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# A History of the Schools of Edgar County, Illinois

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A HISTORY OF THE SCHOOLS OF

EDGAR COUNTY, ILLINOIS

(TITLE)

BY

Charles L. Humphrey

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Science in Education

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1968

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
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## PREFACE

The cultural development of a community is dependent, in part, on the development of its school system. The purpose of this study was to trace the historical development of the school systems of Edgar County, from the date of the first school in the county, 1820, through 1968. Brief histories of the political boundaries of Edgar County, and the public school systems of Illinois were also included as background material.

This study was concerned with the growth of the schools of Edgar County, and with the development of each of the present school districts. This study traces the formation of the school districts from the early village and city schools, through the formation of the township schools, and to the organization of the present Unit Districts which are in operation in the county.

Information concerning the history of the schools was collected from histories of Edgar County; histories of Illinois; histories of the townships and villages of Edgar County, which were written by early residents of the county; newspaper files; official records, such as, Laws of Illinois, Annual Statistical Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Annual for the Edgar County Public Schools 1907-1967; local school board minutes; and from personal interviews of present and past board members, teachers, county superintendents and

local historians. The information gained from these sources was used to trace the establishment, use, termination, or present status of the school districts in Edgar County.

The one room country school is no longer a reality in Edgar County. A few such buildings still remain. Most, however, have been torn down, or are in a bad state of repair. Some have been remodeled into homes. Others have been converted into community centers and still serve their communities in this capacity.

The cultural heritage of the citizens of Edgar County is rich in the traditions of our schools. This heritage which we have inherited from our forefathers should not be forgotten. However, many of the records of the schools have been lost or destroyed; most of the people associated with the early school systems have died; and all that remains of the early schools are the memories.

It is hoped that this study will somehow stimulate, and revive, some of these memories and restore the interest and respect which is due these early schools.

The author would like to thank all of these people who helped find information, or who took the time to be of service in the writing of this paper. Their help is greatly appreciated.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

The history of Edgar County dates back to the early part of the eighteenth century. From 1673 to 1765, the Illinois Territory was claimed by the French. In 1717, Illinois became a part of the French colony of Louisiana. In 1765, France relinquished her claims to the Illinois Territory and it became a province of England until 1778. After the surrender of Kaskaskia to George Rogers Clark on July 4, 1778, the Illinois Territory was a county of Virginia. "The new county vaguely defined as to boundaries was attached to that commonwealth. This act was passed in October, 1778, and proclamation of the act made June 17, 1779."<sup>1</sup>

In 1787, Virginia gave up her claim to the territory and it became a territory of the United States of America. In 1790, Edgar County was included in the Northwest Territory and was at that time a part of Knox County. (See Map page 2)

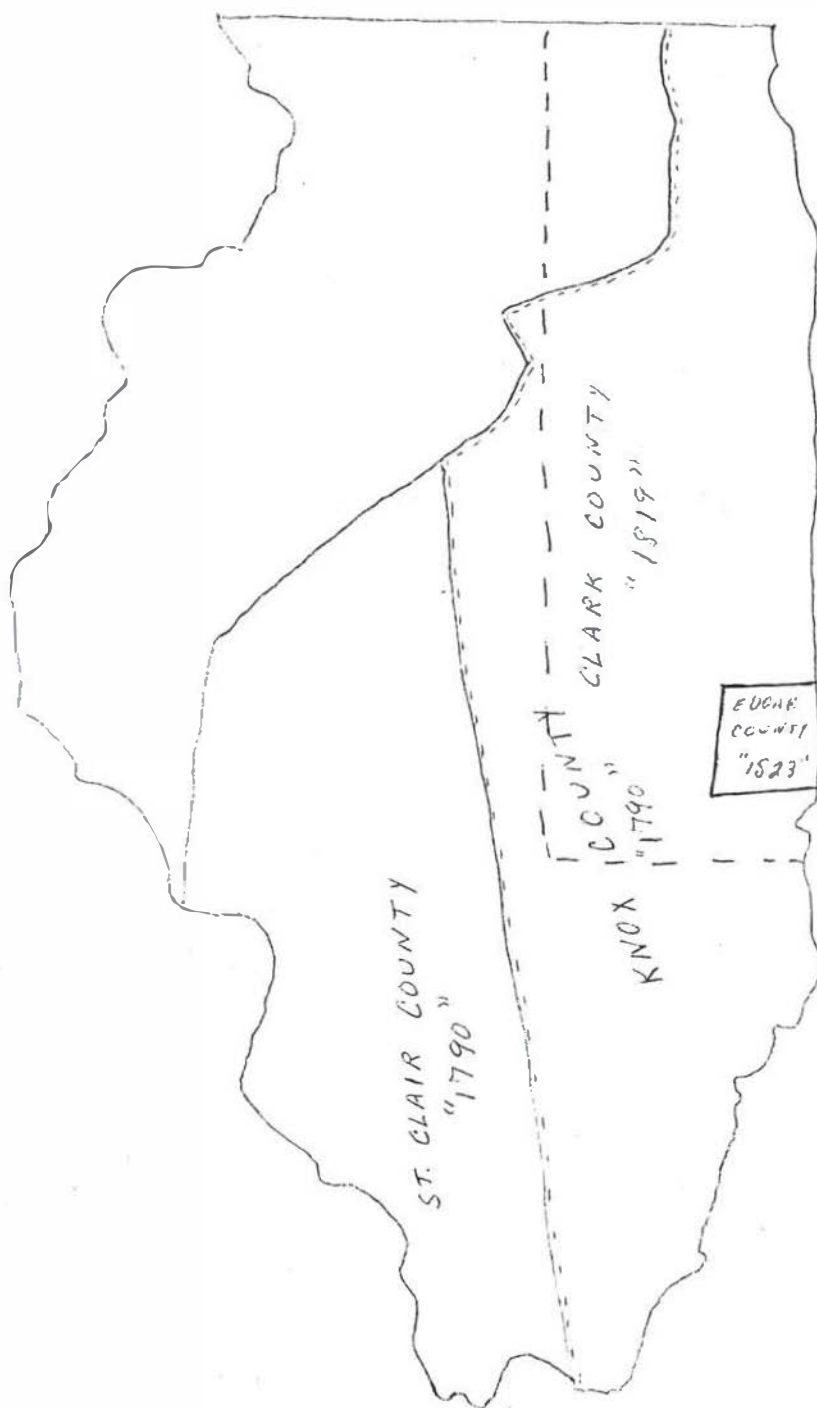
With the arrival of settlers from Kentucky and Tennessee, the population of Illinois increased rapidly and the territory was granted statehood in 1818.

From 1819 until 1823, Edgar County was a part of Clark County. On January 3, 1823, Edgar County was formed. The

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<sup>1</sup>Edward J. Hughes, Counties of Illinois, Their Origin and Evolution, (Springfield: State of Illinois, March 21, 1934) p. 5.

## MAP OF ILLINOIS AND EDGAR COUNTY



county was named in honor of General John Edgar. He was born in Ireland and later became an officer in the British Navy during the American Revolution. He married an American woman, who helped three British soldiers to desert from the British Army during the Revolutionary War. Because of this, General Edgar fled to Kaskaskia and later joined the Colonial Army. Edgar County was named by the wife of General Edgar. "It is told. . . Mrs. Edgar was at the capital and was given permission to name it / Edgar County / and she bestowed upon it her own name saying, 'My husband gave this name to me; it is mine, and I give it to this new county--I name it Edgar.'"<sup>2</sup>

"From 1824 until 1856 Edgar County was divided into five precincts--Pike, Wayne, Carroll, Fairfield and Ripley."<sup>3</sup> When Edgar County was first formed, its northern boundary was north of the present city of Chicago. This was the boundary line until 1826 when Vermillion County was formed. With the formation of Vermillion County, Edgar County's boundary was reduced to the area that it presently contains. By the year 1856, most of the settlers of the county were in favor of having township organization, and on November 4 of 1856 an election was held to decide this question.

"There were a total of 2,320 votes cast and of this number 1,349 were in favor of organization and 971 opposed."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Edgar County. (Chicago: Munsell Publishing Co., 1905), p. 624.

<sup>3</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois. (Chicago: Wm. LeBaron, and Co., 186 Dearborne Street, 1879), p. 543.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 549.

The townships duly formed were "Grandview, Young America, Embarrass, Kansas, Ross, Sims or Symmes, Stratton, Prairie, Brouilletts Creek, Elbridge, Buck, Edgar, and Paris."<sup>5</sup>

These 13 townships which were originally formed in 1856 are still in existence today. Hunter and Shilo were added in 1866.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS OF ILLINOIS

The development of the public schools of Illinois has been connected with the public land policy of the national government. The nucleus for the public school system of Illinois had its beginning on July 13, 1778, when the Congress of the American Confederacy passed the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. The following words were contained in this Ordinance. "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged."<sup>1</sup> Section 6, Article 1 of the Enabling Act provided that section sixteen of each township, or one of equal value, would be granted to the State for the use of the school of that township. Article 4 of this Act gave three per-cent of the net proceeds of the sale of Public lands in Illinois as a general fund for the encouragement of learning of which one-sixth part was to be devoted to the support of a college or university, with the remainder going to the benefit of the Public school. Prior to this Act, the Ordinance of 1785 set aside the sixteenth section of each township to be reserved as a bounty to public schools.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Illinois Blue Book 1955-1956, State of Illinois, Springfield, p. 400.

<sup>2</sup>John D. Hicks, The Federal Union--A History of the United States to 1865. (Houghton Mifflin Company, Cambridge, Mass., 1937). p. 178.



The State of Illinois did not pass any legislation creating authority for organizing schools and for maintaining them by public support until 1825. In that year Senator Duncan secured the passage of such a law. This law provided for the levying of taxes on property within the school district to provide funds for the operation of the schools.<sup>3</sup> It also provided for a board of directors which had charge of the school, was required to examine teachers, and was to have general oversight of the subjects taught. This law gave two per-cent of the net revenue of the State to the public schools. This act also provided for the establishment of a school or schools in each county open to all white citizens of the state between five and twenty-one years of age.<sup>4</sup> This part of the law was repealed in 1829.

In 1833, the legislature passed a bill which required the teacher to keep a record of daily attendance. The teachers depended upon this attendance record for their share of the township school fund. This share was based upon the proportionate part of the total attendance for the township.

From 1829 to 1855 there was no free public school system in the state. The schools were maintained mostly by subscription, but were supplemented in part by the distribution of the small township fund to the schools in proportion to the daily attendance of the children of that district.

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<sup>3</sup>George W. Smith, A Student's History of Illinois, (Chicago: Hall, McCreary Co., 1930), p. 115.

<sup>4</sup>Laws of Illinois, 1825, First Session, Fourth General Assembly, p. 121f.

In 1855, the legislature of the State of Illinois passed the School Law of 1855 which levied an annual school tax of two mills on the dollar on all taxable property in the state.<sup>5</sup> This school system, whereby common schools could be had wherever the people chose to organize and establish them, was free to residents from five to twenty-one years of age. Until this time educational opportunities were limited to those who were willing and able to pay the expense which the law required the public to pay.<sup>6</sup> Before 1855, Illinois did not require that its prospective teachers should meet any standard requirements to become qualified to teach in the public schools.

The school tax of two mills on the dollar had been repealed by 1905, and in lieu of this tax, one million dollars was appropriated annually for support of the schools of the State of Illinois. The largest part of all school funds in 1905 was obtained from two direct taxes on property which was within the school district. This tax was levied by the school district. This tax was levied by the school directors. The limit was 2½ mills on the dollar for building purposes.

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<sup>5</sup>Laws of the State of Illinois, 1855. Nineteenth General Assembly, p. 77.

<sup>6</sup>Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Edgar County. p. 666.

### CHAPTER III

#### EARLY SCHOOLS OF EDGAR COUNTY

The first settlement in Edgar County was established in the spring of 1817. In that year, Remember Blackman, John Stratton, Anthony Sanders, William Whitley, and Aloysius Brown settled on the North Arm of the Grand Prairie, which at that time was part of the old Wayne Precinct. In the fall, Colonel Jonathan Mayo arrived in the newly established settlement. During the winter of 1817-1818, Barna B. Reynolds also located in the North Arm area.<sup>1</sup>

With the arrival of each new family, the desire of the settlers to provide an education for the children of the settlement increased. By 1820, it was decided that there were enough children to warrant the erection of a school building. At this time, a little log house was erected on the land of William Whitley. This was the first school house in Edgar County. Amos Williams was the first teacher of this school. The courses taught consisted of a little spelling, reading, and writing. As were most of the early schools of this period, this was a subscription school. Each parent paid in proportion to the number of children he sent to the school. The teacher's pay usually consisted of peltries, coonskins, beeswax, or any article which could be used in

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<sup>1</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879. p. 225.



barter.<sup>2</sup>

The following description of this school was taken from the Annual for Edgar County Public Schools, 1910-1911. It was originally written for the Daily Gazette by the Honorable A.J. Hunter who attended the school in 1839. At that time Augustus E. Bowlin was the school master.

The schoolhouse was 14 x 16 feet, made of hewn logs, clapboard roof, a door in one end and a fireplace in the other. It had a stick and clay chimney and the house was warmed by a log fire; the andirons were large stones weighing about thirty pounds. Frequently they became overheated so that they would burst, throwing the fragments all about the room.

The crude cracks between the logs of the house were filled with clay. There was only one window made in the side of the house and that was made by leaving out one log and the space was filled by a row of 8 x 10 glass. Under this window, a writing desk was placed  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet above the floor. This desk was a rough board, just as it came from the sawmill, about two feet wide. A high bench was made so that those learning penmanship could be seated as a higher grade, being higher up in the air. There was usually a string of girls and boys on this bench; their heads reached close to the ceiling, and their bare feet swung in the air. They enjoyed the privilege of studying nature through the window.

The other seats were made of oak slabs fresh from the sawmill and the only finish they had was from the scrubbing of the girls' linsey and the boys' jeans pantaloons. The most interesting piece of furniture in the house was two large wooden hooks over the fireplace that held in reserve about a dozen well selected hickory sticks. They were always used for the purpose of dusting the boys clothes as well as an admonition for future thought.

Regular school books were unknown. The school book trust had not been discovered. Any and all kinds of books were used without references to the contents. There was one book called the English Reader that was used by one class that could read without spelling out the words. The head one in the class would read a few sentences, then pass the book to the next and so on to the end. Some testaments were also used for this purpose.

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<sup>2</sup>Mrs. J. Odgen O'Hair, "History of Synmes Township", 1925, unpublished document, p. 1.

School hours were from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the summer and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the winter. One hour was allowed for recess from 12 noon to 1 p.m.<sup>3</sup>

The first schools in the county which were really public schools were organized March 7, 1862, by the County Commissioner's Court. This first school district embraced the village of Paris and some of the adjacent farms. This district contained three schools, one southeast and cornering the village, one east of the village, and the third school included the village. This district conforms to the present-day boundary of Paris Union School District No. 95.<sup>4</sup>

After the passage of the School Law of 1825, John M. Kelly was appointed as the first school commissioner of the county and was given powers of keeping the funds from the sale of school lands. The county officer had no authority to examine teachers and to superintend the school until 1855.<sup>5</sup>

Schools were established at a very early date in Elbridge, Stratton, Grandview, Sims, Paris, Brouillett, and Hunter townships. Prairie, Edgar, and Embarrass township schools were established before 1855. The rest of the county was hardly settled when the School Law of 1855 went into effect. The schools which were organized in Ross, Buok, Kansas, Shiloh,

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<sup>3</sup>Honorable A. J. Hunter, "First Schoolhouse in Edgar County", written for Daily Gazette, Annual for Edgar County Public Schools, 1910-1911, George W. Brown, County Superintendent, p. 101-102.

<sup>4</sup>"Paris School System Keeps Pace with Modern Trends in Field of Education", Paris, Illinois Daily Beacon News, October 24, 1936, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, p. 297.

and Young America townships profited and were established under the School Law of 1865.

Between 1855 and 1879 the number of schools increased sharply. There were seventy public schools in the county in 1855. Three years later in 1858, this number had increased to 97--by 1879 to 137. This increase in the number of schools is attributed to the School Law of 1865, which provided for free public schools.<sup>6</sup>

The total expenditures for maintaining the Edgar County school in 1903-1904 school year was \$110,467.84. Of this amount \$71,482.91 was for instruction. At this time, the average monthly salary for male teachers was \$50.47 and the monthly salary for female teachers was \$40.41. This information was obtained from the following statistical report for Edgar County Schools.

#### Statistics for Edgar County Schools for the Fiscal

Year ending July 1, 1904:

number of persons under 21 -----	12020
number of persons between 6 and 21 -----	8623
number of school districts -----	143
number of school buildings -----	145
whole number of pupils enrolled -----	6326
male teachers -----	84
female teachers -----	143
schools of one room -----	124
schools of two or more rooms -----	21
private schools -----	3
whole amount paid teachers -----	\$71,482.91
total expended for support of schools -----	\$110,467.00
estimated value of school property -----	\$260,630.00
principal of township fund -----	\$47,132.03

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid... p. 297.

Statistical report of Paris High School 1904  
H.W. Monical Superintendent

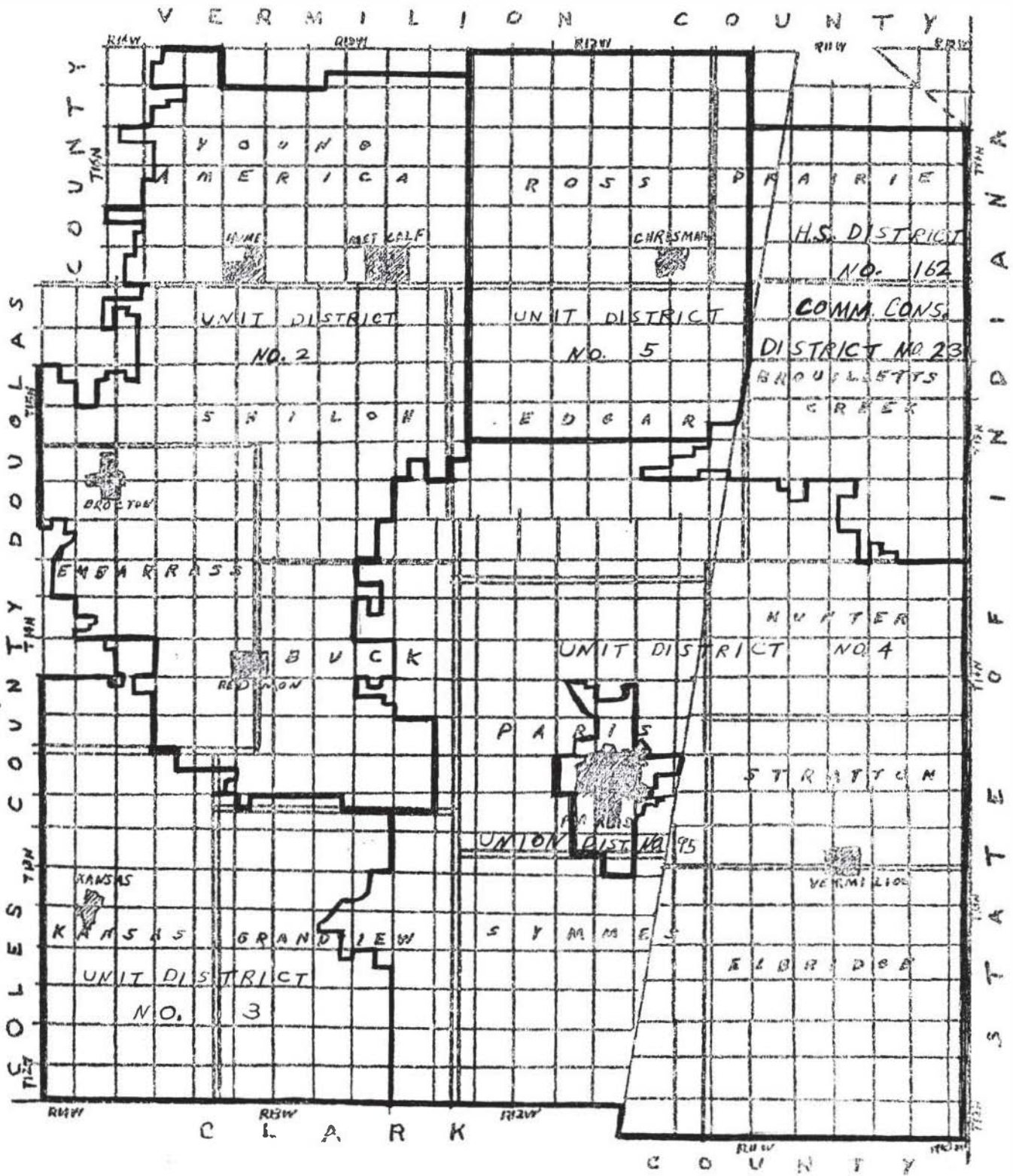
total enrollment for past year -----	212
total enrollment in other grades -----	1200
grand total enrollment -----	1412
salaries of instruction for year 1903-1904 -----	\$13,900.00
other expenditures for the year -----	\$13,400.00
Salaries	
of Superintendent H. W. Monical-----	\$1,500.00
of principal of High School Miss Tillie Ross -----	\$900.00
of principal of 1st Ward School or Tanner School---	\$540.00
James Tanner -----	\$450.00 <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of  
Edgar County, p. 670.



0 1 2 3 4  
SCALE IN MILES



## CHAPTER IV

### PARIS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 95

The first school in Paris township was built by Amos Williams in 1824 on a lot owned by General Alexander. This lot was located on the south end of the alley which divides the two blocks on the south side of the public square. For some reason this log cabin was surrounded by a wooden stockade. Isaac Alexander taught in this school in 1828.<sup>1</sup>

Paris High School has in its possession the original copy of the first contract made between a teacher and the people of the community for the establishment of a school. The class of 1917 had the document reproduced in bronze and it now adorns the walls of the High School Assembly Room. The contract reads as follows:

An article of agreement, made and entered into this 21st day of August 1824, between Amos Williams of the First Part, and the undersigned subscribers of the second part,  
WITNESSETH: -- That the said Williams engages to teach a school in the town of Paris, Edgar County, Illinois, for the term of six months, (Saturdays excepted) at the rate of Five Dollars per scholar, one half of said sum to be paid in trade, at cash prices; the other half to be paid in money, the school to commence on or before the first Monday of October next, if a sufficient number of scholars can be had--the subscribers, on their part, engage to furnish a sufficient quantity of fire wood and keep the schoolhouse in good repair during the above term.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 333.

All lost time, on the part of the teacher, to be made up at the expiration of said term.

#### Subscribers Names

William Means --- 2	Jon. A. Wayn ----- 0 1/6
Smith Shaw ----- 3	William Hearn ----- 0 1/6
John Pugett ----- 0 1/2	John Lyoan ----- 1 1/2
Samuel Vance ----- 2	Robert Brown ----- 4 paid
Ebon Center ----- 2	Wm. Whitley ----- 0 1/4
Thomas Jones ----- 1 1/2	John Wells ----- 0 1/3
Thomas Tennery -- 4	

In 1835, one room in a building on the front of lot sixteen was used as a schoolhouse.

The Rev. Henry I. Venable founded The Edgar Academy in December of 1841. "It was located on six acres where the Catholic church and school now stands."<sup>2</sup> At first, Edgar Academy was a school for girls, later on, boys were admitted to the school. Rev. Venable was assisted by his wife, Martha Martin Venable. This school became famous as a pioneer institution of learning in the Eastern Illinois area. It was the only school in all of eastern Illinois where the classics were taught.<sup>3</sup> Because of ill health, Rev. Venable sold the Academy to the people of Paris. It became a public school in 1849. Professor James Nelson was the first principal of this school. A department of music was added to the curriculum by Professor Nelson.

A Methodist Seminary was erected in 1848. Colonel Johnathon Mayo gave the Seminary a block of ground between

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<sup>2</sup>Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Edgar County, p. 670.

<sup>3</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, p. 300.



East Court Street and East Wood Street for the site of this building. A two story brick building was erected on this site. The Temperance Society added a third story on the building for a meeting hall. This school was under the direction of Rev. Jesse H. Moore. In 1869, this building became a public school, although the land was not purchased from the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Paris by the Paris Union School District until 1875. This building was located on the present Mayo school site.<sup>4</sup>

There is a record of a school which was conducted in a one story frame building on Washington Street by a Mr. Bastion, a Methodist Minister. Mr. Bastion left Paris around 1848, and a Mr. Neville then taught for a while in the same building. It was reported that Mr. Neville always had a long whip in his hand and that he was able to use it with a great amount of accuracy.<sup>5</sup>

Twenty years after the village of Paris had been organized and incorporated, the trustees of Edgar Academy secured a charter from the legislature. Paris Union School District was organized in accordance with an act of the legislature on April 15, 1869. This school district was independent of the city government. The charter members were Samuel Graham, George C. Levings, Levi C. Mann, H. J. Miller, Henry Van Sellar and Obed Foote. "The charter was liberal,

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<sup>4</sup>Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Edgar County, p. 670.

<sup>5</sup>Dr. Floyd M. Davis, "Davis Picks up Thread in Series of Articles," Paris Daily News, February 7, 1923.



and specially provided for instruction in the branches of a common school education, science, higher mathematics, and languages."<sup>6</sup>

The first county institute was held in Paris in 1886, when Captain George Hunt, the county superintendent, called the teachers together.

Professor Josiah Hurty came to Paris in 1866 and took charge of the schools. When Paris Union School District was formed in 1869, he became the first superintendent of the Paris School District. He served in this capacity until 1871, when he retired and founded the Hurty Academy. This school occupied the second and third floors of the Old Mullins building. In 1876, the Hurty Academy merged with the Edgar Collegiate Institute which had been established by Rev. Venable. The old academy was abandoned in 1880, and Professor Hurty established a private school in the Methodist Church which he operated until 1885. Altogether his schools had four different locations in Paris.<sup>7</sup>

The First Ward School, which later was named the Sanford Grade School, was erected on West Washington Street in 1869. This building was torn down in 1930 and the lot remained vacant for over twenty years. The site is now occupied by the Carolyn Wenz School.

Paris High School was organized in 1871. The purpose of this school was to provide a liberal and practical course

<sup>6</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, p. 334.

<sup>7</sup>Thurman B. Rice, "The Hoosier Health Officer", pp. 10-11.

of study for high school students. It was not intended to be a college preparatory school. In 1875, the Old Methodist Seminary School was purchased by the school district and was used as a high school.

It is interesting to note that in 1879, Paris High School offered courses in Reading, U.S. History, General History, English Analysis, English Literature, Rhetoric and Composition, Latin, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Botany, Natural History, Physical Geography, Geology, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Astronomy, Mental Science, and the Constitution of the United States.<sup>8</sup>

By 1879, school was held in Paris in four large public school buildings. The Superintendent of the Paris Schools at this time was one Professor Alfred Harvey. Professor Harvey after leaving Paris, became president of the State Teacher's Association. The following record of the public school statistics for 1877-1878 was given in the History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879.

#### PUBLIC SCHOOL STATISTICS FOR 1877-78

Professor Alfred Harvey--Superintendent of Paris Schools

whole number of persons in district under 21 ---	2007
number between 6 and 21 (school age) -----	1345
whole number of pupils enrolled -----	1019
greatest number enrolled in any month-----	819
least number enrolled in any month-----	690
average monthly enrollment -----	778.4
average daily attendance -----	650.4
number of teachers employed-----	18

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<sup>8</sup>Paris School System Keeps Pace with Modern Trend in Field of Education", Paris, Illinois, Daily Beacon News, October 24, 1936, p. 19.

superintendent ----- 1  
 salary of teachers and superintendent ----- \$8265.29

The Cost of Tution for the year per pupil, including  
 High School:

on the whole number enrolled ----- \$8.10  
 on the average number belonging ----- \$10.62  
 on the average daily attendance ----- \$12.71

The attendance and expenses of the High School are as  
 follows:

whole number of different pupils enrolled ----- 82  
 greatest number of pupils enrolled in any month --- 76  
 least number of pupils enrolled in any month ----- 55  
 average enrollment for the year ----- 68.3  
 average daily attendance ----- 61.3

Tution, including salaries of teachers and the High  
 School's proportion of the Superintendent's salary:

on the whole number of schedules ----- \$15.62  
 on the average number enrolled ----- 18.76  
 on the average daily attendance ----- 20.90

Statistics furnished by William Roth, 1879 County  
 Superintendent

Public Schools of Edgar County, 1879

number of persons under 21 ----- 12429  
 number of persons between 6 and 21 ----- 8618  
 number of districts ----- 137  
 districts having school five months or more ----- 135  
 whole number of months school ----- 934  
 whole number of pupils ----- 6786  
 male teachers ----- 111  
 female teachers ----- 147  
 upgraded schools ----- 132  
 graded schools ----- 4  
 private schools ----- 1  
 whole amount paid teachers ----- \$44,192.97  
 total expended for support of schools ----- \$65,665.52  
 estimated value of school property ----- \$96,989.00  
 principal of township fund ----- \$56,010.729

The first record of education for Negro children in the  
 public schools occurred at this time. "In 1879, twenty colored  
 children attended the public schools and shared the advantages  
 that the white students had, although they occupied a room to

<sup>9</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, p. 299.

themselves."<sup>10</sup>

By 1881, a new building had been erected on the old Methodist Seminary School site at a cost of \$50,000. This building had eleven rooms and was considered to be large and convenient for the times. This building was used by both the grade school and the high school from 1881 to 1908.<sup>11</sup> However, the rapid growth of the high school made necessary the erection of a separate building. The present high school building was erected on South Main Street in 1908. This building contained twenty-five class rooms and laboratories for chemistry, biology, and the domestic sciences. In 1921, a new wing was built on each end of the old building. One wing was a gymnasium, the other was the auditorium. In 1936, another addition was made for the library. A large new gymnasium was built in 1942.

The Junior High School was organized in 1921 in the Old Mayo School building. This building was destroyed by fire in 1927. The present Mayo building was dedicated on September 14, 1938. At that time it had a capacity for 725 students. The building was built at a cost of \$146,443.

Of the Paris schools which are in use today, Tanner School on West Chestnut Street is the oldest. It was built in 1892. Redmon School is located on South Central Avenue and was built in 1911; Vance School is on North Main Street and was erected in 1912; Carolyn Wenzel School was built in 1953.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid... p. 334.

<sup>11</sup>"Paris Schools Keeps Pace with Modern Trends in Field of Education", Paris, Illinois Daily Beacon News, October 24, 1936, p. 19.



Paris Memorial School was dedicated on April 27, 1958. It was built at a cost of \$297,335.71. All of the schools mentioned above have enrolled grades one through six. Mayo School, enrolls all eight grades and has the only junior high school consisting of the seventh and eighth grades in the city. Paris also has one Catholic grade school, St. Mary's Parochial School, which was constructed in 1899.<sup>12</sup>

On February 20, 1968, a position paper was presented by the special building committee of the Paris Board of Education to the school board. The plan which was advanced by the committee would eventually replace the antiquated Tanner, Vance, and Redmon elementary schools. At the present time, the plan consists of two parts. The first part includes the closing of Tanner School and the addition of enough classrooms to enlarge Carolyn Wenz School from 240 students to 400 students. This addition would serve the educational needs of the western area of Paris. The new addition would have twelve classrooms made out of a atran-steel structure.

The second part of the plan is to add onto the present Mayo School to improve the Junior High School curriculum. The addition would consist of a band room, a vocal music room, an art room, an industrial arts shop, and a home economics classroom laboratory.

A referendum to authorize the project is already in the planning stage. The tentative target date for the first new addition is 1970.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

## CHAPTER V

### COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 2

The unit two school system was formed in 1948 when Brooton, Hume, and Metcalf schools consolidated. The unit had two school centers at that time. One center was at Brooton, and consisted of grades one through twelve. The other center was made up of the combined schools of Hume and Metcalf. This school was named Young America. Grades one through eight attended school at Hume. Young America High School was established at Metcalf. In 1952, the unit gained more territory when Redmon withdrew from Unit 3 and combined with Brooton. The high school was located at Brooton, and grades one through eight were sent to Redmon.

Construction on a new consolidated school for Unit 2 began on August 19, 1967. The Unit 2 school board announced on December 8, 1967, that the new school will be known as Shiloh High School and Grade School. The name for the new school was taken from the township in which it will be located. The naming of this school follows the precedent set by Young America township. Shiloh will replace Young America High School, Brooton High School, Redmon Grade School and the grade school at Hume. Construction site for the school is between Hume and Metcalf just off of Route 36 and is at the north edge of Shiloh township. The building is to be ready for the 1968-1969 school term. Unit 2 school district is located in all or parts

of the following townships: Young America; Shiloh; Embarrass, and Buok.

Young America township was organized on the 9th day of March in 1854. The first settlers came to Hickory Grove in 1820 in search of coonskins and honey. In 1822, Daniel Reed built a cabin at Hickory Grove and registered his land at the land office located in Palestine, Illinois.<sup>1</sup>

The first school house in the township was the "Old Green Schoolhouse" which was built around 1854. Sarah Henthorn was supposed to be the first teacher of this school. In 1879, this building was being used as a carriage house.<sup>2</sup>

The town of Hume was laid out for E.W.S. Hume in November of 1873 by George W. Foreman, the county surveyor. The first school in Hume was built in 1875.<sup>3</sup> The present school in Hume was built in 1900 and had eight rooms attached in 1939.

The town of Metoalf was surveyed for John A. Metoalf in 1874; a school was built soon after the establishment of the town.<sup>4</sup> A two story brick school building was erected in 1908. The present Young America High School building was constructed in 1921.

Buck township was organized in 1857 and was called Pilot Grove. However, the name was changed to Buok because

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<sup>1</sup>History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 522.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 523.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 524.

there was already a township in Illinois named Pilot Grove. The township was organized in the Buckler Schoolhouse. This township was originally part of the old Fairfield and Carrol Precincts.

Bull's Head Township was formed on March 3, 1866, but was changed to Shiloh Township by a petition on April 27, 1866. The first school was built in the winter of 1855 near the William Kiles farm. The first teacher was a man by the name of Edmonson.<sup>5</sup> The first settlers came to Embarrass Township around 1826. However, no attempt was made by the settlers to conduct a school until 1834. Edward Brown was employed by fifteen families to teach their children. School was held in an unoccupied cabin. Mr. Brown taught from 15 to 20 students. Around 1836, Samuel Wood erected a temporary log cabin which served as a school. The schools were taught by subscription. The tuition for a three month term for one pupil was from one dollar to one and one half dollars. If a family had several students attending the school, their tuition was lowered. The teachers also were given their board by the families of the students. This was part of the tuition and was obtained by the teacher living with each family for one week at a time.<sup>6</sup>

The town of Redmon was surveyed on January 9, 1872 for J. B. Warnick and Joseph Redmon by the county surveyor, George W. Foreman.<sup>7</sup> In 1879, the only school in Redmon was

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid... p. 505.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid... p. 508.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid... p. 508.



held in a hall, and building facilities were considered inadequate.<sup>8</sup> In 1928, a history of the development of the Redmon School System was prepared and edited in the high school annual, The Redmonian. The following account was given:

The first grade school in Redmon was a hall in an old warehouse building which stood on the lot where the Kirchner and Biggs store now stands. The children who attended school were the children of Redmon who found it inconvenient to attend the Old Arbogast School of which Redmon was a part. The first teacher was Miss Tillie Both.

This hall continued to be the school building until, in the early eighties, a one room school house was built on the site of the present grade building. In 1891 the school was made a two-room grade school by the addition of another room to the old structure. The first teachers were Camille Rice Henn and Dr. W. S. Jones. These two rooms served the purpose of a grade building until the present building was erected.

In 1910 the old school house was torn down and the present grade building was built in its place. . . . the members of the School Board during the time of the building were Dr. W. S. Jones, Mr. S. E. Meyers, and Mr. Francis G. Blair, state superintendent. . . . delivered the main address. The first teachers to enter upon duties in the new building were Mr. A. L. Shellenberger and Ethel Moser Kennen.<sup>9</sup>

The following is an account of the High School:

Do you remember way back when. . . we occupied the room in the southwest corner of the second floor of the grade school building. . . In our cramped quarters we had two teachers, Mr. Gunn and Mr. Bennett. The former taught English and history; the latter had charge of Latin, Mathematics and science. Our laboratory was one corner of the big room; our class was the pigeon hole off to the right. . . A community high school became a near reality, when the bonds were issued. But to minds which can grasp concrete ideas better than the abstract ones, the foundation, the long piles of brick, and great heaps of sand meant something. During the summer and fall of 1925, we watched the

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>The Redmonian, Redmon Comm. H.S., Class of 1928, p. 36.

workmen going about their tasks. . . There were four classrooms and a library. . . During our first basketball season, 1925-26, many interesting and amusing incidents took place. . . At that time we had four teachers. There was Miss Hloks, the Latin instructor; and Mr. Dunn our coach. Mr. Gunn was our principal and Miss Noakes, the English teacher. The Board of Directors in 1925-26 was composed of H. E. Standly, president; I. J. Brinkerhoff, A. L. Wood, J. P. Carter, and Bert North.<sup>10</sup>

In 1948, Redmon consolidated with Kansas to form Community Unit No. 3. Both a grade school and a high school were maintained in Redmon by Unit 3 until Redmon pulled out of the unit in the summer of 1952. From that time, the high school students were sent to Brocton, and the grade school students were transported to Redmon. One reason which was given for the split between Redmon and Kansas was "interschool and community jealousy."<sup>11</sup>

The town of Brocton was incorporated in 1890. Around 1880, a two story brick building was constructed in Brocton. This building, in addition to serving as a grade school building, also housed a two year high school. The building was used as a grade school until 1952 when Brocton and Redmon consolidated. The old building is still in use today, serving as a cafeteria for the high school. A new high school building was built in 1924. This building is already outdated and does not serve the needs of the community effectively. Unit 2 should be located in its new home by September, 1968. This new building will cost close to \$1.3 million.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>Robert Decker, private interview, Kansas, Illinois, December, 1967. He was a teacher at Redmon, Illinois when the split occurred.

## CHAPTER VI

### COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 3

Community Unit School District Number 3 was formed in 1948. Most of the district is located in southwestern Edgar County, although parts of northwestern Clark County and southeastern Coles County are also included in the district. The school district takes in all of Kansas Township, most of Grandview Township and small amounts of both Sabarrass and Buck Townships in Edgar County. The territory which makes up Grandview Township was purchased from the Indians by the federal government. It was surveyed and offered for sale by 1822. Arlo Sutherland came to the township in June in 1822 and made the first land entry which was recorded in 1825.<sup>1</sup> Joseph McCrackin was the first teacher to teach in what is now Grandview Township. He began a school in 1826. Mr. McCrackin was also a tavern keeper.<sup>2</sup>

The Rev. J. A. Steele taught the first school in the village of Grandview in 1837. LeBaron, in his History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, reported the following about the Steele's school:

The school established by the Steeles was designed for, and proved to be of, a higher character than the common pioneer schools of the country; and, had

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<sup>1</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879. p. 339.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 334.

Mr. Steele's health been spared, there is every reason to believe that here had been laid the foundation for an institution of learning that would now rank among the most influential in the West. This is almost the identical history of the foundation of many of the noblest colleges and seminaries in the State.<sup>3</sup>

The Grandview schoolhouse is now serving the community as a community center. This building was built in 1906. It was a two room building and served as a grade school until 1924. In that year, a third room was added. From 1924 until 1933, a two year accredited high school served the small community. Grades one through six were housed in two of the rooms. In the third room of the building, classes were held for the seventh, eighth, and tenth grades the next year.<sup>4</sup> The high school was closed at the end of the 1932-1933 school year and then served as a grade school until 1948, when Unit Three was formed. At that time, all students were transported to Kansas, Illinois, to attend school.

The small community of Dudley is located two miles north of Grandview. The first teacher in Dudley was William Ramsey. He taught school here in a small frame building in 1855.<sup>5</sup> This building was replaced by a two story frame building, and was at that time, known as the Dudley Academy. Thomas J. Hughes was the head of this school. From 1886 to the school year 1894-1895, Dudley school was a one room school. A second room was added to the one room school in 1894, and high school work was offered. The ninth and tenth grades alternated each year. The name of this two year high school was

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.. p. 335.

<sup>4</sup>Jerry White, Private interview, Paris, Illinois, February, 1968, Teacher at Grandview, taught high school and grade school from 1923-1933.

<sup>5</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, p. 368.



# Dudley Township High School District No. 156.<sup>6</sup>

In 1902 the number of the grade school district was changed from No. 2 to No. 100.

The tenth year class of 1904 was the first class to hold commencement exercises. Commencement exercises were held every two years through 1934. Sometimes Dudley would join with Grandview for commencement exercises. High school work was taught until the fall of 1935 when all of the high school students attended Redmon Community High School.<sup>7</sup>

From 1935 to 1944, school was held in both rooms of the building. Two teachers were employed to teach grades one through eight. In 1944, only one room was used with the fifth and sixth, and the seventh and eighth grades alternated.

Dudley District No. 100 became part of Unit 3 in 1948. Grades one through six were taught in 1948. For the next three years, only five grades were taught in the school. By the 1952-53 school year, only four grades, one through four, were being taught. In 1952, Redmon withdrew from Unit 3 and the Dudley school closed. The students of the community were sent to Kansas to attend school. "On June 22, 1956, the Dudley school house was sold at public auction."<sup>8</sup> This building is now serving as the "Dudley Community Center."

"The first schoolhouse in Kansas Township was located south of the state road and just south of Clay Longs. It was soon moved onto the McDavitt land, one half of a mile south of where the present Walnut Grove school now stands."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Calendar and Directory of Edgar County Public Schools 1916-1917. D. Rice Jones, County Superintendent of Schools, p. 50.

<sup>7</sup>Mary H. Young, "History of Dudley, Illinois", p. 10. Life long resident and area teacher. Attended two story frame building.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>James Bull, "History of Kansas Township", p. 1. Early resident.

In 1852, a schoolhouse was built at Warrington, which is three miles north of Kansas. School was held in a small one room log building. The seats used by the students were benches with no backs. The desks were shelves built onto the wall. One log had been left out the full length of the room for a window. Neither geography nor grammar were taught in this school. Spelling and history were given some attention. The students sang the capitals of the states and also the multiplication tables.<sup>10</sup>

The village of Midway was founded in 1850. The name was changed from Midway to Kansas shortly after the town was founded. The plat was recorded on the 16th of July, 1853.

Education began soon after the town was founded. An acre of ground was donated by William Brown. This school was located where the First Methodist Episcopal Church was later built. Hallock's tire shop is now located on this site. The first teacher was John McDavitt, a wealthy farmer. The school soon became too small; it was moved to another location, and then was used as a harness shop.<sup>11</sup>

During the Civil War, a four room, two story frame building was erected. This building was destroyed by a fire in 1888. At that time the population of Kansas was 2,000 and was still growing. The present grade building was built in 1889. This building is two stories high and was used for both the grade school and the high school until 1936.

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<sup>10</sup>"Early History of Kansas", The Kansas Journal, Kansas, Illinois, August 24, 1922.

<sup>11</sup>Don Troll, Our First Hundred Years, Kansas, Illinois, July 16, 1953. p. 26.

In 1889, The Village of Kansas made and published plans to open the Eastern Illinois Normal School in Kansas. However, the school was located in Charleston when Senator Pemberton swung the vote to Charleston.

The Eton Academy was opened May 1, 1894, in Kansas. Edward Willasey and his wife operated the school until 1904. The school enrolled students from age eight through high school.<sup>12</sup>

The present high school building was built with federal funds in 1936. An addition was made to both the grade school and the high school buildings in 1956. Eight class rooms were added at the grade school. From 1954-1956, all first grade students of Unit 3 attended Inclose, a two room country school. At the high school an agricultural and industrial arts building was constructed. This was in addition to six classrooms, a cafeteria, and central offices for the Superintendent and the high school principal.

On Saturday, April 13, 1968, a bond issue was passed by the people of Community Unit School District No. 3. The purpose of the election was to authorize the school district to build an addition onto the high school. The building program includes the demolition of the old section of the grade school. The newer part of the building will be retained for use of kindergarten through fourth grades. Eight new classrooms will be constructed at the high school to house grades five through eight. Also, a large gymnasium with dressing rooms

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

and a lobby will be built at the high school. The old gymnasium is to be converted into a junior high school gymnasium. The estimated cost of construction for the proposed building program is \$450,000.<sup>13</sup> Construction is to begin in the summer of 1968, and the building should be ready for use by 1969.

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<sup>13</sup>Notice of Proposed Building Program for Community Unit School District No. 3, Kansas, Illinois, issued by the Board of Education.



## CHAPTER VII

### COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4

Community Unit School District No. Four is located in southeastern Edgar County. It is the largest school district in the county. The townships which lie in the Unit 4 district are: Elbridge, Symmes, Stratton, Hunter, and Paris. The school district boundary line also extends into parts of Brouillette Creek, Edgar, Shiloh, Buck, and Grandview townships.

The first school in the county was built in what is now Hunter township. In 1879, LeBaron noted in his History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, that five school houses were operating in the township.<sup>1</sup>

Daniel Lane made the first settlement in Stratton township in the spring of 1818.<sup>2</sup> The first school in the township was taught by Richard Kimbrough in the winter of 1825-1826, on Samuel Trogdon's farm.<sup>3</sup> William Denning taught school in the schoolhouse near Col. J.M. Blackburn's farm. This building served as a school for over forty years. It was torn down in

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<sup>1</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, p. 387.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p. 472.

<sup>3</sup>Mrs. W. O. Wright, "History of Stratton Township", 1927, p. 10.

the fall of 1878.<sup>4</sup>

The village of Vermillion was incorporated April 1, 1872. It was surveyed and laid out by Edward Wolcott, the county surveyor, in 1856. The village was named for James S. Vermillion.<sup>5</sup> The first school in the village was taught by Edward Eldridge. A two story brick building, containing three rooms, was erected in 1870 at a cost of \$5000. The first floor was divided into two large rooms. Here, on the first floor, grades one through six were taught. The second floor was independent of the first floor and was reached by an outside stairway on the southwest corner of the building. The seventh and eighth grade students had classes on the second floor. This old building was torn down in 1910. The present Vermillion school was built in 1911. At that time, only three teachers were employed, although there were four rooms.<sup>6</sup> In the Edgar County Public Schools Annual for 1912-1913, there is a picture of the Vermillion school with these words, "Vermillion Public School. One of the best buildings in the middle west. Modern in every detail. The pride of the entire community."<sup>7</sup>

Vermillion High School District No. 116 graduated thirty one students from a four year high school between 1918 and 1923. From 1923 until 1947, the school district offered only

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<sup>4</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879. p. 481.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 482.

<sup>6</sup>Gertrude E. Harknes, "Golden Memories--Reunion Class of 1912-1913." Furnished by Leonard Prye.

<sup>7</sup>Annual for Edgar County Public Schools, 1912-1913. George W. Brown, County Superintendent of Schools, p. 116.

two years of high school work.<sup>8</sup> In 1949, Vermillion was converted into an eight classroom school. Grades one through eight were taught until 1955, when Crestwood, the main attendance center for the district, was completed. Since 1955, Vermillion Elementary School has served only part of the district. Grades one through four are taught to the students residing in the southeastern part of the district.<sup>9</sup>

James McNutt taught the first school in Elbridge township in 1823. This school was built of unhewn logs and had a large fireplace in one end. Greased paper was used for windows. Benches were made out slabs of rough wood. These had no backs but served as seats for the students. Writing was practiced on large slabs of wood fastened onto the wall by wooden pegs. "Goose quills were used, one of the requirements of the teacher being that he knew how to make them into pens. The three 'R's' were the chief acquirements of the day, and to be proficient in these was considered enough by the aspiring scholars."<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Peter Yeargin taught the first school in the village of Elbridge on February 21, 1837. This school was conducted in a private home. Dr. Yeargin taught about fifty students in this school year. Later, the district erected a small frame house in 1850. This building was used until 1876. At that

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<sup>8</sup>Annual Statistical Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Illinois, 1947, Vernon L. Nickel, Superintendent of Public Instruction, p. 302.

<sup>9</sup>Annual School Directory Edgar County Schools, 1966-1967, Carl Jones, County Superintendent of Schools, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, p. 405.

time, it was replaced by an old church building.<sup>11</sup>

The village of Nevins first held school in a log cabin. In 1879, school was held in a frame building which was originally built for a church.<sup>12</sup> This building was torn down and replaced in 1926. School was then held in the new building until 1954. In 1955, Nevins school was closed, sold, and converted into a home.<sup>13</sup>

Symmes township was originally part of the old Fairfield Precinct. The township was formed in 1823. The first teacher in this township was Nelson W. Nunnally. Mr. Nunnally was very active in civic affairs and served as a member of the state legislature for three terms. The first schoolhouse was built of unhewn logs, and had a clapboard roof and a puncheon floor. School was held during the three summer months and the three winter months. This was a total of only six months per year that the students attended school.<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Nunnally used an elementary spelling book. The student's lessons were heard once or twice a day. Lessons consisted of, at first, attempting the recital of the alphabet "on" and "off" the book. After a term or two, spelling of simple simple words began. When he got as far as "baker", he was allowed a first reader followed by a second and third.

<sup>11</sup>Miss Olive Brown, "The Story of Elbridge Township", p. 1. Presented to the Edgar County Historical Society.

<sup>12</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, p. 407.

<sup>13</sup>Stella Lamb. Personal Interview, Nevins, Illinois, November, 1967. A Granddaughter of Daniel Roll, one of the early settlers of the township. She attended Nevins school in 1890. Lifelong resident of Nevins.

<sup>14</sup>Mrs. J. Odgen O'Hair, "History of Symmes Township", p. 1.



After a while, the arithmetic came in, writing with a quill pen began, and, having safely passed these stages, the common school was complete. Pupils learned to read, write, and cipher to the Rule of Three, and that was considered enough to fit them for the ordinary pursuits of life.<sup>15</sup>

Unit four was formed in 1948. The present main attendance center is at Crestwood Grade School. It is located about one mile east of Paris on United States Route 150. Grades one through eight are taught at Crestwood. A kindergarten class is also conducted by the school at Crestwood. Vermillion also has grades one through four.

Crestwood was completed in 1955. While Crestwood was being built, school for the unit was conducted at Vermillion, Oliver, Nevins, and Elbridge. This was between the years 1948-1955. The district does not have a high school. The school board pays tuition to Paris Union School District No. 95 for their students to attend Paris High School.

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<sup>15</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879. p. 469.



## CHAPTER VIII

### COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

Community Unit School District No. 5 lies mostly in the township of Ross. The rest of the District is in the north half of Edgar Township and the far western portion of Prairie Township.

The first school in what is now Edgar Township was built at Steam Point. Rev. G. W. Riley taught the first term of school here in 1830. Edgar Township was not formed until April 7, 1857.<sup>1</sup>

Bloomfield was laid out in 1831. In that year a combination schoolhouse and Baptist Church was constructed. The building was similar to other early day school buildings. It was made of unhewn logs, had greased paper for windows, split log benches for seats and was eighteen feet square.<sup>2</sup> John McKee was the first teacher to teach school in Bloomfield. The following description of the contract between John McKee and the citizens of Bloomfield was given by Mrs. Winfield Scott in her "History of Edgar Township":

Article of agreement entered into the 6th day of July, 1840. between John McKee of the one part and the undernamed subscribers of the other part,

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<sup>1</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879. p. 535.

<sup>2</sup>Mrs. Winfield H. Scott, "History of Edgar Township", p. 1.

WITNESSETH: That John McKee on his part agrees to teach the art of Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic to the best of his abilities, for five days in each week, at the Bloomfield schoolhouse for the term of six months, commencing on Tuesday the 14th day of this month, provided a sufficient No. of scholars can be subscribed. And the under named subscribers on their part agrees to pay the above named McKee at the expiration of the school four dollars for each scholar annexed to their names, and repair and keep in repair the above named schoolhouse, and each subscriber is to furnish a portion of firewood equal to the portion of scholars they send at the season of the year that it is necessary and the subscribers are to meet at the schoolhouse at twelve o'clock on the first Friday after the school commences to elect Trustees and a majority of the subscribers by their Trustees are to have a right to discontinue the school by allowing pay in proportion to the time he has taught. And McKee on his part is to have a right to at any time to discontinue the school by only charging for the number of scholars or days actually sent and he is to keep an open book for subscribers till the number of scholars subscribed exceeds thirty.

(Signed) Jesse Moore 1; Samuel P. Clark 1; Henry Drake 2; William Battershell  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; George W. Stephenson 1; Abram Connery 1; Ensign Mitchell 1; James Payne 1; Elizabeth Gorden 1; Ambrose Field 2; William Stillwell 1; Wm. Gordon 2; William Hawkins  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; Wells Morgan 1; Alexander Sommerville  $\frac{1}{2}$ .<sup>3</sup>

In 1854-1855 Andrew Y. Trogdon taught at Bloomfield. His salary was \$2.50 per scholar for the quarter. John C. Wooley also taught a term of school in Bloomfield. Mr. Wooley was the candidate for President on the Prohibition ticket in 1900.<sup>4</sup>

The first school in Ross Township was kept in a log house about two miles east of Chrisman in 1836. The pioneer teacher was a man named Haines.

The city of Chrisman was surveyed August 5, 1872 for

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Moulton, "History of Bloomfield, Edgar County, Illinois, 1927," p. 1.

Mathias Chrisman. It was incorporated on March 24th, 1874. Miss Ada Gibbs taught an early school in Chrisman on the south side of the square in 1874. From 1875 to 1877, a Professor Reed taught a subscription school over the J. R. Seusley building in Kenton's Hall. A four room brick school was built in 1877 at a cost of \$8,000. Professor F. B. Green was the principal of this school. This building was enlarged to eight rooms in 1900. The first class to graduate from the old high school building contained only four members; Eva Crawford, Nettie Hartley, Rachel Hoult, and W. F. Hoult.<sup>5</sup>

Both high school and grade school were conducted in the old brick building until 1914. In that year, the Chrisman Township High School District No. 149 was ready to move into their new high school. After Unit Five was formed in 1948, construction on a new gymnasium was begun. This building was finished in 1949. The old brick building which was built in 1877, served as the grade school from 1914 until it was torn down in 1966. The present grade school building was constructed in 1965.

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<sup>5</sup>"The City of Chrisman", Unpublished Document, Written for the Carnegie Public Library in 1927.

## CHAPTER IX

### SCOTTLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Scotland Elementary School District No. 23 and Scotland Community High School District No. 162 have the same political boundary. Almost all of the two districts lie in Prairie and Brouillette Creek townships. Prairie Precinct was formed in March, 1854, by order of the County Commissioner's Court. It later became Prairie township in 1856 when the county adopted township organization.

Sylvester Barker was the first settler in the area. He came to the township in the spring of 1826. The first school was taught by Mrs. Nancy Jones in her home in 1830. Her house was located in what is now part of the village of Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

The town of Scotland was laid out for William Scott on September 17, 1872. A two story building was erected in 1879. This building served as a school for the village until 1906.<sup>2</sup> The first consolidated school in Edgar County was built in Scotland at a cost of \$5000.<sup>3</sup> From 1906 until the present time, this building has served the community as both a grade school and a high school.

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<sup>1</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, p. 516.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 517.

<sup>3</sup>Annual for Edgar County Public Schools, 1907-1908, George W. Brown, County Superintendent of Schools, p. 11.

Brouilletts Creek Township was named for Pierre Brouillette, an old Indian trader. Robert J. Scott made the first settlement in 1826. Later in that year, Samuel Littlefield moved to the township. Littlefield and Scott hired a man by the month to teach their children. School was held in the Littlefield cabin. Christopher Ward was the first teacher in the first schoolhouse built in the township in 1833.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>The History of Edgar County, Illinois, 1879, p. 495.



## CHAPTER X

### SUMMARY

The schools of Edgar County have gone through many complex changes since the time of the first school taught by Amos Williams in 1820. The early schools were mostly subscription schools, and were built and paid for by the parents of the students. The teachers were paid in coonskins, beeswax and other articles which could be used in trading for supplies. As part of their salary the early teachers boarded with a different family each week. Most of the early schools were made of logs. The furnishings were rather crude, consisting of rough board desks and seats. Wood for the fireplace was usually contributed by the parents of the students.

The curriculum of the early schools consisted of reading, writing, and arithmetic. There was no standard textbook used in the classroom. The Bible and other kinds of books were used to teach the students how to read.

Edgar County has had a county school officer since 1825, when John M. Kelly was appointed as the first school commissioner. It was his duty to keep the funds from the sale of school lands. This office was maintained from 1825 until 1865. In 1865, the State of Illinois abolished the Office of School Commissioner and provided for the election of a County

Superintendent of Schools. George Hunt was elected as the first county superintendent. The present superintendent of schools is Carl Jones.

There were no public schools in Edgar County until 1865. In that year, the School Law of 1855 went into effect. This law levied an annual school tax of two mills on the dollar on all taxable property, and required the public to pay the expense of educating the children of the state.

In 1855, there were seventy schools in the county. This number had increased to 137 in 1879. Most of these schools were rural, one-room schools. By 1948, there were 146 school districts in Edgar County; of these, 133 were one-room country schools. In 1948, school district reorganization occurred on a county wide basis. At this time, Community Unit School Districts Numbers One, Two, Three, and Four were established. Paris Union School District which had been formed by an act of the state legislature in 1869 did not reorganize. The Scotland school systems voted to maintain a dual district system instead of forming a community unit district.

From the one room school with only a few students, the enrollment of the elementary and secondary schools has greatly changed. By 1904, there were 6326 students enrolled in the public schools of Edgar County. However, the number of students enrolled had decreased to 5274 by 1967.

Although many of the school buildings are very old and can no longer be operated efficiently, steps have been taken by many of the districts to initiate building programs which

will update the schools and help to improve the educational opportunities of the children of Edgar County.

## APPENDIX

THE SCHOOLS OF EDGAR COUNTY  
AT THE TIME OF REORGANIZATION IN 1948

District - School	District - School
1. Quaker Hill	23. Soottland
2.. Scott	24. Chrisman
3. Prairie Union	25. Cherry Point
4. Woodyard	26. Watson
5. Ross	27. Metoalf
6. Dickson	28. Hume
7. Galway	29. Gilkey
8. Hildreth	30. Bane
9. Patterson	31. Wyatt
10. Palermo	32. Melwood
11. Maple Grove	33. Van Sickle
12. Baum	34. Silver Grove
13. Dodd	35. Rogers
14. Kendall	36. Manning
15. Maple Grove	37. Mt. Carmel
16. Boone	38. Watertown
17. Mitchell	39. Legg
18. Legate	40. Kidley
19. Manley	41. Logan
20. Victor	42. Scott
21. Excelsior	43. Bloomfield



## District - School

- 44. Edgar
- 45. Marks
- 46. Gossett
- 47. Garland
- 48. Bentwood
- 49. Dole
- 50. Payne
- 51. Brocton
- 52. Sand Ridge
- 53. Hanner
- 54. Merkle
- 55. Golden Rule
- 56. Patrick
- 57. Shiloh
- 58. Willow Grove
- 59. Horace
- 60. Larkin
- 61. Pleasant Hill
- 62. Banner
- 63. Jones
- 64. Pan Handle
- 65. Sugar Grove
- 66. Clay's Prairie
- 67. Forest

## District - School

- 68. Baldwinsville
- 69. Steam Point
- 70. Pine Grove
- 71. Blue Mound
- 72. Stewart
- 73. Pilot Grove
- 74. Barnett
- 75. Baltimore
- 76. Catfish
- 78. Independent
- 79. McCollum
- 80. Redmon
- 81. Henn
- 82. Buckler
- 83. Walnut Grove
- 84. Maple Grove
- 85. Sugar Creek Point
- 86. Buckeye
- 87. Kimble
- 88. Morehouse
- 89. North Arm
- 90. McGee
- 91. Hunter
- 92. Hedgin

## District - School

- 93. Lanes Branch
- 94. Sulphur Springs
- 95. Paris Union
- 96. Plum Grove
- 97. Union
- 98. Barnhill
- 99. Cross Roads
- 100. Dudley
- 101. Hickory Grove
- 102. Harmony
- 103. Baber
- 104. Kansas
- 105. Simpson
- 106. Grandview
- 107. Brinkerhoff
- 108. Conlogue
- 109. Asher
- 110. New Hope
- 111. Turner
- 112. Camp Chapel
- 113. Little Brick
- 115. Grand Center
- 116. Vermillion
- 117. Pleasant Grove

## District - School

- 118. McCord
- 119. Ft. Sumpter
- 120. Buchanan
- 121. Walnut Grove
- 122. Willow Grove
- 123. Inolose
- 124. Pleasant Hill
- 125. Fairview
- 126. New Goshen
- 127. Bell Ridge
- 128. Union
- 129. Providence
- 130. Walls
- 131. Rhoads
- 132. Nevins
- 133. Stipp
- 134. Success
- 135. Kirkpatrick
- 138. McCown
- 139. Grand Success
- 140. New Providence
- 141. Patton
- 142. Elbridge
- 143. Salem
- 144. Jefferson
- 145. Oliver
- 154. Isabel

**Edgar County School Commissioners 1825-1865**

1. John M. Kelly 1825-1829
2. Jonathon Mayo 1829-1830
3. Garland B. Shelledy 1830-1831
4. John M. Kelly 1831-1841
5. Jonathan Mayo 1841-1849
6. John W. Blackburn 1849-1857
7. Sheridan P. Read 1857-1859
8. James A. Eads 1859-1861
9. W. G. Burnett 1861-1863
10. R. N. Bishop 1863-1865

**Edgar County School Superintendents 1865-1968**

1. George Hunt 1865-1869
2. A. J. Mapea 1869-1873
3. R. B. Cusick 1873-1877
4. W. H. Roth 1877-1882
5. Dr. D. T. Stewart 1882-1886
6. James A. Kerrick 1886-1894
7. George H. Gordon 1894-1902
8. George W. Brown 1902-1913
9. O. Rice Jones 1914-1923
10. D. H. Hamilton 1923-1927
11. O. Rice Jones 1927-1931
12. Arthur C. Foster 1931-1943
13. Russell Stephens 1935-1943
14. Sam W. Arbuckel 1943-1963
15. Carl Jones 1963-

Fall Pupil Enrollment and Teacher Statistics  
 Illinois Public Schools  
 1966-1967 School Year

Edgar County		Enrollment			Teachers		
Dist	Type	Total	Elem.	Sec.	Total	Elem.	Sec.
002	unit	606	392	214	38	19	19
003	unit	414	285	129	25	16	9
004	unit	1167	660	507	39	28	11
005	unit	422	314	108	25	17	8
023	elem.	146	146	0	11	11	0
095	unit	2568	1256	1312	112	49	63
162	sec.	51	0	51	8	0	8 <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fall Pupil Enrollment and Teacher Statistics, Illinois Public Schools, 1966-1967, Circular Series A, Number 194, Ray Page, Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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Arbuckle, Sam. W., Edgar County Superintendent for twenty  
years, 1943-1963.

Decker, Robert, Former teacher at Redmon, presently teaching  
in Kansas.

Frye, Leonard, Graduate of the four year high school at  
Vermillion.

Jones, Carl, County Superintendent of Schools since 1964.

Joneson, Nelle, Early teacher in county, first taught school  
in 1902.

- Lamb, Forrest, Director three man school board at Nevins.
- Lamb, Stella, attended the first grade at Nevins in 1890.  
Her grandfather, David Roll, one of early settlers.  
She has lived in Nevins all of her life.
- Sexton, Kathryn, taught in Grandview system at time of two year high school.
- Webster, William, his Mother taught school in the Elbridge vicinity in 1903 for \$20 a month.
- White, Clifford "Jerry", Principal at Grandview in 1925  
later became Assistant County Superintendent in 1934.
- Yargus, Charles, School Board Director at McCord School, served on a three man school board, 1924. Three year term.

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