

September 6, 1958

Mrs. George Fugh,
Radnor, Ohio.

Dear Mrs. Fugh:-

I have your letter relative to a history of the one-room schools of Delaware county and would be glad to give you a comprehensive report of all the one-room schools in the county, but after a lapse of over forty years, and no records to refresh my memory, I fear that my report might be more fictional than historical. In 1914 when I became County Superintendent there were one-room schools in every township. The only centralization in the county was at Powell, in the southern part of Liberty township. There was a two-room school at Norton and a three-room school at Warrensburgh, and of course there were the village schools at Sunbury, Calona, Ostrander, Radnor and Bellpoint. At that time the rural districts were reluctant to join with the villages and preferred to keep the one-room schools. After the County School *law* was passed in 1914 there was an attempt on the part of State School Dept. to create an interest in schools by having meetings in all the school houses, and the slogan was, "A light in every Schoolhouse" I was in Ashley at the time and I attended some of the meetings in the one-room school houses in Oxford township, and I suggested that probably they could have better schools if they were to join with the village, but the sentiment seemed to be that they would not want their children to associate with the children in the village. It was not quite as bad as integration is to day but on that order.

While I was County Superintendent, Berlin, Orange, Radnor, Harlem and Brown townships were centralized, and centralized schools were established at Hyatts and the rural districts adjacent to the villages was annexed to the villages, so that most of the one-room schools were eliminated. There were still some one-room schools in the County as late as 1925 and you probably had them in Thompson township. Annexations to village schools were delayed in some cases on account of road conditions and the attendant difficulty in transporting children, and in Delaware township where a good city high school was accessible they were not so interested in centralization.

It is always difficult to get people to change from any established custom and a centralization campaign there was always the pro and con with some pretty violent repercussions, but the majority ruled and after it was over there was usually a reconciliation and the principal objection was the bad roads and slow horse drawn transportation.

There are probably a number of places where source material on the establishment of one-room schools in Ohio could be found; possibly some information could be found in county records, and there is always the public libraries, which have histories of Ohio schools. It is probable that schools were established as soon as there were enough people in a community to form a school and the expense was paid by the people whose children attended. My memory goes back to the time when there was no township board of education, but only a township tax for schools, and the teachers got an order from the township clerk, and cashed it at the county treasury. A township board of education was established in about 1893, and in most cases there were still sub-subsistence from the one-room schools, but not required by law. From that time until 1914 when the County School law was passed and a County Board of education created. Up until this time all money for schools was derived from local taxation, and in centralizing a district we attempted to get a tax duplicate of at least three million in order to have enough money to run the school, but now the state appropriates millions and allots it to schools and the Federal Govt. wants to help. The sputnik gave quite an impetus to schools. Every thing now depends on education, even our survival.

You have a very good questionnaire and you can get it to the olde folks in the townships especially the teachers, I should think that they would have a lot of fun filling it out. There must be a lot of older ladies who can furnish the information. There may be a man occasionally, but you know the ladies live on the average seven years longer than men, and I have to associate with the women for the most part, because something seems to happen to my old men acquaintance. How I wish that I had a copy of my teachers and school lists that were available to every body who wanted one. The name of every one-room school and teacher in every township. They were in the files at the county office once, but after forty years or more it would be very unusual to find such a list.

I am afraid that I can not be of much help to you, but I will keep your address on file, and if I should find any thing that I think may be of help I will be glad to send it to you.

Yours truly

Paul M. Lybarger

Mr. Lybarger was the Delaware County
Supt. of Schools.