

Few School Advantages Century Ago

Just A Few Hundred Dollars Spent For Education In 1840

Six Primary Or Common Schools Had Total of 130 Pupils

Abraham Lincoln may have had his trials and tribulations in seeking an education, but a little over a century ago the people of Martin County had very few greater advantages than those enjoyed by Lincoln himself.

According to the official United States census for 1840 there were no academies in the county, and the six primary or common schools were struggling along with a handful of pupils—130 to be exact. The average enrollment was hardly 22 for each of the schools and the terms were brought to a close almost before they got started. Old stories tell about the crude facilities, and how education was squeezed in between crops and "more" important duties in and around the home.

Despite all its drawbacks and obstacles education in Martin County back in the year 1840 was more universal than it is today, excepting the slaves of the former period, of course. The census for that year listed only 370 illiterate whites in the county, and in the first three selective draft registrations made since October 16, 1940, listed more than 600 illiterates and the big number is not limited to members of the colored race; no, not by several jugfuls.

MANUFACTURING

While there were no manufacturing establishments in this county a hundred years ago, quite a few skilled workers turned out certain articles and products in their homes. The 1840 census values home-made goods at \$22,938. The type of goods made in the home or on the plantations is not revealed, but it is well known that the old-timers tanned and sold leather, and even some silk was produced. The census states that 35 pounds of silk were produced that year.

In the course of a century manufacturing has jumped from a few thousand dollars to way up in the millions in value.

The cost of education a century ago was negligible as compared with the money outlay for the modern schools of today. Just a few hundred dollars were spent for education in those days, and while the payment of that amount offered a greater problem than the payment of the tens of thousands now, it is fairly well agreed that the return from an 1840 school dollar was far, far greater than the return from a dollar spent for schools today.

Education in those days was

No Holds Barred In Town Political Race 40 Years Ago

The electorate gets all "het up" about election time in this day and age and forgets who it voted for soon thereafter, but forty years ago no holds were barred in politics and the people took the business, though rotten it must have been, very seriously.

Taken from an old file of The Enterprise forty years ago last May, the following story tells how the people voted in a new set of commissioners and mayor and how the old group ruled out the election and continued in office:

"The election as advertised, was held on Monday, and so far as the voting went a new set of Commissioners and a Mayor were elected. But, the election was illegal, and, therefore the old board

and mayor will continue in office. "It seems rather strange that this question was not raised till after the polls were open Monday morning. Several persons had "looked up" the laws on this subject, but none had construed the clause in the election laws as meaning the election in Williams- ton was not to be held until 1903, hence the confusion.

"The new charter for Williams- ton, granted at the last session of the General Assembly, calls for an election on the first Monday in May, annually. But, an act to provide for the holding of town and city elections, as enacted at the same session, repeals that election clause in the charter of Williamston."

Depend On Eyes

Buzzards and other vultures that subsist principally on carrion depend more upon their eyes than upon their sense of smell in locating food, according to the Better Vision Institute. Frequently buzzards will gather around a man sleeping in the open, attracted because of his motionless position.

taken as a serious matter, while today too many parents look upon school as a place for the children to go to get away from home.

Electric Shavers Are Life Savers

One electric dry shaver will keep one man well-groomed, but the copper in a hundred electric dry shavers would make a smoke tank for an airplane — a smoke-tank which, by throwing a screen around a fighting ship, might save many hundreds of American lives.

THEY CAN DO IT!

Submarines can stay at sea as long and travel as far as battleships.

No Pay Roll In The County Long Ago

Growth and prosperity of any community are measured more and more by the number on the pay roll and the amount paid out in wages. A little over a century ago there was not a single pay roll in all of Martin County, according to a review of the 1840 census. There wasn't a single person working on wages in mining, agriculture, commerce, manufactures or trades or learned professions, according to the census report.

Of course there were slaves in those days and they helped carry on farming operations, commerce and possibly a little manufacturing, but it would seem that there should have been a few persons engaged in teaching. Apparently there was no such thing as wages as far as Martin County people were concerned. Every man did his own work in the professional fields, apparently.

With hired help in the offices, in the stores, in the factories, in the professions and in almost every other line of endeavor today, it is hard to picture a business world as ever existing without employed workers in the past.

There was a time when every man did his own work, and it is quite possible that a time will come again when one will have to do what he wants done or leave it undone.

The old-timers may not have owned their property, but it is a apparent they did their own work.



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