

COUNTY SCHOOLS AMONG THE BEST IN NORTH DAKOTA

Williams County One of the Leaders in Consolidation --- Fourth in State in Classification. --- School Nurse Employed.

North Dakota Appreciation Week is not complete without a fitting and proper estimate of the public schools of which we are justly proud.

Great advance has been made in this work during the past few years,—indeed, the tide of improvement is ever swelling. Public sentiment has taken hold of the subject,—today, whatever tends toward the betterment of conditions and increasing the efficiency of the educational system holds the serious attention of all hearers.

The scope of the work in Williams County may be estimated when it is stated that this year there are employed one-hundred-ninety-eight teachers, of whom forty-one are in graded city and town schools, twenty-one in District Consolidated schools one-hundred-thirty-six in one room rural schools.

CONSOLIDATION

Today, Consolidation is the index finger pointing the way which Rural Education should take, and Williams County supports many of these sign-boards, that all who run may read.

Of the fifty-five school districts in the county, Buford, Sauk Valley, Tioga, Stewart, Bonetrail and Brooklyn are now operating successful consolidated schools having from one to six teachers in each. Stony Creek and Lindahl are erecting three-room buildings with full basement; Round Prairie and Hofflund are putting up two-room buildings. All four buildings will be in use this winter. Twin Lake, Spring Coulee and Pherrin have voted to consolidate and will begin building in the spring. Several other districts are agitating the question and all are looking forward to the time when all roads in the district shall lead to the Central building which is fully equipped for educational and vocational work on five days, religious training on the Seventh; provided a suitable meeting place for Farmers' Clubs and Ladies' Aid Societies, an auditorium for the Home Talent Play and the varied numbers of a Lecture and Entertainment course, Graduating Exercises from the Eight Grade and District High School Commencement.

CLASSIFICATION

Williams County is fourth in the State with its number of classified schools. It has taken tireless and unremitting effort for the past several years on the part of a Superintendent, who had high ideals for the country schools in which boys and girls were to receive their training, to bring about this great betterment.

Attention on the part of the parents to the regular attendance of the children would be a great help, for a school to classify must have at least an eight months term, with an attendance of 75 per cent for all enrolled and an average of 90 per cent for each child between the ages of eight and fifteen inclusive.

A classified school means teachers whose least educational preparation is four years of High School with a short course in pedagogy and psychology. She must receive at least sixty dollars a month. There has been a decided raise in the professional standing of the country teacher during the last few years. There are practically none in this county with less than two years of High School, most of them are High School graduates and many have completed Normal Courses as well.

A classified school also means a regularly installed heating and ventilating system, proper lighting from the left and rear, at least one-hundred volumes in the library, all necessary texts, dictionaries and reference books, black-boards, maps, globes etc.; also a closed receptacle for drinking water with either fountain or individual drinking cups, a lavatory, and sanitary or at least well kept toilets, and attractive play-grounds.

Schools of this type give better intellectual, moral and physical advantages. Williams County has seventeen of these schools now receiving state aid.

ATTENDANCE

The attendance law is enforced as rigidly as is possible for such distances as this county affords. If the parents would look more to the future of the children and less to the need of the day, there would be fewer cases reported of "Absence for Work." In some instances there seems to be a feeling that this law is enforced by the county superintendent for personal reasons. This is true, and the person is the child who is being kept away from classes and opportunities especially prepared for his benefit causing him to lose instruction given to the rest of the children, and so to fall behind them in measuring up to the standard set for them all. By-and-by, because he is behind others of his age, he loses all interest in school—in fact he comes to have a dislike for the environment in which he should be happiest.

INDUSTRIAL CONTESTS

For several years contests in Corn and Potato raising have been held. These contests have been instrumental in creating interest in farm work for boys and girls as well as arousing interest in the better farming idea. This year two contests in sewing were added. The results of all these contests have been very gratifying. In spite of the late frosts there was a good showing of both corn and potatoes. The judges of the contest, Mr. W. E. Hall and Mr. Ruzicka, declared that the boys of the county had better corn than their elders. The sewing contests brought in thirty some sets of completed work. The five best sets in each

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ANOTHER FRIEND

MY PRAIRIES

I love my prairies, they are mine
From zenith to horizon line,
Clipping a world of sky and sod
Like the bended arm and wrist of God.

I love their grasses. The skies
Are larger, and more restless eyes
Fasten on more of earth and air
Than sea-shores furnish anywhere.

I love the hazel thickets, and the breeze,
The never resting prairie winds; the trees
That stand like spear points high
Against the dark blue sky

Are wonderful to me. I love the gold
Of newly shaven stubble, rolled
A roval carpet, toward the sun, fit to be
The pathway of a deity.

I love the life of pasture lands; the songs
of birds
And not more thrilling to me than the
herd's
Mad bellowing—or the shadow stride
Of mounted herdsmen at my side.

I love the prairies, they are mine
From high sun to horizon line.
The mountains and the cold gray sea
Are not for me, are naught for me.
—Hamlet Garland.

ACREAGE AND ASSESSED VALUATION OF COUNTY

An evidence of the rapid development of Williams county during the past ten years is shown by comparing the total acreage on the tax list now with that of ten years ago. This also applies to the acres under cultivation and to the assessed valuation of the county.

Of course ten years ago Williams and Divide counties were one, so that in looking over the figures one should take about two thirds of the total for 1905 as the portion belonging to Williams county.

In 1905 we had only 108,840 acres on the tax list for both counties while this year Williams county alone has a total of 1,106,011 acres. In 1905 both counties had under cultivation 26,855 acres and this year Williams county farmers farmed 322,164 acres. The assessed valuation has advanced by leaps and bounds. Ten years ago both counties had an increased valuation of \$1,549,987 and today Williams county gives a total of \$8,378,750, an increase for this county of almost a million a year. And this rapid development is bound to continue for we have thousands of acres of land which has as yet to become acquainted with the plow. Inside of ten years more we predict that Williams county will be the banner county of North Dakota, leading in everything pertaining to farm and city improvement.

AS THE EDITOR SEES IT

Why shouldn't churches advertise their Sunday services, and their mid-week meetings, and their socials and other public affairs? If they are worth attending (and they are) they are surely worth the expenditure of a dollar or so in bringing them to the attention of all of the people. We are strongly of the opinion that if the churches in this town would contract for a display space in this paper each week and then announce their subjects for sermons, with a key to their import and application to current events, together with any other special features of the day, there would be a greater interest taken in church affairs, with a consequent increase in attendance and financial receipts. Times are not as they were fifty years ago, and the church that would fill its pews must adopt modern methods of keeping in touch with the people. Publicity will do it.

Buy it at home this Christmas! Keep prosperity in this town! What better slogan could we have for a progressive community spirit? Everybody wants to see this town prosper, and we all want to share in the fruits of that prosperity. Even the fellow who habitually sends out of town for his own goods wants his full quota of the riches that are accumulated through the thrift and husbandry of his fellow citizens. Producing and selling the surplus abroad and then keeping our money at home by buying from home dealers will add many thousands of dollars to the money in circulation in this community. It is the sure way of meeting prosperity with open arms and gathering in our share and a little more for good luck. Let other communities support themselves. Our interests and our duty are at home. Let's keep prosperity in this town.

You young fellows who have your eyes focused upon the bright lights of the gaudies of the big cities should get out your stub pencils and do a little sum in addition. If you go the way of others and drift to the city you will naturally annex a "best girl." She will want you to take her to the theatre once a week, and that will cost \$4.00 for the tickets, \$5.00 or so for the taxi and \$3.00 or \$4.00 for the supper after the performance. Then frequently she will want an automobile ride on Sunday and the car and chauffeur will touch you up to the tune of \$2.00 to \$4.00 an hour. A box of candy and a few sodas and sundaes and a bouquet will eat up another \$3.00. Your dancing lessons will cost you \$30.00 a season,

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GROWTH OF BANKS SHOW PROGRESS OF THE COUNTY

Our Banks are the Indicators Showing Growth of County--Deposits Multiply Rapidly -- Bankers and Farmers Friendly.

The banking institutions of a community possibly as much or more than any other line of business reflects the advancement or depression in the community. The following interview with Mr. L. C. Wingate, one of the oldest bankers in the county, gives you a very good idea of the banking conditions in our county and goes to prove that we have forged ahead in a remarkable way during the past few years:

"A days ride through the farming sections of Williams County, viewing the immense wheat fields, the new houses and barns, fences on Section lines and nice herds of well bred stock in barnyards and pastures, converts to the mind of the most skeptical the true progress attained in only a little more than ten years and forever settles in his mind the fact that the immigrant wagon, and the Ox team, is now a relic of the past.

THE BANKERS PART

While no doubt every Business has contributed towards this wonderful development by wisely constructed discipline and council, yet no other Business Enterprise have done more or played a more important part in the drama of constructing Williams County than her many strong and well managed Banks. No doubt the Banks will play that same important part in the next ten years to come.

GROWTH OF BANKS

Nine years ago, Williams County had ten Banks with total deposits aggregating \$615,000.00. Today Williams County has twenty-one Banks with deposits aggregating \$3,250,000.00. In comparing the deposits nine years ago with the deposits of today it is necessary to consider the actual amount of cash that has been used in developing the Williams County farm for buildings, horses, cattle, machinery, breaking, farming expenses etc., and not least, the Thousands and Thousands of Dollars that has been sent back to Investors in the East every years for interest payments on money borrowed for these improvements. A great many of these mortgages have matured in the last three or four years and have been paid off in full from earnings made on these farms and a nice percentage of the mortgage indebtedness has been paid off each year.

CONSERVATIVE MANAGEMENT

In referring to the excellent showing made by the Banks of Williams County it must be assumed that they have been wisely and conservatively managed. Eight, nine and ten years ago the Banks and the customers were strangers. While the Banker who was not able to judge "Human Nature" had a missing link in his make-up,—this faculty when applied to the granting of loans could only be considered of secondary importance. Only the Chat-tel Mortgage a mile long was considered a true medium of exchange. Sometimes even these were re-inforced by a Real Estate mortgage that the Banker would take special pains in seeing signed, sealed and delivered.

NEW CONDITIONS

While that conservative attitude of the Williams County Banker has not changed materially, conditions here are changing just the same as they were changed in Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin years ago. To-day the old Iron Rule of handling the strong and weak alike does not apply as it did ten years ago. It has been discarded the same as the Ox team and the prairie schooner. Today, and no where more than in Williams County, is the tare separated from the wheat. No where in America is "ABILITY and HONESTY" respected more than in Williams County. To-day the Farmers and the Merchants and the Bankers are no longer strangers but what goes farther than that,—they are friends,—each taking a keen interest in the others welfare, realizing that the prosperity of a few will eventually mean the abundant prosperity of the many. No where is the "real Western Spirit" of friendship and co-operation more evident than it is in Williams County,—the one place where an able man wearing overalls is just as big and just as much respected by all as an able man wearing a silk hat and a Prince Albert suit. That is the "Real Western Spirit,"—an Ideal in Twentieth Century progress.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

In Williams County as in Eastern Counties while they were comparatively new, the prices on commodities depend largely upon the supply and demand. Men with money (Bank Depositors) as a rule do very little pioneering. Williams County has been developed by men of small means. Our average farmer even five years ago was a borrower and not a depositor. Since the percentage of borrowers compared with the percentage of depositors were five to one, money naturally became a scarce commodity and every Banker who took a keen interest in the development of his community was forced to make a little money reach as far as possible and to encourage the use of this money for actual necessities rather than for speculation and expansion in business. While this to some seemed hard and unjust the theory proved to be a wise one. It encourages thrift and self-reliance. The plans that were illisional then are real now. It was the one thing that started to install cows and poultry on the average Williams County farm. It

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