

This document researched and graciously provided by Mary Whitcomb, August 2007
from "Delta, Ohio Area History" T108, page 159 and T109, pages 159-160

OUR EARLY COUNTRY SCHOOLS

By Hazel Fetterman

Horace Mann said, "The Common School is the greatest discovery ever made by man".

The Delta Area has long shown its concern for the education of its people and so the need for schools was recognized.

According to Howe's Historical Collection of Ohio p. 663 the first education in the Delta area was held in Mission Schools. Their first mission was to Christianize the Indians. To gather one or two hundred boys and girls of all ages from six or seven to twenty years was no easy task according to Col. D.W.H. Howard. He attended such a school along with the Indians. He was between the age of seven and eight years when his father placed him in the care of Rev. Van Tassel at the Mission School on the Maumee River. He had thought it a sad experience as did the Indians — to be shut up in a school room presided over by "a sanctimonious old maid of the hard-shell, stiff-backed Yankee Presbyterian persuasion". He would have left with the many Indians who left the school, but as he said, "The Indians were too honest and would not keep me hid from my father and mother." The school did a good job and those running the mission were kind, pure, just, and generous. Col. Howard became a friend to the Indians and a good authority on them. He realized his great experience in education.

Schooling first taught in the Delta Area was done in the homes. The first one room school, in 1835, was reported to have been near Winameg, in Pike Township. The first one room schools were of logs, but later they were frame or brick construction and dotted in each township about two miles in any direction. The students walked to school, usually, although my mother told of having a horse that she rode to school. It would meet her at the end of the school day and take her home. These schools taught students from first through the eighth grades. If they could afford to attend high school by paying tuition they would attend in a nearby town.

The first centralized school - grades one through twelve - was erected in Fulton Township, Fulton County in Ai. It was the second centralized in the state that did away with one room schools in their district.

There had been fourteen or fifteen one room schools in Fulton Township.

No. 1 Shaffer; No. 2 Werner (or No. 12 in 1882 and Ai 1888); No. 3 Wilson-Koder, Rd. 6 between Land K; No.4 Fauble between Rd. 5-2 and 6.2 on Rd. J; No.5 Fraker at Rd. H and 5-2; No.6 Everett (Wood before 1882) on Rd. N; No.7 Dutch Ridge, Rd. 5 and M; No.8 John Dowling; No.9 ?; No. 10 Luke (Amboy-Fulton Special) Rd. N between Rd. 6 and 7; No, 11?; No. 12 Werner (1888); No. 13 West of Swanton, Rd. H between 3 and 4; Log School behind Woodrow Sipe on Rd. N, not numbered, and Peterson on dead end road between Rd. 6 and 7; Basswood School was on Rd. J between Rds. 5 and 4.

Many one room schools were named for the person or family who donated the land for its structure. In each one room school there was the American flag, a blackboard, single or double desks, a teacher's desk, and a potbellied stove in the center of the room which had to be fed with wood or coal by the teacher or an older student during cold days. The teacher did the other janitor work or hired a boy to do it, also. Some schools had a well or the water pail needed to be filled from a nearby farmhouse. The water pail, dipper and wash basin usually occupied a back corner of the room. There wasn't much worry about sanitation. (I taught the students to make their own paper_cups.)

Restrooms were two out houses at the rear of the school grounds. Physical education was the walk to school and the play at recess, morning, and noon periods. (I for one, took advantage of this play with the children.) The beginning of the hot lunch program began when soup was often made on top of the pot bellied stove on wintery days.

A May 1929 *Atlas* headed an article "Fulton Schools of Ye Old Days Were Marvelous Institutions" states that the expense of the school house of 1839 and 1840 was not elaborate but "they didn't squeeze the tax payer to a pulp." There were about twenty in Fulton County costing about \$200.00 each.

The pioneer school teacher will always be remembered. His or her labor was certainly one of sacrifice and patriotism. Various prices were paid to teachers. William Cowan, a great teacher, was paid \$13.00 per month his first term but was later boosted to \$30.00 "He was a strong man. A weak female demanded \$105.00".

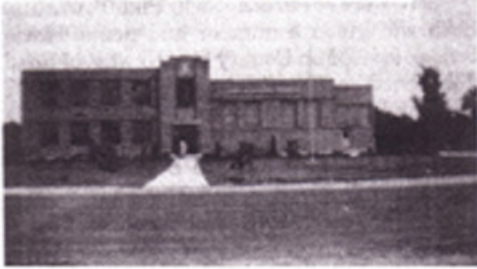
The school houses of 1840 were heated by the fireplace and later a box stove. The teacher was the janitor. Wood cost \$1.14 a cord delivered in 1868, \$1.00 in 1871, and .60 cents in 1879. (Wood was plentiful and money scarce.)

In 1875 H.B. Mann was one of the foremost teachers of the country school. His first school was the Wagner District in Swancreek. He received \$180.00 for six months and was his own janitor.

"Away back yonder, clothed in homespun clothing, heavy boots or shoes, and a big scarf wrapped around their heads, boys and girls, the six year olds and the sixteens, walked through fields and woods, through snow and mud, one, two, and more miles to the school-house and back again with a heart full of song."

In the January 30, 1880 *Atlas* a report of schools was listed. Koos School, district No.9, York Township, third month of term ending Jan. 28:— Average monthly enrollment - 43, average daily attendance - 38, average per cent of deportment - 90 percent, cases of punishment - 00, school progressing finely, Mont Trowbridge, teacher. Report for month ending Jan.25 of district No.7, Fulton Township: - Number pupils enrolled - 30, average daily attendance -25, number of boys enrolled - 19, average daily attendance - 16, No. of pupils missing whole days - 21, cases of corporal punishment - 1, number of visitors -20, visits by members of the Board - 00 - Clayton Hopkins, teacher. Miss Alice Smith, who is teaching in district No. 10, Fulton Township, reports her school in a progressive condition. She will furnish her pupils with grade cards from the *Atlas* job office.

**PIKE TOWNSHIP
SCHOOLS** T109



Pike Twp. School opened its doors in the Fall of 1938 and closed in 1987 because of declining enrollment

159

There were seven schools in Pike Township. Each was given a number and name.

Hoxie School, located on County Road J west of Road 7-2 burned and the children were moved to #7 school, which had been vacant for a time.

This left six schools that went into Pike Township School — grades 1 through 8 in 1939. They were:

No.1 Swamp Angel School Corner of Road M and 8.

No. 2 LaSalle School Read M and 10.

No.3 Whitcomb School which had first been built on Samuel Whitcomb's farm at Road L and 12, and later moved one mile north at the corner of M and 12.

No.4 Howard School at Road J and 12.

No. 5 Pike Center School at Road J and 10.

No. 6 Hone School (was also known as the Aumend School).

No. 7 Maple Grove School at Road K and 8.

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