

## Educational Interests in Otsego County

The sentiment that stands at the beginning of this article has found liberal support in Otsego County.

To give a little better idea to the residents of one part of the county what is being done educationally in another part and to assure non-residents that if they move to this county the education of their children need not suffer, I give these few thoughts on educational interests in Otsego County.

Of course, it is generally known that teachers' examinations are held on the same days and with the same printed questions from the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction as in every other county in Michigan. The Board of Examiners consists of two examiners, chosen for two years each by the Board of Supervisors, and the Commissioner of Schools.

The Examiners are paid by the day, the Commissioner receives no compensation for services as Examiner.

Examinations are held in June, August and October. Certificates issued as follows:

Third grade, good for one year

Second grade, good for three years

First grade, good for four years.

The law requires ladies to pay an institute fee of fifty cents, and gentlemen, one dollar, for each year of the life of the certificate for which they are examined. Receipts are invariably given for fees so paid. These fees are deposited with the County Treasurer, who holds them until he is authorized by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to pay them out in defraying the expenses of the Teachers' Institutes.

These Institutes are of very great value to teachers, pupils and to every district whose teacher attends, as they are sources of a large fund of information and inspiration to the teacher, and in no very indirect way to the pupil and the district.

Teachers are authorized by law to close school during the time an Institute is held without the loss of pay, provided the teacher is in attendance at the Institute. Conductors of Institutes are obliged to give all teachers present a receipt showing how many days the teacher was present. School directors should demand that the teacher show receipts after closing school to attend an Institute.

No school board should hire a teacher who does not attend Institutes, for that teacher is either too dead to be galvanized into life by the Institute, or is lacking in professional zeal to such an extent that her teaching is a chilly proposition.

Otsego County has one good Institute every year and several live Associations. As Institute workers we have as good as Michigan produces: H. C. Rankin, W. N. Ferris, H. P. Pattengill, A. B. Lightfoot, Miss Fannie Allen, Miss Abigail Lynch, O. S. Woodley, M. O.

Graves, S. B. Laird, Prof. McFarland, F. L. Keeler, Jesse Hubbard, Morley E. Osborne, etc., etc.

School houses are equipped, as a rule, as well as any in Michigan, with various charts, maps, globes, modern desks, flags, etc. There are few schools that do not have a neat little library of good books to add further interest to the history, geography, reading or language classes.

Probably school officers will in no way spend district money in a way that will yield, and continue to yield, good results for such a length of time as to put ten dollars into their libraries each year. The books should, in nearly every instance, be chosen by the teacher. One of the worst enemies to the library movement is the agent who wants to sell a "library and case" to the district. Such libraries contain a large portion of books that the school does not need, and leave out a large number of history readers, geography readers and nature readers that the school really needs, and costs too much.

The Commissioner of Schools, though absolutely having no financial interest in the sale of any supplies, makes it a business to be able to tell school officers where they can get absolutely all kinds of things that schools need, from flags to desks, from building plans to crayons.

School houses in Otsego County are better than an outsider might suppose. There is not a log school house in the county. The day of the dingy, dreary affair is past.

Practically every building is neatly painted. Many have well graded yards, neatly fenced with woven wire.

There seems to be a praiseworthy epidemic of putting in drive wells.

The text-books are, in nearly all schools, strictly up-to-date.

All schools are graded and taught according to the State Manual and Course of Study, a book from the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Thus, pupils in a certain grade are doing the same work that is being done in a corresponding grade in Southern Michigan.

Outsiders will not doubt that educational interests are looking up when it is known that the state has established at Gaylord a County Normal School under state auspices and inspection. This school will be housed in the building of the Gaylord Public Schools; will have a course of nine months; will open September 11, and will, at the close of a one year course, grant certificates for three years.

This is an opportunity worthy the investigation of the teachers and young people of the county.

This county is not the dumping grounds for poor, unsuccessful or low-grade teachers. During the year just closed there was employed in Otsego County schools teachers with certificates as follows:

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State Normal College certificates .....	5
Mt. Pleasant Normal certificates.....	8
College certificates.....	2
Endorsed first grade certificates.....	1
First grade certificates.....	1
Second grade certificates.....	24
Third grade certificates.....	16

R. D. Bailey, the efficient County School Commissioner, author of the article appearing herewith, is an able man and an important personage in the educational affairs of our commonwealth. He dates his entrance into the county in the year of 1892, coming here from Hastings, Barry county. Mr. Bailey is an instructor of no mean ability, and has taught district and village schools for many years both in this and other counties, and as showing the esteem in which he is held in educational matters it is but necessary to cite that he is now serving his fourth term as County School Commissioner, which office he has held with signal honor and fidelity, by his untiring energy and unflagging zeal has very materially aided in raising the standard of educational ethics in the county, and so highly is he valued by men of letters that his services are in constant demand throughout the northern counties as a lecturer and director of county institutes.

**“Right Education Should be the Chief Business of a Nation”**

It is not easy to get a special certificate in this county.

We do not endorse certificates; it is unlawful.

Practically all rural schools pay as high as \$35 per month, some \$37 and \$38 and several \$40.

The Gaylord school employs eleven teachers, all are either University, College or State Normal graduates; none other need apply. Gaylord schools have twelve grades, a kindergarten separate from other grades, three teachers in the High School, and its graduates are admitted on diploma to the University of Michigan or any other Michigan college.

In many subjects the work can be done as well here as at a college.

Young people who have finished the grades of their home school are invited to enter Gaylord Schools. The tuition of:

\$6 per year in grades 1, 2, 3 and 4

\$8 per year in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8

\$10 per year in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12

is very low considering the many advantages offered.

Gaylord has three grades in the high school, a teacher for each grade with one exception, spends \$50 per year on physical apparatus, \$50 per year on reference books, and has large, cheerful and well ventilated rooms. The school house, a picture of which accompanies this

article, is a large brick structure, with two dinner rooms in basement, lavatories, six drinking fountains, two-story, brick water-closet which is heated and ventilated the same as the school proper, electric lights and a valuable outfit of reference books which the teachers require to be used. Truant law is strictly enforced by a special truant officer.

Elmira has a corps of three teachers, two having second grade certificates and one, their progressive principal, having an indorsed first grade.

Vanderbilt has a corps of four teachers comprising two second grade certificates and two Mt. Pleasant Normal certificates.

Johannesburg has a corps of three teachers, comprising two second grades and one first grade.

These three schools are ten grade schools and have quite valuable reference libraries, and are doing a faithful and earnest work.

Eighth grade examinations are held once a year in the county on the same dates as other counties hold theirs on questions from the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The papers written in examination are examined by the Board of Examiners. Pupils passing this examination receive a neat diploma which admits them to the ninth grade of any high school or to the Agricultural College.

There were forty-five applicants at this examination in the spring.

It is a pity that more parents do not keep their children in school until they have finished this examination at least; in fact, in these good times out High Schools ought to be crowded, as a reasonable amount of sensible education greatly increases a child's earning power.

There is one township unit district in the county, viz., Charlton township. Here one board manages all the schools in the township.

District No. 1, Chester township, known as the Big Lake district, is building a fine, large school house, using cement blocks. District No. 2, Dover township, is building a fine new school house. Next year District No. 3, Dover, will do the same.

We look with admiring eye upon the neat property of the Weber or Meston school, the Klingensmith school, the Royal Stone or Sturgeon Valley school, the McCoy school, the Rush school, the Ashley school, the Whitmarsh school, the Hallock, the Teeter, the Shaff, the Madison, etc., etc. We point with pride to the windmill with tank in school room and horse tank at roadside at Madison school; to the windmill with tank in well house and horse tank at roadside at Shaff school; to the fine, woven wire fences at the Van Buren, Weber, McCoy, Klingensmith, Rush, Wertman, Ashley, Sturgeon Valley, Whitmarsh, Hallock, Teeter, Hurd, Burr, Van Tyle and Madison schools.

We point with pride to the beautiful interior, the steam heat and convenience of the Johannesburg school.

We point with pride to the many able and painstaking school officers.

We point with pride to the many bonnie lasses who are at the helm in these schools.

There is a live educational sentiment in Otsego County, but we must not rest self-satisfied. The best that the state knows is none too good for every school in this county. Parents, can you not guarantee to your children a good common school education? Officers, can you not hire teachers with care and keep them by the year rather than by the term?

There should go forth from all our schools a stream of well-trained young people.

When the heart of the home is in league with the head of the school it is well with the child.

Right education should be the chief business of every nation. R. D. BAILEY, County Commissioner of Schools.

#### **GAYLORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND CORPS OF TEACHERS FOR 1904-5**

George H. Curtis, Superintendent, Graduate of Albion College  
Mabel E. E. Wolf, Principal, Graduate of Ypsilanti State Normal College  
Grace Green, Ass't Principal, Graduate of Olivet College  
Lena M. Burch, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, Graduate of Central Normal, Mt. Pleasant  
Ethel McReavy, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades, Graduate of Central Normal, Mt. Pleasant  
L. Alice Wheeler, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Graduate of Ypsilanti State Normal College  
Bertha McKenzie, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Graduate of Central Normal, Mt. Pleasant  
Martha S. Cosier, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Graduate of Ypsilanti State Normal College  
Mary McCormick, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, Graduate of Ypsilanti State Normal College  
Goldia Whittaker, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, Graduate of Ypsilanti State Normal College  
Grace McBain, Kindergarten, Graduate of Central Normal, Mt. Pleasant