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A historical survey of changes in education in Madison county 1792-1970

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A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF CHANGES IN EDUCATION

IN MADISON COUNTY 1792 - 1970

A Thesis

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty of the

University of Richmond

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in

Education

by

John Edward Dwyer

August 1970

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APPROVAL SHEET

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The author's purpose for writing this thesis is to show certain changes in the educational development in Madison County from 1792 to 1970.

A History of Madison County has been written by Claude L. Yowell, but it does not deal in depth with the changes in education or its evolvement from 1792 to 1970. References were made to Mr. Yowell's work as they related to this thesis.

A great deal of the source material has come from personal interviews with the people deeply involved in the public schools or those who had a personal interest in them. Other source material came from books, mostly related to Virginia history, newspapers, periodicals, and public records. However, the written record of educational history in Madison County was not begun until 1920.

The only term in the paper that would need clarification is the term dwelling house. The dwelling house was related to private schools and was the one in which the owner and his family lived, but was also the place where the meals of the boarders were eaten.

The chronological division of the paper is often irregular because the period of time involved is one in which a dramatic physical change occurred and made a more convenient climax to the period. The

paper has three broad areas of division. The first division is the educational history before the county was formed to 1870 when public schools became a state responsibility. The second division enters into the competition with the private schools from 1880 to 1915. The final division extends from 1915, when consolidation began, to 1968, when consolidation ended.

The general theme is supported with information describing, wherever possible, the types of schools, and occasionally the conditions under which education existed, and in some instances an analysis of those changes. Most educational changes, however, are not critically analyzed.

Because so many people have been involved in the educational system in Madison who are still living, the author left out names in most cases and used them only when they helped to identify a particular school or if the persons' contributions were of unusual stature.

CHAPTER II

EARLY HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MADISON COUNTY

The scenic beauty of Madison County's slightly rolling hills is surpassed only by the Blue Ridge Mountains, which stand as the backdrop to them and enhance their beauty. The historical significance of the growth of the county and hence the educational growth is closely related to the accessibility that three main roads give to its residents. Route 29 is an arterial highway that runs generally north and south connecting the county with urban centers at Culpeper and Charlottesville; Route 231 divides the county roughly into two parts running northwest to northeast; and Route 230 connects the southwestern and southeastern section with Orange, Virginia, and the town of Madison, the county seat.

Mostly rural in its social and economic setting, the county appears to the person unfamiliar with it to be somewhat slow in its development. To one who lives here, however, it is easily recognized that the development is controlled by a resolute people who enjoy a way of life that has been a pleasure for many generations. It should not be implied that there is no progress, but one should understand that progress is achieved according to the pleasure of its inhabitants. The pleasure, of course, might increase and progress be greater if there were a greater source of revenue. With this background there should be little surprise that the school system has slowly evolved to what it is today.

Historically, Madison County was formed three years after the Constitution of the United States was put into effect in 1789. It was named for Congressman James Madison who lived at Montpelier in Orange County. Although he did not live in Madison, he and his relatives owned a mill located on the Rapidan River in Madison County and there is a community near by that still bears the name Madison Mills.¹

Prior to this time the land area of what is present day Madison County had been a part of three counties. It was part of Spotsylvania County until 1734, when it became a part of the Orange County tract. It became part of Culpeper County when it was formed in 1748 and was finally created as a separate county by an act of the General Assembly on December 4, 1792.²

The General Assembly ordered the judge to hold court to appoint the various governmental officers and give the oath of office to those taking office. The court convened on May 23 and 24, 1793, and became officially operative at that time. It took two days to appoint the officers which included the attorney and commissioners to value property. The court was held in John Yager's house until a courthouse, made of logs, was built on the site of the present courthouse.³

¹Claude L. Yowell, A History of Madison County, (Virginia: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1926), p. 55.

²Ibid., pp. 51-53.

³Court Order Book No. 1, 1792-1809, p. 1.

The courthouse consisted of two rooms and was made with a chimney in each end. In 1828 the court was charged with levying a tax to build a brick courthouse and a clerk's office. The brick courthouse, 40 x 50 feet, was completed by 1829.⁴ The commissioners first decided to rent out the old courthouse after it was to be moved to one end of the present day site. Later on they decided to move it across the street on the two-acre public lot for \$28.50, where the War Memorial Building now stands. It was later sold for \$77.90,⁵ dismantled and removed.

SUMMARY: The social and economic setting in Madison County is mostly rural, and the county has slowly developed its educational system to what it is today.

The county was created in 1792 and was named after James Madison. The county was a part of three separate counties prior to its creation.

The first order of business before the court was to build a permanent courthouse, so that the government could carry on official business. The first courthouse, made of logs, was completed in 1793. The present day brick structure replaced it in 1829.

⁴Madison Eagle, "Madison County Courthouse", Vol. 53, No. 43. Thursday, Oct. 26, 1961, p. 5.

⁵Court Order Book No. 7, 1826--1833, pp. 97, 167, 189 and 190.

CHAPTER III

BASIC EDUCATION ESTABLISHED

IN VIRGINIA AND MADISON COUNTY 1643--1800

To understand the educational development in Madison, it is necessary to see some of the educational development in Virginia, because education had been going on for quite a while before Madison became a county.

For whatever reason education began, it was evidently not for the high purpose of scholarly pursuits. Because masters in Virginia received a number of orphans from time to time from England, something had to be done to see that the orphans could take care of themselves in adulthood. It seems, at least, that some degree of self-protection was in the minds of Virginia society in the first half of the seventeenth century. Schools, therefore, were created to prepare the orphans for a particular vocation. Laws were passed in 1643 providing for an apprenticeship program for them and they were to receive a basic education which included some reading and writing. Three years later "good breeding" was added to "a good and lawful trade" in new laws imposed upon the masters of orphans. By the year 1705 the master was compelled to see that the orphan learned to read and write and included in the law was an apprenticeship program that included any child whose parents had not taught him. The latter responsibility was

placed upon some of the minor church leaders.⁶

The first school established to teach these orphans and other untaught children was the Symms' School, which was endowed by Benjamin Symms in 1634. The school did not start functioning until 1643 in Elizabeth City (present day Hampton, Virginia). Shortly thereafter, the Eaton School was established in the same area. Both of these schools provided education through the next two centuries.⁷ Heatwole contended that these schools were the first "free" schools, but many residents in Madison contended that the Hebron Lutheran School was the first "free" school.

About fifty years before Madison County was formed the Hebron school was started in the 1740's. The school was started after 1740 because that was the year the new Hebron Church was built.⁸ It was unusual indeed the way funds were raised to establish the church and the school. The congregation was very poor, and the chapel (small log building) was badly in need of repairs. Reverend John Caspar Stoeber, the pastor, Michael Smith, an elder, and Michael Holt, a member of the congregation, went to Europe to collect funds to build the church and the school. They left sometime in 1734, arrived in England and stayed until August 1735. They then sailed for Holland, after

⁶Cornelius J. Heatwole, A History of Education in Virginia, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1916), pp. 27--34.

⁷Ibid., pp. 44--45.

⁸Rev. W. P. Huddle (Pastor), History of Hebron Lutheran Church from 1707--1907, (Newmarket, Va.: Henkel and Company, 1908), p. 33.

collecting a good contribution in England. From Holland they went to Germany and after some months in Danzing, Holt returned to England in 1736 before returning home. A short while later Michael Smith and Stoever met George Samuel Klug, another preacher. He was appointed assistant pastor of the Hebron Church while there, and left for England presumably to go to America. He did not come to Hebron Church until May 20, 1739, however, but had been in this country for about a year prior to that.⁹ Michael Holt had misrepresented Stoever while in Germany and this had caused the German ministerium in Danzing to appoint Klug as assistant. Stoever was angry, but still accepted Klug as the assistant. Stoever and Smith continued collecting funds and finally collected about fourteen or fifteen thousand dollars¹⁰ before they started the return voyage home. Stoever became ill and died aboard ship on the high seas, so Klug became pastor. Construction began on the new church building almost immediately after Klug became pastor. The church had about ten thousand dollars with which to begin construction because one-third of the donations had been used¹¹ by the collectors for expenses and wages.

The school was built and in use by 1748, but whether it was in operation before that time is not certain. The idea about the school

⁹Ibid., pp. 31--32.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 27.

¹¹Ibid., p. 27.

was Stoever's, but Klug established it and was the first teacher. The two-room school was 16 x 30 feet long. It was kept open only on occasions because when the church was without a pastor there was no school. There was evidence that pastors and members of the congregation taught there as late as 1844.¹² When Reverend Michael Meyerhoffer, who by far had the most successful ministry in the early years, was teaching, he mentioned that there were two other schools in his parish in 1818 and three in 1819, but he failed to identify them.¹³ In all probability the schools were "old field" schools, which were "free" schools of a later date.

The children of the inhabitants of the Hebron area, who were mostly German with some English and Irish, were free to attend the Hebron school. The difficulty in determining whether Hebron was the first free school in Virginia is the terminology used in defining a "free" school. The tradition of recent years gives an all-embracing term for a free school because the public school system is looked upon as "free." Either various areas in the state gave different meanings to a "free" school or Heatwole grouped schools that were essentially the same into the "free" category. The Eaton and Symms' Schools were not free for any who wished to attend, but were limited to apprenticeship for orphans. In 1705 they moved closer to a "free"

¹²Ibid., p. 34.

¹³Ibid., p. 55.

school by allowing any others who were not taught by their parents to attend; but even in this case any and every child could not attend. Religious schools were used for elementary education, but the term "free" meant liberal education.¹⁴

"Free" classification also was given to the school which charged a fee for those who could afford it and to those schools attended by persons who did not pay.¹⁵ Finally, free schools were those which were set up by the court for all children in the judge's district with funds collected from taxes.¹⁶ This interpretation would come closer to the present day idea of the "free" school, but the specific date of the first one set up under this system is unknown, unless it was in 1871 when the public system was inaugurated. The Hebron School is a closer interpretation of a "free" school than the others mentioned, with the possible exception of the court established school, the beginning of which has not been positively established.

The tutorial school was established certainly by 1820 because there were wealthy land owners there by that time. The census of 1820 indicates that out of a population of 8,490 people there were 4,612 slaves.¹⁷ The tutorial system was at that time characteristic of rural

¹⁴Heatwole, op. cit., pp. 36--39.

¹⁵Ellwood P. Cubberley, Readings in the History of Education (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., Cambridge, 1920), pp. 427--428.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 428.

¹⁷Madison County Eagle, Oct. 26, 1961, p. 6

18 schools. This type of school was set up in the home, usually, of the tutored. Sometimes two or more families would send their children to one home to share the expenses.¹⁹

The academy, a preparatory school for those who were later to attend college, also must have existed in Madison County during the nineteenth century. The only two, of which there is a record, are Locust Dale Academy (1858) and Woodberry Forest (1889). The latter was the original estate belonging to William Madison, the brother of James

Madison.²⁰ There was at least one academy in every county between 1800 and 1860.²¹ There was such a close relationship between academy and college that in at least one instance in Virginia an academy became a college. When money was donated to George Washington in 1784 for his interest in supporting the James River Canal (Kanawha) he refused it and directed that the money be donated to Liberty Hall Academy. The name of the academy was soon thereafter changed to Washington College. After Robert E. Lee became president of the college, it received the present name of Washington and Lee University.²² The academy was the basis for

¹⁸ Mathew Page Andrews, Virginia, The Old Dominion, (Richmond: The Kietz Press, Inc., 1949), p. 368.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 368.

²⁰ William Ward Briggs, History of Locust Dale Academy, (Lynchburg, Va.: John Bell Co., 1902), p. 1; Elizabeth Copeland Norfleet, Woodberry Forest: A Venture in Faith, (New York: The Georgian Press, Inc., 1955), p. 8.

²¹ Heatwole, op. cit., p. 26.

²² Address by George W. Miles, Pan American Exposition, Buffalo, N.Y., (Richmond Chamber of Commerce, 1901), p. 37.

high schools for the wealthy and was probable cause for the difficulty in getting the public to support public schools for all.²³ After all, one did not need an education to plant crops, fork hay, or drive a plough horse, but one did need it to oversee property and to negotiate property slaves, participate in politics and converse intelligently with the educated.

As Virginia moved toward public schools for all, the "free" schools, academies, and religious schools played an important part in establishing them. This movement received great support from Thomas Jefferson, a great advocate of free education. On several occasions he attempted to get the General Assembly to support free education in Virginia. When he first presented his plan in 1779 he showed great foresight by suggesting that every county be divided into districts four or five miles square, called hundreds, and establish a school in each district for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. Education would be free for the first three years for all children and the schools would be paid for out of taxes collected in each district. Realizing the need for competition, he declared that the boys doing the best work would be sent to grammar school for two years. Then the best would be selected from that group and sent to school for six more years.²⁴ It is interesting to note that this would be the

²³Heatwole, op. cit., p. 33.

²⁴Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 427--428.

equivalent of a college education at that time. In its development the public school system increased its grades until it reached eleven, and then in 1945 the twelve grade system was adopted. All those who were not sent on for the six final years would be dismissed. Thomas Jefferson concluded his arguments with the statement that "The best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish annually, instructed and sent as far as grammar schools go."²⁵ He was saying in effect what educators are proclaiming in the present day, that ability is the only thing that would limit one's education. He also asked for a state supported system of education that included elementary, academy, and college.²⁶ To a degree, the state was supposed to be assisting counties for education through the Literary Fund, but it was not doing much.²⁷ The state appropriated public funds for supporting colleges, which laid the groundwork for part of the three-level system Jefferson sought. The state of Virginia is still divided into school districts even today. Scholarships are offered to outstanding students to continue their education and the emphasis is still being based on ability as the only criteria that limits an individual in his scholarly pursuits.

SUMMARY: Education in Virginia was begun primarily as a vocational program. As educational experience was developed the "free"

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Heatwole, loc. cit.

²⁷Ibid., p. 104.

school emerged in the form of religious schools, academies and tutorial schools. Madison County's example of the "free" school was the Hebron Lutheran Church School.

Although Thomas Jefferson was not successful in establishing a public "free" school system, his ideas helped sow the seeds for establishing the public schools in Virginia.

CHAPTER IV

FROM CONVENIENCE TO NECESSITY FROM 1800--1870

Over the next seventy years from 1800 to 1870 the state of Virginia and Madison County were greatly influenced by the introduction of the "old field" schools. The time is only roughly estimated because the date of the first "old field" school is unknown. There were many of these schools that existed in Madison and in that county, like the rest of Virginia, the weather had much to do with the length of the school year. Whereas some operated longer, most in Madison operated for from three to five months and usually when the weather was warm. The teachers did not have to be qualified, and some were very unqualified, but the year usually lasted from April or June until September as late as 1911.²⁸ Some were held, however, during some of the winter months. The schools were of one room and were usually constructed by the community, paid for by the community, and the salaries of the teachers were paid by the community.²⁹ Therefore, hiring and firing of teachers were done by the community.

²⁸ A. W. Yowell, personal interview.

²⁹ Effie Tucker, personal interview.

The purpose for establishing the "old field" school was primarily for convenience, but was also created out of necessity as transportation was poor and the roads were poorer. Therefore, people who lived near each other joined together to support the school and the teacher. In fact, the roads in Madison, as in other rural areas, were so poor that people who lived in Aroda and other places, which were approximately five miles away, had to board in the town of Madison to go to high school there until June 1922.³⁰

There were no books at first, no blackboards, and the desks were made of puncheon.³¹ The desks were usually used by two to four students and on each side of the room the tops of the desks were planed to make a smooth surface for what little writing was to be done. The chairs were just plain benches made from flat boards. It was not unusual to have forty or more students in a room with grades from one through eight.³²

What few books there were in the schools were usually manmade, which simply means the course of study had to be prepared and presented by the teacher. Those parts of the book that the student had to memorize were copied by them.³³ Most of the work in these schools was memorization and recitation. Emphasis was placed upon discipline and

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Puncheon desks were ones made by splitting a log and using the flat part for the desk top.

³²A. W. Yowell, loc. cit.

³³Claude L. Yowell, personal interview. Mr. Yowell has originals in his possession showing the beautiful penmanship of some of the teachers.

the hickory stick across the back of the hand was used most often. This helped most students to bear down, but on many occasions a log stump was used to sensitize the rump of the more difficult disciplinary cases. Then, too, this certainly did not encourage attendance which was poor at best.³⁴ Most of the class work was done on a hand slate, which each child possessed. This was customary throughout Virginia during this period. Some bound works began appearing about 1860 and such books as Pike's Arithmetic, Walker's Dictionary, Murray's Grammar and McCrae's Geography³⁵ were used, but they usually belonged to the teachers. Most teachers, however, did not have the above books.

This era did not pass without another attempt being made to get the legislature to establish a public school system. This time, in 1849, Dr. Henry Ruffner, the father of William Henry Ruffner who was the first superintendent of public instruction in Virginia, offered a plan similar to the one Horace Mann had put into effect in Massachusetts.³⁶ Just three years prior to this suggestion, the General Assembly passed a law for a primary plan, but, like the General Assemblies of Jefferson's Day, it attached a condition to it. It maintained that the system could be implemented only if two-thirds of the voters in each county voted for

³⁴Claude L. Yowell, "History", p. 105.

³⁵Madison Eagle, "Centennial Edition," October 26, 1961, p. 8B.

³⁶Heatwole, op. cit., p. 219.

permitting it. Only nine counties accepted it and Madison County was not one of them.³⁷ Therefore, the results of the 1846 act met a fate similar to that of previous acts concerning a public school system. The 1849 decision was not successful either.

If the overall public school plan continually was being turned down by the General Assembly, the question arises, why did it keep coming upon the floor for consideration? The answer is mainly because public funds were being used for schools on an elementary and college level, so the Literary Fund influenced the state legislature to face the issue infrequently. The Fund started on February 2, 1810, and the money would be accrued by "escheats, fines, confiscations, penalties, forfeitures, and all rights accruing to the state as derelict, shall be set aside for encouraging learning."³⁸ A year later, 1811, the law provided that the Literary Fund money would be used for the poor in any county in the state. Commissioners were to be appointed by each county court to find the poor ones and place them in the school. The funds could not be used until \$45,000 was built up in the fund, then the amount of money granted to each county was determined by population. Because of a loan made by Virginia to the Federal Government in 1812, Virginia received \$1,210,550 in payment of it. The money went into the Literary Fund. The directors of this fund were the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and president of the Court of Appeals.³⁹

³⁷Ibid., p. 105.

³⁸Ibid., p. 104.

³⁹Ibid., p. 105.

Therefore this group had authority to distribute the funds, but no power to promote the public school program. In 1829, \$100, or roughly ten per cent of the fund could be used by a locality to build schools, if the patrons put up three-fifths of the total, leaving the localities to pay the rest.⁴⁰ By 1853 all of the capitation tax was placed in the Literary Fund. In spite of this, the attitude of the commissioners in 1855 in Madison County was that different neighborhoods in the county had schools and therefore it was unnecessary to establish new schools. They further stated that funds were not sufficient to educate all poor children.⁴¹ The big stumbling block before the General Assembly was centered around the attitude of people on the local and state level toward providing education for the poor and the stigma attached to schools that educated them. Funds for educating the poor were a great part of education from its inception in Virginia. Pride does not allow people to accept the social stigma that is attached to being poor. This attitude of the poor themselves and the people who feared being classified as such was deeply engrained in the mores of the Virginia society, and it was no less so in Madison County.

By the turn of the century public schools were looked upon with disdain in Madison⁴² and teachers in Virginia who taught in schools

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 118.

⁴²Pauline Bowman, loc. cit.; Effie Tucker, loc. cit.; Claude L. Yowell, interview.

where fees were paid refused to teach the poor in their classrooms.⁴³
This was all the more reason why free education for all was important.

SUMMARY: The "old field" schools firmly established primary education in Madison County and the state of Virginia. The desire of the people to pay for the school buildings and the salaries of the teachers, meager as they were, meant that the people wanted education for their children.

The General Assembly was not ready to take on the responsibility to fund a state school program except by allowing the Literary Fund to assist local programs. One of the primary reasons for the above statement was the unwilling attitude the wealthy took toward the "poor" and their education. Indeed, even the people on the county level did not see a need to establish new schools from state funds.

⁴³Heatwole, op. cit., p. 115.

CHAPTER V
FINANCIAL PROBLEMS FACING PUBLIC EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA
FROM 1870--1880

The primary objective of public schools was to give free education to every child. There was very little schooling provided during the Civil War as some of the financing was done by the use of the Literary Fund.⁴⁴ The public school system, however, had a very difficult time after the Underwood Constitution inaugurated it by authorizing the use of public funds to pay for it. The Constitution provided for the election of a superintendent of public instruction by the General Assembly and a State Board of Education similar to the board that disbursed the Literary Fund. This board consisted of the Governor, the Attorney General, and the Superintendent with authority to appoint and remove county superintendents and school trustees of the district.⁴⁵

On March 1, 1870, the first superintendent was elected and was instructed to submit to the General Assembly a plan for the public school system. Dr. William Henry Ruffner finished and presented a plan to the General Assembly by March 28, 1870.⁴⁶ By July 11, 1870, the plan

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 180.

⁴⁵Richmond Times Dispatch, May 24, 1970, p. 34.

⁴⁶Dr. William Henry Ruffner, Report of Superintendent of Instruction, Document No. 6, Mar. 28, 1870, p. 1.

for public instruction called the "Public Free School Law" was signed into law by the Governor.⁴⁷ This plan suggested that gradual introduction of public schools be started in the state in 1871. In particular, Dr. Ruffner pointed out how the schools would be financed. The state and county would pay half of the cost, whereas any other expenses would come from the school district itself. The state would apportion its money according to the population and it would be administered by the State Board of Education. The capitation tax would be set aside to help pay for free schools, along with Literary Fund which was already being used. The Constitution of Virginia, also, stated that school funds would not be used for any other purpose.⁴⁸

The system was begun and all students between five and twenty-one years of age were to be educated free, but Virginia's representatives in the legislature were inexperienced and for the most part ignorant of assessing property while determining the amount of money needed to provide the necessary functions of government.⁴⁹ This, plus Virginia's war debt, complicated by West Virginia's receiving statehood, placed a tremendous handicap on the public school system during the early years of its development. West Virginia was created in 1861 as a new state. Virginia was heavily indebted at this time and some of the indebtedness was the responsibility of the new state. The Virginia legislature, after

⁴⁷Heatwole, op. cit., p. 219.

⁴⁸Ruffner, op. cit., p. 9.

⁴⁹William Lawrence Royal, Virginia State Debt Controversy, (Richmond, Va.,: George M. West, Publicsher, 1897), p. 21.

long debate, decided that she should pay off her indebtedness rather than repudiate it, but the payment of the bonded indebtedness should be rewritten and one-third of the principal owed by Virginia as of 1861 would be collected from West Virginia and paid off later to the bond holders. The Virginians arrived arbitrarily at the one-third figure by determining that one-third of her land mass was taken by West Virginia, so West Virginia would have to pay one-third of the debt the state of Virginia owed in 1861.⁵⁰ The greatest difficulty came in 1871, when, because of lack of funds, Virginia had to default on the bonds that had been rewritten and accepted by the creditors. This led to the repeal of the Funding Act. Politicians began choosing sides from then through 1877; some of them wanted to repudiate the debts altogether and still others wanted to readjust and pay off most of the debt. During the raging battle, Virginia still suffered from irresponsibility in the government and had to use money from the Literary Fund to pay public expenses in other areas, although such use was clearly unconstitutional. The auditor, who was responsible for disbursing funds, continued to use the money until 1879, the year the McCulloch Bill was passed.⁵¹ To cloud the issue more, until 1871 Virginia had been investing in projects that were for internal improvement, such as canals, railroads and turnpikes.⁵² The result was that in the first

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 21--22.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 26.

⁵²Ibid., p. 5--15. State policy since 1820 was to borrow money for internal improvements and sell bonds at 6 per cent per annum. The state paid interest until the war came and then paid no interest during the war. Most of her bonds were held in northern states and in Europe.

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year over one million dollars of the Literary Fund was used for purposes other than school funds. Despite the optimistic fervor of Dr. Ruffner during the years of 1871--1880, the public system did anything but prosper. Indeed, Madison County closed its system entirely in 1878, as did 126 others.⁵⁴ In 1881, while speaking to the Senate of the United States about funding the debts of the states, William Mahone, a Virginia Senator, contended that lack of funds in Virginia caused school closings between 1870 and 1878 until one-half closed and the other half were operating only two or three months a year.⁵⁵ Whereas his figures are not completely accurate, they do emphasize financial difficulty in the public school system.

Turmoil and strife over the debt Virginia owed greatly affected the public school system. There were three groups with different ideas on how the debt should be handled. The first group was called the "funders" because an act had been passed in the General Assembly in 1871 called the "Funding Act." This act called for payment of Virginia's debt at six per cent interest on all of the debt, except that accrued as a result of the Civil War. The creditors accepted this, but the legislators were in many ways ignorant and inexperienced on matters of high finance and methods of appropriation. As a result Virginia had to default on her payment and this created a great division on what should

⁵³Hon. William Mahone, Congressional Record, (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1881), pp. 7 and 19.

⁵⁴The Educational Journal of Virginia, Vol. 10, No. 10, Dec. 1879, p. 86.

⁵⁵Mahone, op. cit., p. 19.

be done to correct the situation. The second group and one with the least effect was the "repudiators." They wanted to repudiate the debt Virginia had accrued and start over. This group was in a very weak position because Virginia's credit was poor anyway and this would only make it worse, especially with her financial solvency being in jeopardy. The third group was the "readjusters" who wanted to pay interest on the debt, but reduce it to two or three per cent instead of six per cent. This group used the argument also that when West Virginia became a state a fair share of the Virginia debt was owed by West Virginians.⁵⁶ The "readjusters" almost won with the Barbour Bill in 1877, but the Governor, James Kemper of Madison, favoring the "funders", vetoed it. The question was partially settled by the passage of the McCulloch Bill in 1879, which was a "readjuster" victory. The creditors agreed to receive payment at a reduced rate, which averaged to be three and one-half per cent interest and payment of the full principal by 1892.⁵⁷

This opened the door to the restoration of the Literary Fund to its rightful place, support for the public schools. Dr. Ruffner played no small part in the battle to restore the funds to their original function. He prepared a seventy-two page indictment against state officials for illegal use of school funds in his annual report in 1878. This helped in preparing the way for the Henkel Bill, which was passed in 1880.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 7--19.

⁵⁷Andrews, op. cit., pp. 118--119.

It enforced the constitutional provision that required that the funds
for schools be set aside separately from other expenditures.⁵⁸

SUMMARY: During this ten-year period the public schools faced a great financial crisis. Much of the money that should have been set aside for education was spent by inexperienced legislators on other state programs. Quite a number of the school systems in the state, including Madison County, had to close down or operate on a part-time basis. After a valiant effort by members of the General Assembly and Superintendent of Public Instruction Ruffner, the McCulloch and Henkel Bills were passed restoring the Literary Fund to the public school system. With this problem solved the public schools could be promoted much more smoothly.

⁵⁸Smith, op. cit., p. 9.

CHAPTER VI

TRADITION AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS HINDER PUBLIC EDUCATION

FROM 1880--1915

In 1880 the tradition that was created by the continued attempt to educate the poor with public funds gave education the "poor" label when it became a reality. This problem had plagued primary education in Virginia for over a hundred years and was a carry-over from the "old field" school of poor preparation, poor housing and only meager funds. This enabled the private school to lend a fair degree of competition to the public schools for about thirty years. The people like Andrew J. Gordon who founded Locust Dale Academy, John D. Fray who founded Warrick High School, and Robert S. Walker who founded Woodberry Forest, did not feel that the public schools effectively educated the young people. Although the Woodberry Forest School is best known and is still a very outstanding preparatory school in Madison, it was not founded until the Warrick High School had been in existence for four years and the Locust Dale Academy for thirty one years.

The Locust Dale Academy located in the Locust Dale District of Madison County about one-tenth of a mile west of Route 15 on State Route 634 was a formidable competitor of the public schools. This academy was founded in 1858 by Andrew James Gordon, a college graduate at age

eighteen from the state of Vermont. Gordon was riding on a train, headed south through Virginia, to teach. A passenger on the train told him of a man who was looking for a teacher to teach his twenty-one children, twenty by his second wife, rest her soul! Gordon left the train at Brandy Station just south of Culpeper and walked eight miles to the home of Larkin Willis. The family tradition states that while he was sitting on the porch of the Willis home Lucy Herndon Willis, a daughter, rode up on horseback, and he said, "That is my future wife." He later married Lucy and then founded the academy on approximately fifteen acres of land across from the present day Willis home.⁵⁹ He died in 1880 and William Ward Briggs, married to Mary Taylor Gordon, a daughter of A. J. Gordon, who was teaching in Suffolk, Virginia, bought the academy from the Gordon family. He headed the school until poor⁶⁰ health forced his retirement at the end of the 1907--08 session.

Undated pictures verify that between 1858 and 1902 the school prospered. In one picture there was a dwelling house and two dormitories, while another undated picture showed the house, a classroom building, at least five dormitories, a chapel, a headmaster's house and a gymnasium. The dwelling house stood on the same foundation that the Jeff Lohr house now stands, and the headmaster's house is occupied

⁵⁹Mary Ward Walters, personal interview. Mrs. Walters is the great-granddaughter of A. J. Gordon and granddaughter of W. W. Briggs, the late owner of the academy.

⁶⁰William Ward Briggs, History of Locust Dale Academy, (Lynchburg, Va.: John Bell Co., 1902), p. 1. This history was only a few pages long and was not in book form.



FIGURE 1
LARKIN WILLIS



FIGURE 2
MARY GORDON WILLIS
SECOND WIFE OF
LARKIN WILLIS

by John and Mary Walters.⁶¹

The dormitories were rectangular in shape and had four rooms in each. The two lower floor and upper floor rooms were not connected to each other, because a chimney went up the center of the dormitory to give a fireplace to each room. There were steps outside of some of the dormitories that led to the upstairs rooms. These steps were at both ends of the dormitory so that the students in the upper room on the right went up on one side, and the students on the left could go up the other side. There was a balcony on the second floor, so the students could easily visit each other's rooms. After crossing a small porch, the students entered each of the first floor rooms by separate doors. Some of the dorms, however, had the steps to the second floor going up from the inside of the first floor rooms, but they still had a balcony and chimney located in the same places. Usually two boys slept in a room together, but if a student wanted a room alone he paid \$10.00 extra. He could pay that extra fee and sleep in the headmaster's house if he chose.⁶²

The tuition was \$37.50, and room and board was \$112.50 for nine months, September through early June. Military training was compulsory there, but when it was instituted is not known. The uniforms cost \$16.35 each. The number of instructors for the individual school years from the time the school began until it ended in 1910 is not fully

⁶¹Pictures and statement from Mrs. Walters. She has numerous pictures of the football, baseball teams and students in full military uniforms posing in front of the dormitories.

⁶²Locust Dale Academy Brochure, 1908; pictures of dormitories. There is one dormitory still standing on the Walters' farm. Another was moved across Crooked Run and is a home on the Elgin Farm on Route 15, north of the academy site.



FIGURE 3

TWO DORMITORIES AND CHAPEL (UNDATED)

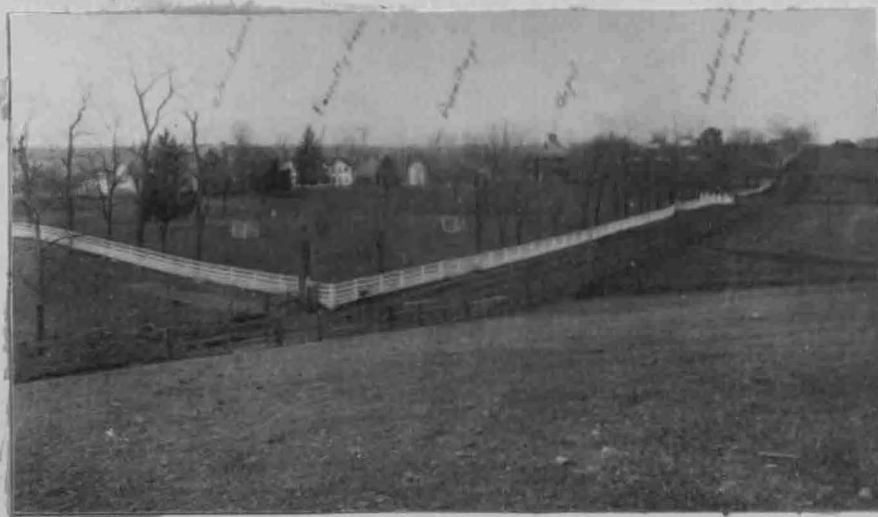


FIGURE 4

LOCUST DALE ACADEMY CAMPUS

known; however, in 1902 there were eight faculty members plus Briggs, the headmaster, and in 1911 there were only four, including the headmaster, L. A. Prouty. This indicates that its popularity was waning before it was closed after a fire destroyed the main house.⁶³

The subjects taught for a number of years were numerous, depending upon the course the student took. There were four courses they could take; namely, preparatory, classical, general and scientific. The preparatory course prepared the student for college. Upon graduating, he could be accepted by either Rensselaer College, the University of North Carolina, Washington and Lee University, Brown University, Bates College or Hampden-Sydney College. The classical course included the languages and highlighted Greek and Latin. The general course was for high school graduation, and the scientific course prepared students for engineering and medicine.⁶⁴

There were five forms or grades in the school, and a student under twelve could not enter unless he had an elementary knowledge of reading, writing, spelling, English, geography and arithmetic. With such rigorous entrance requirements, a student would have little chance to enter unless he had the equivalent of an elementary school education. The students were graded H, C, P, and F. H stood for a grade of 90 to 100; C stood for 80 to 90; P stood for 70 to 80; and F stood for what it does today, failure.⁶⁵

⁶³Ibid., 1902 and 1909.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.



FIGURE 5

DORMITORY USED AS RESIDENCE
NORTH OF CROOKED RUN



FIGURE 6

CORP OF CADETS IN FRONT OF CHAPEL

By the 1910--1911 session there were only about three dormitories, the dwelling house, some small classrooms, and the headmaster's house. Behind the dwelling house was a small one-room house where a Negro woman ironed the clothes. One day during the month of March while she was ironing she placed the clothes too near the flames and they caught on fire. The flames enveloped the building, carried to the main house, and burned both to the ground. Much of the furniture and some of the records were saved, but not many. W. W. Briggs, who was residing in the house, but not in it at the time of the fire, went from there to live in the headmaster's house until the end of the school year. The school was then closed after that session.

Eight years after the Hebron Lutheran School operated for the last recorded time, in 1872 by Reverend Robert C. Holland,⁶⁷ John D. Fray started a school on the church grounds. The school, called the Fray School, met on the church grounds and although W. P. Huddle does not state what happened to the Hebron School building, it was not used by John Fray. The Reverend Jacob S. Moser was the last teacher at Hebron Church and he started a school at the parsonage in Madison, Virginia, in 1886; however, it lasted for only one or two years. Whether the Hebron School was dismantled or destroyed in some other way was not recorded, but it is doubtful that Moser would have established a school at the parsonage if the old school building had been standing at the church.⁶⁸

⁶⁶Walters, loc. cit., interview.

⁶⁷Huddle, op. cit., p. 83.

⁶⁸Ibid.

Fray established his school in an old saddle shed, which was located on the present site of the parish house of Hebron Church. This shed was a part of the agreement put in the deed to the property that William Carpenter left to the church.⁶⁹ The shed had been used earlier to place horses' saddles on rainy Sundays. He established the school in 1880, but was there for only a short time before the building burned. The Fray family was living on property now owned by John McLain. Fray then built a two-room school with twelve dormitory rooms on a hill on his property. It was located on the northeast side of the Robinson River. The Fray family lived in a one and one-half story house on the present site of the McLain house. The school was built about 1885 and lasted until 1915. He named the new school Warrick High School and usually had another male teacher to assist him. The assistant lived in the dormitory with the boys and assisted them in their studies at night. In addition to the twenty-five young men the school housed, residents of the community also attended. There were usually thirty or forty boys in attendance in the classes. Lodging and meals, which were eaten at the Fray home, cost each student \$130 for eight months of schooling.⁷⁰

The school had better furnishings than the public schools because each classroom had a blackboard and individual desks with compartments under the top for storage of books and any other items the student prized.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 91

⁷⁰Joseph and Mary Fray, personal interview. Mr. and Miss Fray are the son and daughter of John D. Fray.

Each classroom had windows on one side and at the entrance. There were very few books except the ones Fray and his assistant used. If a student wanted to read a book he had to get permission first from his parents and then from Fray.

John Fray was very conscientious and believed wholeheartedly in recitation and memorization. He was an excellent teacher and especially good in mathematics. Toward the end of his career he taught physics for one period of four to six weeks and chemistry for one period of four to six weeks, in addition to the three "R's."⁷¹ The last year the school was operative under Fray was the 1911--1912 session. The school was used only two more years, although it did not fall into ruin until 1944. Annie Childs Aylor taught there after John Fray retired. She taught only about eight children including the Fray children. The dormitory part of the school was used to house the Fray family for a while until the present day McLain house was finished enough to house the family. The house was finally completed in 1921. The school turned out many men who later entered the business and professional world and made outstanding contributions to society.⁷²

Another competitor with the public schools was Woodberry Forest, a preparatory school which was started by a former Captain in Colonel John S. Mosby's Rangers. He was named Robert Stringfellow Walker. He and his sister, Sallie, were given the two hundred and fifty-acre site

⁷¹A. W. Yowell, loc. cit.

⁷²Joseph and Mary Fray, loc. cit.



FIGURE 7

"THE RESIDENCE" AS IT APPEARS TODAY

in 1872 by their father. There was a hundred-year-old house on the site which housed William Madison and his family when they owned the property. This house was named by William Madison, "The Residence." Around this house the school was created because the father, who had married in 1874, wanted to educate his six sons properly. They had a teacher come to the house to instruct the boys in 1887, but she was not a qualified teacher. She was too old to teach in 1889, so J. Thompson Brown, a qualified teacher, was contracted for the job. He had eight students including the Walker and Grinnan children, who were neighbors. The school prospered continually from then until the present day.⁷³

Not only did these boys' schools compete with the public schools, but there were at least two private girls' schools that competed. They were Rock Springs Institute and Oak Park Institute. The Rock Springs School was located about one and one-half miles east of Harry Gibbs' Store on Route 662 in the Shelby Community. The name of this community was Glory when the school was functioning. The date of its beginning is not clear, but it was about 1890 or 1900. It was located west of the Rochelle Community, which was a thriving community at that time. There was another community, present day Uno, which was located to the south of Rochelle, called Kingdom. There was a favorite saying of the residents of that day, "Rochelle was located between Glory and Kingdom Come."⁷⁴ The school taught basket weaving and cooking besides reading,

⁷³Elizabeth Copeland Norfleet, Woodberry Forest: A Venture in Faith (New York: The Georgian Press, Inc., 1955), pp. 1--11.

⁷⁴Statement by Pauline McClary Bowman.

writing and mathematics. The school was run by Mollie Goodall who also taught some, but Anna Goodall did most of the teaching. The dormitory classrooms were located in front of the dwelling house, where the students took their meals. Some music was taught there. The school had from twelve to fifteen girls boarding, but the day students increased this number some. The school closed in 1910 because of the lack of teachers, but the house still stands, although unoccupied. ⁷⁵

The Oak Park Institute was very similar to the Rock Springs Institute, but it concentrated more on music, besides giving girls reading, writing and arithmetic. It was abandoned after the 1914--1915 session because of lack of funds, which meant there were not enough students to pay for its continued operation. ⁷⁶

During this same period from 1880 to 1915, the public schools in Madison County were beginning to be accepted by the people. The "poor" stigma was bowing to economy and common sense. People could become educated without having to pay all of the costs. While the private schools were closing, the public schools were seeing added growth during this same period. This simply meant that public schools began an upswing in Madison County between 1910 and 1915. Money was only part of the explanation. The revision of the State Constitution was one of the major reasons that public schools improved. The revision

⁷⁵Mrs. A. W. Yowell, personal interview. Mrs. Yowell is a graduate of Rock Springs School.

⁷⁶Tucker, loc. cit.

gave more power to the State Board of Education and divorced it from the political grip to a great degree. The superintendent was to be elected by the people for four years. Harry Flood Byrd changed it to appointment by the Governor in his 1928 amendments, but this gave the leadership of the schools to a professional educator. This gave greater depth to understanding the problems confronting public schools. The schools needed upgrading, improvement of facilities, employment of more qualified teachers, and greater acceptability by the communities themselves. These changes occurred, as the Etlan, Radiant, Rochelle, Brightwood and Criglersville schools showed an increase in size between 1910 and 1915.⁷⁷

SUMMARY: Private schools became competitors of the public schools between 1880 and 1915. These private schools flourished and then closed, while the public schools, at first struggling, became stronger and increased enrollment. The schools increased in size, had facilities improved, and were accepted more readily by the communities.

The revision of the Virginia Constitution and later amendments weakened the political grip on education.

⁷⁷Survey of Public School Plant, Madison County School Board.

CHAPTER VII

SCHOOL GROWTH IN MADISON COUNTY

FROM 1915--1933

There were a number of one-room schools in the county, seventy to be exact, on January 1, 1907.⁷⁸ By 1920 there were "only" sixty-three white and eighteen Negro schools, including one, two, and four-room schools. There were some communities where schools were larger and grew a little more rapidly than did the others. They were roughly divided into eight areas, which were Brightwood, Criglersville, Etlan, Madison, Oak Park, Radiant, Rochelle, and Wolftown.⁷⁹

The earliest date of a two-room school is not known, but the Wolftown school was in existence as far back as 1905 or before.⁸⁰ There were some high school subjects taught, but the number could not be established. The school had the rare distinction of having a seventh grade graduate admitted to Longwood College from which she graduated.⁸¹ The school was not divided into grades, which was typical during that period of history, but a student read books and as he

⁷⁸Letter by Clemmie White, Clerk of School Board of Madison County.

⁷⁹A. W. Yowell, loc. cit.; School Census, 1920.

⁸⁰Mrs. Stuart J. Gilmore, personal interview.

⁸¹Mrs. Otis (Brown) Berrey, personal interview. Mrs. Berrey was allowed to enter Longwood on the condition that she pass her work for the first two weeks.



FIGURE 8

ONE-ROOM SCHOOL AT LOCUST DALE
(WHITE)



FIGURE 9

ONE-ROOM SCHOOL AT WOLFTOWN (COLORED)

completed one he was given a harder one to read. This continued until all the required books were completed. In 1932 the Wolftown school burned and a new four-room school was built, but the seventh grade was sent to Madison to provide space for children coming from a one-room school at Hood, Virginia, which was closed. The school building is now being used as a residence and the property is owned by Thelma Jarrell, the daughter of the original purchasers, John Delph and his wife. They bought the school and the property in 1959, after it closed for the last time.

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The second school that was built with two rooms was the Radiant school in 1910. It was built by J. T. Johnson and W. S. Reddish after the community purchased the property. The Madison County School Board paid for the school building. A third room was added in 1916 and a fourth one in 1920, as enrollment continued to increase. This school, like most of the other four-room schools, included the third year of high school, which was the tenth grade. It had essentially the same regulations as any of the others. As previously stated, a student finished one book and then read a more difficult one. There was usually a large iron stove in the middle of each room for heat. After the fourth room was added the classes were divided thus: 1--3; 4--6; 7--8; 9--10, with the principal always teaching the high school subjects. By 1920 the classes were divided roughly by grades.

⁸² Gilmore, loc. cit.

⁸³ Tucker, loc. cit., Miss Tucker taught at this school (1932--1959)

In 1911 the Etlan school had two rooms built. The Call school, which was a one-room school, was coming to an end that year, so the Etlan school was started but not finished in time to start the term. This was true even though most school terms began in October. The students attended school at a nearby Methodist church until the school was completed. The following year two more rooms were built and high school work was added for the 1913--14 session.⁸⁴ The Etlan school has the distinction of having two outstanding educators related to it in some way. Mr. A. W. Yowell was the first principal of the school when it was built in 1911 until he was appointed superintendent in 1921. He served as superintendent of schools in Madison and Greene Counties from 1921 to 1949.

Claude Lindsey Yowell, after graduating from Etlan, went to the University of Virginia where he received a Master's degree. He was principal of Madison High School and Director of Instruction in Madison in the late 1940's and early 1950's. He is well known for his interest in the history of Madison County and has many artifacts pertaining to it.⁸⁵

The Rochelle School was begun also in the early 1900's and it became a three-room school in 1915. In 1920 the school burned during the school year and the students had to finish the session in an old farmhouse. The new school had four rooms and was poorly constructed.

⁸⁴Otho Call, personal interview; Ouida Tanner, personal interview. Survey, loc. cit.

⁸⁵A. W. Yowell, loc. cit.; Claude L. Yowell, op. cit., interview.



FIGURE 10
ETLAN SCHOOL (WHITE)



FIGURE 11
RADIANT SCHOOL (WHITE)

It followed the same custom as the other four-room school and continued through the third year high school beginning in the 1921--22 session.⁸⁶

The Madison school was built in 1916 in the town of Madison, Virginia, the county seat, and had elementary through fourth year high school. It was located on the present day A. E. Powell and Charles Hawkins properties. For a while, Madison had the only four-year high school in the county until one was established at Criglersville in 1921. The primary reason for having the fourth year high school in only two schools was the student interest. The number of students in the classes decreased by the time they reached the fourth year. For example, when Madison became a standardized school (nine months) in 1921, there were only two graduates, and there were only nine in 1922.⁸⁷

Standardization was an effort to bring uniformity to the school systems in Virginia by Superintendent Harris Hart. Standardization was called for in 1920, and the idea behind it was to develop schools so they could be accredited and their graduates would be accepted into college with the requirements a diploma carried with it. Madison High School, after standardization, was accredited in 1924.⁸⁸

The Brightwood school was begun in 1913. Soon afterwards a third room was added, and by 1929 the Community League requested that Brightwood have five rooms. The School Board allowed only four rooms and the

⁸⁶ Bowman, loc. cit. interview. Mrs. Bowman taught at this school, (1916--1950).

⁸⁷ Tucker, loc. cit., Miss Tucker graduated from Madison in 1922.

⁸⁸ A. W. Yowell, loc. cit.

first two years of high school there, which was the equivalent of a present day junior high school.⁸⁹

A two-room school was constructed at Criglersville in 1913. This school was expanded to four rooms in 1921. The school continued through the eleventh grade and was located on the present site of the elementary school. This school had much the same program as the other four-room schools, except that there was a basement in which soup was cooked and served to the students as early as 1925. If there was a charge, the cost was no more than ten cents a bowl.⁹⁰ The Criglersville school had the distinction of having the first students bussed. H. L. Bowler hauled the youngsters from Syria, located about five miles away.⁹¹ Bussing did not become widespread in the county for two more years.

The Oak Park school was established as a two-room school about 1912 or 1913. Later it became a three-room school, but the date is not known. This school like the Brightwood school, continued through two years of high school. This community increased in population in 1933 when the Federal government nationalized the Shenandoah National Park. The people living in the park were resettled in the Oak Park and Wolftown areas, after the government paid them for their property.⁹² However the children from these families did not attend the Oak Park school, but attended a resettlement school in the Oak Park area.

⁸⁹Survey, loc. cit.; Mrs. Earle Blankenbaker; School Board minutes.

⁹⁰Mrs. R. N. Finks, personal interview.

⁹¹School Board minutes, September, 1921.

⁹²Tucker, loc. cit.; Bowman, loc. cit., interview

The classroom facilities after 1900 improved considerably. There were blackboards in the rooms, textbooks that were used by the students, and standardization of some of the schools. The public school enrollment increased decidedly in Madison County during this period from 1915 to 1933. Although conditions were not the best, there were a number of interesting developments during this period. Most of the two and four-room schools had sand tables, which had raised edges and were inlaid with tin, so that the sand could be moistened. The primary grade children could then illustrate a story which they had read by building in sand some aspect of the story, such as building an Indian village or building battlegrounds after a study of war.⁹³

In most schools there were iron stoves for wood. The teachers would rotate and get the children to bring canned vegetables from home once or twice a week and then a teacher would make soup for the children and themselves. Usually one stove was used rather than two or more. On at least one occasion, when the teacher finished washing the dishes after lunch, she threw the water out of the window and drenched a youngster who happened to be under the window. It was not all lighthearted, however, because often the wood would be wet and the teacher who was the "stoker" had a very hard time getting the wood to burn. In some instances the water was nearby, but when it was not, the students had to go a long distance to get a bucket of

⁹³Tucker, loc. cit.; School Board minutes, loc. cit.

water twice a day for drinking.⁹⁴

The students would help the teachers in more ways than one. They would help sweep the room at the end of the day and put oil on the floor to hold down the dust. The best assistance rendered, however, was assisting the younger students in the class. The older students would work with the younger students so they could prepare their lessons a little easier.⁹⁵

The teaching was quite repetitive, but those who taught felt the students of that day were given a stronger basic knowledge than the students of a later day. If there were two grades in one class, the students were sure to get two years of essentially the same material, and if there were three grades in one class, the subjects were gone over for three years. For example, if a teacher had the fourth and fifth year in history, the fourth grader would receive the fourth grade lesson and the following year the fifth. When the teacher was teaching the fifth grade, the next year, a new fourth grade was hearing what she said and was getting fifth grade information; the next year the fourth grade students became fifth grade students, but that year the teacher would again be teaching fourth grade history, therefore, the fifth grade was getting fourth grade work while the fourth grade was getting it, but the fifth grade work had been taught to them when they were in the fourth grade level. If three grades were together, then the teacher

⁹⁴Bowman, loc. cit., interview; Tucker, loc. cit.

⁹⁵Bowman, loc. cit.; Gilmore, loc. cit.; Tucker, loc. cit.

taught in a series of three years, and it was not unusual for a fourth grade student to give the answer for a fifth grade level question. This would be the equivalent of present day grouping without separating the groups. There were some disadvantages, of course, because a younger student could be confused by receiving higher level work. When a fifth grader was getting third grade material while the third, fourth and fifth graders were together, he would be in effect taught backwards, because the hardest would have come first and the easiest last. The system was able to survive, nevertheless.⁹⁶ Team teaching was also practiced on occasion. For example, if one teacher was strong in Latin and another in math, they would exchange classes and teach their special subject to the other class.⁹⁷ This was a typical example of departmentalization on a smaller scale in the four-room schools.

One of the highlights of the year that created interest in the schools was the county fair. At first, the students would make baskets, cook, sew, and make scrapbooks about the work done during the year. This was centered around each school originally, but the fair created such interest that it became a countywide affair. Then each school participated and made displays and the winner received a banner, which was held in high esteem by the schools. The civic groups used the fair to raise funds for projects, and contests would be held on pies, cakes and canned goods.⁹⁸

⁹⁶Bowman, loc. cit., interview; Tucker, loc. cit.; Mrs. A. W. Yowell, loc. cit.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Blankerbaker, loc. cit.; Tucker, loc. cit.; A. W. Yowell, loc. cit.

As the fair continued each year to encourage large crowds, a young couple contemplating marriage would be encouraged to be married at the fair. Large crowds were drawn to the wedding. A large crowd was also drawn when Herbert Hoover, at that time President of the United States, visited the fair for a few hours. Mr. Hoover owned a mountain retreat in Madison County.⁹⁹

The decade of the twenties showed signs of great progress in Madison County. Among the outstanding improvements were the paved roads that became a part of the landscape beginning in 1921. Additional paved road was completed in 1922 and 1923 along present day Route 231, which runs from Pratts to Somerset. This part of the route was known as the Liberty Mills Road and was quite well traveled because there was a railroad depot at Somerset and a flour mill nearby. The farmers used the railroad for shipping and receiving goods and equipment, and the mill to have their grain ground. In 1925 the road was paved from Pratts to just outside of the town limits of Madison, with the roadbed being made of rocks crushed by a state convict road gang, located just outside of the town of Madison.¹⁰⁰ The paved road from Pratts to Orange, Virginia, was completed at a much later date between 1929 and 1930. That was a part of Route 16 and the present day Route 230. It was a shorter route to Orange than was the Liberty Mills Road.¹⁰¹ The rest of Route 16, present

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Deed Book Index, Madison County, p. 109--110; Charles Ross, Clerk of Circuit Court at Madison, Personal interview.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 110

day 231, north from Madison to Sperryville was paved between 1928 and 1931.¹⁰²

With improved roads, buses were used to carry students in earnest by the 1923--24 session. Although one bus was used in 1921, as previously stated, and two buses were used in the 1922--23 session, in the following year there were nine buses. There were eleven buses in 1924--25¹⁰³ and thirteen by 1929.¹⁰⁴

As buses moved more easily through the county, consolidation resulted, much to the satisfaction of parents and school officials. Bussing ended the expense of boarding students so more citizens were encouraged to support public schools. There was also a ten-school decrease of one-room schools by 1920 in contrast to 1907.¹⁰⁵ By 1927 there were thirteen less one-teacher schools and three less two-teacher schools than there were in 1920.¹⁰⁶ The State Board of Education assisted in this consolidation by giving a \$100 bonus for each bus, if the school that was serviced was a nine-month school. This helped defray some expense for bus transportation.¹⁰⁷ The purpose of the emphasis the state was placing on the nine-month school was to make a statewide

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 110--111.

¹⁰³School Board minutes, op. cit., Mar. 21, 1923; Sept. 23, 1924; Aug. 28, 1924.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., Aug. 28, 1929

¹⁰⁵White, loc. cit.; A. W. Yowell, loc. cit.

¹⁰⁶Madison County Eagle, op. cit., Vol. 4, No. 8, Feb. 25, 1927, p.1.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

uniform system, which became law in 1928.¹⁰⁸

Finances were a problem during the 1920's because the county was divided into three school districts which were independent of each other, yet had to work together. For example, in 1922 the two other districts which sent students to Madison had to pay the Rapidan District \$2.00 per student per month.¹⁰⁹ In 1927 this division was changed when the county went on a consolidated basis and all three districts met as a single school board. After the consolidation of school districts, cost of transporting the students to high school in Madison County was \$1.00 per student and paid by him.¹¹⁰ In an effort to lessen expenses in 1926, elementary and high school students were bussed together, and whenever funds ran out the county would cut off bus runs early in the year. Sometimes the School Board closed schools early or got the patrons to help pay the teachers' salaries.¹¹¹

In spite of financial trouble, consolidation continued and in 1929 four-room schools were allowed to go only through the first year high school.¹¹² The School Board voted unanimously on this issue. By 1933 no more high school students were sent to four-room schools. All four-room school high school students, except the ones attending

¹⁰⁸State Board of Education (Bulletin), Virginia State Laws, Vol. XXIII, No. 5, Nov., 1940.

¹⁰⁹School Board minutes, op. cit., Aug. 1922.

¹¹⁰Ibid., July 8, 1929.

¹¹¹Ibid., Feb. 8, 1926; Apr. 8, 1929; Feb. 27, 1926; Mar. 14, 1927.

¹¹²Ibid., Jan. 14, 1929.

Brightwood were to attend Madison High School. The Brightwood high school students had to attend Criglersville because it was in the same magisterial district. The only exception was that the seniors who were from Brightwood and already attending Madison could graduate from Madison. Once more, this was done because of economics, for the depression was upon the county at that time.¹¹³

School funds were further decreased when the state reduced its funds to the county in 1930,¹¹⁴ but some progress was made in broadening the school programs in the high schools at Criglersville and Madison. The School Board proposed in 1929 that an agriculture department building be constructed on the Madison school site for the 1929--30 session and then one at Criglersville for the 1930--31 session.¹¹⁵ This could be done during the depression years because federal and state expenditures were involved.

SUMMARY: Educational progress was primarily centered around eight areas in Madison County. The period of 1915--1933 saw one and two-room schools diminish as student bussing increased. By 1929 there were thirteen buses transporting children.

Citizen interest in the public schools increased when bussing started and the expense of boarding students ended. Citizen interest was also increased with competitive school participation in the county fair.

¹¹³Ibid., Apr. 10, 1933.

¹¹⁴Ibid., Apr. 8, 1929; June 10, 1929.

¹¹⁵Minutes, op. cit., May 2, 1928.

Standardization was begun and accreditation followed shortly thereafter for the two high schools. The agriculture buildings were added to broaden the school programs.

The funding of the public schools was greatly affected from 1929 to 1933 as a result of the depression. The length of the school year was reduced, bussing stopped early and some parents paid part of the teachers' salaries. In spite of this, consolidation continued with new building programs financed with state and federal funds.

CHAPTER VIII

EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT BY ACCIDENT

CONTROVERSY AND PLANNING FROM 1934--1950

The depression years brought economic despair to the Madison County educational system as schools were consolidated, teachers were reduced in number, and classes became overcrowded. There was a slow return economically in the late thirties and early forties. The state regulations became stricter, and better financial returns in the forties allowed more centralization of schools. This encouraged a better quality of teaching and gave a greater opportunity to the children as consolidation continued. Consolidation gradually reduced the number of schools until there were twenty-four by 1940 and only seventeen in 1948. This was done by a combination of accidental events and improved planning, interspersed with controversy.

In 1934 the School Board authorized the construction of home economics units in both Madison and Criglersville for the 1935--36 session.¹¹⁶ This meant that better training would be provided for the young ladies in these schools. This welcomed improvement was only short-lived, for on August 19, 1937, Madison High School burned, leaving the town and county without one major learning institution only a few weeks

¹¹⁶Ibid., June 3, 1934.

before school opening. A hurried School Board meeting was held on the same day, and temporary arrangements were made to house the students beginning school in September. The agriculture shop was not damaged so that was divided into two classrooms. Another room was to be set up in front of the home economics building, also undamaged. Preparation was made to establish classes in the auditorium of the War Memorial Building. Two days later the School Board made final arrangements to construct two or more temporary rooms on the school site for \$100.¹¹⁷

Plans were then set up to collect the insurance, which was \$16,279.16, and prepared for a new building and site. After some months of deliberation the School Board bought the Christian property at the north end of the Madison town limits and construction was soon started. The new building was to be made of brick, consist of seventeen rooms, and have grades one through eleven. The building was financed partly by the Works Project Administration (sic) and the Literary Fund and was to be paid off within thirty-five years at five per cent interest. A tax levy was passed each year to meet the payments. After the school was completed for the final cost of \$96,276.51, the students first occupied it on November 5, 1938.¹¹⁸ This school later became the Waverly Yowell Elementary School with the completion of consolidation in 1959 and the construction of a new county high school. When Madison

¹¹⁷Ibid., Aug. 19 and 21, 1937.

¹¹⁸Ibid., Jan. 17, 1938 and Nov. 3, 1938; Board of Supervisors' minutes, Jan. 26, 1938.

High School was opened it was possible for school authorities to reduce all schools with partial high school in them to elementary status for the 1939--40 session, leaving only Criglersville and Madison with high school students.¹¹⁹

Although there were still one, two and four-room schools in Madison in 1940, they had been reduced considerably. The school plan then called for a gradual phasing out of the smaller schools. This would be done by eliminating one or two grades a year. For example, in 1940 the sixth grade from Wolftown attended Madison, Etlan school was closed in August, 1949, and its students were sent to Criglersville. The Rochelle school had only the first and second grades attending in the 1948--49 session and closed in 1950 when its students were sent to Madison.¹²⁰

Controversy arose in Madison when another fire claimed the Criglersville High School at 4 a.m. on January 21, 1946. Again the School Board had an emergency meeting and quickly decided to send grades one through seven to a C. C. C. Camp located on Quaker Run and use the agriculture building, home economics building, the cannery, and the Oddfellows Hall to house the high school students.¹²¹ The Board of Supervisors allowed the School Board to borrow money to build a new brick elementary school on the same Criglersville school site and to make a five-room addition to Madison High School to accommodate the

¹¹⁹Ibid., Sept. 12, 1939.

¹²⁰Ibid., Apr. 8, 1940; May 28, 1940; Apr. 10, 1950.

¹²¹Ibid., Jan. 21, 1946.



FIGURE 12
MADISON HIGH SCHOOL IN 1948



FIGURE 13
CRIGLERSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN 1948

Griglersville High School students. A letter of protest was presented to the School Board. The signers were W. J. Huckstep, Hugh R. Ross, J. H. Hood and Elmer T. Lohr. They opposed the elementary building because there was too great a need for use of funds for other elementary schools. Furthermore, if a new school was built, it should be more centrally located in an effort to accommodate pupils from all over the county rather than just Griglersville. They cautioned, with some degree of validity, that the state program of consolidation was not being followed. The money, however, was borrowed and the School Board plan went into effect, with the contention that the money spent on transportation of the Griglersville students elsewhere would equal the amount of the cost of construction over a period of ten years.¹²²

This cleared the way for only one high school for the County of Madison in 1948. The total number of schools in the county now numbered seventeen.¹²³

In February, 1946, the Madison School Board discussed the possibility of joining with Rappahannock, Culpeper, and Orange to establish a regional high school in Culpeper County for the Negro students of those counties. Each county that participated would contribute \$50 to the Culpeper School Board for each student attending. The Madison School Board approved, and the first students attended in 1948--49,

¹²²Ibid., Oct. 14, 1946; Mar. 31, 1947; A. W. Yowell, loc. cit.

¹²³Census, op. cit., 1948.

after the school was completed in June of 1948. The Negro Training School, which had been built in 1933, was closed as a result of the opening of the Carver school.¹²⁴

A regional board was set up to administer the George Washington Carver School and the arrangement was unique in that four counties cooperated in this venture. The four superintendents and member from each School Board were members of the regional board. The decisions concerning the policy of Carver School were determined by this body.¹²⁵

With this improvement on behalf of the Negroes in Madison County the Negro patrons appealed in April of 1950 for a consolidated Negro elementary school that would be centrally located for the convenience of Negro pupils. The School Board and Mr. Samuel C. Morgan, the superintendent, were affirmatively in accord with the patrons.¹²⁶

SUMMARY: By 1950 consolidation of the public schools in Madison was developing at a rapid pace. The grades were still being taken away from the one, two and four-room schools and added to the larger and more modern facilities at Criglersville and Madison. The Negro patrons' voice was heeded to improve the very poor conditions that existed for the colored students. Consolidation had not only been encouraged in Madison, but on a regional basis. Co-operation within the four counties showed signs of greater progress in education for all.

¹²⁴School Board minutes, op. cit., June, 1948.

¹²⁵David F. Berry, personal interview. Mr. Berry is the Chairman of Madison County School Board, 1970.

¹²⁶School Board minutes, op. cit., Apr. 10, 1950.



FIGURE 14

NEGRO TRAINING SCHOOL IN 1946

CHAPTER IX

CONSOLIDATION ENDS, INTEGRATION IS ACHIEVED AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING BEGINS IN MADISON BETWEEN 1950 AND 1970

Many improvements were made in Madison over the next twenty years with Negro school consolidation, white school consolidation and integration being achieved over an eleven-year span from 1955 to 1966. Construction on a new high school began in 1958 after an addition to the new Negro elementary school. After full integration was achieved, a vocational training center was opened in an even greater effort to provide the best education available to the students of Madison County.

Eventually increased enrollment in the educational system created the need to build an addition to the high school. Under the direction of Superintendent Samuel C. Morgan, discussion started on October 2, 1951, concerning future educational needs in the county. The Negro patrons had endorsed a centrally located school and now with a projected vision of future expansion a white high school was discussed. The first business before the School Board was to procure the property to build these facilities. In 1953 the Gordon and the Price properties were bought by the School Board. The high school location was to be on the Gordon property, and the Negro elementary school was to be erected on the Price property located on Route 607, just south of Route 29. The high school

was to be built just a short distance away on a site that is now located on Route 29 about one-half mile southeast of the town of Madison.¹²⁷

The first phase of this improvement program was achieved under Superintendent Morgan, when the Negro elementary school was completed in 1955. There were additions, however, that were to be made in the school later, and they were completed under the direction of the present superintendent, William H. Wetsel. The additions included an auditorium, a library, the principal's suite, and four additional classrooms. The additions were completed in 1957, the same year that the last one-room school, a Negro school at Achsah, was closed.¹²⁸

The construction of the new Madison County High School was considered a great event. There were some differences of opinion as to whether the high school should be located on the property already acquired for that purpose. Some two years prior to the construction of the school there was a need for an industrial arts shop with greater facilities than the old high school could provide. A shop was built in 1957 on the new high school site. Once the shop was built, there was no question of where the high school would be built. Construction started in 1958 and was completed in time to be entered for the 1959--60 session.¹²⁹ This ended consolidation, as the county then had only three elementary schools and one high school in 1959--60.

The facilities were very modern in the high school with labs for

¹²⁷School Board minutes, op. cit., Oct. 2, 1951 and May 18, 1953; Berry, loc. cit.

¹²⁸William H. Wetsel, Superintendent, personal interview.

¹²⁹Wetsel, loc. cit.; Berry, loc. cit.

science and language, a large auditorium, gymnasium, a modern library facility, and an elaborate home economics area. A commercial department was established. The industrial arts shop and agricultural rooms were already in operation. A fairly diverse program was made available after the construction of this school. Its graduates have been in many cases college graduates, and the schools have produced many fine citizens at Madison. This year there were outstanding examples of academic proficiency; among them, John Kipps, a finalist in the National Merit Scholarship, Peter York, a student who will attend Harvard College on a scholarship, and a young Negro lady, Patricia Snead, who was awarded a scholarship to attend the University of Miami, all in the fall of 1970.

The integration case in 1954 caused controversy throughout Virginia, and Madison was no exception. However, a freedom of choice plan was put into effect, but integration did not begin until the 1966-67 session. There was little pressure brought to bear by citizens of the community to integrate, but with the encouragement from the superintendent, William Wetsel, total integration was adopted in the fall of 1966. There was no pressure from the Federal government to do so, as had been the case in some localities. There are Negro teachers and white teachers working together in the school system at the present time and one of the four principals is black. To provide proper balance, the first three grades attended the previously Negro elementary school, and grades four through seven attended the Waverly Yowell Elementary School. Grades eight through twelve attended the high school.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Wetsel, loc. cit.

With the integration of the public schools in Madison, the need had lessened for the George Washington Carver Regional High School. Discussion then arose concerning the possibility of providing a broader program for job preparation. The regional administration of Carver discussed the possibility of establishing a vocational training center there. The only difficulty was that Culpeper had not integrated at that time. A year later, 1967--68, the Culpeper system was fully integrated and the vocational center approved. The transition from high school to vocational school was quite smooth because of the previous experience with the regional high school. The school was named Piedmont Vocational School and was opened in 1968--69 after two years of planning. In 1966 an industrial and business survey was made in Orange, Culpeper, and Madison counties. After seeing what job opportunities were available, a similar survey was made of Charlottesville. Then, under the direction of Thomas N. Broyles, a program was established. It included practical nursing, auto mechanics, introduction to data processing, electronics, and drafting. Three programs were established for the disadvantaged. These included repairs to small engines, occupational food services, and occupational sewing. Also, in an effort to prepare adults for special skills, a program was established at night twice a week during the year.¹³¹

¹³¹Thomas N. Broyles, personal interview; Wetsel, loc. cit.; Berry, loc. cit.

The regional policy-making body was the same as the one that planned the regional high school. The first year there were 185 students who participated in the program, and the second year, just ended in June, 1970, there were 335. The projected enrollment for the 1970--71 session is 400. The school has a capacity of 550. The achievements of the Piedmont school were excellent for the first two years. However, the leadership felt that there was too large a percentage of students, whether planning to attend or not to attend college, who were not taking advantage of the vocational opportunity. Greater need exists for educating the pupils to understand that vocational training does not deter one from attending college, but should better prepare him for college life if he were to choose to go.¹³²

After total integration was effected, the need arose for additional classroom space in both the elementary and high school. Before 1968, plans were made to provide the greatest amount of space in the most economical manner. The School Board decided to build a new cafeteria in the Waverly Yowell Elementary School and an annex to the high school. These buildings were made available for use in September, 1968.¹³³

The cafeteria formerly used was located in the old shop building which was made available in 1957 when the new shop was built. The old cafeteria was converted into two additional classrooms and a food storage area.¹³⁴

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Berry, loc. cit.

¹³⁴Wetsel, loc. cit.

The annex is a twenty-three classroom building including four laboratories for science, physics and art. The building also has a multipurpose room which can be used as two classrooms or may be used for consolidating into one large class. As one classroom the capacity is seventy-five to ninety pupils and it is especially useful for such classes as science when the television science series is shown. The facility is primarily used for the seventh, eighth and ninth grade classes, but has some tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade classes, mostly in science and math. The annex has excellent lighting and is centrally air-conditioned. There are no cafeteria, gymnasium or library facilities in the building so the high school library and cafeteria are shared by both.¹³⁵

SUMMARY: Consolidation was completed and the number of schools in Madison County was reduced to one high school, three elementary schools and one regional vocational school. This was considerably less than the sixty-three white and eighteen Negro schools in Madison County in 1920.

The planning for future growth from 1950--1970 showed greater insight. Problems were anticipated before they occurred, and the necessary steps were taken to bring about a solution to them. The discussion concerning a Negro elementary school and consolidated high school

¹³⁵ Clyde Hackney, personal interview. Mr. Hackney was the first principal of the annex and is present principal of the high school.

began several years before the buildings were begun. This gave the educational leadership enough time to find the best possible site for the schools.

The industrial and business survey was well planned before the program was instituted in the vocational school. The experience the regional board gained in setting the policy for the regional high school made the transition from an academic school to a vocational school a smooth one.

Total integration, although delayed for twelve years, was freely established without any trouble in 1966. The judgment used by the School Board, with the recommendations from the superintendent, William H. Wetsel, was sound and has led to better race relations in the County of Madison. Both Negro and white students have access to both the academic and vocational facilities.

After integration was established in the Madison schools, the need for additional classroom space arose. This need was fulfilled when a cafeteria and an annex was built at the Waverly Yowell Elementary School and the Madison County High School respectively.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSIONS

The study of the changes in education in Madison County reveals many setbacks and attainments. Finances have plagued the system from the beginning to the present. One-room, two-room, and four-room schools fulfilled the educational needs in the school systems' early development.

Bus transportation led to extensive consolidation of schools. The depression years forced even greater consolidation. Fires proved to be both a disaster and a blessing.

When financial resources improved in the forties, fifties and sixties the one-room school ended, consolidation of schools was brought to a climax and total integration was achieved.

Planning in the early history of the educational system was not the best, but it improved as finances improved. Plans for the schools from 1950 to 1970 were much improved over previous years.

Future growth in public education and in education in general will require sound judgement and a sensitivity to the quick changes that new discovery is constantly providing. Short range and long range planning is essential if the Madison County educational system is to stay abreast of the changes.

Future areas of interest to be explored in education in Madison County include the certification of public school teachers, expanded

curriculum and the development of education beyond high school.

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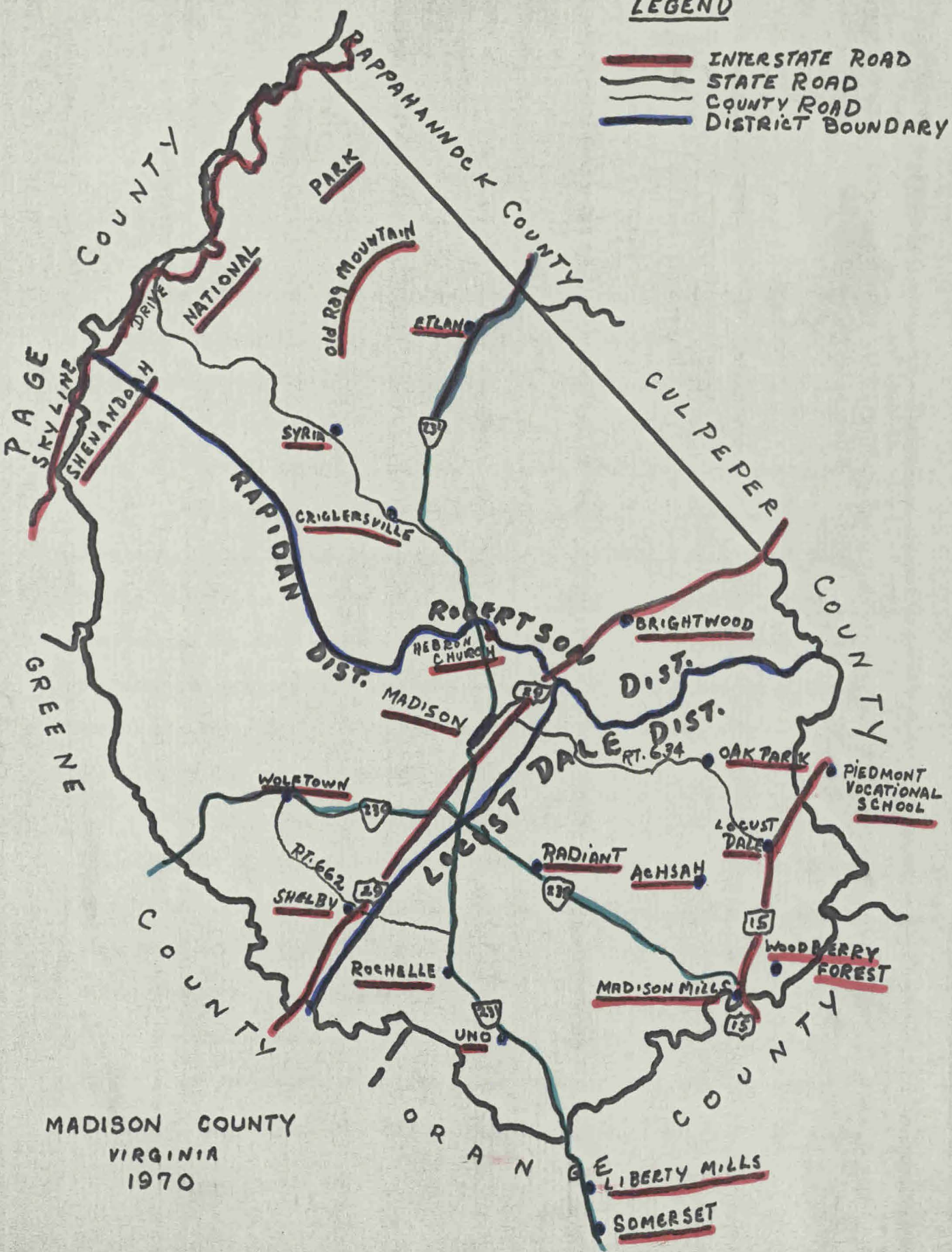
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LEGEND

-  INTERSTATE ROAD
-  STATE ROAD
-  COUNTY ROAD
-  DISTRICT BOUNDARY



MADISON COUNTY
VIRGINIA
1970

VITA

The author was born in Alexandria, Virginia on January 23, 1928. At the age of eight he and his family moved to Richmond, Virginia where he attended the Richmond city schools. He was graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in 1946 and from the University of Richmond in June, 1955 with a degree in history and since that time has been teaching U. S. Government and related subjects in the public schools of Virginia. These include two years at the C. H. Friend School in South Boston, twelve years at the Hermitage High School in Richmond and one year at the Oak Hill Academy at Mouth of Wilson. For the coming year he holds the position of Assistant Principal of the Madison County High School and Principal of the annex, after being Supervisor of Government and History for one year in Madison County.

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