

Maple Springs Was Among First Consolidated Schools

By J. L. SANDERS

Maple Springs was one of the first consolidated schools in Macon County. On or about the year of 1930, the two-teacher school of North Skeenah and the one-teacher school of South Skeenah, were consolidated and became known as Maple Springs School, which was a three teacher school. But, let's go back about a hundred years or more, to an old

log building, which stood in the Stockton Cove, on what was known then as Middle Skeenah Creek.

This old building was of hewn logs and had a large fire place and puncheon seats. At this time, for lack of sufficient information, the teachers can not be named. Also, I can't say now if this school

Many Learned Through N.Y.A. Local Projects

By MRS. MARGARET ORDWAY
(County N.Y.A. Supervisor)

The National Youth Administration was organized during the depression to assist young people (16 to 25 years), unmarried, and living at home.

Everyone had to be certified by the county superintendent of public welfare as a member of a family eligible for W. P. A. as-

was financed by the county or by the community.

About the year 1875 or 1880, a new log school building was erected about a half mile further up the creek, near the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church. This building had a large wood stove and wooden benches, with backs, but no desks. This was the building where the writer first tackled the rudiments of education. But not when it first opened, as it stood until about the year of 1920, when a new frame building was built and another teacher was added, and modern equipment installed.

Among the teachers who taught at this place were as follows: from 1900, Lem Griggs, Ada White, Nellie Reece, Lila McPherson, Carl Shope, Mr. Cathey, Mary Jenkins, Carl Setser, Colonel Stockton, E. B. Dehart, Clara Shope, and J. L. Sanders.

On South Skeenah, the first school house was of logs and stood on the creek near where Marion Thomas now lives. Later in the early nineteenth century a one-teacher school was built nearby on a hill, and was a frame building.

As mentioned in the first paragraph these two schools were consolidated about 1930 and became a three-teacher school. The first teachers were Bertha Williams, principal, Thelma Ray and Minnie Sanders, assistants. Then for five years, J. L. Sanders, Principal Assistants during that time were Leota McCrackin, Selma Henson, Minnie Sanders, and George Carpenter. Later teachers were Kate Shope, Glen Patton, Frank Fleming, and Ruth Slagle.

A few years ago, 1952, the Maple Springs School was included in the consolidated school now known as the Union Elementary school.

assistance. In 1936 I had waiting list of 181 and how thrilling it was to receive appointment as county supervisor with the notation: "You are now empowered to proceed."

Youth were permitted to work on town, county, state, and federal property and I had vowed that none would be deprived of employment because of inability to reach a project. At that time Macon County had 98 miles of state highways. There were 440 miles of secondary roads, more than half of these designated, "unimproved." So it was necessary to establish work centers all over the county. The Washington office said the money was expended over a wider area in Macon than any county in North Carolina.

Nearly 700

By 1942 the number employed (white and Negro), totaled nearly 700. They worked 80 hours per month at 20 cents per hour. This does not include nearly a hundred pupils in county schools who were assisted by N.Y.A. Student Aid. They worked under the direction of principals and teachers, earning three to six dollars per month. I was appointed "time-keeper without remuneration" to check, copy, and transmit the monthly reports.

In the beginning the work projects were established at a number of rural schools. There were 40 at that time. Eleven springs were enclosed and 11 drinking fountains erected. Ten thousand feet of pipe was laid from springs to fountains. Rock walls, to stop erosion, were constructed where necessary and many playgrounds were improved. Kind people in every area provided mules or oxen, so that we also improved roads close to the schools.

Donates Lumber

The U. S. Forest Service donated 50 thousand feet of lumber, and this was used to construct 54 lean-tos, which provided shelter for children waiting for school buses. The forest service also gave the N.Y.A. logs for the Frazier Community Center for Negroes.

This structure (later destroyed by fire) was 30 by 70 feet and was described as the handsomest log building erected by the N.Y.A. in this state.

An abandoned W.P.A. recreation center at Horse Cove was given to N. Y. A. This was taken down and hauled to Otter Creek. There it was rebuilt and named the May Community Center.

Excellent Training

All this was excellent training for the boys. Those who had aptitude for wood carving received instruction. A number of them were taught to make looms for the weaving centers conducted by Noah Evans, who taught the girls to process raw wool and to weave beautiful materials that were highly praised at the Raleigh exhibits.

Sewing centers for girls were established in a number of communities. During the last year of N. Y. A. there was a sewing and cooking center in Franklin.

Projects Stopped

Soon after the beginning of World War II, all local projects were discontinued. N. Y. A. War Industry Training Centers were established and many young people from Macon County went to these. As soon as they finished the course they were assigned to employment in big production plants in the Piedmont and coastal areas of North Carolina and in Maryland and Virginia. Several stenographers who had been assigned by N. Y. A. to public offices in Franklin also left to assist in war work. Thus in 1943, the great experiment was halted by the demands of war.

The inland area of the Coastal Plain rises approximately one foot per mile in a westerly direction.

"An Educated People Moves Freedom Forward"

This is the slogan of your organization, the National Education Association which is celebrating its 100th Anniversary. We join the people of Macon County in saying we are proud of the teachers of Macon County and of the work they have done to make this great slogan come alive.

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there are always good solid teachers.

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Many Things Have Changed . . .

In the progress and growth of the schools in Macon County, but children and teachers remain as the two most important elements making up our public schools.

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TO THE TEACHERS OF MACON COUNTY
FOR THE LEADERSHIP
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