitude to them and I hope you will join me in that feeling of thankfulness to them.

Although many of the names of the good old families who settled Cross Creek and our other communities are now gone, yet many of us are descendants of those pioneers, and those whose ancestors came to this area at a much later time also owe these early Americans a great debt of gratitude for what they left here for you to share also.

And so in summarizing, may I say again young folks look to the future and make it the very best you can; but while you are here, look

also about you and learn to appreciate and enjoy what you have at the present time, and finally, look back and learn of the times which used to be and breathe a brief prayer of gratitude to those who gave us everything which we have today.

And thank you for your patience in hearing me to the end. My best wishes and a prayer for God's blessing on you all.

## **Recollections of Sixty Years in the Public School**

**May 17, 1961**

Future Teachers of America looking forward to a life of Teaching - a retired teacher has to look back. To me it looks good both ways. Public education in the USA has had an interesting history. If this talk is to have a title it will be "Recollections of Sixty Years in the Public School," for it will be sixty years next fall since I first entered the public school. As I told an audience a few weeks ago, this time has not all been spent as a student, although most everybody knows that old talks about spending 3 years in the Fourth Grade, but I actually was in Elementary School for 8 years and High School for 4 years, just as most of you have been, and after 2 years in College, I went back to the one-room school where I had last gone to Elementary School and there began a forty year experience in Public School work, which I terminated about 2 years ago.

I would like to go back much further than my own time and say something about the old one-room school, for it was the basis of our public education for just about 100 years. Before it was the subscription school, which was supported by a few well-to-do persons in a community and usually attended by children of those unable to pay, as well as those who supported the school. These schools were sometimes held in a private home, or in a shed-like structure, or occasionally a building would be erected for the school. The teachers were hired by the subscribers and would "board round" in the families whose children attended school.

Then when the School Law of Pennsylvania was first passed in 1834, our district schools began to appear, and these were the one room schools of a few years ago. In rural areas these were so located in a township that there would be one within walking distance of all children in the township. For these schools better buildings were erected and better qualified teachers were sought, although it was a long time before some of them really became good schools, and in some townships, when interest in public education was not too good, perhaps the one room schools never were of a very high standard. In other townships, progressive school directors and interested patrons saw to it that good buildings were provided and good teachers and fairly good equipment were furnished.

These schools became community centers in their time, being used for school in the daytime and for singing and literary societies and spelling bees and box socials on certain evenings, and since people could



not go far from home to seek entertainment they did attend these affairs at their district school.

I mention this institution because I attended such a school. My first teacher Mr. W.P. Wilson of Washington, is still living. He is a large man, very alert and active for his years, now about 84. I saw him at a church dinner last week. On such occasions, he always likes to tell the people around him that he taught me my ABCs and I usually respond by saying that I still know them too.

Well, after attending school at a one-room school first in Smith Township and later in Cross Creek Township, I went on to High School and College and then in the fall of 1919 came back to the old Noseo Hall School to teach my first term. The older children there had been the younger ones when I had attended that school, so I had to teach some who had been former schoolmates, including my own younger sister, with whom I didn't always get along too well at home, but who co-operated with me very well in the school situation.

I wish I had time to tell all about my experiences that first year, but will have to say only that my most fruitful experience was with my First Graders. I believe I did my best work with that group, seven in number, I recall. I had no equipment except possibly an old frayed reading chart which wasn't much good, so I had to depend upon the blackboard and my own ingenuity to provide material for the class, but they were a responsive bunch and soon I had them "eating out of my hand" so to speak, and they did learn to read and spell and write that school term in spite of a very ill-prepared teacher and lack of adequate equipment. Two of this group later became good teachers themselves, so I must have given them a fair start at least.

My next term of teaching; about 2 years later, was done in the High School which I had formerly attended, and then after another lapse of about two years began teaching in a graded school - then came back to my old high school again and taught in it for about 3 years. During these years of High School teaching, I had to do some "spade work" in developing courses in Science. During those years I taught General Science, Botany and Zoology, Chemistry and Physics. In much of this effort, I was hampered again by lack of equipment. We had no running water, no electric light or power, no laboratory equipment, at first, although I was able with prodding from the State High School Inspector, to persuade the School Board to get some scientific equipment. To teach electricity and magnetism, we had to depend on a homemade compass and the old magnets out of a Model T Ford Magneto, and since dry cells cost money and storage

batteries practically unknown, I got an electric current by running a copper line from my Model T Ford Car to the classroom and then would start the motor and use some of the current generated by the magneto, which furnished current for the ignition and the lights in the primitive Ford Car. That was a strong current, an alternating current, but I was able to demonstrate an arc light for instance by sharpening two carbon ions out of flash light cells and then passing the current through the gap between these two points.

Time will not allow me to dwell on any more of my experiences, which have been many and varied, I assure you. I taught in all about 9 years, and then spent most of the next thirty one years in supervisory and administrative work where I had for the most part congenial and pleasant contacts with quite a number of persons: teachers, directors, parents and pupils. Some of these contacts were tinged with unpleasantness, since it was not possible for one human being to please everyone, and after I had learned that one fact, I didn't let little unpleasantnesses bother me too much. In public school work one is dealing with all sorts of people, so a teacher and principal has to do the very best they can. Nobody can do any more.

I have mentioned some of the primitive conditions under which I had to work to contrast them with the conditions under which you will probably be working when you begin to teach. You will probably never teach in a one room school. There is only one left in Washington County and it has only one grade. Regardless of where you begin to teach, the chances are good that you will be in a modern building and have good textbooks and equipment. You will probably be under expert supervision, and probably best of all, before you will be permitted to teach, you will have adequately prepared yourself for your teaching.

What is adequate preparation for teaching? First, I think in your case, is the decision to be a teacher - you appear, as members of the FTA, to have taken this step already. You are not going to drift into this profession - you have been doing some deep thinking and careful planning. If you think you have made the right decision, then the next step is further training - you will probably not be allowed to do much teaching until you have four years of college training. What you get from that will depend on yourself. You will be given expert help in planning, you will be guided through the courses you take by your instructors, but what you "soak up" will be mostly dependent on your interest and your effort.

I am not in a good position to give expert advice, but I feel that what a good teacher needs first is a thorough knowledge of the subject which he

teaches - methods courses are all right, they will give you some help - but do your best in your college years to get as good a grasp of your chosen field as you possibly can - as the Bible admonishes "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

And I think, in your teaching, you will want to imitate one of your own good teachers. Those who become English teachers will, I am sure, want to be as good a teacher as Miss Cowden, if she will only pardon this reference, and in my opinion keeping such an ideal in mind will do you as much good as all the methods courses which you can take. Future Teachers of America, I wish for you a most profitable and pleasant teaching career.

**Reunion of One-room Schools  
at White School - Hopewell Township  
June 23, 1962**

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is appropriate that the reunion of former pupils of former one-room schools be held at the only remaining one-room school in Washington County. Although this school known as White, or more popularly, Possum Hollow, was officially closed in 1932, yet it has, through necessity been reopened by the Avella District Jointure, as part of that system and for the past two or three years, this school is reported to have been the only such building of the old one-room school type in operation in Washington County. Of course some of the features of the old type school are lacking here. The old pot-bellied stove, for instance, has been replaced by a modern heating system. This school has electric lights, which none had a half century ago. Of the pupils of the present school, I believe that not one walks to school all being transported here in a modern school bus, but the old building is here, one teacher does the instructing and, except that all are of one grade, yet we must consider this our one remaining one room school.

We are met here to honor the teacher and the former pupils of two of Cross Creek Township's former one-room schools, Nosco Hall and Beech Knob. These two schools were among over 200 which formerly dotted the hills and valleys of Washington County. As just indicated they were of a type of educational institution which has almost vanished from our way of life. Since it was an institution

which was the foundation of all education of an earlier day, we should on this occasion give full credit to the work done in those schools by the teachers and pupils who labored in them.

These schools were established probably in 1853. One of the early schools of the township was located on the McNarry farm, now the Stritzinger farm about halfway between the later sites of the Nosco and Beech Knob buildings. This school at McNary's was used until 1855, so I have reason to believe that Nosco Hall and Beech Knob schools came into existence in that same year. I have in my possession a contract made between the Cross Creek School Board and Wm. R. Campbell for the erection of the building at Beech Knob. When Mr. Campbell bid on the erecting of this building on March 16, 1855 his bid was \$387 to which he added \$5 for painting, so when the contract was awarded, it was for the consideration of \$392.00. Two other bids received for the same work were from Joseph Crones for \$396.00 and from James McClain for \$409.00 so Mr. Campbell won the contract at the lowest bid.

That Nosco Hall school was also in existence in 1855 I am sure of since I have a copy of the monthly report of J.D. Patterson, teacher, for the month of November 1855. This report shows a total of 19 pupils, 9 males and 10 females, which was low for an old time school since many of them had 40 or 50 pupils, and I have heard that at times a teacher was required to teach as high as 65. Of course, there was more keeping order than teaching in such a situation but the teacher of that day was capable of both so school continued in good order.

When the district schools were set up in Cross Creek Township, presumably about 1855, ten such schools were established, and numbered, and they were as follows:

Number 1	Nosco Hall
Number 2	Bunker Hill
Number 3	Cemetery
Number 4	White Oak
Number 5	West Point
Number 6	Willow Valley
Number 7	Bushy Rock
Number 8	Beech Knob
Number 9	Limestone Lane - later known as Muddy Lane
Number 10	Buckeye Valley

You will notice that 4 of these schools were named for trees of the forest - also that 2 of them were historic names - Bunker Hill and West Point. The Cemetery School, in Cross Creek Village, being located near the old graveyard, about where the Leal Oviatt home is now. Bushy Rock and Limestone Lane were distinctive names, indicating the location of each school - and what of Nosco Hall, what is the meaning of that name? Well, if you know your Latin, you will know that Nosco means in Latin: I know, so appropriately, the Nosco School should be referred to as the Hall of Knowledge and such it was for some 83 years for you folks who attended it and those who preceded you in that school.

In speaking of one room (district) schools of several generations ago, we do so, recalling that these schools were not only institutions of learning but that they also served as the social and

entertainment center of the communities in which they were located. Many were the stories told of the old time singin's, and spelling bees, and box socials, attended by people of the home community, and also, if sleighing was good, or the mud not too deep for riding horseback, people came to these functions from adjoining communities. In all cases, the purpose of the gathering was usually pretty well taken care of. If it was a singing, a good vocal master, the best and loudest singer in the whole area would be in charge. If a spelling bee, there was no dearth of contestants for the honor of spelling down the best that a community could offer. If it was a box social, the young bucks of the community often had to pay dearly for the privilege of eating the evening lunch with his lady love, since there was usually also a contest for that honor.

But when it comes to telling "tall tales" of these events, probably it is by them that these community events were best known.

As just indicated, much rivalry usually existed at these events. As long as this was good-natured and friendly, everything was kept under control. But when bitterness and feuding started, then you had better look out. Many a time, a young fellow and his gal had to walk home through the snow or the mud, because some rival suitor had loosed his horses, or taken his sleigh before going home time came.

And this story has just come to my attention at an occasion at the Muddy Lane School, probably sometime in the 1880's. It was a cold night, many had assembled at the schoolhouse, including three newly married couples, the pot-bellied stove was red hot. The latch

on the door here was on the outside, with the latch string running through the hole to the inside of the door. This was the setting. Suddenly some roughnecks of an adjoining community came to the door - opened it quickly and threw a full grown skunk onto the stove. They closed the door and pulled the latch string out. Of course, pandemonium broke loose, and it took some time to open a window and let someone out to open the latch on the door. It was said, since there were no dry cleaning establishments in those days, that for weeks afterward, the Sunday clothes of many people could be seen hanging on the clothes lines being "aired out."

Well such were some of the events of the early days as they centered around these early schools. In addition they were used as plaur for Sunday afternoon preaching, at times, and when the Grange movement began, many Granges did and some still do meet in rural school buildings.

Well we must come down to later times. If you permit a personal word about the Nosco School. To it, in the old building went my father and his brother from our old home place. And this was the last common school which I attended as a pupil, in the 1908-1909 school term, and to this school seven years later I returned as teacher, to find still there some of the same pupils with whom I had attended seven years before.

Well to this school in 1933 came a young teacher by the name of Miss Hazel Carter. She too had, I think, been educated in this school, and so after adequate advanced training had come back to teach. Just who the pupils of that and the next term were, I do not know exactly, since I was not then working in Cross Creek Township,



but many of you are here today, and you know who you are, and the records of the Cross Creek Township Schools will reveal the lists of the pupils for those school terms.

The school term 1935-1936 finds Miss Carter in a new location; at the Beech Knob School, and this was to be her place of business for the next ten school terms, until 1945 when by action of the school board, this school was closed, the last of the one-room schools of Cross Creek Township to be closed, Willow Valley School having been closed the year before in 1944.

So Miss Carter, who became Mrs. Leonard Cooke in 1940 holds the honor of having been the teacher of the last one-room school to be closed in Cross Creek Township and since she is still actively engaged in school work, now being the 2nd Grade Teacher in the Cedar Grove School, we wish for her, your teacher, many years of continued success in this her chosen field of public service.

And to all of you who have been fortunate enough to have had Miss Carter, or Mrs. Cooke for your teacher, may you continue to revere her for her marvelous work as a teacher, and please, in the midst of all the improvements in education which we enjoy now, don't forget to pay a tribute to the old one-room school, which gave both you and your teacher and may I add, me, too, a good start in life. Thank you.

**Retirement Party for  
Mrs. Brownlee and Mrs. McNelly  
September 13, 1962**

I don't know from whom, if anyone, I am to bring greetings tonight to these honored guests. I do want to extend my own best wishes, and if I may be permitted to do so, to bring greetings also for the Retired Teachers Association of the County, and of the State, and also from the National Association. Since these ladies whom we are honoring are now eligible to belong I hope that they will join the county and state and national retired teachers associations and receive the benefits of membership to which they will then be entitled.

People engaged in public school work always have problems, as you folks so well know. Sometimes these are only individual and personal problems like when the boy came to his teacher and said "My father is not very well pleased with my report card. He says I don't want to frighten you, teacher, but Pa says if it doesn't improve someone is going to get paddled." And then sometimes they are more far-reaching and affect the entire school system.

In one school system, there was a so-called inspector, so he started out one day to investigate the quality of teaching that was being done in this school, he went into one classroom and began asking questions. His first question was: "Who broke down the wall of Jericho?"

Well everyone looked confused for a bit - then one boy raised his hand and said, "Please, Mister, I didn't do it." Furious, the inspector turned to the teacher and said "Now what do you do in a case like this?" Well she says "I have full confidence in that boy and believe he is telling the truth." The inspector turned and stamped out of the room and looked up the building principal and told him what had transpired. The principal said "I've known both this boy and his teacher for several years and I'm sure neither of them would do a thing like that." Now completely disgusted the inspector had only one more chance, so he went and reported the incident to the Supervising Principal. Said he, "I feel we are making a mountain out

of a molehill in this case. I suggest we pay the damages and forget the whole thing."

Well, I simply mention these to lead on to the remark that, of course, retired teachers have problems, too. I have been much concerned about this type of problem for the past three years, now, and now that Mrs. McNelly and Mrs. Brownlee have also retired from public school work, I want to assure them that I am concerned about the problems that they, too, will be facing in the years ahead.

I don't want to shock anyone here tonight, least of all these new retirees, but as I have been watching them, I am convinced that they are both afflicted with a new disease. This is a malady which they have never had before - it is a disease which one usually gets only once in a lifetime. It is not catching, but more and more people are getting it, and once you get it, I understand that it is incurable. I refer, of course, to the disease known for want of a better name, as retirementitis.

When a person gets this malady, his friends are always very much concerned about the individual and very considerably keep asking questions about his welfare, health, etc and especially the person's health. It is the usual thing when you meet one of these afflicted persons to remark about the bags under his eyes, and if the retiree appears a bit pale it is proper to remark about it, or if the sick one seems to be losing weight, you shouldn't hesitate to express your concern and say something about it. Well, these are just some of the physical aspects of the decline of a retired person. I should like to mention a few other symptoms.

And the first is the problem of time, which a retired person has to solve. The friend interrogating a newly retired person always asks this question "What are you going to do with all your time?" Now that does pose a problem for a person who has diligently given freely and fully of his time to the job of teaching school, and as one who has known them for a number of years, I can say that Mrs. McNelly and Mrs. Brownlee have always been of the type who gave a full measure of time to this job of teaching. They always came to school in good time in the morning and they stayed till the day's work was done. A number of years ago, a speaker at teachers

institute was speaking about this problem of teachers' time. He said in a school of which he knew, the pupils had to wait in the class room till the teacher got out of the building in the evening - if they didn't they would get run over, because as soon as 3:30 came in the evening, the teachers were gone. He was not talking about the type of teachers to which our honored guests belong. I used occasionally to ask these teachers, knowing that they also had household duties to perform, whether they had the breakfast dishes washed before coming to school. I think they usually answered in the affirmative, but I wouldn't wonder but that Bro. Elza and Husband Bill often had to help out with their duty so that our teacher could devote full time to their school work.

Well, another question, which you are supposed of course to ask a newly retired teacher is "What are you going to do with all your money?" and of course the teacher is then supposed to reply "What money?" Well, be the situation whatever it may be, we are glad to know that our state has seen to it that when a teacher has given their all during the best years of their lives for the education and training of our children, when they come now to years of retirement, they are not left without some satisfactory monetary recognition and recompense for their many years of faithful work in the public school. We still know of some old people still living who were teachers and retired without these provisions for their comfort and safety, and we are glad to know that provision has been made for the rest of us who have retired more recently or who will do so in future years.

And then finally there is the problem of people. What are you going to do about people in the years ahead - we know that it is people who have given teachers their life work - young people have a way of growing up and becoming older people, and we are glad that we have had a part in their growing up. But now that you are no longer dealing with young people in the class room, are you going to retire away from people entirely. We believe not so, for no one has any better ability for still dealing with people than a retired teacher, and I hope in the years ahead that these retired teachers will find many opportunities to make themselves useful to people

and that they will be watchful for chances to keep me from doing good in the years ahead as they have been able to do while serving in the class room.

Well, now that I have analyzed some of the symptoms of this disease of retirementitis, what about the treatment for it?

These teachers have had much to do over the last forty years or so with what we call the 3Rs, and now that they have left the classroom, they may think that they are leaving these 3Rs behind, but I think not so. In fact, I am going to prescribe not only the 3Rs, but maybe even the 5Rs or 6Rs.

Yes, I suggest that you still use the first R, even that you make abundant use of it, I mean Reading. Most people, even some teachers, are busy in their active years to keep up with their Reading, so in your years of retirement. I hope you can use some of your newly acquired time of catching up with your Reading which has had to take second place for many years - get out these books you have laid aside so long and subscribe for that magazine you have always wanted to take and Read, Read, Read!

Most busy people also find little time during their active years to write, so if you have been neglecting the second R of Writing, now is the time to reorganize your time and talents and learn again to Write. If you are not going to write a book in your retirement years, I at least strongly urge every retired person to at least write out some sort of Memoir of their life and lifetime experiences, and in so doing I am sure you will enrich the years of your life for your relatives, your friends, and for everyone who has known you. And don't forget those long neglected letters which you have been promising to write for so many years. You see I am trying to prescribe something for you to do to use all that time you are now going to have on your hands.

The next two Rs in this prescription, I am going to prescribe together - for they go together and I hope you will take them in generous dose. These are Rest and Relaxation - so if you have almost forgotten how to Read and Write, and maybe have never really learned how to Rest and Relax - I prescribe regular lessons until you know how to get away from it all and give both body and mind a

"break" such as they have probably never had before - Yes, learn to kill time a little bit, and I assure you if you don't do anything worse than that, you will never be accused of murder.

Another R which I think belongs to the years of Retirement is that which I will call Remembering. For after so many years of public service, no finer feeling can come to a person during the Golden Years than a sense of duty well done, and the recalling of all the nice things that have happened over the years. And Remember this also, those with whom you have worked over the years are Remembering you, too, and recalling with joy the things you have done for them and they will, I am sure, rise up and call you blessed.

No, I haven't forgotten that other R of the school days - Arithmetic - but I prescribe some of it, too, not only to count you money and be sure that it is adequately used and taken care of for that rainy day which is almost sure to come to each one of us - but also that you may count your blessings every day, as you realize that the God of your life and the myriad of your friends have been good to you everyday of your life, and that they will continue to sustain you on everyday which is to come. Our heartiest and best wishes to you both! May God Bless You!

**Speaking on Retirement of  
John M. Caldwell and Mrs. Wetzel  
at Avella High School**

Mr. Chairman, Dr. Bowman, Mr. and Mrs. Wetzel, Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell, members of the School Board, Fellow Teachers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I feel highly honored in being asked to speak on this occasion, and to share the platform with Dr. Bowman when we are here to honor these two retired teachers. I feel a little timid in being asked to speak before Dr. Bowman, since I am now going to have to be extremely careful in what I say. If Dr. Bowman had spoken first and I had the last word, I wouldn't have to care so much what I said. (or I am glad that Dr. Bowman was asked to speak first, for now I won't have to be so careful in what I say.)

You see, Dr. Bowman is head of our County Schools, while I am serving as President of the Washington County Retired Teachers Association, so whether you know it or not, there is a struggle for power, or rather for members going on behind the scene I am trying to recruit members for the RTA and, of course every retired teacher I get in my organization means one more teacher whom Dr. Bowman has to enlist for the schools. In fact, this struggle is so intense just now that it might remind you of the little colored boy going home late one evening and he had to pass a graveyard. This graveyard had a stone wall around it, and there was a walnut tree standing just inside the wall. As the boy approached this tree he heard voices inside the wall "You take dis one, I'll take dat one. You take dis one, I'll take dat one." This went on for a minute or two,

when One of the voices said "dat's all but the one on the outside, and you can have him." With that the colored boy ran home and told his mammy. "Mammy, St. Peter and the debbil is up there in the graveyard dividin' up all the people, and St. Peter done told the debbil he could have me." Well, in this case, I have got me two, and St. Peter - that's Dr. Bowman, has only what's left.

I am no authority on retirement problems - I have been working at it for less than five years now, I'm just experimenting with a few things to put in the time. I've come to this conclusion, retirement is something like getting married - you have to prepare for it, and have to make certain adjustments when you enter into it. When two people get married, you know, they want to be in each other's company a lot - Well, when a person retires it is that way up to a certain point - when a retired man comes home and wants to sit around the house all the time, or a retired woman comes home and starts working about the house again, it all makes a difference.

Now it used to be when a person retired, he or she usually spent the first month of so sitting around in the old rocking chair, resting up, and then when they got well rested, they began rocking. Now, according to the experts, a retired person should just keep on working. Oh, of course, not on the old job, but they are supposed to have work laid up to do, or hobbies, or something of that kind to keep themselves busy. Of course, the difference is, after retirement one is supposed to work without pay - and that is a big difference.

Last fall after cold weather began, John Caldwell thought he would take the rocking chair plan of retirement, so after Helen had him around the house a day or two, she decided she would get the



vacuum sweeper going, and so she started in, and every time she came near John's rocking chair, he had to move, so one afternoon, after he had move about 17 times, John decided he would go back to work on the farm.

Of course, then , Mr. Caldwell is very fortunate to have this farm, where he van get away from it all and keep busy at the same time. He has conducted a large farming operation in addition to his teaching and has been very successful in both.

Well, one of these government experts from Washington D.C. heard about Mr. Caldwell's farm, how well it was conducted, etc. so he drove out one day and looked it all over and before he left, he wanted a statement from Mr. Caldwell, in answer to the question: To what do you owe your success in farming? Well, you recall Mr. Caldwell had been teaching mathematics at Avella High School for write a number of year, so this was only natural for him to give a mathematical answer to this question: To what do I owe my success? Well, I'll tell you! 50% to weather, 50% to good luck, and the rest to brains.

In addition to being a successful farmer, Mr. Caldwell is a dairyman. He has a herd of good producing cows, and you would think that with all the facilities around the Caldwell farm, with a good barn, a large silo, mows full of good hay, and good pasture in summer, those cows ought to be contented - but they're not really satisfied. Last summer these cows were out in the pasture along the public road when the big milk truck went by this big tank truck like they use nowadays. This truck had a sign on it in large letters

Milk - Pasteurized - Homogenized - Standardized Vitamins A&D added. One old cow turned to another and said "Makes you feel a little inadequate, doesn't it?"

Another thing John has to consider about his home in addition to his wife, and the cows, is his good-sized group of grandchildren. Like all grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell like to have the grandchildren come home. If it takes children to make a home, you can leave it to the grandchildren to almost tear it down sometimes. One afternoon John was trying to take a nap when a load of grandchildren arrived, and John went right on taking his nap, at least he tried to, but the grandchildren started crawling all over him, trying to wake him up, etc. but he kept his eyes tightly closed. Finally a little granddaughter went up to him and pried one to his eyes open and looked in - then announce to the others "Grandpap's still in there."

Well, I haven't known Mrs. Wetzel so long as I have Mr. Caldwell, but soon after the formation of the Avella District Jointure, when I began visiting some of my teachers at the old Avella High School Building, I became acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Wetzel and also their youngest daughter, Gail. In my last year of school service, I was asked to go on the trip to Washington DC with the Senior Class, and Miss Gail Wetzel was in that party and it must have been about the same year that Mrs. Wetzel accompanied the Eighth Grade on their trip to Gettysburg and Harrisburg. Mrs. Wetzel was the teacher of Domestic Science, or the household Arts, if that is what you call it, at the old High School, and since her room there was near one of the entrances to the building, I frequently stopped

by in going in and out of the building. I then got to see the dresses the girls were making, and to smell what was cooking, etc.

I understand that Mrs. Wetzel had some adjustments to make, also, after retiring. You know at school, everything the girls did, or made, they did it in quantity, if they were sewing, why all the girls made dresses, and if they were cooking or baking, everyone made a pie or a cake, or whatever, so Mrs. Wetzel was used to doing things in a big way. So one day last fall after she had retired and was doing the cooking at home again, she decided to have soup for lunch as so many people do these days, so she prepared that lunch and called to Mr. Wetzel "Ernest, soup's on" and when Mr. Wetzel came out and looked on the stove the soup really was on - five gallons of it - you see, she couldn't get over doing things in such a big way.

Mr. and Mrs. Wetzel have been wise, since they have been spending the winter in the Sunny south, where I'm sure all or us have wished we could be on many occasions during this cold weather. They stayed there long enough to find out that Cassius Clay was more than just a big wind, and now we are glad that they have gotten back in time for this reception tonight. Before leaving Florida, Mr. Wetzel, realizing it was still very cold up here decided to buy herself a mink coat before coming back to this cold climate, so she went down to one of the large department stores in Miami to look over their stock. She soon found one she liked very much, and when she asked the price, she found out it was \$500 - too much for a retired school teacher to pay. She looked at the coat - then she looked at the clerk, and said "Young lady, I remember when I could have bought that coat for \$125." The clerk saw she was losing a

sale, but she still wanted to be gracious, so her reply was "O Madam, I didn't think you were quite that old."

Well, whether we like it or not, the years are creeping up on us, and perhaps we can paraphrase Gen. Douglas MacArthur and say "Old school teachers don't die - they just fade away," but in place of fading away silently and without tribute, as they used to do, for you, Mrs. Wetzel and Mr. Caldwell, your employers and your fellow workers and all of us here assembled tonight, wish to express our gratitude to you both for your fine service to education here, and to wish for both of you many years of joy in the retirement into which you have now entered. Have fun!

If you fail it is because you took a chance. If you succeed, you grasped an opportunity.

I'd like a bottle of reducing medicine. Anti-fat? No, its for my uncle.

Do you like your teacher? I guess I will, but she wants to have her own way, and I'm afraid I'm going to have to let her have it.

Woman decked out in a new mink coat. Another woman: "O your husband must have changed jobs." "No my dear I have just changed husbands."

What flavors of ice cream? Vanilla, strawberry, and chocolate. Do you have laryngitis? No, only vanilla, strawberry, and chocolate.

Are your father and mother in? They was in but they is out. Young man, where's your grammar? She's just went upstairs for a lay-down.

Texas woman dyeing bedspreads. One day a lamb fell into the vat of blue dye. She pulled him out and dried him off. Next day a motorist offered \$50.00 for the colored lamb. Soon the man was dyeing his lambs all colors. Now do you know, I'm the biggest lamb dyer in Texas.

John playing possum taking a nap. Grandchild pried open one of his eyes. He's still in there.

## **Eldersville School P.T.A.**

**November 3, 1966**

My pleasure at being here - your organization must be 10 or 11 years old, since we had it for at least one year when I left here in 1956. It is a good organization and I hope you keep it going strong. A bond between the parents and teachers of your school.

Darlene asked me to speak on the History of Education in this area. Education and religion came into this region with the earliest settlers since they were interested in both. So, after erecting their log cabins, they erected next the Church and then the school.

Of course, education in the early days was not too well organized and the conduct of schools was sporadic, but the better class of citizens had a school if they could find a teacher, and in the so-called "subscription schools" the well-to-do paid the cost of educating their own children and after this not so well-to-do neighbors could send their children to the same schools for free. These schools were usually held in poor buildings, often in one little better than a stable or mill, occasionally in a good building erected for the purpose. Usually school was not held in the severest weather in those days. The most of those early teachers have been long forgotten, but one who should always be held in remembrance is that of Robert McCready, who settled on the land here in this township so long known as the McCready farm. He was a native of Scotland, came to America in 1772 - fought for a time in the Revolutionary War, and evidently having enough of that came here in 1777, built his log cabin and settled down to a useful existence of nearly 70 years here for he lived till 1846, having served as school teacher, elder in the Church at Cross Creek and a Justice of the Peace for many years. His teaching must have been done in the subscription schools for when the Public School Law was passed in 1834, Mr. McCready was 82 years old, so he probably didn't teach much after that time.

In 1834 or 35, though, the so-called District Schools sprang up all over Pennsylvania. Since Jefferson Twp. was not set up until 1853, but was a part of Cross Creek Twp for nearly 20 years, the district schools here were a part of the Cross Creek Twp. School District. Now there were 10 schools in the Cross Creek area and six

in what was to become Jefferson Twp. So Cross Creek had schools Nos. 1 to 10 and the ones in the present area of Jefferson 11 to 16, so when Jefferson became a separate district in 1853, they just cut off the first digit in the number of each school - thus Millers had been No. 11 and then became No. 1 in the new Jefferson Twp. School District. The others were Melom No. 2, Eldersville No. 3, Coles No. 4, Lees No. 5 and Gardner No. 6 - although as some of these rural one-roomed schools were closed, the numbers were somewhat differently assigned.

The setting up of regular districts called for the erection of permanent buildings. Some of these were still built of logs, but most after 1834 were framed buildings. When Albert Miller tore down and re-built the Miller School at Meadowcroft Village, he found much about the structure to confirm his opinion that that school was built around 1834, as he has inscribed on the name plate on front of the building.

More teachers were now needed to man all the district schools which had sprung up and at first difficulties were encountered in finding enough qualified teachers. Standards of educational accomplishment were low, and the directors were the judge of a teacher's ability. Usually one director was a sort of over-seer for one or more schools, this being before the days of Supervisor Principals or even of a County Superintendent, and until the passage of the School Law of 1854 which set up the office of County Superintendent, each school board and each school director was a law unto himself and could do as he pleased in running his school. Fortunately, most of these men were intelligent and really interested in education so they did the best they could. Teachers became better and more numerous, so in spite of each lack of books and equipment the district school served well its day and for nearly 100 year it was the backbone of our educational system.

I above enumerated the 6 district schools, which didn't include the Hanlin school. Up until the 1880's, the reports indicated only 6 schools and 6 teachers in Jefferson Twp. but by 1885-86 terms there were 7 schools and 8 teachers, which indicates, I think, that the Hanlin School had come into being and that Eldersville had a two-room school.

Not only was the one-room school the backbone of education, but it also was the social center for the community, and don't think they didn't have good times then with their night singing schools and



Spelling Bees and quite often a box-social, for these affairs were well attended and participated in by all the young people and many of the older people in each community. When sleighing and sledding was good, that was the mode of travel. When the mud got knee-deep in the roads in the spring of the year, the farm folk would hike over the hills to the school-home and the social life went on as usual.

While the district school is now outmoded and most of the buildings even are gone, yet we must recognize that that type of school served its own day very well, preparing its people for the professions and vocations of life and what more could you ask than that?

With the concentration of population here in Jefferson Twp. resulting from the opening of the coal mines, we find the one-room schools unable to cope with the increase in population. In 1916 there were still only 7 teachers in the Jefferson Twp. Schools - the next year there were 8 teachers and in 1918 - 9 teachers. By 1922 there were 16 teachers with Millers School closed, and Turney with 3 teachers, Eldersville with 4 and Bertha Mines with 5, so the pattern was set for the gradual elimination of the one-roomed school and the establishment of the graded schools.

This movement was still going on when I began to work here in 1928. I shouldn't speak of this period, but since they were very important to me and significant also, I think, for the district, if you can go along with me a bit further, I shall try to pursue. My years of service here were 28 in number, from 1928 until 1956, dates easy for me to remember.

My first year here, we had still two one-room schools: Coles with George McDonnell as teacher and the Hanlin School where Anna Muskerina was teaching. At Turney there were four teachers: Mr. and Mrs. John Wiley, Max Hagar, and Mrs. Jane Brown, and Eunice Guy - here at Eldersville: Eliza Munchland in the odd Fellows Hall, and Sara Pettibon, Lillian Munchland and Mr. Bertha Barnes in the frame school, and at Bertha that year were Emma Lawson, Mary Sanders, Elsi Muggs, Agnes Roberson, and Howart Oviatt. That was the last year for Hanlin School and next year with Ruth Pettibon as teacher was the last for Coles School, so Ruth has the honor of being the last teacher in the last one-room school in Jefferson Twp. i.e. of we leave out of account the so-called Penobscot School which was put into use in 1928 and used until 1935-36 term, but it was a graded

school, really a part of Turney with only the Primary grades attending.

My first school board here consisted of Alden Miller, Frank Pollock, W.E. Maggs, Dr. Schmidt and Bill Truax. Van Nest Wiefman succeeded Dr. Schmidt the following year and he was still on the Board when I left here although I don't believe his service was quite continuous.

1928 seemed like a prosperous year for the Jefferson Twp. School District. The finances were in good shape and Board had a \$12,000 surplus in the bank, but a year later that surplus was only \$2,500 and from that time the finances gradually declined. In the fall of 1928 the topple of the Superior Mining Co. here at Eldersville was burned and that put that company out of business and they weren't paying taxes - then in 1929 the big stock market crash came and the Bertha Mining Co. became unable to pay their school taxes, bearing the burden of taxation on the small property-holders and the two coal companies in the south end of the township, Penobscot and Jefferson. Things of course went from bad to worse - by 1933-34 teachers salaries were reduced to 80% of standard, and often the school board was several weeks in arrears in paying salaries - those were the days when a man with a family really was fortunate to have also a cow and a garden - then at least they could all eat.

This condition persisted through 1934 and 1935 and then with the advent of the New Deal, people again began to know what money looked like again, even though they couldn't hold on to it very long. When we compare those hard times with the present when everyone seems to have plenty of money, we wonder what has happened to this old world, and also we wonder how long we can keep going at this furious rate.

When I began working here in 1928, on the first day of school, we had a teachers meeting in the afternoon and since I was facing a new corps of teachers, I decided to give them a little talk - among other things which I told them, I recall that I said: in this new relation I want it understood that I am to be your servant, not your master, and if there is any thing I can do to help you teachers, I wish you would let me know. Crude as that expression was, I believe it did express my philosophy as a supervising principal and I hope that I lived up to it, at least to some extent.

In the troublous times of which I was speaking, the School Board began to talk that they could no longer employ a supervising principal, so in the depths of despair, I proposed that I would teach four days a week, then have a substitute one day when I could visit the schools. So in the fall of 1932 I began teaching at Turney School, using this plan for my supervision work. While I had one day to visit the other schools, the result was that more often than not, after teaching all day at Turney, I would have to visit one or more of the other buildings after school, and on many and many a night for the next four years, I would get home for supper around 8 to 9 P.M. - then had to prepare for another such day tomorrow. This continued until the fall of 1936 when with improved finances and a good argument or two which I used on the school board, I was released from teaching and began supervising full time. In 1941 I took on Hopewell Twp. and in 1942 Cross Creek Twp., so even against the Biblical injunction, I at least tried to serve more than one master. And this happy relationship continued until 1956 when I left Jefferson Twp. and devoted my next three years to the schools in the Avella Jointure.

In my second year here, the present faculty of Eldersville School began to take shape: Dorothy Grimm and Helen Ryan and Ruth Pettibon came into the District in the fall of 1929 - on March 17, 1931 on the completion of the new building here, Marion Butler came on duty. Mrs. Gaines arrived for the 1945-46 term and in 54, I had the pleasure of welcoming back to this school one of my former pupils here, when Marjorie Robertson began teaching that year. Then finally, just before I took my leave here, Mrs. Ethel Malone came for the time 1955-56.

It was a sad day for me on the last day of school in the spring of 1956 which was my last day here in Eldersville School, but the teachers and the pupils and the P.T.A. brightened the occasion for me when you presented Mrs. White and me three beautiful, commodious, and useful pieces of luggage. I assure you we have been making good use of those gifts. We appreciate them very much and they have gone with us almost into every State of the Union, and we hope to use them some more in the years to come.

**Party for Mrs. Ilah Smith  
December 7, 1966  
on the occasion of her retirement from teaching**

Why I was asked to speak?

Directors are all good speakers and they are long-winded, all wanted to speak on this occasion - Mr. Lunger had a problem.

He called me: "Make it short."

Stories of the cough drops.

I accepted this appointment before I realized that I had never been Mrs. Smith's supervisor. I have been in her classrooms only very briefly - have never observed her teaching. That she has been a successful teacher I have known from her reputation. I have known of her as a teacher for quite some time - have known her well only past ten years, since formation of the Avella District.

Not knowing first hand too much about her work, I consulted a reliable source to find what her record of service has been. It has been an impressive record and while I don't have it all here, I believe she has retired on a record of 32 years service.

From the Washington County School Annals I find his record:

At least 6 years teaching in one-room schools:

Brown School in Donegal Township - 22-23

White School in Donegal Township - 23-25

Manchester School in Independence Township - 25-26

Jamison School in Independence Township - 26-28

Some remarks about the old one-room school.

Graded School

at Buffalo in Hopewell Township 1928-29 - Upper Grades

at West Middletown School 1929-31 - Upper Grades

She changed her name to Smith in 1931 - out of the school picture for about 13 years - raised her family - then resumed teaching in 1944.

1944-45 - Independence Township Dept. 5-8

51-53 - no record

53-54 - again in service Independence Township 5-8

and in a similar assignment in

55-56 in Avella Joint High School in Junior High School

So having earned an honorable retirement, Mrs. Smith terminated her fine record of service at the close of the 1965-66 school term last June.

This meeting of school directors and fellow teachers is held as a tribute to you Mrs. Smith to mark the close of the useful period of service to this school, which has been your second home for a good many years. The directors know they have lost a good faithful teacher your fellow teachers share this sense of loss, but I am sure all want to congratulate you on your accomplishments.

I said I didn't know much about Mrs. Smith's classroom work, I think I do know something about her manner of controlling her classroom groups. Mrs. Smith has been the quiet type able to control by a quiet admonition to anyone trying to get out of line, and this has been backed up by her own very exemplary conduct. And then, I think Mrs. Smith has found it necessary at times to be a little persistent. This instance was not in a classroom situation, but was similar to it.

For a number of years, we have been taking the 8th graders from this area on a two day tour of historic places in Pennsylvania: Gettysburg, Lancaster, and Harrisburg. Mrs. Smith has been in charge

of the girls on recent trips. Of course this two day trip has entailed an overnight stop in a hotel. For these overnights, some of the young folks usually plan something which is at times a bit trying for the sponsors of the group.

On this occasion, two girls staying together in the hotel had planned that they were going to visit the other girls in their rooms and then possibly to create a disturbance all night long. Mrs. Smith heard of the plans, so she had plans of her own.

The next morning when checking out at the hotel I asked the manager if there had been any disturbance during the night. He assured me that there had not been and he spoke especially of the fine control which the girls have been under. Why he said I was up on this floor checking about 3 o'clock this morning and there sat your lady teacher, Mrs. Smith, in a rocking chair right by the door of room number 305. Then I told him the rest of the story - that these girls had plans, and that Mrs. Smith, also had plans, so when these girls looked out of their door and planned to leave the room, Mrs. Smith was right there to nip the plot in the bud. I think their illustrates one of the fine traits of Mrs. Smith which have made her a successful teacher.

And so, Mrs. Smith, I am empowered to extend to you on this occasion, heartiest congratulations and best wishes from your bosses, the School Directors and from your colleagues, your fellow teachers. And may I add my own good wishes and as representative of the Retired Teachers of Washington County may I invite you to join our retired group.

Oh! I have time on that cough drop for one more story - and it's a rocking chair story, too. The formula for using a rocking chair.

**Address to the Senior Class of 1970**  
**Avella High School**  
**May 25, 1970**

Mr. Fioroni, members of the faculty, members of the School Board, Graduates of the Class of 1970, and last but not least, you long suffering parents and friends up there in the bleachers. This is one time in the school year when Avella High School gives the parents of the District a really warm welcome. And while you are sweating it out up there, it seems to be the function of the commencement speakers to make it hot for the folks down here on the main floor. And after this commencement speech is over, I strongly suspect that all of you will combine to make it hot for me.

I appreciate the generous introduction by Mr. Frosom. What he didn't say is that I requested this honor for this particular commencement. Last year the school board decided to dispense with a commencement speaker, but this year I wrote to Mr. Fioroni and I said, "Ray, you have tried all those other commencement speakers. Now won't you give me a chance?" Well, Ray didn't know what to do, so he took the problem to the school board. The next thing I knew, people were telling me that it was reported in the newspaper, that, in an unprecedented action, the School Board had reversed itself and I was to be the commencement speaker this year. I was wondering how Mr. Fioroni had got this across, and then I remembered that there are those ladies on the School Board here at present, and with that situation, I could easily see how he got the School Board to change their minds. I consider these three ladies all good friends of

mine, one of them a former student, and all three of them very cooperative parents with children in school when I was working here as elementary supervisor. I hope these ladies didn't have too much trouble with the men on the school board over this matter, and since I understand the action was unanimous, I assume that they didn't. Thank you all very much.

Of course those must be a reason why I wanted the privilege of speaking to this graduating class as has been revealed. These young people were attending their first year of school, when I was serving my last year in the Avella School District. These were my last First Grade Class, and when this graduating class get their diplomas tonight, and claim of mine to having former students in this High School will cease. Of course, at the end of their first year of school, I didn't show these young folks a very good example because I dropped out, while they had 11 years yet to go. But over the years, I have not forgotten this class and I am glad they haven't forgotten me, either. Anytime I have visited the schools since I retired, these young folks have always given me a warm welcome, which I have appreciated very much.

I recall very well a few things about these first days in school. For example, Tana Casciola wasn't very anxious to attend school at first, I think she wasn't sure whether she wanted an education or not. Her aunt Mary would bring her to the Cedar Grove School each morning, and either Mrs. Byrd or I should meet her and after a good deal of persuasion we would finally get Tana into the classroom. But the next morning it would be the same thing, so one morning I decided to make Tana a promise. I told her if she would come to



school and study hard, that when she got to be a senior I thought she could get the D.A.R. History award for herself and the Avella School, and I see by the program that she did indeed get this award just recently.

With Rebecca Midler it was somewhat different. I don't recall that she had any trouble getting started to school, but 12 years ago I couldn't have predicted that she would be Prom Queen in her senior year and would be among the first girls to be accepted as a student to W&J College, which until this coming year has been an all-boy school.

Down in Mrs. Martin's room that year there were 2 sets of twins: twin girls, Alice and Mary Slomaski, and twin boys, Donald and Ronald Simons. During my years of school work, we have had several pairs of identical twins as students, and while their teachers always managed to learn to tell them apart, try as I could, I could never learn to distinguish one from the other, but that year it helped me greatly when one of the Slomaski girls wore glasses, and the other didn't. so I could easily tell them apart. At commencement here last year. I had my picture taken with Mary and Alice and I believe neither one was wearing glasses, so I couldn't tell them apart then.

Then also in Mrs. Martin's group, there were two Terrys - Terry Valduga and Terrie Macugoski. To help me to identify them, I wrote in my roll book which I always carried with me: Terry Valduga and Terrie Macugoski are girls.

And then in this 1st grade class of 12 years ago, I found one of the reasons why I thought it was time for me to retire. There were

quite a number of second generation students in this class, young folks whose parents had been students of mine. But there was also one third generation student in Mr. Ross's room in Buffalo School and that was Donald Rush, whose grandmother, Mrs. Scovart had been a student of mine quite a number of years before in my first year of teaching. So I believe that I felt strongly with the third generation of students starting to attend my schools, it was time for me to retire.

Well, I think from these remarks you can all understand why I coveted the position which I am occupying at this moment. Since I had a very small and insignificant part in this class's first year at school, I sort of wanted to be in as they complete their school course here tonight. I want to congratulate these young folks individually and publicly in this climax of their public school careers.

As I bring my warmest greeting to them, it is with the knowledge that they have studied hard and worked diligently at their school tasks. This diploma which you are about to receive is evidence of the work which you have performed, and I am sure it is with pride and the best of good wishes that the faculty and school board honor you with graduation.

But in felicitating you upon your performance here in school, I want to remind you young folks that your education has not all come by your own individual efforts. Your schooling here has not been an Operation Bootstrap by any means. I would like as briefly as I can to remind you of the part others have had in your education.

First there are your parents. What a debt of gratitude you all owe to them: Not alone for food and shelter and clothing which usually come to a youngster as a matter of course. But for the finer things in life the intangibles, so to speak, the desire in their hearts and minds for you to get an education, in many, many cases, a better education than your parents had themselves, and their willingness to make every sacrifice possible so that you might receive this training in the public schools. I think I know something of the type of parents most young folks in this school district have. As I have been sitting here looking into the the faces of these parents and friends opposite, I have been trying to figure out who many of them are, most I suppose, the parents of this class and many of whom I have known personally, and as I have been reflecting and recalling what I knew and know about these people, my heart had been filled with gratitude, not only for many courtesies accorded me personally when I was working here, but more from the knowledge that these are people who desire the best for their children and who have done all they can to help provide a good public school education. This is the kind of parents you have here and you graduates should be deeply grateful to them.

And then there is another group whom I know you will not let me forget: the faculty, the administration and teachers. Although I have become somewhat detached from the educative process here by my 11 years absence from active duty, yet I pride myself that I still know most of your teachers in the Avella Schools, almost all in the elementary school and quite a number of these in the High School. I cannot praise too highly the efforts which I know your teachers have

put forth from that first grade year when you were learning to read and write and count all the way through these later years when you have struggled with the higher branches of learning, You were always secure in the knowledge that you had faithful to teachers by your side to help you over the difficult places in school. Recent years have been times of turmoil and strife in many high schools and colleges over the land. As I have read and heard about these disgusting occurrences in many parts of our land. I have been proud that in the school system where I once worked, these things have not happened. And that has been due, I think, to the wisdom and good sense and dedication to the work at hand of these teachers and administration who conduct the instruction in Avella High School. The teachers here are entitled to as much consideration for good salaries and fringe benefits as any in our land, but violence and threats and sabotage do no create the justification for these benefits, as do dedication to duty and consideration for those precious lives intrusted to our schools in the hope of their receiving a good education. I hope that the teachers of Avella School District will always try to maintain the good image which is theirs at the present time.

In a day or two we will be observing Memorial Day. Would you mind if I expressed a brief personal tribute in memory of one who is not here tonight? Last September as Mrs. White and I were touring England and Scotland, a letter from our family received when we were in Glasgow brought us the sad news of Mr. Lunger's death. Of course I was greatly shocked and after I recovered for a moment, my first thought was "He has literally given his life for the Avella

School District," for Mr. Lunger's determination was to stay in service, and had he been permitted to do so, I believe this would have been his commencement too at Avella High School. He was your friend and my friend, and he was faithful even unto death.

Another group of people who are often overlooked when the accolades are being handed out on an occasion such as this are the bus drivers of the Avella School District. Some of you young folks have walked to school part of the time, but most of you have been hauled in our school buses, and if you have attended school at least 90% of the time in the last 12 years, you have been hauled safely and fairly comfortably for well over 2000 trips twice a day. I suggest that you owe your bus drivers a vote of thanks for getting you safely to school and safely home again. And I would like to include here also your custodians and your cafeteria workers who have taken care of your school buildings and who have helped to keep you warm, comfortable, and well fed while you have been in school.

And last, but not least, standing back of you students, your teachers and administrators, and these service workers in your school, ever planning for and furnishing all you have needed for the educative process has been your School Board. At times the most maligned, the least appreciated the hardest worked, and always the poorest paid of all those who have worked to make your education possible, we salute these men and women who have seen to it, that come what may, the schools have been kept open during all those twelve years of your public school course. No one but the school directors themselves and probably their families, too, really know how much time and how many headaches are involved in being a

school director. That several of them here at Avella have had many years of service to their credit only confirms the devotion and dedication of these public servants to the welfare and success of our public school system. So lets all say a Thank You to these folks, too, for their help in your attaining of your educational goals. And if the teachers of the Avella Schools ever do strike for higher wages, be sure to include in your demands, better pay for School Directors, too. 40 persons have served as School Director since this class has been in school.

Up in New England they have this advice for commencement speakers: "When you're through pumping, let go of the handle." So it is about time this speaker taken that advice and lets go of the handle.

I would have liked to close with a verse of original poetry, but as I searched through my repertoire of original poems, I didn't find any which were appropriate to the occasion. And so, since I think the muse fled from me many years ago, I have turned else where for a closing thought. The man who wrote this is not well-known, in fact I can't find anything else he wrote of anything about his life, but so far s I am concerned he is almost immortal for having written this one small gem, entitled:

#### My Creed

I would be true for these are those who trust me  
I would be pure for these are those who care  
I would be strong for there is much to suffer  
I would be brave for there is much to bear  
I would be friend of all - the foe - the friendless

I would be giving - and forget the gift  
I would be humble, for I know my weakness  
I would look up - and laugh - and love - and lift.

If you would make your life count for much, if you would really try to please these folks who have made your education possible and would make them proud of you, take this or something very similar for your creed. That is my hope, my wish, my prayer for each on of you as I bid you all a fond farewell.

On Saturday, we will be observing Memorial Day. Would you mind if I brought a few brief tributes to your mind on some of the good folks from these groups whom I have been mentioning. Back in 1964 at a football game here on three school grounds, death came to Mr. Ellis Zellars, a member of the school board who was interested in every phase of the action her of this school. He had served well as a member of this School Board and just a few weeks ago his friend and another good former director Mr. George Rankin was called away after a commendable service as a director here. And several weeks ago a man who was faithful to his custodial duties in this school building was called away when death came to Charley Zatta.

And so let us think of these friends on this coming Memorial Day as among those who helped this class secure their education here.



**The Fort Cherry School District**  
**Speech to Garden Club of McDonald**  
**February 14, 1978**

I do not have very extensive or intimate knowledge of the history of McDonald, having never lived any closer than the six or seven miles which separate your town from my own town of Hickory.

My earliest recollection of McDonald is when, about seventy years ago, my father made weekly trips here to bring our butter and eggs and other products from our farm in Cross Creek Township and sold them to Jacob Troutman, a German butcher who had a shop not far from where the traffic light is here on Lincoln Avenue. I got to come to McDonald once or twice a year, during the summer when school was not in session, and I got some early impression of the town which I still carry with me.

On one occasion, in the late summer, I suppose, we had our lunch at a local restaurant and fresh watermelon was on the menu and I ate much too much of this delicacy so had a bad stomachache on the way home and the result was that I still can't eat much watermelon.

The town, of course, is named for the McDonald Family, who were early settlers here. John McDonald came here in the 1770's and settled on land which he later patented, and from the original small holdings, at the time of his death, he owned over 5000 acres of land. He was a bachelor when he came and remained so for a number of years, finally taking as his bride Miss Martha Noble from the family who founded Noblestown, farther down the Robinson Run Valley. At the time of their marriage John was forty years old, while Martha was a mere seventeen. One of their descendants in speaking of this and wondering why John McDonald had not married sooner finally concluded that he had been waiting for Martha to grow up, a very logical conclusion since he may have had her in mind for some time.

Anyway Martha came and took charge of John McDonald's home and its manifold duties, but when her mother came up the Valley a few weeks later to visit the happy couple, she was mortified to find Martha down at the creekside in Robinson Run helping the colored servants do the weekly wash. She took John to task about the matter and he had to persuade the irate Mother-in-law that Martha

was at the creek through her own choice. Oh my! they had their troubles in the old days, too.

The McDonald land took in the west side of the present town, and the tract here taken up by John McDonald bore the name Mt. Pleasant, and first west of their tract he took out papers for another large tract known as Primrose Hill. The McDonald family continued to occupy these lands until comparatively recent times, the Mt. Pleasant property having last been occupied by Mr. Edward McDonald and his sister, Jane, while K. Noble McDonald, a cousin, occupied Primrose Hill. You are familiar, I think with the large substantial homes which stand upon each of those properties, the one occupied by the family of Kim Donagle and the other by the Dalino Family.

Just east of the McDonald tract on a line represented now by Center St. in the borough and between that and the county line lay the Johnston tract. When the town was first plotted in 1871, it took in land from both the McDonald and the Johnston tracts.

There was not much here by way of a town until the Panhandle Railroad was built up Robinson Run Valley in the 1860's. The McDonalds had had a small block house near their cabin and a grist mill had been located on the creek at an early day. John McDonald had considerable prominence as an Indian agent and proprietor of an Indian trading post, but the nearest place which could be called a town was Noblestown farther down the Valley.

The coming of the railroad changed all this, a station was established on the McDonald land, at first called Havelock, but soon changed to McDonald, and as noted, the town was plotted in 1871 and quite a number of lots were sold. During its first 15 or 20 years, the town was small, being a convenient trading and shipping point for the farmers from out in Robinson, Cecil and Mt. Pleasant Townships.

The first rapid growth came in 1890 when a successful oil well was drilled in on the McDonald Farm. Intense excitement following this discovery, and prospectors, capitalists and all kinds of people actually began coming into the town. Within a couple of years as many as 200 wells had been drilled and these were located, not only out in the country, but on town lots, as well. With gardens and back yards and anyplace being used where a derrick could be located. Most of the wells drilled were good producers, and some

like the Matthews Well and old Mill No. 1 were as good wells as could be found any place in the world.

Needless to say this produced a financial "boom" in McDonald. Many lots were sold, fine homes were erected, fortunes were made, and I suppose lost, too, and the population of the town grew rapidly. The borough was established in 1889 and you observed your 75th anniversary in 1964. I didn't get to attend any of the activities in connection with that affair, but I believe you had a "Big Time."

With such an influx of people, demand rose for churches and schools. In the earlier days, the Presbyterians of the area attended services at the Raccoon Church at Candor, while the Seceders went down the valley to Noblestown, and a bit later, when the Robinson's Run Church was established on the hill at the site of the present Cemetery, they went to church there. The McDonald U.P. Church was established in 1876, and the Presbyterian Church here about 9 or 10 years later. As people of other persuasions came to the town the Methodist, Baptist, and Roman Catholic Churches were established here. Following the destruction of the building at Robinson's Run on Easter Sunday 1902, that congregation, too, moved down into the borough.

The school here grew with the town from a one or two room affair to the modern school which you have today, and a part of the Fort Cherry School System.

As McDonald was developing, farther west along the railroad the town of Midway came into existence. Known first as Egypt, it, like McDonald, had coal mines develop on its borders, and like the development of the oil field, the mines brought business and population and prosperity to Midway, so called because of its being half way between Pittsburgh and Steubenville, Ohio. Midway was a milling center of considerable importance for many years. The town, once a part of Robinson Township became incorporated and its school, like that of the present township became a part of the Fort Cherry system.

Speaking of Fort Cherry - going over to the location of your High School in Mt. Pleasant Township and looking down the Valley to the west, one can almost see the location of the old Cherry Fort. It was located on the Cherry Farm, Cherry being the name of the Family who had settled here in the 1770's. By 1774 Thomas Cherry had built the Fort on his land, and he was killed then later that year. The

fort consisted of rough log houses, one of them two and half stories high and surrounded by a stockade. During times of Indian incursions this was a shelter for the Cherry Family as well as for their neighbors who were the Farrars, McCartys, Rankins, Atchisons, and others located in that area. After the danger of Indian attacks was over, the Cherry Family used the fort as a home for many years, but the old building has now completely disappeared.

The stream in this Valley is known as Cherry Run and farther down the Valley in Smith Township is the old mining town of Cherry Valley, now only a residential village.

Another important historical connection with Mt. Pleasant Township is the location of the so called "Washington Lands." When George Washington was through this part of the country before the Revolutionary War he was so impressed with the quality of the land that he asked his agent, William Crawford to select and survey 3000 acres of good land here, so this was done and a tract of 2813 acres was surveyed and patented on July 5, 1774. This tract lay just south of Fort Cherry High School and took in the Herbst Farm, the Peter Pan Horse Farm, the Kelso land, and other present farms between there and Southview. At present there are some 16 or 17 farms incorporated in what was the Washington Land. The Big Story in connection with this, of course, is that when the war was over, Gen. Washington came out to look over his land, found it was occupied by 10 or 12 squatters and after trying to deal with them for the sale of the land, he finally gave up and ordered them to vacate the land, which they reluctantly did. Of course, Gen. Washington never occupied this land, and it was all eventually sold.

Over in the southern part of Mt. Pleasant Township on the old McGugin Farm was drilled in the early 1880's the famous McGugin Gas Well, which produced and wasted millions of cubic feet of natural gas as the flow of gas caught fire and burned with a giant flame for nearly two years before it was brought under control and piped away. In these times of energy shortages and high prices for gas and oil, we could surely use some of the gas from the old McGugin Well, or some of the oil which ran away down Robinson Run during the 1890's oil boom here.

I was still in public school work in the 1950's when school merger was being discussed here, and I attended many joint meetings held by the school boards of northwest Washington County. The State and County Office had outlined for us a giant merged

school district for all of Northwest Washington County. Each school district was to maintain its own elementary school, and a couple of Junior High Schools were to be formed, with a mammoth Senior High School to be located somewhere near Burgettstown or Atlasburg. After much discussion, the three districts of Avella, Burgettstown and Fort Cherry were formed each with their own complete school system and I believe anyone of these three is large enough. There is not so much the matter of numbers, but more critically the problem of transportation. I recall in the discussions on this matter, one of your McDonald directors very wisely affirmed that he would not agree to having your High School students bused to Burgettstown or Atlasburg. I imagine that most of you think that the location of the Fort Cherry High School is far enough away, for busing students as well as for attending high school functions during the year.

Before closing this talk I would like to say a word about some of the literature which pertains to our area.

Two novels of the Whiskey Insurrection have some connections here: Dr. Andrew Lyle Russell, once a resident of Midway wrote "The Freighter" having to do with the Insurrection, and he wrote three or four other articles and tales of the early days. Some of Dr. Russell's family lived in McDonald for many years, but I am not sure any of them are still here. Then "Sim Greene" another novel of the Whiskey Insurrection was written by Richard T. Wiley, who spent the last years of his life at the home of his daughter, Mrs. McInistin, here in the borough.

Most of what has been written about McDonald, as far as I know, has been in newspaper articles. Mr. James F. Mullooly who was raised in Noblestown has written many articles on the history of the Robinson Run Valley. These, of course, should be made into book form, but I doubt if they ever will.

The Bicentennial in 1976 saw the reproduction of a number of historical works of local importance. The Ft. Vance Historical Society, which has a number of members from McDonald, had the 1876 Caldwell Atlas of Washington County reprinted and it is still for sale.

Crumrine's History of Washington County was republished and had a good sale but it has been sold out.

The SouthWestern Pennsylvania Genealogical Society had a reprint made of Beer's Biographical Record of Washington County and I think it can still be purchased. And so the pursuit of local history and genealogy goes on. Many are interested but some are not, and so it will ever be.

Thank you very much.

**Sunday Schools in the Presbyterian Churches**  
**by A.D. White at Trinity U.P. Church, McDonald**  
**September 14, 1980**

The Presbyterians have always stood for education in general, and for Christian education in particular.

Before the Sabbath School as such was accepted by the Presbyterians in America, the ministers of most churches saw to it that the young people of their congregation were instructed in what we commonly think of as basic education, reading, writing, and spelling - this being before the organization of our public school system. If young people did not have the advantage of attending a subscription school, they were instructed at home by their parents and in matters pertaining to their spiritual life by their pastor, who periodically visited the home to instruct the children and to examine them for their progress in their spiritual life.

Lesson materials being scarce, often the main course followed was the study and memorization of the Shorter Catechism, which had been prepared by the Westminster Assembly and made a part of the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church.

As early instruction in the public schools consisted largely of drill and memorization, so the same method was used in the study of the Catechism - the questions and answers being memorized and repeated to the minister on his regular rounds. Likewise memorization of Scripture verses was used as a part of the course of study.

When Sabbath Schools were organized the Presbyterian Board of Publication came to their aid by supplying Christian literature, as well as study materials for the Sunday School.

A familiar publication furnished for the younger folks was the small lesson card consisting of a picture depicting a Biblical scene, usually a memory verse below it, and sometimes a short story or explanation on the back of the card.

In order to more definitely point out this function in the denomination's work the Board of Publication became the Board of Publication and Sabbath School work. And in later years the Board of

Christian Education - whose chief function still is to provide Presbyterians with Christian books and other publications, and to furnish study materials for the Sunday School.

While the Sabbath Schools were first founded by Robert Raikes in 1780, their coming to America is attributed to a missionary from London, one Rev. Mr. May who came to Philadelphia in 1811 and there organized a model school from which schools began to spread over the country. The oldest in Washington County is claimed to be that of First Presbyterian Church in Washington which dates from June 15, 1816, although it is also claimed that there has been a Sabbath School in Upper Buffalo Presbyterian Church since 1815. Be that as it may, that is about the time when Sabbath Schools began springing up in our area.

It is said there was objection in some quarters to these early schools, believing them to have been a profanation or desecration of the Sabbath Day, but this view gradually vanished and the value of instruction in Christian Education throughout the Sabbath School became generally accepted.

I have spoken in terms of this movement in the Presbyterian Church. I believe the same movement prevailed in the United Presbyterian Church of North America, although I am not sure that it began as early in those churches as in the old line Presbyterian Churches.

Two men who promoted and encouraged this work simultaneously in these two denominations were two brothers Rev. J.R. Miller who headed the Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work, and his brother Rev. R.J. Miller who was Editor of the United Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work. These men were raised in this region and each devoted most of his life to this important work for his church.

In the management of the Sunday School, the pastor usually had a prominent part and he was aided by other prominent members of the church, all thinking of the Sunday School as an important arm of the church in preparing people for Church membership.



## Talk at North Franklin School April 9, 1981

White people started coming here over 200 years ago.  
This country was one big forest.  
Where they came from.  
How they got here.  
What they brought.  
What they did first - settled near a spring - cut some trees and made log cabins - planted a garden  
Use of the ax and gun.  
Few other tools - saws - sledges - wedges  
Their food - guns for killing game.  
Berries and nuts -  
Using guns for protection - wild animals - Indians  
Neighbors - not very close  
No schools for a while  
Churches built before schools  
Washington County formed in 1781  
George Washington came here in 1784  
Forests were cleared - crops were planted - farm animals were brought here - Wolf Stories - old tools.

Older group - History of Our County  
200 years old - White people began coming here 210 years ago  
Where they came from - How they got here  
Heavy forests - no roads or bridges - only trails - cutting down the trees - building log cabins - later log houses.  
Log forts for protection from Indians.  
Cleaning the forests - planting crops  
Raising farm animals - building log barns  
Mills on the stream for grinding grain - meal and flour - saw mills  
Building farm houses and barns.  
Building stone and brick buildings  
Stories of the Pioneers  
First settler in Mt. Pleasant Township  
George Washington land there  
Wolf stories - use of guns for hunting and protection - use of tools made of wood - little iron - showing tools.

## **EDUCATION**

**for P.T.A. Meeting February 26, 1985**

I have asked to speak on this topic, believing it might be an appropriate one to consider for a P.T.A. meeting. If I speak of my own education first, I hope that you will not consider me unduly impartial. I know more about my own education than that of anyone else. My formal school education began 83 years ago last September 1, which I think will not surprise any of you who know me, and I believe most of you know I am no "spring chicken."

I began attending school at a one room school, known as Cooke School, in Smith Township just about 3 1/2 miles north of Hickory. Ironically, my first teacher who was a man just about 14 years older than I was at the time and he outlived all of my other elementary school teachers and he died just seven years ago at the advanced age of 97 years. After teaching for about three more years, he became a newspaper man in Washington PA and when we would meet on the street, as we did on numerous occasions, he seemed to take a delight in telling anyone nearby that he had taught me my ABCs. I usually retorted by remarking that I still remember what he taught me.

I continued going to school for the next 56 years - with a two year intermission. One of my small granddaughters, about the time she was starting school several years ago, asked me if I had ever gone to school - when I told her that I had gone to school for 56 years she remarked "Oh, Grandpa, you must have liked school very well, or else you were awfully dumb." When I told her that both of those conditions were true, she seemed to be satisfied. The 56 years, of course, included eight years in a one-room elementary school, four years in a small country High School, which never had over 35 students at one time, four years at College, and then forty full years of service in the public schools as teacher and elementary supervisor.

My education was no different than that of hundreds and thousands of people of my earlier years, who had the same meager advantages that I had. As was so well known, the elementary curriculum (we didn't know there was such a word) consisted of the traditional Reading and 'Riting and 'Rithmetic (yes, usually taught to the time of a hickory stick) but judging from results it was a

program fairly adequate for the times - the teachers were usually well prepared in the same program, and they used methods which now would be considered primitive, but were effective for that day. Learning materials were very skimpy, sometimes almost nonexistent, but they were properly used and thoroughly mastered during the six or seven months of the school term. After elementary school, the secondary program offered in the small high school or academy of those early days was likewise on with a limited course of study, but the teachers were often young men or young women who had pursued at least a part of a course in college, and then came out to the small secondary to use proven methods of instruction. Seldom was a student graduated from these schools who did not do well in College. And if they chose not to attend an institution of higher learning, in almost all cases they were ready to undertake the arduous duties of life, and to take their place in the community in which they chose to live.

In this describing the type of education in which I was trained, it is not with the intention of recommending this type of education for the children of this present day. I can not, and would not try to bring back the one-room school of two or three generations ago, because they would not be adequate for these present times. My contention is that the schools of today should be as adequate for our time as these earlier schools were for that time of which I have spoken.

During the years of my service in the public schools, a transition was taking place in which the rather primitive one-room school system has given place to the well-graded and highly organized graded schools of the present day. Here in Mt. Pleasant Township in 1912 there was a local school system consisting of about eight one-room schools, a two-room two-teacher high school here at Hickory and, due to the influx of miner families at the coal towns small graded schools at Westland and Southview. When McCarrell School was closed in 1914, it was the beginning of the consolidation movement in the local school district, a district then being entirely co-terminus with the township boundaries. In that same year, 1914, a progressive school board begun this consolidation movement by erecting this building at Hickory and forming a graded consolidated elementary school and housing here, too, a four year High School. The pupils from the closed McCarrell School were transported to this building in a so called "Kiddie Wagon" propelled by a good team of farm horses. There were no

motor buses nor the roads to accommodate the operation of such motor vehicles.

The consolidation movement from that time was, of necessity, a gradual one. As soon as good roads could be built into the area of a one-room school, that school was closed. Cherry Valley and Cockins in 1918, Moon and Rankin in 1919, and Miller and Fort Donaldson in 1929, by which time good transportation routes had been established into all parts of the local school district, and with graded schools at Hickory, and in the outlying town of Westland, Southview, and Primrose.

The further consolidation and merging of adjoining school districts into larger school areas did not get underway here until the late 1950s and the 1960s when such areas as the Fort Cherry District was formed. This consolidation was promoted by the State Department of Public Institution as it was then known with the cooperation of the County Superintendent of the Commonwealth. While I was involved in some phases of the consolidation in the Avella School District, and was an interested observer of the formation of the Fort Cherry District, I have never been entirely convinced that these larger districts provide any better education than did the local districts such as Mt. Pleasant Township. The transportation pattern is larger and much more expensive, the erection and maintenance of larger buildings has created problems which must be eternally grappled with. Also, I believe that the administration and supervision of these larger schools will present problems which are always difficult to solve with complete satisfaction.

But be that as it may - we have these schools and we have to do our best to operate them as efficiently as possible. Fortunately, the relationship of pupil and teacher still exist in a comfortable degree, and since the matter of instruction of our youth is the primary objective of our school system, if we can control and promote and improve this effort, we still have the chance to have good schools in our areas.

In the relationship of parents and teachers, I know of no organization that can be any more effective than the P.T.A. On this Founders Day, I want to bear testimony to my impression of this valued organization. You have had this organization in you midst, for I think, about thirty years. I recall, upon its organization, when I attended one of the early meetings, some one tried to prevail upon

me to serve as President of the Organization. Since I was involved then in the P.T.A. in my own schools, I gracefully declined the recognition in the organization here, and to preclude any other attempt to involve me in the organization, I didn't attend any more meetings here. This is the only meeting which I have attended for possibly thirty years. My own direct interest in the local schools ceased in 1961 when our youngest child graduated from Fort Cherry High School. But now with grandchildren attending your schools, and if I dare mention it, with a personal representative on the Joint School Board, I think I am still interested in the local schools, and am glad to pay the small amount of school tax assessed against me each year. I feel that I have gotten my money's worth from the Mt. Pleasant Township and the Fort Cherry District Schools.

What constitutes a good school? Many factors, of course, can be mentioned but these three were mentioned in an address recently by our Governor Dick Thornburgh. They are:

Faithful attendance at school by the students

Homework for the students as a tie between the teacher and the parent

Discipline as a factor of good leadership in every school

May your P.T.A. do all possible to help maintain good schools here.

## **A. D. White speaking at Reunion of Buffalo School on August 23, 1986**

I am very grateful for the introduction and for the opportunity to speak on this unusual occasion. It is so nice to be back at Buffalo Grade School. The High School Alumni of Buffalo have regular reunions, and I don't know of any reason why the Alumni of the Elementary School should not do likewise.

I am thrilled at the attendance here today. I was just thinking if we had had this many at school at any one time where could we have put them? And I wondered too with this large crowd if we were likely to have any problem of discipline - in my time at Buffalo School I don't recall any such problem, but one of the boys who is here this evening told me one time that when I, as Elementary Principal, made my regular visits to this school that the word soon got around that I was in the building, and then all the students were on their good behavior possibly then was true, but I think there was one exception - when I went into Mrs. Stack's room, it was the teacher, not the students, who went onto her good behavior. I could understand this, of course, since I had a part in raising her and also in her education, and in training her to become a teacher.

My first contact with the Buffalo School came in 1934 - I had another school job but it was getting a bit shaky, so I came to Buffalo and began teaching the upper grade room. One of the teachers there at that time was Mary Sawhill who drove over from her home in Blaine Township each day. I had not known Mary before, but I was impressed with her training for teaching since she had graduated a year or two before at my old College, Muskingum, in New Concord, Ohio and I knew that she was well prepared for her teaching job at Buffalo, I will speak of her later in another comment.

Going back a little in the history of Buffalo School, I have tried to find out who the earlier teachers were. Up until 1920 and later there was a high school here at Buffalo - the brick building had been built to house the High School - and there was a two-room elementary school in the Village, and some of the one-room schools were still open out in the Township Oak Ridge, Maple Grove, Farrar's, White's etc. As far as I can find out the earliest teacher still living who taught at Buffalo School was Mabel Wilson, now Mrs. Hamilton. Notice I do not call her the oldest former teacher, but so far as I

know the earliest former teacher still living. We are not here today to tell how *old* we are, but only how *smart* we are. Mabel Wilson came from a teaching family: her grandfather, J.M.K. Reed was a well-educated man and a teacher and her mother and an uncle and several aunts were teachers, and Mabel herself was well prepared for teaching. Mabel was famous and well-known from the time of her birth. I hope she will not mind if I read the report issued at the time of her birth.

### A Stranger in Cross Creek

I see in the evening of October 25, \_\_\_\_\_, a young strange lady stopped at the home of Andrew C. and Clara B. Wilson in Cross Creek Township. Not being able to state her wants and desires in our language, and being without visible means of support, after confirming with some of their neighbors and Dr. Bemis, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson decided to board, lodge, and clothe the unknown lady for the sake of her company, and if she becomes acquainted with our language to educate her. Next day, Professor Hall, County Superintendent, visited and brushed up the public school in that immediate vicinity.

The young lady, on her arrival, being dressed in the garb of Mother Eve during her primeval purity, was also dressed in the habiliments of fallen humanity and reposed contentedly. The moon then its zenith looked down with snarls upon this mundane sphere. The stars sung together with joy, the telephone wires hummed. Over most melodramatic voices, and flour at Wilson's Mill advanced 50 cents a sack.

I can say few, if any other present got a send-off like that when you made your appearance on earth.

Well, Mabel Wilson tonight for many years at Buffalo - then she marries a Buffalo farm boy, Robert Hamilton, settled down on a new farm and raised the family of 3 boys and 1 girl all of whom attended Buffalo School. Later, Mabel did substitute teaching at Buffalo School on many occasions.

The next earliest teacher, according to my record, is Lawrence Sutherland, who taught in 1923-29 at the White School. I wondered if this is the Lawrence Sutherland who later taught in Canton Township and then became Assistant County Superintendent where he served for quite a long time. I asked Lawrence about this short time ago and he admitted to being the same person. I asked him too if the school was then known as Possum Hollow and he admitted to that too. I thought he might have done some trapping in connection with his teaching, thus giving the school its nickname.

The next in point of time was Grace Martin who taught at White School in 1927, and taught many more times in other schools and who, I believe, is still teaching, when it is used at the Miller School at Meadowcroft Village. Grace's sister, Marie Martin came with the school picture in Hopewell in Farrar School at about the same time Grace began teaching.

I did not have anything to do with Buffalo School again until 1941, when Homer Lowry then on the School Board asked me to come to the school and do part time supervising in connection with my work, then in Jefferson Township, and later in Cross Creek Township, too.

At that time, Mrs. Ethel Vaught was teaching at Buffalo Room One, when she had been teaching since 1933 - Mary Sawhill was well established in Room Two and another Mary, Mary G Hutchinson from Donegal Township was serving in Room Three, and Miss Katherine Wright was teaching in Room Four. This staff served through the next three terms.

Then Mary Hutchinson, now Mrs. Waterhouse, went to a school nearer home and she was followed at Buffalo by Mary Scott McGaughey who had taught at both White and Farrar Schools until the latter was closed.

Catherine Parkinson Geho succeeded Katherine Wright Shaw in 1943 - and Mary Stack came to Buffalo at the same time, so for the next ten years, the teachers were 3 Marys - Stack, Sawhill(who became Mrs. Stine), McGaughey - and Mrs. Geho.

Mary Ross came into the picture here in 1954 - to make four Marys and one Catherine - Mrs. Geho - to make it unanimous. I once asked Mrs. Geho to change her name to Mary, but of course in that I was not successful. Other teachers taught for short periods in later



years at Buffalo - Without any reflection on them or on any other teacher at Buffalo. The period from 1943 - to 1958 and on to the closing of the Buffalo School, was, in my humble opinion, the Golden Age of this School. There was a time of stability for the school, with no change in the staff for a full fifteen years, or more. I can say that the teachers of this period were sincere, capable, and dedicated to the work which they were doing there, day after day, and year after year.

And you, who were young folks then, probably without realizing it were preparing for your life's work, encouraged in this and probably even compelled by concerned parents and the school officials, to attend school regularly, and to do the work which was presented to you to do. Yours was not the age of drugs and narcotics to stultify your minds and your bodies, and the hippies and the yuppies were words you didn't know much about, nor were you tempted to follow the low examples set by such demoralizing influences. I think that the school environment in which you grew up was wholesome and helpful in most all respects.

It is not my intention to overlook two other agencies which helped in the education of most of you. Those who lived in the Village and on a few nearby farms had the rare privilege of walking to school each day, and this didn't hurt you a bit, much as you may have envied those who rode on the school buses. For those who did ride the school buses, you had careful and capable drivers to bring you to school each morning and to take you home just as safely each evening. I do not recall a single accident involving the school buses, and if there were any, they were very few and very minor. I don't think that I can recall all the drivers who served while I was connected with the school, but I do remember well, Paul Roney who drove the Birch Run Route for many years, and of course Hack Wilson, known to all of you, who drove for so many years, to the High School in Washington, and in what was then the Route 31 Route for Buffalo School. Bob (Petry) McCreery has had a long service. Harold Taggart and Alex Taggart both drove bus, and in recent years, Homer Denning has driven a lot, and has assisted in supervising the transportation system in the Avella School District. The drivers were always punctual and capable I remember in making up the bus schedule, if Paul Roney was to have the initial loading point on Birch Run at 7:30 AM and to arrive at the school a 8:10 - you could almost set your watch by the time of his arrival. Bad road conditions of course, caused delays at times, but even then the buses were usually nearly

always on time. Our bus drivers did us a good service in keeping our school going well.

And last, but not least, the unsung heroes of the Public School System, the member of the Township School Board, who served year after year, without compensation, meeting regularly every month to take care of the business of keeping the schools open. Again, I have done a bit of a survey to determine some of our living school directors of former years here in Hopewell Township the oldest living one of whom I am sure is Mr. Paul Patton now in his nineties and living with a daughter in Texas. About two years ago, I visited Paul at her home then at Marland Heights over in the West Virginia Panhandle. He showed me through his time where he had been living alone in recent years - he showed me around so completely that if I had had the urge to go back that evening to burglarize him I could have gone to every nook and cranny of the home and probably have taken anything I wanted - the last thing he showed me - he pulled open a desk drawer, took out a large wallet, and showed me how much money he had in the wallet, and then showed me an airplane ticket - one way to a destination in Texas - he was to leave by plane the next morning - and it is reported he isn't able to come back to Pennsylvania and probably never will. Paul's interest in our school was sincere and complete - he served in the school board for more years, I think than any other person in Hopewell Township, he visited the school regularly and managed to visit with each teacher if possible while he was there. His unselfish interest was invaluable to Buffalo School.

Others who served faithfully and well:

John Hunter from 1957 until well into the years of Avella Jointure.

Robert Coulter, Sr. from 1945 to 1956

Ben Miller for a year or two around 1953-54

John Rush from 1956 and onto the Jointure Board

Wray Jones and Ruth Ripper and Kenneth Craft for several years and onto Avella Jointure.

Several others now deceased: Homer Lowry, Bob Hamilton Ed Ralston, Alvin Taggart, Alex Taggart

I am sorry for any which I may have missed.

I am sure we are all grateful for these unsung heroes who had such a vital part in the years of the operation of Buffalo School.

**A.D. White speaking to  
Sons of the American Revolution  
February 19, 1987**

Honored guests.

When President Yohe called me sometime ago to speak on this occasion, I quickly reminded him that I had done the honors to George Washington at a similar meeting about a year ago - He said that he remembered and he even told me what I had talked about, but I found that he could talk faster than I could, and that a man of the legal profession could not easily be dissuaded from his position, so I realized that I was not only nominated but also duly elected for this task.

I did speak last year on Mr. Washington's interest in our part of the Country and of his activities here to promote that interest.

In calling about for a topic to use on this occasion, again I had the feeling that the military exploits of George Washington are pretty well known, at least to members of the D.A.R. and the S.A.R. and I wondered if I couldn't choose a topic not directly related to those activities. I thought that I would prefer to speak on Mr. Washington as a person, as a man rather than as a soldier, but in reading one of the more recent biographies of this famous man, I came to realize that these two aspects of his character are so thickly entwined that, except in relatively few cases, it is hard to distinguish one without the other. His military exploits are so much of the man and of his character.

George Washington was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, to a rather affluent colonial family. His father, Augustus

Washington, was of the English family ones so prominent in \_\_\_\_\_ . His mother, May Ball, is said not to have been of equal social standing with the Washington family. His father died when George was barely ten years old, and through the death of his half brother, George came into possession of Mt. Vernon when he was only 20 years of age. He respected his Mother, but did not get along well with her. She seldom visited him at Mt. Vernon, but she did live to see him elected President of the United States, but she died later that year, in 1789.

The circumstances of George's early life were such that responsibilities were laid upon his shoulders, one by one, but he accepted these nobly and acquitted himself well in discharging duties as they were thrust upon him. He early became a judge of good land from his experiences in surveying extensive lands for Lord Farifax in the Shenandoah Valley, so when he became the sole owner of Mt. Vernon he was capable of managing that estate and it then became his home for the rest of his life.

It was his friend and neighbor Henry Lee, "Light Horse Henry," who thus eulogized Mr. Washington at his death in 1799 as First in War, First in Peace, and First in the Hearts of his Countrymen.

As a man of Peace, Mr. Washington was best known for his love for his home at Mt. Vernon. He was reluctant to leave it when called to duty by his country, but he always answered those calls and remained on duty until he felt that that duty had been completely discharged.

His earlier exploits in the French and Indian War, and at Fort Necessity and at the Battle of Braddock, in both of which young

Colonel Washington tasted the dregs of bitter defeat, but when he returned to Ft. Duquesne and drove the French out in November, 1758, he felt a sense of victory at last, and again he returned to Mt. Vernon and married - in June 1759, Martha Dandridge Costis, and settled down to what he thought would be the life of a Virginia gentleman farmer.

The next fifteen years must have been most to his liking - he was the owner and operator of a large plantation - he had many slaves and many hired workers, and as he rode over his plantation he could be, literally, the "monarch of all he surveyed."

As he rode over his plantation on horseback, and as he rode among his troops in battle, Mr Washington was an impressive sight to behold. He was large and well built - over six feet in height, and I believe it was Lafayette who remarked that Mr. Washington had the largest hands he ever saw on a man.

In his conduct of affairs - either of his own business, or of the affairs of government, Mr. Washington acted punctually and directly and efficiently. In making decisions, he always consulted his fellow officers and then made decisions which were usually correct and effective.

In the early 1770's when the clouds of war began to threaten the colonies, Mr. Washington was doing his duties as a good citizen in the Virginia House of Burgesses, and when the First and Second Continental Congresses met at Philadelphia, Mr. Washington was there as a member from Virginia and at the Second Congress, he was the only member to attend in military uniform. On June 15, 1775 he was elected to command the armies of the colonies - he accepted

the appointment, but with the stipulation that he receive no salary - however, he asked for compensation for expenses incurred - and during the War Years he kept a careful accounting of expenses, and at the end of the Conflict he gave this accounting to the Congress for settlement.

The campaign and battles of the Revolution are pretty generally known to most of us. In the conduct of the War, General Washington had not only to direct the strategy in most of the battles which were fought, but he was faced also with the problems of recruitment, training, and discipline of the forces which he commanded. He was constantly faced with these problems during the entire war, but they were most aggravating during the winter, such as that at Valley Forge in 1777-78, when his troops were ill clad, poorly fed, and many times serving without sufficient monetary support. It is surprising that Washington was able to resolve so many of these situations, when he often had little support from the Congress and from the States.

He had mutinies, too, and insubordination and treachery to deal with time after time. In the treason of Benedict Arnold he had tried to be patient and understanding in his earlier dealings with Arnold, but in the critical time of this disquieting affair, Arnold was able to escape to within the enemy lines and it was the British spy, Captain Andre who had to pry the penalty for his part in the affair.

Early in 1781, when, with the help of the French forces on land and sea, victory at last seemed to be within the grasp of the American forces. It was during that year that actions were taken to form a new County in South Western Pennsylvania. This movement

was directed on the State level by President Joseph Reed of the Supreme Executive Council, an office equivalent to the Governor of later years. After defining the boundaries of this new county to embrace all of present Greene and Washington counties, as well as the parts of Allegheny and Beaver Counties west and south of the Ohio River, and providing for the governing offices of the new County, it was specified that this county be named Washington.

A full account of the act creating this county is given in Crumrine's History of Washington County. I want to quote one paragraph: viz. At the date of the formation of this new County, bearing his name, George Washington had firmly fixed himself in the hearts of the American People - soon to give them the avails of his victory: Cornwallis was marching and counter marching through the central portions of North Carolina, to surrender in the fall of this year to Washington and Lafayette at Yorktown. What name thus the more proper for the new County than it received?

Soon thereafter Catfish Camp became the town of Washington and ever since it has been the County seat of our whole county. When around the turn of the century, now 87 years ago, it was decided to erect a new Court House here, the building erected was then and still is architecturally beautiful on both the outside and the inside and to stand guard over it all is the majestic statue of George Washington himself.

On June 5, 1924, when it was decided to organize a chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution in the County it was appropriately called the Washington Chapter which was the name it carried for about three years, or until April 17, 1927 since which



all of the Beauty and Goodness which was in the life of Dr. Charles Gersna.

## **Response of A.D. White - June 3, 1990**

### **Avella High School Baccalaureate Hall of Fame Award**

Thank you, Dr. Zellors. When the matter was first mentioned to me about 2 weeks ago, my first thought was that the profile of the Avella School District must surely have forgotten the damage which I did to their school system when I was working here as Elementary Supervisor. When I meet former students, as I am always doing, my greeting usually is "Yes, I remember you, since I interfered with your education.

But fortunately for me, I guess the thirty-one years since I retired from Avella School District have given some of us, at least, the opportunity to forget the unsavory and to remember, with charity, the good things which happened when I was working in these public schools.

I began supervising in 1927, almost without qualifications, except the feat that I had had a few years of teaching experience, possibly about seven. But I found in my schools good teachers who were honestly trying to do a good job of instructing those students entrusted to their care.

I perceived my job to be to assist these teachers by improving conditions under which they were working, by furnishing them better materials with which to work, and also making it possible for them to have their pupils in school regularly - this entailed improving the transportation which brought the children to school each day. For those parents and children who were negligent in attendance, there was ever the Compulsory Attendance Law, which I had to invoke on occasion.

But I can now say, with confidence, that when the students and their parents come to realize that we were trying to really provide an education, our attendance improved, and our teachers had a good situation in which to do their job of instructing.

I believe that a business or institution is judged by the product which it puts out. That is true of a School-Student.

Of the possibly 12,000 students who were in my schools, of course I have lost track of many of them. But of those whom I still meet from time to time, and then know about their lives and their work, almost without exception, I find that they have been successful in life. There are teachers and preachers, doctors and lawyers, nurses and sometimes, engineers and businessmen and women, farmers and artisans and

time it has carried the full name: The George Washington Chapter, and then this organization now and in future years to come will thus honor, the Father of Our Country who was First in War, First in Peace, and First in the hearts of his Countrymen.

**Response of A.D. White  
to the award for Good Citizenship  
given at Apple Festival, Hickory PA  
October 7, 1989**

When Robbie asked me to be present on this occasion, he didn't tell me what I was being charged with, so it hasn't been possible for me to prepare much of a defense. I do admit to most of the allegations which have just been read, but I am still much at a loss to know why I am here.

For the award which has just been presented, I am sincerely grateful. As a citizen of Mt. Pleasant Township I don't think that I have done much except live here and raise my family here. I came to this area for the wife who was my helpmate for over 61 years.

Since my work was in the field of public education, I had to go to other communities to secure employment. When I meet former students who were in the schools which I supervised, I facetiously remark to them that I interfered with their education when they were in school. I really don't think that that interference, if that was what it was, was serious, since I believe that most of them turned out all right, since among probably 12,000 children I had in the schools, I have heard of only one boy who served time in the penitentiary - most of my former students became good citizens, and I feel like taking a little credit for that fact.

Since I was not working in the schools which my own children attended, I was not able, directly, to interfere with their education, but I believe that the local schools did a good job in educating my

homemakers. I am proud of them, and I believe that they are proud too of their achievements.

A life and a good mind are an awful thing to waste, and I believe that the Avella Schools in my time and in the present time are doing a good job of preparing their precious young lives to prepare for years of usefulness.

## **A Tribute to Mike Panjuscek**

It is a great pleasure to be present and be able to add a few words to honor Mike Panjuscek on this significant occasion. I believe that I may have known this man longer than most of you folks here with the exception of his own family and his neighbors of his earliest years. For Mike came from a good middle class Czecho-Slovakian family who lived far down the Cross Creek Valley 3 or 4 miles from Avella and within just a few miles of the West Virginia State Line. His father was a coal miner and the years of the 1930's when Mike was born were hard years for the families of the Pennsylvania area, for those were the Depression years - at best the miners had only a few days of work a month, and in order to exist, they had to work elsewhere, whenever they could find something to do, but the hardy ones made out somehow and managed to exist at least.

These families had children, too and Mike was the youngest of a family of four. We had a school called Turney, a four room school down in that part of Jefferson Township and I had the privilege of being Supervising Principal in charge of that school. Mike began school at Turney when he was between 6 and 7 years of age, and he attended Turney School until it was closed in 1944.

One of my functions as Supervising Principal was to enforce the Compulsory Attendance Law, that is I was truant officer among other duties which I performed. If I visited that school and found certain pupils absent, usually I made an immediate call at the home, and if the absent pupil was able to attend school, he got a free ride in my car and was soon back in school again. The pupils there and their parents soon got the idea that the children were expected to be in school if they were able to attend. My point with the parents was, if they would only send their children to school, we would do our best to give them an education. Fortunately, we had teachers in that school who were willing to do their part, and I have the feeling that we did a fairly good job of giving these young people a good elementary education - this school has been closed now for 44 years, but every few years we have a Reunion of former pupils there, and I challenge anyone to find a better group of people than these folks are - for in learning to read and write and all the rest of the elements of an education - these young folks, many of them from immigrant families, learned also to behave themselves and to work and to become good useful Americans.

I want to say, parenthetically, that within a few days after these honors are given to Mike Panjuscek, a writer from California, another former student of the same Turney School, is coming back to that area - to

Meadowcroft Village - to autograph copies of a book which she has written and in which she tells what life was like in those days of the Depression in the lower Cross Creek Valley.

Mike continued his education after Turney School close in the Cross Creek Township graded schools - he couldn't go to High School so his education was continued in the School of Hard Knocks - he had to go to work, and fortunately he got a job - Union Switch and Signal needed a strong young man on the crew as they were putting in a new signal system on the old Wabash Railroad which went down Cross Creek Valley within a few rods of Mike's home - he worked at that project until it was completed going through West Virginia and out into Ohio to complete the project. Mike served his Country for four years - in the US Navy - and then as we all know, he turned to his artistic talents to becoming a commercial sign painter which he has made good, and also has been so successful in the field of entertainment that he has come to be known on the radio as Polka Mike - so as I said in the beginning, I am highly pleased, as one who had a small part in giving this man a good start in life to help honor Mike on this occasion - more power to you, Mike, you have many good years to go. Keep up the good work.

**Remarks of A.D. White  
given at his  
Testimonial Dinner at Avella School  
September 28, 1991**

Mr. M.C. and Friends and distinguished guests,

Since so much has been said, I feel like sitting down without saying anything.

This has been quite a "bash." When this fine Committee who has arranged this affair first mentioned it to me several weeks ago, I think that I told them that a very few people would want to attend, but I was told that all of my friends would be here, and I said probably 25 or 30 would come on such an occasion.

Really and truly, I had never ever thought of counting how many friends I have. Whenever I needed you, you were there to help and encourage me, but I have never thought before of trying to get them all together in one place, but here you are.

First I want to Thank You all and especially to you who have come from a distance at personal sacrifice - I will not mention you by name now, but I know you are here. Then for all the good things the speakers have said, I am sincerely grateful. You have made it appear that I am some important person. I do not intend to refute these good things you have said about me. If I tried to do that you would probably ride me out of here on a rail and take me and leave me in the deepest pool you could find in Cross Creek. But I do want to give my own side of the story, since there is another side to it.

I am especially grateful to those who have spoken here tonight, representing organizations to which I belong. My membership in their groups has been satisfying to me, and my contacts with these and other members of these groups has been most gratifying.

The first group which I joined when I was twelve years old, was the Presbyterian Church so for the past 85 years, the Church and its teachings have always been a stabilizing influence on my life.

But all of you know that the "best years of my life" were spent in the services of the public schools of our area. When I took my first job of



teaching in the fall of 1915, I went to work in the same school which I had attended only 6 years before. Some of the younger children who were in school with me were still there when I went back to teach. Two were my favorite friends and neighbors, yet I was accepted by those people who knew me best, and I don't think that a "sour note" was expressed by anyone during that term of school. It was the same when I went to teach in Cross Creek High School. I was working for and with people who knew me well.

Although I lived on a farm and planned to farm for my life's work, I found that I couldn't stand that type of work, so went into the field of education instead.

As time went on, I found myself working largely with people who knew me well.

In the public schools, I was working for school boards and directors, and also for the parents of the children of all the people. Yet I can think of only two directors in one school district and two in another who opposed me in the operation of the schools, and their opposition was on personal grounds and had nothing to do with the operation of the schools.

I was working with teachers all of whom were good, dedicated people who knew what they were in the class room for. Of all the teachers with whom I worked, I can think of only one who was disloyal to me. With all the other I had good relations.

And of the hundreds and thousands of young people, the students in our schools, again I can recall only a very few ever gave me any trouble, and most of those whom I meet including a lot who are here tonight you are still my friends, and I thank you for that enduring friendship.

So what I have been trying to say is this: You have spoken of my success in life, but I want to tell you that any success which I have had is your success, too, so it is not my success, or yours alone, but our success. That dear friends is my message to you.

My deepest gratitude to all of you for our friendship over these many years for you many kind expressions here tonight and most of all to all of you for being here and for giving me this Testimonial to me, and to our success together.

My God Bless You, Each and Everyone.

- Good Night.

